



UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA COMILLAS
FACULTAD DE TEOLOGÍA
INSTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO DE ESPIRITUALIDAD

For the greatest benefit of each soul

**Applying the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola
to the context and needs of survivors of forced displacement
resettled in Australia**

Tesis para la obtención del grado de Doctor

Director: Prof. Dr. Pascual Cebollada Silvestre, S. J.

Autor: Sacha Alejandro Bermúdez-Goldman, S. J.



Madrid - 2018



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Visto bueno del Director
Prof. Dr. Pascual Cebollada Silvestre, S. J.



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To Antoinette

*Ex-refugee, survivor,
sister, friend,
graced life,
loving presence,
living hope.*

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i> , “On the Mission Activity of the Church”
AR	Acta Romana Societatis Iesu
Au	Autobiography of St Ignatius of Loyola
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CIS	Magazine <i>Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis</i>
CLC	Christian Life Community
CN	Complementary Norms of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus
Co	Constitutions of the Society of Jesus
CST	Catholic Social Teaching
Dir	Directories of the <i>Spiritual Exercises</i>
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> , Apostolic Exhortation
Epp	Letters, Sancti Ignatii de Loyola <i>epistolae et instructiones</i>
FDP	Forcibly displaced person or forcibly displaced people
GC	General Congregation of the Society of Jesus
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican Council II
IDP	Internally displaced person
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican Council II
MHSI	Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu
NRSVCE	New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition

PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PTSS	Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome
SFD	Survivors of forced displacement
SpEx	Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola
SS	Encyclical Letter <i>Spe Salvi</i>
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

INTRODUCTION

Movement and displacement, both forced and voluntary, have always been a reality of human life. What has changed in our time, because of the world's population explosion and a series of factors leading to such displacement—wars, internal conflicts linked to procurement of resources, ecological disasters—is the magnitude, frequency, intensity and worldwide impact of these massive human movements. We live in the 'Age of Migration' and tragically a large percentage of people on the move today are victims of forced displacement and its aftereffects.

Unfortunately, by and large, these horrific consequences are not being met by a proportionate sense of solidarity with and hospitality towards forcibly displaced peoples, by those with the power and resources to offer them welcome. Some notable exceptions are found among faith-based and humanitarian organisations and religious institutions. The phenomenon of migration and forced displacement has in fact become one of the most pressing issues for the Church today, not only because of the care the Church is called to provide for the forcibly displaced as people in need, but because such displacement also affects the Church's nature and composition and challenges the understanding of its 'catholicity' or universality as the people of God. It challenges the Church, in particular, to seek ways to incorporate the experience of people-in-movement into the lives of its existing communities of faith and to discern their specific contribution to the Church's identity and essence.

1. Context and motivation: personal, social, ecclesial and Jesuit

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), Pope Francis wrote:

Since this Exhortation is addressed to members of the Catholic Church, I want to say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a

journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must translate mainly into a privileged and preferential religious care (EG 200).

These powerful words by Pope Francis summarise the main motivation for this thesis. They echo comments made by an ex-refugee friend from Rwanda a few years ago, lamenting the lack of ‘appropriate’ spiritual support for people who had been victims of forced displacement and therefore did not fit the mainstream approach to spiritual nourishment offered in their countries of resettlement. She had said she needed something that addressed more directly her own experiences, “something that can help me reflect on and heal what I went through as a refugee, now that I am in Australia, beginning a new life”. What she was asking then is basically what Pope Francis is calling us to do now for so many of our brothers and sisters in the margins of society: *we must not fail to offer them [...] a journey of growth and maturity in the faith*. While local and international organisations and institutions (both governmental and charitable) strive to respond to the physical, material, psychological and even emotional needs of victims of forced displacement, very little is on offer for them in the pastoral and spiritual areas. And for those who have survived this deeply traumatic experience and, as my Rwandan friend, have begun new lives in other parts of the world, what is on offer is usually not what they really need or desire.

In terms of personal motivation, this thesis brings together two areas that have been of great interest for some years, namely, offering the *Spiritual Exercises* to different types of ‘communities’ and finding ways to respond to the plight of refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Although never a refugee, I have experienced situations of ‘forced displacement’ in my life, having had to leave family, traditions, culture, language and possessions behind. As director of Jesuit Refugee Service Australia (2008 – 2011), I also had the privilege of being invited to share in the lives of many people who had been forcibly displaced from their home countries. An initial personal exploration into the coalescing of these two areas resulted in my *tesina* for the Licentiate in Spiritual Theology: “Hope in forcibly displaced peoples: the gift of a stranger”, (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013). This thesis is, as it were, a continuation of that document and seeks to pick up and expand on the content of most of the themes presented there.

The social context from which I approach this thesis is primarily that of my own country, a developed nation, geographically a member of the southern and far-eastern nations, but in culture and social background very much a Western country, with a very high standard of

living and quality of life. Australians consider their nation ‘the lucky country’¹—a nation of prosperity and privilege—and would like to keep it that way, even if this requires ‘keeping others out’ who might want to come and enjoy similar benefits and good fortune. In fact, Australia has one of the most rigorous immigration policies in the world and one of the most callous systems of asylum and refugee policies as well. Unfortunately, these official policies are kept in place and supported by a vocal minority and their political agendas (see next section).

In its ecclesial context, Australia is considered a highly secular nation, with close to 30% of its population in the last national census (2016), declaring they had ‘no religion’. In the same census, 23% of Australia’s population declared itself Catholic.² However, only a small percentage of these would consider themselves practicing Catholics, and most of those Australian-born who attend religious services would be elderly people. Significant to our study, the census showed that among Mass attenders, 43% had been born overseas and these included people of all ages and families. As it is happening in many places around the world today, the Church in Australia has been discredited by the many cases of sexual abuse that have come to light in the last few years.

Because of both the high degree of secularism in Australia and the negative portrayal of the Church, the Church as an institution is not usually a place where most people would go seeking comfort or direction in terms of either spiritual needs or moral decisions; yet, as we will see later, it still fulfils that role for a great majority of newly arrived people of faith. Positively, the Catholic Church, together with representatives of other Christian and non-Christian faith traditions, has been one of the most openly outspoken institutions against the inhumane asylum policies purported by the government. The social work and assistance provided by the Catholic Church is also widely recognised by those involved in this area, although perhaps not as widely known by the general population. The ministry of the Society of Jesus in Australia to the forcibly displaced is provided mostly through its Jesuit Refugee Service (through advocacy, accommodation, legal advice and other practical services), though other Jesuit institutions also provide support in various ways.

¹ ‘The Lucky Country’ is a term that appeared as title of a book by social critic Donald Horne in 1964. Although the origin of the phrase was negative, it is now used in a favourably way to refer, among other things, to Australia’s prosperity, its distance from problems elsewhere in the world, its natural resources, history, multicultural dimension, etc.

² Cf. AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS, http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_CENSUS_2011_B14, and <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/7E65A144540551D7CA258148000E2B85?OpenDocument>. Both accessed 9 September 2018.

In his address to the members of the 35th General Congregation (GC35) of the Society of Jesus (21 February 2008), Pope Benedict XVI reminded the Jesuits that:

Gathering and developing one of Fr Arrupe's last far-sighted intuitions, your Society continues to do praiseworthy work in the service for refugees, who are often the poorest of the poor and in need not only of material aid but also of the deeper spiritual, human and psychological closeness that is very much a part of your service.

GC35 spoke of this service in terms of going to the frontiers—in *meeting the challenges for our mission today we are sent to the frontiers*.³ The Society's mission to the forcibly displaced continues to be a ministry 'in the frontiers', in places and areas where few groups or none have been engaged before. Thanks to its almost five hundred years of history, the Society of Jesus possesses a great deal of resources to undertake this mission, and one of the greatest of these resources—which concerns this thesis—is the *Spiritual Exercises* of its founder, St Ignatius of Loyola: as Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, former Jesuit Superior General, reminded us "if the Good News are not proclaimed to the poor, the discourse of the *Spiritual Exercises* is futile and lacks authenticity".⁴

2. Background: *humanity washed ashore*

On the morning of 2 September 2015, the world woke up to images of the lifeless body of a three-year-old toddler, Alan Kurdi, one of at least twelve people (including Alan's five-year-old brother) who drowned attempting to reach the Greek island of Kos, en-route from the northern Syrian town of Kobani. Of Kurdish ethnic background, Alan and his family were Syrian refugees, fleeing the tragic war still raging in that country today. The picture depicted the little boy, wearing a bright-red T-shirt and shorts, washed up on a beach, lying face down in the surf not far from one of Turkey's fashionable beach resorts. The image, depicting the full horror of the human tragedy unfolding on the shores of Europe (and other parts of the world), and encapsulating the extraordinary risks refugees take to reach the West, went 'viral' on Twitter within hours of first appearing, under the hashtag 'humanity washed ashore'.

Less than two years earlier (4 October 2013), newspapers around the world had reported the tragic death of more than 200 'undocumented' asylum seekers (at the time more than 150 others remained missing), mostly from Eritrea and Somalia, who had perished the previous day trying to reach the Italian island of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean sea—both the 'gateway to hope' to life in Europe and the 'symbol of death' for many African and Middle

³ THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Decrees and Documents of the 35th General Congregation*, AR 26 (2008) 171-250; Oxford: Way Boos 2008; *Challenges to Our Mission Today*, D. 3, 15-17.

⁴ Cf. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, "Ejercicios Espirituales y amor preferencial por los pobres" (chapter 12) in *Decir... al "Indecible": Estudios sobre los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio*, Bilbao: Mensajero/Santander: Sal Terrae 1999, p. 175.

Eastern people escaping hunger, violence and war in their home countries.⁵ Less than one mile from the island the small boat, carrying an estimated 500 people (including many children), went up in flames. It had departed like many others from the Libyan port of Misrata heading for Lampedusa (the island itself is located only 205 km from Sicily and 113 km from the African coast). The wreckage itself was not a novelty, but what made it notable was the number of victims perishing at the same time together. It is estimated that more than 10,000 people have disappeared or lost their lives since 2014 while attempting to cross the Mediterranean, according to a study by the International Organisation for Migration.⁶

“It is shameful” was the spontaneous and heartfelt response made by Pope Francis at the time. “The word that comes to mind is ‘shame’”. Less than three months earlier, the Pope had visited Lampedusa, on his first official trip outside the Vatican, and had thrown a wreath into the sea in memory of the many people who have drowned trying to reach European soil. During his short visit, the Pope had called for a “reawakening of consciences” needed to counteract the indifference shown to those seeking asylum. A plea that echoed repeated calls made by his predecessors in previous years. Deploing a lost sense of “brotherly responsibility”, the Pope asserted that we “have forgotten how to cry” for those lost at sea.⁷

That same year, on 7 September 2013, federal elections were held in Australia which resulted in giving power to the conservative Liberal Party. As one of the ‘hot’ issues leading to the election had been immigration and border protection in regards to asylum seekers seeking refuge in Australia, an important element of the Party’s platform had been a promise to institute tougher immigration policies. The slogan of the new Prime Minister’s party was: “we will turn back the boats”, referring to boats carrying asylum seekers who had departed from some of our closest neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, heading towards Australia. Basically, the policy behind the slogan consisted in not allowing these boats to reach Australian soil and sending them instead to other island nations, close to

⁵ Cf. At last count, 359 people, including 16 children, lost their lives. A similar tragedy occurred less than five months before the death of Alan Kurdi, in April 2015, when hundreds of asylum seekers again headed to Lampedusa lost their lives.

⁶ Cf. *The Guardian’s* e-news, *Migrant sea route to Italy is world’s most lethal*, 11 September 2017; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/11/migrant-death-toll-rises-after-clampdown-on-east-european-borders>. Accessed 30 September 2018.

⁷ The following day after the Lampedusa tragedy, on his first visit to Assisi, Pope Francis, visibly moved, pronounced even stronger words: “To this world it doesn’t matter that there are children dying of hunger; it doesn’t matter if many families have nothing to eat, do not have the dignity of bringing bread home; it doesn’t matter that many people are forced to flee slavery, hunger and flee in search of freedom. With how much pain, how often don’t we see that they meet death, like yesterday in Lampedusa: today is a day of tears!” Cf. FRANCIS, *Address during his meeting with the poor assisted by Caritas; Pastoral Visit to Assisi*, 4 October 2013, AAS 105 (2013) 916-919; http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131004_poveri-assisi.html. Accessed 21 September 2018.

Australia, where applications for asylum would have to be processed (a policy, as we will see, still in vigour today). The purpose was to send a clear message to the world that Australia had tough immigration laws, that it had a right to decide who could enter its territory, and that it would not allow anyone to abuse that right.

It is a message endorsed by many other countries today, especially (but not only) those in the West. Politics and national interests have, for several years now, been gravitating against asylum. While the number of forcibly displaced peoples continues to rise around the world—because of wars and armed conflicts, structural and generalised violence, fights over resources, economic instability and climate change—developed nations (and some rapidly developing ones) are closing more and more its borders to asylum seekers and other forcibly displaced people. The clear message these policies embody is: “we do not want you”. There is no mention anywhere in that message of the fact that these policies are in breach of Australia’s and other countries’ international legal obligations—as they fail to respect the right of any individual to seek asylum—as well as of their humanitarian obligations. Little mention is made of the factors that push people to risk their lives to reach safety and peace. Little mention is made of their dignity as individuals, of their needs and hopes. Certainly, no mention at all is made of the benefits and gifts that these people can bring to these countries. And no mention is made of our obligation, as human companions, to offer hospitality, solidarity and care for those who come knocking at our doors, in need.⁸

3. Premise/hypothesis of the work, theme and statement of issues

Taking into account the aforementioned contexts and background, this thesis’ concern is the care of survivors of forced displacement, and more specifically, the provision of resources to contribute to their spiritual well-being. As we have seen, current trends show the international community for the most part trying to rescind its legal and humanitarian responsibilities towards victims of forced displacement, and even in those countries where local and international organisations do strive to respond to their physical, material and psychological needs, very little is on offer to them in the pastoral care and spiritual areas. More specifically, the thesis looks at responding to these spiritual needs in the context of ex-refugees who have resettled in Australia and who spouse the Christian faith tradition, and within the context of the theology and spirituality of the Catholic Church and the mission and ministries of the Society of Jesus.

⁸ “In the face of attitudes hostile to these displaced persons, our faith invites the Society [of Jesus] to promote everywhere a more generous culture of hospitality” (GC36, D. 1, 36).

The purpose of this thesis then is to seek to respond to the perceived need for greater and more relevant resources to nourish, support and develop the spiritual lives of ex-forcibly displaced people who have resettled in Australia, and to provide these resources based on principles of Ignatian spirituality. More specifically, the aim is to determine the factors and elements that should be considered in designing these resources and then to develop *spiritual exercises* that address the circumstances, disposition and condition of survivors of forced displacement. This response is therefore based on three premises or hypotheses:

- (1) There are currently not enough resources or tools that address the spiritual needs of ex-forcibly displaced people.
- (2) Ex-forcibly displaced people have particular needs—not only physical and emotional, but also spiritual—as a result of their forced displacement experience
- (3) Ignatian spirituality, and St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* in particular, can be adapted and applied to meet these specific needs.

Furthermore, the proposed resources are intended for two audiences: (1) the ex-refugees themselves who will benefit from them, and (2) their spiritual guides, accompaniers, givers of the *exercises* and anyone else who might be involved in supporting their faith and spiritual journey, both individuals and institutions. In addition, it is intended that the summary of conclusions that will help identify the criteria for developing these resources will be used as material for the formation of givers of these resources.

In summary, this thesis argues that ministry, and particularly spiritual ministry to forcibly displaced people, has a central place in the universal contemporary Church, and therefore in the Church's theology and spirituality. This ministry has also a central place in the Society of Jesus, whose *Spiritual Exercises* are considered a distinctive gift to the Church, and a powerful instrument to carry out the Society's mission. The *Exercises* have always been and should continue to be adapted and applied to the needs of specific audiences, including one of the fastest growing groups in our world today: forcibly displaced peoples. Considering these four premises, the thesis will seek to develop a program of spiritual resources and Ignatian *exercises* to fit the needs of survivors of forced displacement.

4. Current status of studies and clarification of limits of this study

As mentioned, most resources allocated to assist forcibly displaced peoples seek to meet their physical and psychological needs. In the areas of spirituality and faith development, some pastoral programs are offered in refugee camps, urban settings and detention centres, in particular to vulnerable groups such as women and children and the elderly, and certainly

parishes or parish-like institutions strive to provide some degree of spiritual support and nurturing to people of diverse faith traditions, both Christian and non-Christian. Most of this support is given to groups, though instances of some individual spiritual accompaniment also take place along the way. Yet these ‘services’ are intermittent, usually tailored to meet the specific individual needs of the people involved. Of greater relevance to this thesis, little has been written in the area of spiritual support provision to forcibly displaced people who have survived this traumatic experience and have resettled in third countries to begin a new life.⁹ Certainly, their spiritual needs are different from people and groups who are still waiting for a resolution to their plight, be it in long-term refugee camps or in urban settings.

As we will see, particularly in chapter 2 of the thesis, the Jesuit Service for Migrants (SJM) in Colombia and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in several countries in Africa and in the Middle East, together with other Jesuit institutions (schools, universities, spirituality centres), have explored in the last few years ways in which Ignatian spirituality and the *Spiritual Exercises* can contribute to the process of peace and reconciliation in the lives of refugees and internally displaced peoples in those countries.¹⁰ Also, JRS international has brought together JRS staff and academics (moral and social theologians) to look at different areas within the forced displacement field (ethics, law, service provision, etc.) to begin a process of theological reflection and to “see about building a bridge between theology and JRS”. The process has used as its foundation for reflection the seven JRS values of compassion, hope, dignity, solidarity, hospitality, justice, and participation.¹¹ Though this has been a step in the right direction, there is clearly a lot more that needs to be done in this area. Further, while this theological reflection can help illuminate some of the social and moral aspects that need to be addressed to respond to the needs of forcibly displaced people, from a methodological

⁹ As we will see, particularly in chapter 4, the existing literature tends both to gather accounts and testimonies of survivors’ faith and spiritual experiences during their *past* displacement journeys, and to point to their *current* spiritual and pastoral needs. When accounts of present spiritual and pastoral support are given, they focus primarily on sacramental services and educational support provided by Catholic institutions.

¹⁰ Reconciliation has now been “mainstreamed” into the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service and named one of its four strategic priorities (together with education, livelihoods and advocacy) in its Strategic Framework for 2019-2023. However, reconciliation programs and activities have been part of its mandate for most of its existence, in places such as Cambodia (from the early 1990s), Colombia (since the late 1990s), Uganda (mid 2000s) and more recently in South Sudan and Syria. It is a response inspired by a Christian faith that does justice and the Society of Jesus’ Ignatian principles and characteristics, and open to multi-religious and multicultural dialogue. Cf. “Peace and Reconciliation – JRS Responses”, <http://en.jrs.net/Advocacy?LID=708>. Accessed 14 October 2018. JRS has also developed a resource to guide and channel its reconciliation efforts: *Recreating Right Relationships: Deepening the Mission of Reconciliation in the Work of JRS*, Rome: JRS Publications 2013.

¹¹ Cf. http://en.jrs.net/theological_reflection_detail_continue?TN=DTN-20111109045430. As part of this process, several theologians have written theological reflections on these values. See, for example, James Keenan on ‘hospitality’; cf. http://en.jrs.net/theological_reflection_detail_continue?TN=DTN-20111109052215. Both accessed 14 October 2018.

point of view, a spiritual reading of this lived reality, which goes beyond an analysis of data based on the cultural, sociological or psychological environments forcibly displaced people occupy, is also required. This spiritual ‘reading’, once interpreted, can help elucidate some of the defining aspects of a spirituality of displacement and of the particular spiritual needs of the forcibly displaced.

There is certainly no other study that has explored adapting the *Spiritual Exercises* or offering retreats or pastoral programs designed specifically for ex-refugees in Australia nor, as far as I have been able to ascertain, in other ex-refugee receiving nations. Though our country has received a relatively small number of refugees every year (less than 15,000¹²) and only a small percentage would be Catholic or Christian, yet, when adding up the numbers of arrivals in the last thirty or so years, the number becomes considerable. And they continue to arrive. Some of the earlier arrivals (mainly from South East Asian countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) have received little personal care and spiritual support that has specifically addressed their experience of forced displacement. Once again, this thesis seeks to address this dearth. Furthermore, while this study is based on the Australian context and focuses on survivors of forced displacement who have resettled here, it is expected that other developed nations (particularly in Western Europe and North America), and which are also major receiver-countries of forcibly displaced peoples, will exhibit similar characteristics and face similar issues and challenges. Thus, it is hoped that the thesis’ findings and outcomes will prove helpful for other contexts as well.

However, as mentioned before, the study does possess other limits besides its particular geographical context. It is intended for survivors of forced displacement who spouse the Christian faith tradition. It would be enriching to expand the study across several other faith traditions, but such endeavour goes beyond the scope of this paper. It is also aimed at the spiritual needs of ex-refugees who have completed their ‘displacement journey’ and who have been resettled mostly in third countries. As expected, their spiritual needs are different from people and groups who are still waiting for a resolution to their plight, be it in long-term refugee camps, detention centres, or in urban settings (though it is hoped that some of the resources developed here could be also adapted to their needs). The thesis also does not intend

¹² In 2017, however, the number reached over 24,000 to include a special intake of Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Cf. *The Guardian’s* e-news, *Australia takes the most refugees since start of humanitarian program*, 10 February 2018; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/10/australia-takes-the-most-refugees-since-start-of-humanitarian-program>. It is expected, furthermore, that the annual intake will increase to close to 19,000 by 2018-2019. Cf. ABC e-news, *Where does Australia rank on its refugee intake?* 21 September 2016; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-21/where-does-australia-rank-on-its-refugee-intake/7864070>. Both accessed 30 September 2018.

to be a rigorous systematic study about the many aspects involved in a theology and spirituality of forced displacement, though many of these aspects will be considered and will inform and guide the context and structure of the work. Finally, this limited scope does not allow us either to address in detail the wide range of issues found within the forced displacement field—political, economic, ethical, legal, social, etc.—though continuous reference will be made to the more salient and relevant issues linked to our study.

5. Definition of theoretical frameworks

Because of the ‘audience’ or group involved, as alluded earlier, two main areas or fields of study converge here to provide the theoretical framework that underpins our work: spiritual theology and forced migration (though as expected and as we will see, other areas of theology are also relevant to our discussion, as for example, narrative theology). The process of development in the Christian life, of growing and maturing in Christ, and of appropriating his mystery in one’s life in and through one’s own spiritual experiences is the object of study of spiritual theology. While these spiritual experiences are personal, they are also rooted in history, taking place within a specific time and space. Christian experience cannot be separated from the ‘timeline’ of God’s history of salvation for humanity, nor from the Church, the ecclesial ‘space’ which provides the context within which the spiritual reading of the events in our lives, as a community of faith, can take place. And for forcibly displaced people, because of their very particular ‘extreme’ experiences, such appropriation of Christ’s mystery will exhibit very specific characteristics.

Forced displacement today, as never before, has become a multifaceted global phenomenon, affecting every continent and region of the world. It involves many aspects though, of course, not all the aspects are present in each and every forcibly displaced person. The causes for displacement, for example, and the physical as well as psychological effects that it can have on any particular person, will vary significantly. The same can be said about the faith experience and spiritual needs of refugees in response to the events that have uprooted them and convulsed their lives, and also in response to the main events transpired during their displacement journey—often protracted over several years—and finally to the events linked to their eventual resettlement.

This thesis argues that the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola can provide effective support and nourishment to meet the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement. There is no doubt that other spiritual traditions (both Catholic and Christian as well as non-Christian) could also offer this spiritual growth and nourishment, and studies to determine

their contribution should be encouraged. But in terms of the *Spiritual Exercises*, their anticipated effectiveness lies in the fact that they have been adapted and applied to the situations, conditions and dispositions of many different peoples and groups over the centuries, and have been found to be effective and beneficial to all.

Of course, as not all people in ‘normal’ circumstances are ready to engage in the full *Spiritual Exercises*, not all (and perhaps few) forcibly displaced people will be either. This is something that was clear to St Ignatius from the beginning, and thus he made provisions for adaptations and application of his *Exercises* with the understanding that many people might not be called to make an election or reform of life, but might only require some ‘light’ spiritual exercises which could still provide *the greatest benefit to each soul*. St Ignatius believed that God treats each person differently and communicates with each according to one’s needs and desires. This thesis explores how best to offer the *Spiritual Exercises* to survivors of forced displacement, with the additional hope that through this study a means can be offered for the voices of the forcibly displaced to be heard, so as to enrich our common spiritual enterprise and to help us understand better the richness that lies within the *Exercises*.

6. Methodology

As mentioned above, two main areas of study converge in our work: spiritual theology and forced displacement studies. One advantage is that both areas rely on integral or mixed approaches or methodologies. They look at the experiences of their subjects while attempting a critical reflection on those experiences in order to arrive at specific conclusions that might help illuminate their lives and guide their futures (inductive approach). At the same time, they consider these experiences within the context of specific traditions, rooted in history and past reflection (deductive approach).

As alluded to in the previous section, our work will include a detailed study, analysis and interpretation of the aspects involved in the applicability and adaptability of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius. It will seek to identify the qualities and characteristics of a survivor of forced displacement as the ‘subject’ of the *Exercises* (as much as these can be held in common in a spectrum of innumerable varied possibilities), as well as the particularities that might characterise a spirituality and theology of displacement, and how these might be lived out in our specific Australian context. This all will be done mainly through bibliographical research of pertinent sources in both fields, but also through engaging in ‘conversation’ with appropriate interlocutors or discussion ‘partners’: academics and givers of the *Spiritual Exercises*, theologians, forcibly displaced persons and those working with them—in particular

personnel of the Jesuit Refugee Service who have accompanied refugees in diverse parts of the world.

And important ‘core’ group of these discussion partners will be Jesuit and other religious ex-refugees who have lived both through the experience of forced displacement and of the *Exercises*, having done them during their formation while in Australia. Of course, my own personal experiences and learnings from my contact with both refugees and survivors of forced displacement for the past ten years will be incorporated into the discussion. Thus, it can be said that our methodology is socio-theological in nature in that it is grounded on sustained ‘conversations’ and participant-based approaches (in regards to survivors of forced displacement), bringing these into dialogue with tradition and the lived experience of Christian faith, as influenced by the specific factors of forced displacement.¹³ As such, it falls also within the scope of several other qualitative methodologies, including narrative, phenomenological, and grounded theory approaches.¹⁴

Moreover, the thesis’ methodology as well as much of its content and narrative style, is very much influenced by the aforementioned audiences this work considers, namely, survivors of forced displacement and their future spiritual guides and givers of the *Exercises*. In the case of victims of forced displacement, the widely acknowledged ‘best practice’ is to allow them to share their stories and ‘voices’ and to listen respectfully to them. Thus, our in-depth literature review and analysis of topics on forced displacement issues, Ignatian spirituality, the *Spiritual Exercises*, and theology and spirituality of displacement, is complemented by pastoral and experiential ‘excursus’ (presented throughout the document) on personal accounts and testimonies of survivors of forced displacement as well as critical issues affecting them.¹⁵

¹³ Thus, the thesis (specifically in chapter 1), explores in detail the process and steps involved in the methodological systematisation of a theology of displacement.

¹⁴ Cf. JOHN W. CRESWELL, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications 2013.

¹⁵ Thus, and as we will see chiefly in chapters 1 and 4, the selected qualitative methodologies used in our study have been the ‘narrative’ (particularly through the use of ‘oral history’) and ‘phenomenological’ methods. The ‘narrative method’ begins with experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals and seeks, as in our case, not only to assess those individuals’ experiences but also to explore the social, cultural, political, theological and spiritual institutional narratives within which these individual experiences have been constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted. Cf. D. JEAN CLANDININ, *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry*, Oxfordshire, UK: Taylor & Francis, p. 18. Of particular relevance to our study, the narrative method has been found to shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants of a study have in common as they experience a phenomenon (in our case, the phenomenon of forced displacement), and based on such descriptions attempt to develop a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals (cf. chapter 4 of the thesis). In addition, and as mentioned above, our study also moves into the area of ‘ground theory’, which focuses on processes that have distinct steps or phases which occur over time (e.g. the phases of forced displacement) seeking to provide an explanation of how such a process ‘works’. Cf. CRESWELL, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*, pp.

While the thesis is, of course, an academic (theoretical) endeavour, it seeks also to provide a pastoral (praxis) application, and as such it has to be rooted in the real life circumstances and experiences of ex-forcibly displaced people.

The original *Thesis Proposal* had envisioned developing an initial program of *spiritual exercises*, (based on the theoretical research and input gathered from the discussion partners referred to above), to be offered to a small group of ex-refugees and then, based on reflection and assessment of their initial experiences and feedback, to further ‘re-fine’ the program and the *spiritual exercises* themselves, and offer them again. Further feedback and reflection then could lead to further refinement. However, it became clear in the early stages of the thesis that carrying out this practical component was beyond the scope of this work. While the initial program of *spiritual exercises* will indeed be developed, to add a process of testing and verification (including designing a specific qualitative research project to gather the data from participants) would have amounted, in practical terms, to another thesis. Such testing and verification, then, will have to be carried out as a follow-up to the thesis. With the exception of this deviation from the original proposal, all the other initially proposed elements have remained as part of the thesis.

7. Objectives and contents

The convergence of our two fields of study—spiritual theology (including its contribution by Ignatian spirituality) and forced displacement, as well as its two ‘audiences’ and the main purpose and objectives of the thesis—has determined its content, format and the way the different chapters have been divided. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this thesis is to address a ‘*lack of spiritual care*’ to a particular group of people, namely survivors of forced displacement who have resettled in Australia, and to offer them a ‘*way of growth and maturation in their faith*’ through the experience of a spiritual program based on St Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*. As we will see in chapter 3, this will require an adaptation/application of the *Exercises* to take into account their needs, circumstances and disposition, as well as determining the factors and elements to be considered in designing these resources, all within the context of the mission and ministries of the Society of Jesus and the specific contribution of the forcibly displaced to the Church’s identity and future. In addition to the conclusions presented at the end, this thesis then is divided into five chapters, whose contents seek to meet the specific objectives outlined below.

69-71, 82-83. In our case, the process explored has sought to develop a spiritual program for survivors of forced displacement in the third and last stage of the forced displacement experience (cf. chapter 5).

Starting with **chapter 5**, this chapter charts the actual design and development of the Ignatian *spiritual exercises* for survivors of forced displacement, including their content, structure, dynamics and overall format, and which constitute the practical and pastoral application of this thesis, thus fulfilling its main objective. These *exercises* (about two hundred of them), will be presented in a separate volume with an introduction addressed to the receivers of these *exercises* to act, so to speak, as a concise ‘exercitant manual’. The content, presentation, process and dynamics of these *exercises* are all informed by the learnings and insights obtained from the first four chapters and thus, these could be considered as the four ‘pillars’ on which the spiritual exercises will ‘sit’. A detailed presentation of these learnings and insights, in table format, will be presented in Appendix I, covering four areas: (1) major themes recognised; (2) identified spiritual needs of the displaced to be addressed based on those themes; (3) possible Ignatian *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement to address these needs and, (4) relevant resources from Ignatian, scriptural and other ecclesial sources to help develop these *exercises*. Though these four chapters are not written so much as a handbook or ‘how-to-manual’ to be followed by givers of these *exercises*, they do provide a guide of ‘things to consider’ as they engage in this spiritual ministry to survivors of forced displacement.

Chapter 1, divided in two parts, looks respectively at what might be involved in the development of a contextual theology and a spirituality of displacement and migration. It explores also the significance of forcibly displaced peoples’ particular contribution to our Church, our theology and our spirituality. As we will see, theologising contextually through the ‘lens’ of displacement has identified, among others, three main areas of reflection: (1) displacement as an image or metaphor of the ‘existential exodus’ we experience as human beings on our way back to God; (2) displacement as a ‘sacred space’ where we encounter the ‘Other/other’, and (3) displacement as a constant challenge to our understanding of the ‘catholicity’ or universally encompassing nature of Christ’s church. A spirituality of displacement is in essence a spirituality of hope—a much needed gift or treasure in our world today—which forcibly displaced people hold and can offer to us. The explorations in this chapter seek to fulfil two specific objectives of the thesis, expressed best as the questions: (1) “How and what can a theology and spirituality of displacement contribute to the lives of survivors of forced displacement and to the life of the Church? and (2) What can we learn through this investigation in regards to their specific needs which should be taken into account in developing *spiritual exercises* for them?”

Chapter 2 places the giving of the Exercises to forcibly displaced people within the call of the Society of Jesus to minister to the poor, the marginalised and those who are not being ministered by others. It briefly reviews the history, characteristics and spirituality of the Society's social apostolate, especially as articulated in the Society's last six General Congregations. It looks also at specific examples of the connection *spirituality/social apostolate* within the Society that has guided its response in three areas: solidarity with the poor in Latin America, solidarity with creation, and solidarity with women, before addressing this connection in its institutional response to the plight of forcibly displaced people through the Jesuit Refugee Service. In regards to this chapter's contribution to the task of developing Ignatian *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement, its main objectives are: (1) to look at the history, purpose, characteristics and way of proceeding of the Society of Jesus' Social Apostolate and its particular focus and approach in its service to the forcibly displaced; (2) to show that applying the *Spiritual Exercises* to the context of forcibly displaced peoples is in line with this continuing mission of the Society of Jesus and its service to the Church, following similar efforts endeavoured in the past; (3) based on applications of the *Exercises* to other areas of the Society's Social Apostolate, to distil further considerations to take into account for developing *exercises* for forcibly displaced people, and (4) to explore the principles and criteria that should guide our response—both practical and spiritual—to the plight of forcibly displaced people, following guidelines based on the rights of human persons, Catholic Social Teaching and on learnings amassed from the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service in the last thirty-eight years.

Chapter 3 endeavours to answer the question “Can the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius be adapted so as to take into consideration the particular circumstances of forcibly displaced people? The ‘obvious’ answer is ‘yes’. The main thrust of the chapter is to show how this has been done previously in the history of the *Exercises* (both in theory and through particular examples), and what needs to be taken into account to ensure that the end product of such adaptation/application is still Ignatian *exercises*. The relevance of this chapter to the task of developing spiritual exercises for survivors of forced displacement is articulated in the following four main objectives: (1) to benefit from the lessons on application and adaptation learned from the past; (2) to consider the main factors required for the application and adaptation of the Ignatian Exercises for survivors of forced displacement (3) to distil the essence of what are ‘Ignatian spiritual exercises’, and (4) to provide practical examples of these applications/adaptations that could serve as models in the development of our own Ignatian *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement.

Chapter 4 seeks to identify the characteristics of a survivor of forced displacement as the ‘subject’ of Ignatian *exercises*. In other words, it explores the dispositions, attitudes, capacities, circumstances, needs and desires of forcibly displaced people that should be taken into account to adapt the *Exercises* for them. Following the holistic and integral approach strived for throughout the thesis, the four parts of this chapter seek to address the theological and spiritual, psychological, anthropological and sociological factors which might influence the ability of forcibly displaced persons to engage in the *Exercises*. Since the chosen ‘audience’ of this study are ex-forcibly displaced people who have resettled in Australia, the chapter also considers issues/challenges which the present Australian reality might pose to the giving and receiving of Ignatian *exercises* to the forcibly displaced. In terms of the objectives that have helped determined the contents of this chapter, these include: (1) to distil the essence and characteristics of the Ignatian *subiecto* so as to better design exercises that might help develop this potential in forcibly displaced people as future receivers of the Exercises; (2) to explore how to respond to the consequences of the various psychological, anthropological and social issues mentioned above and incorporate those insights into the design of the Ignatian *exercises*; (3) to explore the effect (in particular the healing dimension) that receiving these *exercises* might have on these issues, and (4) to explore what the effect of particular circumstances in Australia might be for survivors resettled here in terms, for example, of their access to the *exercises*, the opportunity to engage in them and the level of priority given to receive them.

The thesis then covers a wide range of topics, but as we hope to show in chapter 5, the elements and themes raised throughout these chapters will be incorporated into the design of the *spiritual exercises* presented there. And again, we believe their content is of relevance because it provides essential information for people who desire to offer spiritual support to survivors of forced displacement within the Ignatian tradition but might lack foundational knowledge of the tradition in this particular area.

Finally, in terms of some procedural aspects, the thesis is of course written in English. Translations from Spanish, French or Italian texts are my own, unless otherwise specified. In the case of historically important texts, in particular from the *Spiritual Exercises* and other Ignatian sources, these have been kept in the main text in their original language and translations of these texts have been given in the footnotes. Conversely, when the English translation appears in the main text, its source in the original language is provided in the footnotes. In terms of the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, besides working with the Spanish original, I have referred to several English editions (listed in the Bibliography). Unless

otherwise noted, all citations in English of the *Exercises* in the thesis come from George E. Ganss' *Translation and Commentary* (1992), which is based on the critical text A (Ignatius' *Autograph*) published by Cándido de Dalmases (1969). All scriptural quotes, unless otherwise specified, are from the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition.¹⁶

¹⁶ Copyright © the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

CHAPTER 1

Characteristics of a theology and spirituality of displacement

Introduction

As mentioned in the Introduction, this thesis argues that ministry, and particularly spiritual ministry to forcibly displaced people, has a central place in the universal contemporary Church, and therefore in the Church's theology and spirituality. This ministry has also a central place in the Society of Jesus, whose *Spiritual Exercises* are considered a distinctive gift to the Church, and a powerful instrument to carry out the Society's mission. The *Exercises* have always been and should continue to be adapted to the needs of specific audiences, including one of the fastest growing groups in our world today: forcibly displaced peoples. As we embark on the process of adaptation and application of Ignatius' *Exercises* to develop Ignatian Exercises for survivors of forced displacement (chapter 5), in this first chapter we look at how this ministry to them might both challenge and enrich our current theological and spiritual understanding.

The chapter is divided in two parts looking respectively at what might be involved in the development of (1) a contextual theology of displacement and migration and (2) a spirituality of displacement and migration. Of course, the essential interconnectedness of these two areas (both in general and in the lives of the forcibly displaced) warrants overlapping and makes the separation somewhat artificial—and in fact we will address the field of 'spiritual

theology’ in this chapter. We acknowledge this interconnectedness but also the benefits of sectioning the chapter in this way to structure our exploration and facilitate the presentation of specific contents. This exploration, in broad terms, seeks to answer two relevant questions to our study: (1) How and what could a theology and spirituality of displacement contribute to the lives of the forcibly displaced and to the life of the Church? and (2) What can we learn through this investigation in regards to specific needs of survivors of forced displacement that we should take into account in developing spiritual resources for them?

Part I in turn is divided into two main sections. The **first section**, ‘In search of a theology of migration and displacement’, looks first at the context, background and reasons the phenomenon of migration/displacement has become one of the most pressing issues for our Church today. It then considers the four elements or steps involved in a methodological systematisation of a contextual theology of displacement, using the example of mandatory detention in Australia to concretise the theoretical underpinnings presented. **Section 2** of this first Part explores the process of theologising contextually through the *lens* of displacement, following on the footsteps of other contextual theologies. It considers how such theologising might affect our understanding of God, Jesus, and the Church, in particular in the areas of pneumatology, Christian anthropology, soteriology, eschatology, moral theology, pastoral theology and liturgical practice, and ecclesiology. The section ends with a brief exploration of the concept of ‘Catholicity and community’, addressing what might be required in the construction of an imagined Church that is not only *for* forcibly displaced peoples but also *with* and *of* the displaced.

Part II is divided into three main sections. After a short introduction, which asserts the fundamental role of ‘hope’ in the spirituality of the forcibly displaced, and in order to provide background and context to our discussion, **Section 1** looks at the perennial and essential function of hope in people’s lives; it addresses the current crisis of hope in the world—what it means to live in ‘a world without hope’—as well as the opportunities that such crisis might present to us as Church today. **Section 2** then explores what a lived spirituality of hope might entail: it discusses the theological and biblical foundations that underpin it and looks at its praxis in our present globalised context. Finally, **Section 3** seeks to address how this spirituality of hope has found its roots—and has been further developed—in and through the

experiences of forcibly displaced people, how they incarnate it and express it in their lives and the lessons we can learn from them to build upon our own spirituality of hope.

At this initial stage it is important also to give a procedural reminder: since our study focusses on the Australian context and on survivors of forced displacement who have resettled in this country, many of our references and examples, as well as the conclusions derived from the study, come from and apply to Australia. It is expected, however, that other developed nations, particularly in Western Europe and North America, that are major receiver-countries of forcibly displaced peoples, will exhibit similar characteristics and face similar issues and challenges. When appropriate, information from other countries is also provided.

As also mentioned in the Introduction, the content, methodology, as well as narrative style—both academic and pastoral—of this and the next three chapters is driven by the audiences this work has in mind, namely, survivors of forced displacement and their future spiritual guides and givers of the Exercises. Thus, the in-depth literature review and analysis of topics on forced displacement issues, Ignatian spirituality, the *Spiritual Exercises*, and theology and spirituality of displacement (the present chapter), is complemented by pastoral and experiential ‘excursus’ (presented throughout the document) on personal accounts and testimonies of survivors of forced displacement as well as critical issues affecting them. The thesis is, of course, an academic (theoretical) endeavour, but it also seeks to provide a pastoral (praxis) application, and as such it has to be rooted in the real life circumstances and experiences of ex-refugees. We begin therefore with the words of a survivor of forced displacement—both his ‘prayer’ and an invitation for all to enter into the ‘mystery’ of the complex lives of survivors of forced displacement. His reflection helps anchor our exploration into the mystery of the God, the Jesus and the Church that may be revealed through the lives and experiences of displaced peoples.

You asked...

Where do I find myself, you ask?

This is where I find myself:

I am in this world, but in a world that feels foreign;
the sky looks different,
the food tastes different,
the air smells different;

even the silence sounds different;
it is your world, not yet mine.

Where is my church, you ask?
My church is your church;
but I don't find much life in your church;
I try to find God there,
but you have made God so distant.
Where have you hidden him?

What is my spirituality, you ask?
With all due respect, I don't know what that is.
But I can tell you about my spirit, if you wish.
My spirit is that part of me nobody can touch,
nobody can hurt, nobody can know.
My spirit is what gives me life,
what sustains me, what connects me to you.

How do I feel, you ask?
This is how I feel:
I feel lost and found and lost;
I feel hopeful, excited, fearful and anxious.
I feel empty, lonely, guilty.
I feel guilty that I don't feel better.
I feel sometimes that the burden is too much to bear;
then I feel hopeful again, because I have felt that way before,
I bore the burden, and I survived.

What do I need, you ask?
This is what I need:
I need to tell you how I got here,
what I had to do to get here;
I need to tell you about the people I left behind
and those I still carry with me,
even if they are not here anymore.
I need peace, I need rest.

What do I want, you ask?
This is what I want:
I want to feel that I belong;
I want companionship;
I want to see you smile when you say my name;
I want a good job;
I want to feel useful;
I want the little things that make life worthwhile:
family, friends, meaning, joy.

I want you to believe that I can contribute
something to this country, to you, to others.

What can I give you, you finally ask?

This is what I can give you:
my pain, my suffering, my loneliness, my resilience.

*What good are these things, you don't ask,
even if you want to.*

They are good.

They are incredibly good, because in them I have found my God,
and in them I can help you find your God too, if you want.

Who is this God, you ask?

How much time do you have to listen?

For what you ask me to tell you,
is the story of my life.

Part I: A Theology of displacement and migration

1.1. In search of a theology of displacement and migration

For many displaced people of faith, ‘the story of their lives’ cannot be separated from their belief in God. God is the source of their being, the one who protected them in their journey to safety, the one who led them to their new homes after being forced to leave their former dwellings. When they arrived at this new ‘home’, they brought with them their beliefs, their faith traditions, their rituals of praise and worship. They brought along *their* God, or rather, their concept of God—of the God they *knew* and *loved*. Some, through strong conviction and power, imposed their beliefs on those they met but at the same time were also influenced by theirs, so new synergetic ways of expressing those beliefs in worship and prayer developed... This is the history and the story of Christianity—of what we now term ‘inculturating the Gospel’—as well as the story of all other major world religions. This is part of the story of migration and forced displacement and the profound role they have had in the development of all faith traditions throughout history.¹

1.1.1. A ‘displaced’ Church

Such profound role has shaped the Catholic Church in Australia throughout its short 230-year ‘European history’ and in particular in the last seventy years since the end of World War II.²

¹ In the words of Pope Francis: “Migration, in its various forms, is not a new phenomenon in humanity’s history. It has left its mark on every age, encouraging encounter between peoples and the birth of new civilizations. In its essence, to migrate is the expression of that inherent desire for the happiness proper to every human being, a happiness that is to be sought and pursued. For us Christians, all human life is an itinerant journey towards our heavenly homeland”. POPE FRANCIS, *Address to participants in the International Forum on ‘Migration and Peace’* (21 February 2017), AAS 109 (2017) 249-254; http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170221_forum-migrazioni-pace.html. Accessed 6 June 2018. And from the Society of Jesus’ 34th General Congregation: ““Evangelization is not possible without inculturation. Inculturation is the existential dialogue between a living people and the living Gospel’ (cf. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach). This process has always been a part of the life of the Church: in the early Christian centuries the Church, while proclaiming its faith in ways that a Hellenistic culture could receive, was at the same time shaped by that culture. Insights which first originated outside the Jewish and Christian context came to find a place within the very heart of Christianity. A similar process is going on today in many parts of the world, as representatives of indigenous cultures, the great religious traditions and critical modernity bring insights which the Church must consider as part of the dialogue between Christian experience and the diversity of other experiences. In this way, the Church is recovering, in our times, the creativity shown in the early centuries and in the best of its evangelizing work”, D. 4, 3-4. Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Documents of the 34th General Congregation*, 1995, St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1995.

² Australia today is a country of many cultures, languages and faiths. Its 25 million residents have come from (or have ancestry in) about 230 countries, speak close to 200 languages and observe more than 100 religious faiths. Close to 49 percent of Australians were either born overseas or have one or both parents born overseas. According to the 2016 census, 52 percent of Australians identified themselves as Christian, with 23 percent of the total population as Catholics; non-Christians number 8.2 percent and people with no institutional religion

Of course this is a phenomenon common to other migrant receiving countries—the so-called ‘colonies’ of the 15th and 16th and following centuries. In the United States, for example:

In spite of widespread anti-Catholic prejudice and discrimination, Catholic migrants assimilated the North American culture, building churches in spite of their meagre financial resources (the so-called “brick-and-mortar Catholicism”, engaging in education and healthcare, founding devotional societies, and forging a new type of Catholicism marked by cultural pluralism and lay involvement—all accomplished while remaining faithful to their ethnic origins through a system of national churches.³

One needs only change ‘North America’ for Australia in this description to get a sense of how the Catholic Church has developed in Australia, following the arrival of the first European migrants—most of them forcibly displaced as convicts—in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.⁴ But these later movements constitute only a part of the continuum of

about 30 percent; about 10 percent did not specify religious preference in the census. Cf. AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS, <http://www.abs.gov.au/>. Accessed 29 May 2018.

³ PETER C. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration” in *Theological Studies* 77 n. 4 (2016) 848. Though concise, Phan’s article offers an excellent introduction, both historical and theological, of some of the major aspects we will develop further in this section, so we will refer to it in several instances in this early introduction to our topic. Despite the great contribution of early migrants referred to above, it was not all smooth sailing. As Phan points us, “[...] not everything was problem free with migration and migrants within the US Catholic Church. For instance, the system of national churches and ethnic parishes, which helped migrants preserve their cultures and religious traditions, have occasioned numerous conflicts between laity of minority ethnic groups and the hierarchy”, p. 848. And here it could be added, also conflicts among some of the minority ethnic groups themselves. In the Australian context, for example, the pastoral difficulties associated with the post-World War II arrival and assimilation of Italian Catholics into the existing ‘primarily Irish Catholicism’ became known as the ‘Italian problem’ with neither group understanding the other’s customs and mentality: “For Australians [from Irish background] religion is primarily for the individual, for Italians it is for the community; for Australians it is primarily a matter of personal conscience and commitment, for Italians it is primarily a matter of social manifestation and experience [...]”, Cf. ADRIAN PITTARELLO, *Soup without Salt: the Australian Catholic Church and the Italian Migrant*, Sydney: Centre for Migration Studies, c.1980, pp. 53-55. For other examples, including conflicts between different Christian churches, see, for instance, FRANK ENGEL, *Australian Churches in Conflict and Unity 1788-1926*, Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education 1984 (reissued 1992 with new title: *Christians in Australia*, volume 1), and its sequel by the same author, *Christians in Australia, Times of change, 1918-1978*, volume 2. In some instances, conflicts have arisen even between peoples from the same ethnic group or the same country. This, of course, is not uncommon when people of a same country, but on the different sides of the political spectrum, become forcibly displaced because of a particular conflict, such as Chileans who arrived in Australia in the 1980s, some of whom were supporters of the dictator Augusto Pinochet while others had been victims under his regime.

⁴ See, for example, CYRIL HALLY, *Migrants and the Australian Church*, Richmond, Victoria: Clearing House on Migration Issues, 1980, paper 6,1; PATRICK FARRELL, *The Catholic Church in Australia: A Short History 1788-1967*, Sydney: Nelson 1968, and PATRICIA MADIGAN, ‘Graced by Migration: An Australian Perspective’ in Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Christianities in Migration: The Global Perspective*, London: Palgrave Macmillan 2016, pp. 135-152. Summarising the Christian church’s contribution, Patricia Madigan points out: “The policies, and especially the praxis, of churches in Australia have made their own significant contributions to the immigration debate, just as Australia’s experience as a country of migrants has been transformational for the Christian churches. At first, churches mainly reflected the concerns of the wider national debate, but as time passed, they began to find their own distinctive voice and, in most recent times, have developed a prophetic voice in Australian society”, p. 135.

displacement we have just mentioned which has brought Christianity to the four corners of the world, effectively making the Church an ‘institutional migrant’.⁵

In view of what he considers an essential and defining element in the reality of the Church, Phan argues that, besides being confessed (as it is in the Nicene Creed) as “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church”, a fifth mark of the true church should be added, namely that of ‘migrant’. He points, for example, to Vatican II’s recovery of the concept of the ‘Church as a pilgrim’ journeying towards the kingdom of God, especially in chapter 7 of *Lumen Gentium*⁶, which deals with the eschatological nature of this pilgrim church. He argues, however, that

⁵ Phan briefly outlines eight migrations or migratory movements that stamp Christianity as such an institutional migrant, ‘each of them presenting a distinct face of the church’. These migratory movements—most of them also easily recognisable as examples of forced displacement, include: 1) The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, which caused a major Jewish Diaspora and produced some of the first important leaders of the early church (Jewish-Christian migrants); 2) The suppression of Jewish revolts in 115-117 and 132-135 led to another massive migration from Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole, not only of Jews but also of thousands of Christians, many of whom, as ‘Middle Eastern migrants’, settled and formed thriving communities in five main destinations: Mesopotamia and the Roman Province of Syria with its three major cities (Antioch, Damascus and Edessa); Greece and Asia Minor; the Western Mediterranean (including Italy, France, Spain and North Africa); Egypt (particularly Alexandria), and Asia (especially India); 3) The transfer by Emperor Constantine of the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium and the subsequent establishment of the imperial court at Constantinople shifted the Christian centre of gravity, causing the emergence of a different type of Christianity (Orthodox Christianity), with its own liturgy, theology, monasticism, spirituality and organisation. The Islamic victory in the 8th century over the Byzantine Empire and the final fall of Constantinople in 1453 would lead to further displacement and division of the Orthodox Church, as would the Russian revolution of 1917 fragmenting the Russian church with the establishment of national Orthodox churches in Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. The face of the church in this series of migrations became that of Greek, Middle Eastern and Slavic peoples; 4) The migration of Northern European ‘barbarians’—Germanic tribes including the Vandals, Goths and Lombards (who invaded Southern and Eastern Europe, particularly Spain), and the Angles and Saxons (who spread to the British Islands) brought Christianity to these lands once these Germanic tribes were converted; 5) the ‘discovery’ of the New Worlds starting in the late 15th century, produced the movement of massive numbers of religious missionaries and secular Europeans to Latin America and Asia, leading to a new form of Christianity which reflected the cultures and religious traditions of the peoples they colonised; 6) Europe’s continuous search for resources and wealth led to massive migrations from about mid-17th century right up to World War I. Most African and Asian countries were colonised once again producing new forms of Christianity in these areas; traveling in the other direction, the transatlantic slave trade that brought twelve million Africans to the Americas—the largest forced migration in history—transformed the Christianity of that continent; 7) more than any other armed conflict, World War II caused global large-scale European displacement—a movement that continues until today. Post 1945 and particularly since the mid-1980s large scale migrations have been spawned by decolonisation and by economically advanced or oil-rich Asian countries importing work forces from poorer Asian countries; in Africa, the wars of anticolonial liberation, dictatorial regimes, interregional and tribal conflicts and conflict over the exploitation of mineral riches, have produced an inexhaustible stream of forcibly displaced peoples; 8) finally, the more recent Middle East wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Syria have also caused massive displacement and in many cases, reduced to rubble what remained of Middle Eastern Christianity. Cf. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, p. 850-853. See also PETER C., PHAN, “Christianity as an Institutional Migrant: Historical, Theological, and Ethical Perspectives” in Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Christianities in Migration: The Global Perspective*, London: Palgrave Macmillan 2016, pp. 10-22.

⁶⁶ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen gentium*, promulgated by his holiness, Pope Paul VI on 21 November 1964, AAS 57 (1965) 5-71; http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html. Accessed 10 June 2018.

this eschatological nature is treated in the text exclusively in theological terms, dealing with the church's final fulfilment in heaven and the so-called 'last things' (death, judgment, purgatory, hell, heaven) without referring to the fact that historically migration and displacement have been:

[...] a major catalyst for the realisation of Christianity's eschatological dimension, so that migration is not simply an accident of history in the development of Christianity but constitutes the church's very nature as an eschatological community—that migrantness is an essential mark of the true church.⁷

Phan's assertion is quite suggestive and though not everyone would agree with his assessment ('migrantness' is certainly not a 'mark' with which all Catholics would identify), it challenges us to consider the significance of forcibly displaced peoples and their possible contribution to our church, our theology and our spirituality. In effect, it would seem to imply that we actually *need* forcibly displaced people in order to become the church we are meant to be, and that by not taking into account their experiences but rather ignoring them and even stifling their voices, we are missing a constitutive element of what it means to be a true global, universal, 'catholic' church, and a world religion that "has always been but is becoming more than ever diverse, multiple, transnational, transcultural, and polycentric in all aspects of its life".⁸ And the more so today, when voluntary and especially forced displacement have reached such dramatic proportions. As we search now for the distinctive characteristics of a theology of displacement, we explore further this premise that without taking into account the contribution of forcibly displaced peoples, the church might not fulfil its true nature and mission.

As we do so, it is important to note at the outset that our objective is not to develop a comprehensive theology of displacement and migration. Others have already begun and

⁷ PHAN, "Deus Migrator—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration", p. 849. And of course, this 'migrantness' was also an essential mark of the Jewish people, whose first confession of faith as the 'chosen ones' of God was 'my father was a wandering Aramean': "The vocation of Abraham is a symbol of what each one of us is called to do, moving out from the 'known' toward the promised land, 'unknown' and yet desirable to the point of motivating our journey of faith. That vocation is not to be considered an accident or just a moment in the life of our 'father in faith', but rather a permanent condition, affecting his life and that of all his descendants". Cf. GIOVANNI ZEVOLA, "What are you talking about to each other as you walk along?" (Lk 24:17): Migration in the Bible and Our Journey of Faith" in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, p. 94. And in the first chapter of 1 Peter, Christians will likewise be reminded that though they are 'exiles', they are at the same time 'elected' by God (1Pet 1:1-2).

⁸ PHAN, "Deus Migrator—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration", p. 853.

continue to pursue this endeavour.⁹ Our purpose here is to touch upon those theological aspects that might help us understand how to best address the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement—in particular those who have resettled in Australia. On the practical side, it is hoped that this brief exploration will give us additional language to use in the resources and Ignatian exercises we hope to offer them, as well as suggest content for those resources. On the conceptual side, our hope is that it will allow us to interpret and decode further how forced displacement has affected people's ability to experience God's Spirit in their lives or, in some cases, their inability to do so. Despite its recent emergence, the growing field of a theology of displacement has already identified three main areas of reflection: (1) displacement as an image or metaphor of the 'existential exodus' we experience as human beings on our way back to God; (2) displacement as a 'sacred space' where we encounter the 'Other/other', and (3) displacement as a constant challenge to our understanding of the 'catholicity' or universally encompassing nature of Christ's church.¹⁰ We will address these areas in our ensuing discussion. First, however, we look at the reasons the phenomenon of migration/displacement has become one of the most pressing issues for our Church today.

⁹ Although a theology of displacement and migration "cannot claim a long tradition, the presentation of the 'status quaestionis' should consider some substantial 'roots' planted in the very beginnings of the Church [...] some seeds of reflection can be discovered in the patristic tradition. In the 16th century, the Council of Trent underlined the 'Christological reason' for Christian hospitality (25th Session, *De Reformatione*, VIII). The final document of the Third Council of Baltimore (1884) bound the duty of hospitality to the explicit commandment in the Holy Scripture: 'Love the foreigner, for you were a foreigner yourself' (Deuteronomy 10:19) and 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me!' (Mt 25:35). The need for a systematised theological reflection was clearly felt after the Second World War, when the Catholic Church was challenged by massive migration [...] In 1952, Pius XII issued an apostolic constitution, titled *Exsul Familia* (The Family in Exile) [...] propos[ing] the exile to Egypt of Mary, Joseph and Jesus as the 'icon' of the contemporary massive forced migration due to different forms of tyranny [...] The instruction *De Pastoralis Migratorum Cura*, issued by the Congregation of Bishops in 1968, introduced the human rights of migrants as a relevant topic for theological reflection. In 1978, the circular letter of the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People to the Episcopal Conferences, *Chiesa e mobilità* added more topics to the reflection: 'Exodus' as a path of liberation, the ideal of universal fraternity, the commitment for a balanced world development, the research for the common good and the duty of hospitality". Cf. FABIO BAGGIO, "Introduction" in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, pp. ix-x. The last decades of the 20th century and the first few years of the 21st have witnessed a growing number of theological publications on specific displacement-related topics in different parts of the world. Finally, to confirm the status of forced displacement and human mobility as a theological subject, in particular in the field of Pastoral Theology, the instruction promulgated by the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People in 2004, *Erga Migrante Caritas Christi*, "stressed the importance of a sound theological reflection that would lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon and the challenges it posed to the Catholic Church", p. xi.

¹⁰ Cf. BAGGIO, "Introduction", p. xii.

1.1.2. *Responding to the ‘signs of the times’: a multi-faceted approach*

[...] the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit [...] To carry out such task, the church has always had the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel (GS 3-4).¹¹

In writing this Pastoral Constitution, the Vatican Council sought “to explain to everyone how it conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today” (GS 2). A world whose ‘joys and hopes, grief and anguish’, especially of those who are ‘poor and afflicted’, “are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ” as well (GS 1). More recently, movingly and pithily, the Latin American theologian Ignacio Ellacuría identified the ‘crucified peoples’ of our world—the poor and victimised majorities—as *the* sign of the times in the light of the Gospel:

Among so many signs always being given, some identified and others hardly perceptible, there is in every age one that is primary, in whose light we should discern and interpret the rest. This perennial sign is the historically crucified people, who link their permanence to the ever distinct form of their crucifixion. This crucified people represents the historical continuation of the servant of Yahweh, who is forever being stripped of his human features by the sin of the world, who is forever being despoiled of everything by the powerful of this world, who is forever being robbed of life, especially of life.¹²

¹¹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes*, promulgated by his holiness, Pope Paul VI on 7 December 1965; AAS 58 (1966) 1025-1120; http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-etspes_en.html. Accessed 5 May 2018.

¹² As quoted in GIOACCHINO CAMPESE, “¿Cuántos Más? The Crucified Peoples at the U.S.-Mexico Border” in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008, p. 283, footnote 46. The title of Ellacuría’s article is “Discernir el ‘Signo’ de los Tiempos”; found in Ellacuría’s *Escritos Teológicos* 2:133-135. The English translation is from KEVIN F. BURKE, “The Crucified People as ‘Light for the Nations’: A Reflection on Ignacio Ellacuría” in Teresa Okure, Jon Sobrino and Felix Wilfred, eds., *Rethinking Martyrdom*, London: SCM Press 2003, p. 124. Writing on a methodological proposal for theologising contextually (a topic we will address further shortly), Campese affirms: “A theology that has decided to confront honestly and responsibly historical reality cannot avoid the massive and shocking reality of the poor and victimized majorities of our planet. It is in this context that Ellacuría forges the image of the crucified peoples [...] Ellacuría draws an engaging parallel between the figure of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh—found in Second Isaiah—Jesus, and the crucified peoples, which underlines the following commonalities: they are chosen by God; they suffer for historical reasons; they are rejected and considered sinners even if they are not responsible for what they are suffering; they accept carrying the sins of those who are really responsible for their suffering; and finally, precisely because of their willingness to carry the burden of sin, they become the ‘light of the nations’ (Isaiah 42:6)”, p. 283. For further analysis on this image of the forcibly displaced as ‘crucified peoples’, see DANIEL GROODY, “Jesus and the Undocumented Immigrant: A Spiritual Geography of a Crucified People” in *Theological Studies* 70 (2009) 298-316.

Arguably, no other group today embodies these “joys and hopes, grief and anguish” more radically than forcibly displaced peoples¹³—the crucified people of the 21st century.¹⁴ Yet, the factors behind and around the tragic reality of forced displacement are so complex, so multi-faceted, that no theology of displacement seeking to truly ‘read the signs of our times’ can be developed without considering possible contributions from such secular disciplines as anthropology, demography, sociology and psychology, geography, history, environmental studies and politics, as well as state, migration and human rights’ law. These disciplines, together with those considered properly ‘theological’ such as systematic and practical theology, church history, ecclesiology, biblical study and eschatology, are the necessary ‘tools’ theologians need in order to lay down the foundations of a theology of displacement.¹⁵

However, because the factors are indeed so complex, we also need to recognise that this endeavour can only be a work in progress. As Groody points out, part of this complexity resides in the fact that unrestricted movement and flows of people give rise to conflict and controversy for they affect not only those in movement but also their receiving communities, thus making migration and forced displacement “increasingly volatile and contentious political issues”:

The clash of cultures, identities, and religions, along with debates over economics, resources, and rights, has polarised public discourse, making the migration debate convoluted and confused. Not only does rhetoric about immigration conflate, if not manipulate, multiple

¹³ “We can therefore consider the present-day phenomenon of migration a significant ‘sign of the times’, a challenge to be discovered and utilised in our work to renew humanity and proclaim the gospel of peace [...] The hard test of migration and deportation is therefore fundamental to the story of the chosen people in view of the salvation of all peoples”. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE, *Erga Migrante Caritas Christi*, (14 May 2004), 14. Cf. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/rc_pc_migrants_doc_20040514_erga-migrantes-caritas-christi_en.html. Accessed 6 June 2018. Already in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI, in his *Message for the 2006 World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, had referred to the growing phenomenon of human mobility as a “sign of the times”.

¹⁴ For both Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, these crucified people are a historical reality, flesh and blood persons who live each day in the shadow of death. The term does not refer to a single person but to a collective body—the poor, insignificant, oppressed and forcibly displaced majorities of the world. They exist because there are crucifiers in this world, in other words, the victimisation and crucifixion of these peoples is the product of a minority that exercises power as dominion. Cf. CAMPESE, “¿Cuántos Más? The Crucified Peoples at the U.S.-Mexico Border”, p. 284.

¹⁵ As the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus reminds us: “We cannot be excused from making the most rigorous possible political and social analysis of our situation. This will require the utilization of the various sciences, sacred and profane, and of the various disciplines, speculative and practical, and all of this demands intense and specialized studies. Nothing should excuse us, either, from undertaking a searching discernment into our situation from the pastoral and apostolic point of view. From analysis and discernment will come committed action; from the experience of action will come insight into how to proceed further”, D. 4, 44. Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Documents of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, 1974-75*, AR 16 (1974) 265-445; St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1977.

issues like national security and human insecurity, sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law, but the disciplines governing the debate have not given us the concepts necessary to move beyond unfruitful, polemical discourse and reach the core issues.¹⁶

And while the secular disciplines struggle to arrive at a concerted approach on how to grapple with these multiple issues, in most instances theology as a whole—and its diverse fields in particular—is rarely referred to in major works or included in centres of migration and displacement studies. While some research has been done on displacement and religion from a sociological perspective, there has not been much on the topic from a theological perspective, highlighting the fact that theology possesses very little official recognition in the overall discourse about migration and displacement.¹⁷

The reaction to the announcement by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in September 2015 that Germany would welcome Syrian refugees is a good example of this complexity, volatility and greater need of theological reflection in the forced displacement debate. Politically, her stance called for a strong and striking decision: either refugees were welcomed in Europe or they were not—there was no middle ground. Sociologically, it highlighted Europe's concurrent identity crisis—a crisis in which religion plays a significant but little-understood role, interpreted and used—as it often is—as a marker to distinguish European from non-European identity. For many grappling with Chancellor Merkel's declaration, Europe was construed as 'Christian', while non-Europe was construed as 'non-Christian' and identified with Islam. Ulrich Schmiedel has argued that this assumption has been revived in the present discourse because Christianity is seen as—and some would say, has proven to be—a religion that is capable of coexisting with European secularism. And yet, the role of Christianity in the forced displacement debate is far from straightforward. As Schmiedel points out:

On all sides of the political spectrum, Christianity is referenced as a motivation to save the identity of Europe—either by advocating or by attacking humanitarian policies of open borders. These are the two opposite extremes of Christianity's response to the refugee crisis: the one with a theology that stresses the necessity of belonging (where defending Christian

¹⁶ DANIEL GROODY, "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees" in Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books 2009, p. 1. Groody further reminds us that "while often perceived as a problem in itself, forced migration is more often a symptom of deeper issues related to human crises ranging from poverty, persecution, and underdevelopment, to widespread socio-political and economic changes such as nation-building and industrial expansion, and to global events like wars and natural disasters", p. 20, footnote 5.

¹⁷ GROODY, "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees", p. 2.

culture is more important than faith) and the other with a theology that stresses the necessity of believing (where faith is more important than defending Christian culture).¹⁸

These theologies of belonging and believing are two polar extremes: the latter characterises a view of Christianity that says we should welcome the ‘other’; the former, one that says we should not. Of course, most Christian responses are located along a continuum between the two and display elements of both, sometimes in contradictory and sometimes in complementary ways. The Catholic Church in Europe is a good example: Pope Francis has repeatedly called for Europeans to take responsibility for the forcibly displaced, but not all clergy (let alone the faithful) in the Catholic Church agree with their Pope.

To give a further idea of the complexity of what is involved here, it is enough to consider some of the pressing questions—many of which remain largely unanswered or only partially so—facing victims of force displacement today. In the area of anthropology alone, we could ask for example: What new norms and values have emerged (both in countries ‘producing’ forcibly displaced peoples as well as those receiving them) as a result of the massive movements of people in the last seventy or so years (social and cultural anthropology)? What new forms of language have been developed to address this new large ‘community’ of people and what effect has such language had in how they are perceived, welcomed or rejected (linguistic anthropology)? What effects will constant displacement and/or prolonged captivity and restriction of movement (as in refugee camps or detention centres) have on the forcibly displaced and their descendants (physical anthropology)? We take now a short ‘detour’ to

¹⁸ Cf. ULRICH SCHMIEDEL, *Religion is Key to Europe’s Identity Crisis over Refugees*, published 9 March 2018. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2018/03/09/religion-is-key-to-europes-identity-crisis-over-refugees>. Accessed 11 June 2018. Schmiedel is a lecturer in systematic theology at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany. His recent research, including the coedited compilation, ULRICH SCHMIEDEL and GRAEME SMITH, eds., *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, New York: Palgrave 2018, concentrates on the intersections of religion and migration. Other recent and influential studies on the relationship between displacement and religious belief, mainly from a European and North American perspective include: JAMES FREDERICKS and TRACY SAYUKI TIEMEIER, eds., *Interreligious Friendship after Nostra Aetate*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; HELEN ROSE EBAUGH and JANET SALTZMAN CHAFETZ, eds., *Religion across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks*, New York: Altamira 2002; HELEN ROSE EBAUGH and JANET SALTZMAN CHAFETZ, eds., *Religion and the New Immigrants*, New York: Altamira 2000; KARIN I. LEONARD, et al., eds., *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America*, New York: Altamira 2006; KYVONNE YASBECK HADDAD, JANE I. SMITH and JOHN L. ESPOSITO, eds., *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish and Muslim Experiences in the United States*, New York: Altamira 2003; MICHAEL W. FOLEY and DEAN E. HOGE, *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007; HUSSAM S. TIMANI, ALLEN G. JORGENSEN and ALEXANDER Y. HWANG, eds., *Strangers in This World: Multireligious Reflections on Immigration*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2015; M. DANIEL CARROLL R. and LEOPOLDO A. SANCHEZ M., eds., *Immigrant Neighbours among Us: Immigration across Theological Traditions*, Eugene, OR: Pickwick 2015.

offer an example in the area of linguistic anthropology to highlight why the multi-faceted approach endorsed here is so necessary to develop a theology of displacement that reads appropriately the ‘signs of the times’.

1.1.3. *Practical excursus: Queuing up or not queuing up—that is the question*

The effects of some of these new developments have begun to be felt already; clearly, others will require a great deal of time before they can be determined. In linguistic terms, for example, we can consider the term ‘queue jumper’ which has been strongly associated (certainly in Australia) to asylum seekers who have come to this country using their own resources, arriving by boat (often without identity papers) or by plane, holding any type of visa they are able to secure so as to be allowed to enter the country. This in contrast to already recognised refugees (based on the definition of the Refugee Convention and its Protocol), who have spent several months or years in refugee camps or urban settings, waiting for resettlement in third countries—different from their countries of birth and the countries where those refugee camps or urban settlements are located.

While it could be argued that these refugees are in a ‘queue’ (or rather several queues spread around the four corners of the world), patiently waiting their turn to be resettled, it can be retorted that such a concept of ‘being in a queue’ is not very helpful at all, since it oversimplifies a terribly complex issue, as we have already stated above. As one asylum seeker once put it: “When you are being persecuted, tortured and are running like mad for your life, you don’t wait in a queue; you do whatever it takes to save your life, and the life of your children and loved ones”.

Further, this concept of ‘queues’ lends itself to imagining people waiting in orderly fashion, with numbered tickets in hand, assured that sooner or later their ‘number’ will be called. Of course, the reality is far from this. Who gets placed first in the queue is determined by factors that in many cases have nothing to do with waiting periods, or who got ‘there’ first. The ‘numbering’ is determined by current conflicts and wars (Syrians, for example, have ‘jumped’ to the front of the ‘queue’ in the past four years)) as well as political and economic interests. It is also influenced—as much as receiving countries would like to deny it—by the colour of a person’s skin, her religion, his cultural background, her health, his age, and a

number of other objective and subjective factors. And in practical terms, for those seeking asylum, those ‘queues’—be it in refugee camps, detention centres or urban settings—could be hundreds or thousands of kilometres from their homes, and thus realistically unreachable. In those cases, it is easier and more expedient (and in some cases safer) for them to get on a plane or a boat and try their luck on their own. And that is what many of them do.

In Australia, the rhetoric behind the use of this term ‘queue jumper’ has been highly politicised. It has been abused by certain political parties and groups to strengthen their political platforms, claiming that if we do not protect our borders we will be invaded by thousands of people, many of whom will come claiming to be asylum seekers but who in the end will not be recognised as ‘authentic’ refugees.¹⁹ Such rhetoric taps into deep-seated historical fears shared by many Australians (including recent migrants!) that the arrival of uncontrolled masses of people will affect the way of life enjoyed in this country. Australia is certainly the ‘lucky country’ in that the quality of life here is considered today one of the highest in the world. The most extreme political groups claim that some of those posing as asylum seekers might even be terrorists who will take advantage of the offer of asylum to inflict great harm and suffering on Australians, once they are allowed to stay here.

The use of this phrase—‘queue jumper’—to refer to asylum seekers who arrive in the country seeking protection outside the ‘official’ channels of Australia’s government-run humanitarian program (they are referred by the government as ‘unauthorised arrivals’), has had a great impact on how a great proportion of the Australian population (including many who would consider themselves faith-filled persons) perceives them—usually as people who are trying to buck the system, using illegal measures to enter Australia, and often as criminals who have no respect for the law.²⁰ It is no wonder then that, based on such misguided perceptions, a large percentage of the population—including many Catholics—is wary of offering a warm welcome to asylum seekers into the country.

¹⁹ Even the use of this seemingly simple term ‘authentic refugee’ is fraught with many complications. As we will see, the Refugee Convention, delimiting the scope of the term ‘refugee’, was written as a result of the experiences and circumstances of a particular group of people after a specific world-wide conflict. In the last few decades, the need to expand the definition of a ‘refugee’ has been acknowledged repeatedly, but no consensus has been reached yet and, as result, legal instruments to protect the needs of many forcibly displaced are still lagging behind.

²⁰ Church teaching, of course, rejects this dehumanising language, asserting that human beings cannot be ‘illegal’. Other more nuanced terms such as ‘undocumented’, ‘unauthorised’ or ‘irregular’ are much more preferred.

This highly politicised ‘queue jumper’ term exemplifies once again the complexity behind the issues of forced displacement. Here we have seen how language, politics and faith converge over the use of a single phrase, and highlights the necessity of using a multi-disciplinary approach—secular as well as theological—to address these issues. The limited scope of this work does not allow us to consider in detail many of the innumerable factors involved, but they will certainly inform our discussion as we explore the question that pertains to us at this stage of our work, namely, what are some of the essential elements that should be included in a theology of displacement. The ‘lenses’ of these secular disciplines ‘superimposed’ on the ‘lens’ of faith will inform the understanding of forcibly displaced people’s reality as we seek an appropriate response to their plight. And the lens of faith, in turn, will have a bearing on how we utilise these secular disciplines and how we put into practice the recommendations they offer.

At this point, it is helpful to recall the question we posited in the Introduction: why is this important? Why do we need a theology of displacement and migration? What could it contribute to the lives of the forcibly displaced and to the life of the Church, as the people of God? At this stage we might simply respond that we hope that a theology of displacement would help us as Church to consider and revisit our Christian doctrines and beliefs viewing them through a new lens, open to the possibility that through this new perspective God, and God’s desire for humanity, can be revealed in ways we have not hitherto perceived or considered. And in regards to our forcibly displaced brothers and sisters, we would hope that it would help, at the very least, to answer the question: “What does it mean for a forcibly displaced person to have survived the experience of forced displacement in terms of how that person relates to him or herself, to those around him or her, and to God, as each of them understands, believes in and seeks God”? There is an undeniable relationship between *what* one believes and *how* one lives. And also how one lives—or is forced to live—will undoubtedly affect one’s beliefs about oneself, about others and about God.

1.1.4. Methodological contributions and systematisation

Coming up with a methodology—a set or system of methods, principles, procedures and rules—for regulating this emerging discipline termed ‘displacement or migration theology’ is

certainly a work in progress. The final outcome should seek to offer the best theoretical underpinning not only for understanding the theological elements involved, but also for developing the ‘best practices’ to be used. As expected, expounding such methodology does not happen in a vacuum but builds instead on other fields, particularly philosophical (as for example in the concept of intercultural rationality) and other theological approaches—narrative, liberation and other contextual theologies, for instance.²¹ As with many other fields of study, it is commonly accepted today that the methodological systematisation of a theology of displacement involves four steps, starting from experience, and moving on through analysis, theological hermeneutics and practice.²²

1.1.4.1. First step: the realities of forced displacement

We begin, as we must, with the realities of forced displacement, which include both the experiences of the forcibly displaced as well as the reality—contextual and cultural—of the receiving communities: *The First Prelude is to survey the history of the matter I am to contemplate. Here it is how the three Divine Persons gazed on the whole surface or circuit of the world, full of people [...] [SpEx 102].*²³ As expected, the elements involved in these realities will vary throughout the three different stages of displacement, starting with (1) the initial movement from one’s country of origin or home. This displacement, though caused by a great variety of factors will always include, in one degree or another: violence, trauma, persecution, and the leaving behind of one’s loved ones, one’s material possessions, land and culture, language, and sense of identity. For asylum seekers wanting to be recognised as refugees, the (2) second stage begins with the initial arrival to a safer place, followed by a

²¹ On these topics, see for example, JORGE E. CASTILLO GUERRA, “Hacia una teología de la migración: Perspectivas y propuestas” in *Chakana* 2, n. 3 (2004) 27-51; PETER C. PHAN, “The Experience of Migration in the United States as Source of Intercultural Theology” in Gioacchino Campese and P. Ciallella, eds., *Migration, Religious Experience and Globalization*, New York: Centre for Migration Studies 2003, pp. 143-169; JON SOBRINO, “La teología y el ‘principio de la liberación’” in *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología* 12 (1995) 115-140; STANLEY HAUERWAS and L. GREGORY JONES, eds., *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1989; and HANS W. FREI, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1974.

²² See for example, JORGE E. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology” in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008, pp. 265ff; and PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, pp. 855-857. As we will see in the next section of this chapter, Jon Sobrino reworks these steps in developing his ‘compassionate theology’, within the context of a theology whose primary purpose is to deal with ‘historical reality’.

²³ As Haight reminds us: “Theology seeks not only meaning but also truth; it is therefore a critical discipline that has its eye on reality [...]” and is informed by the real life experiences (as one of its sources) of humanity. Cf. ROGER HAIGHT, “Theology and Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises” in *the Way Supplement* 70 (1991) 97.

processing period to determine legal status (including granting of refugee status) and concludes with one of three ‘permanent solutions’ carried out in (3) the third stage—return to country of origin, settlement in country of first arrival or resettlement in a third country.

Usually the second stage takes place in one country (for most people a country neighbouring their homeland), though for some it can involve constant movement through several borders. For the internally displaced, this second stage takes place within their country of origin, but in an area either within proximity to or quite distant from their original homes. The length of time for this second stage can vary from a few months to several years. As expected, the duration of this period will affect the way existing communities continue to receive, welcome and respect new arrivals.

As mentioned, for some, the third stage might involve the return to one’s original homeland. But for many, it will entail settlement (or resettlement) in a third country, though some might actually live out the rest of their lives in the in-between country of the second stage (as for example, in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border). This third stage of settlement/resettlement can be further divided into three phases: (i) the initial arrival into the new territory (usually a ‘honeymoon’ period, characterised by hopes and expectations in the new home), followed by (ii) another transition period, an ‘*inter space*’, which is the “place of struggle between the native culture and the resident culture” at different levels—socio-political, economic, cultural, religious, linguistic—all of which will be factors in creating a new identity.²⁴ The last phase (iii) of this third stage (3) will involve the creation and concretisation of this new identity over a considerable period of time. Depending on the age of the new arrivals and a series of other factors—extent of cultural differences, complexity of new language, previous formal education, opportunities for further study and work, among others—this last stage could require many years.

In terms of a theology of displacement, then, all data and theoretical analysis will only be relevant as long as it is not separated from the stories and the lives of displaced peoples as they navigate through these different phases—from the men and women and children whose dignity, in many cases, has been obviated and whose rights have been ignored in so many

²⁴ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology”, p. 247.

different ways. *The First Point. I will see the various persons [...] First, those on the face of the earth, so diverse in dress and behaviour: some white and others black, some I peace and others at war, some weeping and others laughing [...]* [SpEx 106].²⁵ Ideally (and all efforts should be directed to this), it should be these forced displaced peoples themselves who are doing the theologising, guided and aided by those who have acquired the necessary tools and experience to do so. Unfortunately, most victims of forced displacement have not had up to now the opportunity or possibility to engage in this endeavour, at least in a formal way.²⁶ But without the sharing of their stories, their narratives, their fears and hopes, griefs and anguish, their daily struggles and liminal experiences of trying to ‘navigate’ and dwell betwixt-and-between two or more worlds, any theologising will only be theoretical.

As mentioned before, we cannot dismiss either the reality of the ‘existing’ inhabitants of those worlds into which forcibly displaced people arrive. The receiving communities in the second and third stages mentioned above will often be deeply affected by the new arrivals, in particular if they come in large numbers. Clearly, the current political climate at any particular time, as well as historical relationships between nations or ethnic groups, and the globalised perception about certain peoples—the general population of many Western countries today, for instance, will look with suspicion and even derision at people coming from Middle Eastern, Muslim nations, trying to migrate to their countries²⁷—will also be determining factors in the welcome or lack thereof offered by the resident community.²⁸

²⁵ IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, *Spiritual Exercises*. Translation and Commentary by George E. Ganss SJ, St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1992; unless specified otherwise, all citations from the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* are based on this translation.

²⁶ There is great need to create safe and welcoming forums for such theologising to take place, and to do so in such a way that forcibly displaced people are ‘met where they are’. For example, the experiences of forced displacement for some of them might mean that they had only very limited formal education. ‘Big words’ such as ‘theology’ or ‘theological reflection’, ‘hermeneutics’, ‘eschatology’ might scare them away (many university-educated people from developed countries could be puzzled by some of these terms as well). Yet, simply asking someone to answer the question ‘How do you experience God?’ is already asking her to ‘theologise’. And it is the collective answers of questions such as this, by those who are truly at the centre of this theology (the forcibly displaced), that will help us develop a worthwhile theology of displacement.

²⁷ On the perception of Islam in general as problematic, see for example, MARTIN DOLEZAL, MARC HELBLING and SWEN HUTTER, “Debates over Islam in Austria, Germany and Switzerland: Between Ethnic Citizenship, State-Church Relations and Right-Wing Populism” in *West European Politics* 33 n. 2 (2010) 171-190; MARC HELBLING, ed., *Islamophobia in the West: Measuring and Explaining Individual Attitudes*, London: Routledge 2012, and ZAN STRABAC and OLA LISTHAUG, “Anti-Muslim Prejudice in Europe: A Multilevel Analysis of Survey Data from 30 Countries” in *Social Science Research* 37 (2007) 268-286.

²⁸ The aforementioned book, *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, edited by ULRICH SCHMIEDEL and GRAEME SMITH, for example explores, from sociological, philosophical and theological perspectives, the role of religion in this so-called ‘refugee crisis of Europe’ through the contribution of renowned scholars across Europe. Thus, REGINA POLAK, in “Turning a Curse into a Blessing? Theological Contributions to a Resource-Orientated

In general terms, if the socio-cultural and religious background between the two groups is quite similar, assimilation or adaptation will be quicker and fairly smooth. This was the case in Australia, for example, for some of the European groups who arrived here after the Second World War or those from Latin America who came in the 1980s. For other groups, the process of adaptation will be longer and mired in certain instances by specific prejudices against them—in Australia, for example, we can cite peoples from Asian background who came to our country in the middle of the 19th century and in the following one hundred years.²⁹ And for others, from more distinctively different cultures and backgrounds, such adaptation might take a generation or two. Here we can think of our brothers and sisters arriving to Australia from African countries (Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and more recently Sudan and South Sudan) in the past twenty or so years and in particular of those coming from Middle Eastern countries in the last decade. Thus, in terms of the ‘spectrum of reception’ this can range from a warm welcome, general acceptance, and appreciation of the riches and contribution of the new groups (i.e. their cultural expression, food, traditions) to rejection, contempt, derision and even hatred, expressed in exclusion and intolerance or more extremes manifestations of ethnocentrism, racism and xenophobia.

Narrative on Migration in Europe”, pp. 243-263, argues that the arrival of two million people since autumn 2015 in Europe has been considered a “disaster of apocalyptic dimensions” and a “catastrophe”, not for the refugees, but for the receiving countries: “The way some leading politicians, journalists, and even bishops of the Catholic Church talk about migration suggests that Europe is currently experiencing a curse: an unforeseeable destruction”, p. 244; and JOHANNA GUSTAFSSON LUNDBERG in “Christianity in a Post-Christian Context: Immigration, Church Identity, and the Role of Religion in Public Debates”, pp. 123-143, suggests that a growing debate on religion especially Christianity, and its place in the public sphere, illustrates an awakening or reawakening of the consciousness of one’s own Christian heritage due to increased migration and the perception that it might be under threat: “On July 26, 2016, the Swedish Christian website, *Kristen Opinion*, published the following statement: ‘Christians of the world are under attack [...] May we stand united in the battle against evil and barbarianism. In the name of Jesus, Amen’, p. 123.

²⁹ Negative perceptions towards such Asian peoples continued for decades in Australia, well into the 1970s (the famous fears regarding invasion by the ‘yellow peril’), though in the last decades they have subsided. Many of the ‘boat people’ who arrived to Australia from Vietnam and Cambodia in the late 1970s and 1980s constitute an interesting example. The Vietnamese in particular received, in broad terms, a very warm welcome from the general population. Part of this probably had to do with their well-documented plight, but also the fact that they were escaping persecution by a Communist regime. The fact that many of these Vietnamese were Catholics, undoubtedly contributed to their success in resettlement, as they could be more easily welcomed into the Australian churches. Having said this, the original arrivals tended to stay close together in specific Vietnamese communities, where they retained their language and cultural elements and food. It has been the second generation which has ‘integrated’ more into the still prevailing Western European Australian culture.

1.1.4.2. Second step: socio-political and intercultural analysis³⁰

The second step in developing a theology of migration/displacement requires a socio-political and intercultural analysis of the causes and consequences of such displacement with the help of the secular disciplines mentioned above. A few of the specific areas that this analysis might include are: statistics on numbers of forcibly displaced peoples and their countries of provenance and destination; trends in relation to geographical routes followed and other push-factors (wars, internal conflicts, environmental degradation, religious persecution, etc.); psychological studies on the effects of mandatory detention; modification of existing international treaties or creation of new ones, and even a more comprehensive and encompassing definition of what ‘refugee status’ entails.

In broader terms, such analysis should reveal the factors and dynamics that generate conflict, poverty, violence and marginality in countries ‘producing’ forcibly displaced people, as well as the factors and dynamics that influence the type of reception these new arrivals are given in their countries of resettlement. In situations where injustices are generated and unfair asymmetries develop between and within competing cultures, this socio-political and intercultural analysis will be fundamental to achieve an accurate reading of the contextual reality of the forcibly displaced and to identify problems “about polarisations of cultural identities or about the absence of *inter* spaces to achieve social and cultural communion”.³¹ Unfortunately, our limited scope does not allow us to explore in detail these ‘factors and

³⁰ Brazal points out that the term ‘interculturality’ was first used in the 1970’s in the South and North Mediterranean of Europe in relation to those countries’ experience of strong immigration. While the understanding of what interculturality means continues to develop, among its main elements are: “the creation of spaces for interactions among diverse cultures, the call for mutual listening and dialogue and a consequent positive transformation in the view of the other. Interculturality has also oftentimes been employed in theology or religious studies to describe the dialogue between different religions [...] The term *inter* implies mutuality and reciprocity in the relationship with the other”, Cf. AGNES M. BRAZAL and EMMANUEL S. DE GUZMAN, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, Place of Publication not identified: Borderless Press 2015, p. 48.

³¹ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology”, p. 260. Unfortunately, the present migration/displacement climate and policies seem to discourage and even hinder these efforts to promote the said cultural interaction: “After a season in which assimilation was displaced and various nations formally or informally adopted a multicultural program (Australia, Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands), scholars are noticing a return to assimilation in various countries, and multiculturalism seems now to be on the retreat. Although globalisation facilitates the simultaneous belonging of migrants to various cultural communities, in fact the negotiation of culture and identity remains an ongoing struggle. Increased communication possibilities might even damage the potentials for intercultural dialogue, as migrants could settle for the ghetto of virtual space”. Cf. GRAZIANO BATTISTELLA, “Migration and Human Dignity: From Policies of Exclusion to Policies Based on Human Rights” in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008, p. 179.

dynamics' that lead to mass forced displacements. We consider here only briefly some of those aspects that might influence the reception of survivors of forced displacement into their resettlement communities, and in particular into the religious and spiritual lives of those communities, as they are more pertinent to our goal of providing resources to nurture the spiritual lives of ex-refugees.

As mentioned earlier, forcibly displaced peoples (and all those who fall within the designation of 'migration') live a hybrid existence: they live in an 'in-between', an *inter*-situation, *between* the reality of their places of origin and the reality of the society where they arrive.³² As it continues to gather data with the help of secular disciplines, a theology of displacement will seek to address, in a Christian way, this *inter* (cultural, social, religious) space, so as to tackle the needs of new arrivals and profit from the 'treasures' they bring with them. In Australia, for example, while it is true that the number of arrivals is relatively low on a yearly basis, such numbers continue to increase and add up. Unfortunately, the reality is that not so much has been done until now—despite the 'secular' data obtained—to incorporate the richness of faith, tradition, liturgy and spirituality offered by the new arrivals. In the context of a theology of displacement:

[...] the intercultural perspective means a call to its constant decentralising and openness to conceive criteria with the purpose of understanding the truths of faith from diverse traditions, experiences of faith, and realities, both in the country of origin of its interlocutors and the new place where the migrants [and other forcibly displaced peoples] struggle to build a new home.³³

Thus, it is about paying attention and respect to both "the otherness and affinity" between persons, groups and communities that have been brought together into a shared context. Yet, this requires going beyond the usual multicultural approach which, while recognising diversities as well as cultural and religious behaviours and orientations, often overlooks that

³² Displaced peoples live "what has been commonly called a *hybrid existence*, an unstable identity where conflicting traditions—linguistic, social, religious and ideological—are negotiated in order to deal with the joys and pains of living [...] in order to make a life. Hybrids reside in the 'in-between words', which can also be characterised as living in the 'borders'". Cf. VICTORINO A. CUETO, "'Out of place': Exilic Existence in a HyperGlobalised World" in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, p. 5. On the positive side, while living in this in betwixt-and-between situation can cause tension and conflict to those facing this challenge, it can also be a font of creativity: "Being in betwixt-and-between is, paradoxically, also being both this and that, both insiders and outsiders". So hybrids are in "a standpoint that may be able to discern more the strengths, as well as, the weaknesses of both cultures. They are better equipped to contribute to a rethinking of both cultural traditions, the native and the foreign and thus pave the way to the emergence of a new, enriched culture". Cf. BRAZAL and DE GUZMAN, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, p. 63.

³³ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, "A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology", p. 254.

“which promotes or avoids mutual interaction among different members of a multicultural society”, in other words, the *relational* aspect between these groups. The required movement then is from peaceful and harmonious coexistence to an existence marked by dialogue-communion in those contexts where forced displacement—and migration in general—is “generating societies of cultural, religious, or ethnic diversity or plurality”, so that seemingly competitive identities are explained, informed and sensitised to the other and a truly in-communion Church can begin to develop.³⁴ For this to happen, a greater understanding of the tensions, limitations, sources of encounter and clashes between the resident ‘natives’ and the new arrivals is needed. It is, partly as a response to this new intercultural rationality, that the fields of interculturalisation and intercontextualisation have developed:

By interculturalisation we understand the process where the mutual acknowledgement and a reciprocal interchange of cultural orientations, values, traditions, or behaviours take place. And by intercontextualisation we understand the process [...] that points to a mutual openness not only in the narrative or formal scope, but also in the practical and material scope [...] From the intercontextualisation exercise, each person or group proposes from its own context some ideas for the construction of situations of *convivencia*.³⁵

This *convivencia*, or coexistence in dialogue-communion, requires the deconstruction of the monocultural, ethnocentric and monological projects of the dominant rationality which belongs, in almost every case, to the resident populations. Yet, in its search for relationship, this intercultural philosophy requires the mutual conversion of the members of *both* groups “in order to interact and search for the creation of a common shared space” where true communion takes place.³⁶ As an example of this process, we look briefly now at our experience in Australia, significant particularly because major advancements towards *convivencia* have occurred in a relatively short period of time—about seventy-years.

1.1.4.2.1. An experiential excursus: Graced by migration in Australia

In secular Australia, the multicultural approach has sought the peaceful and harmonious coexistence mentioned earlier with varied degrees of success, with the Australian church welcoming new arrivals and encouraging the inclusion and acceptance of new members into the existing faith communities, while at the same time also supporting the development of ‘migrant’ faith communities, in particular in the last decades of the 20th century. After the Second World War, Australia found itself a major participant in the enterprise to provide

³⁴ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology”, p. 255.

³⁵ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology”, pp. 256-257.

³⁶ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology”, p. 257.

refuge to the thousands of displaced people victims of that conflict. Since then, several approaches have been put forth to address the issues of displacement and migration:

From this time the Australian government's thinking regarding immigration evolved through some broad social policy frameworks that have been described as (a) the assimilation policies of the post-war period from 1947; (b) the integration phase from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s; and (c) multiculturalism, along with associated access and equity strategies to the present day. The response of the churches, in particular the Catholic Church, which received the largest and most varied number of immigrants, is discussed within this framework. A post-multicultural phase has also been proposed that incorporates concepts such as "social cohesion".³⁷

This 'post-multicultural phase' or approach is what we have been referring to in our previous discussion on interculturality. But as history has shown, the process of getting to this point has not been easy. Back in 1950, the Catholic Bishops of Australia issued their first Pastoral Letter on the issue of migration and forced displacement. In that document, the bishops call on Australian Catholics to offer hospitality to migrants and refugees, adopting the assimilationist approach to immigration prevalent at the time:

By genuine friendliness, helpful advice and warm endeavours toward happy social intermingling shall they make more easy and happy the assimilation of our New Settlers into a way of life that is Catholic and Australian. Be tolerant of their customs that differ from our own. In time they will learn our ways and adopt them. Help them to understand our customs [...] introduce them to the Parish Priest as soon as possible.³⁸

³⁷ MADIGAN, 'Graced by Migration: An Australian Perspective', p. 137. See also AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, "Chapter One: The Policy Context" in *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants 2003*. In regards to the *assimilation* approach, the report states that: "The 'New Australians' of the assimilation period entered an Australia that was overwhelmingly Anglo-Australian in ethnicity and culture, and in which the immigration intake was shaped by the White Australia Policy. Under assimilation policy, new arrivals were expected to learn English, adopt existing cultural norms and become indistinguishable from the Australian-born population as rapidly as possible", p. 24. In regards to the *integration* approach, the report states: "Integration policy recognised that the adjustments required for a successful immigration program should include adjustments by the host society. There was increasing recognition that settlement was a more difficult process than had been originally envisaged, that it was unrealistic to expect migrants to dissociate themselves from their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that successful settlement of new arrivals required greater responsiveness to their needs", pp. 27-28. And concerning *multiculturalism*: "The principles for multiculturalism, now referred to as 'Australian multiculturalism', were redefined in the 1999 New Agenda for Multicultural Australia to include: *civic duty*, which obliges all Australians to support the structures and principles of Australian society which guarantee us our freedom and equality and enable diversity in our society to flourish; *cultural respect*, which, subject to the law, gives all Australians the right to express their own culture and beliefs and obliges them to accept the right of others to do the same; *social equity*, which entitles all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity so that they are able to contribute to the social, political and economic life of Australia, free from discrimination [...] and *productive diversity*, which maximises for all Australians the significant cultural, social and economic dividends arising from the diversity of our population", p. 31.

³⁸ ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF AUSTRALIA, "On Immigration (1950)" in Fabio Baggio and Maurizio Pettenà, eds., *Caring for Migrants: A Collection of Church Documents on the Pastoral Care of Migrants*, Strathfield: St Pauls Publications 2009, p. 965.

Moving beyond such paternalistic approach, by the late 1960s the Catholic Bishops, along with the broader Australian population, were also supporting the move from an assimilationist to an integrationist model towards new arrivals, recognising not only their rights and needs but also their potential contribution to the nation. In their Catholic Bishops' Immigration Sunday Statement of 1967, referring to the departure of those people who, having come to Australia had failed to 'assimilate' and hence had made the decision to move on, the bishops stated: "Australia cannot afford the loss of people. Neither can Australia allow cause to be given for settlers to be dissatisfied and unhappy in the country to which they bring a precious contribution in their persons and their skills and into which, in consequence, they have a right of gradual and harmonious integration".³⁹ By the late 1970s, in conjunction with the 1978 Vatican document *The Church and People on the Move*, the bishops were speaking of promoting cultural pluralism within the Church and developing a truly multicultural Australian society.⁴⁰ This stance was particularly prophetic at the time, as Australia began to overturn its then 150-year-old policy of encouraging immigration as a means to population growth, economic development and security.

As the new millennium dawned, the Australian Catholic Church produced forward looking documents such as the 1991 Issues Paper from the Australian Social Justice Council, *I Am a Stranger: Will You Welcome Me?*; the Statement *On the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees* of 2001, and the landmark statement *Graced by Migration: Implementing a National Vision in Pastoral Care for a Multicultural Australian Church*, in 2007, which embodies the Australian Church's most mature and comprehensive understanding of the reality, challenges, needs, contribution and gifts of forcibly displaced peoples and migrants as new settlers into our country.⁴¹ Unfortunately, despite these visionary documents and

³⁹ FEDERAL CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE, "A Brief Statement—Immigration Sunday 1967" in Fabbio Baggio and Maurizio Pettenà, eds., *Caring for Migrants: A Collection of Church Documents on the Pastoral Care of Migrants*, Strathfield: St Pauls Publications 2009, p. 976.

⁴⁰ Cf. HALLY, *Migrants and the Australian Church*, p. 28.

⁴¹ These initiatives occurred within the wider international framework of Vatican documents such as *Exsul Familia* (1952), the documents of the Vatican II, *Pastoralis migratorum* (1969), the aforementioned *The Church and People on the Move* (1978), and *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* (The love of Christ towards Migrants), 2004. Cf. MADIGAN, *Graced by Migration*, p. 145. As an example of this approach, the AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, in their document "On the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees" (2000), speaks of the Catholic Church in Australia having been strengthened by migrants in many ways, enabling it to know itself better and enriching it through their "symbols, practices and devotions which add visible substance to the Church's catholicity", since they "enrich the Church's openness to, and inclusiveness of, all peoples and cultures" [paragraph 2967]. Cf. <http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/about/church-documents-on-migration/the->

statements, the movement from theory to practice in the said post-multicultural age, has been slow and has not had a “perfect record”, though it is only right to acknowledge that some important gains have been achieved,⁴² especially as compared to the situation in other Western nations.⁴³

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1995, taking the place of two previous Conference bodies—the Federal Catholic Immigration Committee (founded in 1949), and the Australian Catholic Refugee Office—and assuming many of their functions. The work of the Office can best be described by the mandate which it has received from the Australian Bishops⁴⁴:

- To advise and serve the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference at both a national and international level on migrant and refugee issues, including the development of Church policy.
- To act as an official Church voice as approved by the Bishops' Conference on issues relating to migrants and refugees.
- To provide a mechanism for effective consultation and coordination among Catholic bodies and other groups involved in migrant and refugee activities.
- To make appropriate representation to Government and other bodies on matters relating to migrants and refugees.

While the work of the ACMRO has been very important and relevant, in particular in the last few years in terms of advocating for a more humane and dignified treatment of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and for policy changes to achieve this end, it has not been so successful in fostering the more recent intercultural approach. So much more still needs to be

[teaching-of-the-church-in-australia/389-statement-on-the-pastoral-care-of-migrants-and-refugees/file](http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/about/about-us). Accessed 30 May 2018.

⁴² “Bringing immigrant peoples together, forging them into cohesive parish communities with their mainstream fellow parishioners, healing ancient and recent wounds of war and division and speaking out on behalf of the immigrant, the refugee and the asylum seeker have all been part of the work of the Church. It has not been a perfect record, but it is a record of which the Church can be proud”. Cf. AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, *Graced by Migration: Implementing a National Vision in Pastoral Care for a Multicultural Australian Church*, May 2007, p. 18.

⁴³ In contrast to multicultural, multi-religious Australia, in the more culturally and religiously homogeneous Western European countries, the language of adaptation, assimilation and particularly ‘integration’ is still very much in use today, where the *integration* of forcibly displaced peoples and migrants is regarded as an immense economic, political, social, cultural and religious challenge for upcoming decades. See for example, STURLA J. STALSETT, “Fearing the Faith of Others? Government, Religion and Integration in Norway” in U. Schmiedel and G. Smith, eds., *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, pp. 105-120. We should point out, however, that the meaning of terms such as ‘assimilation’ or ‘integration’ varies considerably depending on the field of study as well as in their use from one author to another, so that the terms could have a variety of interpretations. For an in-depth study on integration from an European perspective (Spain), see for example, ALBERTO ARES, *La rueca migratoria: tejiendo historias y experiencias de integración*, Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas 2017.

⁴⁴ Cf. The Role of the ACMRO, <http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/about/about-us>. Accessed 30 May 2018.

done to foster the creation of those common and shared faith-based spaces mentioned before. In Australia, there are currently migrant chaplains serving over twenty communities, as varied as Polish, Sudanese, Tongan, Indonesian, Syrian, Korean, Filipino, Tamil and Vietnamese, each with a potential contribution to the Australian church. As former Archbishop Philip Wilson put it:

The very notion and experience of God in the pews will somehow reflect differences. It is the challenge of what one sees and experiences in common worship that is of the utmost importance, in this context, for both people and their priests. I am alluding to the different spiritualities that migrant people carry within them, some born out of religious persecution (Vietnamese, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Polish, Croats, some countries in Latin America, Sudan), other spiritualities from evading wars, genocide and ethnic cleansing (Lebanese, Rwandan, Sudanese, El Salvadorians). All of these stories of struggles and hard-earned experiences would form a great story, if recounted in catechetical books for use in Catholic schools. In the relatively short history of Catholicism in Australia, is not the opportunity for amalgamation of different religious and cultural heritages (including the very substantial Irish contribution) over the span of two centuries, been a clear sign from Above? Is the integration of migrants into a local church a purely humanitarian undertaking or is it also a sign that God is a pilgrim God and intends to walk with all pilgrims?⁴⁵

Of course, for this “amalgamation of different religious and cultural heritages” to take place, the different groups have to be brought together somehow. While every year we celebrate a Migrant and Refugee Sunday often preceded by a Statement issued by the ACMRO (usually on an issue of relevance such as mandatory detention or the right to migrate), much more effort could be placed into bringing together diverse communities of faith—including the larger Anglo-Celtic community—to address common issues concerning those who have migrated or resettled in Australia or even to celebrate together. In some parishes, different ethnic groups share a common space, but rarely come together to celebrate common liturgies.

In fairness to the ACMRO and to parish priests and other church leaders, instances of this collaboration and greater communion do take place now and again and would probably occur more often if the communities themselves asked for or even demanded them. In some parishes, the larger percentage of the faithful is made up of people who belong to groups of migrants or ex-refugees (fewer and fewer parishioners of European descent are found sitting in the pews or if they are, they are mostly elderly), but the liturgies (unless they are

⁴⁵ PHILIP WILSON, “Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees in Australia: An On-going Challenge”. Address delivered at the Conference for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees, October 2009. Cf. <http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/about/church-documents-on-migration/the-teaching-of-the-church-in-australia/69-pastoral-care-of-migrants-and-refugees-in-australia/file>. Accessed 30 May 2018.

celebrated in ethnic-specific services), continue to be European-centred in content and form. It could be argued that there is nothing wrong with this, but what is ‘wrong’ in effect is the wasted opportunity to enrich communities of faith with the traditions, devotions, spirituality and rituals, shared prayer and leadership of brothers and sisters from around the world. In fact, what is even ‘more wrong’ is that as they feel pressure to adapt to the customs and spiritual and religious practices in their new homes, forcibly displaced people can let go of their own rich traditions. As they participate in the life of Western Christian Churches, migrants and other forcibly displaced people are...

[...] unavoidably shaped by their worship styles, spiritual practices and organisational structures, which are often governed by result-orientated efficiency, streamlined bureaucracy, financial solvency, and legal protection. These concerns are, of course, legitimate and even necessary to assure a smooth functioning of church activities in a complex society. However, the dark side of all this is that Christian ‘communities’ tend to operate like corporations and not like the ‘family of God’.⁴⁶

The diminishing numbers of this ‘family of God’ attending Catholic—and other Christian traditions’—parish services and activities has been cause of concern in the last few years, not only in Australia but in many developed nations of the Western world. Some see it as a direct consequence of the increasing secularisation of these countries and blame it on external factors related to such secularisation—materialism, individualism, antagonism towards organised religion. Others, however, believe that the church has had a big role in this diminishment by not keeping up with the radical social and cultural changes that have taken place in the last decades. But rather than berating themselves for ‘having failed’, they see this declining process as a wake-up call and an opportunity to review current practices and learn from past mistakes. They believe that if people are not coming to our parishes it is because we are not offering them what they need. Neither are we making effective use of some of the resources we have at hand, including recent arrivals and others whose worship, liturgical practices and experiences can enrich our own:

We know that discipleship is vulnerable without the ongoing living support from other Catholic disciples. Significantly, a parish sustains personal faith not only through a shared life, mutual witness and spiritual support but by opening individual lives to more possibilities for the life of faith than we might otherwise recognise. In the same way as a number of European settlers arrived in Australia assuming they were, if you like, dragging land and civilization behind them, we can be tempted to consider our increasing diversity as Australian parishes as something which is being added ‘from the outside’ rather than a

⁴⁶ Cf. PETER PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory” in Agnes M. Brazal and María Teresa Dávila, eds., *Living with(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migrations of Peoples*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2016, p. 180.

theological fact and principle of our life from its earliest beginnings at Pentecost. The challenge and companionship of fellow Christians, diverse in cultural expression of faith and piety, liberates and enables a faith richer and deeper than what we could gain on our own.⁴⁷

In this paradigm, new arrivals are indeed seen as a great resource, even as a gift, rather than a problem to be solved. And forcibly displaced peoples, because of their very specific circumstances can offer a particular gift of their own. The author further proposes that the best way to use this great resource is through “small groups of ecclesial support and differentiated unity [...] The introduction of small groups within our parishes and an accompanying culture of invitation, one that communicates in effect that ‘we are incomplete without you’, will enable people to be brought into and nurtured by supportive network of disciples”.⁴⁸ In terms of displaced peoples, one of the reasons this suggestion is quite appealing is that in many cases, when they arrive in small numbers into an existing faith-based community, they feel lost and isolated and find it difficult to engage with members of that larger community. Thus, ‘small groups of ecclesial support’ can be that welcoming face and hand that greets them by name.

This brief excursus into the present reality of the Australian church highlights once again the complexity involved in trying to incorporate into receiving communities the richness of faith, tradition, liturgy and spirituality offered by the new arrivals; but also the need for a willingness and openness by these same communities to understand those ‘truths of faith’ and spiritual experiences of survivors of forced displacement so as to best care for them and provide for their ongoing spiritual needs.

1.1.4.3. Third step: theological interpretation and systematisation

The narratives of forcibly displaced peoples together with the analysis of data obtained from the sociocultural and scientific sciences provide the material for the third step in developing a theology of displacement, namely, a theological interpretation or hermeneutics of such data and narratives in the light of the sources of the Christian faith—Scriptures, tradition and Church teachings. Clearly, this is not a new undertaking, for such interpretation seeking an

⁴⁷ DANIEL ANG, “The evangelising parish in the Australian Church: Foundations of an evangelising parish” in *The Pastoral Review* 13, n. 2, (2017) 33, based on Daniel Ang’s talk, “The Evangelising Parish in the Australian Church: Strategies for Prophetic Witness” at the PROCLAIM 2016 Conference of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay in Sydney, on behalf of the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference, held in September 2016.

⁴⁸ ANG, “The evangelising parish in the Australian Church: Foundations of an evangelising parish”, p. 33.

understanding of what forced displacement means in terms of our relationship with God has been engaged in for thousands of years—one only needs to look at Post-exilic Hebrew literature. What is ‘new’ is both the data content and also the advances that have been made in recent times in the sociocultural and scientific sciences. Thus, the sets of problems that these hermeneutics is asked to address have been prevalent in human life from time immemorial and have consistently and repeatedly been brought into consideration with increasing resources and tools.

As mentioned, this theological interpretation requires mutual evaluation between the sciences and the Christian sources, in what might be defined as true interdisciplinary dialogue. In other words, it calls us first to interpret and evaluate the Christian teachings on displacement in the light of what the sciences can teach us about their varied contexts. We are invited to use our reason to test our faith, to verify its source, to examine its doctrines and to justify its moral principles. Thus we might ask, for example, what enlightenment can these sciences give us regarding what the Hebrew and New Testament Scriptures teach concerning our duties towards the stranger (in terms, for instance, of this practice’s philosophical, anthropological, social and political background and consequences); or our sense of being a pilgrim church (socially and culturally, what have been the rights and responsibilities of pilgrims in different times and cultures?), or the repercussions of a Church that has grown universally as a result of constant displacement (consequences, for instance, of its evangelisation practices throughout the last two millennia on the native populations it has found, and the reaction and perception, in turn, of those native populations towards the Church)? And secondly, it calls us to interpret and evaluate the scientific data in the light of the Scriptures and the Church’s Tradition and teachings—in other words, to give them a properly theological meaning. And to do so in a way that is relevant and meaningful for secular societies, using language, concepts and values that invite dialogue rather than create division and isolation. The hope is that the end process will bring great illumination to both partners in this hermeneutical dialogue, and if needed—and openness and humility allow it—mutual correction.

A third element or task required to complete this theological systematisation is the continuous and open dialogue between this emerging theology of displacement and other theological fields. We will explore the implications of this mutual communication in more detail in the

next section but, in general terms, it calls for this emerging theology of displacement to establish links with (1) the main relevant sources of theological discourse: biblical and doctrinal sources (Bible, Tradition and the Magisterium); (2) the theological traditions of forcibly displaced people's places of origin and of the societies where they arrive, and (3) the theologies as well as popular traditions and experiences of other migration/displaced communities. This theological systematisation will then bring forth, it is hoped, new ways of understanding God, christologies, ecclesiologies, spiritualities, missiologies, and liturgies where the challenges, responses and expressions that come from the faith of forcibly displaced peoples and other migrants are imbedded.⁴⁹

We must, however, acknowledge that while this all sounds good at the theoretical level, it will lead to very little unless it translates into practical and concrete action (our fourth step). Unfortunately, the dominant rationality of the resident ('receptive') population can, in many cases, erect powerful barriers to prevent this. As Wilson points out:

Vatican documents remind us all that, when discussing or planning the pastoral care of migrants and refugees, we should allow adequate time for reflection and concerted action on the words: *widen the space of your tent* (Isaiah 54.2) [...] The case of the Australian Catholic community could be summed up, I believe, in re-phrasing a popular statement: "Yes, we can, but..." As with many other local churches, Catholic communities throughout Australia have taken a rather pragmatic stance, which appeared to them as quite justifiable conduct, e.g. 'You are welcome to Australia, *but* we will avoid implementing the Holy See's clear directives, contained in the document *Exsul Familia* (1952), followed later by *Pastoralis Migratorum Cura* [...] We will also welcome and at times actively recruit migrant chaplains, as we began to do in the 1950s and onwards, *but* we will rather reluctantly, and with long delays, concede to the granting of the necessary canonical faculties, as mandated by the Holy See [...]. We will accept migrant children in Catholic institutions (schools, orphanages, kindergartens...) and we will treat sick and frail migrants in Catholic hospitals and institutions for the elderly, *but* in relation to their specific cultural and religious needs, the prevailing attitude should be: the quicker they adjust to existing patterns, the better for everybody.⁵⁰

Wilson's comments remind us that some of the obstructions to possible coexistence marked by dialogue-communion can be quite subtle and even hidden behind seemingly welcoming practices. He adds:

This circumspect way of providing accommodation, while perhaps not embracing the new guests in their cultural and religious identity, is not infrequent. When discussing the experience of the many migrant workers in Switzerland, a famous Swiss sociologist

⁴⁹ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, "A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology", p. 261.

⁵⁰ WILSON, "Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees in Australia: An On-going Challenge". Accessed 30 May 2018.

remarked: *We wanted strong hands and we got brains and hearts!* Back in 1971, among the advocates of a greater and more open acceptance of migrant spiritualities, a Canon Lawyer, H. M. O’Leary stated: We are not free from the merely-save-the-faith or merely give-spiritual-aid approaches or from looking at migration matters merely through the eyes of the inhabitants of a receiving country [Cf. ‘Legislation on Migrant Care’ in *Australasian Catholic Record* (April 1971), p. 129]. The same author invited the local Church to highlight more forcibly the salient points of the migrants’ cultural background (internal factors) and the degree of necessary interaction with the dominant local cultural group (external factors). According to the same author, a greater flexibility would have aligned the position of the Catholic Church in Australia with the re-evaluative processes observed in some of the major Vatican documents issued during the latter half of the 20th century. And, we may add, would have kept the Church’s thinking and policies in line with the prevailing mood existing in the country since the introduction of multicultural policies by the Whitlam government in the early 1970s.⁵¹

Unfortunately, in the past few years Australia has not been immune to the growing nationalistic tendency in many developed countries to close their doors further and tighter to new arrivals—seeing some of them as competitors in the constricting job market, as opportunistic intruders or even as threats to our way of life—and to inflict stringer demands on those who do make it into the country to ‘adjust to existing patterns’ as quickly as possible. To be fair, some of these concerns are well-founded: the more skilled labour around, the harder it might be to get one’s ‘dream job’; some people might see Australia as a land of opportunity from which they can profit but might not be very interested in becoming active members of the wider community, and yes, some people (even if their numbers are minimal) might present a threat to our quality of life. But the reality is that any of these ‘risks’ can be applied to any Australian-born citizen. Welcoming people from other cultures involves risk and can involve a cost; but it also delivers opportunity, benefit and richness. Aside from these pragmatic considerations, for Christians, as members of the one body of Christ and of the Church as the people of God, inviting others to be part of their communities is indeed a recognition of the truth that “God is a pilgrim God and intends to walk with all pilgrims”.

1.1.4.4. Fourth Step: praxis and the creation of a society of kin-ship-based inter-existence

The fourth step in developing a theology of displacement involves praxis. The implicit goal—though it should be made explicit as much as possible throughout the whole process—is to lead all Christians (and in fact, all peoples) to put their lot in with the displaced: to make an

⁵¹ WILSON, “Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees in Australia: An On-going Challenge”. Accessed 30 May 2018.

‘option for the displaced’, including those affected in any way by the politics and economics of migration, and to commit themselves as people of faith in attitudes, words and actions to uphold the dignity and rights of forcibly displaced people. In doing this, however, it must always be remembered that whatever is said and done has to be tried and tested, being always open to the possibility (again, exercising great humility) that words and actions might require rephrasing or redoing.

As it is well known, there is a dialectical tension between theory and practice that must accept and embrace a spiral movement requiring action, evaluation, modification, further praxis, and so on. The final, and continuous, goal is to develop a richer theology of displacement which in turn leads to more effective practice. And here, we must introduce again our constant reminder (together with the constraining caveat posed by the scope of our work) that because a *universal* theology of displacement—one that leads to true effective practice among the human community—cannot be limited to our Christian faith, the role and contribution of interreligious dialogue in this enterprise is essential. As we will soon explore further, the qualities and gifts of hospitality, solidarity, welcome and acceptance are all essential components in a spirituality and theology of displacement, and these cannot be limited to people of one particular religion/faith tradition or another.⁵²

One way to make an ‘option for the displaced’ is to record their contribution to communities, including their Catholic heritage, since documentation of anyone’s experience suggests some degree of esteem for them, turns hospitality into something real and allows for a mutual learning process. This writing down and building up of a track record of ‘salvation history’, of the living God as God reveals Godself in and through God’s pilgrim people, may translate into specific actions including:

[...] a more welcoming attitude by the Catholic Media to reporting events and stories [of migrants and forcibly displaced peoples] that are otherwise doomed to remain within the precincts of a particular community; a pastoral practice that is not swamped by the many things to be done, but that has enough time and resources to be regarded as important enough for the wider catholic community [...] intelligent and untiring leadership and supervision at the level of the national and diocesan offices to ensure the twin objectives of documentation and the possibility of retrieval of precious information.⁵³

⁵² Cf. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, pp. 856-857.

⁵³ WILSON, “Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees in Australia: An On-going Challenge”. Accessed 30 May 2018.

This exercise of documentation might not list as a priority ‘item’ in many peoples’ agendas, but the reality is that recorded history is remembered history, as much as recorded stories are remembered stories. A theology of displacement-in-praxis springs up from the shared stories, experiences, challenges and reflections of displaced peoples.

As we will see shortly, a theology of displacement in praxis must also see itself as a contextual theology of liberation from oppressions that specifically affect all types of displaced peoples, by defending their rights and supporting their struggle for justice and dignity, as well as humanising the societies of destination/arrival and raising awareness about the human condition of displaced peoples. A theology of displacement, for example, cannot but seek to denounce and address the different types of exploitation to which women and girls—who make up the bulk of humanity-in-movement in the world today—are submitted at home, work, in a domestic environment and in the horror of human trafficking.

A theology of displacement in praxis must also find and promote ways to foster human encounters and alternatives to any form of exclusion by the dominant, resident groups. Supporting open and mutual reflections on the appropriation of new elements of identity (for both receiving and arriving groups), valuing intercultural dialogue as a theological expression of diversities, and identifying and appreciating “cultural, ethnic, religious and spiritual affinities” will be essential in this project to “affirm the values that emerge from intercultural and interreligious encounters.”⁵⁴ As alluded to earlier, this ‘interreligious option for the displaced’ cannot be obviated. In particular, in a country such as Australia, where religious pluralism is championed, (but at the same time increasingly feared, even if tacitly, by a growing percentage of the dominant population) the advent of a common *inter-space* for encounter among the different faith traditions—and people with varying approaches to a common faith tradition—must become a priority. Once again, it is not simply about sustaining peaceful and harmonious co-existence, but about promoting dialogue that seeks communion and mutual learning and growth between receiving communities and survivors of forced displacement.

⁵⁴ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology”, pp. 264-265.

As mentioned earlier, the methodological systematisation of a theology of displacement will only be of value as long as it is not separated from the stories, experiences and concerns of forcibly displaced peoples. One such major concern is the issue of their mandatory detention in many countries around the world. We address this issue now and take it through the four methodological stages just outlined in order to concretise our theoretical presentation. Specifically, we will look here at the issue of mandatory detention for so-called unauthorised arrivals in Australia. In other words, for asylum seekers who come to this country fleeing persecution without the necessary formal documents (holding one of various types of approved visas) or having been accepted to enter Australia under the country's humanitarian resettlement program, and are thus described as 'illegal'.⁵⁵ The choice of this topic in our discussion is based on the belief that mandatory detention is not only a social justice issue: it is also a pastoral theological issue and a spiritual one as well, and is therefore very relevant to our study. This belief is supported by the assertions made in the previous sections: we cannot separate the theological/spiritual reality of forcibly displaced people from external factors that affect that reality, in particular in life-draining ways (contextualising theology). As we will shortly see, mandatory detention not only has long-lasting nefarious psychological effects on the forcibly displaced but also 'attacks' their spirit, drains them of hope and negates their human dignity as daughters and sons of God; it affects everyone's collective sense as people of God and demands a pastoral response that cannot be disregarded nor neglected.

1.1.5. Mandatory detention in Australia: 'killing the Spirit'

Much has been written about mandatory detention: the reasons for its existence, the adverse psychological effects it has on both detainees and those who guard them, its legal considerations (including their use being in breach of international treaties and human rights standards), and the inhumanity of such policy. In Australia, mandatory detention of 'irregular arrivals' has been championed in the past fifteen or so years by the current and previous governments as well as other major political parties both as an instrument of deterrence—"if asylum seekers know that they will be detained indefinitely while their asylum claims are being processed, sometimes for years, then they will think about it very carefully before trying to get into our country illegally", and as a way of 'protecting our borders' from

⁵⁵ However, as mentioned earlier, this is not a term that in reality should be applied to them: everyone has a legal right to apply for asylum, even if in the end such asylum is not granted.

potentially dangerous individuals who might be trying to harm our way of life—“we need to make sure to have security, health and other check procedures in place to safeguard our country”.⁵⁶

While asylum seeker and refugee advocates have constantly deplored the use of prolonged mandatory detention, the fact that it is still being used as part of the government’s migration and border protection policies suggests that a good percentage of the Australian population still supports it. The government’s strategy of placing detention centres in isolated areas (even those detention centres in the two major cities of Sydney and Melbourne are fairly well concealed) is likely to have contributed to such support. The adage ‘out of sight, out of mind’ has worked well here, and while most Australians would have heard of detention centres, very few would have come close to one and even fewer would have entered them. One thing is to *hear* about the negative effects of detention centres, while another is to *see* them first hand. Placing detention/asylum processing centres outside of the Australian continent (both on Christmas Island which is Australian territory but located a couple thousand kilometres west of the mainland as well as on other independent states, such as Nauru and Manus Island) has been part of this strategy of keeping asylum seekers out of sight.⁵⁷ However, as the tragic

⁵⁶ Most, if not all, humanitarian groups would agree that such checks are important. Health and psychological checks for example can help determine particular needs that ought to be addressed to look after the well-being of some asylum seekers (as long as they are not used against them in their asylum application process, i.e. returning a person because he or she suffers from a terminal illness or a recurring mental health condition). What these groups object to is the indefinite character of such detention. In most cases, such checks could and should be carried out in a period of three months or less. In very special cases, reliable information might suggest that for security reasons some people should be held in detention for a longer period of time, but this policy should be the exception and not the rule.

⁵⁷ Robert Manne, a leading Australian public intellectual and former professor of politics, provides a good historical and political summary of the rationale behind this ‘culture of deterrence’ and off-shore processing: “Between late August and October 2001, the Howard government responded to a small but steadily increasing number of asylum-seeker boats reaching Australian shores by instigating a new deterrent system – more radical than the existing system of indefinite mandatory detention in Australia. It came to be called the Pacific Solution. It was a complex administrative solution but in essence consisted of two principal parts. The first was offshore processing, on Nauru and Manus Island, of all asylum seekers who arrived by boat. The second was naval interception and return of the asylum seekers, where possible, to Indonesia, the country to which the vast majority of the asylum seekers had journeyed before purchasing a passage from a people smuggler. The two-pronged Pacific Solution almost immediately stemmed the flow of asylum-seeker boats setting out for Australia [...] Between 2002 and 2007 virtually no boats of asylum seekers set out for Australia from Indonesia or anywhere else. In 2008 the recently elected Rudd government abolished both prongs of the Pacific Solution. Gradually, as a probably inevitable consequence, the asylum-seeker boats returned, before too long in far greater and ever accelerating numbers than before the introduction of the Pacific Solution in the latter half of 2001. Between 2009 and mid 2013, 50,000 asylum seekers reached Christmas Island on approximately 800 boats. More than one thousand drowned. There is no government in the Western world for which a situation of this kind would not have represented a problem [...] At first, as the number of asylum-seeker boats increased, the Gillard government re-introduced the Howard policy of offshore processing for a small proportion of the

conditions reigning in the centres in Nauru and Manus Island received greater publicity from the beginning of 2017, the call to close these centres gained greater momentum, giving rise to heated debate which culminated in their closure on October 2017. Sadly, the Australian government still refuses to allow these refugees to set foot in Australia and over 1500 of them (as of September 2018) are still anxiously waiting for resettlement.

The ‘culture’ of deterrence and off-shore processing has in fact been extremely effective in stymieing the arrival of boats to Australia with basically no boats arriving in the last three years. But of course, the question looms large as to whether in upholding this strategy to ‘stop the boats’, Australia is disregarding its moral and humanitarian obligations. The answer is arguably ‘yes’, but that raises a far more difficult question to respond to, ‘if so, what other alternatives are there?’ The short answer at this stage is that there is no clear consensus as to a solution. This is yet another reminder of the complexity of the issues in the field of forced displacement. And even though unquestionably the lives, protection and care of the forcibly displaced should be paramount in the discussion, the fears, anxieties and doubts of the receiving communities cannot be ignored, even if some of these might be exaggerated or unfounded. As we turn now to analyse the consequences of mandatory detention (using the four methodological steps alluded to earlier) we begin the discussion with a reflection by

asylum seekers arriving by boat. This had no effect; the numbers of boat arrivals continued to increase. On his return to office, in mid-2013, Kevin Rudd transformed the situation by agreeing to send not some but all asylum seekers who arrived by boat to Nauru and Manus Island for offshore processing. Even more significantly [...] Rudd radicalised even further the system of the Pacific Solution by pledging that any asylum seeker who reached Australia after July 2013 before being sent to Nauru or Manus Island would never ever be settled in Australia [...] Rudd’s universalisation of offshore processing and his “never ever” pledge quite dramatically slowed the number of asylum-seeker boat arrivals. Once Tony Abbott was elected in September 2013, in addition to Rudd’s measures, Abbott re-introduced the Howard policy of naval interception and return to point of departure, which included now not only return to Indonesia but also, after perfunctory on-board refugee assessments, return to two countries from which the asylum seekers had fled directly – Sri Lanka in many cases and Vietnam in a few. The Australian system of anti-asylum seeker deterrence was now complete. By combining offshore processing, the promise of no settlement in Australia ever, and naval interception and return to point of departure (a policy the Labor Opposition under Bill Shorten first resisted and then embraced), between 2014 and 2017 no asylum-seeker boats reached Australia”. While Manne is not a supporter of these measures, he is clear about what would probably happen if the system was dismantled: “If Australia returned to the situation of 2008 – where offshore processing and turn-back were abandoned by the Rudd government – it is [...] certain [...] that within a relatively short time very large numbers of asylum-seeker boats would return to our shores; that considerable numbers of these asylum seekers would lose their lives at sea as they did between 2009 and 2013; and that the political party or parties who were regarded as responsible for this situation would be ceding significant ground both to the party or parties that opposed these measures...” ROBERT MANNE, “It is time to rethink asylum-seeker policy: An open letter to the supporters and opponents of the Nauru and Manus Island asylum seekers” in *The Monthly* (e-magazine), 28th February 2017. Cf. <https://www.themonthly.com.au/blog/robert-manne/2017/28/2017/1488253944/it-s-time-rethink-asylum-seeker-policy>. Accessed 6 June 2018.

Robert Manne, cited earlier, reflecting on how detention practices used on Nauru and Manus Island has affected not only the detainees kept there, but also the Australian population. This reflection is likewise fitting because it also addresses an important aspect of the first methodological step in the systematisation of a theology of displacement, namely the contextual and cultural reality of the receiving community.

Not a day passes when, like many hundreds of thousands of Australians, maybe even more, I do not think about the unspeakable suffering our country is inflicting on 2500 innocent human beings, who have been marooned on Nauru and Manus Island for the past three or four years, or who are now living in Australia, because of their own serious ill-health or that of a member of their family, with the threat of return to Nauru or Manus Island casting a shadow over their lives [...]. The deportees to Nauru and Manus Island are not, strictly speaking, political prisoners. In both places they have the right to move around the islands – although many are fearful, having experienced racism or brutality.

Report after report has documented the grievous mental condition of very large numbers of the people Australia has sent to Nauru and Manus Island. Some might recover; many will not. The *Guardian* has published the scarifying case files of the inmates on Nauru. Hundreds have engaged in self-harm. Two people we have imprisoned on Nauru have set fire to themselves. One lost his life. A small number of the people we have sent to Nauru and Manus Island have died from conditions that could have been treated if they had been transported in time to Australia. One of the detainees on Manus Island was bashed to death by Papua New Guineans involved in guarding the detention centre [...].

Scores of reports and several carefully researched books have been published documenting the legal, psychological and ethical aspects of the actions successive Australian governments have taken regarding those we have transported to Nauru and Manus Island. Television documentaries and films have been produced. The most respected human rights bodies in the world—like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as our own Human Rights Commission—have published carefully documented reports concerning the legal, medical and ethical abuses that have occurred on Nauru and Manus Island over the past three or four years.⁵⁸

1.1.5.1. First step: The Place Where God Died

The negative physical and mental health effects of mandatory detention, especially over prolonged periods of time, in Australia and in other parts of the world, have been well documented both in adults⁵⁹ and in children⁶⁰. Following our earlier assertion (regarding this first methodological step) that any socio-political and/or cultural analysis of displacement-

⁵⁸ MANNE, “It is time to rethink asylum-seeker policy: An open letter to the supporters and opponents of the Nauru and Manus Island asylum seekers”. Cf. <https://www.themonthly.com.au/blog/robert-manne/2017/28/2017/1488253944/it-s-time-rethink-asylum-seeker-policy>. Accessed 6 June 2018.

⁵⁹ Including reports by the Australian Medical Association, cf. <https://ama.com.au/media/mandatory-detention-harmful-physical-and-mental-health-asylum-seekers>; the Medical Journal of Australia, cf. <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2013/199/11/mental-health-and-immigration-detention>, and other academics, cf. <http://theconversation.com/how-immigration-policy-harms-asylum-seekers-mental-health-8358>; accessed 30 May 2018.

⁶⁰ Report by the Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia) cf. <http://www.mapw.org.au/about-mapw/policies/-effect-detention-centres-health-children>. Accessed 30 May 2018.

associated factors cannot simply be based in abstract theories or statistics, but must be rooted in the stories of and by displaced peoples, we ‘listen’ now to one of these stories, entitled “The Place Where God died”, written in 2000.⁶¹ Despite its length, we present it here in almost its entirety as different sections of the account will be referred to in the various methodological steps. The narrative contains also of some the main elements of the three stages of displacement presented earlier and thus offers a good introduction to many of the elements involved in the forced displacement ‘experience’.

At Auschwitz, tell me, where was God? The answer – Where was Man? When Jostein Gaarder, author of “Sophie’s World”, wrote these words, he conveyed a very important message: that ‘God’, being the symbol of love, compassion and benevolence cannot be present where barbarism, persecution and injustice prevail. He saw ‘God’ as a spirit present only in humanity, manifested in acts of love and kindness. When Gaarder heard the stories of the detainees in the Auschwitz concentration camp of World War II, and the horrific cruelty they had been subjected to, he was convinced that, in such circumstances, any notion of ‘God’ is destroyed.

Gyzele Osmani is a refugee who tells a story of persecution and cruelty, of the unnecessary suffering of the innocent, of places where the qualities represented by ‘God’ cease to exist. Most particularly, Gyzele’s story reveals truths that many do not want to believe, truths about what happens to refugees in the ‘lucky country’⁶²; truths that will inevitably leave the reader asking themselves what has happened to humanity.

Fleeing from Persecution

In 1999, Serbian soldiers marched into East Kosovo and forced Kosovo Albanian villagers out of their homes at gunpoint. Gyzele Osmani, a then 29-year-old Kosovo Albanian mother of five, was at home when the soldiers arrived, telling her to vacate her house immediately. Terrified, she called her husband and children (aged 19 months to 6 years) together, and the family fled, leaving behind everything they owned. “There was fire and gunshots and shouting, there were screams and cries coming from everywhere [...] We ran and ran until it was left behind.”

The family walked for six hours before reaching the house of friends who lived in Macedonia. They stayed with these friends for two nights, after which they again walked for hours to catch a bus that would take them to a refugee camp. They spent over twelve hours waiting for the bus, during which time there was no food and nothing but water to give the children.

When they reached the camp, four of the five children had developed illnesses and Gyzele’s youngest daughter (one of her 19-month-old twins) was found to have a dislocated hip, thought to be a result of the long journey and the hours she had spent with her legs at unnatural angles while on her mother’s hip.

⁶¹ REFUGEE ACTION COMMITTEE, “The Place Where God Died—Gyzele’s story”, cf. <https://refugeeaction.org/information/refugee-stories/the-place-where-god-died-gyzeles-story>. Accessed 30 May 2018.

⁶² As mentioned earlier, Australia is often referred to as the ‘lucky country’.

A doctor examined the baby and told Gyzele that, unless she was operated upon, she would never walk properly. He then advised Gyzele to apply to be taken to either Australia, Canada or America. Gyzele applied for all three, desperate to find somewhere with adequate conditions for her children. Within several weeks, she was told she would receive temporary protection in Australia, something that filled her with overwhelming joy and relief. “I thought to myself, ‘Now my children will have a place that is safe with many opportunities for the future’. My husband and I were so happy. We thought, ‘Australian people are so kind’”.

On the 15th of July 1999, Gyzele and her family arrived by plane in Sydney, Australia. They stayed in Sydney for five days and then were taken to the Bandiana Safe Haven in Albury Wodonga. Here they met with support workers who made them feel safe and welcome and arranged for medical care for the children.

Gyzele’s daughter underwent three operations over ten months, however all were unsuccessful. She was booked in for a fourth operation when suddenly the news came that the government had decided it was time for the family to be deported.

“It was war in my country. They said that it was safe now in Kosovo because the United Nations were there and we could all go back. But we did not think it would be safe in East Kosovo. There were no United Nations there, not in our village. We had no place to go. If we went back we would be in a tent, we would have nothing. We were scared to go back”.

The government refused to listen, however, and the Osmanis were told that if they did not leave Australia they would be detained. Gyzele did not know what detention was, but did not think it could be worse than what her family would be forced to endure if they returned to East Kosovo.

“I thought: ‘The Australian people are kind. It is good here. Nothing can be as bad as in my country’. Also, staying here was the only chance my daughter had of being able to walk again”.

So the Osmani family stayed in Australia, despite the severe threats and fear tactics the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) officers used to try to convince them to leave.

“They told us that in detention everybody would hate us and try to hurt us. They said we would regret it if we did not leave. But we still think that maybe Immigration will change their mind and let us stay to live”.

Seven Months in Hell

Immediately after Gyzele and her family made it clear to immigration that they were too afraid to return to their country, they were arrested and taken to the Port Hedland Detention Centre in Western Australia. The sight that greeted them was beyond any Gyzele had comprehended.

“It was horrible. All desert [...]. No trees, no flowers. My children kept asking ‘Where are we? Where are the flowers?’ I could tell them nothing. They kept saying ‘We want to go. Please we go away from here’. They kept crying and crying. It was a very, very bad place”.

Gyzele and her family lived in a building with 200 other people. Conditions were terrible, with poor facilities and little space. As a result, disease was rife and within days Gyzele’s entire family fell ill. As the detention centre was run by Australian Correctional Management (ACM), a private company, everything was done at minimum cost. The meals were meagre portions of partially cooked rice, with occasional serves of basic fruits and vegetables. To

wash with, detainees were issued with bottles of chemicals labelled ‘shampoo’ which burned Gyzele’s children’s scalps, and caused their hair to become brittle and dry.

The ‘education’ program was held in a crowded room and taught by poorly paid, under-resourced teachers. It was also selective; only ‘good’ children who didn’t protest or cry, or ask for extra food when they were hungry, were allowed to be educated. There were times when Gyzele’s children were not allowed to receive education because there was not enough room or paper and pencils for them.

Within the detention centre there were 400 children and, of all the abhorrent things she witnessed, Gyzele found the most heartbreaking to be seeing them deprived of nutrition, medical care, education and, most significantly, their freedom. “How can they lock up children? How can they lock up any innocent people, but especially how can they lock up children?”

There were numerous stories of the suffering other detainees had endured whilst in detention, stories that Gyzele will never forget. One particular woman from Iraq had been detained for five years and seven months. During her first month she had given birth—and so her five-and-a-half-year old had grown up incarcerated, never having tasted freedom at all. Her other child, who was two years old when they arrived in Australia, could not remember anything but his time in detention. Gyzele said she would never forget those two children, who suffered from depression despite their young ages, and who seldom laughed or smiled. “The children there weren’t like children I’d seen before. Many of them had no hope. [...] Many wanted to die”.

“The ACM scared everybody. They gave threats to all the kind people, all our friends. There were some nice ACM, like one woman who hugged me once. She was in a lot of trouble, they said to her “You are not allowed to hug these people. You cannot talk to them unless they ask you questions or you are giving orders. You must refer to them only by number, not by name”.

The detainees were also frequently threatened; Gyzele recalls being told that if she asked for extra food, or talked to the media, or protested, then the government would ‘blacklist’ her and she would never live in Australia. Consequently, most detainees were too scared to speak out though some, having reached a point of utter desperation, tried to protest against their treatment.

After seven months in detention, Marion Le, a well-known human rights lawyer, came to the aid of the Osmani family and secured permanent residence in Australia for them. Such was the Osmanis’ gratitude that they decided to move to Canberra simply to be near Marion.

Epilogue

Since being released from detention, Gyzele has actively campaigned for refugee rights. She attends protest marches and supports action groups and, perhaps most importantly, continues to share her experiences. “It is only through revealing the truth” says Gyzele, “that anything will ever be changed”.

Gyzele’s children still suffer nightmares and have found adjusting to ‘normal’ life very difficult. “In Port Hedland the guards came into our rooms at night, waking everybody to see our identification tags. They would flash their torches and yell our numbers, as though we were dogs. Now the children wake up in the night screaming, thinking that the guards are by their beds”.

Gyzele has not lost faith in the Australian people, however, and frequently mentions the kindness of people like Marion Le. “I think the Australian people are mostly very kind. But I can never forgive the Australian Government. I cannot forgive the nightmares and the trauma and the suffering. Not the lies and the threats and the cruelty. No, never can I forgive that”.

While some of the most inhospitable and isolated detention centres have been closed down and conditions in those remaining Australian detention centres have improved considerably in the last eighteen years since this story first appeared—in large part thanks to people like Gyzele who spoke up about the inhumane treatment they experienced—detention centres still exist in Australia and other parts of the world, people are still detained for prolonged periods of time (even if in some cases, like Nauru and Manus Island they are allowed some freedom of movement), and children are still kept in detention-like centres, even if more sanitised terms are used to refer to them, such as ‘Residential Housing’, but where freedom of movement is still restricted and ‘residents’ are under 24-hour vigilance.

As mandatory detention is used during the processing period to determine refugee status, our example falls within the second stage of forced displacement. This stage is characterised more than anything by uncertainty regarding the impending outcome or resolution of legal status. Such uncertainty is accompanied by a great deal of anxiety and fear at the prospect of being denied protection and being returned to the place of violence and persecution from whence asylum seekers came. For those in indefinite mandatory detention, the anxiety, fear and trauma is exacerbated by the uncertainty of not knowing how long they will be kept in detention. And even though conditions might have improved, the greatest negative impact of mandatory detention still persists: to be deprived of one’s freedom, for indefinite periods of time, for having committed no crime at all other than to seek safe heaven. Furthermore, those ex-refugees now resettled in Australia who ‘survived’ mandatory detention, especially for an extended period of time, are still marred by the trauma of that horrifying experience and might have been affected in ways that will only reveal themselves in the future. Besides healing of their psyche through on-going psychological help, many would also need and welcome healing of their spirit. Gyzele’s words: “I cannot forgive the nightmares and the trauma and the suffering. Not the lies and the threats and the cruelty. No, never can I forgive that”, foreshadow a very important topic we will discuss in chapter four, namely, the importance of forgiveness for healing and wholeness, and the role that nurturing of our spiritual life can have in achieving this.

1.1.5.2. Second step: “The children there weren’t like children I’d seen before”

The second step in developing a theology of migration/displacement requires a socio-political and intercultural analysis of the causes and consequences of such displacement with the help of the secular disciplines mentioned earlier, namely, anthropology, demography, sociology and psychology, geography, history, environmental studies and politics, as well as state, migration and human rights’ law, among others. For the particular example of mandatory detention—an instrument ‘developed’ as a consequence of forced displacement—it would be useful to enlist the aid of several of these fields to understand why mandatory detention has come to be used at all, why some countries use it while others refuse to do so, and so on. We have mentioned already how in Australia it has been employed not only to ensure that asylum seekers’ security, medical and identity checks are carried out, but also as a political strategy for political gain. The cost and economics in general around mandatory detention are certainly also worth considering⁶³, as it is the way in which certain elements of mandatory detention contravene international conventions and treaties⁶⁴. Because of the constraints of our study, here we will limit ourselves to acknowledging some of these factors and focus on one particular issue, namely, the adverse health consequences (both physical and psychological) of mandatory detention, using Gyzele’s story to support the theoretical findings.

The Position Statement of the Australian Medical Association on the Health Care of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (2015), highlights many of the adverse health issues caused by indefinite mandatory detention. It states:

Australia’s detention facilities are harmful to both adult and children asylum seekers. Within detention facilities, people face uncertainty, fear for the future and hopelessness which causes their health to deteriorate. Reports and investigations provide evidence that immigration detention facilities have significant psychological morbidity which is directly associated with the amount of time spent detained; with the Australian Human Rights Commission report finding that 85% of parents and children reporting negative effects on

⁶³ According to a report by aid organisations Save the Children and Unicef, the Australian Federal Government spent almost \$10 billion on offshore processing, mandatory detention and other border protection policies in three years between 2013 and 2016. According to figures presented in the report, it would cost about \$400,000 a year to keep one person detained in either Nauru or Manus Island! Cf. ABC News, 13 September 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-13/offshore-detention-cost-australia-10-billion-in-three-years/7837388>. Accessed 30 May 2018.

⁶⁴ Cf. BEN DOHERTY, “Australia’s indefinite detention of refugees illegal, UN rules”, 18 May 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2016/may/18/australias-indefinite-detention-of-refugees-illegal-un-rules>. Accessed 30 May 2018.

their mental health while in detention. The literature consistently confirms high rates of depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), self-harming and suicidal thoughts in asylum seekers who have been detained.

Adverse psychological impacts are prominent in detainees as a result of the detention environment being punitive and dehumanising, characterised by deprivation and confinement. On average, asylum seekers spend 394 days in detention. The cumulative effect of long-term detention can cause a mental state dominated by hopelessness, the inability to concentrate or perform simple tasks, paranoid tendencies, psychotic symptoms and delusions.

Detention facilities create an unacceptable risk to children's health. 'The Forgotten Children' report provides exceptional direct evidence showing the negative effects of detention on children. Detention not only compounds mental health problems in children but also creates it, resulting in high rates of self-harm. There are commonly observed psychological disturbances among children in detention facilities, including separation anxiety, disruptive conduct, nocturnal enuresis, sleep disturbances, nightmares and night terrors, sleepwalking, and impaired cognitive development. Furthermore, detained children also experience significant developmental and language delays.⁶⁵

These findings, and in particular those related to children, describe in sad detail the experiences of Gyzele's children and the other children she refers to in her story. As mentioned earlier, they also remind us that the harmful effects of mandatory detention do not end when children and adults are finally released, but bouts of depression, anxiety and PTSS for long periods after release are not uncommon. Thus, one of the salient elements in the contextual reality of forcibly displaced people who have been subjected to this dehumanising policy is that they will be even less ready—as result of the adverse psychological effects caused by mandatory detention—to enter into, adapt to and contribute (from their personal and societal richness) to life and culture in their new homes. In other words, using the language of intercultural analysis presented earlier, mandatory detention generates yet another unfair asymmetry between new arrivals and members of the receiving community. Often this is not understood by the latter (who simply expected survivors of forced displacement “to go on with life”), and yet, it is extremely important to acknowledge this asymmetry, if there is to be any hope of achieving the aforementioned coexistence in dialogue-communion between the two groups.

⁶⁵ AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, “Health Care of Asylum Seekers and Refugees”, 23 December 2015. Cf. <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/health-care-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-2011-revised-2015>. Accessed 30 May 2018.

This also helps recognise the handicap with which former detainees would enter into this dialogue (a further asymmetry). Put in other terms, mandatory detention widens or extends the in-between situation, already so difficult to navigate, in which the forcibly displaced find themselves, by diminishing their cognitive and psychic capacity to traverse such space. And this applies to all areas of life—socio-economic, cultural, religious. Put yet in another way, it is practically impossible to enter into relationship, dialogue and mutual understanding with another, if one's relational capacity and trust has been impaired and he or she feels, even more so, a 'stranger in the world'—any world.⁶⁶ All this points to the necessity of providing resources and safe spaces to enable healing to take place in ex-detainees' lives before dialogue occurs. And for forcibly displaced people of faith this would necessarily require a specialised pastoral response incorporating, among other things, healing rituals, individual spiritual accompaniment and the support of a strong community of faith that revitalises and sustains the hope of survivors of mandatory detention.

1.1.5.3. Third step: “How can they lock up any innocent people, but especially how can they lock up children?”

There are things and actions that negate human dignity, freedom and respect of life. Somehow people intuitively know that they do. Locking up of people, and especially children, in detention centres is one of those things. This is the reason that Gyzele's question above is so poignant. In her worldview, in her understanding of life, in her perception of how human beings should relate to one another, this just could not be possible!

⁶⁶ Ronald Baard explores ways in which the experience of mental illness can be understood, metaphorically, as a special kind of migration or displacement (what he refers to as 'inner migration'). People forced to move geographically become strangers in the world; and it can be said that persons afflicted with mental illness also become 'strangers in the world', with all the associated feelings of disorientation, stress, and anxiety such experience brings. Forcibly displaced peoples experience both these geographical and inner displacements. There is no doubt that for most of them their mental health has been compromised by the violence and trauma experienced in their forced displacement journey. And when subjected to the additional trauma of indefinite mandatory detention, their conditions are exacerbated, possibly in such a way that they might never really feel at home in their adopted country. Being a stranger for short periods of time is enough suffering but being a stranger for the rest of one's life can become literally unbearable, unless hope and healing in some form enters one's life. Baard suggests that when becoming a stranger, religious and spiritual resources often provide the greatest kind of comfort, courage, and inspiration. Healing for the religious person, he suggests, always has deep spiritual connections and dimensions. Cf. RONALD W. BAARD, "Immigration as/and Mental Illness: More than Metaphor" in HUSSAM S. TIMANI, ALLEN G. JORGENSEN and ALEXANDER Y. HWANG, eds., *Strangers in This World: Multireligious Reflections on Immigration*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2015, pp. 281-294.

As mentioned earlier, a theological interpretation and systematisation of the data obtained in the previous two steps calls us both to interpret and evaluate the Christian teachings on displacement in the light of the secular sciences (and other theological fields) and to interpret and evaluate the scientific data in the light of the Scriptures and the Church's Tradition and teachings—in other words, to give them a properly theological meaning. This constitutes the third step in the methodological systematisation of a theology of displacement and migration. The Catholic Church has had a long history of engaging in this dialogue and has developed a series of doctrines and principles that encapsulate its teaching on matters of human dignity and the common good in society in what has come to be known as Catholic Social Teaching. These principles address not only matters related to forcibly displaced people and migrants, but also issues regarding social organisation, social justice, oppression, issues of wealth distribution and the role and obligations of nation-states. As it would be expected, while addressing specific issues, these principles do not stand alone but overlap and complement one another. And, pertinent to our endeavour, they have been developed borrowing heavily from principles and findings from other non-theological fields, in particular sociology, anthropology, politics and law.

Ten of the key elements of Catholic Social Teaching include the principles of: respect for human dignity, respect for human life, association, participation, preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, solidarity, stewardship, subsidiarity, human equality and the common good.⁶⁷ In regards to our particular example, the findings on the negative psychological and sociological effects of mandatory detention could not be clearer (and as mentioned, we could also have considered its political, economic and legal aspects, among others) and they clearly reveal that mandatory detention contravenes most, if not all, of the aforementioned key elements of Catholic Social Teaching. We will address in some detail some of these principles in chapter two, namely solidarity (which also demands hospitality), the common good and respect for human dignity.

Every person is worthy of respect simply by virtue of being a human being. For Christians, this is based on the belief that every single person has been created in the image and likeness of God, and thus, this right to be respected has been given by God and not by human beings.

⁶⁷ Cf. WILLIAM J. BYRON, 'The Building Blocks of Catholic Social Teaching' in *America* (31 October 1998), 9-12.

People do not lose this right because of their race, country of origin, religion or even entering a country without a passport or visa. So, an implication of this first principle is that every person has an inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with the dignity that is ours as human beings, from the moment of one's conception to one's death—any deprivation of this right, for any period of time, is not acceptable. Violation of this right takes place through physical or psychological harm, and also by treating people as objects rather than human persons. Gyzele's account, for example, mentions that the guards at the detention centre were forbidden to refer to the detainees by name and were only to use their numbers.

Human persons are not only sacred, but also social, communal beings. Locking people up in detention centres deprives them of their right of association, of coming together freely and enjoying the company and support of family, friends and new acquaintances. The Christian belief of God is Trinitarian; in other words, Christians believe that the one God is a diverse community of Father, Son and Spirit, and this essence of their communal existence is the model of human life as beings in community—and as active, participatory members at that. The principle of participation affirms that all people have a right as well as a duty to participate in shaping a more just and human society, that seeks the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable. No one should be treated as only a passive recipient of other people's decisions; the agency and action of all should be respected. Every time Gyzele and her family tried to exercise this right, it was denied them. Not only that, but they were threatened with deportation and with effectively being banished permanently from the country if they continued in their efforts to exercise such right. Effectively too, Gyzele and her family were regarded basically as law transgressors rather than the vulnerable and at-risk family they were.

It has been said that all societies are to be judged by the way they treat the poor and marginalised in their midst. In the Christian tradition this is expressed in the parable of the last judgment (Mt 25:31-46) in relation to our treatment of the 'least' amongst us. Catholic Social Teaching spouses that the needs of the poor and marginalised take priority over the desires of the rich, and this includes the needs of vulnerable groups and nations, not only individuals. This principle of an option for the poor and the marginalised is further sustained by the principle of solidarity. Upon receiving the news that they would be granted temporary

protection in Australia, Gyzele was filled with overwhelming joy and relief: “I thought to myself, ‘Now my children will have a place that is safe with many opportunities for the future’. My husband and I were so happy. We thought, ‘Australian people are so kind’”. Unfortunately, this joy would soon turn to sorrow and despair. The principle of solidarity is about trusting in people’s kindness to us in our need. It says, in Christian language that “we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers”. Upholding this virtue of solidarity means understanding that ‘loving our neighbour’ has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

The principles of stewardship and subsidiarity affirm that all people, without exception, have a responsibility to care for the resources of the world—including the greatest of its resources, the people of God—at whatever level of authority or circumstances they find themselves. One cannot blame one’s government or argue that one is only ‘following orders’, when those orders contravene the dignity of human persons or violate the other principles already mentioned. Despite the risks, as in the case of the guard who was reprimanded for ‘getting too close’ to the detainees, there is no option but do all that is in one’s power to protect the dignity of every person. And given that every human being is entitled to respect and dignity (as sons and daughters of God), it follows that there is a radical equality among all human beings. This principle is best articulated in the Australian value of giving people ‘a fair go’, but it can be easily argued that Gyzele and her family were never given such fair go. It could also be argued that this was the case because of the fear that if Gyzele and her family were given a different kind of welcome and granted permanent protection from the beginning this might ‘set a precedent for thousands of others’ wanting to resettle in Australia.

However, this negates one of the basic principle of granting protection to asylum seekers, namely, that this is typically done on an individual basis.⁶⁸ The real fear in fact is that the arrival of supposedly large groups of displaced people might affect negatively our quality of life in Australia. Here the significant word is ‘our’. The principle of the common good—an overarching principle for all already mentioned—sustains that humanity flourishes and fulfils its potential only when *all* people flourish and are able to fulfil their potential: “Every social

⁶⁸ It is true that in some cases ‘collective’ protection has been given to people seeking refugee status, but this has happened when it has been clear that a particular group was being persecuted because of its race, ethnicity, religion or other factors. A current example would be Christians in places such as Syria and other Middle Eastern countries.

group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family” (GS 26). This principle overrides the utilitarian formula of the greatest good for the greatest number, replacing it with the moral formula of the greatest good for all.

1.1.5.4. Fourth step: aid comes to the Osmani family

Achieving the ‘greatest good for all’ might sound like a utopic dream. But ‘dreams’ can become true, though not by chance or by waiting for things to happen, but by engaging with the issues with commitment and determination, as individuals but especially as communities who work for the change people want to see in their world. Thus, this fourth step, which demands making an ‘option for the displaced’—to commit as people of faith in attitudes, words and actions to uphold the dignity and rights of forcibly displaced people—requires praxis.

As alluded to earlier, there is a dialectical tension between theory and practice that must accept and embrace a spiral movement requiring action, evaluation, modification, further praxis, and so on. This requires patience, for change takes time; resilience, for the status quo will fight back, and humility to accept mistakes made so one can learn from them. The final goal is to develop a richer theology of displacement which in turn leads to more effective practice, where the forcibly displaced are made welcome and are offered opportunities for full participation and access to benefits in our societies.

A lot has changed in Australia in terms of mandatory detention in the last twenty years, and both the Catholic Church and other faith traditions can take a great deal of credit for this. They have added their indefatigable voices to others’ (like that of human rights lawyer Marion Le), demanding not only change in favour of more humane conditions but of the total abolition of mandatory detention in this country. Their efforts have tried to address the multiple needs of people in detention: visiting and offering hospitality and conversation to detainees; providing basic resources (e.g. toiletries, school supplies, special clothing, toys) and services when allowed (such as English and art classes, religious services, support with asylum applications), and finally advocacy at local and national level to influence policy and decision making. It was popular outrage and action that brought to a close the more isolated

and stark detention centres in Australia, including the Port Hedland Detention Centre where the Osmani family was interned, and more recently to the detention facilities in Nauru and Manus Island, and many church leaders and activists have been at the forefront of these efforts.

Unfortunately, as in the case of the Osmani family and many others, great damage has already been done to many people victimised by the policy of mandatory detention. For many, it will take a long time before they can recover. For others, total recovery will never be an option; at best, they will learn to deal and live with the trauma that has been inflicted on them. However, care should be taken in not using additional labels that might be construed as demeaning to address them. Mental illness does not define a person. But it is truly important to recognise that this is an issue and that, as mentioned, measures be taken to provide opportunities and resources to help bring about healing for victims of mandatory detention. Indeed, all those who have become “strangers in the world” through either their experiences of forced displacement or the suffering of mental illnesses in many cases associated with these experiences, need both deep compassion and respect. New arrivals cannot be expected to simply find a place to live, get a job and then ‘get on with it’.⁶⁹ And yet, many Australians do have that expectation, often claiming that their own migrant ancestors had to do the same, but also forgetting the hardships and suffering they had to go through, or if acknowledging those difficulties, saying that they are part and parcel of the ‘migration experience’. But as Christians, or people of other faiths, why would anyone want one’s brothers and sisters to suffer in this way?

In general terms, and as it would be expected, first-generation immigrants (including those who have been forcibly displaced) generally show higher rates of mental illness than the rest of the population, because of the difficulties and challenges involved in assimilating into a new culture, learning a new language sometimes later in life, and in some instances not

⁶⁹ And this applies also to their becoming active members our parish communities: “As well, if settlement is a long-term process, it is also a gradual process. It is wrong to expect them [immigrants and refugees] to integrate quickly into the Australian parish, and research shows that the closer links immigrants and refugees retain with their own communities, the more likely they are to retain their faith. Research shows that the best Mass attenders in Australia in recent years have been immigrant women. Ethnic communities integrate at different rates, and the process should not be unduly hastened”, cf. AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE, *Graced by Migration*, p. 40.

feeling welcomed due to their ethnicity or religion.⁷⁰ Suicide rates are higher than the general population for persons with mental illness because their suffering is both consistent and intense. So, one of the practical actions in terms of theology of displacement is to remember that this theology needs to include ‘healing’ as an essential element. The healing from God’s Spirit, from the broad community and from those nearest to us. As Baard reminds us:

In the Christian tradition, Jesus neither feared nor misunderstood mental illness, but rather took a healing approach toward it. Luke 8:26-39, the story of the Gerasene demoniac, is one of several such encounters of Jesus and a mentally ill person recorded in the gospels. Jesus was not simply interested in the individual’s healing, but in the healing of the larger social context; that is, the whole society and social order of his day. In that sense the healing ministry of Jesus always had a systemic and a prophetic edge to it. Persons of Christian faith, by the example of Jesus, are called toward this type of prophetic compassion with respect to those who are mentally ill.⁷¹

And of course, with respect to forcibly displaced people as well. One’s praxis, one’s practice, needs to be practical and concerted. The Church, ‘opting for the forcibly displaced’, certainly possess the institutional resources to help shape at all levels a more humane response to the plight of the displaced. In doing so, it might do well to remember the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, seventh Archbishop of Chicago, and his consistent-ethic-of-life-approach to the critical issues of his day. He was guided by three convictions: that the signs of the times needed to be read accurately; that the church had a role not just in deciding social and justice issues but also in shaping and defining them, and that the church was uniquely positioned as an institution to promote the common good in society.⁷² The ‘times’ in our day have been renamed the ‘age of displacement’, and the ‘signs’ point in all directions to the forcibly displaced as the ‘crucified people’ of this age. Bernardin’s consistent ethic of life emphasised the connections between issues of human life and human dignity, the care for the ‘least of these’ and care for creation, as well as the pursuit of justice and respect for others. His approach emphasises what we have been underscoring all along, that a theology of

⁷⁰ An international study in 2008 linking mental illness and immigration found that in the Netherlands, for example, immigrants living in white, Dutch neighbourhoods were more than twice as likely to have some form of schizophrenia. Cf. ERIK RASCHKE, “Immigrants and the Jinn: New and ancient paths to better mental health” in *America* (2 January 2017) 24-27. The author points out that “It was a startling find, one that reminded psychologists and many others that bringing immigrants to the supposedly safe, white bastions of Europe might have very complicated results”, p. 25; and further that with “[...] anti-immigrant parties rising to power in Europe, vulnerable immigrants will be under even more pressure to integrate into society—pressure that in itself negatively affects mental health”, p. 26.

⁷¹ BAARD, “Immigration as/and Mental Illness: More than Metaphor”, p. 292.

⁷² CARDINAL BLASE J. CUPICH, “The controversial legacy of Cardinal Bernardin” in *La Croix International*, 20 May 2017, cf. <https://international.la-croix.com/news/the-controversial-legacy-of-cardinal-bernardin/5215>. Accessed 31 May 2018.

displacement and its contents cannot stand in isolation, unconnected from other issues of life and justice, and independent from other fields—both secular and theological—that address these issues.

It is hoped that the methodological interpretation we have proposed above can help explain how the Christian faith, its beliefs and the way Christians live them out, might have to be adjusted or at least reframed, as the Church takes up the ‘option for the displaced’ and truly immerses itself in their context. We look at what might be involved in this ‘theological reframing’ in the next section.

1.2. Theologising through the ‘lens’ of displacement

All theology is contextual, though of course the question that should always be asked is: “whose context?” Theologising in context is the attempt to ground one’s theology in ‘historical reality’, in one’s political, economic, socio-cultural and religious context so that such articulation be as closely relevant as possible to the questions and issues that pertain us and our communities. Jon Sobrino succinctly describes this particular understanding of theology: “To do theology, means, in part, to face reality and raise it to a theological concept. In this task, theology should be honest with the real”.⁷³ In fact, theologising contextually is about prioritising these issues and questions. Of course, this does not mean that when one issue is prioritised (i.e. forced displacement), others are either necessarily less important or less relevant. It means that the specific issue addressed—partly because of its significance at a particular crossroad in salvation history—is one among several others that stand out if this promise of salvation is to be ensured for everyone. And here, salvation is understood to include the health and well-being of all persons and society: a salvation for the here and now where people are liberated from any form of captivity and their wounds can experience healing:

The painful experiences, harrowing tales of woe, cries of poverty and oppression [...] make theology much more than a discipline of study. It becomes a spontaneous cry for life, a response that people of faith make with commitment to transform the cry into laughter and joy. Contextualising theology therefore is an act of faith, responding to the groans that come

⁷³ JON SOBRINO, *Witnesses to the Kingdom: The Martyrs of El Salvador and the Crucified Peoples*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2003, p. 13.

from different corners due to life-diminishing, life-denying powerful systems, unjust judicial structures, social orders [...].⁷⁴

For Sobrino, the reality of the poor should sensitise the theologian—her or his theological task and understanding of faith, as well as shape the logic, presuppositions and relevance of theology. This sensitised or ‘compassionate theology’ for the reality of the marginalised and the victims follows the four steps mentioned earlier in the methodological synthetisation of theology, though in this case the emphasis is on the importance of bringing theology to honestly face reality.⁷⁵ Thus, the four steps are re-presented as:

[1] *hacerse cargo de la realidad* [taking reality on], that is, getting to know reality by being in the midst of reality, and not just by reflecting on the idea of reality; [2] *cargar con la realidad* [‘carrying’ reality], which is about taking responsibility for reality by realising the demands that reality makes on us, demands that cannot be avoided; [3] *encargarse de la realidad* [taking charge of reality], that is, to understand that the fulfilment of the process of knowing and comprehending reality is to become involved in the process of its transformation; [4] *dejarse cargar por la realidad* [allowing reality to carry or sustain us], which points to the fact that reality is not just to be carried but, thanks to its grace-filled nature, it can carry the person who allows this grace to work. In other words, reality is not just negativity and sin, but also surprising and unexpected grace and hope, which have the power to carry those who entrust themselves to them.⁷⁶

The act of faith involved in contextualising theology and theologising contextually is not only about what one *thinks*, but it reveals also who and what one *is*. Theologising in this way should reveal one’s priorities in life, the values that guide one’s existence, and the goals that one sets in life (cf. *Principle and Foundation*, [SpEx 23]).⁷⁷ This includes all people of faith who share common values and goals, the Church, the people of God, who must be convinced of the prophetic task in which everyone is involved as Christian faithful when theologising in context, with love and justice as one’s vision and goal (cf. *the Call of Christ the King* [SpEx 95]). This perspective of *love* and *justice* “becomes a matter of faith and commitment, an act

⁷⁴ EVANGELINE ANDERSON-RAJXUMAR, *Towards Theologising in Context: Our Vision and Goal*, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/36-1_109.pdf, p. 110. Accessed 31 May 2018. The author adds: “Theologising in context is not an *option* but *mandatory* where context gives priority to the underside of history, to the ‘non-persons’ who have never been counted as humans”.

⁷⁵ Cf. CASTILLO GUERRA, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology”, p. 252.

⁷⁶ Cf. CAMPESE, “¿Cuántos Más? The Crucified Peoples at the U.S.-Mexico Border”, p. 282. For the original development of these four steps, Campese refers to JON SOBRINO, “La Teología y el ‘Principio Liberación’” in *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología* 12 (1995) 115-140. Campese also clarifies that the first three steps of this methodology were originally proposed by Ignacio Ellacuría, while the last is Sobrino’s specific contribution.

⁷⁷ As Haight points out: “Theology, like all knowledge, is for life, and life is to be led in this world and this concrete history that is ours right now. All theology, even in all its specialised branches, insofar as they are parts of an integral discipline, is practical theology. The very purpose of theological interpretation is to open up possibilities for life in the world today, that is, in our concrete history”. HAIGHT, “Theology and Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises”, p. 98.

that comes closer to the heart of God who seeks healing and wholeness of a broken world”.⁷⁸ A love expressed in compassion, mercy and care; a justice lived out in the equitable access and sustainable use of our common resources. Accepting these perspectives of love and justice as the keys to the heart of God (God’s desire and dream for humanity) should then shape one’s theological constructs.

1.2.1. Key questions as point of departure

In regards to the particular contextual issue (forced displacement) that we have chosen to prioritise in this study,⁷⁹ and assuming that as suggested earlier, displacement and migration constitute an existential characteristic of the human condition, then all branches of theology and their areas of study, as well as the basic questions they pose, are up for reformulation or at least reconsideration. How does one understand who God (Trinitarian theology), Jesus (Christology) and the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) ‘are’? Who and what is a human being (anthropology and bioethics) and how do human beings understand their relationship to God and the transcendent (spirituality) and live out their faith relationship with one another (Ecclesiology)? How do they ‘attain’ salvation (soteriology) and understand and hope about the ‘last things’ (eschatology)? How do they relate and behave towards others (moral theology), including non-Christians (interreligious dialogue)? How do they bring to others the Good News of Christ (missiology), minister to them and to those inside the Church (pastoral theology) and transmit the doctrinal aspects of their faith (catechetics)? How do they preach (homiletics) and how do they worship (liturgical and sacramental theology)? In a word, how do they ‘theologise’ when they start from the perspective of forced displacement?⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Cf. ANDERSON-RAJXUMAR, *Towards Theologising in Context: Our Vision and Goal*, pp. 109, 115-116.

⁷⁹ Other contextual realities that are currently the subject of much study include: globalisation, capitalism, war and internal conflicts, systematic violence against people, multi-religious contexts, poverty, the status of women and ecological concerns.

⁸⁰ Cf. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, p. 857. Some recent resources on theologising contextually through the lens of migration and displacement (mainly in the North American context), include: DANIEL G. GROODY, *Border of Death, Valley of Life: An Immigrant Journey of Heart and Spirit*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 2002; GIOACCHINO CAMPESE and PIETRO CIALLELLA, eds., *Migration, Religious Experience and Globalization*, Staten Island, NY: Centre for Migration Studies 2003; DANIEL G. GROODY and GIOACCHINO CAMPESE, eds., *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008; DONALD KERWIN and JILL GERSCHUTZ, eds., *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books 2009; AGNES M. BRAZAL and FABIO BAGGIO, *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008 (Asia); VAN THANH NGUYEN and JOHN M. PRIOR, eds., *God’s People on the Move: Biblical and Global Perspectives on Migration and Mission*, Eugene, OR: Pickwick 2014; KRISTIN E. HEYER, *Kinship across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University 2012; SUSANNA SNYDER, *Asylum-Seeking, Migration*

We can start by asking whether, from this perspective of forced displacement, there is an image of God or particular attributes that we assign to God that might contribute to a newer and greater understanding of this God we believe in? What can Jesus' life, characterised as it was by constant displacement, both forced and voluntary, say to both the forcibly displaced and also all of us who often feel 'displaced', 'uprooted', groundless?

As we will see in the next section, the one element that essentially characterises the spirituality of the forcibly displaced is hope. Their hope is a gift they can offer all—hope that God's reign will become a reality in the here and now, even if partial or incomplete, but whose fulfilment is secured in God's promises to all. How can people open themselves to receive their gift? And how can they help survivors of forced displacement not to lose that hope once resettlement takes place and the reality they had hoped for does not materialise? What are the Christian moral obligations towards the forcibly displaced? And what are theirs, if any, in return? How do we allow their painful experiences inform and enrich our liturgical practices and rituals? These are some of the questions and issues that a contextual theology of displacement—following the methodological steps we introduced in the previous section—seeks to address. In the present endeavour, the key question among these many is: How does one minister to and care pastorally for survivors of forced displacement, as they move through the different stages of displacement and once they have found a new home in another country?

1.2.2. Following on the footsteps of contextual theologies

Of course, similar 'contextual theologising' endeavours have been carried out before. We can mention, for example, liberation theologians in Latin America, Asia and Africa, who as members of basic Christian communities have espoused a 'preferential option for the poor'

and Church, London: Routledge 2013; JULIUS-KEI KATO, *How Immigrant Christians Living in Mixed Cultures Interpret Their Religion*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen 2012; M. DANIEL CARROLL R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos 2013; ELAINE PADILLA and PETER C. PHAN, eds., *Contemporary Issues of Migration and Theology*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2016; ELAINE PADILLA and PETER C. PHAN, eds., *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2014; ELAINE PADILLA and PETER C. PHAN, eds., *Christianities in Migration: The Global Perspective*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2016; STEPHEN B. BEVANS, ed., "Mission and Migration" in *A Century of Catholic Mission: Roman Catholic Missiology 1910 to the Present*, Oxford: Regnum 2013, pp. 247-260; GIOACCHINO CAMPESE, "La théologie et les migrations: La redécouverte d'une dimension structurelle de la foi chrétienne" in *Dossier: Les catholiques et les migrations* 24 (2012) 135-155.

and have taken this theologising to the people who have suffered from unjust structures, who have been marginalised, abused and persecuted. The first perspective of this preferential option for the poor is the social-pastoral level, and so it requires first of all the concrete commitment to be with and work for the poor, to whom the forcibly displaced belong. But theology does provide a second perspective within this preferential option:

The option for the poor is not only a question of social and pastoral commitment, but also it is a way of doing theology. Poverty, in the final analysis, means death. Poverty means death—physical, early, and unjust death—due to the lack of the most basic necessities for life. The option for the poor is truly a theocentric option because Christians are called to be witnesses of the resurrection, of Jesus Christ's victory over death [...]. The third perspective offered by the preferential option for the poor, the spiritual one, is the deepest one. The option for the poor is not only a question of going to and working with them in solidarity, but it is also not just a way of doing theology. Above all it is a specific ground or foundation of the manner in which to follow Jesus. The preferential option for the poor is an essential aspect of discipleship [...].⁸¹

It has been argued that because most displaced people come from similar developing nations, in the geographic East and South, they too should be at the forefront of this theologising. Certainly, academic theologians from these parts of the world have been engaged in this theologising from the perspective of forced displacement in the last few years,⁸² continuing the paradigm shift in theologising—moving from dominant theologies of Europe and North

⁸¹ GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ, "Poverty, Migration, and the Option for the Poor" in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008, pp. 81-82.

⁸² We have already cited works, for example, from Agnes M. Brazal and Emmanuel de Guzman in the Philippines and Jorge E. Castillo Guerra from Latin America (writing in The Netherlands). Other works from these parts of the world include: (Africa) DEOGRATIAS M. RWEZAURA, "Hospitality and Solidarity: Virtues Integral to a Humane Refugee Policy" in Agnes M. Brazal and María Teresa Dávila, eds., *Living with(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migrations of Peoples*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2016, pp. 154-161; OROBATOR AGBONKHIANMEGHE, ed., *Practicing Reconciliation, Doing Justice, Building Peace: Conversations on Catholic Theological Ethics in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2013; (Asia) AGNES M. BRAZAL and EMMANUEL S. DE GUZMAN, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, Place of Publication not identified: Borderless Press 2015; JAMES H. KROEGER, "Living Faith in a Strange Land: Migration and Interreligious Dialogue" in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, pp. 219-251; (Latin America) RAFAEL LUCIANI, "The Itinerant Fraternity of Jesus: Christological Discernment of the Migration Drama" in Agnes M. Brazal and María Teresa Dávila, eds., *Living with(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migrations of Peoples*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2016, pp. 206-212; PEDRO TRIGO, "Horizonte Cristiano de la pastoral de la movilidad" in *Revista Lationamerica de Teología* 91 (2014) 3-40; GIOACCHINO CAMPESE and FLOR MARÍA RIGONI, "Hacer Teología desde el Migrante: Diario de un Camino" in Gioacchino Campese and Pietro Ciallella, eds., *Migration, Religious Experience and Globalisation*, New York: Centre for Migration Studies 2003, pp. 181-203; and (Oceania) SUSAN P. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia, 1990s-2010*, Basingstoke, Hampshire/New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2016; JIONE HAVEA, "Cons of contextuality... Kontextuality" in Stephen Bevans and Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, eds., *Contextual Theology for the 21st Century*, Eugene, OR: Pickwick 2011, pp. 38-52; JIONE HAVEA, "Diaspora Contexted: Talanoa, Reading and Theologising, as Migrants" in *Black Theology* 11, no. 2 (2013) 185-200.

America—started over fifty years ago, in the 1960s. It is worthwhile at this point to recall some of the words expressed in the Final Document of the First Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in 1976. A declaration that sums up the mutual concerns of many of these alternative, emerging contextual theologies:

The theologies from Europe and North America are dominant today in our churches and represent one form of cultural domination [...]. In order to be faithful to the gospel and to our peoples, we must reflect on the realities of our own situations and interpret the Word of God in relation to these realities. We reject as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action [...]. We call for an active commitment to the promotion of justice and the prevention of exploitation, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, racism, sexism and all other forms of oppression, discrimination and dehumanisation [...]. The Christian theological task in our countries is to be self-critical of the theologian's conditioning by the value system of their environment. It has to be seen in relation to the need to live and work with those who cannot help themselves, and to be with them in their struggle for liberation.⁸³

It is clear that most forced displacement finds its sources in “exploitation, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, racism, sexism and all other forms of oppression, discrimination and dehumanisation”. When these issues reach widespread proportions within a country or between nations, all-out wars and internal conflicts arise which drive people to abandon their homes against their will.

For people of faith the question that sooner or later will arise is “Where is God in the midst of all this terror and suffering?” or “Why does God allow this to happen?” Others might feel that God has abandoned them or that God is punishing them for their misdeeds. These questions and assumptions have at their root a common element: they reveal particular images of God. These operative images of God will vary from person to person, according to their circumstances and stages in their lives. We will explore this very important aspect in greater detail in the next section of this chapter on the ‘Spirituality of Displacement’ and also in chapter 5. At this stage, however, we begin exploring a conceptual image of God that

⁸³ As quoted in SAMUEL WELLS and BEN QUASH, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell 2010, p. 152. This being “faithful to the gospel” and reflecting “on the realities of our own situations” to “interpret the Word of God in relation to these realities” includes reformulating Christological images that are more grounded in the needs of our global church. Lassalle-Klein, for example, suggests the images of ‘the crucified peoples’ and ‘the mestizo Jesus’ as two of the most promising images to achieve this, in particular in relation to displaced peoples. Cf. ROBERT LASSALLE-KLEIN, “A Postcolonial Christ” in Tatha Wiley, ed., *Thinking of Christ: Proclamation, Explanation, Meaning*, New York: Continuum 2003, pp. 135-153.

might help victims of forced displacement reflect on their own operative images of God from a new perspective—one that hopefully will also help them grow into a deeper relationship with God.

1.2.3. God-in-displacement

On the other hand, if I try, shyly and hesitantly, to speak to You about Yourself, You would still be hearing about *me*. For what could I say about You except that You are my God, the God of my beginning and end, God of my joy and my need, God of my life?⁸⁴

People of faith believe that God has chosen to reveal Godself to us—God’s creation. We profess that this is so, because we hold that God created us in love and through love. To know one’s beloved and to be known by him, by her, is in the essence of love. While we confess that God is in no need of our love, of our praise or adoration, we also believe that this is something God desires and something that fulfils us (cf. Common Preface IV). Using this premise as point of departure, we dare then to speak of God, of what we believe God is (and is not), trusting that somehow in our discourse, through dialogue and experience, through surrender and logic, through illumination and trust, we will capture God’s continuing self-revelation in our particular moment in time and history. We do this while acknowledging that despite all of these efforts God will continue to be Absolute Mystery (Rahner) and that in the end, all we can say about God is that we will never fully know what/who God is (Aquinas). There is an immense gulf or chasm between creatures and God as their Creator, but together with Aquinas they can try to find ways in which they can bridge that gulf between them, or rather, ways to avoid getting in the way of God’s bridging that gulf, in order to ‘know’ God.⁸⁵

1.2.3.1. Describing the God we ‘need’

In limited human language, God can only be described by images, metaphors or analogies, speaking of what one believes God is or is not, but qualifying whatever one says by noting that “God is much more than this, infinitely much more” (affirmation, negation, transcendence). Thus, one might say that one can be ‘good’, but that God is ‘infinite goodness’, even if we are not sure what ‘infinite goodness’ looks like. One might say that we

⁸⁴ KARL RAHNER, *Encounters with silence*, trans. James M. Demske, London: Sands & Co. 1967, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae I: How God is known by us*. General Editor Thomas Gilby, Garden City, NY: Image Books 1969; cf. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1012.htm>. Accessed 26 June 2018.

can be compassionate and merciful, but God is all-merciful, unconditional compassion. Clearly, what one says about God also reveals much about us—recalling Rahner’s words quoted just before: “On the other hand, if I try, shyly and hesitantly, to speak to You about Yourself, You would still be hearing about *me*”! In the attributes people assign to God they consider God to be what they are not but wished they could be: omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, all truth, justice and love. And what they say about God also reveals their needs and desires, in particular in terms of what they perceive as their deficiencies: they need God to be all-merciful because they need unreserved mercy. They refer to God as Father or Mother because they need to know and experience the unconditional love of a parent who will never abandon them.

1.2.3.2. God’s experience of displacement

The act of God’s self-revelation in God’s Son—the incarnate *Logos*—means that God has been truly among us, in our midst, as one of us, and this gives us the assurance that God truly understands us. People continually look for new ways to describe God, so that such description makes sense of their situation and circumstances. For people who suffered (and still might suffer) the yoke of slavery and the gross mistreatment of tyrannical slave masters, God might become the truly benevolent Master, who rewards their labours with great generosity, looks after all their needs and promises the eventual release from all imprisonment.⁸⁶

It is in this context that within a theology of displacement and migration, for those who have been victims of forced displacement, the image or concept of a *God-in-displacement* could be a source of great consolation and a possible pathway to find meaning in their suffering. Phan suggests the term *Deus Migrator* (God the Migrant) to refer to this God who has also experienced ‘forced’ displacement, though the nature of this ‘force’, in God’s case, is not produced by an external, malevolent agent, but rather by an ‘interior movement’ within God, caused by nothing less than unconditional love:

[...] from the point of view of the Christian faith in God’s creation of the world and especially in God’s incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth, it is incontrovertible that there are

⁸⁶ Of course, any positive or life-giving image of God can be distorted into an image that can be used in detriment of others, supporting the continuation of systems and structures that might lead to inequality and injustice, i.e. patriarchy and andro-centrism when using the image of God as ‘Father’, and paternalism in regarding God as ‘Master’.

“events” or “movements” in God. These events or movements [...] do affirm a real movement within God from a non-creative God to a creative God [...] and from an unincarnated God to an incarnated God [...]. I submit that these two movements in God may be interpreted as God’s migratory acts.⁸⁷

In the self-chosen act of creating, God experiences displacement “out of what is divine into what is not”, thus also choosing to experience the “precarious, marginalised, threatened, and endangered condition of the migrant”, of the forcibly displaced. Created in the image and likeness of God, all human beings are the *imago Dei*, but what is unique and distinctive about displaced persons is that they are the “*imago Dei migratoris*”, the public face of a God who, opting for displacement, becomes the foreigner, the stranger, the alien in need of welcome, acceptance, protection and love. Thus, when the displaced person is welcomed, accepted and loved, the *Deus Migrator* is welcomed, accepted and loved. But when they are rejected, discriminated against, labelled ‘illegals’ or ‘queue jumpers’, thrown into detention centres for prolonged periods of time, tortured and even killed, “it is the original of that image, the *Deus migrator*, who is subjected to the same inhuman and sinful treatment”.⁸⁸ *What you did to the least of my sisters and brothers, that you have done unto me.*

I believe this image of *God-in-displacement* can be explored further. One could argue that one’s belief that God created us in love and chose to dwell among us in love leads to the conclusion that as a ‘lover’, and despite of God’s transcendence, God desires to be at the centre of one’s life. Yet, more often than not, people push God out of that centre and replace God with other ‘loves’. They forcibly displace or dislodge God from their being, claiming autonomy, independence, self-reliance. They ‘banish’ God to a ‘holding cell’, where God can be accessed if and when needed, but while all is going well God is never needed. And even when things turn out really bad or they ‘go straight to hell’, still often they choose to reject the God who they believe wants to move closer and closer to them; they push God away, blaming God for their misfortunes, their struggles, their failures.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Cf. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, pp. 859-860.

⁸⁸ Cf. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, p. 861.

⁸⁹ Of course, this way of speaking is metaphorical since, even if God took the form of a man, God’s transcendence cannot be denied; and human persons are not God—they are sinners.

The paradox lies in that for many forcibly displaced people of faith, God is not dislodged from their lives, or pushed away or banished. Instead, for them God is the *centre* of their lives, the one constant who—despite all the horrific things done to them—is never distant, even when their perpetrators and persecutors ask that inflammatory question posed to Jesus himself: ‘Where is your God’ and ‘why doesn’t God come to your aid?’ Though we might be tempted to explain the abuse, hatred, violence and even the absolute evil that in many instances seem to surround forcibly displaced people as ‘the absence of God’, many of them would be quick to correct us: “God is here with us, a victim also of the world’s violence and hatred; in reality God is not absent: God is in the hearts and souls of all those who like us cling on to God and find in God their refuge and strength”.

1.2.3.3. Embraced by the Trinity

Finally, this utter dependence on God is sustained by both God’s and God’s people’s communal nature. Created in the image and likeness of God, all human beings are the *imago Dei*. But the God Christians believe in, and in whose image they also believe to have been created, is not a ‘unitary wholeness’ but a Trinitarian God, characterised by relationality and mutuality, equality in friendship, diversity, creativity, fecundity. Thus, created in the image and likeness of the Trinity, “we are likewise persons-in-social relations, not individual isolated subjectivities”. As such, this Trinitarian perspective places demands on Christians in terms of how they ought to respond to those brothers and sisters who come knocking at their doors, conscious of how such response might affect them:

[...] Our cultural practices and identities are formed in relation and in dialogue with others. How others perceive and respond to us, whether with hospitality or xenophobia, shapes our self-identity. The Trinity as a community of friends challenges us to be welcoming of ‘others’ who do not initially belong to our ‘circle’ as migrants and refugees.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Cf. AGNES BRAZAL, “Cultural Rights of Migrants: A Philosophical and Theological Exploration” in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, pp. 82-86. We know that in some cultures this sense of inter-relatedness is particularly strong. Thus, in South Africa for example, the Zulu word *Ubuntu* depicts an anthropology of “relatedness, community, difference, and oneness” and as such aligns naturally with this Trinitarian perspective. *Ubuntu* professes a belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity—it means that people are people through other people. To be created in the image of the Trinity means “that relatedness, difference, equality, interdependence and community define what it means to be human. The mission of Christians in the context of xenophobia [in South Africa] is to unite the concepts of *Ubuntu* and Trinitarian theology as the model for inclusive and just communities of difference that promote the common good where none is excluded”, cf. NONTANDO HADEBE, “Toward an *Ubuntu* Trinitarian Prophetic Theology: A Social Critique of Blindness to the other” in Agnes M. Brazal and María Teresa Dávila, eds., *Living with(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migrations of Peoples*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2016, pp. 214, 216.

This image of a ‘circle’ has often been used to symbolise the Trinity and is a fitting one too as symbol of belonging: those who are considered as ‘belonging’ being inside the circle; those who do not ‘belong’ being left outside. How porous is the boundary of one’s community circle to allow others in? Of one’s nation? One might imagine the persons of the Trinity ‘locking’ arms with one another forming a circle—a three-way embrace—and those who ‘belong’ being inside that circle. Could we imagine the Trinity saying “you are not welcome” to anyone who asked to be let in? Not really! As Groody suggests,

The *Verbum Dei* means that for God there are no borders that cannot be crossed, neither within himself nor in the created world [...]. The *Verbum Dei* manifests that, even as human beings erect barriers of every sort, God walls off no one from the divine embrace.⁹¹

No one, regardless of their colour, their language, their cultural background, their broken history and their less-than-perfect stories. Survivors of forced displacement need to know this, but not only intellectually or rationally. They need to be able to internalise this ‘felt knowledge’ so they can claim, with assurance and without doubt, their rightful place inside the ‘circle’: a circle that keeps growing to accommodate ‘new arrivals’; and a circle that is also in motion, as in a dance, where there is joyful celebration among those welcomed into the banquet.

1.2.4. Jesus-in-displacement

This image of *God-in-displacement* is indeed a powerful metaphor for the forcibly displaced. The image of the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph forced to leave their home and having to seek sanctuary in the land of Egypt is often invoked. But the idea that this displacement was preceded by God’s ‘displacement’ in the Incarnation, coming into history as a poor Jew, into a land occupied by an external force—and not as a wealthy, powerful, royal—is seldom considered. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St Ignatius asks us to:

Imagine Christ our Lord suspended on the cross before you, and converse with him in a colloquy: How is it that he, although he is the Creator, has come to make himself a human being? How is it that he has passed from eternal life to death here in time, and to die in this way for my sins? [*SpEx* 53].

This *downward incarnational mobility*—Jesus’ *kenosis* (Philippians 2:5-11)—is what Karl Barth refers to as the way of the Son of God “into the far country”⁹², not a country where the

⁹¹ GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 8.

⁹² As Barth suggests, “It is God who went into the far country, and it is man who returns home. Both took place in the one Jesus Christ. It is not, therefore, a matter of two successive actions, but of a single action in which

‘grass is greener’ but instead a remote place of darkness populated by a broken and sinful humanity—yet, God’s beloved and favoured ones! Why? Because only in this way can the Trinity help humanity find its way back home to God: sheer love in God’s displacement for and to humanity makes possible its displacement, its movement back to God, following Jesus’ footsteps and imitating his way of life.

1.2.4.1. Jesus, the itinerant messianic preacher

As the incarnated Son of God, and in his human life, Jesus is the perfect embodiment of *imago Dei migratoris*,⁹³ and also the one who shows humanity the way back to God. Not only in the inherent circumstances of his birth and early life, but also in the various way Jesus chose to live out his ministry of compassion, reconciliation and welcome to all, he became a Messiah-in-displacement. In Christ, God does not only reach out to the stranger but becomes himself the stranger. As an eschatological itinerant preacher and prophet, healer and teacher who had nowhere to lay his head (cf. Luke 9:58), he totally depended on the hospitality and welcome of those who received him and his disciples. Some did receive him and welcomed him—Mary, Martha and Lazarus (cf. Luke 10:38-42), Simon and Andrew (cf. Mark 1:29) and even Zacchaeus the tax collector (cf. Luke 19:1-10)—while others rejected him, even in his own hometown (cf. Mark 6:1-5). Purposely adopting this lifestyle of an itinerant allowed Jesus to encounter “faces and stories never before imagined by him”, finding faith where others would not have expected any, like with the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7:24-30 or the centurion in Matthew 8:5-13. Jesus’ itinerant life shaped his character, affected the way he prayed and showed that “our belonging to a culture, religious tradition or biological family

each of the two elements is related to the other and can be known and understood only in this relationship: the going out of God only as it aims at the coming in of man; the coming in of man only as the reach and outworking of the going out of God; and the whole in its original and proper form only as the being and history of the one Jesus Christ”. Cf. KARL BARTH, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, G. W Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, eds., G. W. Bromiley, trans., New York: T&T Clark/Continuum 2004, p. 21.

⁹³ From his birth, and even before, Jesus’ life mirrors the day-to-day existence of many displaced peoples, both in their homelands and host and resettlement countries: his status as a stranger and migrant in his own occupied country, his ancestry; which included foreigners (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Beersheba); his birth far from home and family (Luke 2:1-7); his family’s escape to Egypt, fleeing persecution and death (Matthew 2:13-14); the lack of welcome—considered a stranger—in his own country (John 1:11); his being considered a threat to the status quo, a rebel and a revolutionary, and finally his own self-identification with the stranger, the marginalised, the unwanted (Matthew 25:35). Cf. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, p. 862.

should not be absolutized”, rendering them “temporary roads toward the realisation of our humanity” but not the definite paths that should define anyone.⁹⁴

1.2.4.2. Jesus, the humble ‘royal’ open to all, reflecting God’s hospitality

Despite being considered a descendant of the tribe of David, Jesus never boasted of his royal lineage, but instead associated himself with the poor, the marginalised, the outcast and unclean. In a society where racial, cultural, ethnic, economic, gender-related and even religious factors erected walls and borders separating the have’s from the have not’s, Jesus became a ‘boarder-crosser’ who not only moved back and forth through these liminal spaces, but also sought (in a peaceful way) to demolish those walls by inviting one and all to the house of his compassionate and loving Father. Though his divine nature made him the epitome of ‘difference’, he preached against any differentiating that led to discrimination, lack of compassion, violence and de-humanisation. And he lived what he preached, surrounding himself by both the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak. He held the hands of the clean and the impure, shared table with those considered righteous and those considered sinners, and despite being a stranger, he hosted his disciples at the Last Supper (cf. John 13:1-20), and one of his favourite images to describe the kingdom of God was that of a banquet to which all were welcomed, especially “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Luke 14:21). And in one of the resurrection scenes we see him preparing a lovely breakfast for his disciples, after their exhausting and unsuccessful night of fishing.

1.2.4.3. Jesus, the margin-dweller at the centre of controversy

From one perspective, Jesus was a margin-dweller, with little worldly power, riches or influence to his name. At the same time, he became the centre of the ‘new world order’ he proposed, marked by inclusivity, equality, service and compassion. Unfortunately, it is easy today to underestimate the magnitude of the changes Jesus was proposing in this ‘new world order’, especially if they are regarded only in spiritual terms and separate from the context of persecution, abuse, violence and dehumanising practices that those in the margins suffered at

⁹⁴ Cf. LUCIANI, “The Itinerant Fraternity of Jesus: Christological Discernment of the Migration Drama”, p. 208. Luciani further suggests that, “Symbolically, this [Jesus’ itinerant lifestyle] can be viewed as a prophetic protest against and detachment from all cultural and religious codes of honour, status and social stability” and that this itinerant character also shows that “only those who broaden their ties and become brother/sister to all—including migrants and political exiles—can discover their own identity and vocation, as part of a non-biological family, that of sons and daughters of God living in fraternity”, p. 209.

the time of Jesus, both under their Roman occupiers, but also at the hands of many of their religious leaders. Jesus is quoted several times in the gospels rebuking these leaders and calling them hypocrites for placing such burdens—in the name of God—on people who were suffering so much already (cf. Matthew 15:7, 23:29; Mark 7:6; Luke 13:15).⁹⁵

Becoming the ‘centre’ always attracts attention, and often jealousy and envy. And also fear—from those who fear losing the little or great deal of power, influence and riches they possess. As it often happens in the lives of the forcibly displaced, fear (from certain groups in the receiving communities) leads to violence, and for Jesus (as for many displaced peoples also) to death. It was the death reserved for an outcast—death on a cross. But in and through his resurrection, Jesus demolished the powerful wall of death and crossed into new life, promising that same destiny to all who believed in him and in his Father (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-26).

1.2.4.4. Jesus, a fellow displaced brother

For forcibly displaced people, the concept of *Jesus-in-displacement*, of a ‘fellow displaced brother’ can bring not only great consolation, but also help give meaning to their suffering (past and present), even after resettlement in a new home. Jesus lived his life for others, especially for those in need. His mission was to present and work for a vision of life which he often described as the ‘kingdom of God’, where justice, mercy, love and service would be the main values that would guide life for everyone.⁹⁶ He welcomed all—and especially the marginalised—to his table and to the banquet of his Father. He embodied—incarnated—and made a reality the hope they had held on to, based on the promises found in their Scriptures,

⁹⁵ These burdens were very real and were related both to the observance of the many religious laws which exerted great pressure on the poor and caused them to become marginalised even further and also the unjust practices of their leaders. Thus, it was not only the tax collectors working for the Roman occupiers who exacted outrageous and inflated taxes from the poor and benefited from this practice; religious leaders also filled their coffers by demanding very high interest (against their own Jewish laws!) on loans obtained through the Temple. While most of their fellow Jews lived in extreme poverty, some of these Jewish leaders, including Caiaphas the High Priest in Jesus’ time, lived in great opulence. To expand on the context and harshness of life in Jesus’ time see, for example, SEAN FREYNE, *Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels: literary approaches and historical investigations*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1988 and SHARON NADAV, *Judea under Roman domination: the first generation of statelessness and its legacy*, Atlanta: SBL Press 2017.

⁹⁶ As Kasper suggests: “Mark and Matthew summarise Jesus’ message in the same way. The centre and framework of Jesus’ preaching and mission was the approaching Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God was what it was about [...]. It involves the meaning of God’s being God and Lord, which at the same time means the humanity of human beings and the salvation of the world”. WALTER KASPER, *Jesus the Christ*, London: T&T Clark International 2011, pp. 60-62.

that freedom and life abundant would be theirs, that they could find meaning in their suffering, that violence and death would not have the last words.⁹⁷ As much as these words describe the hope of the poor and marginalised in Jesus' days, they also describe the hopes of most forcibly displaced people of faith:

For many compelling reasons, numerous migrants and refugees reframe their own story in the light of Jesus' journey. Leaving their homelands, undergoing dangerous journeys, and taking up residence in a foreign land entails not only emptying themselves but radically surrendering everything they own, without any assurance that what they lose will come back to them.⁹⁸

Each person is called to live his or her life following the model of Jesus, to be an instrument of evangelisation and conversion, but as fellow displaced persons who have shared Jesus' lot, as true 'Christ-like' figures, the forcibly displaced can do this with greater effectiveness than most, and this is so because they possess the Christ-like credibility that many others lack. This is a gift they can offer to the rest of humanity, and also, I believe, a responsibility they are called to fulfil, within the realm of the capacities and possibilities. Unfortunately, after amazing perseverance, endurance and courage in the face of despair, sometimes for years while their journey of displacement continues, many forcibly displaced people 'fall by the wayside' once they reach the 'promised land' they had hoped for. They might allow themselves to be subsumed by the dominating culture around them (in many cases materialistic, self-serving, relativistic), or expect to be 'repaid' or receive retribution for all the harm done to them, becoming forever victims that expect things to be handed to them. Others, fall—often in desperation at the lack of opportunities available to them—to the allure of 'easy' money-making schemes (in particular drugs and gangs) and yet others are overcome by despair when they discover that the promised land they expected only existed in their dreams.

Sadly, the root of this downfall can be traced to a way of thinking and acting based on the mantra "now it is my turn to enjoy all the things I was deprived of". Yet, as many people have learned, doing all they can to achieve success, riches and influence without considering

⁹⁷ "By his preaching of the Kingdom [Jesus] promised the fulfilment of all human hopes, expectations and longings for a fundamental transformation of the order of things and a completely new start. There was an ancient hope, which appears in the early myths and was taken over by the Old Testament prophets, that in the time of redemption, when God's Kingdom came, all suffering, all tears and all distress would be ended. Jesus too adopts this hope: the blind are to see, the lame walk, the lepers are to be cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are to be raised up and the poor have the good news preached to them (Lk 7:22-23; Mt 11:5-6)". Cf. KASPER, *Jesus the Christ*, pp. 71-72.

⁹⁸ GROODY, "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees", p. 8.

the needs of others, can only bring meaning to their lives to a certain degree. As the example of Jesus shows, true meaning comes from doing all that is possible to ensure that the kingdom of God becomes more and more a reality, for all, in the here and now (cf. [SpEx 53]):

As the paradigmatic migrant [and displaced person], Jesus holds up to migrants a way of life that is not exclusively centred on the well-being of oneself and one's family but is also committed to the promotion of the kingdom of God marked by justice and love for all and by solidarity with other migrants [and forcibly displaced persons], especially those who are poorer and weaker than themselves. As a gracious host, Jesus reminds migrants [and the forcibly displaced] though poor and marginalised, that they must be generous hosts to others, especially to their fellow migrants [and forcibly displaced].⁹⁹

It might seem too demanding, and perhaps even unfair, to expect many forcibly displaced people to take up such responsibility, especially after all they have gone through, but as church—as people of God—everyone is called to offer one's giftedness to one's wider community, and the forcibly displaced have many gifts to share.

1.2.5. The Church—as people of God—in-displacement

But I have still one more request. Make my heart like that of your Son. Make it as great and rich in love as His, so that my brothers—or at least one of them, sometime in my life—can enter through this door and there learn that You love him.¹⁰⁰

As mentioned earlier, theologising from the perspective of forced displacement requires that all branches of theology and their areas of study, as well as the basic questions they pose, be reformulated or at least reconsidered. We have explored briefly what this might mean in terms of one's understanding of God and Jesus. It is not possible, within the scope of this study to address in detail the various other areas of theology mentioned earlier (though we will address the relevance of spiritual theology—Part II of this chapter—and narrative theology—chapter 4, to our study). In this section, under the rubric of the Church-*in-displacement*, we simply point out some of the salient themes within these fields that might

⁹⁹ Cf. PHAN, “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, p. 863. As Anderson-Rajxumar reminds us: “The act of sin/fall in human beings both individually and collectively is to love oneself more than the other, at the cost of another's life and blood. Conversely, the way one works to love, true love for *all*, is to be aware of how love for the poor is obscured by injustices in law, rituals, religion, power and other systems”. Cf. ANDERSON-RAJXUMAR, *Towards Theologising in Context: Our Vision and Goal*, p. 117. And for Kasper, “The solidarity of God with men [sic] manifested and realised in Jesus Christ establishes a new solidarity among men [sic] [... It] assigns to Christians and to the Churches the world as the place of their service that binds them to cooperate in a new world order of peace in freedom sustained by the idea of solidarity. Then Christian love, realising the love of God and thus accepting every man [sic] unconditionally, also becomes an absolute commitment to justice for everyone”. Cf. KASPER, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 213.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. RAHNER, *Encounters with silence*, p. 17.

offer a starting point for further exploration as we delve deeper into the spirituality and theology of forced displacement. The hope is to include these themes in our *exercises* for forcibly displaced peoples.

1.2.5.1. The Holy Spirit

One of the images or descriptions of the Holy Spirit used in Trinitarian theology is that of the ‘bond of love’ that unites the Father/Mother and the Son. The Holy Spirit too is understood as the source of life that dwells in each person, that gives them energy, sustains them and guides them—when they allow it too—in their journey back to God, to the Source of their being. The Spirit dwells in each person, and as such, the Spirit is also the bond of love and life that connects us and unites each one of us to every single other being on this earth. Having been created in the image of God, God’s Spirit ‘labours’ in us so that we grow into this likeness in the course of our lives (cf. *Contemplation to Attain Love* [SpEx 230-237]). This does not mean necessarily that people become more ‘divine-like’, but rather that they become more ‘human’, more like the beings God created each one of them to be, more like the human person Jesus was.

While the same Spirit dwells in all people, how they express His/Her action in each of them varies according to their nature, their circumstances and experiences. And that is part of the beauty of being created as unique individuals. Each human being, *a priori*, is a constituent part of ‘humanity’ and our collective humanity is potentially enriched by each person. Each forcibly displaced person is unique, and his or her contribution to our collective humanity is also unique. But as a group or *comm-unity* with *comm-on* experiences, they can also contribute as such to our understating of what it means to be human—their shared voices can thus provide the Spirit with a thunderous voice which cannot be ignored.

1.2.5.2. Christian anthropology

As mentioned earlier, the human life of Jesus was characterised by constant displacement, and such displacement influenced his understanding of himself and the way he related to others. What does one’s being in constant displacement, especially when this movement is forced, mean in terms of how one understands his or her *being* human? And how does the

action of the Spirit use, transform and vivify our common trait of being *beings-in-displacement*?

Many people tend to think of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers as the ‘other’, different from them, often in negative terms. But if they can agree and begin to see that they are all subject to this common phenomenon of displacement (granted, much more violently for some than for most), could this help them to see the ‘displaced other’ as their own ‘displaced self’ and through this paradigm shift begin to welcome the stranger in their midst? Christian belief recognises all people—regardless of their faith tradition or none at all—as pilgrims on their way back to their true home with and in God, always dependent on God to get them there:

The Church understands that of all the needs of the human spirit, the need for roots is exceptionally important. The concept of home is never as truly appreciated as when one leaves home and feels the uprootedness of not being in a place of one’s own [...]. But it is also not unusual for a person to discover God in the process of migration. The act of uprooting tends to concentrate the mind on the true priorities in life, including our dependence on God.¹⁰¹

And for Christians, this journeying together while recognising the temporality and arbitrariness of their countries of birth, of work, of ‘residency’ is very much part of their tradition:

[Christians] live in their own countries, but only as aliens (*paroikoi*). They have a share in everything as citizens (*politai*), and endure everything as foreigners (*xenoi*). Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet every fatherland is a foreign land.¹⁰²

As paradoxical as it might sound, forcibly displaced people’s experience of no longer having a home, of having to depend on the welcome and hospitality of others, of having to find a home in lands they never expected to end up in, can serve as a great lesson to many people (including Christians), whose views regarding their cultural and ethnic identity might be too constrained, too unfree. And for Christians, in particular, this experience can serve as a constant reminder of the mission that has been entrusted to them to be heralds of the good news of the gospel to ‘the ends of the earth’ carrying nothing with them except *the message* and their trust in a God who always provides (cf. Mark 6:7-11).¹⁰³ What would the world

¹⁰¹ KERWIN and GERSCHUTZ, eds., *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, p. xii.

¹⁰² “The So-Called Letter to Diognetus” 5:5 in Cyril C. Richardson, ed. and trans., *Early Christian Fathers*, New York: Macmillan 1970, p. 217.

¹⁰³ In Vatican II’s Constitution on the Church, “The Church is viewed primarily as the new People of God—a people still on the march through the desert, pressing forward through trial and tribulation to the promised land.

look like—and each of its communities—if instead of erecting three-metre walls and fences to keep others out, people took these barriers down and actively welcomed the strangers among them; if instead of speaking of *my* home, *my* country, *my* resources, they saw everything as gift (as spoken of in the Scriptures) and made efforts to share their homes, their countries and their resources with those in need? If they regarded themselves as true citizens of the world? If they saw themselves as the ‘one’ people of God?¹⁰⁴ As a ‘community of disciples’?¹⁰⁵

Unfortunately, there is still a long way to traverse to get there. The ‘other’, one of those generalised labels people use to describe those who are different from them (and not only different, but different in ways that they do not approve of or understand), is only one of the many different kinds of labels displaced peoples are subjected to which, as mentioned earlier, create asymmetries that make them vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation. Part of the task of a theology of displacement is to “bridge the gap created by these labels, challenge the dehumanising stereotypes created by [them] and build up ‘a civilisation of love’ [Paul VI] and ‘a culture of life’ [John Paul II]” that can help displaced peoples “discover an inner identity that fosters their own agency rather than an imposed external identity that increases their vulnerability and subjugation”.¹⁰⁶

Interest is focused on [...] its relations to the peoples to whom it must communicate the good news of the gospel. In this view missionary activity is not a kind of supererogatory function by which certain individuals venture forth beyond the Church’s limits. Rather, the Church is missionary by essence. It is, so to speak, a great missionary society; its primary vocation is to be a herald”. AVERY DULLES, *The Dimensions of the Church: A Post-conciliar Reflection*, Westminster, MD: Newman Press 1967, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰⁴ “It is one and the same God who gathers the scattered from all places and all ages and makes them into one people of God. It is one and the same Christ who through his word and his Spirit unites all together in the same bond of fellowship. It is one and the same baptism by which all are made members of the same body of Christ, one and the same Lord’s Supper, in which all are united with Christ and with one another. It is one and the same confession of faith in the Lord Jesus, the same hope of blessedness, the same love, which is experienced in oneness of heart, the same service of the world. The Church is one and therefore *should be* one”. HANS KÜNG, *The Church*, London: Burns & Oates 1969, p. 273.

¹⁰⁵ The phrase ‘community of disciples’ was suggested by Avery Dulles based on an allusion made by Pope John Paul II. According to Dulles, this concept “precludes the impression that ecclesial communion exists merely for the sake of mutual gratification and support. It calls attention to the ongoing relationship of the Church to Christ, its Lord, who continues to direct it through his Spirit. The concept of discipleship [...] also illuminates the institutional and sacramental aspects of the Church and grounds the functions of evangelisation and service that are central to the herald and servant models”. AVERY DULLES, *Models of the Church: A Critical Assessment of the Church in all its Aspects*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1987, pp. 206-207. In relation to survivors of forced displacement, it points to their integral part of the Church and its community of discipleship, as heralds of hope and witnesses of the continuing presence of God in the midst of the greatest adversities.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 4. Groody reminds us (cf. footnote 19, p. 23) that Paul VI was the first pope to use the expression ‘a civilisation of love’, *la civiltà dell’amore* (cf. *Regina Coeli Address* (17 May 1970); <https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/>

Language is an extremely powerful tool; some would say, one of the deadliest of weapons and, in regards to displaced peoples, using labels such as ‘queue jumpers’ or ‘illegal aliens’ can be fatally dehumanising. And once people are demonised, then it becomes almost impossible to create fair policies that seek to safeguard and protect society’s weakest and most vulnerable. Earlier we referred to displaced persons as the *imago Dei migratoris*—the public face of a God who, opting for displacement, becomes the foreigner, the stranger, the alien in need of welcome, acceptance, protection and love. Sin, as portrayed in the story of Adam and Eve, disfigured the original *imagines Dei*. Structural sinful policies—and those who uphold them—that disparage the forcibly displaced, continue to disfigure the *imago Dei migratoris* in the world today. One of the definitions of an ‘alien’ is *a hypothetical or fictional being from another world*. Every human being, *a priori*, is someone who belongs to this world. So, why would a person choose to call anyone an ‘alien’? As Groody aphoristically points out: “If the term ‘alien’ is to be used at all, it would be descriptive not of those who lack political documentation but of those who have so disconnected themselves from God and others that they are incapable of seeing in the vulnerable stranger a mirror of themselves, a reflection of Christ, and an invitation to human solidarity”.¹⁰⁷

1.2.5.3. Soteriology

People tend to think of the forcibly displaced as needing to be ‘saved’. And this is true—they do need saving from the violence, oppression and persecution they are subjected too in their countries of origin and places of transit as they journey to safety. They also need to be ‘saved’ from the prejudices, rejection and xenophobia they experience in many resettlement countries. But rarely, if ever, in their privileged developed nations, people think of them as possible *bearers* of God’s saving power for them. The concept or image of ‘crucified peoples’ alluded to earlier in this chapter can be very helpful here to expand on this potential restorative and life-giving role. Because the crucified peoples unmask the sin of the world and expose its need for conversion and renewal, they constitute a ‘revelatory place’ by

angelus/1970/documents/hf_p-vi_reg_19700517.html Accessed 6 June 2018). Pope John Paul II also speaks of a civilisation or communion of love in several of his encyclicals (cf. *Novo millennio ineunte*, 42; *Redemptor hominis*, 10; *Ecclesia in Europa*, 82-85), as well as a ‘culture of life’ (cf. *Evangelium vitae*, 21, 28, 50, 77, 82, 86, 87, 92, 95, 98, 100).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 20.

embodying the ongoing presence of Jesus Christ, our Saviour—but also the *Crucified One*—throughout history.¹⁰⁸

Thus, for Ellacuría, the crucified peoples of the world today are both saved and mediators of salvation, both objects and subjects of salvation. This saving role does not come from their own salvific power—only God can save—but it is grace and gift: a gift offered to all. The forcibly displaced of this world, among others who suffer marginalisation and oppression, are a reminder that God’s salvation comes from below (cf. Ps 118:22; Mt 21:42; 1 Cor 1:26-29).¹⁰⁹ Campese summarises Jon Sobrino’s further elaboration of this idea:

[...] the crucified peoples become a principle of salvation: [1] By [...] show[ing] the presence of the enormous and deadly reality of sin within the world [...] offer[ing] at the same time the possibility of conversion. [2] They provide values that cannot be easily encountered elsewhere, values that have an extraordinary humanising potential like a sense of community, simplicity, spirit of service, creativity and so on—the values that we need today to purify the contaminated air which the human spirit is forced to breathe. [3] They offer hope, which might seem senseless and absurd in their situation, and yet it is mysteriously present and active. [4] They show that selfless love is possible and are prepared to forgive even their oppressors. [5] They generate solidarity, a new and mutually supporting way of relating to human beings. [6] And finally, the crucified peoples point to a new way to be church, and a holiness that is more authentic and faithful to the “signs of our times” and to the gospel.¹¹⁰

This potential salvific role of survivors of forced displacement is a hidden treasure that needs to be unearthed, as it is also the gift of their hope.

1.2.5.4. Eschatology

In terms of eschatology, as mentioned earlier, the spirituality of the forcibly displaced is characterised, above all, by their capacity—and their need—to hope and generate hope. Without this virtue, the constant dangers, uncertainties, violence and suffering they face would be unbearable. Hope gives meaning to the turbulent stages of their journeys by promising that survival, peace and security somehow will follow. For Christians, their eschatological hope is the fulfilment of the reign of God: this is their common and final goal,

¹⁰⁸ Cf. BURKE, “The Crucified People as ‘Light for the Nations’: A Reflection on Ignacio Ellacuría”, pp. 123-130.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. CAMPESE, “¿Cuántos Más? The Crucified Peoples at the U.S.-Mexico Border”, p. 284.

¹¹⁰ Cf. CAMPESE, “¿Cuántos Más? The Crucified Peoples at the U.S.-Mexico Border”, p. 284. Campese composes this summary from two of Sobrino’s sources: JON SOBRINO, “La Teología de la Liberación en América Latina: Relación Esencial entre Teología y Pobres” in Jon Sobrino, Julio Lois and Juan Sánchez-Rivera, eds., *La Teología de la Liberación en América Latina, África y Asia*, Madrid: PPC 1998, pp. 53-55, and *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1993, pp. 262-264.

but one that cannot be achieved through human means, and one that can only be partially achieved in this time or any time. Christian hope looks always towards the future (the not yet) and beyond, when the future will become an eternal already-in-the-now, but it is also grounded and builds upon the events of the past: creation, Incarnation, redemption, revelation—all gifts of God within the constraints of time which give the assurance (in hope!) that the fulfilment of God's reign is indeed secured in and through God's promises to humanity—those already fulfilled and those we believe will be fulfilled because of God's record in the past.

As we will discuss in further detail in the second section of this chapter, this hope in the forcibly displaced is not of the passive, 'I cannot do anything but wait for things to happen' kind. It is active hope, embodied in actions to prepare for, anticipate and bring about the reality that is hoped for. Those actions, in the forcibly displaced, are particularly propelled by their hope that their suffering will have some meaning—even if they cannot imagine what that might be as they wait for years in refugee camps for resettlement or imprisoned in detention centres while their asylum applications are assessed. Those actions are also embodied in the plans they make for their children—preparing for and anticipating the coming of freedom, security and peace they hope incessantly for.

The eschatological hope of Christians then is the fulfilment of the reign of God—of God's vision for humanity—both in the future and in the here and now. To be active companions of the forcibly displaced, people need to be clear as to how this vision takes root in human history today, how it influences and produces social transformation, and how it transforms the way they view and understand forcibly displaced people. And finally, how such understanding impels them to act, to labour, in the pursuit of justice, with compassion and even tenderness, but also with passion, conviction and solidarity. It could be argued that, as the paradigmatic victims of the world's refusal of universal human solidarity, displaced peoples are the judges of "our worthiness to enter into the eschatological fulfilment in the communion of the triune God".¹¹¹ Displaced people or not, all humanity is on its way to its

¹¹¹ Cf. ANSELM KYONGSUK MIN, "Migration and Christological Hope: Historical and Eschatological Reflections on Migration" in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, p. 199. Min suggests that: "It is reasonable to think that only those who have shown mercy to the suffering members of humanity and have done something to

eschatological destiny, and the success of that destiny could depend on what each person does for and to the forcibly displaced now.

1.2.5.5. Moral theology

The human and moral issues linked with forced displacement are copious and are being addressed from various perspectives—human rights, legal considerations, natural law principles, and so on.¹¹² In this area, the perspective of the Christian faith and tradition as well as the Church's teachings (in particular Catholic Social Teaching) have already offered a valuable contribution, but in some instances such contribution has been dismissed as being overly spiritual or idealistic. New ways of transmitting and sharing these values (Christian ethics) that engage the secular world more efficiently need to be explored. Welcoming the stranger, solidarity with the marginalised, compassion towards the downtrodden, protection of the most vulnerable in society, are all pillars on which Catholic Social Teaching stands and they are also common 'civic' values which all, as members of the human family, share.¹¹³ So, the question must be asked as to why it is so difficult to put them into practice in generalised and widely accepted ways when they are applied to the forcibly displaced.¹¹⁴

Part of the answer lies in the complexities of an interconnected world and the struggle for power and appropriation of resources that characterises it today.¹¹⁵ The reality is that unless

overcome division and alienation in this world are considered worthy of enjoying that incomprehensible solidarity and communion in the love and peace of the triune God in the *eschaton*", p. 197.

¹¹² Cf. DAVID HOLLENBACH, ed., *Driven from home: protecting the rights of forced migrants*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press 2010, and also DAVID HOLLENBACH, *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press 2003.

¹¹³ Charles Curran points out that: "Obviously a personal acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord affects at least the consciousness of the individual [...] but the Christian and the explicitly non-Christian can and do arrive at the same ethical conclusions and can and do share the same general ethical attitudes, dispositions and goals". CHARLES E. CURRAN, "Is There a Catholic and/or Christian Ethic?" in Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, eds., *Readings in Moral Theology No. 2: The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics*, New York: Paulist Press 1980, p. 77.

¹¹⁴ "The Catholic Church has joined in the debate [on forced displacement] and, in its own way, has stimulated and effectively influenced the journey of the international community [...]. Through [its] multiplicity of documents, though conditioned by the historical circumstances within which they have been issued, it is possible to see a comprehensive approach [...]. The combination of human rights, religious belief, and theological insight helps to motivate people to pursue social justice, to rally for the rights of forcibly displaced persons and other vulnerable groups of people, and to organise. Policy recommendations are based on the understanding of the responsibilities that universal rights impose, and on the added insight and motivation brought by the light of faith". Cf. SILVANO TOMASI, "Human Rights as a Framework for Advocacy on Behalf of the Displaced: The Approach of the Catholic Church" in David Hollenbach, ed., *Driven from home: protecting the rights of forced migrants*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press 2010, pp. 59, 61, 65.

¹¹⁵ In this regard, Niebuhr perceptibly speaks about the 'selfishness of nations': "The selfishness of nations is proverbial. It was a dictum of George Washington that nations were not to be trusted beyond their own interest".

public perception of their plight is changed and decisions are made based on solidarity and compassion for the most vulnerable, incorporating these civic and religious values into policies towards the forcibly displaced will not be possible.¹¹⁶ So, where is a good place to begin? A good place, as it will be suggested later, is with the forcibly displaced themselves. No one can deliver their message better than they can. Those who would like to support this endeavour are called to provide the avenues and forums for their stories to reach as many people as possible.

At the same time, while Christians put forth their best efforts to engage with a broader, more secular audience, they cannot deny nor forget what impels them and sustains them in this endeavour: to bring about God's kingdom, the way of the world as God originally intended, God's vision and dream—the *visio Dei*:

Because Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxis emerge out of an understanding of God and God alone, the *visio Dei* shapes people's ethical dispositions and offers a new way of perceiving the *imago Dei* in those whose dignity is often disfigured by dehumanising stereotypes and demeaning public rhetoric [...]. The *visio Dei* comes into focus in the person of Jesus Christ and the kingdom he proclaimed. [This] kingdom [...] brings people into a different kind of social and ethical territory. It is based not on geography or politics but on divine initiative and openness of heart, leading to a different kind of vision of the current world order, where many of the first are last and the last first (Mt 19:30; Mk 10:31; Lk 13:29-30).¹¹⁷

“The *visio Dei* comes into focus in the person of Jesus Christ and the kingdom he proclaimed”. As mentioned earlier, in several occasions Jesus reminded his listeners that the kingdom of God was among them, and that the kingdom of God was already in them. It was

And as to the basis and reason for this selfishness: “[...] nations do not have direct contact with other national communities, with which they must form some kind of international community. They know the problems of other peoples only indirectly and at second hand. Since both sympathy and justice depend to a large extent upon perception of need, which makes sympathy flow, and upon the understanding of competing interests, which must be resolved, it is obvious that human communities have a greater difficulty than individuals in achieving ethical relationships”. REINHOLD NIEBUHR, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960, pp. 84-85.

¹¹⁶ As Hollenbach suggests: “The interdependence of persons on each other is a fact of human life. The prevailing ethos of Western culture, however, often leads us to forget how human well-being thoroughly depends on reciprocal cooperation with other people. The initiatives that engender both economic and cultural flourishing are social activities; they are embedded in networks of human interaction and interdependence [...]. The autonomy and independence so highly regarded today are, to be sure, genuine marks of good human lives. They are aspects of the freedom and creative capacity that distinguish human beings [...]. But without careful attention to the ways humans are dependent on each other, the good life will be misunderstood and the path toward it misconstrued. This is especially relevant to the pursuit of economic justice and to efforts to overcome poverty”. DAVID HOLLENBACH, *The Common Good & Christian Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010, pp. 181-182.

¹¹⁷ Cf. GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 15.

his presence then, and his continuing presence now in the Spirit, that allows the kingdom to become a reality. To the extent that people act as Jesus did, allowing the Spirit to guide them and to reveal the face of Jesus in each other—particularly in ‘the other’ and in the stranger—they will contribute to the drawing near of God’s kingdom. As Terry Coonan points out, there is

[...] a discernible shift in the moral paradigm of the New Testament: whereas in the Old Testament, the Jewish people were called to welcome the stranger because they themselves had once been strangers, in the New Testament, the Christian obligation to do so derives from the conviction that, in the face of the stranger, the Christian community encounters the face of Jesus.¹¹⁸

This face of Jesus, this presence of God in the stranger and in the foreigner to be welcomed, represents the value added to the Christian interpretation of the duty of hospitality. Paradoxically, as we will see in the next chapters, while the fear of loss of personal and societal identity constitutes the major obstacle in welcoming strangers and foreigners, it is through this encounter that such identities are explored, challenged, reassessed and reaffirmed. And such encounters also reveal “new dimensions about the relationship between God and humankind” and offer different interpretations of ‘God’s image and likeness’ in referring to human nature.¹¹⁹

1.2.5.6. Pastoral care and liturgical practice

The factors and causes of forced displacement are numerous and those affected can range from lone victims of individual persecution (a young woman being forced to undergo genital mutilation, for example) to a particular race or whole ethnic group fleeing to avoid impending genocide (we need only think of Rwanda in the mid-1990s). The circumstances and needs of the forcibly displaced also vary as they move through the different stages of displacement—the preceding conflict, the actual physical displacement, the journey to safety, the period of internment, resettlement or return to country of origin, and the post-settlement period which

¹¹⁸ Cf. TERRY COONAN, “There Are No Strangers Among Us: Catholic Social Teaching and U.S. Immigration Law” in *Catholic Lawyer* 40 (2000) 110-111; as quoted in GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 28.

¹¹⁹ Cf. BAGGIO, “Introduction”, p. xiii. It should be remembered that “A disturbing aspect of identity is that it is only constructed ‘through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called the *constitutive outside* that the *positive* meaning of any term—and thus its *identity*—can be constructed. The process of identity formation is thus integrally related to the process of exclusion, leaving out, rendering others outside. As produced in or through difference, it is not fixed but always challenged by that which it excludes”. BRAZAL and DE GUZMAN, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, p. 51.

can go on for years or even a lifetime. The trauma and violence endured by survivors of forced displacement will affect all areas of their lives and to some extent, throughout all of their lives.

Fellow human beings, and fellow Christians (for those who share this faith tradition) are called—within their possibilities and competencies—to minister to and care pastorally for survivors of forced displacement throughout each of these stages, even once they have found a new home in another country. It is not a matter of treating them differently, but rather of treating them with the compassion and care they would offer to anyone, while at the same time acknowledging their very special circumstances and needs. The place to begin, as always, is by listening to their stories, openly, without prejudice or judgment, and by allowing them to express what their needs—physically, emotionally, spiritually—are, but also by allowing them to share their dreams and their hopes. It is necessary to address all these areas in a holistic way, for if one's mental well-being for example is not well looked after, then one's physical and spiritual self will also suffer. Of course, even as important as listening is, it is not enough. Pastoral carers (be it in a professional role or offering pastoral support as friends and neighbours), need to inform and form themselves, both as individuals and communities, to offer the best and most relevant pastoral care possible.

Ideally, in order to do this effectively as a community, they should count with the assistance of former displaced persons who will understand, better than any of them could, what will indeed be useful and relevant. Unfortunately, and as we will explore in more detail later on, in many cases former refugees or asylum seekers do not come to the assistance of new arrivals. Some argue that they prefer to put that stage of their lives behind, either because it is too painful to be reminded of the hardships they had to go through, or because they want to look to the future in their new homeland rather than to the past. In many cases, though, the scarcity of their involvement has to do with insufficient confidence and not being sure as to whether they can actually offer support to others. Like everyone else, they would certainly benefit from receiving training and formation. Unlike most, they possess already something others lack as possible pastoral supporters of ex-refugees: to have gone through a similar experience of forced displacement and have survived it—and in some cases thrived despite of it. This shared experience gives them the credibility, and empathy, to assist the latest wave of

arrivals and to exemplify for others what they might be able to achieve in their new found home.

Government and charitable organisations provide some of this much needed pastoral support, but people of faith are placed in an enviable position of sharing with forcibly displaced people of faith a common bond, underpinned by similar values. And yet, there is still so much more that the institutional Church and Christian communities can do to make our displaced brothers and sisters feel welcome and at home. And as mentioned already, this applies particularly to sacramental and other liturgical celebrations. Christian communities should be constantly asking, for example, “How do we allow forcibly displaced people’s painful experiences as well as their stories of survival, perseverance, hope and joy inform and enrich our liturgical practices and rituals? Are we able to try new things and trust that our spiritual lives might be revitalised by these different practices? Can we let go of our ‘liturgical control’ and recognise that there is still so much we can learn from those with experiences quite different from ours?”

1.2.5.7. Ecclesiology

As mentioned earlier, and as we have tried to demonstrate throughout this section, ‘being-in-displacement’ has been and continues to be an essential and defining element in the reality of the Church. Based on this premise, it can be argued that the Church is not only a church of pilgrims as stated by Vatican II, but also a ‘church of the displaced’. The commonalities between the two abound, but the differences though subtle are extremely important. Both pilgrims and the forcibly displaced are on a quest, they face uncertainties, experience both welcome and rejection, and might arrive or not at their destination. But while pilgrims in most cases walk *towards* a particular destination, the displaced—and in particular the forcibly displaced—walk (or run!) *away* from danger, unbearable and even inhumane living conditions, abuse and marginalisation. And in most cases, their destination is not clear. Most forcibly displaced people, in fact, would prefer to return to the place they originally called *home*. They pray and hope that their long journeys will eventually bring them back there. Is not this what each one of us, in the depths of our being, truly desires? To be able to journey back to our home in God, the source of our being? Where we will finally experience an end to our restlessness and find true peace (cf. St Augustine)?

As a Church—in—displacement, we would also do well to explore what this essential element of the Church brings to its constitutive ‘marks’: what does it mean, for example, to be *one church in displacement*, or an *apostolic church in displacement*, a *holy church in displacement* and even a *catholic church in displacement*? In regards to the latter, the document ‘Starting Afresh from Christ: Towards a Renewed Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees’ affirms that “[...] no one, be they migrants, refugees or members of the local population should be looked upon as a ‘stranger’, but rather as a ‘gift’, in parishes and other ecclesial communities. This is an authentic expression of the ‘catholicity’ of the church”.¹²⁰ Displaced peoples, with their diverse religious traditions and cultural backgrounds, challenge the catholicity not only of local communities, but also of the church as a whole, encouraging further theological reflection on essential displacement-related concepts such as citizenship, interculturalisation, inclusiveness and cultural rights: “Theologically, catholicity is not a heavenly dream where all have become one and the same; catholicity is a praxis through which those who are not yet related to the whole are given privileged spaces in what Jesus calls the *basileia* of God”, so as to enrich it and draw it nearer to what it is meant to be.¹²¹

1.2.5.8. Catholicity and Community

It is worth exploring further this concept of ‘the catholicity of the church’ in relation to the concept of ‘community’ as we seek to proactively include and welcome the forcibly displaced. Communities are distinguished by the style or form in which they are imagined. That is to say, “notions of community that people construct influence the way they experience each other in social relationships”, which in turn forms and informs their notions of collective identity:

In an interactive experience, people go through a process of imagining or understanding who they are in concrete and changing historical, temporal, and social circumstances [...]. Images of collectivity that people make and impose on others are not ‘objective’ but carry certain agendas which the others are expected to execute. Conversely, to pursue new or alternative

¹²⁰ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE, “Starting Afresh from Christ: Towards a Renewed Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees”, final document of *the Fifth World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees*, Rome, 17 - 22 November 2003, Part II, Pastoral Care, 9. Cf. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/rc_pc_migrants_doc_2004_001_Migrants_Vcongress_%20findoc_en.html. Accessed 1 June 2018.

¹²¹ Cf. BAGGIO, “Introduction”, pp. xii, xvii.

discourse is more than a conceptual exercise but suggests a different way of looking at things and behaving in the world.¹²²

From this follows that ecclesiological discourse on ‘community’ in the language of symbols, images, metaphors, analogies and models has not only helped articulate the Church’s self-understanding but also to describe and prescribe its internal and external relationships. De Guzman believes in the need to construct anew the meaning of ‘church as community’ from a new perspective, that of displaced peoples and migrants. He points out three styles in which the church has been imagined and understood in the context of displacement—a church *for* the displaced—and then suggests specific elements that he believes might help us reimagine the church as one *with* and *of* the displaced. The three conventional styles or images of the church visualise the church: (1) as a relation of shepherd and flock; (2) as a relation of mother-teacher and children-pupils, and (3) as a relation of family in the world. De Guzman explores both the positives and the limitations of these metaphors.¹²³

1.2.5.8.1. A good shepherd smells like his sheep

In its positive sense, the image of the ‘good shepherd’, as exemplified by Jesus (cf. John 10:7-18), implies that all of his disciples are also challenged to become good shepherds and offer their lives for others, especially the ‘lost ones’, in selfless and unconditional love. This entails going beyond their functional roles as ministers and having the willingness to face the challenges and disappointments that accompany their work *for* and *with* forcibly displaced peoples. And it entails also seeking out the ‘sheepfold’, going out of their churches and of their way (as Pope Francis continuously urges us to do) to find the displaced wherever they are in order to respond to their needs and concerns. A limitation of this image, however, is that for most people it has become an outdated metaphor (even in Australia which has the

¹²² Cf. EMMANUEL S. DE GUZMAN, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies” in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, p. 118.

¹²³ Cf. DE GUZMAN, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies”, pp. 120-126. What follows is a summary of some of the ideas presented in this document. These three styles or images fall mainly within the multiculturalist model of church. Three other models (which at times can overlap), categorised as such by using the disciplines of social anthropology, missiology and systematic theology are: the monocultural host church, the monocultural migrant church and the intercultural church. In the monocultural host church, displaced peoples and migrants of varied backgrounds are incorporated into one church, that is the host church and its culture. In some of these churches, over-assertion of cultural identities is seen as a possible threat to the unity of the whole. The monocultural migrant church refers to a church composed mainly of a single ethnic group. Their ministers are mainly ‘immigrants’ or ‘sent by the church’ (migrant chaplains) in the originating countries. A possible danger is to become a ghetto church if the relationship with the church of the receiving society is not fostered. Cf. BRAZAL and DE GUZMAN, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, pp. 117-123.

third highest ratio of sheep to people after Mongolia and New Zealand, but whose majority of population is found in urban settings), and one that is mostly identified with ordained ministry, hardly ever being used for lay ministers and basically never for women. And in the real world sheep are some of the dumbest and dirtiest animals to be found! So the use of such a term might not only be irrelevant but actually offend some new arrivals.

1.2.5.8.2. *Mother knows best*

By combining ‘mother’ and ‘teacher’, the Church is imagined as gentle and kind-hearted yet authoritatively firm in its decisions and commitments:

Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother: “We believe the Church as the mother of our new birth, and not in the Church as if she were the author of our salvation”. Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith.¹²⁴

The role of a mother is also to protect her children, to discipline them and guide them so they grow up with exceptional values, and it is also to make sure harmony reigns in the home. Like a loving mother, the Church sees its role of harmonising and unifying the diverse, if not conflicting, cultures and religions, giving special attention to the human dignity of those in the margins, including the forcibly displaced. Here, we need to remember again that whether the kind of Church fostered by this image is false or genuine is not as important as to how the image influences social relationships. As a protective mother, the Church has constantly lobbied and exhorted governmental, business and international organisations to respect the dignity of the forcibly displaced.

A major limitation of this image however is that, in honouring and respecting their ‘mother-teacher’, displaced peoples and migrants are expected to commit themselves wholly to the teachings of the Church which projects itself as ‘the one’ possessing the only right and true judgement. Forcibly displaced peoples who have had to do ‘whatever it took to survive’ and might continue to have to do so, might feel that some forms of their interpersonal relationships and activities might be considered immoral by mother Church and therefore they might believe themselves to be ‘unworthy’ of or rejected by it.

¹²⁴ Cf. CCC, n. 169.

1.2.5.8.3. Family Ties

The Church as family might constitute a greatly appealing image for many displaced peoples, especially to those who have lost family members in conflict or who have been separated from them for a variety of reasons or circumstances. In an ideal family, all members share equal rights and responsibilities, so this image would also support the idea of the Church's being equally both for native residents (hosts) as well as newcomers (arriving guests).¹²⁵ As members of God's family, the displaced should never feel discriminated against nor excluded in the Church. On the contrary, as brothers and sisters, the native hosts should welcome them unconditionally as 'long-lost siblings' who have finally come home. In the Church as family of God, we are first of all brothers and sisters in Christ, and no differences in our ethnicity or cultural traditions can change that. Unfortunately, the concept of 'ideal family' on which this metaphor is based is rapidly becoming more of an idyllic representation than a reality. The care and responsibilities for family members are still there, but they are lived out differently now as newer forms of family relationships continue to emerge.¹²⁶

1.2.5.8.4. The Church as an intercultural community

The three images presented above both describe and prescribe our Church's current thoughts and practices in relation to the displaced—basically, a Church *for* them. A theology of displacement is concerned with the construction of an imagined Church that is not only *for* displaced peoples but also *with* and *of* the displaced. Reimagining a Church that brings together people of different origins and cultures asks us to modify our approach at the cognitive level, but also to seek more relevant relationships within the Church and the world. De Guzman suggests that social and political theorist Iris Marion Young's vision of an 'inclusive participatory polity' can be helpful in reimagining a new self-understanding of the Church in relation to migrants and displaced peoples. Such a Church would: nurture social

¹²⁵ "In the present state of affairs, out of which there is arising a new situation for mankind, the Church, being the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Matt. 5:13-14), is more urgently called upon to save and renew every creature, that all things may be restored in Christ and all men [sic] may constitute one *family* in Him and one people of God" (AG 1), *Ad Gentes*, On the Mission Activity of the Church (7 December 1965), AAS 58 (1966) 947-990; http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_1965_1207_ad-gentes_en.html. Accessed 1 June 2018.

¹²⁶ Interestingly, despite (or perhaps because of) the continuous fracturing of African families due to endless conflicts and wars, the AIDS pandemic and the never-ending outflux of displaced peoples from several nations, the Second African Synod (Rome, 2009) "affirmed the nature of the church as family of God and defined its mission as the promotion of reconciliation, justice and peace on a conflicted continent". Cf. AGBONKHIANMEGHE, ed., *Practicing Reconciliation, Doing Justice, Building Peace: Conversations on Catholic Theological Ethics in Africa*, p. 9.

difference in its positive, relational meaning; be aware of and attend to configurations and dynamics of power relationships; be critical of insisting on ‘community’ as the only mediation of human connectivity, and promote social relations in the ideal of ‘city life’ or, in other words, an experience of ‘being together of strangers’.¹²⁷

As mentioned earlier, understanding difference in its relational meaning goes beyond the notion of Church as a multicultural community, if by *multicultural* we understand a harmonious and peaceful coexistence of various ‘autonomous’ cultures within one Church.¹²⁸ On the other hand, what the intercultural model of church attempts to do is to promote “opportunities for meaningful interaction between various cultural groups toward mutual enrichment and positive change in the perspective of the other”.¹²⁹ What it proposes is that recognition of social differentiation does not have to break up the Church; rather, to regard the Church as “consisting of differentiated groups is to contextualise group differences, not in the negative sense but in the affirmation of diversity”.¹³⁰ In the case of forcibly displaced people, in particular, for whom being ‘different’ is an existential trait, this is something that should be encouraged and celebrated within the Church rather than dissuaded.

¹²⁷ Cf. BAGGIO, “Introduction”, p. xii.

¹²⁸ BRAZAL and DE GUZMAN, in their work on the *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, provide a concise description of a multiculturalist church: “[It] encourages ethnic distinctions by facilitating each group of migrants to express their faith in their cultural particularity under the leadership as well of migrants [or other displaced peoples] from their own countries. These groups co-exist with one another, where co-existence means permitting migrants to celebrate their own liturgies, programs and activities, with their own leadership, in their own time and with assigned rooms in the parish compound or in the diocese. Once in a while, there will be some interaction among the different migrant groups during special occasions or major liturgical celebrations but groups maintain their relative autonomy [...]. The multiculturalist church promotes cultural variety by giving each migrant group freedom to develop and grow in their communal life of faith according to their cultural wisdom and resources [...]. There is little effort done for the groups to relate with one another, as there is also less opportunity for communication exchange and common activities”, p. 124. As mentioned earlier, this has been the prevalent model used in ‘migrant’ churches in Australia.

¹²⁹ BRAZAL and DE GUZMAN, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, p. 126. The authors point out that interculturality helps people appreciate better the richness of cultures, their own and others, and suggest three motifs from biblical and theological traditions which “endorse the obligation to create intercultural Christian communities today”: (1) *Pentecost*, which reminds us that “the Spirit of God precedes, creates, assists and completes the church as communion—the church does not possess the Spirit; the Spirit has power over the church” and we are all guests in the Spirit-filled home where God is the gracious host. “Speech and communication enhance the Spirit’s gifts of difference”; (2) *the pilgrim people of God*: the image describes a church that has to go through a process of discovery, that is being transformed, that is always on the move; (3) *the Trinity*, as the mystery of the one God characterised by relationship, equality in diversity and creativity; pp. 129-131.

¹³⁰ DE GUZMAN, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies”, p. 130.

Yet, in order to promote this mutual enrichment, it is necessary to be attentive to configurations and dynamics of power relationships. Within the Church, this means first accepting that there are certain groups in it who are in a privileged position of being the ‘norm’ (dominant groups) that measures other groups, and of having the authority to set the norms for others, which may lead to exclusion and discrimination. It is important likewise to acknowledge that this does not only happen among members of receiving societies but also among displaced groups where there is one dominant group, or particular dominant persons (sub-group) within a group. The goal in addressing power asymmetries within the Church is not to make all groups think and act as those in privileged positions do, but to respect their difference by allowing them to be heard, recognised and involved in the Church’s life and institutions¹³¹: “This would imply that the Church allows ways of thinking, lifestyles and ritual practices other than what have been prescribed by those in position of norm”.¹³²

The concept of ‘community’ is almost universally regarded in positive terms, but de Guzman, argues that because it has been widely used without qualification—under the assumption that everyone shares the same meaning—it has become “obscure, meaningless”. Further, “the notion of community is highly suggesting of people who are or should be homogeneous in sharing similar beliefs, understandings, priorities and values. The concept expresses a longing for harmony among persons, for consensus and mutual understanding”. While these aspects are certainly desired, the downside is that respect for differences “may not find its visible expression in the social relations of a ‘community’ that tends to homogenise people rather than allow them to be themselves”. Similarly, while the value of community-based face-to-face encounters that promote intimate relationships and participation in the life of the Church cannot be denied, it should not be assumed that they provide the only form of human mediation that fosters these anticipated outcomes. An issue with many communities, (especially smaller ones) is that they tend to be concerned mainly with their own little world and fail to tackle far-reaching political, economic, cultural and gender issues. Widening the

¹³¹ “Interculturality or mutual fecundity can only truly happen in the context of a mutually empowering relation. To know whether mutuality exists in a relationship entails a power analysis [...]. Because negotiations occur in fields of power relations, it is not enough simply to create opportunities for interaction but it is an imperative to address as well asymmetrical power relations for mutual fecundation to occur”, Cf. BRAZAL and DE GUZMAN, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*, pp. 59, 63.

¹³² Cf. DE GUZMAN, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies”, pp. 131-133.

spectrum to include members who are not the in-situ community, but still connected through other means, can serve as an antidote for this insularity.¹³³

Finally, de Guzman argues that the Church *of* and *with* the displaced should promote social relations in the ideal of ‘city life’, where strangers can find a place in “hospitable spaces that will affirm their difference”. This suggestion is based on the assumption that cities are meant for the benefit of life in such a way that both residents and administrators will indeed desire to make their cities hospitable spaces for *all beings* (granted, this never happens for all people, but in principle the goal is there). Because ‘city life’ is a space where people recognise difference “as a reality they must live with”, group distinctions tend to be respected. Further, individuals and groups do not function in terms of inclusiveness or exclusiveness, but rather “overlap and intermingle without becoming homogenous”. In terms of a Church *of* and *with* the displaced, this image can serve as an alternative to a Church made up of small communities and rather be seen as a ‘network’ where ‘differentiated solidarity’ is experienced: displaced peoples are affirmed in their difference, yet the various groups “responsibly share obligations for the well-being of one-another, especially in promoting inclusion and justice in their society”.¹³⁴ And they accept this function as part of their mission.

1.2.5.9. The Church’s mission *with* and *by* the forcibly displaced

One essential aspect of that mission to the Church, as expressed in the ‘Starting Afresh’ document, is for every person to share their giftedness with us all, helping us discover that those who we are called to serve also have something to offer. Beyond assimilation, beyond helping to create a multicultural society, they have the opportunity (and, as mentioned earlier too, the responsibility) to promote and help create an intercultural ‘community’ based on dialogue in communion. Of course, this is no easy task and obstacles are present both in the receiving groups—complacency with the status quo, fear of the ‘other’, and multiple other biases, and in the forcibly displaced people themselves—difficulty in articulating their own faith experience, fear of moving out of their own ethnic and cultural groups, and so on. But

¹³³ Cf. DE GUZMAN, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies”, pp. 134-137.

¹³⁴ Cf. DE GUZMAN, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies” pp. 138-144.

the duty of the new arrivals is to share these gifts, and the responsibility of the receiving church is to be open to accept them. The mission of the forcibly displaced, and all migrants in general then, is “to call the church to its own catholicity and, indeed, to its own mission, so that the church can be what it is called to be: a sign to the world of God’s own unity-in-diversity, an ‘outpost of hope’ in which peoples and cultures can work in harmony together”.¹³⁵ Displaced peoples remind us as Church of who we are. As a *one church in-displacement*, we are ‘marked’ by being ‘foreigners’ here on earth—foreigners but also missionaries: “The Church that is missionary by nature is a pilgrim Church that is also migratory by nature”.¹³⁶

Such call or ‘invitation’ involves facing uncertainty and taking risks. But this has been the lot of most forcibly displaced people for a long time. They have developed the skills and talents to weather and ride out these storms and can teach others to do the same. They, who have been called to move outside of their comfort zones, into deserts and uncharted frontiers but also into new and unexpected life, can be co-guides in this daring adventure. As an *apostolic church in-displacement*, the body of Christ is also “the ‘Border Christ’, always on the move, never at home in one place, willing to go where needed, wearing the simplest of clothes, carrying no more than needed—but because of this able to enter into every situation” (cf. Luke 9:3; Mt 10:10).¹³⁷ But while the forcibly displaced have developed the skills and talents to venture into the peripheries for themselves, as they arrive into other receiving cultures, they also depend on the local church to help equip them with the additional tools required to collaborate effectively at the start and later become themselves ministers and leaders in these communities. Thus, the receiving local churches bear the responsibility to

¹³⁵ Cf. STEPHEN BEVANS, “Mission *among* Migrants, Mission *of* Migrants: Mission of the Church” in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008, p. 100. And for its mission to be fulfilled, the Church has to make room to allow people the space to come to God in their own way: “This notion of creating space is foundational to a theology of migration/[displacement] because it sees the *missio Dei* not first as an imposing evangelisation but as a ministry of generous hospitality, one that is mutually enriching for those who give and those who receive”, Cf. GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 14.

¹³⁶ Cf. WILLIAM LAROUSSE, “‘Go... and make disciples of all nations’: Migration and Mission” in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, p. 167. LaRousse also reminds us that through the eyes of faith we need to read displacement “in light of God’s plan of bringing about the unity of all humanity. Migration is where the Church is asked to prove its participation in the Trinitarian mission of calling into one family, one human community, all humanity splendid in diversity and yet united in and through this diversity”, p. 164.

¹³⁷ BEVANS, “Mission *among* Migrants, Mission *of* Migrants: Mission of the Church”, p. 100.

incorporate the newly arrived into its ministerial life—as catechists and religious educators, social justice workers, parish or diocesan council members and music ministers, among others—not only for ministry among people of their own culture but for intercultural ministry as well.

The Church, strengthened and empowered by the Spirit, has made its own Jesus' *Great Commission* by going to the ends of the earth, in permanent displacement, to proclaim the Good News of salvation. An essential element of this task is to work against any and all individual and structural forces of sin that deface the image and likeness of God in every human person—including those disguised as legal instruments to safeguard the privileges of few over the rights of many—and to work for reconciliation among those who have been divided by these forces. Above all, through his words, his actions and his attitude to all, Jesus demonstrated that the law of compassion is supreme, calling us always to read any other law in terms of how it takes into account the needs of our least privileged brothers and sisters, especially the forcibly displaced.¹³⁸

1.3. Conclusion and Summary of learnings for Part I

We have endeavoured in this first part of Chapter 1 to consider some of the main aspects, characteristics and issues that might be involved in the development of a contextual theology of displacement and migration. In doing so, our motivation and intention has been to answer two questions which we believe are relevant to our study: (1) How and what could such a theology contribute to the lives of the forcibly displaced and to the life of the Church as the people of God? and (2) What can we learn through this exploration in terms of specific needs of survivors of forced displacement which we should consider in developing spiritual resources for them?

As an initial response to the first question—and based on the insights obtained from our discussion—we have suggested that a theology of displacement should help us as Church to consider and revisit our Christian doctrines and beliefs viewing them through a new lens,

¹³⁸ “A central dimension of this mission is Jesus’ ministry of reconciliation which deals largely with overcoming human constructions that divide the insider from the outsider, particularly those constructions generated by law in its various forms. The *missio Dei* challenges human tendencies to idolise the state, religion, or a particular ideology and use it as a force that excludes and alienates, even when it does so under the guise of obedience to a greater cause”. GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 10.

while also being open to the possibility that through this new perspective God—and God’s desire for us—can be revealed in ways we have not hitherto perceived or considered. In regards to our forcibly displaced brothers and sisters, our hope is that these theological considerations will help, at the very least, to answer the question: “What does it mean for a forcibly displaced person of faith to have survived the experience of forced displacement in terms of how that person relates to him or herself, to those around him or her, and to God, as each of them understands, believes in and seeks God”? As we have seen in our study, there is an undeniable relationship between *what* we believe and *how* we live. And also how we live—or are forced to live—will undoubtedly affect our beliefs about ourselves, about others and about God.

We will try to answer the second question in the conclusions that follow, summarising our learnings as we go along: learnings which highlight the spiritual needs and challenges of survivors of forced displacement that we hope to address through our *spiritual exercises*. Also, as mentioned in the Introduction, Appendix I offers a more detailed presentation of these learnings, in table format, covering four areas: (1) major themes recognised; (2) identified spiritual needs of the displaced to be addressed based on those themes; (3) possible Ignatian *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement to address these needs and, (4) relevant resources from Ignatian and scriptural sources to help develop these *exercises*. As also mentioned in the Introduction, similar tables will be used to collect further information and learnings at the end of each section of each chapter. It is hoped that this format will facilitate cross-referencing, bring up connecting threads, and suggests pivotal issues to be addressed, as we gather ‘raw data’ to be used for the content of the spiritual resources developed for the forcibly displaced within our Ignatian and other traditions in chapter 5.

Part I was divided in two sections. **Section 1** began looking at the context, background and reasons the phenomenon of displacement has become one of the most pressing issues for our Church today. We saw that migration and forced displacement have indeed had a profound role in the development of all faith traditions throughout history, and that this has certainly been the case for the Catholic Church in Australia throughout its 230-year ‘European’ history. In fact, since the continuum of displacement has brought Christianity to the four corners of the world, it could be argued that the Church might be considered an ‘institutional migrant’ and that ‘being-in-displacement’ has been and continues to be an essential and

defining element in its reality. This assertion challenged us to consider the significance of forcibly displaced peoples and their possible contribution to our church, our theology and our spirituality today. In effect, it challenges us to consider whether by failing to take into account the experiences, insights and voices of forcibly displaced people, we might also fail to become the church we are meant to be. In other words, we might miss a constitutive element of what it means to be a true global, universal, ‘catholic’ church today.

Putting it in another way, it could be argued that by ignoring the contribution of forcibly displaced peoples, the church might not fulfil its true nature and mission. It was pointed out that to carry out this mission, the church has always had the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, so as to focus its presence and activity in the world in response to the “joys and hopes, grief and anguish”, of the followers of Christ, especially of those who are “poor and afflicted” (cf. GS 1-4). Arguably, no other group today embodies the “joys and hopes, grief and anguish” of the world more radically than forcibly displaced peoples—the crucified people of the 21st century (cf. Ignacio Ellacuría). We saw that because the factors behind and around the tragic reality of forced displacement are so complex and so multi-faceted, no theology of displacement seeking to truly ‘read the signs of our times’ can be developed without considering possible contributions from such secular disciplines as anthropology, demography, sociology and psychology, geography, history, environmental studies and politics, as well as state, migration and human rights’ law.

Adding to this complexity is the fact that large, unrestricted movement and flows of people give rise to conflict and controversy, for they affect not only those in movement but also their receiving communities, thus making migration and forced displacement increasingly volatile and contentious political issues. Even the role of the Catholic Church is not straightforward in this discussion. As it was pointed out, currently there are two main (and opposite) extremes of Christianity’s response to the current forced displacement debate: one with a theology that stresses the necessity of *belonging* (where defending and upholding Christian culture and its ‘ways’ is more important than faith) and the other with a theology that stresses the necessity of *believing* (where faith and universal gospel values are more important than defending Christian culture). These two polar extreme theologies of *belonging* and *believing*

are characterised by either a view of Christianity that says we should welcome the ‘other’ (*believing*), or one that says we should not (*belonging*), unless the ‘other’ is like ‘us’, which in effect means that they are not really an ‘other’ anymore. Of course, most Christian responses are located along a continuum between the two and display elements of both, sometimes in contradictory and sometimes in complementary ways.

For our purposes, these initial learnings translate into several considerations and criteria for the *exercises* we will develop in Chapter 5. These include: (1) learning and addressing the ‘joys and hopes, grief and anguish’ the forcibly displaced bring with them; (2) making sure that survivors of forced displacement realise and internalise that they, like all of us, are an essential part of the church; (3) that they have a right but also a responsibility to make their ‘voices’ heard; 4) that they *are* individuals, human persons of dignity, and not the ‘labels’ others might impose on them; (5) making sure that they feel welcomed and accepted; (6) identifying the ‘crosses’ that they, as the ‘crucified people of our world today’, carry; (7) responding to their need to tell their stories and be heard, and (8) recognising that their issues and needs vary depending on the stage of displacement they find themselves at, so diverse spiritual resources need to respond appropriately.

The **second half** of **Section 1** then considered the elements involved in a methodological systematisation of a theology of displacement. As with many other fields of study, we saw that it is commonly accepted today that this methodological systematisation involves four steps, starting from (1) experience (the reality of forcibly displaced peoples), and moving on through (2) analysis (a socio-political and intercultural analysis), (3) theological hermeneutics and (4) practice. The realities of forced displacement (step 1) must include both the experiences of the forcibly displaced (through the three stages of displacement) as well as the reality—contextual and cultural—of the receiving communities. The socio-political and intercultural analysis (step 2) seeks to discern—and then carry out—whatever is necessary to incorporate the richness of faith, tradition, liturgy and spirituality offered by the new arrivals to their hosts. In the context of a theology of displacement, and from an intercultural perspective, this calls for a constant decentralising and openness to conceive new criteria with the purpose of understanding the truths and experiences of faith and realities from diverse traditions, both in the country of origin of the forcibly displaced and the place where they

struggle to build a new home. Beyond assimilation, beyond integration, and even beyond multiculturalism (characterised by peaceful and harmonious coexistence), the required movement should be towards an existence marked by dialogue-communion in those contexts where forced displacement—and migration in general—is generating societies of cultural, religious, or ethnic diversity or plurality. The desired goal is that seemingly competitive identities be explained, informed and sensitised to the other so that a truly *in-communion* Church can begin to develop.

The ensuing theological interpretation (step 3) requires mutual evaluation between the sciences and the Christian sources, as an essential part of the interdisciplinary dialogue mentioned earlier. It requires both to interpret and evaluate the Christian teachings on displacement in the light of what these sciences can teach us about their varied contexts, and to interpret and evaluate the scientific data in the light of the Scriptures and the Church's Tradition and teachings—in other words, to give them a properly theological meaning. A third element or task required to complete this theological systematisation is the continuous and open dialogue between this emerging theology of displacement and other theological fields (which we addressed in the second section of Part 1). The fourth and final step (4) in developing a theology of displacement involves praxis. The implicit goal is to lead all peoples to 'put their lot in with the displaced'—to make an 'option for the displaced'—and to commit themselves as people of faith to uphold the dignity and rights of forcibly displaced people. This demands that a theology of displacement in praxis see itself as a contextual theology of liberation from oppressions that specifically affect all types of displaced peoples, and that it explore and promote ways to foster human encounters and alternatives to any form of exclusion by the dominant, resident groups, supporting open and mutual reflections on the appropriation of new elements of identity for both.

Since the methodological systematisation of a theology of displacement will only be of value as long as it is not separated from the stories, experiences and concerns of forcibly displaced peoples, as an example of this methodology we looked at the issue of mandatory detention in Australia, taking it through the four methodological stages just outlined. Both the theoretical and practical components of this methodological study rendered additional considerations for the design and development of spiritual resources for survivors of forced displacement,

namely: (9) we cannot underestimate the effects of the biases/prejudices they have to confront because of their being seen as the ‘other’ by members of the receiving (faith) communities; an appropriate assessment of those effects will be essential in order to provide them with adequate spiritual support; (10) at the same time, whatever is possible should be done to recognise and appreciate the positive aspects of their ‘otherness’ and how they can enrich their receiving communities, (11) particularly in areas of worship, liturgy and other rituals; (12) there is a need to challenge the lingering expectation that new arrivals need to adapt to the culture and ‘way of doing things’ of their hosts; in other words, to find ways to promote the ‘dialogue-that-leads-to-communion’ presented above; (13) a true sense of ‘belonging’ is dependent on a true sense of ‘being at home’, which cannot occur as long as survivors of forced displacement as seen and treated as second-hand citizens; (14) finding ways to encourage this sense of belonging should be encouraged, and (15) survivors of forced displacement who in addition have survived mandatory detention will require special spiritual accompaniment and resources.

Having addressed the motivation, context, background and methodology for the development of a theology of displacement, **Section 2 of Part I**, explored the process of ‘theologising contextually through the *lens* of displacement’. We saw that theologising in context requires us to ground our theology in ‘historical reality’, in our political, economic, socio-cultural and religious context, so that such articulation be as closely relevant as possible to the questions and issues that pertain us and our communities. Moreover, the ‘act of faith’ involved in theologising contextually (and contextualising theology) is not only about what we *think*, but it reveals also what and who we *are*. Thus, theologising in this way should reveal our priorities in life, the values that guide our existence, and the goals that we set for the future (cf. *Principle and Foundation*, [SpEx 23]), in terms of our ‘option for the displaced’. Taking this into account and assuming that, as suggested earlier, displacement and migration constitute an existential characteristic of our human condition, it was argued that all branches of theology and their areas of study, as well as the basic questions they pose, should then be considered for reformulation or at least reconsideration, from this perspective of displacement. It was pointed out that similar ‘contextual theologising’ endeavours have been carried out before, for example, by liberation theologians in Latin America, Asia and Africa, who as members of basic Christian communities have espoused a ‘preferential option for the

poor’ and have taken this theologising to marginalised people who have suffered from unjust structures.

Because for people of faith, the question that sooner or later will arise is “Where is God in the midst of all this terror and suffering?” or “Why does God allow this to happen?” (questions connected to people’s operative images of God), we then explored how, within a theology of displacement and migration and for those who have been victims of forced displacement, the image or concept of a *God-in-displacement* could be a source of great consolation and a possible pathway to find meaning in their suffering. Paradoxically, while a great majority of people in ‘developed’ nations today tend to displace or dislodge God from their existence—claiming autonomy, independence and self-reliance—for many forcibly displaced people of faith God has never been dislodged from their lives, pushed away or banished. Instead, for them God has been and continues to be the *centre* and anchor of their lives.

As the incarnated Son of God, and in his human life, Jesus is the perfect embodiment of this *God-in-displacement*, the *imago Dei migratoris*, and also the one who shows us the way back to God. We saw how as itinerant preacher and dweller, Jesus became a Messiah-in-displacement, going to those in the margins, welcoming all. From his birth, and even before, Jesus’ life mirrored the day-to-day existence of many displaced peoples, both in their homelands and host and resettlement countries. In Christ, God did not only reach out to the stranger but became himself ‘the stranger’. In a society where racial, cultural, ethnic, economic, gender-related and even religious factors erected walls and borders separating the have’s from the have not’s, Jesus became a ‘boarder-crosser’ who not only moved back and forth between these liminal spaces, but also sought (in a non-violent way) to demolish those walls by inviting one and all to the house of his compassionate and loving Father. It was argued then that for forcibly displaced people this concept of *Jesus-in-displacement*, of a ‘fellow displaced brother’, could also bring great consolation, knowing themselves in the constant company of one who not only suffered as they too have suffered, but who also gave meaning to his suffering as they themselves searched for meaning in theirs.

The **final section** of **Part I** explored what a *Church-in-displacement* might look like, addressing briefly how some branches of theology and/or their areas of study might be both

challenged and enriched by theologising contextually through the lens of displacement. The scope of our study only allowed us to address some of the salient themes within these fields which we believe might offer a starting point for further exploration into the spirituality and theology of forced displacement. The fields addressed included: the Holy Spirit, Christian anthropology, soteriology, eschatology, moral theology, pastoral care and liturgical practice, and ecclesiology. In regards to ecclesiology, and because of its relevance to our study, we explored in more detail the concept of “Catholicity and community”. We saw that communities are distinguished by the style or form in which they are imagined; that is to say, the notions of community we construct influence the way we experience each other in social relationships, which in turn forms and informs our notions of collective identity.

For the Church, ecclesiological discourse on ‘community’ in the language of symbols, images, metaphors, and models has not only helped articulate its self-understanding but also to describe and prescribe its internal and external relationships. Three conventional styles mentioned (with the positives and limitations of each metaphor) were those of a church *for* the displaced imagined (1) as a relation of shepherd and flock; (2) as a relation of mother-teacher and children-pupils, and (3) as a relation of family in the world. A theology of displacement is concerned, however, with the construction of an imagined Church that is not only *for* displaced peoples but also *with* and *of* the displaced. It was pointed out that reimagining a Church that brings together people of different origins and cultures asks us to modify our approach at the cognitive level, but also to seek more relevant relationships within the Church and the world; i.e. the Church as an intercultural community. Such a Church would need to nurture social difference in its positive, relational meaning; be aware of and attend to configurations and dynamics of power relationships; promote social relations in the ideal of ‘city life’ or, in other words, an experience of ‘being together of strangers’; see it as its responsibility to incorporate those newly arrived into its ministerial life, and continue to make its own Jesus’ *Great Commission* by going to the ends of the earth (including the heart of its own local communities), in permanent displacement, to proclaim the Good News of salvation.

As before, this process of ‘theologising contextually through the *lens* of displacement’ has raised additional aspects to include in the development of our *spiritual exercises* (chapter 5),

namely: (1) the importance of assisting survivors of forced displacement to reflect on the values that guide them in life and the goals they set for their future as members of a community of faith; (2) exploring their different operative images of God; (3) and offering alternative ‘displacement-based’ images that might offer them consolation and healing; (4) what it means to always feel in ‘the margins’ and how to address this sense of isolation; (5) how to promote greater identification with Jesus as ‘brother-in-displacement’; (6) exploring the roles of the forcibly displaced (and responsibilities) as witnesses of Christ and ‘workers in the vineyard’ of the Kingdom; (7) particularly in terms of the richness they can contribute as a community of faith with special gifts; (8) finding meaning in contributing to society and their faith communities; (9) discerning the best possible pastoral practices to meet their specific needs; (10) helping build a ‘civilisation of love’ that fights against stereotypes; (11) creating opportunities to incorporate survivors of forced displacement into the ministerial life of the church, both as ‘helpers’ and as leaders, and (12) providing opportunities for their gifts to be nurtured and developed further.

In conclusion, and as we have seen, despite its recent emergence, the growing field of a theology of displacement has already identified three main areas of reflection: (1) displacement as an image or metaphor of the ‘existential exodus’ we experience as human beings on our way back to God; (2) displacement as a ‘sacred space’ where we encounter the ‘Other/other’, and (3) displacement as a constant challenge to our understanding of the ‘catholicity’ or universally encompassing nature of Christ’s church. This *being-in-displacement*, as an essential and defining element in our reality as people of God, impels us not to ignore the significance of forcibly displaced peoples and their possible contribution to our Church, our theology and our spirituality.

Part II: A Spirituality of displacement and migration

Introduction

As we have tried to point out in the preceding section, the phenomenon of forced displacement and migration has become one of the most pressing issues for the world and the Church today. The plight of forcibly displaced men, women and children can no longer be ignored. And while an appropriate response might involve considerable risks and challenges, the human community cannot abdicate its responsibility of caring for those in greatest need. At the same time, it can be argued that the human community also ‘needs’ the forcibly displaced because:

[they] bring to the forefront of theological reflection the cry of the poor, and they challenge more sedentary forms of church in social locations of affluence and influence. The migrant [and the displaced person] reveals the paradoxical truth that the poor are not just passive recipients of charitable giving but bearers of the gospel that cannot be encountered except by moving into places of risk and vulnerability (Mt 25:31-46).¹³⁹

So, the forcibly displaced are needed in order to reveal the realities and riches of the gospel *that cannot be encountered except by moving into their places of risk and vulnerability*. Through this revelation, forcibly displaced people can help us expand our understanding of God and of ourselves and deepen our connection with God, with ourselves and others. And in this second Part of Chapter 1, we would like to suggest that they may also help us face and overcome the deep-seated feelings of hopelessness, of despair, that seem to have taken root in the hearts of so many people in our world today—humanity’s spirits are ‘under siege’ and many people cannot seem to find a way out. How can the forcibly displaced do this? What is the treasure they possess as ‘bearers of the gospel’ that can give the key to find a way out? The answer, we believe, can be found in the spirituality of the forcibly displaced, and the name of that ‘key’ is *hope*.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, because of the relevance of this topic to our study, which regards hope as the essential element in the spirituality of the forcibly displaced, we explore three main ‘hope-related’ themes in this section: first, (1) as a way of background and context, we look at the essential role of hope in people’s lives as well as its current

¹³⁹ Cf. GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 18.

crisis—what it means to live in ‘a world without hope’—but also the opportunities that such crisis might present to the Church today. We then address (2) what a lived spirituality of hope might entail—its theological and biblical foundations as well as its praxis in our present globalised context. Finally, we explore (3) how this spirituality of hope has found its roots—and has been further developed—in and through the experiences of forcibly displaced people: how they incarnate and express it in their lives and the lessons we can learn from them. As in Part I, the content of this second Part is driven by three main objectives which we hope to achieve by answering the following questions: (1) What does a spirituality of displacement and migration ‘look like’ and how can it contribute to the life of the Church as the people of God?, (2) What can we learn from survivors of forced displacement about a ‘lived spirituality of hope’? and (3) What can we learn through the present exploration about specific needs of survivors of forced displacement which we should consider in developing our spiritual resources for them?

2.1. A spirituality based on hope

Broadly, spirituality is understood in terms of experiencing and responding to what is deepest in human persons. What brings up one’s deepest emotions. What engages one’s conscience at the most profound level. People see things through a certain framework, a particular perspective which has become their habitual way of interpreting all reality. Then because they see things in this way, they habitually act in a certain way. Hence the two, their vision or *outlook* in life and their response or *way of life* which flows from it, make up what we call one’s spirituality.¹⁴⁰ For some people, because of their experiences, circumstances and relationships, this might mean seeing the world as a violent place, filled with dangers they have to overcome and doing whatever it takes to do so. For others, it might be believing that the world is a good place, that they are called to enjoy life and do all they can to make sure others can enjoy it too. Others might see life as a gift from *someone* or *something* greater than themselves, whom some might call ‘God’, and be filled with great gratitude towards this God; and out of this sense of gift and gratitude, they might want to give of themselves in service to others and to God.

¹⁴⁰ Or as Daniel Groody puts it: “I define spirituality as how one lives out [way of life] what one most values [outlook], and Christian spirituality as how one lives out what Jesus most valued”. Cf. GROODY, “Jesus and the Undocumented Immigrant: A Spiritual Geography of a Crucified People”, p. 300.

Christian spirituality—our connection to the transcendent Trinitarian God and how it is expressed in our lives—is also influenced and defined by specific beliefs, traditions and relationships. For Christians, their spirituality cannot be separated from their belief in and experience of this Trinitarian God who came to dwell among us in the human person of Jesus. It cannot be (should not be!) separated from the values of the gospel—the Good News—he instituted and modelled for us. But beyond any experiences, relationships and circumstances, Christians believe their spirituality is marked, more than anything else, by God’s grace in their lives, by the action of God’s Spirit, and by God’s gifts of faith, charity and hope. As gifts they are not imposed on us but offered and we are free to ‘accept’ them, and when we do, our lives are transformed.

We see that Ignatian spirituality, for example, is based on the vision and response of St Ignatius of Loyola to the experiences of his whole lifetime. For Ignatius, his vision and response to life was encapsulated in the phrase *finding God in all things*. Ignatius believed that God existed and that God had created the universe and everything in it, and done it out of God’s love for humanity. He also believed that God continued to sustain all creation and to give life anew, that God wanted to communicate with human beings and be made accessible to them, and that God wanted them to be free from anything that prevented them from having lives in abundance (cf. [SpEx 230-237]). So for Ignatius, God could be *found in all things* as a loving Creator, always present, always ready to shower us with graces.¹⁴¹ A basic tenant of the Christian faith is that God indeed gives the graces people need to face the challenges they encounter throughout their lives. The remainder of this chapter rests on the premise that for forcibly displaced people this fundamental grace is the gift of hope—a gift they not only receive and accept but also make their own to gift to others; a gift which constitutes the essential element of their spirituality.

However, before we embark on this journey of exploration of a ‘spirituality of hope’ through the lens of forced displacement, it is important to recognise that there are other ways of formulating—through the use of diverse theological concepts—what a Christian spirituality

¹⁴¹ Cf. WILLIAM A. BARRY, “Encontrar a Dios” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, pp. 746-749. See also WILLIAM A. BARRY, *A companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: finding God in all Things*, Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press 1994, and D. MOLLÀ, “Encontrar a Dios en todas las cosas”, Eides 9, Barcelona 1993.

of the forcibly displaced might entail. By defining spirituality as the way in which people live out *what* they most value—what is deepest in them—powerful images, themes or narratives arise connected to the lives and experiences of forcibly displaced peoples, which in turn ‘speak’ of other possible ‘spiritualities of displacement’: a spirituality of sacrifice; a spirituality of the desert; a spirituality of the cross, and a spirituality of gratitude.¹⁴² Each of these could certainly be explored and developed in its own right. However, in prioritising the theme of hope in our study—and as we make reference to each of these other themes throughout our present exploration—we hope to show that these various spiritualities can be incorporated into a more encompassing spirituality of hope.¹⁴³

2.2. We cannot live without hope

Expectation. Anticipation. Something desired. Trust. Confidence. All these words certainly reflect common ideas about what hope is and what it should entail. So, when a world without hope is considered, can it be said that the world—or the majority of people in it—have lost the capacity to experience these feelings? Of course not. There are plenty of instances of people who do hope and whose lives are marked by hope. At the same time, it is true that many people also experience a great deal of hopelessness and despair, and for some, these are the forces that control their daily lives.

In raising the question of a world without hope, what we want to consider is not so much the subjective type of hope that people speak about when they say “hope is the last thing we’ll lose”; that personal hope which is surely present and which translates into projects—within families, groups, communities—that look to transform and improve their particular

¹⁴² Thus, many forcibly displaced people often speak of the physical and emotional costs which they are willing to pay—to sacrifice—for the people they love. It might mean, for example, giving up the dream of returning to one’s country of birth for the sake of one’s children and the promise (and hope!) of a brighter future for them in their country of resettlement. They often compare their journeys toward freedom as ‘walking through a desert’ (in some cases, physical deserts), where they suffer hunger and thirst, extreme conditions and are stripped of the essentials of life, including their dreams. They speak of carrying heavy crosses—the death of loved ones, the loss of home and culture, the shame of doing the unspeakable to survive. Yet, despite how difficult each of these realities is, many forcibly displaced people also speak of them as helping them realise central truths about who they are and what they are before God. Through them, they speak about learning how to suffer or come to terms with their vulnerability, but also of learning to appreciate their relationships and becoming more aware of God’s presence in their lives, of how everything is gift, of simply ‘enjoying’ the fact that they are alive. And this rouses in them the only possible response: deep gratitude. Cf. GROODY, “Jesus and the Undocumented Immigrant: A Spiritual Geography of a Crucified People”, pp. 302-306.

¹⁴³ The themes in the next section were originally explored in my *tesina* and have been reworked and expanded here. Cf. SACHA A. BERMUDEZ-GOLDMAN, *Hope in forcibly displaced people: the gift of a stranger*. Tesina for the Degree of Licentiate in Theology, Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas 2013.

circumstances and the quality of their lives. What we want to consider is the widespread perception of an absence of this possibility for a better future for *all peoples*, especially those in the margins, as most forcibly displaced peoples are. The Christian conscience of people of faith—and the conscience that both believers and non-believers share about the value and dignity of all human life—calls them to go beyond their own particular hopes or those of their own people. A hope that is not within the reach of everyone is simply not sufficient, precisely because of the dignity recognised in each human being.¹⁴⁴ To hope is to be human, so a world without hope dehumanises us all. Is it possible to restore this universal hope to our world? We must strive to do so. And the point of departure should be trying to understand the nature of the despair and hopelessness that permeates the lives of so many, so that the problem can then be tackled.

2.2.1. The present situation: a world without hope?

The crisis of the ‘content’ of hope means that when we take into account the present circumstances and known data in our world, and ask ourselves what we can hope for, we struggle to find a different answer other than “what we can hope for is more of the same”. In other words, it is challenging to imagine profound new transformations in human and social realities; it is hard to come up with utopian designs that can mobilise human action so real transformative change can take place.¹⁴⁵

For some time now the world has been experiencing a paradigm shift—a radical change in its basic assumptions, thought-patterns and beliefs. Or at least it has experienced the first part of that shift. For such a change in paradigm requires both a ‘before’ and an ‘after’ stages. The best way to characterise this ‘before’ stage in the present time is to refer to it as the *post*-period: a period of post-institutionalised religions, post-liberalism, post-any kind of ideologies that have guided humanity for thousands of years—a period of *post*-anything that has long been considered ‘foundational as rock’ in people’s lives, but which has now lost its certainty or has become inadequately insufficient. And while still in this ‘before’ stage of the current paradigm shift, people keep looking for that ‘something’ to replace their former ways

¹⁴⁴ Cf. J. VIDAL TALÉNS, “Creer en tiempos de desesperanza. ‘*In spe, fortitudo vestra*’ (Is 30,15)” in *Scripta Theologica* 33 (2001) 844.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. VIDAL, “Creer en tiempos de desesperanza”, p. 844.

of thinking, beliefs and assumptions that will get them to the ‘after’ stage.¹⁴⁶ While for a few people this process of discovery might seem like an exciting prospect or adventure, for most the absence of certainties, or at least of some clear perspectives for the future, has led to a crisis of hope.¹⁴⁷

2.2.1.1. Doomsday?

The South African Dominican priest, Albert Nolan, asserts that one of the great characteristics of the present time, both in his native country and in the world over is despair: “we live in an age of despair”, he assures us. While for several centuries people lived in optimism and hope in the most important areas of their lives—political, scientific, economic and religious, all leading to *progress*—now “suddenly almost everyone has been plunged into a state of despair”.¹⁴⁸ The optimism produced by the scientific advances and benefits of the *Age of Reason* (17th century Europe) did not, however, solve all our problems. Bloody revolutions followed, and then world wars ensued which showed us how inhuman and cruel we could be towards our fellow human beings. Hope-filled socialist ideologies of shared resources and equality culminated in totalitarian and tyrannic communist governments, while the economic philosophy of unregulated free-markets and limitless economic growth also went bust. The threat of nuclear annihilation (not yet a thing of the past) is now being overshadowed by the use of biological weapons—people continue to discover more efficient ways of disposing of human lives, while at the same time avoiding damage to valuable and scarce resources, which the victors can then pillage and plunder. And even the planet itself, in response to irresponsible and unabated exploitation, seems to be giving up—climate change and global warming are real threats to which there might not be solutions in the long run. And then there is AIDS, the question of how to restrain and stop violence in Africa and in the Middle East, terrorism...¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Cf. N. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, “Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo. Cómo anunciarlo hoy desde la Vida Religiosa” in *CONFER* 52, n. 197 (2013) 43, 48.

¹⁴⁷ Of course, crises of hope throughout history are nothing new. Cf. P. LAÍN ENTRALGO, *La espera y la esperanza. Historia y teoría del esperar humano*, Madrid: Revista de Occidente ³1962, for a detailed study of the long history of crises and of the recovery and rebirth of hope in diverse circumstances. However, Vidal points out that the fact that the 50’s and 60’s were typified as ‘decades of hope’, helps us to put into context the novelty of our most recent ‘hopes’ past and present. Cf. VIDAL, “Creer en tiempos de desesperanza”, p. 848.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. A. NOLAN, *Hope in the Age of Despair*, Mumbai: St Pauls 2009, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ One of the contemporary authors who has explored some of the issues mentioned here is German sociologist Ulrich Beck. In his widely influential book, *The Risk Society*, the author analyses the present condition of Western societies and explores the way in which globalization has created risks that concern people from all different classes, not just the poor but also the rich and all those in between. Underpinning his analysis is the

This is the general picture, and it does not look good. All of this has been heard before, perhaps too often. So much so that most people seem to have become numb to both the negatives aspects of human history and to the present situation. Partly because the problems are just too big, too overwhelming, too out of anyone's control. If powerful nations cannot fix these problems, what can 'little, insignificant' individuals do? The power and control that people thought they could exercise over their lives is now all but gone.

Perhaps, the one way in which most have learned to cope with these insurmountable issues is to immerse themselves in worlds of fantasy and day-dreaming. Significantly, the most popular video games seem to be those in which people get to kill their enemies, obliterate their cities, and exterminate their worlds. The same is true for the big block-buster films: in them the heroes save planets, cures are found for all the worst illnesses, right defeats wrong, good triumphs over evil. But two hours of fantasy do not solve people's problems; they are still there when they return home from the movie theatres and the short reprieve they might have experienced in that darkened screen room, is replaced by a darkness that is prevalent and that does not go away. In the more developed world, people might have been able to disregard these 'uncomfortable' issues (wars, violence, degradation, poverty, illness, conflict) while they did not affect them directly, but as many hitherto flourishing Western countries now experiencing economic crises know, not anymore. There might not be armed conflicts in their streets, but there is scarcity, joblessness, and an ever-increasing percentage of depressed and anxious people walking those streets.

At the same time, a large percentage of the world is indeed victim to violence, degradation, poverty, armed conflicts, and forced displacement. In the mid-90s it was Rwanda, nowadays it is Syria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and tomorrow it will be yet another African nation. Of course, the world has always had its share of difficulties, violence,

notion of the 'risk society'. As a globalizing economy based on scientific and technical knowledge becomes more central to social organization, the changing nature of our society's relation to production and distribution is increasingly related to the environmental impact. The author claims that while in industrial society, the driving force was 'I am hungry', in a risk society it is 'I am afraid'. He also points out that risks are 'socially constructive' and that some risks are perceived as more dangerous because they are discussed in mass media more frequently (e.g. terrorism). This latter assumption has certainly proved true in contemporary Australian society, where the issue of asylum seekers and refugees entering Australia, often portrayed in the media as a 'threat' to its national sovereignty, is perceived by many as a risk to their values and way of life. Cf. U. BECK, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London: Sage 1992.

destruction, inhumanity. But two factors, among others, seem to intensify the reality of these tragedies. While technological advances have benefited and improved the lives of many, it has also allowed people to inflict damage on one another and the environment in ways unprecedented until now. Human beings can be agents of destruction more effectively and efficiently than ever. At the same time, these advances, especially in the area of communications, allow them to be much more aware of these acts of destruction and violence than they have been ever before—not only do they know that they are happening, but in many cases they can watch them ‘live’ in their television sets, or computer screens or smart phones. This is the present reality, and as expressed before, it looks quite bleak. So, the question is: where to go from here? Can anyone restore this gift of universal hope people so badly need? And, is there a place where they can go now? We would like to suggest that the answer to both questions is yes. That forcibly displaced peoples of faith hold the gift of hope, which they are ready to share with us. And that the church—in all its expressions, as community, as people of God, as an institution of faith—offers us a place to go and meet them. Before considering these two hypothesis in more detail, let us first take a look at the way in which this present reality has affected both people’s psyche and their spirit.

2.2.1.2. Despair: a universal spiritual malaise

In the world today, people have become more and more aware that their relationships—with themselves, with their brothers and sisters, and with God and God’s creation—are wounded and suffer from maladies which need to be healed. We have already mentioned some of the consequences of these wounded relationships: violence, injustice, hatred, death. And surely, another casualty is hope. Hope is always relational: people put their hope in God and in one another. They hope together for things that will benefit all. And even when they hope thinking mainly of themselves, they do it taking into account how the outcome of this hope will affect their relationships with others. Hope is always relational and so, if humanity wants to overcome the ‘crisis of hopelessness’ that afflicts the world today, it needs to heal its relationships. And to do so, it needs to begin with each person’s own process of healing.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ As explained later, I am not talking here about physical or even psychological illnesses that might be cured with medication or therapy, but rather a spiritual illness which ultimately can only be cured through God’s grace.

Following St Paul, the desert Fathers and Mothers of the Orient conceived a person as made up of three aspects or dimensions: body, psyche/soul and spirit, and insisted on an undeniable relationship between each one of them. This relationship was key in order to distinguish the causes of the diverse illnesses and ‘passions’ that afflicted a person and to determine the appropriate therapies to heal and purify these *disordered* relationships.¹⁵¹ When people think and talk about a crisis of despair and lack of hope, they tend to connect it with their psyche, with that part of humanity that deals with feelings, with moods, with one’s affectivity. Unless they are thinking of the theological virtue of hope, they probably would not connect it with their spirit, that aspect of themselves that is in direct union with God. However, following the intuition of the desert Fathers and Mothers, I would like to suggest that, because of the intrinsic relationship between one’s psyche and one’s spirit, the present crisis of hopelessness is a symptom, a consequence, of what I would like to call a universal spiritual malaise. People’s spirits are wounded—they have been separated from God—and they do not know how to heal themselves. In order to live in hope again, and to sustain that hope, their spirits need to be healed.

The opposite of hope is not hopelessness. The opposite of hope, what hurts the most, is not to expect anything anymore, to succumb to apathy, to monotony, boredom and indifference. This is what kills.¹⁵² True hope is passion and clamouring for truth, and so the real illness behind despair is this lack of passion for truth. In the climate of decadence that reigns in the present postmodern situation, everything seems to conspire so that the human person is not able to think and react anymore. Apparently, all that is left is for people to abandon themselves to immediate pleasures, because the search for meaning has failed them, and they need somehow to fill the emptiness that consumes them. Yet, it is possible to discern some hints to help in this search for lost meaning that will also begin the process of healing.

Firstly (and as we pointed out in our discussion on the theology of displacement), the re-discovery of the ‘other’. One’s neighbours—near and far—by the simple nature of their existence, are already a reason to live and to *live together*, because they challenge others to

¹⁵¹ For a detailed study of the diverse types of illnesses (somatic, psychic, spiritual) and their respective therapies see F. RIVAS, *Terapia de las enfermedades espirituales en los Padres de la Iglesia*, Madrid: San Pablo 2008.

¹⁵² Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, “Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo”, p. 66.

come out of themselves, to live an *exodus*, a *displacement* without return in their commitment to them, in love.¹⁵³ And then, the re-discovery of God and one's need for God. For, at the end of the day, it is only God, through Jesus, in the Spirit, who can heal humanity. *You shall give birth to a son, and you will give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people* (Matthew 1:21). The name 'Jesus' means 'Yahweh saves' or, in other words, 'cures'. This image of Jesus as healer, as is well known, is quite widespread in the New Testament—an image which brings together the themes of redemption and salvation. This image of Jesus as 'medic' or healer is strengthened also by the plurality of meanings given to two Greek words used widely in the New Testament which express this experience of 'feeling oneself healed'. These terms are the verb *sôtsô* and the noun *sôtería*, which do not only mean to 'free, get out of danger or save', but also to 'heal or cure'. Jesus brings health wherever he is; he is a healer who offers God's salvation, and through his action (and indeed his presence) the health and well-being of persons and the society as a whole increase. This, of course, is part of Jesus' mission to bring about the reign of God.¹⁵⁴ The salvation that Jesus announces is based on gratuitous love, never expecting anything in return. It is a salvation that can only be offered to those who are 'unsatisfied' (those who are not able to satisfy their needs), to the desolate, and to those who have a sense, a conscience, of being incomplete and, in one way or another, of being 'sick', of lacking health. This is good news for the forcibly displaced in their woundedness, but it is also good news for everyone, because that seems to be everyone's universal present situation. And because of this, Jesus can become everyone's hope.

2.2.2. The Christian community and hope

Where does the Christian community, the Church, as an institution and as the people of God, stand in this 'age of despair'?¹⁵⁵ As we saw in the first part of this chapter dealing with a theology of displacement, the beginning sentence of Vatican II's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* gives the assurance that the Church as the Body of Christ shares

¹⁵³ Cf. J. BRONTE, "Cristo, 'nuestra desesperanza', revela el sentido de la vida y de la historia" in *Scripta Theologica* 33 (2001) 829-830.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. RIVAS, *Terapia de las enfermedades espirituales en los Padres de la Iglesia*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁵⁵ Here when I talk about 'Church', I mean the Catholic Church, of which I am a minister, and the only one which I profess to know fairly well. However, this question could be extended to include other faith traditions. Where do they stand in this 'age of despair'? How do they respond to the needs of their members? What could we, as Catholics, learn from them? Unfortunately, the exploration of the answers to these questions is beyond the scope of this study. But for the little connection I have had with other faith traditions, my intuition is that their issues would not be so different from our own.

in all the aspects of the lives of God's people.¹⁵⁶ But does it have today the capacity to guide its members through the dark tunnels of hopelessness in which they find themselves and lead them into the light? And if it believes to have the capacity to do this, how does it intend to do it? Or is the Church also in a state of paralysis, incapacitated by this crisis of despair? For indeed, this crisis of hope seems to have crept even into the lives of those who profess a religious belief.

As mentioned earlier, much has been written about the various crises that the Church has gone through since its beginnings and in modern times, and especially since the Second Vatican Council. Considering the more recent postmodernist rejection to all types of institutions, the tragedy of the sexual abuses perpetrated by the clergy and religious, and the scandals of the financial affairs of the Vatican, it could be argued that until not long ago there would not have been much reason to count on the Church to be a beacon of hope for itself or others.¹⁵⁷ And yet, 'seeds of hope' are witnessed among the youth who have mobilised *en masse* to accompany popes on world-wide peregrinations in the last thirty-five years; among those who have chosen to testify to their faith in situations of civil conflict and wars; among those whose total commitment to the poor and the marginalised in the name of Jesus have cost them their prestige, their securities and even their lives (cf. *The Meditation of the Two Standards* [SpEx 146]). The Church's service to hope in the present time has in fact become more urgent and necessary than ever before. Perhaps the difference is that now, more aware and accepting of its failures and limitations, it can approach this task with greater humility. And more aware of the potential contribution of those in the margins, it can enlist new 'allies' in this mission, of course always remembering that its message has to be centred in the announcement of Christ as hope for the world in our situation today—a proclamation that cannot be separated from the example of those who witness to it, in particular, those who have been victims of forced displacement.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men [sic] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" (GS 1).

¹⁵⁷ If the last five years can be considered representative of his future pontificate, we might hope that the words, actions and proposed reforms of Pope Francis might just bring about the changes expected for so long!

¹⁵⁸ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo", pp. 44, 46. In regards to this proclamation, the author adds: "What is most difficult is that the message that we proclaim has stopped being relevant [...]. How to recover in these times of disillusionment the strength of hope that can make our proclamation credible once again? How are we going to proclaim Christ as hope for the world, if people cannot read in our lives and in our faces that he is our hope, our 'joyful hope'? [...] The key to the proclamation is not mainly in the constancy

2.2.2.1. Striving to maintain and proclaim hope

Albert Nolan suggests that “We live in an age of despair, not only because people [have] built their hopes upon shaky foundations, but also because many of us [have] been hoping for the wrong things”.¹⁵⁹ How to understand the dynamics of hope in the present time? Many people are unable to move forward, to confront the future with clear conviction and expectations, as they try to make sense of the disruptive character of history, the discontinuity between what they expect and actually happens, and suffering that baffles and disorients them. Yet hope can also be the propelling force in all human initiative and certainly in the ‘Christian’ initiative. Some within the Christian tradition (theologians and practitioners alike), see the present crisis of despair as an opportunity for the Church to develop a genuine Christian hope.¹⁶⁰

For Albert Nolan this has to do with the *who*, *what*, *why* and *how* of our hope as Christians. Christians are able to hope against hope because their hope is *not based upon signs*, but is based on God and God alone. God is the *who* of their hope and they strive to put all trust in God. History has taught that no fallible, weak individuals, institutions or ideologies can be relied on totally and all of the time. But for this hope in God to be ‘genuine’, says Nolan, people have to be honest and clear about how they see God and whether what they expect from God is what God wants and can give them: many have fallen into despair because they have been *hoping for the wrong things* for too long. The *what* of their hope, the right object of this Christian hope, is and should always be the coming of God’s reign or, in other words, for the will of God to be done. Translating this into human terms, Nolan talks of this *what* as the common good, *what is best for the whole of creation*. In the past, the object of Christian hope has not been genuine, because it has too often been selfish, self-serving, egocentric and narrow-minded.

or quality of its content, not even in the way that it is transmitted, but in the credibility of its witnesses”, pp. 51, 62.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. NOLAN, *Hope in the Age of Despair*, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ Besides Albert Nolan’s work, see T. RADCLIFFE, “El sacerdote: entre la crisis y la esperanza” in *Selecciones de Teología* 44, n. 176 (2005) 346-354. Original in French: “Les prêtres et la crise de désespoir au sein de l’Église” in *La Documentation catholique* 2322 (2004) 888-895.

Why do Christians hope or are able to hope? Because they rely completely on God's work in the whole of the universe. Their faith tells them that it is God who, since the beginning of history and up to now, keeps all things going, and that God's work is still present even in the bleakness that surrounds them and consumes them. This belief requires from them to look at life *with* an attitude of *hopefulness*, to look for and to recognise those signs of hope that shine through the cracks of this darkness: more involvement in the peace movement as a result of wars; more compassion in the face of terribly suffering and violence; a greater awareness of the undeniable need for change in the Church's structures as a result of sexual abuse scandals.

And finally, *how* do Christians develop a genuine Christian hope? Not only by being hopeful, says Nolan, but by *acting hopefully*. That is what he sees as the most valuable contribution that Christians can make in this age of despair—and this is where forcibly displaced peoples can render their greatest contribution in turn—responding to God's 'challenge' to take God more seriously as the only real basis for hope in the world: acting hopefully, making the *who*, the *what* and the *why* of hope a reality in their lives, so that they can be “an encouragement to those who have lost all hope”.¹⁶¹

God does not make bad things happen so good things can occur as a result. Yet, could Christians be grateful for this crisis of hopelessness in the Church which allows them to share in the crisis of despair that afflicts their societies? Could they even take joy in it, with the deep conviction that the Church will come out renewed as a result of this present crisis? The birth of the Church was the outcome of a major crisis, and its story has been forged throughout history through a series of crises which have re-founded it, renewed it, rejuvenated it. The Eucharist might be our sacrament of hope, says Timothy Radcliffe, but the institution of this sacrament occurs at the same time in which all hope is lost; starting from this point onwards, everything falls apart for Jesus' disciples. Their experiences of Jesus' resurrection and the advent of the Holy Spirit would instil new hope in their lives, but Jesus' absence was soon sorely felt by the next generation of Christians, who had never seen the Lord in person. The hope that Jesus would come again kept the new Christians going for a while, but Jesus did not come as expected.¹⁶² And as a result, a new understanding of the

¹⁶¹ Cf. NOLAN, *Hope in the Age of Despair*, pp. 5-12.

¹⁶² Cf. RADCLIFFE, “El sacerdote: entre la crisis y la esperanza”, pp. 346-349.

mission and purpose of the Church had to be arrived at: helping to bring nearer the reign of God in the here and now, until all things are fulfilled in the Lord.

Radcliffe is one of those who believe Christians should live this crisis of hopelessness with joy. In times of crisis, he says, God breaks through one's armour of self-sufficiency and arrogance to reach down to the deeper and more vulnerable parts of one's life, to transform each person and configure him or her to Jesus' way anew. And this should indeed be a source of joy, because human beings have been created to live as Christ and be like Christ and to be his witnesses. And yet, the Church's irrelevance as witness of God and its lack of a proper moral voice has been evidenced by the fact that the teachings of the institutional Church have been sorely disconnected from the reality of most of the faithful. The abyss between ecclesial doctrine and their daily lives has been deeply painful to watch, for too long. And perhaps this the reason that the words and actions of Pope Francis have restored so much hope in the Church and are signs of hope to many others—because they are trying, among other things, to breach that abyss. They are already beginning to answer the question of how the present crisis of hopelessness can renew the Church as an institution and help it become a true witness of hope by moving towards a Church that offers more security to young people; a humbler Church as humble as its Lord. And also by recreating a Church that is less clerical and secretive, more transparent, where lay people will see their dignity as baptised Christians much more acknowledged.¹⁶³ And finally a Church, as we have seen, that recognises and embraces its essential nature as a *church-in-displacement*, in progress, that celebrates *dialogue-in-communion* and acknowledges the contribution of people with diverse religious traditions and cultural backgrounds and give a true expression to the catholicity of the Church.

This crisis of hopelessness could mark the end of the Church perceived as multinational, distant and bureaucratic, ruled by the 'minority world' of more economically developed nations. It could then become a community of disciples of Jesus Christ. A community that witnesses to the hope Christians have in Him. And because of this hope, they can confront this generalised state of hopelessness or desperation in the world. They continue to hope against all hope, even when there might not be visible signs of hope. But they also do it with

¹⁶³ Cf. RADCLIFFE, "El sacerdote: entre la crisis y la esperanza", p. 354.

humility, because nowadays they have a greater conscience of the fragility and vulnerability of the human person. Getting back onto the path of hope does not mean that they will not meet along the way detours that could take them back to the road of hopelessness.¹⁶⁴ Luckily, they do not have to walk this path alone—not only fellow travellers but also experienced guides might be available as they tread forward on this journey.

2.2.3. *Spiritual theology and a spirituality of hope*

Much has been written about hope from within the fields of dogmatic and biblical theology, and we will engage in dialogue with some of their expositors in the next section. However, very little is found on the subject from the point of view of spirituality or spiritual theology. Part of the reason, I suspect, is that this ‘baby sister’ of the other theological branches has only come into its own in recent times—towards the latter years of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. Though perhaps we should speak instead of the renewed theological interest for a ‘spiritual theology’ as such at this time, since it has been argued that the beginnings of this ‘new’ branch of theology can be traced to the point when it starts to detach itself from the framework of the so-called monastic theology, in the 12th and 13th centuries.¹⁶⁵ Be as it may, it has been in the last decades that spiritual theology has emerged (although not yet by total consensus) as a theological science with acknowledged *contents* of its own—contents not studied by the other branches of theological knowledge (scriptures, dogmatics, moral theology, liturgy, canon law, etc.), or at least not studied in the concrete sense in which spiritual theology does so.¹⁶⁶

The formal object of spiritual theology is the Christian life, not so much for what it is in and of itself, but rather in the extent to which it is assumed, appropriated and lived by each person.¹⁶⁷ It has to do with taking conscience of this particular way of Christian life through one’s experiences rooted in history; with appropriating the word of revelation in one’s life of

¹⁶⁴ Cf. VIDAL, “Creer en tiempos de desesperanza”, p. 844.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. G. MIOLI, “Teología espiritual” in S. de Fiores and T. Goffi (dirs.), *Nuevo Diccionario de Espiritualidad*, Madrid: San Pablo 2000, p. 1839.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. AUGUSTO GUERRA, *Introducción a la Teología Espiritual*, Santo Domingo: Editorial de Espiritualidad del Caribe, EDECA 1994, pp. 68-69.

¹⁶⁷ “Spiritual is everything that through the action of the Holy Spirit unites the person with Christ” and makes him or her like Christ. “It is everything that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, becomes a motive of personal union with God”. Cf. TOMAS ŠPIDLÍK and MARKO RUPNIK, *Teología de la evangelización desde la belleza*, Madrid: BAC 2013, p. 10. Original in italian: *Teologia pastorale. A partire dalla bellezza*, Rome: Editorial Lipa 2005.

faith, hope and charity.¹⁶⁸ We note here the close approach of spiritual theology to the *person*, who is the subject of the spiritual experience, and to *history*, as the place in which this lived experience takes place.¹⁶⁹ Further, all authors who study spirituality systematically talk of the process and development of the Christian life—the fact that there is growth is unavoidable. Some speak of this process as being *on the way* (in our case we might speak of it as *the spiritual life-in-displacement*), of fulfilling an itinerary, something inherent in the act of being a Christian; while others speak directly of growth, of maturing in Christ, with its associated stages along the way which need to be lived through and in some sense overcome.

What it is being referred to here then, is a ‘living process’ that has a special dynamism, and which begins with the taking conscience of one’s personal responsibility over one’s own life before God.¹⁷⁰ In this process we need to remember that one’s spiritual experience as a Christian is closely connected with the nature of the path one follows, and therefore, when we talk of Christian spiritual experiences we cannot ignore the process of one who follows Jesus. It is absolutely necessary to assume the way of Jesus and also to remember that this process is not about searching for one’s own perfection alone; it is a process *in* Christ, who promised to be with us until the end of times (Cf. Mathew 28:20). Further, the community aspect is essential to the Christian process and is inherent in the act of ‘being’ in Christ; it is a path of solidarity and companionship with all of one’s brothers and sisters but especially those who have been victims of marginalisation. Finally, it is a process that leads a person to fulfilment, plenitude, to ‘saving one’s life’ and ‘finding it’ (Cf. Mark 8:35; Mathew 16:25).¹⁷¹

As we have seen with a theology of displacement, spiritual theology also has to be contextual theology: a theology that affirms that “this is where we stand, and from here it is where we do our theology and our reflection”, of course without obviating the tradition and history that

¹⁶⁸ Cf. SATURNINO GAMARRA, *Teología Espiritual*, Madrid: BAC ³2000, p. 14. Moiola adds: “Spiritual theology presents itself once again as the *task* of theology, a task which consists in not closing oneself arbitrarily within the sphere of Christian objectivity, but rather in staying open to the understanding of its ‘living it out’; in other words, of the objectivity made ‘one’s own’ or of the appropriation of this objectivity”. Cf. G. MIOLI, “Teología espiritual”, p. 1845.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. GAMARRA, *Teología Espiritual*, p. 21. In terms of this ‘experience’, we need to be aware of the fact that this word refers both to an objective encounter with reality and also to the subject who, through this encounter, establishes a relationship of knowledge and understanding. Thus, every experience implies simultaneously a certain receptivity or passivity, due to the presence of a concrete reality, and a reaction of our conscience that interprets the impression left by this reality, accepts it or rejects it, and if necessary, organises it for future use. Cf. CH. A. BERNARD, *Introducción a la Teología Espiritual*, Estella: Editorial Verbo Divino 1997, p. 25.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. GAMARRA, *Teología Espiritual*, p. 249.

¹⁷¹ Cf. GAMARRA, *Teología Espiritual*, pp. 271-272.

precedes it, informs it and nurtures it. For this reason, the methodology of spiritual theology has to be both inductive and deductive. It is inductive because it deals with spiritual experiences: the reality of faith lived by the subject is the basic material used later in subsequent reflections. And it is deductive precisely because it considers these experiences within the context of specific traditions, rooted in history and past reflection. And yet, as we have seen earlier, as an inductive spirituality that wants to have its starting point in the present time, it must also have the greatest possible objective knowledge of this present. It cannot exclude, therefore, the analysis of the situation given by the social or other sciences: in this inductive method, after ‘seeing’, one is called to judge, or if we prefer, to illuminate; and here the social sciences are also of great value (cf. GS 44).¹⁷² Part of this ‘greatest possible objective knowledge’ requires also to consider that the Christian experience is never *pure* communication, but rather that its description is always the object of an interpretation. Thus, the spiritual experience, which provides the basis for the elaboration of a spiritual theology, should always be an experience subject to critical analysis. It is clear how this has worked through Christian history. In reality, it has been the great spiritual masters who have known best how to filter the immediate experience to extract from them valid teachings that help identify the authentic Christian experience.¹⁷³

This authentic Christian experience, moreover, cannot be separated from the main aspects of the history of salvation: creation, the tragedy of sin, its consequences and therefore, redemption. It must take into account the totality and breadth of the work of Christ, seen in the unity of creation and redemption, as the work of the Holy Trinity, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁴

What is spiritual in Christian tradition is an action of the Holy Spirit that spreads throughout the whole universe, which makes that all things, events and peoples remind us of God, talk to us of God and of God’s wonders—especially those of the history of salvation—that orient us to God, transmit God to us and, finally, reunite us with God.¹⁷⁵

Finally, the appropriate place for a spiritual reading of these events, of this tradition, has to be within an ecclesial context. This means that it should take into account all that belongs to the memory of the Church, that transcends the present, is always open to the efforts of each historic period, and is able to integrate numerous traditions into one. In effect, it is possible

¹⁷² Cf. GUERRA, *Introducción a la Teología Espiritual*, p. 86.

¹⁷³ Cf. BERNARD, *Introducción a la Teología Espiritual*, pp. 60-62.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. ŠPIDLÍK and RUPNIK, *Teología de la evangelización desde la belleza*, p. 14

¹⁷⁵ Cf. ŠPIDLÍK and RUPNIK, *Teología de la evangelización desde la belleza*, p. 10.

that the Spirit has already given (or is in the process of giving) to another ecclesial community, or to the Church in another apostolic tradition, the gift to read and understand reality and elaborate a theological and pastoral framework that might be fruitful in our situation. There is no doubt that, as an aid to our spiritual reading, the contribution of another ecclesial community, has the potential to be greatly enriching. And, in our case, we want to argue that this should include the ecclesial community of forcibly displaced peoples of faith.

We will address, in the next section, how these elements of spiritual theology we have highlighted so far—*the appropriation of the Christian life through one's experiences rooted in history (a particular time and place); as a process of growth in fulfilling an itinerary; following the way of Jesus in one's given context; anchored in the Church's tradition but also open to various ecclesial contexts and communities' contributions, and as an experience subject to critical analysis*—are relevant to our exploration of a spirituality of displacement, and in particular to a spirituality of hope, in the lives and context of forcibly displaced peoples. Before we end this section, it should be pointed out that they, the shunned and rejected of the world, also have a word to say in spiritual theology and not only about their own situation. The poor perceive in a different way the word of salvation which has been addressed to them with special predilection. They perceive it better than those who run the danger of distorting it, because it gets in the way of their personal plans. The poor have a word to say to the 'spiritual enterprise' and it, in turn, has the duty to listen to it, reflect on it and serve it.¹⁷⁶

2.2.3.1. What is the real question?

According to Nolan—and regarding the present situation concerning 'the age of despair' he believes the world is presently living through—the major theological question of this time is 'What does it mean to put all one's hope and trust in God?' "It is a particularly difficult question", he adds, "because for very many people today God is dead or irrelevant, a meaningless concept. To many, putting all one's hope and trust in God sounds like a pious cop-out".¹⁷⁷ Of course, Nolan's assertion should be preceded by another basic question: Why did God become irrelevant? It is not within the scope of this study to address this question (one which could be answered not only from a theological point of view, but from many

¹⁷⁶ Cf. GUERRA, *Introducción a la Teología Espiritual*, pp. 91-92.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. NOLAN, *Hope in the Age of Despair*, p. 6.

others—philosophical, socio-economical, historical, etc). Yet, I would like to suggest, at the risk of oversimplifying an extremely complex subject, that God ‘became irrelevant’ because people arrived at the conclusion that either God could no longer provide for their needs (no matter how much they prayed, tragedy, suffering and evil still persisted) or that they no longer needed God, because—putting death and some incurable illnesses aside—they could take charge and be in control of their destinies.¹⁷⁸ One of the major consequences of this present age of despair might be the realisation that they do need God after all. But it is possible that many people need to be reminded that God is still there. In fact, that God has never left. And who better to do this than those who have never forgotten it; in fact, those who have put all their trust in this belief—forcibly displaced people of faith.

2.2.3.2. Forcibly displaced peoples and a living spirituality of hope: guiding lights in the darkness of despair?

Followers of Christ are called to appropriate in their own lives Christ’s way of life, as presented in God’s word of revelation to humanity. This growing assimilation of the mystery of Christ in the life of a Christian is a constant and gradual process that culminates in perfection or holiness. If spiritual theology deals with the spiritual experiences of particular subjects within the context of a specific tradition, history and past and continuous reflection, what can it then say to, and do for, forcibly displaced peoples? As we have emphasised, as a contextual theology its starting point must be the forced displacement experience, taking into account its causes, its consequences and its lived reality, and using other academic fields to address these issues. But, from a methodological point of view, what is also required is a theological-spiritual reading of this lived reality, which goes beyond an analysis of data based on the cultural, sociological or psychological environments forcibly displaced people occupy. This spiritual ‘reading’, once interpreted, helps elucidate some of the defining aspects of a spirituality of displacement, and in the case of our study, of the particular elements of a spirituality of hope in the context of forced movements of people. We will endeavour to do this in the remaining sections of this chapter. Earlier, we affirmed the capacity of forcibly displaced people to restore this gift of universal hope the world so badly need in this ‘age of despair’. Following are some initial intuitions that might suggest reasons for why this may be the case—intuitions that, once again, will be developed further in this chapter.

¹⁷⁸ Others might add that God became irrelevant because God did not care for us, or that we finally realised that God “did not exist”.

Firstly, one of the fundamental aspects of a spirituality of hope in forced displaced peoples is that they must literally hope against all hope. They must continue hoping even when there are no visible signs of hope anywhere around them. Living in extremely harsh environments, in many instances lacking some of the basic needs such as water, food and shelter, they often struggle to survive. And often they do not. Particularly vulnerable, as we would expect, are the elderly and younger children. Despite acknowledging the darkness, the bleakness and the apparent hopelessness of the situation, forcibly displaced peoples must continue ‘walking’, placing all their trust in the God of life, even when death is all around them. Their hope is then based on the ‘possibility of the impossible’, of believing that the impossible does happen.

Secondly, a spirituality of hope in the forcibly displaced is characterised by a great deal of paradox. This paradoxical character of hope points to the possibility that realities that in principle should only be bearers of damnation and death can become bearers of life and blessing: it is possible to love your greatest enemy, who by a twist of fate becomes your neighbour in a refugee camp, who offers a piece of bread or a blanket that saves the life of your dying child. It is possible that a life could be turned upside down and be transformed as the fruit of an encounter—a child soldier who refuses to kill his brother and thus begins a journey of healing and reintegration.

Thirdly, it must be a spirituality of hope that is based on the belief in a God who never abandons forcibly displaced people despite all evidences to the contrary. A God who is present in their extreme suffering (because God has lived it) and somehow will make sense of that suffering, even if there does not seem to be a conceivable way for this to happen. A God who always finds new ways to come and meet them, who never gives up on them and never stops caring for them.

And fourthly, it must be a spirituality of hope that is based on companionship, solidarity and relationship: forcibly displaced persons will not survive on their own. And if they do, they might never recover from the trauma they have experienced, for invariably their survival would have been at the cost of some else’s demise. Hope that is shared is hope that is nourished and nurtured, especially when it is the last thing that is left.

The hope of forcibly displaced peoples is a hope that has had to survive the in-survivable. And this is the reason that their testimony of hope is so credible. As we have expressed before, the key in the proclamation of hope does not reside in the consistency or the quality of its content, nor even in the way that it is transmitted, but in the credibility of the witness. In the case of forcibly displaced people this credibility means that their hope can simply be expressed through a smile—words are not needed—because one who has lived through hell and can still smile, is an icon of hope.

2.3. In search of a lived spirituality of hope

We have seen that the formal object of spiritual theology is the Christian life as it is assumed, appropriated and lived by each person. It has to do, specifically, with taking conscience of and appropriating the mystery of Christ in one's life, in and through one's own spiritual experiences. But one also does this within the context of one's specific tradition, rooted in history and in continuous reflection. Appropriating God's word of revelation in one's life of faith, charity and hope thus requires a dialogue between the experiential process and a set of agreed-upon 'reference points'. As presented in the first part of this chapter on the theology of displacement, the understanding of this revelation has evolved throughout time, through reflection and praxis, and given rise to a broad body of theological concepts and insights—reference points—in diverse theological fields. Having looked at some of the elements of the experiential dimension in the previous section, the main objective of this section is to explore the concept of hope and its 'reference points' from the more traditional dogmatic, biblical and eschatological points of view (parts 1 and 2 of this section 2.3), and also to continue to explore—from the perspective now of those 'reference points'—what a lived spirituality of hope might look like, always within our context of forcibly displaced people (part 3).

2.3.1. Understanding hope

But hope, says God, it sure surprises me.¹⁷⁹

And if hope surprises God, what chance do mere humans have to understand it? Yet, we must try. And the point of departure must be in fact human existence. The reality of God enters into the very definition of what it means to be human. Christians believe that from the

¹⁷⁹ Cf. C. PEGUY, *Le Porche du Mystère de la Deuxième Vertu*, Paris: Editions Gallimard 1929, p. 29.

beginning of their existence, they have been given by God the radical capacity (i.e. hope) to go beyond themselves to reach out toward that which transcends them (the Absolute) and which raises them to a new level of existence—the grace of sharing in the life of the Absolute.¹⁸⁰

In regards a theology of hope, some of the main characteristics developed have included: (1) understanding hope as the ‘elevation of the will’, made possible by grace, by which people can expect a sharing in this eternal life as well as expect the means to attain it, confident not of their capacities but of the divine assistance of God;¹⁸¹ (2) people could sin against hope by despair—no longer trusting in God for their personal salvation—or by presumption—expecting that they could either be saved without God’s assistance or that the omnipotence of God’s mercy meant that their personal conversion was not required; (3) the individualistic, non-relational nature of this approach was noted in that it often spoke of ‘my hope for salvation’; (4) in traditional Catholic theology, hope has also been identified as one of the three theological virtues, although in the past it was rarely spoken of in connection with the two others—faith and love; (5) by hope, the human person is oriented towards an ultimate personal union with God—a process that begins from baptism and continues during one’s lifetime and beyond, and (6) this object of hope, based in an ‘*already but not yet*’ aspect, gives hope its eschatological dimension.

We now take a look at these various aspects of hope, from a renewed understanding of these elements and the specific ‘lens’ of displacement. What has changed in particular is the individualistic, non-relational nature alluded to above, which has now been replaced by a more collective/communal approach (the ‘spirituality of hope based on companionship, solidarity and relationship’ of the forcibly displaced we mentioned earlier), which demands greater commitment from every believer. This new approach, as we will see, is upheld in two significant Church documents: Vatican II’s *Gaudium et spes* and Benedict XVI’s *Spe Salvi*. In this section then, the role of hope is considered in 1) the fulfilment of personal human experience, 2) within the Church as a community of transforming power, 3) guided by the

¹⁸⁰ Cf. RICHARD P. MCBRIEN, *Catholicism*, New York: HarperCollins 1994, p. 205.

¹⁸¹ “Specifically, hope is the enduring orientation of the human will toward final union with God, considered as a goal that can be attained with God’s help, but without divine help impossible to attain”. Cf. J. PORTER, “Hope” in Richard P. McBrien, ed., *The HarperCollins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers 1989, p. 638.

theological virtue of hope that leads all on onward in 4) the *already* but *not yet* dimension (eschatological aspect), and 5) within the tradition of the Church and its teachings.

2.3.1.1. Fulfilment of personal human existence

To understand hope, Christians must come first to an understanding of what it means to be human, and to do that they need to reflect on what it is they *are* and what they *do*. According to Heidegger, human existence seems to be characterised by certain polarities or tensions that express themselves in contradictions: *existence* vs. *finitude*: humans are free beings and yet they are also limited by their concrete situations, their race, intelligence, opportunities; *rationality* vs. *irrationality*: people search for truth and yet they are governed by irrational forces; *responsibility* vs. *impotence*: they know what they should be doing and yet are also incapable of doing it: *anxiety* vs. *hope*: they feel threatened by the negativity and absurdity of the world, and yet they hope that somehow life is worth living; *individual* vs. *society*, they are fiercely independent, and yet realise that they can only fulfil themselves through their interactions and relationships with others. It could be said that the polarity anxiety/hope in a way encompasses the rest. If one's existence is marked by living out the tension between these polarities, one can never be free from anxiety. One is also anxious about death, but recognising its reality as the boundary or limit of one's human existence helps see that death can also be a force that introduces a wholeness and unity into life: we look for all possibilities on this side of death and try to bring them into some kind of unity.¹⁸² Hope, moreover helps to see these possibilities for the future as such.

The Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch—who is credited with helping recover hope from ‘oblivion’ and with contributing to the rediscovery of the role hope plays in reflecting on Christian existence—argued that one's being cannot be understood adequately except in connection with one's unquenchable propensity to hope for the future. According to him, so deeply rooted is this attitude that one might conclude it is part of the very essence of human existence. Persons realise themselves in projects, as they seek to overcome the difficulties

¹⁸² Cf. MCBRIEN, *Catholicism*, pp. 121-122. Though Heidegger's ‘polarities’ have been criticised (see for example, AUBREY L. GLAZER, *A New Physiognomy of Jewish Thinking: Critical Theory After Adorno as Applied to Jewish Thought*, London/New York: Continuum International Publishing Co. 2011, pp. 94ff.), I find helpful his suggestion of our being ‘divided’ by concerns of ‘angst’ and ‘care’, particularly for our understanding of the possible role of hope in our Christian existence.

and the limitations of the here and now, subverting the existing order if necessary.¹⁸³ In fact, for Bloch, one of these greatest limitations is that the person is still an incomplete being, “something that has yet to find itself”, and that does not yet enjoy its true identity. The messianic hope at the core of the Judeo-Christian religion constitutes the greatest witness to support Bloch’s thesis. From it comes his conviction that “where there is hope there is religion”, the reverse also being true: “where there is religion there is hope”. The New Testament reflects this conviction that the human person’s present condition is provisional: *what we will be has not yet been revealed* (1 Jn. 3:2). One’s salvation is still partial and incomplete (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12), so one’s sense of the present is anchored in the future. God did not say to Abraham what he was, but promised him what he would be. Only in the future will one be able to attain one’s goal of fulfilling one’s own identity.¹⁸⁴

The tension of this ‘incomplete nature’ is evidenced also in the root of hope, which has a double dimension: metaphysical and historical. The metaphysical nature refers to the transcendence of the human spirit to reach that absolute mentioned earlier, to which it moves but which it can never reach.¹⁸⁵ The historical nature encompasses the promise of God, anticipated in the prophets, and accomplished with the advent of the fulfilment of time in Christ. It is still pending consummation on the final, definitive manifestation of Christ. Humanity is saved in hope, not in possession; that is why it lives by faith, not by what it can see.

The promise of God and one’s experience of it lived in one’s encounter with Christ, as one *walks* in time, is manifested in the concrete signs that history offers, and in which we can

¹⁸³ “For Bloch man is he who hopes for and dreams for the future; but it is an active hope which subverts the existing order [...]. Hope thus emerges at the key to human existence oriented towards the future, because it transforms the present [...]. For Bloch, what is real is an open-ended process”. GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll: Orbis 1973, p. 216.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. GERALD O’COLLINS, *El hombre y sus nuevas esperanzas*, Santander: Sal Terrae 1970, pp. 31-35. Original in English: *Man and his new hopes*, New York: Herder and Herder 1969. Bloch’s quotes in this paragraph are cited from O’Collins’ book.

¹⁸⁵ As Benedict XVI puts it: “[...] man’s [sic] essential situation, the situation that gives rise to all his contradictions and hopes [is that...] in some way we want life itself, true life, untouched even by death; yet at the same time we do not know the thing towards which we feel driven. We cannot stop reaching out for it, and yet we know that all we can experience or accomplish is not what we yearn for. This unknown ‘thing’ is the true ‘hope’ which drives us, and at the same time the fact that it is unknown is the cause of all forms of despair and also of all efforts, whether positive or destructive, directed towards worldly authenticity and human authenticity”. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Encyclical Letter, Spe Salvi* (30 November 2007), AAS 99 (2007) 985-1027; http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html, n. 12. Accessed 3 June 2018.

recognise the imprint of the presence, word and promise of God.¹⁸⁶ The imprint of that presence has been with humanity from the beginning of creation: humans were created in the image of God to become *like* God, in God's likeness. They are therefore, *memoria Dei*, remembrance and longing of God, which defines their being and their given destinies.¹⁸⁷ This is what makes them hope-filled beings, and what helps them understand that 'absolute hope' which goes beyond each of their smaller, concrete hopes (cf. Benedict XVI's *Spe Salvi*), because the memory of their origin anticipates, in trust, the meaning of their end—absolute beginning and end are the same reality. In between, the God of hope intervenes in history, creating, liberating, accompanying, calling and choosing, and loving God's people according to God's promise. It is the continuous memory and recalling of that divine action that helps recognise that, precisely in the moments of greater disaster and calamity—including the worst conflicts, genocides and wars leading to the displacement of millions of men, women and children—the people of God have opened themselves up to new forms of hope and to the possibility of greater human fulfilment and a deeper relationship with God, always trusting in that promise:

The promise becomes concrete through alliance, responsibility, inheritance and filiation [... It] has thus become the supreme root of hope. It is no longer only the memory of its origin, present though veiled, nor the anticipated desire for its object that are the sources of our longing. The promise-filled Word, which has shown its mercy in the death of Christ and its power in his resurrection, has sent to us the Spirit of promise, has poured out the love of God in our hearts. Christianity is the religion of fulfilled hope and anticipated consummation.¹⁸⁸

2.3.1.2. In the Church as a hope community of transforming power

And yet, even though Christianity might be defined as a religion of hope, classical Christian theologians gave little attention to it. Thomas Aquinas, for example, only devoted a few sections to the theme of hope in his *Summa Theologiae*.¹⁸⁹ As with Bloch in philosophy, it is the protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann who is credited with injecting new life into the discussion about hope and its role in the Christian existence. Deviating from an individualistic, non-relational approach mentioned earlier, he sees hope as a virtue by which we take responsibility for the *future*, but not simply *our* individual future. Since hope is oriented toward the Reign of God, not as heaven alone but as the renewal and recreation of

¹⁸⁶ Cf. O. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDEDAL, *Raíz de la Esperanza*, Salamanca: Sígueme 1995, pp. 23-24.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDEDAL, *Raíz de la Esperanza*, pp. 487-97.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDEDAL, *Raíz de la Esperanza*, p. 495.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Questions 17-22 in II-II, which deal mainly with hope as a theological virtue, fear in relation to hope and the sins against hope.

the whole world, each person is responsible for the future of the world. The future holds the primacy. In fact, in one sense, Moltmann argues that all theology is eschatology, *hope seeking understanding*.¹⁹⁰ Christian existence is lived within the horizon of expectation of God's reign. Jesus' resurrection is the first fruits of this Reign and all share in this future of the risen Christ. What God has revealed is not information about another world, but God's promise about this one in relation to the future¹⁹¹:

Hope's statements of promise however, must stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present be experienced. They do not result from experiences, but are the condition for the possibility of new experiences. They do not seek to illuminate the reality which exists, but the reality which is coming. They do not seek to make a mental picture of existing reality, but to lead existing reality towards the promised and hoped-for transformation.¹⁹²

Moltmann's theology has the capacity to show to what extent Christian hope liberates a force, which is both critical and mobilising, that induces humanity towards a constant protest against, and an exodus from, the present negative circumstances in each moment.¹⁹³ But (and sometimes Moltmann has been criticised for a lack of clarity in expressing this), such force *has* to be rooted in humanity's concrete historical experience, with its present joys but also its oppression and suffering: "To hope does not mean to know the future, but rather to [accept] it as a gift. But this gift is accepted in the negation of injustice, in the protest against trampled human rights, and in the struggle for peace [...]"¹⁹⁴ This is what is meant by taking 'responsibility for the future' as mentioned above, and which J. B. Metz has taken up and developed further in what has been called 'political theology'. Following the line of thought

¹⁹⁰ "Moltmann attempts to reformulate the theological questions under his eschatological-political horizon. He assumes as object of theology the eschatological future, which coincides with the only pending human problem, the future of humanity [...]. Revelation is understood from the horizon of promise. Christ is already present to history as the one who will come to fulfil it in plenitude [...]. The ultimate justification [of this eschatological theology] rests in the fulfilment of the promise already signified in the resurrection of Jesus". Cf. VIDAL, "Creer en tiempos de desesperanza", p. 850.

¹⁹¹ "[...] revelation speaks to us about a God who comes to meet us and whom we can only await 'in active hope'. The present order of things, that which is, is profoundly challenged by the Promise; because of his hope in the resurrected Christ, man [sic] is liberated from the narrow limits of the present and can think and act completely in terms of what is to come. For Moltmann, a theology of hope is simultaneously a theology of resurrection". Cf. GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 217. This is so because "the resurrection is the promise of God for the resurrection of humanity and the new creation of all things. It is so in that Christ's resurrection creates a history and future where death no longer has the final claim on life [...]. In essence, Moltmann's view of eschatological promise is that this promise is God's pledge to humanity. It is a pledge to create a qualitatively new future [...]. This promise causes those receiving the promise to align themselves with the future that God will bring into existence and therefore may be said to contradict the unfulfilled present". Cf. T. HARVIE, *Jürgen Moltmann's Ethics of Hope: Eschatological Possibilities for Moral Action*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing 2009, pp. 17-18.

¹⁹² Cf. J. MOLTMAN, *Theology of Hope*, New York: SCM Press 1969, p. 18.

¹⁹³ Cf. N. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Escatología y Virtudes Teológicas" in Á. Cordovilla (ed.), *La Lógica de la Fe: Manual de Teología Dogmática*, Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas 2013, p. 656.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 218.

which has been proposed by Bloch and Moltmann, he attempts to show the implications of eschatology and hope for political life.¹⁹⁵

Facing the holocaust of the Jewish people, J. B. Metz argues that theology can no longer be done with backs turned to human suffering and its social causes, without trying to give a public response. What is sought is to formulate a Christian eschatological hope in society's present situation, where so many brothers and sisters are marginalised, oppressed, and forcibly displaced as a result of structurally sinful practices that have come to be accepted and even seen as necessary. God's historical intervention in Jesus of Nazareth both manifests that this world is to become what is not yet and signals also what it can become through humanity's responsible freedom and the eschatological intervention of God in the resurrection of Jesus.¹⁹⁶ All are called to build a new world, to engage in 'political theology', which critiques the city according to the standards of the Reign of God.¹⁹⁷ Metz's eschatological expectation does not situate humanity before 'the promised city of God' as a distant goal towards a fulfilled reality, but rather converts it into a commitment for the Christian person, who is called to be a 'collaborator' of the promised reign of peace and universal justice.¹⁹⁸ And this collaboration must be incarnated in concrete attitudes and actions: in regards to forcibly displaced peoples it requires the 'option-for-the-displaced' mentioned earlier. The Church is a community of hope which as a relational community lives always, even unto death, for the other, in love of neighbour.¹⁹⁹

And death, as Karl Rahner points out, helps relativise all grand designs. People might be called to build a new world, but only in God do they have hope to do this. And this 'way of hoping' makes them free, for what they hope for they cannot present in advance, and what they enjoy here and now is not ultimately what they hope for: the Christian "is not a person who grasps for something tangible so that he can enjoy it until death comes, nor is he a person who takes the darkness of the world so seriously that he can no longer venture to

¹⁹⁵ Cf. GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 220.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. VIDAL, "Creer en tiempos de desesperanza", pp. 854-855.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. MCBRIEN, *Catholicism*, p. 935.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Escatología y Virtudes Teologales", p. 656.

¹⁹⁹ See J. METZ, *Theology of the World*, New York: Herder & Herder 1969, pp. 107-140, for his development of these notions.

believe in the eternal light beyond it”.²⁰⁰ I would add that perhaps we do need to take ‘the darkness of the world’ seriously enough so that besides believing ‘in the eternal light beyond it’ we can be also agents of this light. But it should be remembered also that humankind as a whole is itself in process of development toward a reality beyond itself—the Reign of God—ahead and not above. People hope not only in their own salvation, but in the salvation of others and of the whole world.

2.3.1.3. Hope: a theological virtue that leads us onward

This new emphasis on the virtue of hope and on the future helps give a better grasp of the meaning of hope as theological virtue. As such, it cannot be separated from its two ‘sisters’, faith and charity.²⁰¹ Theological virtues are inseparable, since they have a common origin, move towards the same goal and give dynamism to the one unique life of the Christian. They are unified in the common root of basic confidence or trust of the creature in God.²⁰² In his beautiful poem about hope, Charles Péguy has a lovely image of Hope as a little girl walking between her two older sisters, Faith and Charity. *The faith that I love the most*, begins the poem, *is hope*. He continues:

*Faith does not surprise me...
Charity does not surprise me...
But hope, says God, it sure surprises me.
Even Myself...
That those poor children should see how all these things happen and yet believe that
tomorrow will be better.
That is certainly surprising and sure the greatest marvel of our grace.
And even Myself, I remain surprised.
And my grace has to be a great force indeed...
What I admire, says God, is hope.
That little hope that seems like nothing.
That little girl hope.
Immortal.*

²⁰⁰ Cf. K. RAHNER, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, New York: Seabury Press 1978, p. 405.

²⁰¹ It is helpful to consider what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says about theological virtues, which provides a fitting summary to the discussion that follows: “The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues, which adapt man’s faculties for participation in the divine nature: for the theological virtues relate directly to God. They dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. They have the One and Triune God for their origin, motive, and object. The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. They are infused by God into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being. There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity”, nos. 1812-1813. In the case of hope, it is referred to as the supernatural virtue through which we expect, in trust, the grace from God in this world and eternal glory in the next.

²⁰² Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, “Escatología y Virtudes Teologales”, p. 725. The comments in this section and the next on ‘eschatological hope’ offer a summary of her excellent exposition on these subjects.

*That little girl, a little nothing
Alone, taking along the others [faith and charity] will cross the finished worlds...
Faith goes by itself...
Charity marches unfortunately alone.
But hope does not tread alone. Hope does not walk by itself. To hope, my daughter, it is
necessary to be happy, truly, it is necessary to have obtained, received, a great grace.
Little hope advances between her two older sisters and is not acknowledged...
In between.
Between the two.
To make her follow that rough path to salvation.
The blind do not see...
That she in the middle leads her two older sisters...
She, that little one, leads everything.
Because Faith does not see but that which is.
And she sees what it will be.
And Charity does not love but that which is.
And she loves what it will be...
Hope sees what is not yet and what it will be.
Loves what is not yet still and what will be.²⁰³*

Péguy describes faith as a faithful wife, while the image he uses for charity is a loving mother, who is all heart. But hope is this little girl, a ‘little nothing’, whose life has just begun, who still plays with her dolls. But this little girl will traverse worlds, leading her sisters, and all of humanity. To believe in the God who is manifested, to hope in the God who is promised, and to love the God who loves humanity, is the foundation of the relationship in dialogue between the human person and God in Christ, which the Spirit interiorises in the life of each believer. This relationship develops as a dynamic process in the framework of the community of faith, hope and charity which we call the Church, as *a way of being, always in process of growth, trusting and loving*.

A way of being. Faith, hope and charity, as theological virtues, should be contemplated firstly as *modes or ways of being*, profound dispositions that rooted in the individual’s own identity define him/her as such—a character, an identity.²⁰⁴ Faith, hope and love are gifts of grace and the new relationship that this grace installs in us is to be made sons and daughters

²⁰³ Cf. PEGUY, *Le Porche du Mystère de la Deuxième Vertu*, pp. 15-29.

²⁰⁴ Saint Paul summarises Christian existence in terms of faith, hope and charity. Faith in the resurrection of Christ, constituted by God as Lord and Saviour of humanity which had been dominated by the power of sin and death; hope in future salvation, as definitive revelation of the glory of Christ resurrected, and participation of the person and of the world in it; love of Christ, fulfilled in love and service to our neighbour. Cf. J. ALFARO, *Esperanza cristiana y liberación del hombre*, Barcelona: Herder 1972, p. 35. This Pauline vision of the Church as a community unified in Christ and sustained by the Spirit in the unity of faith, hope and love, has been expressed thus by Vatican II: “Christ, the one Mediator, established and continually sustains here on earth His Holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as an entity with visible delineation through which He communicated truth and grace to all” (LG 8).

of God. This grace penetrates us as God's own light, so that, being illuminated in all our being, we can perceive God, as mentioned earlier, as origin and end goal. The presence and action of the Holy Spirit unfolds in the triple dynamic of these three fundamental ways of existence—revealing structural expressions of *being* and *doing* as Christians—which help us *be* and *live* as new persons. Thus, these three theological virtues affect the totality of our relationships with God, neighbour, the world and the self.

Always in process of growth. This presence of God which transforms and lifts the creature must be actualised at each moment so that human persons can live in conformity to what they are, while at the same time remembering that all human action and decision can contribute or be an obstacle to the fulfilment of being sons and daughters of God. Thus, as we saw earlier, conforming oneself to Christ is a process.²⁰⁵ This is what is referred to as 'life's growing in grace', and the virtues find here their proper place, as dynamics of this growth. In them resides what is characteristic of the new existence in Christ. They help make the believer ever most disposed to receive this grace, to welcome the divine self-communication, which is concretised in an increase in trust (*faith*) in God, from whom all is *hoped* and who one *loves*, and to respond to this being graced in gratitude to the God who gives of Godself.

Trusting. As mentioned earlier, theological virtues are inseparable. They are unified in the common root of basic trust of the creature in God. Those who believe are defined as those who trust in the Lord (cf. Ps. 25:3), which shows that hope is a fundamental dimension and expression of faith. To hope in the Lord is to believe and to believe is to hope in the Lord. Old Testament hope (as we will explore further in the next section) is trusting hope, in reference to the fidelity and salvific power of YHWH, the God of the Covenant, the hope of Israel (cf. Jer. 14:8). Believing in God and hoping in God dissolve into one another in the divine word-promise, and because of this they are vitally united in the link of trust.

Loving. The certainty of hope roots itself in the *love of God for us*, foundation of one's hope in future salvation: *Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts in the Holy Spirit that has been given to us* (Rom 5:5). Based on this love of God,

²⁰⁵ Christ is the exemplary model of our believing, hoping and loving as expressions of the fundamental attitude of being sons and daughters of God which express Christian existence: "Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church [...] continually progresses in faith, hope and charity, seeking and doing the will of God in all things" (LG 65).

poured out in one's heart by the Spirit and present in the core of the person, there is hope for those who have been justified by faith. This love brings about a response in each person, also of love, that sustains one's assured trust of being loved by God. To trust in God is to abandon oneself to God, to open up in one's own existence a total disposition to give oneself to Christ. As often repeated in the Scriptures, this new existence in Christ is characterised by the holy triad of faith, hope and love (cf. 1 Tes 1:3; 1 Cor 13:13; Gal. 5:5; Rom 5:1-5; Eph 1:15-18; Col 1:3-5, and also found in Paul's thanksgiving at the beginning of his letters). Hope is a dimension of loving faith. The formula faith-love is probably the original one, as it sums up the Christian attitude of loving God and one's neighbour, to which soon would be added *hope*, so important in the practice of Christian life, especially in its dimension of patient perseverance on the face of tribulations.²⁰⁶

2.3.1.4. In the already but not yet: eschatological hope

Suffering tribulations is something that is usually thought of when the word eschatology is mentioned. This is part and parcel, it is believed, of what humanity will have to go through at the end of times (in addition to what one might be experiencing in the present!) But eschatology does not refer only to these end-of-times events. It has to do also with one's expectation of and relationship to them. In this sense eschatology is something changing, dynamic, as our knowledge of it evolves, and we approach the 'ultimate' things. We look now briefly—and as a way to recapitulate some of the 'hope' elements we have mentioned so far—at some of these aspects of eschatological hope: walking towards plenitude, fulfilling the goal of our existence, as we 'move into' Christ, and together 'into' glory.

Plenitude. Christians believe that through the incarnation, God's irruption into the world constitutes the decisive event which gave history its definite orientation towards this 'ultimate' destiny. In reality, the use of the term eschatology in Christian theology is the result of a re-elaboration of the theology of hope, where faith offers and invitation to look at this final destiny—of each person and of humanity. As mentioned before, such destiny, already present in the world and in history through Christ, will reach its fulfilment as renewal of everything created in the consummation of a New Creation. Christian faith promises *this* life transformed, renewed, consummated, taken to its plenitude. In this process, the Holy

²⁰⁶ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Escatología y Virtudes Teologales", pp. 713-734.

Spirit will guide humanity toward this plenitude of truth and will introduce its life and its glory in God. No one knows what this plenitude will look like exactly: eschatological affirmations cannot be absolute certainties, since this would not leave space for faith or hope. As such, eschatology is an *anticipatory* look of the future from the present experience of salvation, even if such experience—as in the case of many forcibly displaced people—is indeed quite limited.

Goal. Christian hope does not only look to the Trinitarian life as the goal of one's existence, but it also walks towards it. Such hope is founded on and made possible by God's drawing near to the world since creation, and will be consummated through the mission of the Son and the Spirit, fulfilling the goal that the divine will had pre-established since the beginning: to recapitulate in Christ all things (cf. Eph 1:10), so that God will be everything in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). From this, it can be seen that the proper goal of eschatology is certainly 'the end', but understood with three meanings: end as fulfilment or consummation; end as finality or sense, and end in terms of chronological time. And as we will see shortly, these three elements—fulfilment, sense and time—are lived out in very particular ways by the forcibly displaced.

Moving 'into' Christ. There is a gap in the Christian person between an already given fulfilment and the consummation of that to which he/she is still open. Everyone participates already of the salvation of Christ (at least in hope, even if we do not necessarily experience it), and in this sense each person has already entered in eschatological time. But as remarked earlier, all Christian existence is a process of assimilation in each person of the death and resurrection of Christ (to be in Christ), who has been and will be with us till the end of time. The New Testament never speaks of the *parousia* as the return or second coming; it is rather waiting for someone who is already present, not absent (in describing their 'spirituality', most forcibly displaced people will invariably speak of this 'presence'). Christ is already with us (through his incarnation, life and resurrection), but humanity is still not what it will be; no one has the form of existence of Christ in glory yet.²⁰⁷ The *parousia* is the solution to this

²⁰⁷ Gesteira suggests that without doubt, the feature which better characterises the singularity of Jesus is the key of the 'ultimate' (or eschatological), and the definitive. What this implies is that in him is already anticipated—and is 'made flesh'—the fulfilment and plenitude of God's salvific action: and no longer as judge, but above all as saviour of the world. Cf. M. GESTEIRA, *Jesucristo, Horizonte de Esperanza: Jesús de Nazaret, Personaje Histórico*, Madrid: PPC 2011, p.12.

lack of adjustment. It is more about one's 'moving' towards the consummated form of existence of the risen Christ than his coming back to us.

Moving together 'into' glory. And this 'moving' is done together, as a community, that cares for all and for each other. As mentioned earlier, eschatological hope can and should be a mobilising force that is reflected in historical commitment. The world will be transformed and consummated by Christ's powerful presence, but this glorious encounter of 'that day' can and should be anticipated 'each day', in the concrete demand of the love towards one's neighbour, in one's relationship with the poor, one's support for the forcibly displaced, in the community, in liturgical celebrations. In other words, it is an active hope that sees the present as the beginning of that hoped-for consummation. The work of believers must give testimony and anticipate that which is proclaimed. To wait for the coming in glory, is to move towards it, fulfilling it, accelerating it.²⁰⁸

2.3.1.5. The Church tradition and its teachings: *Gaudium et spes* and *Spe Salvi*

The work of believers must give testimony and anticipate the hope which is proclaimed. Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* made clear the collective responsibility all hold of nurturing and promoting hope, which in turn entails 'cultivating our moral and social virtues':

We can justly consider that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping [...]. Let everyone consider it his sacred obligation to esteem and observe social necessities as belonging to the primary duties of modern man [sic]. For the more unified the world becomes, the more plainly do the offices of men [sic] extend beyond particular groups and spread by degrees to the whole world. But this development cannot occur unless individual men [sic] and their associations cultivate in themselves the moral and social virtues, and promote them in society; [...] the will to play one's role in common endeavours should be everywhere encouraged [...] (GS 31)²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Escatología y Virtudes Teologales", pp. 631-655. González de Cardedal emphasises the importance of this collective historical commitment. He points out that ancient philosophies and theologies have understood hope mainly in individual terms. This perspective is only partial, since we need to understand hope from the point of view of our neighbour: from 'us' as a collective and from God who became man. Through the incarnation, God entered into our nature, and Jesus allowed himself to be at the mercy of finite and sinful freedoms. From within them he has hoped for all, because in him God's absolute love has been manifested and this love expects absolutely everything for everyone. For Cardedal, the most beautiful phrase ever written about hope finds its ultimate meaning in the lips of Christ: *I hope in you for us*. The 'us' is all of us, since he was not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters (cf. Heb 2:11-12, 17). After him, we all can and should repeat it. The 'you' is also every person, but above all God. Cf. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDEDAL, *Raíz de la Esperanza*, p. 21.

²⁰⁹ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes*, n. 31. The document goes on to say: "So from the beginning of salvation history [God] has chosen men [sic] not just as individuals but as members of a certain community. Revealing His mind to them, God called these chosen

Moreover, hope does not diminish the importance of one's duties in this life but rather gives them special urgency:

[The Church] further teaches that a hope related to the end of time does not diminish the importance of intervening duties but rather undergirds the acquittal of them with fresh incentives. By contrast, when a divine instruction and the hope of life eternal are wanting, man's [sic] dignity is most grievously lacerated, as current events often attest; riddles of life and death, of guilt and of grief go unsolved with the frequent result that men [sic] succumb to despair (GS 21).

These words, though initially proclaimed more than fifty years ago, perhaps ring truer today—in this 'age of despair'—than at the time of the Council. They are a reminder once again that though Christian existence is existence *in* hope, it is also existence which should seek to give hope to others. And as it has been argued, it cannot be assumed that anyone is immune to this crisis of despair nor that this responsibility to give hope is reserved only to a few. It should be part and parcel of calling oneself a 'follower of Christ': insofar as the Church as a community of faith offers a credible witness to the truth, it will arouse the world to a "lively hope" in the coming of the Reign of God.²¹⁰

But to do this effectively, Christians must be also clear as to what they may hope. In his encyclical letter, *Spe Salvi*, Benedict XVI argues that a dialogue between Christianity and the postmodern world is needed to provide a critique of its concept of hope. And in this dialogue, Christians too, within the context of their knowledge and experience, will learn anew in what their hope truly consists—what they can offer to the world and what they cannot offer (cf. SS 22). Because of humanity's fragile freedom, it has to accept that the kingdom of good will never be definitively established in this world: "Anyone who promises the better world that is guaranteed to last forever is making a false promise; he is overlooking human freedom. Freedom must constantly be won over for the cause of good" (SS 24). One's great hope can only be God, who has loved each person unconditionally and who sustains the

ones 'His people' (cf. Ex. 3:7-12), and even made a covenant with them on Sinai. This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ. For the very Word made flesh willed to share in the human fellowship" (GS 32).

²¹⁰ "Now, the Father wills that in all men [sic] we recognize Christ our brother and love Him effectively, in word and in deed. By thus giving witness to the truth, we will share with others the mystery of the heavenly Father's love. As a consequence, men [sic] throughout the world will be aroused to a lively hope—the gift of the Holy Spirit—that someday at last they will be caught up in peace and utter happiness in that fatherland radiant with the glory of the Lord" (GS 93).

whole life (cf. Albert Nolan).²¹¹ And again, it is *shared* hope, not a hope that has an individualistic understanding of salvation.²¹² One's relationship with God is established through communion with Jesus. Being in communion with him draws each person into his being for all. And the love of God is revealed in responsibility for others (cf. SS 29).

How can one learn to hope? What are the 'settings' for learning and practicing hope? A first essential setting is prayer, which causes each person to undergo a process of inner purification that opens him or her up to God and to one's fellow human beings (cf. SS 32).

Prayer is followed by action and suffering as settings for learning hope:

All serious and upright human conduct is hope in action [...] it will always be true that our behaviour is not indifferent before God and therefore is not indifferent for the unfolding of history. We can open ourselves and the world and allow God to enter: we can open ourselves to truth, to love, to what is good. So on the one hand, our actions engender hope for us and for others; but at the same time, it is the great hope based upon God's promises that gives us courage and directs our action in good times and bad (SS 35).

Like action, suffering is part of human experience and stems partly from finitude and partly from sinful attitudes and actions. Everyone should certainly do all that is within his or her power to reduce suffering. But it is only God who can eradicate it by eliminating the power of evil that has a hold in the world: only a God who has personally entered history through becoming a man and suffering within history. "Through faith in the existence of this power, hope for the world's healing has emerged in history [...]. It is, however, hope—not yet fulfilment; hope that gives us the courage to place ourselves on the side of good even in seemingly hopeless situations" (SS 36). A final setting for learning and practising hope is judgement. Through God's taking on the condition of the sufferer, this innocent sufferer has attained the certitude of hope:

There is a God, and God can create justice in a way that we cannot conceive, yet we can begin to grasp it through faith. Yes, there is a resurrection of the flesh. There is justice. There is an "undoing" of past suffering, a reparation that sets things aright. For this reason, faith in the Last Judgement is first and foremost hope—the need for which was made abundantly clear in the upheavals of recent centuries (SS 43).

²¹¹ "Man's [sic] great, true hope which holds firm in spite of all disappointments can only be God—God who has loved us and who continues to love us 'to the end', until all 'is accomplished'" (SS 27).

²¹² Benedict XVI sees the root of this individualistic approach in the foundations of the modern age, particularly as expressed in the thought of Francis Bacon: "How did we come to conceive the Christian project as a selfish search for salvation which rejects the idea of serving others? [...]. Thus hope too, for Bacon, acquires a new form. Now it is called: *faith in progress* [...]. At the same time, two categories become increasingly central to the idea of progress: reason and freedom [... these two] however, were tacitly interpreted as being in conflict with the shackles of faith and of the Church [...]. The nineteenth century held fast to its faith in progress as the new form of human hope, and it continued to consider reason and freedom as the guiding stars to be followed along the path of hope". Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, nos. 16-20.

Benedict XVI is convinced that the question of justice constitutes the essential argument, or in any case, the strongest argument in favour of faith in eternal life. Only in connection with the impossibility that the injustice of history should be the final word does the necessity for Christ's return and for new life become fully convincing. Only God can create justice. And faith gives the certainty that God does so. The image of the Last Judgement is not primarily an image of terror, but an image of hope (cf. SS 44).²¹³ As we will see in chapter 4, for many survivors of forced displacement it may even be one of the decisive images of hope that allows healing to take place in their lives.

2.3.2. *Hope in the Word of God*

Whoever is joined with all the living has hope (Ecclesiastes 9:4). Unabated suffering and hardship are impossible to bear. Unless people find some source of consolation in their lives, they will not survive. For Christians, especially those who find themselves in situations of apparent hopelessness, the Sacred Scriptures can be a source of great consolation. They reveal the drama of the history of salvation as planned by God and constitute the account of God's relationship with God's people throughout that history. Everyone is part of that history even today—*joined with all the living* as well as with those who have gone before us—and sees the basis of one's relationship to God in these accounts. There is too wide a variety of themes in the Scriptures connected with the word hope (and associated actions such as *expect, wait, trust* and *rely*), as well as those depicting its relationship with the two other theological virtues, *faith* and *charity*, to include them all here. In this section we concentrate, therefore, on those themes that bear relevance to the particular theme of a spirituality of hope in the lives of forcibly displaced peoples. The narration of the history of salvation of the

²¹³ That is why faith in the last judgement is before all and above all hope, hope of the mistreated of this world, for the victims of all kinds of injustice. But hope not understood as vengeance, or settling accounts, but rather as an acknowledgment of their situation and as renewing reparation of that situation. God can create justice in a way that we cannot conceive. Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Escatología y Virtudes Teologales", p. 672. And the image of the Last Judgment can also be an image of hope because Christ does not come to judge the world, and less to condemn, but to save; what judges me is my actual attitude towards Christ. The idea of judgement gives its ultimate foundation to that of responsibility. Each person determines his or her destiny in the exercising of his freedom, in his or her own life. Yet, we are under God's judgement both as unique individuals and as humanity, so that God's judgment comes to us both as individual beings and as a corporative/communal being. From this, we would need to consider both the solidarity in guilt as well as our personal responsibility—our own and non-transferable responsibility, pp. 664-670.

people of God, as presented in the Scriptures, is after all, of a people who from the beginning of creation have always been in movement, being displaced, seeking refuge.²¹⁴

2.3.2.1. In the Older Testament

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah [...]. I will be their God, and they shall be my people [...] for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*).²¹⁵

This is God's promise to God's people, the basis of their hope, for a promise always gives hope, especially if that hope comes from God. In the OT hope is never set on people but rather on salvation, deliverance, light, end of distress. It must not be set on riches (Ps 52:7; Job 31:24), on one's own righteousness (Ezekiel 33:13), on others (Jeremiah 17:5), on religious centres (Jeremiah 7.4), on idols (Habakkuk 2:18) or on power or alliances (Hosea 10:13). Basically then, it must not be set on anything that we could count on or control. Hope is only to be set on YHWH and God's grace, which is always gift, but will never disappoint us because it is rooted in God's promise and covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Hope itself is God's gift (Ps 62:5).

It is important to point out that this kind of hope of Israel in God was new; no worshipers of other gods had ever called them 'my hope'. This hope in YHWH, waiting upon him and relying on him, is rooted in the confession of trust in YHWH as found particularly in the psalms. In place of something that is hoped for, we find the one from whom all things are hoped. In particular, in moments of crisis, of persecution, of forced displacement, the word of God as expressed in Jeremiah, echoes in the ears and hearts of God's people who have been pushed out of their homes: *there is hope for our future, says the Lord, your children shall come back to their country* (Jeremiah 31:17). And this hope has a solid base—the fact that God exists and acts in the lives of God's people:

²¹⁴ Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section comes from the following sources: H. BIETENHARD, K. STOCK, and J.M. LOCHMAN, "Hope" in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity, Vol 2 (E-I)*, English Translation. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2011, pp. 593-597; T. PRENDERGAST, "Hope" in David N Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol 3 (H-J)*, New York: Doubleday 1992, pp. 282-285; P. POUQUOTA, "El Apocalipsis Joánico" in M. Quesnel and P. Gruson, dirs., *La Biblia y su cultura. Jesús y el Nuevo Testamento*, Santander: Sal Terrae 2002, pp. 455-469, (Original in French: *La Bible et sa culture*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer 2000); J. ZIESLER, *Paul's Letter to the Romans (TPI New Testament Commentaries)*, London: SCM Press/ Philadelphia: Trinity Press International 1989; J. GOLDSTAIN and P. VAN IMSCHOOT, "Espérance" in *Dictionnaire Encyclopedique de la Bible*, Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v. 2002, pp. 440-441; S. GARCÍA RODRÍGUEZ, dir., *Concordancia de la Biblia – Nuevo Testamento*, Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer – Ediciones Mensajero 1975; and D. GARLINGTON, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans*, Tübingen: Mohr 1994.

²¹⁵ Unless noted otherwise, all scripture quotations in this section come from the NRSVCE translation.

For us, and for the Greeks, there is an element of risk in hope. If I say ‘I hope to come’, I mean that I wish to come, and probably think there is a good chance that I shall come, but cannot be certain of coming. In the Bible, on the contrary, hope has an element of security and even certainty. The ground of this characteristic of biblical hope is the reliability of God and his promises: that is its second notable characteristic. People in the Bible may hope, not because of a calculation of what is probable, nor as a form of wishful thinking, but because God is who he is, and therefore provides confidence in facing the future.²¹⁶

The goal of hope is YHWH’s reign, his kingdom on the new earth, Israel’s conversion as well as the conversion of other peoples and the new covenant (Isaiah 25:9; 49:6; 65:17-25; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hosea 3:5). In Israel there is a phrase, a formula, to describe the righteous, those who believe in YHWH: “those who wait for the Lord” (Ps 37:9). Here the intrinsic link between faith and hope is so clear to the extent that they come to mean the same, to stand one for the other. And the reason or link that sustains them both, as mentioned earlier in the discussion of the theological virtues, is trust. The believer is the one who never doubts that God is God and abandons his or her life totally in God. And as expressed beautiful in Habakkuk, he or she waits in trust that God will surely act: *For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not delay* (Habakkuk 2:3).

2.3.2.2. In the New Testament

Even if the noun ‘hope’ (Greek *elpís*) is not found at all in the Gospels and the verb ‘to hope’ only appears five times (with the OT sense of ‘to trust’, cf. Mathew 12:12), the idea of hope, as confidence in God whose mercy and goodness people can rely on and whose promises cannot fail, is everywhere presupposed. In the Synoptic Gospels this notion of hope is conveyed through the sense of ‘expectation’ generated by Jesus’ preaching of conversion in the face of the imminent advent of the reign of God (cf. Luke 2:25). The evangelists urge their communities of believers to steadfast patience and to ‘keeping watch’ (cf. Mark 13:37). In the Epistles, the motivation of hope rests in its object, that for which it waits, which in turn leads to patience and endurance. One of the best known passages which encapsulates much of this theology is found in Romans 5:1-5:

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character,

²¹⁶ Cf. ZEISLER, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, p. 132.

and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Suffering might not always produce endurance—it can also lead to despair; and endurance might not always build good character—it could lead to a desire for retribution. But Paul's point is that for the person of faith, this will be so. Human life is marching onwards towards God and 'spills' onto God, who welcomes it without dissolving it or annulling it, but instead affirms it in love—which has been already demonstrated with the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the reason that hope, etymologically and existentially united to faith in the Old Testament, appears now so to intrinsically connected to love.²¹⁷

For Paul, Abraham is a model of hope: *Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations" according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be"* (Romans 4:18). When humanly speaking, Abraham had nothing to hope for, he still hoped, putting his trust solely in God. And he could do this because of his faith. Continuing the tradition from the OT, NT faith is essentially hope (the words seem interchangeable), though now based on Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The *Letter to the Hebrews* closely links the "full assurance of faith" (10:22) to the "confession of our hope without wavering" (10:23). And Paul reminds the Ephesians that before their encounter with Christ they were without hope and without God in the world (2:12). Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (cf. Hebrews 11:1). Like faith, hope is the gift of our Father in heaven (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:16). The triad of faith, hope and love, which we have seen earlier, is especially important for Paul and present as triadic formulas in his Letters (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:8). The Christian life is described in terms of the faith and love of those who hope for the eschatological consummation of the New Creation (cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:6; Galatians 5:5-6). A mark of love is that it hopes all things (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:7).

The hope of Christians is deliverance, righteousness, resurrection, eternal life, and the vision of God (Romans 8:22-25). Thus, it reaches beyond death and has a universal goal without being based on anything human that we can depend on. At the same time, it is personalised, for Christ himself is our hope (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:19; Colossians 1:27). Christ's resurrection

²¹⁷ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL "Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo", p. 55.

allows Christians to hope in the future of him who came and is now exalted (cf. Philippians 2:9), while living in the tension between the *now* and the *then*: “by faith we wait for the *hope* of righteousness” (Galatians 5:5) and “in *this hope* we were saved” (Romans 8:23-24). This focus is particularly present in John who points to the present union of the disciple with Jesus the Revealer (realised eschatology) and the believer’s continuing and future union with Christ in the Father’s glory (futurist eschatology). Being a Christian means being born again to a living hope (cf. 1 Peter 1:3) and being ready to give an account of that hope in our lives (cf. 1 Peter 3:15). This hope is that of being saved when judgment comes (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:9), of experiencing filiation and the redemption of the body (cf. Romans 8:23) and life with Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:10). As we would expect, these biblical themes support the theological assertions presented in the previous section.

At the beginning of this section it was mentioned that the Greek noun *elpís* was used as a term for hope. In reality, two terms are used in the NT in relation to hope: *elpís* refers to hope as an ultimate goal or as fulfilment of promises. But when expressing hope in the present time, hope lived in difficult times of persecution, fragility and suffering, the term that is used is *hipomoné*, which translates as *endurance*, staying firm, constancy, trusted waiting. In the Pauline texts, it appears as a fundamental attitude of Christians who trustingly await the reign of God and the coming of Christ as an eschatological fulfilment of God’s promises. This waiting connotes a great capacity for patience, perseverance and a will of resistance to adversity, to persecutions, to all types of suffering. In this way it is presented as constitutive attitude of hope, to the point that it substitutes it.²¹⁸ Indeed, in the post-Pauline literature, perseverance takes the place of hope as a characteristic of faithful discipleship (cf. Titus 2:2; 1 Timothy 6:11). Christians are called upon to be steadfast in bearing sufferings so that they not be put to shame on the day of judgment (cf. 1 Peter 4:14). This call is also present in the

²¹⁸ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL “Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo”, p. 66. Benedict XVI points out the connection between the OT and the NT in the use of this term: “*Hypo-mone* is normally translated as ‘patience’—perseverance, constancy. Knowing how to wait, while patiently enduring trials, is necessary for the believer to be able to ‘receive what is promised’ (Heb.10:36). In the religious context of ancient Judaism, this word was used expressly for the expectation of God which was characteristic of Israel, for their persevering faithfulness to God on the basis of the certainty of the Covenant in a world which contradicts God. Thus the word indicates a lived hope, a life based on the certainty of hope. In the New Testament this expectation of God, this standing with God, takes on a new significance: in Christ, God has revealed himself. He has already communicated to us the ‘substance of things to come, and thus the expectation of God acquires a new certainty’, (cf. SS 9). For a detailed study on the ‘practice of patience’ in early Christianity see, for example, ALAIN KREIDER, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2016.

Book of Revelation, which urges confidence and patient endurance from believers. In those tempestuous times, the mission of the Church was to hold fast and, above all, to give testimony of hope, lived out in true conversion. And there was great reward to those who endured: to the poor, the humble and the oppressed who put their trust in God alone (cf. Psalm 18:3), Jesus promised the possession of the benefits of salvation of the reign of God (cf. Mathew 5:3-12; Luke 5:21-26); and the Beatitudes promised them the future fulfilment of their hope. As it could be imagined, many of these scriptural texts would be a source of strength and consolation to many survivors of forced displacement who have *put their trust in God alone*, and we will endeavour to incorporate them in our spiritual exercises for them.

2.3.3. Lived hope

A life based on the certainty of hope is lived hope. As we have just seen, hope speaks of fidelity, endurance, patience, magnanimity, creative and trusting effort. Lived hope speaks of individual attitudes and dispositions, of community responsibility and action. It speaks also of possibilities, of taking risks, of being ‘un-intimidated’. It speaks of having courage. It speaks of God, of course. And lived hope speaks of liberation. It has to be liberating, for if one no longer has to fret about one’s ultimate destiny, then anguish and anxiety have no place in one’s life. Instead, one’s life can be sign and *praxis* of hope to others:

The NT calls ‘God of hope’ the one who resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead. This act of God, rescuing him from death and making him the Lord-Giver of life of the living and the dead, has created a new hope with respect to the future. With it, a freedom has appeared to live the present and a capacity to serve our neighbour hitherto unsuspected. They, who do not have to look after themselves—since God looks after their life and their death—when they live as Jesus lived, can care for their neighbour unconditionally and bring about historical hopes from an eschatological hope.²¹⁹

2.3.3.1. Liberating hope

As it was pointed out in the first part of this chapter, the point of departure of a theology of liberation is the primacy of praxis with the oppressed and the marginalised. It uses a socio-analytical reading to search for the causes of injustice and how to overcome them, while it continues to be rooted in faith in a God who acts in ways which are liberating. A major challenge in this endeavour is to find ways to speak of God, and of hope, in the midst of these injustices—from which the Church itself is not always exempt. Christians do hope, however, because their faith does not reside in their works, but the labours of God. They do hope

²¹⁹ Cf. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDEDAL, *Raíz de la Esperanza*, p. 16.

because the core of Christianity is not what they do for God, but what God does for them. And they hope because their faith in God leads them to believe that God can and will eradicate evil and its fruits of violence, suffering and injustice. This belief and hope are based on the eschatological promises referred to before and on the power to transform unjust social structures which they imply.

God's Promise which continues to be revealed gradually in all its universality and concrete expression: "[...] is inexhaustible and dominates history, because it is the self-communication of God".²²⁰ In other words, this self-communication of God points toward the future and, at the same time, this Promise and Good News help reveal believers to themselves and broaden the perspective of their historical commitment here and now. We have already seen the centrality of this commitment and responsibility in Moltmann's and Metz's eschatological-political horizons. Their approach was needed to move forward our understanding of hope from something needed for *my* personal salvation to an acknowledgment of its role in the renewal and recreation of our world—already oriented towards the reign of God. Hope in the resurrected Christ can indeed be a liberating force that both critiques the present unjust circumstances and impels each person to collaborate in bringing about the promised reign of peace and universal justice. But we cannot lose sight of the fact that it is the liberating action of Christ that is at the heart of this historical transformation, not one's own:

We find here an unresolved problem, posed in various ways: *the relationship between faith and ideology*, between theology and ethics, between the eschatological hope and historical projects, between the ultimate and the penultimate, between the Kingdom of God and human values, between salvation and liberation. Beyond the nuances in differences between Moltmann and Metz, their eschatological hope was to explore new attempts of historical and ideological mediation as a response to the scandal of the injustice in our world.²²¹

The liberation of the person and the kingdom of God will appear as magnitudes which mutually demand one another. Fulfilment and consummation continue to be gifts and the historical projects of liberation cannot be confused with final salvation, but the condition of possibility of salvation is indeed liberation, and the utopian project of Christian salvation can only be made credible by articulating (and carrying out) these practical human projects.²²² Moreover, it can no longer be denied or ignored that the fulfilment waited and hoped for is a

²²⁰ Cf. GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 161.

²²¹ Cf. VIDAL, "Creer en tiempos de desesperanza", p. 855.

²²² Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Escatología y Virtudes Teológicas", p. 675.

universal human society which fulfils its goal in the participation of the life and glory of God, and not the fulfilment of individual destinies that have to do with personal happiness. Hope has always and essentially been hope for the others; only thus can hope really be a lived liberating hope.

2.3.3.2. A hope that does not diminish in the eyes and hearts of the forcibly displaced

A life based on the certainty of hope is lived hope. Somehow, many forcibly displaced people of faith possess this certainty and through it they ‘refuse’ to despair. And they *tell* us that we should not either. That in fact all of us have an obligation not to despair. Vidal (following E. Fackenheim’s *commandment to hope*²²³) speaks of an *ethical imperative*, a duty, *not to despair*, impressed on humanity from the victims and survivors. It is an imperative firstly from history—from the past—that comes from the victims who beseech each person not to despair because this would mean granting a second victory to the perpetrators of violence, injustice and murder and inflicting a second death on the oppressed. And it is an imperative imposed from the present—for the violence, injustice and killing still continues today.²²⁴ This imperative then requires action, but it also demands an awareness of the consequences of those actions, of projects, institutions and even of humanitarian interventions and intentions, if one’s involvement is to avoid generating more victims.

Thus hope is active, not passive, and as such it cannot be reduced to simply resisting. It does require resistance, but also courage and will, anticipatory imagination and endurance, and the trust that every human person will know fulfilment and justice. What is hoped for is an “absolute future” (cf. Rahner) for humanity, an unimaginable future without God, a future that is God—a God of redemption, resurrection and life.²²⁵ Many people (especially in the developed world) might lack this type of hope, but it abounds among the poor and the oppressed, the shut-out and the shunned, the forcibly displaced—especially in those for whom faith is a non-negotiable part of their lives. They hope, against all evidence to the contrary, that there is meaning in their suffering and that somehow their existence will find fulfilment (cf. the Beatitudes). And they hope they will be given justice, because *God can*

²²³ Cf. E. L. FACKENHEIM, “El mandamiento de esperar: respuesta a la experiencia judía contemporánea” en AA. VV., *El futuro de la esperanza*, Salamanca: Sígueme 1973, pp. 97-100.

²²⁴ Cf. VIDAL, “Creer en tiempos de desesperanza”, pp. 873-80.

²²⁵ Cf. VIDAL, “Creer en tiempos de desesperanza”, p. 880.

create justice in a way that we cannot conceive (cf. Benedict XVI). God's Promise assures them the impossibility that the injustice of history will have the final word.

In their 'simple' *faith* the forcibly displaced continue to believe in God—'simple' because there is no complexity in their statement of faith: *God exists, God gives us life, God is faithful, God will deliver us, we shall see God one day*. And somehow many of them also continue to have faith in humanity, broken and fragile, sometimes inhuman and cruel, but redeemable and capable of surprises. They continue to *love* their broken fellow human beings, in solidarity with their common pain, sharing it and often giving of themselves, in whatever way they can, to alleviate it. They seem to be impelled in doing this by a basic trust in the world (different from their trust in the Other or another) and in a supreme order that rules it and fills it with sense, and therefore, in the future as something that deserves to be waited for. *Hope* of life even where there only seems to be darkness and emptiness. And this *hoping, believing and loving* is the fruit of the Spirit's grace in their lives. It has to be, because it goes beyond anything that could have a human or historical foundation, and even beyond anything we could demand.

We also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. In the case of forcibly displaced people, suffering certainly does not always produce endurance. For many it leads to despair and a feeling of having been abandoned by the world—a world that created their situation in the first place, that turned their lives upside down, but that now does not care what happens to them. And endurance does not always build good character. For some, their impetus for survival, what keeps them alive, is a thirst for vengeance and retribution against their perpetrators. Faith and hope and love, poured out by the Spirit in their lives, are needed to purify and transform their suffering, their endurance and their character. And when this happens, their capacity to *boast in their sufferings* becomes a source of inspiration and challenge to everyone else. Their endurance in hope challenges the endurance of one's hope, one's audacity and capacity to take risks for the good of others. It is as if they were asking: "Do you live fear-filled or hope-filled existences?" *They, who no longer have to look after themselves—since God looks after their life and their*

death—and strive to live *as Jesus lived*, know deeply in themselves to be held in God's hands, and it is this knowledge that truly liberates them.

Hope liberates and gives 'wings' to those whose wings have been clipped over and over again, sometimes to the root. It provides the possibility and audacity to risk and engage in folly—is it not folly to believe that things can change, to see beauty in ramshackle refugee camps, to fall in love, to invite new-born life into the chaos and tragedy that surrounds them? And the possibility to engage in the folly of love—to come out of themselves, those who 'have nothing to give'—and care for their neighbour unconditionally. Hope keeps them going after three years of treading through several countries to get to a port, board a rickety boat, be packed like sardines and risk death to arrive to a 'promised land'; always motivated by the love of children left behind, of families, spouses and friends, for whom they are a sign of hope, an object of hope, an anchor of hope.

As mentioned before, hope requires endurance and active and persevering resistance to stand squarely and face adversity head on. Because it is precisely in adversity and in testing that hope is exercised. And hope finally requires patience, which is also one of the defining characteristics of the way of life of forcibly displaced people—always waiting for resettlement, for the next shipment of food and water, for opportunities for education, for a medical appointment. Their patience is a challenge to various forms of impatience, to those who think that they have waited long enough, that things do not change, that their situation only gets worse. Their patience relativises everyone else's impatience.

2.3.3.3. Our hope is planted in the deepest part of heaven

As affirmed earlier, the capacity to appropriate the mystery of God in one's life is a gift from God; it cannot happen without God's grace. At the same time, each person is called to collaborate with this grace by opening oneself up to receiving this gift. But to receive it, each person must first 'extend his or her arms' so the gift does not fall to the ground. However, extending one's arms is not enough. They have to be *strong* arms, held up firmly so they can receive and bear the weight of such 'hefty' gifts as hope, faith and love. And in our case, a strong and fertile ground is also needed, which can receive and bear the seedlings of hope we long to plant. Humanity is constantly searching for this fertile soil, but unfortunately in many cases in the wrong places:

Day by day, man [sic] experiences many greater or lesser hopes, different in kind according to the different periods of his life. Sometimes one of these hopes may appear to be totally satisfying without any need for other hopes [...] When these hopes are fulfilled, however, it becomes clear that they were not, in reality, the whole. It becomes evident that man [sic] has need of a hope that goes further. It becomes clear that only something infinite will suffice for him, something that will always be more than he can ever attain (SS 30).

Benedict XVI insists that we need the *greater and lesser hopes* that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God, who encompasses the whole of reality and who can bestow upon us what we, by ourselves, cannot attain. God's love alone can be that fertile soil in which we plant our seedlings of hope.

The *Letter to the Hebrews*, as an extended exhortation to a community wavering in its commitment in time of persecution, introduces the anchor as an image that symbolises hope (cf. Hebrews 6:18-19). Royo Marín describes in a poetic fashion the way in which this symbolism 'works':

As the sailor secures its boat with the long chain of an anchor, tied down to the depth of the sea, we too have the little boat of our soul united to God through the anchor of Christian hope. This anchor of our hope is 'secure and firm', because it is planted not in the earth, but in the deepest part of heaven.²²⁶

Our hope is planted in the deepest part of heaven, in God's love for us. It is an active hope in which we struggle to prevent things moving towards the "perverse end". It is an active hope also in the sense that we keep the world open to God. Only in this way does it continue to be a truly human hope (cf. SS 34). The true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer: the capacity to suffer for the sake of the truth is the measure of humanity. Yet this capacity to suffer depends on the type and extent of the hope that people bear within them and build upon (Cf. SS 38-39). The question of hope is the question for the other, for solidarity, for God. Hope in God is possible only when its divine reality is mediated in the world through words, actions and loving gestures that signify it and make it present, especially to those who are in most need of it.

2.4. The gift of hope: a 'hidden' treasure

²²⁶ Cf. A. ROYO MARÍN, *Teología de la Esperanza: Respuesta a la angustia existencialista*, Madrid: BAC 1969, p. 208. Alfaro complements this imagery by affirming that: "To hope in God is to have the courage to cut the moorings that keep us tied to the tangible securities of all those things over which we have control, and to throw the anchor of our existence on to the fathomless depths of God's love, which is revealed vastly in the Cross of Christ (Heb. 6:18-20)", cf. ALFARO, *Esperanza cristiana y liberación del hombre*, p. 43.

If there is no longer hope where you are, then you have to do all that you can to get to a place where you can at least cultivate that hope. No matter at what price.²²⁷

So far, in this second part of our chapter, we have strived to explore some of the essential characteristics of a spirituality of hope and to understand how the forcibly displaced might live out—in and through the Spirit—this hope as a ‘habit of the heart’, which gives them the capacity to do and to endure whatever they must in their journey of appropriation of the mystery of Christ in their lives. We have looked at the situation of hope in the world, and come up with some ‘reference points’ to guide us in this understanding, both from the perspective of traditional theology and from the lived reality of the forcibly displaced.

As we have tried to emphasise throughout this chapter, forcibly displaced people have a fundamental right to speak and express their thoughts and views in their own words. People who have had the privilege of being and working with them speak not so much of being a ‘voice for the voiceless’, but of assisting, facilitating and providing ways so that those ‘without a voice’ are given opportunities to express themselves. This applies not only to situations in which they need to speak up to claim their own rights, but also to those instances where they would like to share their experiences with others. The forcibly displaced have a lot to say and there is much that can be learned from listening to them. In fact, as it has been often asserted, forcibly displaced people hold ‘treasures’ they can offer the world. For some people hearing this might be a surprise, because they think that people who have ‘lost everything’ have nothing left to give. For such people, the treasures of survivors of forced displacement would indeed be ‘unexpected’. But they do have them. They have their suffering to share, or rather, what their suffering and forced displacement have taught them.

In this last section then, we attempt to bring together these learnings and insights as we also strive to give a more ‘complete shape’ to the spirituality of hope of forcibly displaced people by exploring how it has found its roots—and has been further developed—in and through their experiences and how they incarnate it and express it in their lives. We begin looking at three elements—*mutuality* in proclaiming the gospel, *accompanying* from strengths, and our

²²⁷ These words were spoken by an Ethiopian asylum seeker who took 16 years to get to Italy, having travelled back and forth through Sudan and Lybia, been thrown into prison, suffered torture and dehumanizing treatment and finally walked through the Egyptian desert, where he suffered from agonising thirst and saw others fall dead all around him. Cf. JRS ITALIA/Centro Astalli (sede italiana del Servizio dei Gesuiti per i Rifugiati), *Terre Senza Promesse. Storie di rifugiati in Italia*, Roma: Avagliano 2011, p. 43.

shared identity as people of God—as conditions to build and promote hope *in* and *by* both forcibly displaced people as well as all of us. We finish the chapter ‘listening’ to some of the powerful experiences and lessons—*useful* experiences and lessons—survivors of forced displacement would like to share and communicate to those willing to hear them.

2.4.1. Mutuality in sharing together the message of the Gospel

Love consists in a mutual communication between the two persons. That is, the one who loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has, or a part of what one has or can have; and the beloved in return does the same to the lover [*SpEx* 231].

As mentioned previously, force displacement is caused by many different factors: political, social, economic, philosophical, and even religious. Some forcibly displaced people suffer persecution daily in different parts of the world because they profess a particular faith or follow a particular religious tradition. Yet, even if the cause of their forced displacement is not primarily faith-related, their faith still plays a very important role for many of them. They often depend on spiritual resources while moving from place to place and their lives are frequently marked by a variety of religious practices.²²⁸ Asylum seekers, migrants and refugees embark on dangerous journeys and, as we have seen recently, many of them die crossing oceans and borders. Often they seek and rely on God to overcome apprehension, anxiety and fear of rejection or death. They trust in God to protect them and to guide them, and those who are Christians, place their hope in Christ. But they also put their trust and their hope on human assistance from members of religious and secular organisations who come to their aid.

Many survivors of forced displacement speak in gratitude of people who have worked with them and accompanied them for so many years, who have been able to help them live better at the margins of life—in refugee camps, urban dwellings for the displaced, and even in host countries which have given them resettlement, but where they still find themselves living in those margins. They acknowledge that their presence and care have often given them hope. At the same time, many of these ‘companions’ and ‘supporters’ of the forcibly displaced also

²²⁸ Some of these spiritual resources and religious practices include: visits to pilgrimage shrines before leaving or en route, reliance on the aid of religious organisations and institutions, reciting prayers, carrying devotional objects, fulfilling promises after arriving safely, even embracing the religious tradition of the new country as a way of gratitude or as a way to adapt or integrate to the new culture. See, for example, J. HAGAN, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope, and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2008, for a detailed research-based study on the use of these spiritual resources and practices. We will make further reference to these practices in chapter 4.

recognise that as friendships with them have been formed and developed, they have also been able to share with the forcibly displaced their own experiences of living ‘in the margins’—their increasing sense of despair, their anxieties, and their failures to find meaning in life. Many would say that the forcibly displaced have been able to help them live better at their own margins of life by enabling them to love and to hope. Some would even say that their contribution to their lives has been irreplaceable.

These statements of course speak of reciprocity, of having shared precious gifts in a spirit of mutuality. Together, they have all learned that this mutuality has to be expressed through the ways in which they speak and act in the world. As long as we continue speaking of forcibly displaced people as ‘beneficiaries’, as ‘victims’, as ‘those in need’, we will continue to see them and act towards them in ways that uphold these imposed ‘identities’. But the forcibly displaced are more than the labels placed on them; they are real persons, with gifts and a desire to contribute to the lives of others within the church and everywhere. *Love consists in a mutual communication between the two persons.*

As we saw in Part I, hospitality and solidarity are two of the essential tenets of Catholic Social Teaching. We will introduce these themes in the next section and will explore them in greater detail in chapter 2. These are indispensable, but the Church’s commitment to the forcibly displaced cannot be reduced purely to organising structures of hospitality and solidarity. This attitude would impoverish the riches of their vocation as people of God, called in the first place to proclaim the Good News of salvation and transmit the faith, which “is strengthened when it is given to others”²²⁹. At the end of their lives, regardless of the circumstances or challenges they might have faced, people will be asked not only about the acts of charity they have done for the least of their brothers and sisters (cf. Mathew 25:31-45), but also about the courage and fidelity with which they have witnessed to Christ.²³⁰

²²⁹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio: On the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate*, (7 December 1990) n. 2, AAS 83 (1990) 249-339; http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html. Accessed 4 June 2018.

²³⁰ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Message for World Migration Day 1998* (9 November 1997), n. 2; http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_09111997_world-migration-day1998.html. Accessed 12 June 2018.

Everyone without exception has been called to be a herald of Christ, to go out and get in touch with those people that, for one reason or another, find themselves separated from his fold.²³¹ And in some instances the forcibly displaced can do this more effectively than many of us. Their stories of suffering and survival give them credibility before people who are hurting and suffering (and they are so many!) because they can identify with them. This apostolic impulse, the wanting to labour for Christ, the wanting to bring Christ to the people and the people to Christ, is strong in the hearts of many forcibly displaced people of faith. For this they can rely on the commitment of the Heart of Christ that promises extraordinary graces. Christ is the only one who can inspire; the only one who can give encouragement and hope.²³²

2.4.1.1. Hospitality introduced

A young refugee named Lawrence from Gabon, wrote this prayer:

God of heaven and earth, you are the king of nations. That this nation to which you have sent us be favourable to us. Help us carry out all the things for which you have sent us here. That this land may be a source of blessing for us, and that we, in turn, might be a source of blessing too. All glory be given to you, sole master of time and all circumstances.

Much can be said about hospitality, its origins, its characteristics, and what it has meant for many forcibly displaced people such as Lawrence and, as mentioned, we will address this theme in further detail in the next chapter. Like Lawrence, most forcibly displaced are deeply thankful to those who have opened up their countries, their cities and their hearts to them. Without this offering of hospitality, they literally could not have survived. In time, however, they have also come to learn (sometimes with great difficulty) that hospitality is not a one-way street, that it involves mutuality and reciprocity too. It is hard to believe this when you are usually on the receiving end of such a gift. Yet, many of them have come to understand that their presence has been a source of transformation in other people's lives. The testimony of a young Spanish lawyer who opened his home to asylum seekers from Africa describes this powerfully:

I soon realised that hospitality was more than simply offering a room—as in a hostel—to someone. It requires opening up two deadlocks: one for the street door and another for the heart. Only then can the feasting and the joy, the difficulties and the dreams slip through the

²³¹ As mentioned before, the scope of this study has had to be limited to the experience of Christian forcibly displaced people, and it is their contribution we address in this section. But experience has shown that many forcibly displaced of other faith traditions also feel this impulse to share their faith with others.

²³² Cf. PEDRO ARRUEPE, *En Él sólo... la esperanza: selección de textos sobre el Corazón de Cristo. Prólogo de Karl Rahner*, Roma: Secretariado General del Apostolado de la Oración 1982, pp. 15-16.

cracks, like subtle flurries of wind. It finally dawned on me that the tightest locks were within me and then, when I opened my hands, unbolted internal armours and allowed life to penetrate the deepest parts of me, the chains were released. It was at that moment that situations of precariousness, marginalisation and injustice—the ‘daily bread’ of so many people, which were until then unknown to me—became clear. I could no longer be indifferent: the pain of the other manifested itself as a sacred place, almost commonplace, which led me to perceive and interpret reality in a radically different way. Nothing was the same anymore. I stopped interpreting reality as if it were a conflict between ‘goodies’ and ‘baddies’, to the point that everything seemed to have been turned upside down: neither the bad were as bad as they seemed, nor the good were as good.²³³

Hospitality is a two-way street of mutual ministry where people often exchange roles and can learn the most from those whom they considered powerless or of “no account” because they had ended up at the margins of life. But margins can be places of connection. And when the distinctions of ‘margin’ and ‘centre’ begin to blur, as all share in God’s hospitality, they are given a sign that the Reign of God is drawing near.²³⁴ Many forcibly displaced have discovered that not only them but so many other people feel estranged from their loved ones, from their own past, from their own selves and from God. Everybody, it seems, is looking for a hospitable place where they can be part of a community and live without fear. There is so much hostility in this world! They have experienced it so often, and in being honest, many would say that they have been guilty of it against others, too.

Human beings are called to create these hospitable spaces for one another, and for people of faith and hope, this is a duty.²³⁵ How to move from this hostility to hospitality? From considering others a *hostis* to finally seeing in them a *hospes*; from their being labelled an ‘enemy’ to their being granted the status of ‘guest’? It is not easy. As mentioned before, it requires letting go of one’s prejudices and one’s fears, recognising that in his/her otherness the stranger can enrich one’s life (rather than damage it), and that we need one another, all of us.²³⁶ When hostility is converted into hospitality then fearful strangers can become guests

²³³ Cf. J. RÍOS M., *Arando entre piedras, Crónicas de sufrimiento y reconciliación de un abogado en la frontera*, Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae 2013, p. 31.

²³⁴ Cf. LETTY RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality: God’s welcome in a world of difference*. Edited by J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press 2009, p. 65.

²³⁵ “[Hospitality] it is not about changing people, but about offering them space where change can take place. It is not about evangelizing or converting them to our particular position, but allowing space for the other to be freed from fear and uncertainty, to be liberated to put down roots of faith and trust, and to bear spiritual fruit. It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of spirituality, but the opening of an opportunity to others to find their God and their way”. Cf. CAROLYN BUTLER, “Hospitality and Spiritual Direction” in *The Way* 52, n. 3 (2013) 70.

²³⁶ And this includes letting go of prejudices and fears against other forcibly displaced who are seen as strangers!

and reveal to their hosts the promise and gifts they carry with them. Even, as it has happened to so many forcibly displaced, when the guest is unaware of possessing those gifts. Thus a good host must help her guests discover those hidden treasures and then be able to help them develop and deepen them so they can continue their way on their own and bless others as well. Hospitality, as an attitude towards life and others, requires that we affirm one another, especially in this day and age where there is so much self-doubt, so much anxiety about doing what is right.²³⁷

These are not easy lessons to learn, and often they can be riddled with paradox, especially for forcibly displaced people who have felt so empty at times, so devoid of their identity, their sense of meaning, even of their emotions and their faith. Their faith has been shaken and their love has grown dim, but hope has kept them going, even when consolation from all that previously sustained them had disappeared. And God's grace has been able to transform the emptiness that comes from fear and suffering into an emptiness that has left space for freedom, to become their true selves—the glass half full needs to be half empty so God can fill it with God's grace. This has required a great deal of patience but, as mentioned earlier, patience is something the forcibly displaced have had to learn, because their lives involve a great deal of waiting. They have had to learn to welcome this feeling empty before God, because that is simply part of their reality. They often speak of God's grace giving them the time and humility required to endure what they must until 'salvation comes', until the time of the Lord is fulfilled.²³⁸

But salvation concerns the whole of life and begins here and now, not only for the forcibly displaced, but for all people as well. In accepting them, Christ marginalised and rejected is accepted. And in doing so, people are able to receive salvation for themselves in the form of liberation from despair, from meaninglessness in their lives. This is one of the gifts forcibly displaced people are able to give to all; their gift of hospitality. Mutuality arises as the gift of an encounter where two people, no matter how different, accept one another and share what they are—in giving one receives.

²³⁷ Cf. HENRI NOUWEN, *Reaching out: the three movements of the spiritual life*, New York: Doubleday Co. 1975, p. 61. Though better known as a popular spiritual writer, Nouwen was also a recognised pastoral theologian, psychologist and social justice activist, whose perspectives often complemented those from more 'traditional' theologians.

²³⁸ Cf. P. VAN BREEMEN, *Como pan que se parte*, Santander: Sal Terrae 1992, p. 115. Original in English: *As bread that is broken*, New Jersey: Dimension Books 1974.

2.41.2. Solidarity introduced

As expressed earlier, the question of hope is the question *for* the other, for solidarity, for God. Hope in God is manifested when its divine reality is mediated through words, actions and loving gestures that signify it and make it present; when people chose to share their life with others, especially those in greatest need—the poor, the marginalised, the forcibly displaced. And when they share their lives in solidarity with them, they are blessed in unexpected ways:

We want our presence among refugees to be one of sharing with them, of accompaniment, of walking together along the same path. In so far as possible, we want to feel what they have felt, suffer as they have, share the same hopes and aspirations, see the world through their eyes. We ourselves would like to become one with refugees and displaced people so that, all together, we can begin the search for a new life. This attempt to identify with the poor and rejected, however hesitant and imperfect, has brought us untold blessings [...]. In a word, we have found Christ again in the faces and lives of these abandoned peoples, a Christ who is beckoning and calling us to follow him.²³⁹

This is what happens when solidarity is expressed and lived out as a gospel value.²⁴⁰ And, as in the case of hospitality, solidarity can and should also be a two-way street of mutual ministry, where the forcibly displaced are allowed to offer others their solidarity too: to put themselves ‘in their shoes’, to try to understand the sources of their own despair and

²³⁹ Cf. JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE, *Everybody's Challenge: Essential Documents of Jesuit Refugee Service 1980-2000*, Rome: JRS Publications 2000, pp. 70-71. About these ‘untold blessings’ the text says: “For by their very poverty, they [the forcibly displaced] teach us to become detached from material possessions and ourselves. Their insecurity and uncertainty about the future show us how not to rely merely on ourselves or on human planning. Their cultural values and simple dignity as human beings remind us that a person's worth is determined by what he is rather than by what he has. Their openness and generosity so often challenge us to share with them and others all that we have and are. Their happiness and laughter in the midst of adversity help us understand better the meaning of suffering. Their deep faith and unfailing hope lead us to rediscover these spiritual values in our own lives”.

²⁴⁰ It is worth noting here an example of this kind of solidarity put into action. In 2008 Jesuit institutions in Spain working with migrants began a campaign against a proposal to reform Spanish Immigration law which would allow the state to sanction (with large fines) anyone who in solidarity helped foreign nationals who lived in Spain in irregular situations. Their *manifesto*, among other things, stressed the value of solidarity with those who lacked access to the most basic of needs, including shelter, food and work. It pointed out that the government of Spain would lose all ethical and juridical legitimacy in legislating against basic Human Rights, with the sole purpose of creating intolerable conditions which would pressure these irregular migrants already in Spain into returning to their home countries or as a deterrent for those thinking about coming here. Through an internet campaign they received more than 30,000 signatures of support and finally the reform did not go through. However, at the end of 2012 a new reform, aimed at amending the Penal Code, threatened with yet another sanction involving penalties of up to two years of imprisonment for anyone who assisted (in the transit or permanence in the country) persons living in Spain in ‘irregular situations’. Once again, principles and values as basic for any nation as solidarity and hospitality were in danger of becoming illegal. And once again, through the efforts of many organisations, individuals and local civil and government institutions, a new campaign “*Salvemos la hospitalidad*” (*Let's safeguard hospitality*) proved successful. The project for Legal Reform of the Penal Code was approved by the government at the end of September 2013 stating that “the reform expressly excludes penal sanctions in all cases in which the actions [of assistance] have taken place guided by humanitarian considerations”. Cf. RÍOS, *Arando entre piedras*, pp. 276-279, 283.

hopelessness today, so they can help them find meaning in their own lives. This expression of vulnerability on one's part of course involves a risk. But hope always involves taking risks—of being disappointed or rejected or hurt. Opening up to another always involves risk—of whether the other will respond as a friend or foe. Yet, while “[h]ope convenes two great forces of the spirit: friendship and antagonism; one positive, the other negative [...] the first one is more powerful”.²⁴¹

2.4.2. More than a victim: accompanying from strengths, strengthening through accompaniment

We mentioned before that as long as people continue speaking of forcibly displaced people as ‘victims’, they will continue to see them and act towards them in ways that confirm this image, this ‘identity’. Sadly, the danger is that over time many survivors of forced displacement might come to regard themselves purely in this fashion too—many of them in fact have already fallen into this trap. It cannot be denied that they have been victimised over and over again, robbed of their dignity, dehumanised. That is a reality they and us cannot forget and would not want to ignore. And yet, while they have appreciated people's efforts to restore this dignity to their lives and ask them to continue doing so, forcibly displaced persons also want to remind others that they are much more than passive victims—that they are fighters and survivors, endowed with great resilience, inventiveness, initiative, resourcefulness. If they did not possess these qualities, they would not have lasted very long, even with their help. They have suffered many wounds and need much healing in their lives; and the presence of others and their accompaniment have contributed and will continue to contribute to that healing. But they ask others to see beyond their wounds and learn more and more to accompany them through their strengths.²⁴² Otherwise, they might end up getting in the way of their hope!

²⁴¹ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL “Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo”, p. 70.

²⁴² A relatively new field of psychology called Positive Psychology emphasises this approach. Traditionally, psychology has been thought of as an area that fundamentally studies the things that are wrong with people and the ways to ‘fix’ them. This new branch of psychology tries to understand, through scientific observation and research, the processes that lie beneath the positive qualities and emotions in the human person. The object is to obtain new knowledge about the human mind not only to help solve people's mental health problems, but also to achieve greater quality of life and well-being for them through their personal strengths. Cf. M. SELIGMAN, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realise Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, New York: Free Press 2002.

The forcibly displaced cannot deny that their experiences of suffering have changed their lives and have destroyed possibilities that lay waiting for them. They will never become what they could have if they have remained in their lands. But this new reality, as horrendous and tragic as it might seem, has also opened up new possibilities. Perhaps they are scarce, difficult to find, but they are there. *War has changed their life, not their spirit...* The path of healing and recovery will take time. They need time. Many of them have continued to struggle even after having been given the opportunity to resettle in new countries or return to their own. The trauma of the past still haunts them. As we will explore in greater detail in chapter 4, the journey back to health can only come gradually and for some of them it will never be complete. So they need others' encouragement. They need for others to remind them constantly of what they are capable, of what they were capable of doing in the past, and what we are capable of doing now.

It is often difficult for the forcibly displaced to recognise their strengths, especially in times of peace, of 'normality'. As long as there is threat to their lives, they will do what is required to survive, but how to survive in the drudgery of everyday, ordinary life? Forcibly displaced people need to be given back control of their lives, at least in those areas over which they can have control; to be given the opportunity to be committed, to have things and projects which will give meaning back to their existence. But most people need this too: to be challenged, to be given control back of their lives and the opportunity to be committed in the service of others. But the difference is that in most cases they possess resources—not only material resources but also access to opportunities and options—that the forcibly displaced lack and need. Survivors of forced displacement might not actively demand that these resources be shared with them, but that demand has already been 'imposed' on those who have them by their own humanity and their faith.

2.4.3. Our common identity as the people of God

What standard of life is required for Christians? A Christian [...] denies himself the right to be rich as long as there are so many who are poor and so poor.²⁴³

We are people of faith and hope and love because we are people of God. Of course, this 'we' does not refer only to Catholics, including those forcibly displaced people who profess this

²⁴³ Cf. LUIS GONZÁLEZ-CARVAJAL, *El clamor de los excluidos*, Santander: Sal Terrae 2009, pp. 111-112.

faith. And this ‘we’ does not refer to Christians only either. Different forms of religious belief and expressions do not preclude anyone from being part of ‘God’s people’.²⁴⁴ This is part of one’s identity as a human being. And, within the Church, we have seen already that as a matter of identity, another of humanity’s constitutive characteristics is its *pilgrim nature* as people on the move to God.²⁴⁵ For most people, this ‘pilgrim nature’ refers to the interior journeys in their lives on the way to God and God’s Kingdom. For forcibly displaced peoples, this movement to God as pilgrims reflects as much their imposed physical exterior journeys as their transcendent interior ones.

Every time they are forced to displace, they must walk *in hope* to God. A hope that guides them towards the overflowing mystery of God, trusting that the reign of God is already in them, dynamically, as seed, as ferment, and that God will multiply this seed, will nurture it and make it grow until it generates the fruits it is meant to produce. Each person contributes to advancing the Kingdom in his or her own way. The forcibly displaced contribute to the Kingdom *walking away* from war, from persecution, from death, *walking to* God in hope.²⁴⁶ Of course, it is not always easy, this walking. It is dangerous, tiring, monotonous and it can be body and soul-destroying, unless they find support along the way—not only spiritual but also tangible, physical support. For they cannot walk unceasingly, for ever. Like the Israelites in the desert, they hope to walk to a ‘promised land’, find a safe place, of refuge, of hospitality, of welcome.

Another constitutive characteristic of the people of God is that they are different, and this is a good thing. They are different as individuals one from another, but also as cultures, nations, races. And *this is good*, for God *has made us* this way. Forced displacement invites the displaced and their hosts—unwittingly and often unwillingly—to a way of life characterised

²⁴⁴ “Catholicity is not only expressed in the fraternal communion of the baptized, but also in the hospitality extended to the stranger, whatever his religious belief, in the rejection of all racial exclusion or discrimination, in the recognition of the personal dignity of every man and woman and, consequently, in the commitment to furthering their inalienable rights”. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Message for the 85th World Migration Day 1999* (22 February 1999); https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_22021999_world-migration-day-1999.html. Accessed 4 June 2018.

²⁴⁵ “While on earth she [the Church] journeys in a foreign land away from the Lord [...] the Church sees herself as an exile” (LG 6). “On earth, still as a pilgrim in a strange land, following in trial and in oppression the paths he [Jesus Christ] trod, we are associated with his sufferings as the body with its head, suffering with him, that with him we may be glorified” (LG 7).

²⁴⁶ Cf. J. FLAQUER, “Vidas Itinerantes” in *Cuadernos CJ*, n. 151, Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia 2007.

by ‘communion in diversity’, which is not always free from tensions.²⁴⁷ Yet, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, those who share the Christian faith and hope, and want to be a living and witnessing presence of the gospel in the world as an ‘intercultural church’, have to address these cultural tensions. This will require a process of intercultural transformation of habits, structures and spirituality as Church, as well as conversion at all levels—personal, institutional, apostolic and of mission. The ‘adventure’ of the encounter between cultures reveals once again the pilgrim nature of our existence, as it is both an internal and external journey that affects all aspects of one’s life. It requires the letting go of securities, certainties, the known, the familiar. What we are called to do is to cultivate, to nurture our spiritual, shared lives, with wisdom and prophetic courage, open to the truth about the God *that those different from us have discovered*.²⁴⁸

Forcibly displaced people have much to offer in the realm of this shared lived spirituality based both on the particular present situations in their lives and on their traditions. The experience of displaced brothers and sisters from Africa, for example, reveals that:

For Africans, God is a God who sees all, is present in all, and acts in all circumstances of life [...]. God is not introduced into this ordinary or extraordinary experience as a stranger. God makes it possible; we encounter God in it [...] who is already present in the realities of our lives [...]. The crucial point here is the belief that one lives under the constant, complete, and compassionate eye of God [...].²⁴⁹ Perhaps the most significant aspect of African spirituality derives from the African understanding of life. Simply put, African spirituality is a spirituality of life; it is a celebration of life in all its dimensions [...]. It is important not to allow what Africans believe about the sacredness of life to be distorted by what the circumstances of life in Africa, such as war and violence, have caused [...]. This expanded belief in the sacredness of life, along with the threat to life under various circumstances, has facilitated the emergence of a true spirituality of the cross and martyrdom in Africa [...]. In standing for life, it stands against all forms of oppression and suppression of human dignity.

²⁴⁷ “Migration can be regarded as an invitation to live “communion in diversity”. Therefore, the importance of dialogue between cultures and religions must be recognized. The great diversification of origins in migration flows has placed ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue at the centre of the care for migrants and refugees”. Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE, *Starting Afresh from Christ: Towards a Renewed Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees*, Part II, *Dialogues*, nos. 1-2.

²⁴⁸ Cf. C. DEL VALLE, “La interculturalidad: distinto origen, una misma vocación” in *CONFER* 51, n. 196 (2012) 404-405. The author further asserts that inter-cultural living requires that we allow ourselves to be enriched, corrected, confirmed, and questioned by the truth of God that those who are different from us have discovered. To do this we must live in openness to the Spirit, close to others, and vulnerable like others without authoritarian attitudes, cultivating our capacity for dialogue. We must also speak our own truth and welcome the truth of others, understand and welcome what others are living, feeling and hoping, and allow ourselves to be challenged and enriched by their search, p. 407.

²⁴⁹ A vision and view of life and God that St Ignatius also professes and has incorporated into his *Spiritual Exercises*.

In this sense we can represent African spirituality as a spirituality of justice, peace and reconciliation.²⁵⁰

And this world needs greater justice, deeper peace and lasting reconciliation. These are times for Christians (and non-Christians) to build bridges, to become and be interested, affectively and effectively, in other cultures, with their own sources of meaning and value, to risk to understand and value what is different because “what makes intercultural harmony difficult is not diversity, but ethnocentrism that generates fundamentalism”.²⁵¹ And it is this fundamentalism that often requires the forcibly displaced, as new arrivals in foreign lands, to conceal every aspect of their culture and traditions that are different, so they can fit in, or rather, so they do not appear as a threat to the status quo and to recognised ‘values’ and ways of behaviour. Yet, this is not the type of integration the Church promotes or desires nor what God, we believe, desires either.²⁵² The call is to integrate together the whole of our lives so people can discover the abundant *multi-faceted gifts of God to human beings*, in the midst of their current realities. In the last two chapters of the book of Revelation we see that the author wants to:

[...] encourage the hopes of a community forced to find reason of its hope in a reality in which it is necessary to integrate the greatness and the miseries of existence [...]. Heavenly Jerusalem [...] is suggested as the goal of a humanity convened by God. At the beginning of this last prophecy, the narrator recovers the old promise of Isaiah to announce that in the New City: “He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev 21:3b-4).²⁵³

This is the hope we hold, for all of us, and this hope must always be a constitutive element of our identity as people of God. As Christians *we must deny ourselves the ‘luxury’ to be without hope as long as there are so many among us who are hopeless and so hopeless.*

²⁵⁰ Cf. OROBATOR AGBONKHIANMEGH, *Theology brewed in an African pot*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa 2009, pp. 130-133.

²⁵¹ Cf. DEL VALLE, “La interculturalidad: distinto origen, una misma vocación”, p. 411.

²⁵² “In this Document, integration is not presented as an assimilation that leads migrants to suppress or to forget their own cultural identity. Rather, contact with others leads to discovering their ‘secret’, to being open to them in order to welcome their valid aspects and thus contribute to knowing each one better. This is a lengthy process that aims to shape societies and cultures, making them more and more a reflection of the multi-faceted gifts of God to human beings”. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Message for World Migration Day 2005: Intercultural Integration* (24 November 2004), n. 1. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20041124_world-migration-day-2005.html. Accessed 5 June 2018.

²⁵³ Cf. J.M. APARICIO, “El arcótipo de las migraciones: Claves Pastorales en el marco de la nueva evangelización” en *Razón y Fe* 268, n. 1379 (2013) 143.

2.4.4. Characteristics of hope-gifting

On being asked whether Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) staff and volunteers brought hope to a refugee camp or whether they found it there already, Mark Raper, former international director of JRS (1990-2000) replied:

The richness of human spirit that we discover among refugees, including a vibrant hope, is always a surprise [...]. While there may be no rational grounds for believing that what a refugee longs for will actually come about, we also find hope. Hope is not optimism. Optimism expects things will get better. Hope is a virtue grounded in suffering. It is a grace which gives strength. Hope is a promise that takes root in the heart and is a guide to an unknown future [...]. Hope is what enables us to live fully in the present moment [...]. The refugees have a message that our world needs to hear [and] learn from.²⁵⁴

The refugees have a message that our world needs to hear and learn from...

2.4.4.1. Our hope in the Lord, Jesus

To live without hope is to cease to live (*attributed to Fyodor Dostoevsky*)

The hope of forcibly displaced people of faith is in Jesus our Lord in whom—and in whose story and experience of displacement—they see their own lives reflected. As pointed out in the first part of this chapter, from the beginning of his life, Jesus had to flee into exile with his family to Egypt, escaping persecution and death, because a tyrant, fearful of losing his power, decided that children had to die—how painfully similar is this reality to what so many forcibly displaced people have had to live through in our own countries! As they look at Jesus' stepfather, a poor tradesman, and his mother, a pregnant teenager, embarking on a terribly perilous journey, many survivors of forced displacement *see* themselves. And as people who profess the Christian faith, that enduring memory might have shaped the way they see themselves as nothing else has.

We have seen that when Jesus starts his public ministry, a new period of constant displacement begins in his life. In many occasions, just like many forcibly displaced people, he has to move on because his adversaries want to kill him (cf. Matthew 26:4; John 7:1). And like them, he does not have a permanent home: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). Moreover, it is

²⁵⁴ Cf. JRS, *Everybody's challenge*, p. 86. And in the words of Fr Morin: “Do you know the warmth of a smile in eyes that are still flowing with tears? When hope returns to life, our joy is great because they [forcibly displaced people] share their joy with us”. Cf. OLIVER MORIN, “Smiling Eyes Amidst Tears” in *JRS Servir Magazine*, n. 11 (1998) 5.

because of his care for the displaced of this world—*displaced to the unstable margins of society, religion, and politics; outcasts, foreigners, the poor*—that he finds himself in this situation. Jesus was welcoming of sinners, outcasts, and the marginalised not only because of their condition as such, but because beyond lacking protection, they listened to his Word and opened their heart to the love of God with humble faith.²⁵⁵

We mentioned earlier that the story of the incarnation is also a story of displacement, of the Holy Trinity's *pitching their tent among humanity*. And indeed it is. The Word of God became flesh and made a dwelling among us (cf. John 1:14). God has migrated and moved out of a distant or remote existence of divinity towards humanity, to be part of human history, not in an abstract manner, but in a concrete, palpable experience of establishing a dwelling in its midst (God is always with us) in time and space. And the Trinity carried out this 'project' despite knowing the consequences, where Jesus, the Second Person, would suffer his passion and death as a result of this choice for *us*. For many forcibly displaced people of faith, it is this connection with the Paschal Mystery that gives them the greatest of hopes, for through it their suffering is united with Christ's suffering and finds its meaning.²⁵⁶ For them the Eucharist has truly become a celebration of eschatological hope, a remembrance (*anamnesis*) in which a foundational past event (Exodus-Easter-Passover) takes place in the present moment with their full participation, guaranteeing them and giving them a foretaste of their own future resurrection. People know well that if they do not celebrate the Paschal Mystery at regular intervals, they lose their sense of communion and their sense of hope.²⁵⁷ And yet, because of their circumstances, how often do the forcibly displaced miss out in sharing in the Lord's table!

Of course, these assertions are nothing new. Many people have probably heard them before, many times. And yet, do most of them really believe them in their heart to the point that it

²⁵⁵ Cf. G. M. OTALORA, *El evangelio de los excluidos*, Madrid: San Pablo 2012, p. 12.

²⁵⁶ Cf. OROBATOR AGBONKHIANMEGHE, "Justice for the Displaced: The Challenge of a Christian Understanding" in David Hollenbach, ed., *Driven From Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press 2010, pp. 41-42.

²⁵⁷ Cf. A. PIERIS, *Mysticism of Service*, Mt Lavinia (Sri Lanka): Logos Printing 2000, p. 77. Pieris adds: "[...] we have a guarantee that we can see God-in-Christ now, though in some obscure manner because 'eschatology' means that we anticipate *already now* something of what is yet to come; that in the Risen and Exalted Christ, we have a *foretaste* of our own future *already here* on earth; and that, as men and women anchored in the hope of what has been promised as our final destiny, we are called to sojourn in this world as Easter People *already* living in the age that will dawn at the end of time", p. 76.

changes how they see life, how they perceive God and how they relate to others? Forcibly displaced people of faith affirm that they do believe them, that they have to because that makes all the difference between despair and hope. Their hope is sustained by this certainty that God always fulfils God's promise: *I will be with you till the end of times* (Mathew 28:20). *God does not abandon us*. Some people might wonder how survivors of forced displacement are still able to say this despite all they have suffered. But they will say that God has not been the cause of their suffering, humanity has. In and through this hope the forcibly displaced are a reminder that the wind that propels the Church is the breath of the Holy Spirit, who also protects it, strengthens it and sanctifies it. And so, guided by God's grace, they look at the future in hope, and hope does not disappoint us (cf. Romans 5:5).²⁵⁸

2.4.4.2. Listening

Christine, a Sudanese refugee in Kakuma refugee camp in Northern Kenya, wrote: "The life of a refugee is not easy. What I would say to people who work with refugees is that they should be patient enough to listen with care to what we have to say. Many refugees feel their needs and views are not considered".²⁵⁹ From the very beginning, listening has been an intrinsic practice in the exercise of hospitality. In attentive listening—listening with the heart—one is recipient not only of peoples' experiences but also of their suffering and their own lives.

Often, and with the hope of providing assistance, survivors of forced displacement have been asked to share their stories (sometimes repeatedly), to reveal their identities, their origins, their personal journeys, so that relief workers could get an approximate idea of what they have lived through, of what their needs might be. Often, sharing those facts has not been difficult, but what has taken time is for trust to develop, so as to be able to reveal also all the pain beneath the factual events, their frustrations and disappointments and even their failings. Many forcibly displaced people would say that through the gift of others' listening to their stories, they have felt transformed from needy strangers to people who no longer felt so distant, to people who felt welcomed. And in that process they have realised that they needed

²⁵⁸ Cf. CONFERENCIA DE OBISPOS CATÓLICOS DE CUBA, *Carta Pastoral "La Esperanza no defrauda"* (Romanos 5,5), n. 43.

²⁵⁹ Cf. JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, Rome: JRS Publications 2005, p. 53.

to be listened to even more. At the same time, their ‘listeners’—companions and supporters of the forcibly displaced—have often expressed how their words and stories have also changed them; how, somewhere along this process, their way of listening changed: they stopped asking so many questions and taking so many notes, and became more comfortable with the silence, which often expressed more than any words could. And then, they began to ask different questions whose answers it seemed they needed to hear as much as the refugees needed to say them: *How were you able to survive such pain? What sustained you? Where did your strength come from?...* Finally, a feeling of gratitude arose in them towards these displaced people ‘in need’ for the interior transformation they offered, for helping these ‘helpers’ alter their gaze and acquire new perspectives in life.²⁶⁰

Listening is an art that must be developed (we will explore this theme in greater detail in chapter 3). It requires the full and real presence of people to each other, and as such it is indeed one of the highest forms of hospitality. But for Christians, who believe that the Spirit of God is present in each human person, listening takes on a special meaning. When people are truly present, when they welcome the stranger with the hospitality of God, they allow his or her spirit to talk to theirs. The Spirit that abides in one person is united with the Spirit who abides in another. This is the reason listening becomes a channel of hope as grace, that comes from God, and which every person is called to share with another. And it is the reason listening can be such a healing service as well. We welcome God’s grace and allow it to be communicated and wash over us. From this point of view, every human person has the capacity to be a healer. In listening with attentive interest to a person, to her joys and sorrows, pleasures and anxieties, people discover the wounds that need healing, and are able to offer their solidarity with their pain, which paradoxically is the beginning of the healing process—to heal one’s pain one must share the experience of that pain with others.²⁶¹

And listening is healing too because in being allowed to share their own stories, people become even more aware of God’s loving presence all along in their daily lives. Even when they are terribly painful stories, or perhaps especially when they are so. What a gift it is to be able to share one’s story knowing that a compassionate heart will receive it without judgement or condemnation! Many forcibly displaced people wished their stories were

²⁶⁰ Cf. TORRALBA “*No olvidéis la hospitalidad*”, pp. 19, 21.

²⁶¹ Cf. NOUWEN, *Reaching out: the three movements of the spiritual life*, p. 43.

different, but they are the only ones they have, and there will be no hope for their future if “[their] past remains unconfessed, un-received and misunderstood. Quite often it is the fear for the hidden moments in one’s own story that keeps people paralysed”.²⁶² And this is not only true of survivors’ experiences but of others as well. Some people have learned to listen to displaced peoples so well, but have they learned to listen to others, to each other? To their loved ones, to those closest to them? Often it is easier to listen to a stranger than to one’s own father or sister or closest friend. “But they are not strangers”, some would say. Are they not? How well can people know one another if they do not take the time to listen?

Surely the only way to learn what is the hope of a refugee is to listen to him. Our biggest temptation, on seeing the distress of refugees [...] is to begin projects, to give material things, to decide *en masse* what the refugees need [...]. But they did not undergo this experience in order to get a shirt or shoes. Their human experience is to be respected [...]. They want to be understood, to be heard. Their frequent question is: Why is God doing this to me? They have a right to ask this question. But it cannot be asked unless someone listens. This is our primary role, to listen to questions, to the longing and to the fundamental human need of refugees.²⁶³

If one wants to learn about the hope of the forcibly displaced, one first needs to listen to them and to their stories. But one also needs to learn to listen to the hope that is in them *as seed, as ferment, so it does not spoil or go to waste*. And learn to listen to the hope that dwells in those around them. Listen to one another with ears ‘touched’ by the Spirit and then allow grace to find a channel and let it flow, freely and abundantly.

2.4.4.3. Humility and vulnerability

Our human compassion binds us the one to the other—not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future.
(Nelson Mandela)²⁶⁴

How difficult it is for those who lack humility to hope! How difficult too for those who see vulnerability as weakness and will not allow themselves to be vulnerable. This might be one of the main reasons there is so much hopelessness in the world. Pride takes over people’s lives when they believe that they are better than others because of what they have—their prestige, their looks, their intellect, their material resources—and look down on another, feeling superior to him or her. People experience ‘in-vulnerability’ when they believe that

²⁶² Cf. NOUWEN, *Reaching out: the three movements of the spiritual life*, p. 68.

²⁶³ Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge*, p. 87.

²⁶⁴ Cf. NELSON MANDELA, spoken at a “*Healing and Reconciliation Service for HIV/AIDS Sufferers and for the Healing of Our Land*”, Johannesburg, South Africa, December 2000.

what they have can protect them from all harm, when they feel self-sufficient, when they judge that they do not need others (including God) for their well-being and happiness. Hope, on the other hand, is precisely what one has when one has nothing: when one has no control over his or her life, not enough resources to cover one's basic needs, no prospects for today or for the future. Hope is then what forcibly displaced persons have, since they have little or nothing else. They know that God is with them and present somehow in their lives, even if they lack the capacity to see how God's ways will affect their future. And yet this hope enables them to see "the present in the light of some future good, which they realise can only come as gift. Hope is the retrieval of possibilities that come as gift".²⁶⁵ And that gift can only come from God.

Does this mean that only the dispossessed and the marginalised can have hope? Of course not. But it might *be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is proud and invulnerable to experience hope* (cf. Mathew 19:24). Yet, as there is a difference between the poor in spirit and the materially poor, there is also a difference between those who have much but would be happy to give it all away, and those who put all their trust on their possessions. The poor in spirit have no power and yet they are full of hope. They are simple and without pretence. They might have possessions and talents, but are not possessed by them. They know how to use the things of this world and how to take others into account without seeing them as means to their objectives. They have the courage to make themselves vulnerable, like Jesus was.²⁶⁶

The early Christians facing martyrdom realised the strength of humility, the sacred aspect and power of being vulnerable. Dorotheo of Gaza, a 6th c. spiritual master used to say that humility, more than a special virtue, was a fundamental disposition that conditioned all other virtues, a spirit, a temperament, an attitude of the soul before oneself, God and others. Without humility none of the virtues would know how to exist and without humility it would be impossible to fulfil the commandments (cf. *Didaskalia II*). Christian love is rooted in humility, as Jesus showed at the Last Supper, washing his disciples' feet. To maintain an attitude of Christian love requires great generosity and a constant struggle against one's own

²⁶⁵ Cf. M. DOWNEY, *The Heart of Hope: Contemplating Life, Awakening Love*, Mumbai: Pauline Publications 2009, p. 158.

²⁶⁶ Cf. VAN BREEMEN, *Como pan que se parte*, p. 112.

selfishness and desire of self-affirmation. Tragically, in human life, selfishness tends to slip surreptitiously through the cracks of one's generosity and self-giving.²⁶⁷ Yet, another lesson from the forcibly displaced is that if people want to grow in hope, they must grow in humility and have the courage to make themselves vulnerable. Only then will they be able to see life—and all that it entails—through the lens of hope for what it really is: sheer gift.

2.4.4.4. Gratitude

I will call back into memory the gifts I have received [...]. I will ponder with deep affection how much God our Lord has done for me. ([*SpEx* 234])

“There is no better gift for people in exile than the hope of peace” wrote Miriam, a young woman refugee from Africa.²⁶⁸ She had experienced the horrors of war in her own country—so much destruction, violence and death. Yet, she continued to hope that peace would one day reign again, and she and her family would be able to return home. As expressed earlier, human beings cannot live without hope, for without it, the human spirit dies. People need to do all that they can to keep hope alive, and one of the best ways to do this—the forcibly displaced assure us—is through being people of gratitude. They have seen the difference this makes in their refugee camps and urban dwellings, over and over again. Those who are constantly complaining about the quantity and quality of the food, the slowness of the services provided, the lack of opportunities for work, soon begin to lose hope and then quickly slip into despair. In contrast, those who are able to find reasons to be thankful seem to grow in hope. It is not simply a matter of being optimistic, of deluding themselves into thinking that things are not as bad as they are, but rather it is about being realistic with a hopeful attitude towards the reality that is all around them. It is about learning to ‘count your blessings’, to discover them and then to share them.

Using the ‘lens’ of hope to see life and all that it brings—even the difficulties and hardships—as gift, has helped them to find meaning even in the most difficult situations. Of course, it is not that they welcome these hardships. They wish these things had never happened to them, but they can still be grateful for having the certainty that somehow God is in the midst of all the mess, the violence and the inhumanity that engulf them, suffering with

²⁶⁷ Cf. VAN BREEMEN, *Como pan que se parte*, pp. 149-150.

²⁶⁸ Cf. JRS, *In the footsteps of Pedro Arrupe: Ignatian Spirituality lived in the service of refugees*, Rome: JRS Publications 2007, p. 43.

them, enduring with them. *God never abandons us*. Moreover, eschatological hope would lack foundation if it did not go through this bitter experience of what the NT calls *hamartía* (sin) and all its devastating consequences. Without it, Christian life would stop being eschatological and hope would turn into ‘cheap’ hope.²⁶⁹

People need to do all that they can to keep hope alive, to make sure that this basic affection, fragile and vulnerable in the best of circumstances, can be transformed into a lasting passion that faces challenges with courage, and endures them, triumphing over the adverse vicissitudes of their lives. As we have seen, the quality of one’s hope is manifested in one’s capacity to take risks, to face these adversities with fortitude and patience, but also in one’s capacity to continue giving thanks for life, even when life feels unbearable and seems to lack meaning. We must give thanks and do it often, and also do it together. This joint expression of gratitude is an acknowledgment of and commitment to the presence of God in the shared experience of displacement—theirs and everyone else’s. For as we have said before, we all find ourselves, at one moment or another in the ‘margins’ of life. And it is in these margins, these boundaries, that it is possible to discover aspects of reality which remain hidden in other circumstances, and which give us a great appreciation of our experience.²⁷⁰ In learning to give thanks, often, and together, people have also learned the meaning of gratuity: to give of oneself in love without expecting anything in return. A lesson the forcibly displaced have learned through their painful experiences is that the more we become ‘gratitude people’, the more too we will become ‘gratuity people’. We all are called to live our lives also in gratuity, modelled in the gratuity of God, who gives of Godself to us at every moment, in love.

2.4.4.5. Keeping hope alive in the midst of suffering

In an open letter to *The New York Times* (February 2000), Adelaide Abankwah, a refugee from Ghana, wrote:

As a refugee who spent two years and four months in Wackenhut Detention Centre in Queens before I was granted asylum, I know how important it is to have support from people who come to help keep hope alive. I am a Christian, and I went to Bible study sessions in detention, which kept my faith alive when it was challenged every day. Refugees come to this country thinking it is a land of freedom—freedom of speech, freedom of religion,

²⁶⁹ Cf. VICTORIA CAMPS and ALFONSO ÁLVAREZ BOLADO, *Esperanza cristiana y utopías. XXIV Foro sobre el Hecho Religioso*, Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae 2001, p. 34.

²⁷⁰ Cf. APARICIO, “El arcópagó de las migraciones”, pp. 134, 140.

freedom from persecution. Detention almost killed my soul. Prayer and humanity saved me.²⁷¹

Simone Weil once observed that the extraordinary greatness of Christianity is not that it provides remedies against suffering, but the perspective that it gives to it. Christianity has never promised a life without suffering. The Gospels in fact clearly state that in order to attain salvation one has to lose one's life, take up one's cross and follow Christ. But the message of the Gospels is that all this suffering should not be considered as loss. Suffering can surely cause bitterness, but have you ever met people who in the midst of their suffering have become a wonderful grace to others? I have, and many of them have been forcibly displaced persons.

For those who embrace the Christian faith, only Christ can give meaning to their suffering. How often so many people have found the strength to bear their suffering simply by bringing their fingers up to the crucifix around their neck and holding them there, for as long as they needed to do so? This is difficult to explain to people who do not share this faith, who are puzzled by others' finding solace and comfort in looking up at Jesus, the Son of God, on the cross. Some would say, as others have before, "if he is the Son of God, let him come down from that cross". But the gospel message, the message that gives strength and hope responds, "Because I am the Son of God, I remain on the cross".²⁷² Yet, how often so many people seem to forget this message when adversity and suffering enter their lives! When they ask: "why has God done this to me?" or "why has God abandoned me?" Forcibly displaced people, through their suffering and their hope, are vivid reminders that God has not done anything or gone anywhere, for God has been there, all along, tied to that cross.

Many people also seem to forget that suffering and hope as virtue and grace are related. If everything went well all the time, if one did not face adversities, illness or pain, then one's 'hope' would become that 'cheap' hope mentioned earlier. Suffering and hope are intrinsically related:

If we suffer without hope, we become more and more resentful, angry, hateful, bitter. If we think we have hope, yet know no suffering, we are naïve, living in illusion, out of touch with what is real. We must live life on life's own terms. And suffering is part of the deal.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit*, p. 119.

²⁷² Cf. VAN BREEMEN, *Como pan que se parte*, pp. 143-144.

²⁷³ Cf. DOWNEY, *The Heart of Hope*, p. 159.

It might surprise many people that some survivors of forced displacement talk about having come to understand their suffering not only as ‘part of the deal’ but also as a hidden gift, and that their wish for others is that they might come to understand it in this way too. They see it as gift because through this suffering, they have come to feel more deeply the love of God manifested in Jesus on the cross, who loved his own to the end. And they have come to understand also that their love with and for those who suffer brings them comfort and hope and redeems their suffering in the face of so much evil.²⁷⁴ Only through hope can people together face that evil in the presence of the living God, with the strength and courage given to those who stand alongside the Crucified Christ. And together with him can they “look in hope and confidence to the life and the love of God” even and especially today, when the world as we have always known it seems to be crushing under the weight of hatred and violence.²⁷⁵ The constant witness of forcibly displaced people of hope is a reminder that all of us have the duty not to *hide this hope in the depths of our hearts*.²⁷⁶ We must offer it to the world, and like all of God’s gifts, it must be offered it in gratitude and gratuity.

2.4.4.6. Solitude

In Vietnam there is a popular traditional image to show the difference between heaven and hell. In hell, people have chop sticks that are one-kilometre long, so they are not able to reach their mouths. In heaven, the sticks are equally long, but people feed one another.²⁷⁷

Loneliness. Many forcibly displaced people have lived alone for a long time. This condition has often been imposed on them because of the circumstances of their exile. Often times they have ended up separated from their loved ones, in raids at night, in bombardments to their villages during the day, split up in confining cells that break up their families. They find themselves alone and this aloneness can be disheartening and heart-wrenching. Paradoxically, many people would know what this is like, because this perpetual sense of feeling or being alone, even when surrounded by hundreds of people, seems to be one of the most painful malaises plaguing the world today. People feel disconnected, isolated, and oftentimes abandoned as well, but as hard as they try, they cannot get over this feeling. It is

²⁷⁴ Cf. JRS, *God in Exile: Towards a shared spirituality with refugees*, Rome: JRS Publications 2005, p. 53.

²⁷⁵ Cf. DOWNEY, *The Heart of Hope*, p. 159.

²⁷⁶ “Let them not, then, hide this hope in the depths of their hearts, but [...] express it by a continual conversion and by wrestling ‘against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness’” (LG 35).

²⁷⁷ Cf. J. CHITTISTER, *40 cuentos para reavivar el espíritu*, Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae 2011, p. 23. Original in English: *40 Stories to Stir the Soul*, Erie: Benetvision 2011.

paradoxical, because sadly, even though they might have a lot of ‘room’ to welcome others, as long as they are lonely, they do not seem able to open their hearts and their doors to them. They cannot do this because as lonely people they find it basically impossible to create free space for others. Their own needs to fulfil their inner cravings of loneliness (they keep trying to feed themselves with kilometre-long chop sticks!) make them cling to others instead of creating space for them.²⁷⁸ How to come out of this vicious circle? Another lesson from the forcibly displaced is that only in and through faith can people transform this source of separation into a possibility of welcome. Only faith and hope can transform loneliness into solitude.

Christian tradition has always affirmed that we live in solitude, or rather, that we *are* solitude, as a condition to search for and enter into companionship. It is not only a desire of companionship with other fellow human beings, but that longing for companionship that makes people walk ever in hope towards the Infinite. You *have formed us for Yourself, O God, and* our hearts are restless [...]. Solitude for Christians, then, is never a misfortune or an absolute, but rather something that prepares them for a future, that creates the conditions for an encounter and that prepares them for a mission. And as part of this preparation, they have to journey through the desert, wrestle with the powers of evil (without and within oneself) and be purified of their own selfish desires.²⁷⁹ Solitude in Christianity, then, has always been understood as preparation for God’s mission. But God never calls simply as an individual privilege. Every call leads to service.²⁸⁰

As mentioned in the first Part of this chapter, an important part of the mission of forcibly displaced people for the Church and for the world is to be constant reminders that the people of God are “essentially pilgrim people, never settled, always on the move, often alone, always searching, always reaching out further”.²⁸¹ We might ‘hear’ forcibly displaced people asking us: “What is *your* solitude preparing you for?” And we might guess that, if we allowed them to suggest an answer, they might say that part of our mission and task as people of God—ours and theirs together—is ever to question all attitudes, views and structures that are hope-

²⁷⁸ Cf. NOUWEN, *Reaching out: the three movements of the spiritual life*, p. 72.

²⁷⁹ “Go into the desert not to escape other men [sic], but in order to find them in God”. Cf. T. MERTON, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, New York: New Direction Books 1961, p. 53.

²⁸⁰ Cf. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDEDAL, *Raíz de la Esperanza*, pp. 157-61.

²⁸¹ Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge*, p. 71.

destroying, especially those which discriminate against those who like them, have been often shunned and shut out.

2.4.4.7. It goes beyond optimism

D. H. Lawrence once wrote that the optimist builds a secure place within a cell, paints the interior of its walls in celestial blue, closes the door tightly behind him and then asserts that he is in heaven! It has already been affirmed in different ways that optimism is not the same as hope. But it is important to reiterate this point, lest the value of this virtue as divine gift is diminished and it is confused with something that human beings can aspire to conjure. It is not that being an optimist is necessarily something bad or wrong. Optimism as an attitude and way of looking at life can actually improve one's health and be a factor of well-being and happiness. The danger lies in its degenerating into a refusal to see reality as it is and insist that all goes well even when it is clear that it is not. Believers are not optimists; they have hope:

Filled with hope [...] is he who knows that the end of the connecting thread of history, which oftentimes appears enigmatic, filled with suffering and even senseless, is secure in the hands of God, and that our journey will eventually lead home, even if it must pass through the anguish of years in exile.²⁸²

Optimists are those who, analysing the situation of the world, find in it sufficient courses of action to foresee success. They believe that things will go their way or turn out well. Believers, instead, hope, and not because of the analysis of reality, but because they believe in God's promise and commitment to them that everything in their lives, joys, pains and challenges, and even their suffering, will make sense and are worth the cost, regardless of how things might turn out. The analysis of the situation of forcibly displaced people has rarely led them to find 'sufficient courses of action' to expect success. But their hope has kept them constant and unwavering in believing that what they have gone through, and continue to endure, will unveil its meaning at the appropriate time.

2.4.4.8. Advent time

Advent is one of the most beautiful seasons of the Church's liturgical year. It is associated with special colours, rituals and celebrations. The word 'Advent' derives from the Latin term meaning 'coming'. And of course, *what* Christians (or rather *who*) expect to come is the

²⁸² Cf. E. RONCHI, *El desafío de creer hoy. La belleza de la fe y la esperanza*, Madrid: Edición Paulinas 2011, p. 20.

Lord. It is then a period of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas. People who have experienced the liturgical celebrations of Advent in refugee camps or in urban settings for the forcibly displaced have often expressed that these have been some of the most beautiful and prayerful Advent experiences they have ever had. Afterwards, many of them have expressed the intention, year after year, of ‘keeping’ Advent better, of being more faithful to this time of waiting, but the busyness of life and all its demands always takes over. Most likely this happens because as a whole most people have lost the capacity to wait. Perhaps they never really had it! Technology and communications keep finding ways to reduce ‘waiting time’ to a minimum. And this is a pity, because when the capacity to wait is lost, the capacity to hope is also lost. The forcibly displaced, on the other hand, are ‘Advent people’. As described earlier, they are always ‘in waiting’: waiting for something to happen to them or for them, because they have little control over their lives. This can be very hard and frustrating, but they also seem to have discovered a hidden treasure beneath this painful reality.

Perhaps a way to explain it is to say that although they live in real time, they also live in ‘suspended’ time. They live their own time now, but also live in hope for their children’s time in the future. They hope for the time in which their children will not have to suffer anymore. They hope that they will have the home they have lost and perhaps have an even better home; they hope they will have the education they have been denied and will be able to fulfil their vocation; they hope they will have the peace that was taken away from them through the violence and hate of others. Of course, they hope for all these things for themselves too! But they do not limit themselves to what they need or want. And that is part of what this hidden treasure has revealed to them: *time-in-waiting* makes more sense, has more ‘meaning’, when one waits in hope for others. We live in hope for the time of ‘what might yet be’ beyond every obstacle, towards every possibility for all:

Our Christian hope in this new millennium does not dishearten. It reads time, even now, as fulfilment of God’s goodness, who bears the sin of the world and triumphs over it. It reads time this way because it has learned to recognise the signs created by Jesus surrounding the sign of his death and resurrection, because it has also been taught to discover and read new possibilities.²⁸³

²⁸³ Cf. A. TORNOS, *Cuando hoy vivimos la fe: Teología para tiempos difíciles*, Madrid: San Pablo 1995, p. 170.

The temporal quality of hope is such that the past, the present and the future combine to create a continuum. This holistic view or structure of time shows that while past events have taken us to the situation where we find ourselves now, our hope must be nurtured in the present, in concrete ways, so that what we hope for now can become a reality in the future. The forcibly displaced live in ‘suspended time’, but they also live in ‘real time’. Yet so many people seem to be trapped in this suspended time and forget to live in the present!

2.4.4.9. Prayer

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer (Romans 12:12). Karl Rahner used to say that praying consisted simply in opening one’s heart up to God.²⁸⁴ This suggests that the point of departure for one’s prayer should not be letting God know the things one needs, but taking conscience of them oneself so that he or she can then open himself or herself to God. In the ‘how’ of doing this, it is good to be guided by those experts ‘prayers’, the psalmists themselves, whose prayer was invariably a ‘cry, a clamour’ to God: *Uphold me according to your promise o Lord, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope* (Psalm 119:116). The psalmists had already become conscious of the precarious personal and communal situation of humanity, of its finitude and its weakness. And many of them, like most forcibly displaced people, had experienced a great deal of suffering and pain. They cried out to God and God listened to their cries, as God would later listen to Jesus’ own, making him the source of universal salvation because of his solidarity with humanity (cf. Hebrews 5:7-9). The cry of survivors of forced displacement today is a prolongation in history of Jesus’ clamour on the cross, who continues to identify with all the crucified of this world, with all the forcibly displaced who, throughout their long history of suffering and humiliation, have been able to uphold a great sense of solidarity and dignity, and to maintain the hope that their needs will be heard even at times when God did not seem to listen and to have forgotten them.²⁸⁵

Many people have wondered how, after all that has happened to them, forcibly displaced people can still pray? It would seem that the only possible answer is that the invincible

²⁸⁴ Cf. K. RAHNER, *De la necesidad y don de la oración. Prólogo de J. I. González Faus*, Bilbao: Mensajero 2004, p. 14.

²⁸⁵ Cf. VÍCTOR CODINA, *Una Iglesia nazarena: Teología desde los insignificantes*, Santander: Sal Terrae 2010, pp. 106-111. The content of this paragraph is guided in part by the ideas the author presents in these pages.

power of faith in their lives impels them to hope against all hope and to pray against all apparent failure. And they could have learned this only from Christ. His prayer during the Passion, full of realism (*take away this cup*) was filled with total trust in his Father (*I know you always listen to me*) and of unconditional surrender (*not my will but your own will be done*). Christ's prayer teaches us that we need to centre our loving in God, in God's love, and in God's glory. Only in this way are people able to hold both things together: anguish and trust, will to live and readiness to die, surety in being heard and absolute surrender of their need to be heard according to their own plans.

This is the mystery, and the lesson, of forcibly displaced people's lives as people of faith and of their prayer as Christians. Who can understand this? Only the one who prays and pleads. If we want to understand it, do what they do every day: pray, ask, and groan if necessary.²⁸⁶ Pray, and wait, like they also do every day. Prayer is not about searching. Searching suggests an activity "I have to do something", an impatience. Prayer is waiting. As we have just mentioned, the act of waiting places the emphasis on the other person who is to come, and all we can do is to wait for him or her to arrive. Through waiting one expresses one's powerlessness and one's inability to make things happen, and this should be one's attitude towards God. We cannot make God come to us. All one can do is wait and be present. Prayer is then to lose control, become vulnerable and allow God to guide us. Prayer is waiting, and this act of waiting moulds and shapes one's personality. If people are able to wait, they will become different persons—more attentive, more contemplative, more receptive; they will stop asking and will instead worship and love.

2.4.5. A personal excursus: the one who gives receives more in return

The previous sections have been an attempt to sketch what a lived spirituality of hope through the eyes and experiences of forcibly displaced people might look like, how that spirituality has sustained them, and what it can teach us as we continue our journey together towards God. We will try to bring together some of these insights and learnings in the final conclusion of this chapter. This last section constitutes a brief personal account of some of the things survivors of forced displacement have taught me. Though personal, I believe it helps

²⁸⁶ Cf. RAHNER, *De la necesidad y don de la oración*, pp. 82-83.

concretise—embody, incarnate—some of the things we have been talking about, and it is with that intention that it is included here.

Because of my work with forcibly displaced people, in particular in the area of raising awareness about their plight (talks, articles, panels), I have sometimes been asked, “What has your time with them given you? What have you received from them?” It is a lovely question to be asked, because by the simple fact of asking it, the inquirer assumes that something indeed has been received, that the forcibly displaced have something to offer and that it is possible to enter and develop a relationship with them. And all of this is true. And yet, it is not that easy to express what those gifts have been, because they go much deeper than the superficial level of ‘goods’ or ‘services’ being exchanged. Even the significance of the small material gifts they have given me (a pin, a bracelet, a hand-made scarf—most of them made by refugees themselves) goes far beyond their monetary value. It is not the object itself, but what each of them represents: friendship, gratitude, commitment, trust, love. What have I received from forcibly displaced people? Certainly more than I could have ever given them! The old saying: *The one who gives, receives more in return*, has certainly be true to my experience with them.

Although we have heard this expression or similar ones many times before, it does not stop many people from thinking that it is paradoxical that those of us who accompany and work with the forcibly displaced might feel this way. To be sure, what is being ‘measured’ is not the quantity or economic value of what we have been given, the satisfaction we have received in services provided, the learning of new skills, or meeting new cultures and becoming fluent in new languages. Of course, these things are important and have enriched our lives. But what is being ‘measured’ rather is the quality of the encounter that has taken place in the giving and receiving. What we mean is that these encounters and the time we have spent with forcibly displaced people have helped us understand better what our humanity is all about and, through the grace inherent in these encounters, we have become *more human* and more who we truly are, who we have been created to be. We have learned ways to become our true selves through sharing in the hardships and suffering of others: “Going beyond fear of suffering to being with those who suffer and even receiving their anguish, although very painful, can be an incredible journey revealing many precious

treasures”.²⁸⁷ And many of us would say (and this is certainly my case) that we have found Christ. To become more truly human, after all, is to become more like Him, who is “the model of our humanity”.

What do I mean when I say that I have ‘become more human’, and have ‘become more who I am meant to be’? It is very hard to explain, and part of the challenge is that I can only answer those questions from the point of view of my faith in Christ and my vocation as a Jesuit priest. The challenge is in the language I use and making sure it is understood by my listeners. Forcibly displaced people have taught me about hope simply through being present to one another, through witnessing their courage and strength in the midst of suffering, and especially I have experienced hope as God’s gift in our companionship. The deep faith and hope felt and shared in our companionship has helped me discover God, once again in the concrete events of ordinary life.

To be sure, forced displacement brings the best and worst in peoples and two temptations should be avoided: either romanticising them—their lives and motivation—or judging them and their actions. People who have gone through so much suffering, who have lost loved ones to violence and have experienced violence themselves are not immune to turning themselves violent. Experience, however, has shown that for many forcibly displaced people of faith, this has not usually been the case. I believe this has to do with their faith and their hope, which in turn has led them to act with charity and care towards those around them. Not all forcibly displaced people have been able to sustain that faith. But I speak here of those who have; for them faith, hope and charity have helped them stay true to who they are and who they have been created to be. While hope does not take away their pain and suffering, they realise it is God’s gift. That gift is enough to know that ‘God knows’ them and cares for them.

I believe it is fair to say that the seeds of hope are already bearing fruit in our Church and in our lives through our relationships with forcibly displaced peoples. Thanks to them, we have come to new ways of understanding mutuality, hospitality, solidarity and identity as people of God who walk together in our journey back to God. We have come to new ways

²⁸⁷ Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p. 54.

of understanding suffering and even death.²⁸⁸ We have realised that we truly need one another—those in the ‘centre’ and those in the ‘margins’—and that we can accompany and should accompany one another, not only from our weakness, but also through our strengths. But for seeds of hope to continue to bear fruit means that more things have to change: a common destiny of material goods and freedom are sources of hope; to secure hope we have to overcome our poverty (both real and of spirit); personal self-realisation is necessary for hope, and the hopes for a better future should include also a new political, economic and social order based on dialogue and greater respect and mutuality.²⁸⁹

There continues to be too much suffering in our world, too much despair. What to do in the midst of all this suffering? We need to ‘plant’ hope. For the sake of their children and grandchildren the forcibly displaced sow seeds and plant ‘trees’ of hope, never allowing their creative and regenerative acts to be suffocated by the forces that attempt to oppress and repress the human spirit, especially that suffering of the deepest kind—whatever form it takes in us. So they take heart and keep planting!²⁹⁰ In their relentless passion for hope, the forcibly displaced hope not only for themselves but also *for us*. They hold hope as treasure for all those who find themselves seized by despair. In the service of hope, they have been called to exercise it, like Christ did, giving his life for the redemption of many.²⁹¹ And they invite us to hope *with* them too. The wellspring of hope in our world is drying up and we all need to contribute to it, to help fill it once again so, when it does, hope will spill over and will be everywhere helping other seeds of hope grow and bear more fruit.

2.5. Conclusion and Summary of learnings for Part II

Within the Christian tradition, we consider ‘spiritual’ everything that through the action of the Holy Spirit unites a person with Christ and makes him or her more like Him; it is everything that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, becomes a motive of personal union with God. What is spiritual in Christian tradition is this action of the Holy Spirit that spreads throughout the whole universe, that makes that all things, events and peoples remind us of God, speak to us of God and of God’s wonders (especially those of the history of salvation—

²⁸⁸ “My companions [forcibly displaced people] taught me how to be and wait with the dying [...] I learned that dying is part of living”. Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p. 54.

²⁸⁹ Cf. CONFERENCIA DE OBISPOS CATÓLICOS DE CUBA, *Carta Pastoral “La Esperanza no defrauda”* (Romanos 5,5), these sentences are all headings in the Pastoral Letter.

²⁹⁰ Cf. DOWNEY, *The Heart of Hope*, p. 160.

²⁹¹ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL “Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo”, p. 68.

creation, Incarnation, redemption) that orients us to God, transmits God to us and, finally, reunites us with God (Cf. Špidlík and Rupnik). Within this understanding of spirituality then, everything, even hardships, suffering, pain, can—*through the action of the Holy Spirit*—be an object of union with God. And this includes too the experience of forced displacement, with its horrific effects and tragic consequences.

What we have tried to show in this second part of chapter 1 is in fact how the action of the Holy Spirit has transformed these ‘horrific effects and tragic consequences’ for survivors of forced displacement into graced ‘instruments’ to help them appropriate the mystery of Christ in their lives, to help them become *more like Him*. We have argued that the key in this process of transformation has been a particular grace given by the Spirit to the forcibly displaced, namely *the grace of hope*, and that this key is the essential element of their spirituality—a spirituality of hope in displacement. In our discussion, we have explored the context within which this transformation has occurred, what the process has involved, how it has acted upon the lives of survivors of forced displacement, and what it has taught them that can be of help to us, as we face our own crises of hopelessness and despair in so many parts of the world today. In fact, that the forcibly displaced have lessons to teach us in this respect has been one of the main premises in our presentation throughout this part of the chapter. This premise is based on the belief that through God’s action, it is possible that the Spirit gives—or is in the process of giving—to various ecclesial communities (or to the Church in other apostolic traditions), the gifts to read and understand reality and elaborate theological and pastoral frameworks that might be fruitful in particular situations. In our study, we have tried to argue that this is indeed so in the case of the ecclesial community of forcibly displaced peoples of faith, bearers of the hope we need in our ‘age of despair’.

As in Part I, the content of this second Part has been driven by three main objectives which we hoped to achieve by answering the following questions: (1) What does a spirituality of displacement and migration ‘look like’ and how can it contribute to the life of the Church as the people of God?, (2) What can we learn from survivors of forced displacement about a ‘lived spirituality of hope’? and (3) What can we learn through the present exploration about specific needs of survivors of forced displacement which we should consider in developing spiritual resources for them?

After a short introduction, **Part II** was divided into three main sections. As a way of providing background and context, **Section 1** looked at the essential role of hope in people's lives as well as the current crisis of hope—what it means to live in 'a world without hope'—but also the opportunities that such crisis might present to us as Church today. **Section 2** then explored what a lived spirituality of hope might entail—its theological and biblical foundations as well as its praxis in the present globalised context. Finally, **Section 3** sought to address how this spirituality of hope has found its roots—and has been further developed—in and through the experiences of forcibly displaced people, how they incarnate it and express it in their lives and the lessons we can learn from them.

In raising the question of 'a world without hope', **Section 1** began considering the widespread perception of an absence of the possibility of a better future for *all peoples*, especially those in the margins. If it is true that we live in an 'age of despair' (cf. Albert Nolan), is there a way out of this crisis of hopelessness? We saw that the opposite of hope, in fact, is not hopelessness. The opposite of hope, what hurts us the most, is the apathy that seems to have taken over our world: not to expect anything anymore, to succumb to monotony, boredom and indifference. This is what kills us. As a result, the Church's service to hope in our time has become more urgent and necessary than ever before. A greater awareness of our limitations and acceptance of our failures has perhaps made us more cautious and timid to act; yet, it has also given us the opportunity to approach this task with greater humility. As Church, we might in fact dare to live this crisis of hopelessness with joy (cf. Radcliffe) because, as we have seen throughout our history, in times of crisis God has constantly broken through our armour of self-sufficiency and arrogance to reach down to the deeper and more vulnerable parts of our lives, to transform us and configure us to Jesus' way anew. With this humility, joy, and a greater awareness of the potential contribution of those in the margins, the Church can enlist new 'allies' in this mission, always remembering that its message has to be centred in the announcement of Christ as hope for the world—a proclamation that cannot be separated from the example of those who witness to it including (especially), those who have been victims of forced displacement. As people of God we can offer this hope by moving towards a Church that, as we have seen, recognises and embraces its essential nature as a *church-in-displacement*, in progress, that celebrates *dialogue-in-*

communion and acknowledges the contribution of people with diverse religious traditions and cultural backgrounds, thus giving a true expression to the catholicity of the Church and the Christian life.

Our Christian life, not so much for what it is in and of itself, but rather in the extent to which it is assumed, appropriated and lived by each person, is the formal object of study of spiritual theology. In the **second part of Section 2**, we saw how we usually speak of a process and development of the Christian life, because the fact that there is growth is unavoidable. Some speak of this process as being *on the way*, of fulfilling an itinerary, something inherent in the act of being a Christian; while others speak directly of growth, of maturing in Christ, with its associated stages along the way which need to be lived through and in some sense overcome. This process begins where ‘we stand’, and it is from there that we do our theology and our reflection, without of course obviating the tradition and history that precedes it, informs it and nurtures it. These, as we saw in the first part of our chapter, are characteristics of any contextual theology, and which spiritual theology shares, particularly through its methodology, both in its inductive and deductive elements. It is inductive because it deals with spiritual experiences—the reality of faith lived by the subject is the basic material used later in subsequent reflections. And it is deductive precisely because it considers these experiences within the context of specific traditions, rooted in history and past reflection. The elements of spiritual theology we highlighted in this section—the appropriation of the Christian life through one’s experiences rooted in history (a particular time and place); as a process of growth in fulfilling an itinerary; following the way of Jesus in our given context; anchored in the Church’s tradition but also open to various ecclesial contexts and communities’ contributions, and as an experience subject to critical analysis— all pointed to important aspects required in the articulation of a spirituality of hope in the lives of the forcibly displaced.

Having affirmed that forcibly displaced people have the capacity to restore to us the gift of universal hope we so badly need in the world today, the last part of **Section 1** offered some initial intuitions that suggest reasons for why this may be the case. Firstly, one of the fundamental aspects of a spirituality of hope in forcibly displaced peoples is that they must literally hope against all hope. They must continue hoping even when there are no visible

signs of hope anywhere around them. Secondly, their spirituality of hope is imbued with a paradoxical character in that it points to the possibility that realities that in principle should only be bearers of damnation and death can become bearers of life and blessing. Thirdly, it is a spirituality of hope based on the belief in a God that never abandons forcibly displaced people despite all evidences to the contrary. And fourthly, it is a spirituality of hope based on companionship, solidarity and relationship, for forcibly displaced persons can never survive on their own.

As we did in Part I, we note here the initial learnings and insights from this first section that will help inform several considerations and criteria to be used for the *exercises* we will develop in Chapter 5. These include: (1) recognising the danger for survivors of forced displacement to fall into despair, especially after resettlement, and finding ways to address this threat; (2) reflecting on what maintaining a ‘genuine’ Christian hope might entail, both for the forcibly displaced and for all of us; (3) finding ways to concretise the Church’s service to hope in our time, particularly through the gifts of forcibly displaced peoples; (4) seeing the Christian life—our appropriating of Jesus’ way of life into ours—as a process whose stages might require specific spiritual nourishment; (5) recognising the gift forcibly displaced people offer us in terms of reading and understanding reality in a new way and exploring how that gift can be nurtured and articulated for the benefit of all, and (6) addressing a growing sense of abandonment, particularly found in survivors of forced displacement in the later stages of resettlement.

Because Christian life—appropriating of God’s word of revelation in one’s life of faith, charity and hope—requires a dialogue between the experiential process and a set of agreed-upon ‘reference points’ (developed in history and preserved through tradition), and having begun to explore the experiential dimension of a spirituality of hope in the forcibly displaced, **Section 2**, sought to address our understanding of hope and its relation to these ‘reference points’ from the more traditional dogmatic, biblical and eschatological points of view. In this section we considered first the role of hope in five areas, starting with (1) *the search of fulfilment of our personal human experience*. We saw that the propensity to hope for the future is so deeply rooted in us that we might conclude that this attitude it is part of the very essence of human existence (cf. Bloch). Because our salvation is still partial and incomplete,

our sense of the present is anchored in the future and in God's promises to us for that future. This promise of God and our experience of it lived in our encounter with Christ, as we *walk* in time, is manifested in the concrete signs that history offers us, and in which we can recognise the imprint of the presence, word and promise of God.

The role of hope (2) *within the Church as a community of transforming power*, sees it as the virtue by which we take responsibility for the future. Christian hope liberates a force, which is both critical and mobilising, that induces us towards a constant protest against, and an exodus from, the present negative circumstances in each moment (cf. Moltmann). We can no longer do theology with our backs turned to human suffering and its social causes, without trying to give a public response (cf. Metz). The Church which as a relational community of hope is called to live always, even unto death, for the other, in love of neighbour, must strive to give this response, especially in the face of an universal tragedy such as forced displacement. In this endeavour, it is guided by (3) the *theological virtues of hope, faith and charity as ways of being*: to believe in the God who is manifested to us, to hope in the God who is promised to us, and to love the God who loves us, is the foundation of the relationship in dialogue between the human person and God in Christ, which the Spirit interiorises in the life of each believer.

(4) *The eschatological dimension of hope* (its *already* but *not yet* dimension) does not refer only to end-of-times events. As we pointed out, it has to do also with our expectation of and relationship to them. In this sense eschatology is something changing, dynamic, as our knowledge of it evolves, and we approach the 'ultimate' things: plenitude, fulfilling the goal of our existence, 'moving into' Christ, together 'into' glory. Finally, we addressed the role of hope (5) as seen from within the *tradition of the Church* and some of its teachings. Vatican II made clear the collective responsibility we all hold of nurturing and promoting hope, which in turn entails cultivating our moral and social virtues (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*). We need also to differentiate between the 'little hopes' that sustain us each day and our 'great hope' that can only be God, who has loved us unconditionally and who sustains the whole of our life. We can learn and practice hope through prayer, which causes in us to undergo a process of inner purification that opens us up to God and to our fellow human beings. Prayer is followed by action and suffering as settings for learning and practicing hope, and then by judgement: only

in connection with the impossibility that the injustice of history should be the final word does our hope for Christ's return and for new life become fully convincing (cf. *Spes Salvi*).

The **second part** of **Section 2** explored the understanding of hope in the Scriptures. In the Older Testament hope is never set on people but rather on salvation, deliverance, light, and the end of distress. Hope is only to be set on YHWH and on God's grace, which is always gift, but will never disappoint because it is rooted in God's promise and covenant. In place of something that is hoped for, we found the one from whom all things are hoped; the goal of hope is YHWH's reign, his kingdom on the new earth, Israel's conversion as well as the conversion of other peoples and the new covenant. In the New Testament, the idea of hope, as confidence in God whose mercy and goodness one can rely on and whose promises cannot fail, though not actually enunciated is everywhere presupposed, particularly in the gospels. Among other things, the hope of Christians is set on deliverance, righteousness, resurrection, eternal life, and the vision of God. When we want to talk of hope in the present time, hope lived in difficult times of persecution, fragility and suffering (as in the lives of forcibly displaced people), the term that is used is *hipomoné*, which translates as endurance, staying firm, constancy, trusted waiting. In the Pauline texts, it appears as a fundamental attitude of Christians who trustingly await the reign of God and the coming of Christ as an eschatological fulfilment of God's promises. This waiting connotes a great capacity for patience, perseverance and a will of resistance to adversity, to persecutions, to all types of suffering. In this way it is presented as constitutive attitude of hope, to the point that it substitutes it.

The **last part** of **Section 2** explored some of the characteristics of a 'lived' spirituality of hope. Basically, a life based on the certainty of hope is *lived* hope. As we have just mentioned, hope speaks of fidelity, endurance, patience, magnanimity, creative and trusting effort. Lived hope speaks of individual attitudes and dispositions, of community responsibility and action. It speaks also of possibilities, of taking risks, of being 'un-intimidated'. It speaks of having courage. It speaks of God, of course. And lived hope speaks of liberation. It has to be liberating, for when one no longer has to fret about one's ultimate destiny, then anguish and anxiety have no place in one's life, and one can be sign and *praxis* of hope to others instead. But lived hope also speaks of liberation for others. We

do hope because our faith does not reside in our works, but the labours of God: a faith in God that leads us to believe that God can and will eradicate evil and its fruits of violence, suffering and injustice. The liberation of the person and the kingdom of God will appear as magnitudes which mutually demand one another.

Hope has always and essentially been hope for the others; only thus can hope really be a lived liberating hope. As such, we have an obligation not to despair. This is an imperative that requires our action, but which also demands us to be aware of the consequences of those actions, of our projects, our institutions and even of our humanitarian interventions and intentions, if our involvement is to avoid generating more victims. Thus hope is active, not passive, and as such it cannot be reduced to simply resisting. It does require resistance, but also courage and will, anticipatory imagination and endurance, and the trust that every human person will know fulfilment and justice—all elements we find in the lived hope of survivors of forced displacement. And as we also saw, somehow many of them continue to have faith in humanity, broken and fragile, sometimes inhuman and cruel, but redeemable and capable of surprises. Their endurance in hope challenges the endurance of our hope, our audacity and our capacity to take risks for the good of others.

As before, this searching for the meaning of a lived spirituality of hope through the lens of displacement has raised additional considerations to take into account in the development of our *spiritual exercises*, namely: (1) how our human existence is characterised by polarities or tensions which need to be understood and lived as ‘natural’ and acceptable; (2) the collective or communal approach to hope which makes our ‘individual hopes’ accountable to the well-being of others; (3) and thus highlights our shared responsibility for the future in combating human suffering and its social causes; (4) the process of growth into our full Christian life; (5) helping the forcibly displaced recognise the imprints of God’s presence, word and promise along their journey; (6) developing a greater awareness of our ‘way of being’, in our believing, trusting and loving; (7) hoping of true justice for the sufferer can only come from God; (8) a God who is our great hope; (9) exploring how we are encouraged in our hoping through the use of the Scriptures, and (10) the need to keep ‘exercising’ hope actively through resistance, endurance, will and courage even (and perhaps especially) after resettlement.

Finally, in the last section of this chapter, **Section 3**, we attempted to bring together the learnings and insights from the two previous sections and give fuller ‘shape’ to the spirituality of hope of forcibly displaced people. We strived to articulate how the forcibly displaced have lived out—in and through the Spirit—this hope as a ‘habit of the heart’, which has given many of them the capacity to do and to endure whatever they have had to in their journeys back to God. Their own insights and experiences were presented as lessons from which we can learn to develop this habit of the heart for ourselves. Three elements—mutuality in evangelising, accompanying from strengths and our common identity as people of God—were identified as ‘conditions’ to encourage, promote, develop and sustain hope—in other words, *acting hopefully*—for both the forcibly displaced and all of us. In fact, all of us without exception have been called to be heralds of Christ, to go out and get in touch with those people that, for one reason or another, find themselves separated from his fold. This mutuality in the sharing of the proclamation of the gospel means that even though we might have the knowledge, resources and opportunities to offer the Good News to others, in some instances the forcibly displaced can do this more effectively than many of us, because their stories of suffering and survival give them credibility before people who are hurting and suffering, and also the assurance that such suffering will not have the last word.

This mutuality is further expressed through the offering of hospitality and solidarity. Hospitality is not a one-way street, and though it is hard to believe this when you are mostly on the receiving end of such a gift (as most forcibly displaced people have), many of them have come to recognise that their presence has been indeed a source of transformation in other people’s lives. We asserted that hospitality *is* a two-way street of mutual ministry where we often exchange roles and can learn the most from those whom we considered powerless or of “no account” because they had ended up at the margins of life. But margins can be places of connection. And when the distinctions of ‘margin’ and ‘centre’ begin to blur, as we all share in God’s hospitality, we are given a sign that the Reign of God is drawing near. Hospitality, as an attitude towards life and others, requires that we affirm one another and that we share who and what we are, trusting that we will be accepted despite our differences. And as expressed earlier, the question *of* hope is the question *for* the other, for solidarity, for God. Hope in God is manifested when its divine reality is mediated through

words, actions and loving gestures that signify it and make it present; when we chose to share life with others, especially those in greatest need—the poor, the marginalised, the forcibly displaced. And when we share our lives in solidarity with them, we are blessed in unexpected ways, because they in turn share in solidarity our challenges and difficulties.

It was pointed out that one of these unexpected blessings is that we begin to see each other in different ways. Accompanying one another from our strengths requires that we see one another (but especially the forcibly displaced) beyond our and their wounds—beyond the ‘label’ of victims—and learn how to recognise their (and our) strengths, especially in times of peace, of ‘normality’. Forcibly displaced people need to be given back control of their lives, at least in those areas over which they can have control. As we have seen, within the Church, and in terms of identity, one of our constitutive characteristics is our common *pilgrim nature* as people on the move to God. And though paradoxical, another of our constitutive characteristics in terms of our Christian identity is that we are different, and this allows us to be a living, witnessing presence of the gospel in the world in diverse ways as an ‘intercultural church’. While this does raise tensions, these can be addressed through a process of intercultural transformation of our habits, structures and spirituality as Church, as well as conversion at all levels—personal, institutional, apostolic and of mission.

The **final part** of **Section 3** and of the chapter identified several so-called *characteristics of hope-gifting*, and in fact these can be regarded as the main elements that characterise the spirituality of hope of the forcibly displaced. As we have affirmed repeatedly, forcibly displaced people have much to offer in the realm of our shared lived spirituality based both on their experiences of suffering but also on their very particular experiences of God. These characteristics, or ‘lessons’, offered to us a gifts of hope included: hope in the Lord Jesus; listening; humility and vulnerability; gratitude; keeping hope alive in the midst of suffering; solitude; going beyond optimism; waiting in Advent time, and prayer. We offer brief comments on each of these here as we list the final considerations for the development of the *spiritual exercises* for survivors of forced displacement to come from this chapter. Again, they must be seen as lessons the forcibly displaced have learned and which they desire to share with us, for the ‘benefit of our souls’.

(1) For many forcibly displaced people of faith, it is their hope in the Lord, Jesus, and their connection with his Paschal Mystery, that gives them the greatest of hopes, for through it their suffering is united with Christ's suffering and finds its meaning; (2) forcibly displaced people remind us that we need to have enough patience to listen with care to what each other has to say; this listening requires the full and real presence of people to one other, and as such it is one of the highest forms of hospitality; listening is healing too because in being allowed to share our own stories, we become even more aware of God's loving presence all along in our daily lives; (3) another lesson from the forcibly displaced is that if we want to grow in hope, we must grow in humility and have the courage to make ourselves vulnerable; only then will we be able to see life—and all that it entails—through the lens of hope for what it really is— sheer gift; (4) the quality of our hope is manifested in our capacity to take risks, to face adversities with fortitude and patience, but also in our capacity to continue to give thanks for life, even when life feels unbearable and seems to lack meaning; we must give thanks and do it often, and also do it together; this joint expression of gratitude is an acknowledgment of and commitment to the presence of God in our experience of displacement—theirs and ours; (5) for those of us who embrace the Christian faith, only Christ can give meaning to our suffering; suffering and hope as virtue and grace are intrinsically related: the forcibly displaced tell us that they are able to see their suffering as gift because through this suffering they have come to feel more deeply the love of God manifested in Jesus on the cross, who loved his own to the end.

(6) Our Christian tradition has always affirmed that we live in solitude, or rather, that we *are* solitude, as a condition to search for and enter into companionship; an important part of the mission of forcibly displaced people for the Church and for the world is to be constant reminders that as people of God we are essentially pilgrim people, never settled, always on the move, often alone, always searching, always reaching out further; we might well 'hear' forcibly displaced people asking us: "What is *your* solitude preparing you for?"; (7) optimists are those who, analysing the situation of the world, find in it sufficient courses of action to foresee success; they believe that things will go their way or turn out well; as believers, instead, we hope, and not because of the analysis of reality, but because we believe in God's promise and commitment to us that everything in our lives, joys, pains and challenges, and even our suffering, will make sense and are worth the cost, regardless of how things might

turn out; (8) forcibly displaced people are ‘Advent people’: they are always ‘in waiting’—waiting for something to happen to them or for them, because they have little control over their lives; as such, although they live in real time, they also live in ‘suspended’ time; they live their own time now, but also live in hope for their children’s time in the future; they hope for the time in which their children will not have to suffer anymore, and part of what this hidden treasure has revealed to them is that *time-in-waiting* makes more sense, has more ‘meaning’, when we wait in hope for others; and (9) many of us how wondered how, after all that has happened to them, forcibly displaced people can still pray; it would seem that the only possible answer is that the invincible power of faith in their lives impels them to hope against all hope and to pray against all apparent failure, because they have learned this from Christ himself: his prayer during the Passion, full of realism (*take away this cup*) was filled with total trust in his Father (*I know you always listen to me*) and of unconditional surrender (*not my will but your own will be done*).

We conclude this chapter with the questions we posed at the beginning of our discussion: “Can anyone restore to us the gift of universal hope we so badly need in our world today? And, if they can, where can we go and meet them?” In our presentation, we have attempted to put forth positive answers to both questions: that forcibly displaced peoples of faith do hold this wonderful gift of hope, which they are ready to share with us. And that the Church—in all its expressions, as community, as people of God, as an institution of faith—offers us a place to go and meet them. As I suggested in my personal reflection, I believe it is fair to say that the seeds of hope are already bearing fruit in our Church and in our lives through the relationships we have begun to forge with forcibly displaced peoples of faith. Because of them, we have arrived at new ways of understanding mutuality, hospitality, solidarity and our sense of identity as people of God, as pilgrims together on our way back to God. We have arrived at new ways of understanding suffering and even death, and we have realised that we truly need one another to give and share life. But for seeds of hope to continue to bear fruit means that more things have to change: we need to continue labouring together and do all we can so that the Reign of God—the Reign Jesus came to establish—continues to draw nearer. As Christians, we believe that our spirituality of hope cannot be separated from our belief in and experience of the Trinitarian God who came to dwell among us in the human person of Jesus. Our spirituality of hope cannot be separated from the values

of the gospel—the Good News—he instituted, modelled for us, and commissioned us to proclaim. In the next chapter we explore how the Society of Jesus, in its service to the Church and its ministry to the forcibly displaced, has strived to fulfil this mission through its Social Apostolate and various applications of the *Spiritual Exercises* within them.

CHAPTER 2

Responding to the plight and challenges of forcibly displaced peoples: *The Society of Jesus and its Social Apostolate, its characteristics and spirituality*

Introduction

The Society of Jesus has carried a flame for nearly five hundred years through innumerable social and cultural circumstances that have challenged it intensely to keep that flame alive and burning. Things are no different today. In a world that overwhelms people with a multiplicity of sensations, ideas, and images, the Society seeks to keep the fire of its original inspiration alive in a way that offers warmth and light to our contemporaries.¹

Thus begins Decree 2 (*A Fire that Kindles other Fires: Rediscovering our Charism*) of the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus. The Decree then reminds us that—as it has been since the times of Ignatius—fundamental for the life and mission of the Society is an experience that places all Jesuits (and we might add, all ‘their companions in mission’) with “Christ at the heart of the world”, a world whose realities often plunge it into the “depths of darkness”, but where “the transforming light of God is [also] able to shine”.² Starting from the contemplation of the incarnation in the *Spiritual Exercises* (cf. [SpEx 101-109]), it is clear that Ignatius does not sweeten or falsify these painful realities: rather, “he begins with them, exactly as they are—poverty, forced displacement, violence between people, abandonment, structural injustice, sin—but then he points to how God’s Son was born into these realities”,

¹ THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Decrees and Documents of the 35th General Congregation*, AR 26 (2008) 171-250; Oxford: Way Boos 2008; *A Fire that Kindles other Fires: Rediscovering our Charism*, D. 2, 1.

² GC35, D. 2, 4.

to how through his sacrifice on the cross he transformed them, and “it is here that sweetness is found. Tasting and seeing God in reality is a process”,³ illumined and guided by Jesus’ cross, resurrection and gospel.

Similarly, and as in its beginnings, in carrying out its mission the Society today “experiences the companionship of the Lord and the challenge of the Cross”.⁴ In its commitment to ‘the service of faith and the promotion of justice’, the Society’s mode of proceeding is “to trace the footprints of God everywhere, knowing that the Spirit of Christ is at work in all places and situations and in all activities and mediations that seek to make him more present in the world”.⁵ To follow Christ bearing his Cross means announcing his Gospel of hope to the many poor who inhabit our world today:

Human beings need a future in which they can take hold of their full dignity; indeed they need an absolute future, a ‘great hope’ that exceeds every particular hope [cf. Benedict XVI’s *Spe Salvi*]. Our mission finds its inspiration in this ministry of Jesus. Following Jesus, we feel ourselves called not only to bring direct help to people in distress, but also to restore entire human persons in their integrity, reintegrating them in community and reconciling them with God. This frequently calls for an engagement that is long-term, be it in the education of youth, in the spiritual accompaniment of the Exercises, in intellectual research, or in the service of refugees. But it is here, aided by grace and drawing on whatever professional capacities we may have that we try to offer ourselves to God fully, for his service.⁶

These few paragraphs from the Society’s highest decision making and vision setting body describe the Jesuits’ current reasoning behind, and approach to, its mission. As we will see shortly, it is fundamentally the same reasoning and approach that has characterised the Society of Jesus’ service and ministries since its beginnings, always adapted and applied to new challenges, using well-tried methods as well as new and emerging resources. The call to “restore entire human persons in their integrity, reintegrating them in community and reconciling them with God” and with others, continues to be heeded by the followers of Ignatius and his faithful companions.

Having explored in the previous chapter the characteristics of a theology and spirituality of forcibly displaced peoples, in this chapter we look at the Society of Jesus’ concrete response to their needs and the needs of many others in the margins. In its service to the Church and

³ GC35, D. 2, 6.

⁴ GC35, D. 2, 7.

⁵ GC35, D. 2, 8.

⁶ GC35, D. 2, 13.

its ministry to them, the Society has strived to fulfil this mission through its various apostolates—in particular its Social Apostolate—informed and guided by the spirituality of Ignatius and his *Spiritual Exercises*. In terms of this second chapter's contribution to our task of developing Ignatian exercises for survivors of forced displacement (chapter 5), its main objectives are:

- (1) to review briefly the history, purpose, characteristics and way of proceeding of the Society of Jesus' Social Apostolate and its particular focus and approach in its service to the forcibly displaced;
- (2) to show that applying the *Spiritual Exercises* to the context of forcibly displaced peoples is in line with this continuing mission of the Society of Jesus and its service to the Church, following similar efforts endeavoured in the past;
- (3) based on applications of the *Exercises* to other areas of the Society's Social Apostolate, to distil further considerations to take into account for developing Exercises for forcibly displaced people;
- (4) to explore the principles and criteria that should guide our response—both practical and spiritual—to the plight of forcibly displaced people, following guidelines based on the rights of human persons and Catholic Social Teaching and on learnings amassed from the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service.

In order to achieve these objectives, the chapter has been divided in two main parts. Part I begins looking at the origins and development of the Jesuit Social Apostolate and seeks to show that offering the *Spiritual Exercises* to people who are in the margins—as forcibly displaced people are—cannot be separated from the Society of Jesus' commitment to social justice “as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst”.⁷ Working against structures and prejudices that oppress people and devalue their dignity, as we shall see, has been part and parcel of the Society's social ministries since its beginnings. As the scope of our work does not allow us to explore the Society's almost five-hundred-year history, we focus on the two ‘book-ends’ of that history, namely, (1) the social initiatives of the first

⁷ “How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst”. POPE FRANCIS, *Misericordiae Vultus: Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy* (11 April 2015), n. 5. Cf. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html. Accessed 13 June 2018.

Jesuits and (2) the way the Society's Social Apostolate is being carried out at the turn of the 21st century, in line with its particular 'Characteristics'. Since the inspiration of our social apostolates is evangelical—which means that we cannot separate our social praxis from our spirituality⁸—we explore in the second section of Part I some of the characteristics of this spirituality of the Society's Social Apostolate, and in particular the influence and role of the *Spiritual Exercises* in it. We conclude this first part looking at the criteria considered in the application of the *Exercises* for three particular groups or issues within the social ministries.

Part II consists of four sections. Section 1 situates the giving of the Exercises within the context of an appropriate response to the plight and challenges faced by forcibly displaced people, both in the world and in Australia. Within the parameters of our faith, two essential elements of this response (which we introduced in the previous chapter and now explore in greater detail), include the values of hospitality towards, and solidarity with, the foreigner and the stranger: values that have been emphasised in our Judeo-Christian tradition from time immemorial, championed particularly in recent Church documents and highlighted as key elements of our Catholic Social teaching. These values (addressed in sections 2 and 3) have also been guiding lights in the Society of Jesus' institutional response to forcibly displaced brothers and sisters through the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). The chapter ends with a brief exploration of the experiences, learnings and theological reflection amassed by JRS (section 4) in the past thirty-eight years—without which we could not really attempt to offer an adaptation/application of the *Exercises* for survivors of forced displacement. As in

⁸ Unfortunately, signs of this separation—as well as actions—within the Society in terms of the proclamation and fulfilment of its mission have been real and have been the subject of heated debate for many years. Already back in 1967, the 31st General Congregation warned that: "Since, finally, every form of the apostolate of the Society of Jesus flows from its mission 'for the defence and propagation of the faith and the progress of souls in Christian life and learning', we must be very careful lest the social apostolate be reduced merely to temporal activity" (*The Social Apostolate*, D. 32, 3), Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Documents of the 31st General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, 1965, 1966*, AR 14 (1966) 849-1020; St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1977. Similarly, Jean-Yves Calvez argues strongly against such separation: "We must avoid a concept which renders the social only an *ethical* dimension of Christianity, something lateral, 'deduced' from that which is essential [...]. One must, on the contrary, make the social a theological dimension [...] a *dimension of the faith itself* as a commitment to God which demands a commitment to the neighbour and cannot be separated from it [...] there is no true self-giving to God ('whom you do not see') without the gift of self to one's neighbour ('whom you see')", JEAN-YVES CALVEZ, "The Spirituality of the Social Apostolate" in *Promotio Iustitiae* 90 (2006) 14-15. The social/spiritual debate also touches on issues regarding, for example, how well (or not) the Society of Jesus is living its faith-justice mission (see, for example, the 'debate' between José M. Castillo's "The Society of Jesus and the mission faith-justice" and Urbano Valero's "What does the Society live on" in *Promotio Iustitiae* 91 (2006) 6-24 and 25-32, respectively); and on issues pertaining the *Spiritual Exercises*, (for example, José Aldunate L.'s "Readjusting the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius: Social Sin" and Ricardo Antoncich's "Social dimension of the *Exercises* of Saint Ignatius" in *Promotio Iustitiae* 88 (2005) 30-32 and 32-35, respectively, on whether the *Spiritual Exercises* have an individual or social character).

each chapter, we conclude with a summary of learnings that we hope will translate into guidelines and criteria for the Ignatian Exercises developed in chapter 5.

Part I: An overview of the Society of Jesus' Social Apostolate, its characteristics and spirituality

1.1. The Society of Jesus and its Social ministries

Part VII of the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* addresses directly the mission of the Society and states:

[...] this Part VII deals with what the members need to observe in regard to their neighbour (which is an end eminently characteristic of our Institute) when they are dispersed throughout Christ's vineyard to labour in that part of it and in that work which have been entrusted to them, whether they have been sent to some places or others by either the supreme vicar of Christ our Lord or the superiors of the Society who for them are similarly in the place of his Divine Majesty, or whether they themselves choose where and in what work they will labour, having been commissioned to travel to any place where they judge that greater service of God and the good of souls will follow; or whether they carry on their labour not by traveling but by residing steadily and continually in certain places where much fruit of glory and service to God is expected.⁹

This short passage reveals a great deal about the narrative of the social apostolate of the Jesuits: it seeks above all the greater service and glory of God in the care of the neighbour—an “end eminently characteristic of our Institute”; it requires obedience, freedom, availability, faith and discernment. And it will be, almost always, characterised by movement and displacement to where God might be calling God's servants to go in order to achieve the greatest good. And contrary to forced displacement, it is inferred that this displacement is voluntary, purposeful and even assumed with joy.

1.1.1. As a way of introduction: marginalising displacement

As we indicated in the previous chapter, movement and displacement have always been a reality in human life. In the past, as it is now, such movement and displacement have arisen mostly from need (to acquire means of subsistence when formerly existing ones have become insufficient due to population growth or depletion of resources, for example); escaping from danger (invasions, wars, internal conflicts, environmental catastrophes); or seeking new frontiers in search of adventure, better quality of life or a desire of discovering what might lie ‘beyond’. What has changed in our time, clearly because of the world's population

⁹ SOCIETY OF JESUS, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms*, Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources 1996, [603].

explosion, but also because of a number of other factors leading to such displacement (particularly wars and internal conflicts linked to procurement of resources), is the magnitude, intensity, frequency and worldwide impact of these massive human movements.¹⁰

We live in the ‘Age of Migration’ and tragically a large percentage of people on the move today are victims of forced displacement. The UNHCR’s 2017 *Global Trends Report* estimated that a record 65.6 million people had been displaced as of the end of 2016, compared to 59.5 million just two years earlier. Comparing this figure to the then estimated world population of 7.47 billion people, this translated into an average of one in every 113.8 people globally being considered either a refugee, an asylum-seeker or an internally displaced person. And tragically, among those counted as refugees in these figures about half were children, many of whom had been separated from their parents or were travelling alone.¹¹

Sadly too, the horror and traumatic consequences of forced displacement are not being met by a proportionate sense of solidarity and welcome by those with the power and resources to offer hospitality. As Filippo Grandi, current UN High Commissioner for Refugees, put it:

More people are being displaced by war and persecution and that’s worrying in itself, but the factors that endanger refugees are multiplying too [...]. At sea, a frightening number of refugees and migrants are dying each year; on land, people fleeing war are finding their way blocked by closed borders. Politics is gravitating against asylum in some countries. The willingness of nations to work together not just for refugees but for the

¹⁰ Among the best current studies on international migration is STEPHEN CASTLES, HEIN DE HAAS and MARK J. MILLER, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5th ed., New York: Guilford 2014. Other works on the historical, sociological, political and anthropological factors affecting migration include: PAUL COLLIER, *Exodus: How Migration Is Changing Our World*, Oxford: Oxford University 2013; ALEJANDRO PORTER and JOSH DEWIND, *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*, New York: Berghahn 2007; CAROLINE B. BRETTELL and JAMES F. HOLLIFIELD, eds., *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines*, New York: Routledge 2008; DAVID GUTIÉRREZ and PIERETTE HONDAGNEU-SOTELO, eds., *Nation and Migration Past and Future*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University 2009; THOMAS FAIST, MARGIT FAUSER and EVELINE REISENAUER, *Translational Migration*, Malden, MA: Polity 2013; JOSEPH H. CARENS, *The Ethics of Immigration*, Oxford: Oxford University 2013; KAREN O’REILLY, *International Migration and Social Theory*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012; ATO QUAYSON and GIRISH DASWANI, eds., *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell 2013. All these sources are quoted in footnote 3 of PHAN’s article “*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration”, p. 846.

¹¹ The total of 65.6 million comprises 2.8 million people in industrialized countries who as of end 2016 were awaiting decisions on asylum, 22.5 million refugees worldwide (1.2 million more than in 2015 and the highest refugee total since the early 1990s), and 40.3 million people who had been forced to flee their homes but were within the confines of their own countries (an increase of 2.1 million from 2014 and the second highest number on record). At the time of the report, the three countries with the largest number of refugees were: Syria (5.5 million), Afghanistan (2.5 million) and South Sudan (1.4 million), while those with the largest numbers of internally displaced people included: Colombia (7.4 million), Syria (6.6 million), Iraq (3.6 million) and Democratic Republic of Congo (2.2 million). Cf. UNHCR, “Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2016”, <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/> Accessed 13 June 2018.

collective human interest is what's being tested today, and it's this spirit of unity that badly needs to prevail.¹²

There are indeed some who are trying to foster this spirit of unity, both in the short term, by providing emergency relief and opening their borders to refuge seekers as much as they can, and in the long term, by studying the issue of forced displacement from various perspectives to best educate decision makers and the public in general and by fostering practices of welcome and solidarity. It is clear that through his words and actions, Pope Francis—with the help of other Church leaders and communities—has recently been one of the most outspoken voices promoting this more welcoming approach. Pointedly, he links the phenomenon of massive forced displacement to the ‘scandal of poverty in its various forms’ in the world today:

While encouraging the development of a better world, we cannot remain silent about the scandal of poverty in its various forms. Violence, exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, restrictive approaches to fundamental freedoms, whether of individuals or of groups: these are some of the chief elements of poverty which need to be overcome. Often these are precisely the elements which mark migratory movements, thus linking migration to poverty. Fleeing from situations of extreme poverty or persecution in the hope of a better future, or simply to save their own lives, millions of persons choose to migrate. Despite their hopes and expectations, they often encounter mistrust, rejection and exclusion, to say nothing of tragedies and disasters which offend their human dignity.¹³

Pope Francis adds: “We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved”. Of course, this call for solidarity and hospitality within the Catholic and other Christian churches (as well as in other faith traditions) is not new. Throughout its two-thousand-year history our Church has produced countless of documents stressing the importance—the duty, in fact—of Christ’s followers to welcome the stranger and care for the afflicted. This call finds its foundations, as we soon will see, in passages found in both the Hebrew and New Testament scriptures. And echoes too the writings of the early Fathers and Mothers in the desert as well as the customs and Rules of monastic

¹² UNHCR, “With 1 Human in every 113 affected, Forced Displacement Hits Record High”, 20 June 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-au/news/press/2016/6/5763ace54/1-human-113-affected-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html>. Accessed 13 June 2018.

¹³ FRANCIS, “Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World”, *Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014* (5 August 2013). Cf. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day.html. Accessed 13 June 2018.

traditions of the Middle Ages, all of which stressed the duty of hospitality and care for pilgrims, travellers and strangers.¹⁴

As a pilgrim himself, St Ignatius of Loyola, *the Pilgrim*, entrusted himself to the hospitality of many of his contemporaries (cf. [Au 42-43, 76]). He also had great devotion to *Our Lady of the Way*, who he believed had protected him since the time of his conversion, through all his travels and adventures, and not the least in the creation of the Society of Jesus.¹⁵ A Society founded to care for the poor, the marginalised, and those needing reconciliation, peace and acceptance.

1.1.2. Responding to the needs of their time: Jesuits and the origins of their Social Apostolate

All should act on behalf of the poor, many should be near the poor,
and a few should be as the poor.
Fr Pedro Arrupe talking about Jesuits

¹⁴ Saints Augustine, Benedict and John Chrysostom, for example, all spoke and wrote about the proper motive and practice of hospitality. Augustine, for instance, claimed that we are all wayfarers: “Acknowledge the duty of hospitality, thereby some have attained unto God. Thou takest in some stranger, whose companion in the way thou thyself also art; for strangers are we all”. ST AUGUSTINE, *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, translated by R. G. Macmullen, edited by Philip Schaff, New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co. 1886, Sermon LXI, cf. <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txuf/august7d.htm>. Accessed 13 June 2018. For John Chrysostom, the primary motivation for offering hospitality is love for Jesus and seeing him in the poor and the stranger: “Observe, the hospitality here spoken of [in 1 Timothy 5:9] is not merely a friendly reception, but one given with zeal and alacrity, with readiness, and going about it as if one were receiving Christ Himself” (*Homily XIV on First Timothy*). Cf. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Epistles of St Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, Oxford: John Henry Parker 1853, p. 118. And St Benedict in his Rule likewise reminds us that: “Any guest who happens to arrive at the monastery should be received just as we would receive Christ himself, because he promised that on the last day he will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt 25:35). Proper respect should be shown to everyone while a special welcome is reserved for those who are of the household of our Christian faith (Gal 6:10) and for pilgrims”, (*The Holy Rule, Chapter 53: The Reception of Guests*). Cf. SAINT BENEDICT, *The Rule of St Benedict (Benedictine Handbook)*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 2003, p. 74. We take up this theme of hospitality in more detail in the second part of this chapter.

¹⁵ The late medieval mural of Santa Maria della Strada was on an external wall of the small chapel of Our Lady of the Way in Rome. When Ignatius and his companions came to Rome in 1537-38, they celebrated Mass in this church, heard confessions, preached, and taught catechism to children. Witnessing the good accomplished, the pastor of the church entered the Jesuits and asked the pope to place the church under the Society’s care in 1542. It was before the image of Our Lady in this church that many early Jesuits pronounced their vows and prayed before departing for foreign lands. It was also here that Ignatius eventually set up the headquarters of his new Society, placing it under Our Lady’s patronage. When the small chapel of Santa Maria della Strada was demolished to make way for the Church of the Gesù (consecrated in 1584), this image of Our Lady was preserved and placed in a special chapel. Today, it is in the north chapel, having recently undergone restoration. This title of Our Lady echoes the enduring Ignatian motif of the pilgrim and of the Society as a “pathway to God” (1550 *Formula of the Institute*, 1), as well as the words of Jesus, who called himself “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6).

From its inception, as the first Companions gathered to constitute ‘our least Society’, its purpose has been the help and salvation of souls (cf. [Co 3, 156, 308, 351, 603, 813]), and for St Ignatius and his companions and successors, as it was for Jesus, those in the margins have always had a special place. In the next section we look briefly at the early history and development of the Society of Jesus’ Social Apostolate, including its service to the forcibly displaced.

1.1.2.1. The First Jesuit Social Ministries

John O’Malley, in his seminal work on the First Companions¹⁶, points out that for these early Jesuits the material and bodily concerns of those they sought to help were as important as their spiritual needs.¹⁷ Thus, they worked tirelessly to improve the physical circumstances of the poor and marginalised they encountered, spending a great deal of time and energy in carrying out various works of mercy, based on Matthew 25’s injunction: “when you clothe, feed, console, and do other kind deeds for the wretched and outcast, you clothe, feed and console me”.¹⁸ Nadal, for example, has been referred to as the “premier organiser of social relief in Sicily” thanks to the revolutionary social work he did while he was there in 1548-1553.¹⁹ Moreover, from the beginning too, Jesuits enlisted the aid of others to provide these services—a practice which would become a characteristic way of the

¹⁶ Cf. JOHN O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1993. See in particular Chapter 5, *Works of Mercy*, pp. 165-199.

¹⁷ “Ignatius and the first companions heard the cry of the poor in an entirely natural and, of course, spiritual way. They could not have imagined introducing themselves as companions of Jesus without assuming his preferential love for the poor”. PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH, “A paschal love for the world” in *Promotio Iustitiae* 68 (1997) 96. (Speaking to the International Congress of the Jesuit Social Apostolate at Naples on 20 June 1997). This option found fulfilment not only in Europe but also in the new ‘colonies’ where Jesuits were sent, accompanying European settlers, as evidenced by the evangelising activity of one of these early Jesuits, Francis Xavier: “The most palpable proof of the evangelization initiated by Xavier was the change of customs and the beginning of a new civilisation, which was carried out in the places he evangelised. The new converts, let us not forget, belonged to the lowest castes. Their conversion, besides providing a certain security under the shelter of the Portuguese fortresses and laws, also elevated them to the social and theological category of worthy persons [...]”. Cf. ALFREDO VERDOY, “San Francisco de Javier (1506-1552), entre la fe y la justicia, paradigma del evangelizador moderno” in *Manresa* 89 (2017) 272.

¹⁸ For a thorough study of the ‘social ministry’ (“works of charity and mercy”) of the First Companions, see GAUTHIER MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550): Caractéristiques et fondements d’un agir social inspiré par l’expérience spirituelle selon la voie ignatienne*, Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas 2015, doctoral thesis. We will make reference to specific parts of this work throughout this section.

¹⁹ Examples of this social ‘relief’ in action abound in the early Society, both at ‘home’ in Europe and away in the ‘missions’. Thus, “Jean-François Regis, José de Anchieta and Peter Canisius, while exceptional apostles, were also quite naturally inserted in the wretched situation of the poor of their day. These three did not act only out of the kindness of charity, freely distributing alms upon direct contact with misery; they also intervened at a social level by organising welfare and employment, by setting up associations to defend the poor and by getting involved in economic questions or in discussions about the right to take interest on capital”. KOLVENBACH, “A paschal love for the world”, p. 96.

Jesuit proceeding (cf. [Co 257]). Finally, the social component of Jesuit ministry from its origins was grounded in institutions—new ones they created or existing ones they supported, be it hospitals, prisons, orphanages, refuges for women at risk, or confraternities. These confraternities, composed of lay people, would sooner or later take over the management of many of these institutions, thus ensuring their continuity when Jesuits diversified to other enterprises, always seeking to do all they could to contribute to the ‘common good’²⁰:

Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the cross in our Society [...] should show himself ready to reconcile the estranged, compassionately assist and serve those who are in prisons or hospitals, and indeed to perform any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good.²¹

Regarding the Society’s early social enterprises, O’Malley mentions seven specific ministries: peacemaking, hospitals and prisons, ministry to the dying, ministry to prostitutes, orphans and daughters of prostitutes, Jews and ‘New’ Christians, confraternities and the Marian congregations. He acknowledges that there were many other localised, important activities “but not widespread or standard in the Society”.²²

1.1.2.1.1. Peacemaking

Although ‘reconciling the estranged’ does not appear in the earlier text of the *Formula* (1540), it is listed first in the 1550 version. O’Malley suggests that ten years of active ministry must have prompted this specific mention. Jesuits were not the first to engage in this ministry of peacemaking (there are records of other religious orders so involved in the late Middle Ages) and though perhaps not always expected to perform this role, they would

²⁰ Cf. O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 167.

²¹ Cf. *Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus*, 1550, 1. This revised and extended foundational document of the Society of Jesus, *The Formula of the Institute*, appears in the apostolic letter *Exposcit Debitum*, a papal Bull of 21 July 1550, in which Pope Julius III solemnly establishes the Society of Jesus by confirming the earlier Bull of 27 September 1540, *Regimini militantis Ecclesiae*, of his predecessor Pope Paul III. Cf. *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms*, pp. 3-5. Gauthier points out that in the case of the First Companions, their experience preceded the redaction of any document which stated their particular way of carrying out their mission. In other words, anything ‘juridical’ came after their lived experience—by the time the second text of the *Formula* appeared in 1550, the companions had been together for thirteen years and shared ten years of common apostolate. It is also important to remember that they viewed their ‘works of mercy’ not only as ‘ministries’ but also ways for the Society to help souls for the greatest glory of God and for the service and propagation of the faith. Cf. MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, p. 281.

²² The Jesuits for instance, supported and promoted the *Montes pietatis* (low-interest banks of Franciscan inspiration); they begged money to ransom prisoners who had been taken by the Turks; served as chaplain-nurses on military and naval expeditions, and were so successful in preaching against slave-taking raids by the Portuguese in Brazil that for some time the practiced actually stopped. Cf. O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 168. Unless otherwise referenced, the rest of the material in this section is based on O’Malley’s comments in this chapter, *Works of Mercy*, of his book.

not have usually defied people's expectations in the many cases when they did.²³ O'Malley points out that when Nadal commented on this part of the *Formula* in his exhortations, he recalled peacemaking as the seventh Beatitude in Matthew's gospel (5:9) saying: "When this Beatitude is taken in its full comprehension, all the ministries previously mentioned are in its service".²⁴ This early companion is also known to have pronounced, at least in one occasion, that the Jesuits were fundamentally engaged in a "ministry of reconciliation".²⁵

1.1.2.1.2. Hospitals and prisons

Following the example of the early Companions in the hospitals of Venice²⁶, most Jesuits eventually found themselves providing services in hospitals, caring for both the patients' physical needs (washing, feeding, making them comfortable) and spiritual ones (preaching to them, hearing their confessions and engaging especially in spiritual conversation), and later on treating them in their capacity as doctors.²⁷ It is well-documented that many Jesuits lost their lives carrying out this work of mercy, especially in the early years and during the times when the plague struck.²⁸ The services provided by Jesuits to prisoners in jail were

²³ As we will see later, in recent times this ministry of reconciliation has been greatly emphasised by Jesuit General Congregations, particularly its last two, GC35 (2008) and GC36 (2016), but also mentioned in the previous four since 1966, as for example: GC31, Decree 23, *The Jesuit Priestly Apostolate*; GC32, Decree 4, *Our Mission Today*; GC33, *Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach's Homily at St. Peter's Basilica, 15 October 1983*; and GC34, Decree 2, *Servants of Christ's Mission*.

²⁴ Cf. M Nadal 5:862.

²⁵ Cf. O'MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 169. This apostolate for the Jesuits was not only reserved to reconciliation among warring factions (in particular vendettas and feuds in villages), but also extended in some instances to bringing together estranged spouses as well as monks and local clergy and even disputing professors at the university in Ingolstadt. For some specific examples of reconciliation efforts carried out by Ignatius and the First Companions, see MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, pp. 537-560.

²⁶ For a description of the hospital service of Ignatius and the First Companions in Venice as well as more general information regarding their approach to this work of charity, see MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, pp. 484-510. Malulu Lokuwe points out that as expected their service in Venice was not properly 'medical' but was instead limited to spiritual assistance and humble and lowly works proper of domestic staff. He quotes Simon Rodríguez' description of the early Companion's labours: "en estos hospitales servían los padres haciendo las camas, limpiando y barriendo todo lo que estaba sucio, lavando los orinales en que los pobres hacían sus necesidades, y también les daban de comer a su tiempo, y a los que morían les hacían las sepulturas y los enterraban. Esto lo hacían de día y de noche, con tanto favor y cuidado, y con tanto gozo y alegría, que era cosa de gran edificación para todo aquel hospital", p. 486. SIMÓN RODRIGUES' source is *Origen y Progreso de la Compañía de Jesús* (Estudio introductorio, traducción a partir de los originales portugués y latín, y notas por E. J. Alonso Romo), Bilbao/Santander: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2005.

²⁷ "By 1576 enough Jesuits were doctors to prompt Pope Gregory XIII to issue a general exemption for them [Jesuits]—provided that other doctors were not available—from the canons that forbade clerics and religious to practice medicine", O'MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 172.

²⁸ Ignatius' "instructions to Laínez and Salmerón to visit hospitals and minister to the poor while acting as Papal Legates at the Council of Trent set the pattern for future generations of Jesuits, large numbers of whom died ministering to the sick poor during the various epidemics that plagued Europe and the New World before the discovery of modern medicine. To more famous names, such as Peter Claver or Aloysius Gonzaga, must be

similar to those in hospitals—and they seem to have assigned equal importance to this work—with the difference that prisoners did not usually require unceasing attention, which permitted those Jesuits teaching in the schools to also engage in this ministry. Most of these prisoners were not hardened criminals, but rather fell into two major categories, namely, debtors and persons who awaited sentence or execution. In addition to preaching to them, hearing their confessions and teaching them catechism, Jesuits brought prisoners food and begged alms for them, especially to pay off their debts, and in some cases even dealt directly with their creditors themselves.

1.1.2.1.3. Ministry to the dying

While Jesuits did all they could to help heal the infirm, they were also deeply involved in the ministry of helping others die and die well.²⁹ While some of Nadal's exhortations on Jesuit apostolates providing various guidelines for ministers who attended people in their last days or hours were well-known, it was Polanco's *Methodus ad eos adiuuandos, qui moriuntur*, first published in 1575 and running through a number of editions, that became highly influential. As a twenty-chapter handbook for those called upon to assist the dying, it provided not only theological and spiritual advice (to offer confession, Communion and last anointing, read the Scriptures and other appropriate holy books), but also practical details and suggestions to assist the minister help the dying person. It promoted also the use of particular prayers Polanco himself had written to be used or adapted to different situations and persons, including criminals condemned to death:

Nowhere more emphatically than in the *Methodus* do those two consistently inculcated ideals of Jesuit pastoral theory receive expression—the minister's need to accommodate to the situation and his role as bearer and facilitator of consolation. Polanco enunciated these principles in the first chapter and frequently returned to them. He summarised them in two adverbs—the minister should always and down to the most minute detail act “prudently and lovingly” (*prudenter et amanter*).³⁰

added the 1,190 Fathers and Brothers who, according to Fr. Alegambe's catalogue, died as victims of charity serving the sick during the hundred years following St. Ignatius' death". MICHAEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON, "A Brief History: From *Rerum Novarum* to Decree 4" in *Promotio Iustitiae* 66 (1997) 8.

²⁹ "Polanco noted that some ministries were to help persons live well, other to die well. The latter were to be preferred", (*P Co.*, 2:783), Cf. O'MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 175.

³⁰ Cf. O'MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 176. On this topic see also, JOSÉ GARCÍA DE CASTRO, *Polanco: El humanismo de los jesuitas (1517-1576)*, Maliaño/Bilbao/Madrid: Sal Terrae/Mensajero/Universidad Pontificia Comillas 2012, pp. 253-261. García de Castro also points out the practical and direct nature of the handbook, which combines knowledge of dogmatic and moral theology with spiritual experience and pastoral praxis, which could be of great relevance even today, p. 261. See also, JOSÉ GARCÍA DE CASTRO, "Que partan de esta vida en gracia y amor de Dios" in María J. Fernández Cordero and H. Pizarro Llorente, eds., *Discursos después de la muerte*, Madrid: Ediciones Carmelitanas 2013, pp. 18-38; JAVIER DE LA TORRE, "Polanco y su 'Directorio de

1.1.2.1.4. Ministry to women in prostitution

Another ministry that required great prudence and charity was the care of women involved in prostitution, driven to this miserable way of life out of sheer desperation in the face of extreme poverty and the very harsh situations to be found in the 16th century.³¹ Sadly, the appearance of syphilis at the end of the previous century had made them a threat, not only to public decency, but also to public health. The Jesuits, like many others in religious orders, engaged in avid preaching to these women in the hopes of persuading them to give up “their lives of sin”, often pointing out the three possible options or solutions available to those who reformed their ways: matrimony, service as a domestic in some large household, or entering a monastery of *Conversae*, as reformed prostitutes were called. In certain instances, when monasteries fell into strife either economically or because of internal disputes, Jesuits got involved in their reform, and they often too preached in the chapels of their monasteries. O’Malley summarises the extent of the early Jesuits’ involvement in this apostolate noting that:

Two facts about how Jesuits dealt with prostitution are easily discernible: the sheer quantity of their involvement with these women and the variety of attitudes and relationships that this involvement entailed. The Jesuits often acted on their own initiative, but in general concert with the policies and expectations of other reformers and civil authorities. On a few occasions, as in India, they opposed official or quasi-official policy; in others, they acted almost as its agents or instigators.³²

One of the most influential initiatives in this area was the founding by Ignatius in 1543 of Casa Santa Marta—“a strikingly original institution of social assistance”—in Rome, with the approval of pope Paul III, for about 60 women. This project soon had its imitators in several cities, including Florence, Pisa, Padua, Bologna, Medina, Milan, Palermo, Agrigento, Trapani, Valladolid and Messina. Ignatius’ original idea was to provide temporary housing and resources for women—unmarried prostitutes and those who had begun this life a result of estrangement from their husbands—so they could make a choice about their futures. The idea was to collect dowries for the former so “they could freely choose to get married or to enter a monastery of the *Conversae*” or some other convent, and to work towards reconciliation with their spouses for the latter. If this failed, they could then live as nuns,

moribundos’ in *Manresa* 87 (2015) 131-141; and JOSÉ GARCÍA DE CASTRO, ed., *Los Directorios de J.A. de Polanco*, Maliaño/Bilbao/Madrid: Sal Terrae/Mensajero/Universidad Pontificia Comillas 2016.

³¹ O’Malley in fact points out that many of these women, “especially those driven to their situation by poverty or in it out of the inertia of family system, were sincerely religious”, showing great piety and getting involved in regular religious practices. Cf. O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 179.

³² Cf. O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 182.

“though still bound by their marriage”. Ignatius also established the *Compagnia della Grazia* as the confraternity to oversee and fund the institution.³³ Unfortunately, within four years, the original character of Casa Santa Marta began to change as some women asked to be allowed to stay there on a permanent basis. The house was then divided into two sections, but by 1573 it had become a full-fledged monastery reserved for virgins.

1.1.2.1.5. Ministry to marginalised children

Jesuits also became involved in the care of children of prostitutes—especially their daughters who seemed almost predestined to continue in the profession of their mothers—and orphans (from plagues, famine or wars), as well as so-called ‘street kids’ who had been abandoned by their parents who could no longer care for them due to economic strife.³⁴ Soon after the arrival of the companions in Rome in 1541, Ignatius helped establish the *Compagnia degli orfani* to care for boys and girls in two separate institutions. As with the Casa Santa Marta, other foundations, as well as the confraternities which looked after them, followed suit in the next few years in various cities and also extended as similar institutions in the Portuguese dependencies of India and Brazil. For the care of the daughters of prostitutes, Ignatius helped found (and establish a confraternity to look after) the *Conservatorio delle Vergini Miserabili* at the church of Santa Caterina dei Funari, to look after girls (aged 10-12), educate them, and then provide dowries for either their marriage or entrance into a convent. Once again, similar institutions were founded in other cities (Florence, Naples and Venice, for example) either directly by the Jesuits or through their influence.

1.1.2.1.6. Ministry to Jews and ‘New Christians’

Not only were the daughters of prostitutes negatively affected by the circumstances of their birth. Both Jews and ‘New Christians’ (Jewish converts to Christianity and even their descendants for several generations), as well as ‘Moriscos’ (Christians of Muslim ancestry in

³³ “The Society was the originator of the house and functioned in four ways: (1) for its founding, it expedited the papal bulls, collected alms, gave money from its own meagre resources; (2) it sought the first women and selected the first directress; (3) it organised the confraternity, into whose hands the work was entirely committed; (4) it helped in drawing up the rule of life and supplied preachers and confessors for the women’s spiritual profit”. O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 183. On the development of the Casa Santa Marta, and particularly on a summary of the Status which governed the running of the house (*Statuti della Compagnia della Grazia*), see MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, pp. 443-464.

³⁴ On this topic see also MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, pp. 419-426.

Spain) were beset by discrimination, civil and religious injustices and persecution, especially in Spain and Portugal.³⁵ In Spain, most major and influential religious orders refused to admit novices of Jewish origin. Ignatius would not have any of this and responded by sending potential novices to Italy and other locations “for their training and ministry”. As we know, thanks to Lainez’s election to succeed Ignatius as Father General, Ignatius’ attitude prevailed in the Society, at least during his lifetime and a few years afterwards, so that the lack of ‘cleanness of blood’ (*limpieza de sangre*) was not an obstacle to enter the Society (either in Europe or its colonies) or attain its highest position. Ignatius, ever since his earliest days in Rome, had been responsible for Jewish conversions and tried to encourage others to work in this ‘ministry’, preaching to Jews, who sometimes “were herded together against their will”. The Jesuits also managed in some occasions to have the death penalty lifted for Jewish criminals who said they wanted to become Christians and certainly did all they could to make it easier for others to convert to Christianity.³⁶

³⁵ For example, the Jews in Rome were required, at the moment of baptism, to renounce all their goods and turn them over to the official treasury and also to declare their children disinherited, as a sign of their total break with the past. As it would be expected, this was not only ‘legalised’ robbery, but it also made conversions difficult or altogether prevented them. Through great effort, and the help of influential persons, Ignatius succeeded on 21 March 1542 to get Pope Paul III to issue the Brief *Cupientes Judaeos*, which allowed baptised Jews to retain their possessions. Cf. PASCHAL MWIJAGE, “Historical Origins of our Jesuit Commitment to Justice” in *Promotio Iustitiae* 76 (2002) 3-4.

³⁶ In his well-known article (a ‘summary’ of his doctoral dissertation), James Reites explores in detail this ministry to the Jews. Cf. JAMES REITES, “Saint Ignatius of Loyola and the Jews” in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 13, n. 4 (1981) 1-48. Of interest is Ignatius’ concern with “the very personal and practical needs of the Jews, their pain, suffering, and happiness”, allowing for example Jewish catechumens to stay in the Jesuit house on Via degli Astalli for several years despite, (according to Ribadeneyra) “the poverty and austerity of the house”, p. 11. In fact, “Ignatius’ work in Rome attracted so many Jews to the faith that there were soon too many catechumens to be conveniently housed and fed” in this small house, so Ignatius conceived the idea of a house for catechumens, which finally became a reality thanks to Ignatius’ several appeals to Pope Paul III, who in his bull *litis qui*, designated the church of San Giovanni del Mercato as the seat of the new casa. Reites points out that Ignatius’ behaviour toward Jews who had no intention of converting reveal the attitude of his time, and so he accepted and approved of the harsh restrictions that were imposed on them, including the creation of a Jewish ghetto in Rome, by the bull *Cum nimis absurdum* (1555). However, “he clearly transcended his age in his open-mindedness toward the Jews as a race of people. Objecting only to their denial of Christ, he hoped that harsh measures against them would encourage them to reconsider and accept the Lord”, p. 16. Unfortunately, “besides resisting the prevalent discriminatory trends of the Church and state, Ignatius also had to contend with dissension within the Society concerning his acceptance of Jewish Christians. The most persistent of critics was Antonio Araoz”, related to Ignatius as the nephew of his sister-in-law, p. 21. It was not until the time of the fifth General, Claudio Aquaviva, that those who sought to exclude anyone from Jewish lineage finally won out: “In 1592, Aquaviva wrote to the provincials of Spain ordering them not to receive New Christians into the Society. The final blow to the Ignatian attitude of openness came in 1593 at the Fifth General Congregation. With the passage of its Decree 52, no one of Jewish or Muslim backgrounds could ever enter the Society [...]. The matter was again raised in the Sixth General Congregation in 1608, and the decree was mitigated to exclude only those whose Christianity could not be traced to five generations. This impediment was commonly called the “impediment of origin”, p. 30. It was not until General Congregation XXVII (1923) that the General was able to dispense a candidate of Jewish origin from this impediment. Then General Congregation XXIX, convened in 1946 as soon as possible after the close of World War II, abrogated the impediment of origin”, p. 31. As a result, the Society’s law and official attitude in this matter were once again those of Ignatius himself. But as

1.1.2.1.7. Confraternities and Marian Congregations

As we have already mentioned, in most cases Ignatius and other Jesuits helped establish confraternities to take over the care and finances of institutions they had founded or supported. The creation of these confraternities was not a new Jesuit initiative, as they had already been involved in social and religious projects for several centuries before. Their main purpose as voluntary organisations, at least initially, seems to have been the mutual aid of their members, though always following a religious framework. Though they seemed to work like civic or municipal institutions (but again, religiously motivated), what characterised them was that “they were not branch offices of either the parish or the local town hall but self-governing and self-determining entities working in some self-defined way toward the ‘common good’”.³⁷ O’Malley points out that the Jesuits established relationships with existing confraternities quite early on and that the annals of the early Society are filled with instances of this involvement, which included collaborating with existing ones, reforming some when needed, and also being directly responsible for the foundation of new ones following a discernible ‘Jesuit model’.³⁸ Ignatius, however, was against Jesuits’ holding offices in them, lest their mobility and availability be compromised, and thus required a hands-off policy regarding their government.

The establishment of what later would be known as ‘Marian Congregations’ in 1563 signalled a new phase in the Jesuit relationship to confraternities. Trying to “promote a more deeply interiorised ethical and religious life”, calling for more frequent confession and Communion, freer religious practices and relying on the spirituality of the *Exercises*, these confraternities were not attached to parishes, and thus membership in them was more the result of a deliberate decision. Once the Jesuits became involved in schools, it was only natural that they would utilise this model to adapt the confraternity for their students. And although service to the poor was still a characteristic of this institution, documents of the time suggest that “the devotional life of the students was as the centre of this ‘Marian

Reites points out, it is unfortunate that it was not until after the Nazi Holocaust that the Society moved to return completely to the spirit and practice of Ignatius.

³⁷ O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 193.

³⁸ “When Polanco designated the statutes or foundational documents of confraternities like these—their *vivendi formula*, or rule of life—he used the same term that designated the charter of the Society of Jesus, the [*vivendi*] *Formula*. The confraternities that owed their origins to the Jesuits thus manifested a ‘family resemblance’ no matter where in the world they were founded”. O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 195.

Congregation’, or Sodality of Our Lady, as it came to be called”. Perhaps the greatest impact of this development was that finally the Jesuits had a confraternity, a ‘sodality’, that was “as recognisable as theirs as were the ‘Third Orders’ for mendicants”.³⁹ Although mostly a ‘thing of the past’ today, in many places these sodalities continued up to the second half of the 20th century, and their influence and contributions to the care of their members and especially of others in need cannot be denied.⁴⁰ Moreover, rather than disappearing completely, they were transformed into other initiatives more ‘in-line’ and appropriate to our times, such as for example the development of the Ignatian-based Christian Life Communities.⁴¹

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Ignatius and his First Companions’ motivation and goal of ‘helping souls’ led them to respond to both the material and spiritual needs of the poor and marginalised of their time. The choices they made in their approach to face these challenges would later characterise the ‘Ignatian way’ of future initiatives in the social area even to this day—including the Society’s service to the forcibly displaced. Among these characteristics we find the conviction that physical presence is necessary to obtain concrete and real knowledge of the context—needs as well as causes and consequences of these needs—in order to discern properly the way to engage appropriately with a particular situation. However, this ‘being present’ goes beyond a pragmatic ‘needs assessment’ exercise. For Ignatius and his companions, it was a way to witness the love of God (and render more credible their proclamation of gospel values) to all and particularly to the poor, the marginalised and the forgotten—the main beneficiaries of the First Companions’ efforts as they carried out their first works of charity. This ministry of accompaniment would render great fruits ‘for the greater glory of God’ not only for those beneficiaries but also for the Jesuits (and later their companions) themselves.⁴² As stated in the now famous letter to the Jesuit community in Padua regarding poverty: “friendship with the poor makes us friends

³⁹ O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 198.

⁴⁰ See for example, DAVID J. HASSELL, “The Sodalities of the Future” in *Jesuit Educational Quarterly* XXI, no. 4 (1959) 236-251. This article can also be accessed through the Jesuit Online Library at <http://jesuitonlinelibrary.bc.edu/cgi-bin/bcjournals?a=d&d=jeq19590301-01.2.6>. Accessed 13 June 2018.

⁴¹ Refer to the brief history of Christian Life Community in <http://www.cvx-clc.net/l-en/history.html>. Accessed 13 June 2018.

⁴² This list of some of the main characteristics of the social engagement of Ignatius and the First Companions is based on a more extensive presentation by MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, pp. 561-581.

with the Eternal King”⁴³ This friendship with the poor can only be real if it is developed within an ambience of mutuality which encourages accessibility. It requires a lifestyle that is simple (not ostentatious) which encourages availability, offers what one has without asking for anything in return (the gratuitousness of Jesuit ministries), and shows care and compassion more through deeds than in words (cf. [*SpEx* 230]).

The first companions’ simplicity of life and wholehearted commitment to the neighbour was a witness to all they served—the poor and well-to-do alike. For indeed they did not discriminate in their ‘help of souls’, and though their preference was for the former they soon began ministering to the latter. Moreover, they invited those with means to collaborate with and contribute to carrying out their different projects and, as we have seen, eventually trusted these benefactors to continue the work they had begun.⁴⁴ Thus, the First Companions not only responded to immediate needs but planned ‘strategically’ to ensure that their initiatives would endure and have a lasting effect. This not always proved to be the case (as for example with the changes that took place regarding the original purpose of Casa Santa Marta), but the intention was certainly there. This ‘strategic planning’ of Ignatius and the First Companions is also evidenced in a final characteristic of their way of proceeding we want to include here (and certainly one that is still an essential component of all the Society’s social initiatives), namely, their efforts not only to improve the lives of particular individuals, but also to address the structural causes of poverty and marginalisation of their time. They sought to transform those aspects of their social reality which impinged on the dignity and well-being of their brothers and sisters, for indeed only such transformation could promote what is most “expedient for the glory of God and the common good”.

⁴³ Cf. Letter to the Fathers and Brothers of the Community in Padua, Rome, 6 August 1547 in *Epp.* 1, 572-577. As expected this is a theme that has reoccurred often in Jesuit documents, most notably, as we will see later, since GC32.

⁴⁴ Malulu Lokuwe quote of Pedro de Ribadeneyra on Ignatius’ way of proceeding to develop and fulfil those projects is worth presenting here: “Y en hacerlas [obras] tenía este orden: comunicaba su determinación con hombres graves y cuerdos, y amigos de todo lo Bueno, y particularmente inclinados a obras de caridad [...]. Ventiladas entre ellos y allanadas las dificultades de la obra que querían hacer, se iban a representarlo a algunos hombres principales, ricos y devotos, para que con su autoridad y limosna se le diese principio y se sustentase. Y lo primero era escoger algún Cardenal de la Santa Iglesia, e que parecía más a propósito para ser protector de la tal obra; después hacían su hermandad, escribían sus estatutos, ponían sus leyes y daban la orden con que ella se había de gobernar y tener en pie. Hecho todo esto, viendo nuestro B. Padre que ya podía andar por sus pies, y que sin él se podía conservar, se salía afuera dando su lugar u otro. Y poco a poco se aplicaba luego a comenzar otras semejantes obras. Porque era tanta su caridad, que no podía acabar consigo estar ocioso; sino que siempre andaba tratando cosas de nuevo, que acarreasen provecho y hiciesen bien a los hombres para su salvación”. Cf. MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, pp. 579-580. Ribadeneyra’s source is *Vita Ignatii Loyolae*, Liv. III, cap. 9, p. 182.

1.1.2.2. The First Jesuits' choice of ministries and service to the forcibly displaced today

While in his summary of the very early social ministries of the Society, O'Malley makes no direct reference to the forcibly displaced, we can easily infer that those who greatly benefited from their efforts—both individually and through institutions—would have included refugees and internally displaced people, forced out of their homes by the various wars and conflicts of the era, as well as by economic and other socio-cultural factors of that time. Nor is it difficult to see how all seven original ministries listed by O'Malley have either a direct or 'modified' correspondence to services provided by Jesuit ministries in their care of the forcibly displaced today.

As in the mid and late 16th century, possible no ministry is more relevant and needed today than the ministry of peacemaking and reconciliation. The world is beset by wars and many other conflicts. Movements of refugees and other forcibly displaced people can be traced in the history of these wars and conflicts. And for centuries, Jesuits and their companions have journeyed together with them. Our own Jesuit Province in Australia begun with the arrival of two Austrian Jesuits, who came to South Australia as chaplains to a group of Austrians who had established themselves there seeking, among other things, to distance themselves from the conflicts in Europe in the mid-1800's. More recently, in the last forty or so years, Jesuits and companions⁴⁵ have accompanied and ministered to refugees from the Vietnam and Balkan wars, the genocide in Rwanda, the internal struggle in Colombia, the various conflicts in diverse African countries and, in this century in particular, to refugees from wars in the Middle East. Today, the tragic conflict in Syria continues, and the unabated assistance provided by the Society through the Jesuit Refugee Service teams also continues in several affected cities, in many cases providing for the most basic of needs.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ I have chosen this term, 'Jesuit and companions', to emphasise the fact that in the Society's response to the plight of refugees and other forcibly displaced peoples, Jesuits have never been alone. In fact, the majority of those participating (and in many cases, leading) Jesuit programs of direct service and advocacy in this field have been lay men and women, as well as members of other religious institutions.

⁴⁶ A report written by JRS Syria and published on 29 July 2017 stated that in eastern Aleppo, for example, hot cooked and balanced meals were provided for almost 900 affected families daily, and most of them were also given essential items like hygiene kits and equipment, gas cookers, woollen socks and underwear. In Homs, the JRS team helped organised the 'end of the school year' celebration for the children: "They sang songs of peace, danced for joy with their beautiful smiles which lit up their angelic faces. In doing so, they enkindled the flame of hope and peace in all those gathered". And they organised also a graduation party for the women who participated in literacy and handcraft workshops. The words of Omayya Harah, one of the women who participated in the literacy workshop at the Al-Kafroun centre, show the positive impact that these workshops have had on many of these women, opening newer horizons for them: "I used to feel bad because I could not

Jesuits and companions also visit asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced people in hospitals and prisons on a regular basis. In many cases, particularly in conflict zones in developing nations, they help run those hospitals and clinics and also provide financial and other resources to them. Whether it be in Indonesian prisons, Thai or Australian detention centres or Spanish internment centres, they provide legal, health and psycho-social support as well as pastoral and spiritual care to those detained.⁴⁷ Their visits might be the only ones many of these detainees receive. And like the early companions, often they are also called to help ‘die well’ those whom they accompany, making sure their passing takes place with dignity and care. Personally, one of the most powerful and defining experiences in my life has been to help do this with a young man dying of AIDS in a hospital where he had been abandoned by his fearful family.

AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases are one of the major causes of death for forcibly displaced people (mostly women) whose tragic circumstances have forced them to become sex workers, either in refugee camps or urban settings. In some cases, they have been forced to do this because of debts in their families or simply to earn enough money to survive. In others, particularly in the case of women, they have been abducted or lured by human traffickers who offer transport to developed nations in return for a period of ‘service’. Sadly, many of those who are young and naïve do not realise what this ‘service’ implies. And tragically too, as they are forced to fulfil their end of the ‘bargain’, they are usually kept in inhumane conditions for long periods of time. As in the case of the First Companions, Jesuits and companions today strive to support and assist those forced to become sex workers, offering other options—not by providing them with dowries or placing them in convents as in the 16th c., but especially through educational and income-generating programs—and are

read a letter, now I can recognize and read the names of my medicines and I need no one’s help for that. I now have self-confidence and feel very satisfied”. And in Damascus, summer activities for the children are in full swing at the JRS Centre. Shahed Shbeib, one of the young children there, sums her experience beautifully: “This summer was different for me [...]. Being in JRS centre with friends, brothers and sisters gave me another feeling, another hope, a different meaning! I do love everything here, the playing, the activities, the drawing. Every day brings new hope to me”. Small initiatives with great outcomes! Cf. https://jesuits.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=426:jrs-unstinted-support-in-syria&catid=9:news&utm_source=newsletter_88&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=jcep-august-2017. Accessed 13 June 2018.

⁴⁷ For the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service in detention centres, see for example, http://en.jrs.net/Assignment_Detail?TN=DTN-20140212085130 (Indonesia); http://en.jrs.net/news_detail?TN=NEWS-20140127041725 (Thailand); http://en.jrs.net/news_detail?TN=NEWS-20140612024301 (Australia); <http://pueblos.unidos.org/wp-content/uploads/1706-informecie16-vf.pdf> (Spain). All accessed 13 June 2018.

involved in local and international advocacy initiatives against human-trafficking. The issues, however, are very complex, and for many of these young women it seems almost impossible to escape this ‘destiny’, as the following ‘excursus’ shows.

Myriam’s⁴⁸ long journey began when she was twelve years old. Both her parents died of illness that year, a few months apart. Soon after her father died, her uncle told her that she had to leave their home; they could not look after her anymore. She had only had a couple of deficient years of schooling, so she had never learned to read or write.

Myriam lived in the streets of her West African city for a long time; she is not sure for how long. She begged for her food and that way she managed to survive. But it did not take long before a young adolescent girl living in the streets caught the attention of older men. Of that time in her life, Myriam simply says that ‘some men offered to help me’ now and again. She never says what they asked in return.

One of these men offered to take her to a different country, to give her a place in his home. She thought her life might be able to improve and she accepted. There was nothing for her to leave behind. They travelled for several days by car (always at night) and finally got to their destination. As he had promised, he allowed her to stay in his home, with his family. She was expected to work, to look after the children but was never allowed to go to school. But the man’s wife did not like her and beat her often, sometimes several times a day, whenever her husband was away on business, which was often enough. Finally, one day, during one of his business trips, she told Myriam that she had to leave the house. And so she began to live in the streets again. More begging and more men who ‘offered to help’.

Myriam fell pregnant when she was fifteen. She gave birth to a baby girl and somehow managed to convince a store owner to allow her to spend nights in the back shed of the shop. The baby survived a bit more than a year, but after a short illness, she died. Myriam had not been able to get the medicine that she needed to save her.

Back in the streets, another man offered to ‘help’. This one offered to pay her way to Europe on a small boat. They were not far from the coast, only a few hours away, so he said he would take her there and arrange everything. Europe sounded good, so she said yes. When the man asked her if she would be willing to pay back the money, she said that if she had it, she would. The man said that he was sure she would find the way. He did not give her an address or the name of a contact on the other side of the sea. Nothing more was said.

I met Myriam in a detention centre, where she had been taken after the boat which brought her to Europe was intercepted. When I asked her what she wanted to do when she got out, she said she wanted to go to school. She had never learned to read or write, and she wanted to have an education. She was not sure how she would go about doing this, but trusted that others might be able to help her again. She needed not ask what they might want in return. She thinks she knows that already.

⁴⁸ Not her real name.

Myriam's is perhaps not the 'typical' story of a migrant deciding to leave her country of origin in search of a better life. But it is not as if she has had options to make such a decision anyway. In all of her short life others have made decisions for her. Myriam could not be considered a refugee or an internally displaced person. But she has certainly been a victim of forced displacement, facing great vulnerability most of her life, as a young woman always in risk of abuse. Someone like her should have been able to access some type of *complementary protection* (for people who are not refugees according to the definition in the Refugee Convention, but who may face torture or serious human rights violations if they are returned to their country of origin), but she needed to ask for it. Yet, all she seemed to think about was to leave the detention centre and somehow start her education. Constant hardship in her life had taught her not to depend on or trust in anyone but herself.

Not long after my last meeting with Myriam she was released, in her capacity as a minor, into the care of a non-governmental organisation that supported girls and young women in her situation. Sadly, Myriam only stayed a couple of days there. She disappeared one evening without leaving any trail of her whereabouts. Perhaps her sense of 'duty' to fulfil her 'agreement' with her captors was too strong, or perhaps she was just too afraid of what they could do to her. Minors, young girls and boys (especially if they are unaccompanied), are the most vulnerable of all forcibly displaced people. Tragically, there are millions of them in the world today. The 'fortunate' ones still have parents or other relatives who look after them and might even have access to educational opportunities, but the 'unlucky' ones like Myriam, end up being trafficked, or orphaned, or begging in the streets, or used as child soldiers in internal conflicts or as slaves. Once again, as we have mentioned in an earlier example in Syria, Jesuits and companions strive to address their needs (as we will see later in this chapter, education is one of the main activities of the JRS), and to break the cycle of marginalisation and abuse that has plagued their parents.

Unlike the case of the early Companions, where most of the beneficiaries of their initiatives would have been Catholics and their ministry to Jews and New Christians would have been an exception, most of those forcibly displaced people who currently benefit from Jesuit-sponsored activities and programs are not Christian. And this of course has to do with the areas of the world where most of them come from—the Middle East, South Asia, various African countries. And while in the time of Ignatius converting them to the Catholic faith

would have been seen as a priority—a necessity, really—that is certainly not the case today. On the contrary, their faith traditions and expressions are not only ‘tolerated’ but respected and encouraged, and again, as we shall see later in this chapter, these encounters of different faith traditions can lead to moments of grace, both for the forcibly displaced and those whose lives they touch.

Finally, as we have already mentioned, in most cases Ignatius and other Jesuits helped establish confraternities, made up mostly of lay people and other male and female religious, to take over the care and finances of institutions they had founded or supported. Thus we recall that the Society organised the confraternity, into whose hands the work was entirely committed, of the Casa Santa Marta—“a strikingly original institution of social assistance”—in Rome. In regards to service to and care for the forcibly displaced, another ‘strikingly original institution of social assistance’ of the Society of Jesus in Rome is the Centro Astalli, the Italian base in that city of the Jesuit Refugee Service, which for many years has been engaged in numerous activities and services. Since 1981, when Centro Astalli was founded, a great deal of work has taken place ‘in the streets’: a canteen that delivers 400 meals a day, an outpatient clinic, four reception centres, an Italian school and many other direct and indirect reception services for those who come from many countries seeking asylum and protection in Italy and other European countries.⁴⁹ Further, the collaboration between Jesuits and others that characterised these confraternities (and which has always been one of the guiding principles in carrying out the mission of the Society) has also been evidenced in the Jesuits’ ministry to the forcibly displaced in the last forty years, with Jesuits working together with lay people and other religious in teams, be it in Jesuit initiatives or those set up by others. And in regards to the choice of services to the forcibly displaced, the Society has also sought to follow the footsteps of the First Companions, offering assistance in those areas where no one else was involved.

In our discussion above, we have alluded in several instances to the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). We will see in more detail later in this chapter how JRS has embodied (has incarnated) the aspects just discussed in its institutional response to the plight of forcibly displaced people within the Society of Jesus. At this stage, however, we turn to our second

⁴⁹ For more information on the services provided by the Centro Astalli, see <http://centroastalli.it/>. Accessed 13 June 2018.

‘bookend’ in the history and development of Jesuit social ministries, namely the evolution of the Society’s social apostolate at the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st. We do this through (1) a brief exploration of the *Decrees* of the last five *General Congregations* (GC) of the Society of Jesus (starting with GC 32 and moving through to GC36)—the Society’s highest authority—focusing primarily on those Decrees that articulate the Society’s commitment to the promotion of justice and to other social concerns; (2) a short analysis of the ‘Characteristics of the Jesuit Social Apostolate’ (1998)—the Society’s *Handbook* for those involved in the social sector which attempted to translate into practical terms and concrete guidelines the concepts articulated in the decrees of the General Congregations 32 through 34; (3) an assessment of the Society’s concrete and practical ‘performance’ in regards to the vision and planning articulated in these ‘Decrees’ and ‘Characteristics’, trying to respond in particular to the question: “How faithful has the Society as an institution—and Jesuits as individuals—been to this mission of promoting and living out a faith that does justice to which it committed itself so wholeheartedly at GC32?” and (4) a review of the guidelines proposed by the last four *General Congregations* regarding the Society’s ministry to the forcibly displaced.

Lest this appears as a historical or social analysis exercise, it is important to point out once again the relevance of this section to our task of developing Ignatian exercises for survivors of forced displacement (chapter 5). As stated in the previous chapter, we cannot respond to the spiritual needs of forcibly displaced people separate from the context of their lives, their experiences, and the external factors and influences that shape that context and experiences. Similarly, any response from the Ignatian tradition and within the Society of Jesus, does not stand in a ‘vacuum’: it has to be shaped and guided by its history, its foundational values, its tradition and its way of proceeding, which in turn are expanded, rearticulated and applied to the signs and needs of each time, in all of the Society’s apostolates. This is what characterises its response, what sets it apart, the basis of our ‘special contribution’ (cf. Kolvenbach), which the Society is able to offer to the Church and to the world, in solidarity with those in greatest need.

1.1.3. In solidarity with those most in need: a renewed social outlook at GC32 and subsequent General Congregations

1.1.3.1. GC32: in the midst of revolutions and a cry for *aggiornamento*

There can be no promotion of justice in the full and Christian sense unless we also preach Jesus Christ and the mystery of reconciliation [...]. Conversely, it will not be possible to bring Christ to people or to proclaim His Gospel effectively unless a firm decision is taken to devote ourselves to the promotion of justice.⁵⁰

It is widely acknowledged that the 32th Jesuit General Congregation (1975) constituted a decisive moment in the articulation of the apostolic mission of the Society of Jesus.⁵¹ Following on the social movements of the late 1960's that led to worldwide protests (in particular in 1968) against perceived injustices and various types of discrimination by bureaucratic regimes and military dictatorships, and the call for *aggiornamento* by the Second Vatican Council “to throw open the doors of the Church and dialogue with the outside world”, the members gathered at the Congregation sought to respond to “the many requests received from all parts of the Society for clear decisions and definite guidelines concerning our mission today”.⁵² And the response from the Congregation could not be clearer or more succinct: “The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. For reconciliation with God

⁵⁰ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 27.

⁵¹ A mission shared, of course, with the universal Church, in its proclamation of Christ' saving power. Vatican II's Decree *Ad Gentes*, *On the Mission Activity of the Church*, states that by its very nature, the Church is missionary (AG 2), sent to the nations of the world to be unto them “a universal sacrament of salvation” (cf. *LG* 48), and that “In the present state of affairs, out of which there is arising a new situation for mankind [sic], the Church, being the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Matt. 5:13-14), is more urgently called upon to save and renew every creature, that all things may be restored in Christ [...]” (AG 1). Cf. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html. Accessed 1 June 2018. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI (8 December 1975), on ‘Evangelisation in the Contemporary World’, AAS 68 (1976) 5-76, makes it also clear that evangelisation constitutes the essential mission of the Church and that within it, the explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ must always be present (cf. 22). And such proclamation must reach all without exception, especially those who have never heard of him (cf. 51) but also those “who live quite outside Christian life”, both from non-Christian religions, and those steeped in secularism and atheism and who do not practice their faith (52-56) Cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/paulvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_pvi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html. Accessed 13 June 2018. Echoes of both these documents abound in Decree 4. Fifteen years after *Evangelii nuntiandi*, Pope John Paul II would write his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, ‘On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate’ (7 December 1990), AAS 83 (1991) 249-339, and would again remind us that: “Our own time, with humanity on the move and in continual search, demands a *resurgence of the Church's missionary activity*. The horizons and possibilities for mission are growing ever wider, and we Christians are called to an apostolic courage based upon trust in the Spirit” (30). Cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html. Accessed 13 June 2018. More recently, Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), invites us to “embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy [of Christ], while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come” (1) and to be permanently in a state of mission throughout the world (25); AAS 105 (2013) 1020-1137; cf. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazioneap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. Accessed 13 June 2018.

⁵² GC32, D. 4, 1.

demands the reconciliation of people with one another”.⁵³ Not that this was a new mission for the Jesuits; in fact: “In one form or another, this has always been the mission of the Society [cf. the *Formulas* of the *Institute*]⁵⁴; but it gains new meaning and urgency in the light of the needs and aspirations of the men and women of our time, and it is in that light that we examine it anew. We are confronted today, in fact, by a whole series of new challenges”.⁵⁵

Three of these main challenges included: the large number of people in the world who have no knowledge of God and Christ⁵⁶; a loss of the sense of the true God and of traditional values influenced by secularisation and new technologies and discoveries⁵⁷, and a world divided by ever greater injustices, not only individual but also structural injustices that “dominate the lives of nations and of the international community”.⁵⁸ In order to face these great challenges, the Society’s response had be “total, corporate, rooted in faith and experience, and multiform”⁵⁹, which required, among other things, a “reassessment of our traditional apostolic methods, attitudes and institutions with a view to adapting them to the new needs of the times and to a world in process of rapid change”⁶⁰; great spiritual discernment as taught by St Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises*⁶¹, and a whole-hearted commitment to embark on new apostolates and initiatives.⁶² The document then went on to list some of the specific challenges and considerations required to carry out this mission with renew vigour. It is not difficult to see how these innovative guidelines would be put into practice only five years later in the creation of the Jesuit Refugee Service, as a ‘total and corporate’ response by the Society to a greatly growing ‘need of the times’, caused by ‘structural injustices dominating the lives of nations and millions of human beings’—the massive forced displacement of peoples—which would require not only careful discernment

⁵³ GC32, D. 4, 2.

⁵⁴ For a discussion on the relationship between the *Formula of the Institute* and Decree 4 of GC32, in particular in terms of the articulation of its faith-justice mission, see MALULU LOKUWE, *Étude des œuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome (1535-1550)*, pp. 288-306. Malulu Lokuwe (and others he cites) sees this decree 4 as an ‘updated’ or actualised reading of the *Formula*, which helps “revitalise the social sensibility of the origins of the Society for Jesuits today”, p. 306.

⁵⁵ GC32, D. 4, 3.

⁵⁶ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 4, 24.

⁵⁷ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 5, 25-26.

⁵⁸ GC32, D. 4, 6, 27.

⁵⁹ GC32, D. 4, 7.

⁶⁰ GC32, D. 4, 9.

⁶¹ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 10.

⁶² Cf. GC32, D. 4, 34.

of approach and use of resources but also a ‘whole-hearted commitment to a new and far-reaching apostolate’.

In summary, it could be said that the characteristic note of Decree 4 is found in the notion that the service of faith becomes a priority both as an idea and in practice for the entire apostolic mission of the Society, while the promotion of justice is presented as an absolute requirement of this service, especially in the current circumstances.⁶³ The decree also stresses the need for a deeper knowledge of people, their aspirations and the way they feel⁶⁴, as well as a real insertion among them⁶⁵, especially among those who lead a simple life, and more so among the poor and those who personally suffer injustices.⁶⁶ All Jesuits are invited to a serious examination of their way of life,⁶⁷ their ability to communicate their intimate convictions to people who do not participate in our faith, and to a total conversion of mind and heart.⁶⁸ This examination must be encouraged through systematic and well-organised programs in each of the Provinces, under the inspiration of Father General for the whole Society.⁶⁹

As it would be expected, the implementation of this Decree and its recommendations did not happen overnight, and it took longer in some Provinces and regions than in others.⁷⁰ But

⁶³ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 51. This priority is also articulated very strongly in decree 2, *Jesuits Today*, which deals with the identity of the Society in the challenging new times: “the way to faith and the way to justice are inseparable ways” (8) and “the service of faith and the promotion of justice cannot be for us simply one ministry among others. It must be the integrating factor of all our ministries; and not only of our ministries but of our inner life as individuals, as communities, and as a world-wide brotherhood. This is what our Congregation means by a decisive choice. It is the choice that underlies and determines all the other choices embodied in its declarations and directives” (9).

⁶⁴ “Our faith in Christ Jesus and our mission to proclaim the Gospel demand of us a commitment to promote justice and to enter into solidarity with the voiceless and the powerless. This commitment will move us seriously to verse ourselves in the complex problems which they face in their lives, then to identify and assume our own responsibilities to society”, GC32, D. 4, 42.

⁶⁵ GC32, D. 4, 36-37. And this ‘insertion’ or involvement is not to be only among other Catholics, but with all, so greater collaboration in our mission can be achieved: “The involvement we desire will be apostolic to the extent that it leads us to a closer collaboration with other members of the local churches, Christians of other denominations, believers of other religions, and all who hunger and thirst after justice; in short, with all who strive to make a world fit for men and women to live in, a world where brotherhood opens the way for the recognition and acceptance of Christ our Brother and God our Father”, GC32, D. 4, 37.

⁶⁶ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 35.

⁶⁷ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 43, 48-49.

⁶⁸ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 52, 60.

⁶⁹ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 71.

⁷⁰ As it would be expected too, this new direction in the Society’s essential vision and praxis also brought about tensions, resistance and problems of practice and theory: “For example, questions and debates arise like: Is the nature of the Society’s clerical role altered by putting the social service dimension at the heart of the mission? Is this not something concerning laypeople rather than clergymen? Do the Jesuits secularise if they are involved in an area which doesn’t concern religious people? Do they become partisan when really Jesuits should serve

changes did take place, and they influenced profoundly what the Society's new apostolic priorities and activities would be in the ensuing years including, as just mentioned, its institutional response to the plight of the forcibly displaced. It led also to significant changes in the life of individual Jesuits and their communities (a poorer lifestyle, insertion into working-class neighbourhoods, being closer to the poor, more shared community life, among other things). And it encouraged too the reflection—often difficult to articulate because of differing understandings and emphases—of the Society's specific way to carry out the struggle for justice and a preferential option for the poor, based on our charism, our spirituality, our way of proceeding, the emerging needs in the world and our resources.⁷¹

1.1.3.2. The 33rd General Congregation: reaffirmation amid deep challenges

In general terms, it could be said that the last four General Congregations of the Society of Jesus have attempted to embrace the mandate and direction given by GC32, rearticulating it, expanding it and adapting it according to the signs of their specific times. After accepting Father Arrupe's resignation as Father General and electing his substitute, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the 33rd General Congregation (1983), despite the challenges encountered in the previous years, solemnly confirmed the Congregation's 'definition' of the Society of Jesus, reaffirming the most important decrees, 2 and 4, of GC32. As mentioned earlier, these

everyone, including the rich? Do they overstep their duties by being involved in liberation movements, through political affiliation or even leadership? In the Society, should social action be put at the same level as the service of the word, as theology and teaching, and as the 'pastoral'? Is the Faith and Justice option incorrectly identified with social action? Does this option lead too easily to the neglect of teaching or intellectual tasks?" JOSEP M. RAMBLA, "Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice" in *Promotio Iustitiae* 119 (2015) 12.

⁷¹ In his address to the Meeting of Assistancy Social Coordinators held in Rome in April 2003, the then Superior General, Fr. Kolvenbach, summarised some of these challenges, in particular in regards to the relationship between poverty and justice and the Society's particular 'contribution'. Cf. PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH, "Social Apostolate in the Society of Jesus: Challenges and Situation" in *Promotio Iustitiae* 80 (2003) 1-7. Fr. Kolvenbach stated that "The poor must include those who are poor on various counts, those who are discriminated against, marginalised, and oppressed. These are the poor and we should help them. [...]. It is obvious that today we cannot do everything, and that choices have to be made. After GC 32, many Provinces made radical choices and some of them were difficult. I remember the choice made by the Mexican Province: they closed a very famous high school, "Patria." After an earthquake, they told me not to help the victims of the earthquake because they were not victims of socio-economic oppression or persecution. Others should do it, not we, they said, according to their interpretation of GC 32. You may feel that this is an exaggerated response, but the point I want to stress is that regarding the struggle for justice and being with the poor, we have to make choices because we cannot do everything. Our choice must be directed by a specific Jesuit approach that is understood by others, and that leaves us freer to choose other alternatives. There are many organisations like NGOs and networks doing a lot of work in this area. We have never been alone. Following the spirit and commitment of St. Ignatius we must discern our specific contribution. This, I think, is the way we have to proceed ahead. If we do not follow this way of proceeding we may end by doing a tremendous amount work, but we will be under the impression that it is hopeless because there are other choices we have not explored [...]. We need to be open to every kind of need, especially the need of those most neglected, of those most forgotten", pp. 3-4.

decrees were seen as “the application today of the *Formula of the Institute* [including the original ministries of peacemaking and reconciliation mentioned there] and of our Ignatian charism. They express our mission today in profound terms offering insights and guidelines for our future responses”.⁷²

Further, the formulation “preferential option for the poor”,⁷³ which was already included in the documents of both the bishops of Latin America and of the Holy See⁷⁴ but not in those of the Jesuits, appeared for the first time at this Congregation. Decree 1 reviews the experience of the previous years and confirms that this new understanding of the Society’s mission—the service of faith and the promotion of justice—has been a time of grace and conversion, not without its costs, including exile, imprisonment and even death of some of its members in the service of the Gospel,⁷⁵ as well as tensions both within and outside the Society.⁷⁶ Yet, the current situation of injustice in the world, compels the Society to remain faithful to this mission,⁷⁷ encouraged at the same time by signs of hope and solidarity.⁷⁸ Finally, the integration of this service of faith and promotion of justice is a mission both unique and inseparable as well as universal (encompasses all of the Society’s apostolates), which requires careful discernment and is entrusted to the body of the Society.⁷⁹

1.1.3.3. The 34th General Congregation: expanding the Society’s faith-justice mission

GC34 (1995) reaffirms GC32’s directions in its decrees 2, 3, 4 and 5, and expands the emphases of its faith-justice mission to include evangelisation, inculturation and interreligious dialogue⁸⁰ with the option for a faith that promotes justice as the unifying factor.⁸¹ We are all “called to be servants of Christ’s universal mission in the Church and the world of today, to adapt the Society’s apostolic priorities to our cultural situations and to our

⁷² SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Decrees of the General Congregation* 33, 1983, AR 18 (1983) 1064-1092; St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1984, Decree 1, *Companions of Jesus Sent into Today’s World*, 38.

⁷³ GC 33, D. 1, 48.

⁷⁴ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Laborem exercens* (14 September 1981), n. 8; AAS 73 (1981) 577-647; http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html Accessed 19 June 2018.

⁷⁵ Cf. GC 33, D. 1, 31.

⁷⁶ Cf. GC 33, D. 1, 33.

⁷⁷ Cf. GC 33, D. 1, 34-35.

⁷⁸ Cf. GC 33, D. 1, 36.

⁷⁹ Cf. GC 33, D. 1, 38.

⁸⁰ Cf. GC 34, D. 2, *Servants of Christ’s Mission*, 15-16, 20-21.

⁸¹ Cf. GC 34, D. 2, 14. In other places in this present decree, this justice is also described as “the justice willed by God” (13), “the justice of God’s Kingdom” (11, 14, 15, 16), and God’s “justice in the world”.

way of proceeding”.⁸² Looking back at the last twenty years, the Congregation believes that “[o]ur service, especially among the poor, has deepened our life of faith, both individually and as a body: our faith has become more paschal, more compassionate, more tender, more evangelical in its simplicity”,⁸³ and that “[w]e have recovered, for our contemporary mission, the centrality of working in solidarity with the poor in accord with our Ignatian charism”.⁸⁴ We continue to be called to “exercise our Jesuit mission within the total evangelizing mission of the Church”,⁸⁵ working together, in each of our particular contexts and cultures, because justice “can truly flourish only when it involves the transformation of culture, since the roots of injustice are embedded in cultural attitudes as well as in economic structures. The dialogue between the Gospel and culture has to take place within the heart of the culture”.⁸⁶

In Decree 3—*Our Mission and Justice*—the Congregation, recognising that our promotion of justice has sometimes been separated from “its wellspring of faith”, by allowing dogmatism or ideology to see and treat each other “more as adversaries than as companions”, wants to renew the Society’s commitment to the promotion of justice as an integral part of its mission.⁸⁷ To do this, it needs to take into account new and emerging dimensions of this struggle for justice with greater awareness of: a growing international consciousness of a full range of *human rights* designed to protect the dignity of the person;⁸⁸ of the *interdependence* of “all peoples in one common heritage” which can produce many benefits but also result in “injustices on a massive scale”;⁸⁹ of a growing ‘culture of death’ where respect for human life from its inception to its natural end is violated in diverse ways,⁹⁰ and of “unscrupulous exploitation of natural resources and the environment” which degrades the quality of life.⁹¹ The Congregation also recognises “critical situations affecting hundreds of millions of people which call for special concern in the Society”. These include: the marginalisation of Africa; the “devastation in all areas of human and social life” in the collapsed totalitarian systems in Eastern Europe; the discrimination and marginalisation of indigenous peoples; and the ever-

⁸² GC 34, D. 1, *United with Christ in Mission*, 8.

⁸³ GC 34, D. 2, 1.

⁸⁴ GC 34, D. 2, 8.

⁸⁵ GC 34, D. 2, 3.

⁸⁶ GC 34, D. 2, 17.

⁸⁷ Cf. GC 34, D. 3, *Our Mission and Justice*, 2-3.

⁸⁸ Cf. GC 34, D. 3, 6.

⁸⁹ GC 34, D. 3, 7.

⁹⁰ Cf. GC 34, D. 3, 8.

⁹¹ Cf. GC 34, D. 3, 9.

increasing number of refugees and other displaced persons.⁹² In order to meet these challenges, we must create communities of solidarity in seeking justice in each of our different apostolates,⁹³ as well as continue to form “men and women for others” in each of these ministries.⁹⁴ But, above all, we “need to continue on our journey towards the Kingdom with great hope”.⁹⁵

One of the main novelties of GC34 is that for the first time (in its Decree 4, *Our Mission and Culture*) a General Congregation explicitly approaches culture as an unavoidable point of reference of our mission and recognises the *mutuality* between the Gospel and the cultures it engages: “The Christian message is to be open to all cultures, bound to no single culture and made accessible to every human person through a process of inculturation, by which the Gospel introduces something new into the culture and the culture brings something new to the richness of the Gospel”.⁹⁶ It notes that, “Particular challenges must be faced today in order to enable an existential dialogue of this kind to take place with the range of cultures in which the Church is present”, including the rise of contemporary secular culture, the diverse Asian cultural experiences, the increasing pace of urbanization which “leads to impoverished millions in the great cities”, the resurgence of consciousness of indigenous peoples of their distinctive cultures, and the great desire in Africa to create a truly African Christianity.⁹⁷ The mission of the Society, in service to the Crucified and Risen Christ:

[...] is directed to the ways in which he makes his presence felt in the diversity of human cultural experiences, in order that we may present the Gospel as Christ’s explicitly liberating presence. Ours must be a dialogue, born of respect for people, especially the poor, in which we share their cultural and spiritual values and offer our own cultural and spiritual treasures [...]. Our service of the Christian faith must never disrupt the best impulses of the culture in which we work, nor can it be an alien imposition from outside.⁹⁸

It is essential to remember that “the aim of an inculturated evangelization in post-Christian contexts is not to secularise or dilute the Gospel by accommodating it to the horizon of modernity, but to introduce the possibility and reality of God through practical witness and dialogue”.⁹⁹ This ministry of dialogue “is conducted with a sense that God’s action is

⁹² Cf. GC 34, D. 3, 11-16.

⁹³ Cf. GC 34, D. 3, 19.

⁹⁴ Cf. GC 34, D. 3, 20.

⁹⁵ GC 34, D. 3, 24.

⁹⁶ GC 34, D. 4, *Our Mission and Culture*, 2.

⁹⁷ Cf. GC 34, D. 4, 5.

⁹⁸ GC 34, D. 4, 8.

⁹⁹ GC 34, D. 4, 22.

antecedent to ours”,¹⁰⁰ recognising that the salvific work of God’s revelation is already present in every culture and that God will bring it to completion.¹⁰¹ Further, this dialogue must be based upon “a sharing of life, a shared commitment to action for human development and liberation, a sharing of values and a sharing of human experience”.¹⁰²

GC34’s Decree 5, *Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue*, begins by acknowledging that “In a world where Christians comprise less than 20% of the population, it is imperative that we collaborate with others to achieve common goals”.¹⁰³ Acknowledging also that “Above all we need to relate positively to believers of other religions because they are our neighbours”,¹⁰⁴ it calls on the Society to foster the four-fold dialogue recommended by the Church: *dialogue of life* (sharing our joys and sorrows); *dialogue of action* (collaborating for the integral development and liberation of people); *dialogue of religious experience* (sharing the richness of our own traditions); and *dialogue of theological exchange*, among specialists to deepen understanding of each other’s religious heritages and spiritual values.¹⁰⁵ We do this in the belief that “our spiritual encounter with believers of other religions helps us to discover deeper dimensions of our Christian faith and wider horizons of God’s salvific presence in the world. ‘Dialogue is a new way of being Church’”.¹⁰⁶ We cannot forget either that our professed commitment to justice “demands that we share in the life and the struggles of the poor and work with believers of other religions in creating basic human communities founded on truth and love”.¹⁰⁷ Finally, the Decree recognises that the Society must offer a concrete response to certain groups. Because of our shared history, “[d]ialogue with the Jewish people holds a unique place” in our endeavours; together with the Church, the Society must continue to strive to build bridges of mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.¹⁰⁸ Finally, the rising phenomenon of religious fundamentalism, with its ideologies and movements within religious communities, calls us to work hard in paving the way for dialogue and reconciliation, acknowledging our past intolerant attitudes and injustices towards others

¹⁰⁰ GC 34, D. 4, 17.

¹⁰¹ Cf. GC 34, D. 4, 27.

¹⁰² GC 34, D. 4, 23.

¹⁰³ GC 34, D. 5, *Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ GC 34, D. 5, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. GC 34, D. 5, 4.

¹⁰⁶ GC 34, D. 5, 7.

¹⁰⁷ GC 34, D. 5, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. GC 34, D. 5, 12-15.

which have contributed to suspicion and discord.¹⁰⁹ In our responsibility of engaging in this task of promoting interreligious dialogue, as Jesuits we are supported by the Ignatian vision of reality, which “provides the spiritual inspiration and ministerial grounding for this urgent task. It opens our eyes to the incomprehensible mystery of God’s salvific presence in the world”.¹¹⁰ And it makes us sensitive to the sacred space of God’s direct dealing with human persons in history—it is God’s action, not ours that will make God’s Kingdom a reality.

Again, it is not difficult to see how the Society’s apostolate among the forcibly displaced has been guided by the principles set out by this Congregation: entering into the ‘Passion’ of forcibly displaced brothers and sisters, being in solidarity with them, acting towards them with compassion and tenderness (Decree 2); with openness to their cultures and diverse religious traditions (Decree 4); in a spirit of dialogue (Decree 5); and developing greater awareness and increasing capacity to respond to “new and emerging dimensions of the struggle for justice” including “the ever-increasing numbers of refugees” (Decree 3). And those who have worked with and shared the lives of forcibly displaced peoples will testify to the words cited just before in Decree 5: “Our spiritual encounter with believers of other religions [have helped] us to discover deeper dimensions of our Christian faith and wider horizons of God’s salvific power in the world”.

1.1.3.4. The 35th General Congregation: moving to the frontiers and building bridges

In GC35 (2008) the option for the service of faith and the promotion of justice transpires throughout its decrees (in particular its first three) and is considered the great grace received by the Society, given the seal of approval by our martyrs and the poor “who have nourished us evangelically in our own identity as followers of Jesus”.¹¹¹ Decree 1, *With Renewed Vigour and Zeal*, is the response of the Society to the invitation of the Holy Father for Jesuits to go to “physical and spiritual places where others do not reach or have difficulty in reaching”, entrusting us to “build bridges of understanding and dialogue” according to the best tradition of the Society in the diversity of its ministries.¹¹² Thus the Holy Father confirms the mission of the Society asking Jesuits to faithfully help the

¹⁰⁹ Cf. GC 34, D. 5, 16.

¹¹⁰ GC 34, D. 5, 17.

¹¹¹ GC 35, D. 2, 15.

¹¹² Cf. GC 35, D. 1, 6.

Church in its mission of evangelisation.¹¹³ In response, the Congregation affirmed “in a resolute way our specific availability to the ‘Vicar of Christ on earth’”,¹¹⁴ asking each Jesuit “to live with the great spirit and generosity that is at the centre of our vocation” the call to serve the Lord under the banner of the Cross and the Church under the Roman Pontiff,¹¹⁵ and “to examine his own way of living and working at the ‘new frontiers’ of our time”.¹¹⁶

From our experience of “God labouring in the heart of life, our identity as ‘servants of Christ’s mission’ rises up ever anew”¹¹⁷: “This mission of attempting ‘to feel and to taste’ (*sentir y gustar*) the presence and activity of God in all the persons and circumstances of the world, places us Jesuits at the centre of a tension, pulling us both to God and to the world at the same time”. Yet, “[t]o find divine life at the depths of reality is a mission of hope given to us Jesuits”.¹¹⁸ “In what we do in the world there must always be a transparency to God [...]. For ultimately there is no reality that is only profane for those who know how to look”.¹¹⁹ And we also find this divine life and testify to it in our life together as friends in the Lord: “Jesuit identity and Jesuit mission are linked by community; indeed, identity, community, and mission are a kind of triptych shedding light on how our companionship is best understood”.¹²⁰ To live our mission in our broken world “we need fraternal and joyful communities”¹²¹ that act as collective, evangelical witnesses. Thus, our life together as a “Jesuit community is not just for mission: it is itself mission”.¹²²

“Serving Christ’s mission today means paying special attention to its global context” with its growing tensions, paradoxes and conflicts, which requires us to “act as a universal body”,¹²³ working in collaboration at multiple levels and with all people of good will.¹²⁴ It is a mission to establish right relationships—a mission of reconciliation—that takes us to new

¹¹³ Cf. GC 35, D. 1, 7.

¹¹⁴ GC 35, D. 1, 8.

¹¹⁵ Cf. GC 35, D. 1, 9.

¹¹⁶ GC 35, D. 1, 15.

¹¹⁷ GC 35, D. 2, *A Fire that Kindles other Fires: Rediscovering our Charism*, 7.

¹¹⁸ GC 35, D. 2, 8.

¹¹⁹ GC 35, D. 2, 10.

¹²⁰ GC 35, D. 2, 19.

¹²¹ GC 35, D. 2, 27.

¹²² GC 35, D. 3, *Challenges to our Mission Today*, 41.

¹²³ GC 35, D. 2, 20.

¹²⁴ Cf. GC 35, D. 2, 21.

frontiers¹²⁵, following Jesus' example of crossing over physical, cultural and socio-religious frontiers to proclaim God's message of love and compassion to all without exception:¹²⁶ it is a mission of reconciliation with God,¹²⁷ with one another,¹²⁸ seeing the world especially from the perspective of the poor and the marginalised, and with Creation.¹²⁹ Finally, as with previous Congregations, GC35 recognised global preferences or priorities, emphasising the importance of inter-provincial cooperation to face these global challenges which included: Africa, China, the intellectual apostolate of the Society, the inter-provincial institutions in Rome, and migration and refugees.¹³⁰ And as we will see in Part II of this chapter, encouraged and impelled by the mandates of this General Congregation, Jesuits and companions, with "renewed zeal and vigour", continue to go to those "physical and spiritual spaces" where the forcibly displaced are pushed to and where others find it difficult to reach.

1.1.3.5. The 36th General Congregation: emphasis on discernment and community life

GC36¹³¹ in its Decree 1, *Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice*, takes up some of the major themes of preceding Congregations, including our ministry of reconciliation;¹³² the present ecological and environmental challenges we face;¹³³ the need for

¹²⁵ JOSEP M. RAMBLA in his article "Misión en las fronteras. Lectura Ignaciana" in *Manresa*, 86 (2014) 213-228, reflects on the spiritual dispositions for this mission which today we call 'frontiers'. Among these, he identifies: (1) being open to the intangible mystery of God and all the untold surprises it might bring; (2) being aware of the demands—at times quiet harsh and challenging—that might be encountered and to be willing and prepared through adequate spiritual and intellectual formation to face them; (3) to embrace the Ignatian 'more', the *magis*, as the measure of love with which we carry out the mission entrusted to us; (4) to be in the world without being of the world recognising that this way of being present might lead to conflict and sacrifice; and (5) living out our spirituality of discernment as a sort of 'existential sense', so as to be able to perceive adequately the ever changing social reality around us and to face the ambivalent situations that often arise in the frontiers, pp. 226-228. Patxi Álvarez adds that whoever takes up the option for the frontiers must be ready to experience the "depressing reality of suffering and its setbacks" that will be found there, acknowledging that it takes a great deal of faith, hope and trust in God to be able to persevere in circumstances where death rules in the form of greed, power and violence over those we seek to serve. These huge challenges however should not deter us from going there. The strength required to sustain us in this often disheartening reality is found precisely in the new ties generated with those who suffer in the frontiers. It is in the frontier where bridges are cast towards those we want to accompany, where affection, commitment and friendship flourish: "When this happens, everything changes, because in certain events we begin to see signs that for many others go completely unnoticed. The small things, in their simplicity, acquire an absolute value: a life, a minimal step, a caring gesture, a joy, a brief victory. Affection discovers the value of the small. Whoever does not experience it, is incapable of discovering it, even if it is right in front of them". Cf. PATXI ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, "El peso de una vocación que nos envía a las fronteras" in *Manresa* 86 (2014) 249.

¹²⁶ Cf. GC 35, D. 3, 14.

¹²⁷ Cf. GC 35, D. 3, 19-24.

¹²⁸ Cf. GC 35, D. 3, 25-30.

¹²⁹ Cf. GC 35, D. 3, 31-36.

¹³⁰ Cf. GC 35, D. 3, 37-39.

¹³¹ SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Decrees and Documents of the 36th General Congregation*, 2016, AR 26 (2016) 207-319; Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash 2017.

¹³² Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 3, 6 (Cf. GC 35).

discernment in searching God's will for the Society and each of its Jesuits;¹³⁴ life in community,¹³⁵ and the call to live more simply (poverty of life and proximity to the poor).¹³⁶

To carry out our mission as Jesuits, we need to become discerning communities, true 'homes' for the Reign for God.¹³⁷ In terms of community, "[i]t is our union with one another in Christ that testifies to the Good News more powerfully than our competences and abilities",¹³⁸ and because these fraternal bonds proclaim the Gospel, [community] is itself a mission.¹³⁹ In terms of discernment, "In our individualistic and competitive age, we should remember that the community plays a very special role since it is a privileged place of apostolic discernment".¹⁴⁰ "Communal discernment requires that each of us develop some basic characteristics and attitudes: availability, mobility, humility, freedom, the ability to accompany others, patience, and a willingness to listen respectfully so that we may speak the truth to each other".¹⁴¹ (Characteristics and attitudes which are also clearly needed in our apostolate to the forcibly displaced). To nurture these characteristics and be truly effective in our mission, each of us is being called to a spiritual renewal to overcome whatever "elements in our lives, works, or lifestyles hinder our ability to let God's gracious mercy transform us".¹⁴² In discerning our mission, "we are called to find Christ in the poor, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to understand them, and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them".¹⁴³ As mentioned earlier, this is our special contribution, our particular approach to ministry to the forcibly displaced (and others), and what distinguishes ours from the service of other humanitarian organisations.

In discerning the most important calls that the Lord makes to the whole Society today, the "call to share God's work of reconciliation in our broken world emerged often and powerfully. What GC35 had identified as three dimensions of this ministry of reconciliation,

¹³³ Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 1, 3 (Cf. GC 34 and 35).

¹³⁴ Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 1, 4.

¹³⁵ Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 5 (Cf. GC 35).

¹³⁶ Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 6 (Cf. GC 32).

¹³⁷ Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 13.

¹³⁸ GC 36, D. 1, 7.

¹³⁹ Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 9.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. GC 36, D. 1, 8.

¹⁴¹ GC 36, D. 1, 11.

¹⁴² GC 36, D. 1, 18.

¹⁴³ GC 36, D. 1, 15.

namely, reconciliation with God, with one another, and with creation, assumed a new urgency”; this reconciliation is always a work of justice and while “we speak of three forms of reconciliation, all three are, in reality, one work of God, interconnected and inseparable”.¹⁴⁴ And finally, in order to fulfil the renewal of our apostolic life, “all our ministries should seek to build bridges, to foster peace”.¹⁴⁵ And each of us needs to nurture the hope that is in us: “We need more than ever to bring a message of hope, born of consolation from our encounter with the Risen Lord”.¹⁴⁶

As we have seen, the documents of the last five General Congregations we have briefly discussed here follow common threads, and we have articulated or alluded to several of these already. We explore now them further, as we take a look at the characteristics of the Jesuit Social Apostolate, focusing particularly on how they might contribute to the mission of the Society to the forcibly displaced.

1.1.4. Characteristics of the Jesuit Social Apostolate

What characterises the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus? Twenty-three years after the 32th General Congregation and two additional General Congregations later, the Society’s Social Apostolate Secretariat in Rome published a ‘handbook’ on these ‘Characteristics’¹⁴⁷ seeking to: “[...] elaborate the purpose of the Jesuit social apostolate [...] *to bring the justice of the Gospel to society and culture* [cf. CN, 298] and establish a common basis on which Jesuits and colleagues can meet, reflect and work more closely together in the [faith-justice] mission entrusted them (p. 4).¹⁴⁸ Written by Jesuits and companions of the social sector, the document clearly sought to address some of the tensions mentioned previously by recognising the significant contribution of other apostolates to the mission of the Society of Jesus. These *Characteristics* are divided into five parts: *Who inspires us?* (origins); *What do we do and live?* (basics); *How do we work?* (components); *How do we proceed?* (style), and *Why do we hope?* (vision). Unfortunately, the scope of our work does not allow us to delve in great detail on all these sections, so what is presented here is a brief exploration of this most important document, given in the personal tone of the authors (i.e. speaking in the first person

¹⁴⁴ GC 36, D. 1, 21.

¹⁴⁵ GC 36, D. 1, 31.

¹⁴⁶ GC 36, D. 1, 32.

¹⁴⁷ SOCIAL APOSTOLATE SECRETARIAT GENERAL CURIA OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, “Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus” in *Promotio Iustitiae* 69 (1998) 1-101.

¹⁴⁸ Page references in this section, unless otherwise referenced, refer to the issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* cited above.

plural ‘we’). As we will see, the *Characteristics* pick up important themes of the previous Congregations (GCs 32-34), inform some of the comments made by Álvarez in the next section and underpin the foundational principles of the Jesuit Refugee Service (Part II).

1.1.4.1. Who inspires us

The fundamental orientation of the Jesuit social apostolate in its mission to “bring the justice of the Gospel to society and culture” is found in the “faith that motivates us and the vision of hope which draws us” (p. 1). *Who* inspires us is first and foremost Christ, who draws many of us, like he did with Ignatius and his first companions, to “encounter the poor whom we would otherwise naturally flee”.¹⁴⁹ We recognise them as special ‘friends in the Lord’, the same Lord whom we wish to follow. *Who* inspires us are also the poor, *miserable* and *blessed*—miserable in their reality of injustice, suffering and abuse; blessed because our involvement with them, even when we feel resourceless and powerless, leads to “authenticity, freedom from attachment and greed, liberty to give and receive and great happiness” as well as celebration, simplicity and hospitality.¹⁵⁰ Letting ourselves be touched by the suffering of the poor becomes a major source of our spirituality—an incarnated spirituality—brings out the best in us and “makes us live that mixture of tenderness and indignation called compassion” (p. 4). This section of the *Characteristics*, then, speaks of mutuality and reciprocity and, in regards to forcibly displaced people, is a reminder of the gifts they bestow on those who share their lives and seek to respond to their plight: a fact that, as we will see, JRS staff and volunteers can attest to all throughout the thirty-eight years of JRS’ existence. It speaks also of their particular contribution, stemming from their suffering, to an ‘incarnated spirituality’ that manifests the action of God’s Spirit’s in humanity today, leading to authenticity, freedom and joy.

1.1.4.2. What we do and live

We are known not only for our work, but by how we live. Community life supports our work: care for one another, mutual help, right relationships, inclusion, simplicity, solidarity—all make our witness and activity more credible and effective (p. 9). In the social apostolate, “no particular activity or approach is specified or ruled out”: forced displacement, child prostitution, underemployment; ethnic or racial minorities, civil groups, indigenous peoples;

¹⁴⁹ GC34, D. 9, 18.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. GC34, D. 9, 15.

centres for research, reflection or action, housing, welcome centres for refugees; development, protection of the environment, promotion of human rights; literacy training, community organising, formation of leaders—all form part of its mandate, from the most grass-roots to the most global, from local to global organisations. The Society has always resisted to make one particular issue *the* social priority (though various General Congregations have identified specific ‘universal apostolic priorities’ in recent years, including the ministry with refugees and other displaced peoples). Despite the clear benefits, it is felt that this would place heavy restrictions on its availability, mobility and creativity in response to changing needs (pp. 10-11). Finally, to carry out these social apostolates effectively requires insertion in the world of the poor:¹⁵¹ “Seeing things their way and taking on their viewpoint shapes how we see, understand and interpret many things, from details of daily life to large issues and transcendent values. Insertion marks our reading both of the Gospel and of social reality” (p. 14). This characteristic has also been constantly embodied in the Society’s ministry with the forcibly displaced: work in teams and communities rather than by isolated individuals; living and working alongside the forcibly displaced to shape and guide the service offered them; and acting with flexibility to respond to various needs, particularly those not addressed by others.

1.1.4.3. How we work

How we work has to do with how we read the diverse situations around us, how we promote our work and how we form Jesuits and companions to carry out our activities. Our action has to be rooted in careful analysis and discernment lest we misunderstand the context, the players involved and the consequences of interaction between the two (p. 19). This socio-cultural analysis must be carried out working together in a team, with compassion for those who suffer and in relationship with them¹⁵². Several readings are required: cultural, economic, political and religious. And in carrying them all out the various secular sciences mentioned in the previous chapter are needed to inform our theological and faith-based approach.

Culturally, careful attention has to be paid to the way in which powerful or majority groups dominate and repress minority groups (and this includes ‘competing’ groups within forcibly displaced populations), to the way human rights are often violated, and how the inclusion and

¹⁵¹ Cf. GC34, D. 3, 17.

¹⁵² Cf. GC32, D. 4, 50.

dignity of so many peoples are ignored (as in the example of indefinite mandatory detention of asylum seekers explored in the previous chapter). Despite recognition of universal values, how these are understood and exercised might vary from one culture to another and so we are called to ‘immerse’ ourselves in the culture of the people we serve in order to comprehend, encourage or challenge their approaches (pp. 26-27), as in regards, for example, to the treatment of forcibly displaced women and children, the most vulnerable of populations, in situations of conflict.

In regards to the *economic reading*, the *Characteristics* note that:

Realising how the poor people we live near and work with actually face their hardships and survive is an indispensable source for the social apostolate. The observed economics of survival forms a basis for our economic comprehension, cooperation and action, and a compass for moving through the local, regional, national and global levels from micro to macro and back again without getting lost or discouraged (p. 29).

When hearing ‘the cry of the poor’ and working through economic issues, Jesuit social projects are guided by three main perspectives: ethics, protest and reform (p. 32). *Ethics*, to judge how economic policies and institutions protect or undermine the life and dignity of persons—in many cases, for example, the wars and conflicts that ‘produce’ forced displaced populations are intrinsically linked to competing interests for natural resources, often driven by multi-nationals and corrupt governments. *Protest*, to awaken those who are unaware of or complacent with unjust policies and structures and win their support for action and change—as long as refugees and asylum seekers are kept ‘out of sight’, they will be kept also ‘out of mind’. *Reform*, to “create, find or build solutions, through research, politics and negotiations—because of the trans-national nature of forced displacement, unless the international community agrees to work together, a permanent solution to this tragedy will never be achieved.

In the *political* sphere, the Jesuit social apostolate works both with public authority (despite its many shortcomings) and civil society to try and help the voiceless find their voice.¹⁵³ The social apostolate takes part “in every type of group, coalition, network, mobilisation or movement, in pursuit of specific solutions as well as transformation of structures” and influencing of the public sphere, through the use of the media and with the support from

¹⁵³ Cf. GC34, D. 26, 14.

many sectors of society.¹⁵⁴ As expected, this approach often gives rise to conflict, and while it cannot be avoided, we need to pay close attention to our attitude towards the individuals and systems involved so as not to ‘demonise’ others (pp. 38-39)—our work should always be ready to ‘reconcile the estranged’ (Cf. *Formula of the Institute*, 1550). Unfortunately, this demonization is all too real and present in regards to forcibly displaced people and in some cases to those who seek to support them. Finally, dialogue is what needs to characterise the Social Apostolate’s work with people of diverse religious beliefs or none, as it carries out its *religious reading* of the situations in which it finds itself. A great proportion of the world’s poor—and of forcibly displaced peoples—are religious believers and religion is essential for many of them: “To overlook this is not to encounter them fully, much less comprehend them” (p. 41).

Promoting the social apostolate work requires teamwork, cooperation and networking, planning and evaluation and good administration or management. Teamwork needs to be based on relationships of openness and trust where dialogue, listening, consultation and involvement in decision-making are guiding principles at all levels of our work. It calls also for deeper sharing at the level of beliefs, hopes and values (p. 53). And it requires too an appropriate and honest understanding of the relationship between Jesuits and companions and respect for the needs of both groups. Not only are we called to work well with those within our sector, but our projects and ministries must also cooperate and network with others in solidarity (again, as we will see, these principles have defined the Jesuit Refugee Service’s way of proceeding, bringing together Jesuits and companions as well as diverse institutions and ministries to support its work). Cooperation and networking take place at all levels from local through regional and international, with individuals, groups, organisations, public entities, the Church, government bodies. Evaluation and planning also provide opportunities for teams to coalesce and take active responsibility for their work. For this, they also depend on good administration and management as well as good leadership. It is clearly not about assimilating a for-profit mentality in terms of our use of personnel, resources, finances or fund-raising, but rather adapting ‘our way of proceeding’ to techniques of effective business management and group dynamics to ensure our work is indeed as effective as possible. And certainly, for the Society’s ministry to the forcibly displaced, as it seeks to respond to the

¹⁵⁴ Cf. GC32, D. 4, 80.

needs of hundreds of thousands of people in over fifty countries, this has to be *the* way to proceed.

Our projects and initiatives cannot lose their ‘public persona’, which more than an image, is essential in having an effect in society and culture to “communicate our concerns; relate with other groups; resist injustice, promote change and involve others; influence public and political opinion; protect the vulnerable from attack, and raise money or win other needed forms of support.” And of course, a Jesuit social project fulfilling its mission will project “a certain coherence between social action and spiritual discourse. Others will testify to its credibility, to the witness it offers, to the hope it shares, and to the Good News it conveys” (pp. 65-67). It has been acknowledged repeatedly, for instance, that the faith-based approach of the Society to its ministry with the forcibly displaced, is in fact what distinguishes it—what gives it its particular ‘public persona’ in this multifaceted field. When that coherence is not clear or has been lost, then we know that our mission is in danger.

Appropriate formation, both of Jesuits and companions, is essential for the faith-justice mission and to uphold that coherence. The *Characteristics* encourage also greater participation and collaboration of the ‘head’ and the ‘feet’—the ‘intellectual’ ones and those involved in direct action—seeking the benefit of complementarity. Finally, they remind us that the concrete, local social problems we come up against are often rooted in global causes, yet “we Jesuits do not exploit all the possibilities given to us by being an international apostolic body. A certain kind of provincialism, the immediate demands of local needs, and a lack of appropriate interrelated structures have prevented us from realising our global potential”.¹⁵⁵ While this is certainly true for various Jesuit apostolates, it could be argued that the Society’s ministry with the forcibly displaced has made concrete advances in further utilising this global potential, as exemplified for example, by the Jesuit Worldwide Learning project which seeks to provide (through the collaboration of Jesuit universities) access to higher education to forcibly displaced people in several refugee camps and urban settings (cf. section 2.4.5.3. - *Education in the margins*), and by JRS’ consorted international advocacy efforts in collaboration with other agencies and institutions.

1.1.4.4. How we proceed

¹⁵⁵ GC34, D.21, 5.

Our *style* or *way of proceeding* is characterised first and foremost by discernment (cf. GC32, GC34, GC36): a communal apostolic discernment in the light of the deliberations of the *First Companions* (1539), which seeks to read contemporary and future trends, determining exactly what is to be discerned, with Ignatian indifference and centring on the Lord's will (p. 88). It is the Ignatian method of prayerful discernment—so needed in the ever-changing field of forced displacement where new causes, factors and players constantly emerge—which can be described as: “[...] a constant interplay between experience, reflection, decision and action, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being ‘contemplative in action’ (cf. GC32, D. 4, 73)”.¹⁵⁶ It is this prayerful discernment that helps us deal with the ongoing tensions our apostolate faces, between visibility (in advocacy and public education, for example) and hiddenness (witnessing in a more discreet matter); between being more in the ‘head’ (analysis) or in our ‘feet’ (action); between the charismatic figure and institutional values; between our presence and hospitality to those around us and our need for places conducive to prayer, rest and stability—the tension “consists in keeping different levels together, along with counter-cultural values of simplicity and solidarity” (p. 93).

1.1.4.5. Why we hope

Finally, *why we hope* and why we seek to give an account of the hope that is in us (Cf. 1Peter 3:15), is based, as we stated at the beginning of this section, on our faith in Christ—the beginning of the social apostolate: “[...] compassionate love is what we try to give along with competence for social change; and a resulting gift not of our own making is the real hope we feel for human beings and their world” (p. 98), and the hope that is received in return from those in the margins who, like the forcibly displaced, continue to hope despite all evidence to the contrary. Thus, this hope finds expression in *community* and *solidarity*, and it is reciprocal. Our possible hope runs as deep as our very faith: “Being ‘friends of the Lord’, then, means being ‘friends of the poor’ [‘friends’ of the forcibly displaced], and we cannot turn aside when our friends are in need”. More importantly, we are a community in solidarity with them “because of Christ’s preferential love for them”.¹⁵⁷

1.1.5. A personal and critical self-assessment

¹⁵⁶ GC34, D. 26, 8.

¹⁵⁷ GC34, D. 2, 9.

In the last few pages we have explored some of the significant guidelines and criteria we have been given—as Jesuits and companions in the Ignatian tradition—on how to serve and be in solidarity with the poor—how to be their ‘friends’. In the spirit of good accountability and efficiency, we must return often to them and assess how closely we are adhering to them, lest our mission be compromised. Earlier, we alluded to the question: “How faithful has the Society of Jesus as an institution—and Jesuits as individuals—been to the mission of promoting and living out a faith that does justice to which it committed itself so wholeheartedly at GC32?” In an article written thirty years after that Congregation (2005), Francisco Álvarez de los Mozos attempts to assess this ‘faithfulness’ and answer this particular question.¹⁵⁸ Though Álvarez asserts that his reflection is limited to the Society in Spain which he knows best, I believe his comments do reflect the situation in the wider Society and that, although more than ten years have elapsed since the document first appeared (and thus it does not take into account the last two General Congregations), most of his assessment is still as valid today as it was then, providing also a helpful platform for further analysis. Although Álvarez believes that such faithfulness does exist, at least to a certain good degree¹⁵⁹, he had been asked to write on ‘obstacles to the faith-justice mission’ of the Society, and so his comments address these difficulties.¹⁶⁰ Yet, for the purpose of our ‘assessment’, addressing these ‘areas of improvement’ turns out to be quite elucidating and instructive. Álvarez groups these obstacles in six different areas: (1) structural obstacles from history and the common lifestyle in the Society; (2) understanding of the pairing faith-justice; (3) obstacles arising from our formation; (4) those rooted in our apostolic practices; (5) those linked more with our spirituality, and (6) those which result as a consequence of the then present ecclesial situation.

1.1.5.1. Historical and lifestyle-related obstacles

The upheaval in the Church that ensued the changes espoused by Vatican II also affected the Society, especially in the areas of formation and of the social apostolate. In terms of the

¹⁵⁸ FRANCISCO (PATXI) ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, “Current Religious and Ideological Trends as Obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission” in *Promotio Iustitiae* 86 (2005) 12-19. Álvarez de los Mozos was the head (Secretary) of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat of the Society of Jesus in Rome from 2011 to 2017.

¹⁵⁹ Some would disagree with his assessment (see, for example, CASTILLO, “The Society of Jesus and the mission faith-justice”, pp. 16-24), while others would agree (see, for example, CALVEZ, ‘The Spirituality of the Social Apostolate’, pp. 10-11).

¹⁶⁰ “[...] the view I am presenting is in no way complete, but rather, because of the instructions given to me, I emphasise only the negative points and deliberately pass over the many positive ones”, ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, “Current Religious and Ideological Trends as Obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission”, p. 12.

former, there was a massive exodus, in particular of younger Jesuits, but also of many others involved in the Social Apostolate, disillusioned and frustrated at the barriers erected to implement such changes. In terms of the latter, divisions arose in reaction to what was perceived by more traditional members of the Society as lack of faithfulness to the Church hierarchy and Marxist leanings by the more liberal members. The then General, Father Arrupe, was himself the target of many of these accusations:

The crisis and division within the Society were undeniable facts, arising from huge differences in outlook. And the social question—the struggle for justice we might say—was at the centre of the conflict [...]. When decree 4 of GC 32 appeared in 1975, the largest number of departures had already taken place [...]. Decree 4 can be understood in some way as a posthumous victory. The battles which took place over the question it treats had already led to the departure of many Jesuits and suspicion directed at the social ministries. This weakening of the Social Apostolate from the outset inevitably affected the faith-justice mission we try to follow today, because it was through the Social Apostolate that this ‘newness’ of our charism accepted by GC 32 would be strongly lived out.¹⁶¹

In terms of Jesuit models existing in the Society, Álvarez sees our triumphalist tradition and innumerable successes throughout the centuries affecting our faith-mission negatively. First, because it has translated into a voluntaristic/Pelagian approach, very serious and militant, which has missed the joyful dimension of celebration and ‘waste of time’, as well as of hope, that this mission to the poor requires. Secondly, because it has also allowed ‘charismatic’ individuals to go ‘their own way’. Despite their praiseworthy efforts and undeniable achievements, once these ‘lone-rangers’ disappeared, those initiatives were lost because they left no successors willing or even able to provide continuity to such projects. Sadly too, our communal lifestyles, rather than enabling us to offer welcoming ‘sites’ for those we serve, for the most part have led to an ever-widening physical separation between us and the poor¹⁶², and even many of our institutions, as praiseworthy in their work, relevance and excellence as they might be, have gotten in the way of our serving those placed outside some narrow circles.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, “Current Religious and Ideological Trends as Obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission”, p. 13.

¹⁶² Cf. GC32, D. 4, 35. “The faith-justice option needs this contact with simple people, which our communities make difficult or prevent because of the way they are structured [...]. This distance from, and ignorance of, the poor, the lack of friends among them, strikes me as an insuperable obstacle to advancing as a body in the faith-justice option”. ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, “Current Religious and Ideological Trends as Obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission”, p. 15.

¹⁶³ Poignantly, Álvarez remarks: “I must confess I enjoy hearing Jon Sobrino say from time to time that Ignacio Ellacuría never worked for the UCA [Universidad of Central America, located in San Salvador], but for the poor through the UCA. This is to take the Kingdom seriously, to work for the *magis*, and not excellence as it is usually understood, which tends to be a way of seeking prestige and a good name in the same way as those who don’t claim to be Christians”, ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, “Current Religious and Ideological Trends as Obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission”, p. 15.

1.1.5.2. Obstacles from a lack of understanding of the pairing faith-justice

The main difficulty in understanding the formula faith-justice, according to Álvarez, has been to consider this formula as the juxtaposition of two different things, where the issue of unbelief is often separated from that of injustice: “As if we didn’t know that [unbelief] is linked with the lack of care in a society of abundance, its forgetfulness of the suffering of other peoples, the deadening of its conscience—which is what would allow it to hear God’s cry”.¹⁶⁴ Following GC32, Father Arrupe used to say that in every apostolate of the Society the two things must be integrated, the service of faith and the promotion of justice.¹⁶⁵ And if it is true that in recent years most Jesuits working in our social ministries have made an enormous effort to “ensure that their struggle for justice emerges from their faith”, which gives it meaning, according to Álvarez the integration of this faith-justice dimension has demanded a “greater act of will”.

It should be pointed out that the integration of this faith-justice dimension has not been that easy in the case of many of our lay companions, either. Many of them are attracted to the Society’s commitment to the poor and marginalised, to its progressive and creative approaches and its capacity to effect change both through services and advocacy. Many of them, however, would acknowledge that their motivation is neither spiritual nor faith-based, either because they do not adhere to a particular faith or religious tradition, or because the expression of their belief is reserved to what they regard as more conventional religious practices. For them, the concept of being ‘companions in Christ mission’ would be quite foreign. Nevertheless, some would speak of a process of ‘transformation’, of finding glimpses of the ‘divine life’ (cf. GC35), through their work in institutions within the Society, and particularly through being in touch with deeply faith-filled individuals whom they serve. Often this seems to be the experience of our staff and volunteers serving the forcibly displaced. We will present a couple of examples of this in Part II of this chapter.

1.1.5.3. Obstacles related to Jesuit formation and apostolic practice

¹⁶⁴ ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, “Current Religious and Ideological Trends as Obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission”, p. 15.

¹⁶⁵ “For us, the promotion of justice is not one apostolic area among others, the ‘social apostolate’; rather, it should be the concern of our whole life and a dimension of all our apostolic endeavours” (GC32, D. 4, 27). Álvarez reminds us that “When justice is separated from faith it drifts easily towards ideologies and politicization”, p. 16.

Álvarez also contends that characteristics in both our Jesuit formation and our apostolic practice have weakened the Society's faith-justice option. Our formation, geared to 'success' in our institutional ministries, but also (even if we are often slow to recognise it) as individual Jesuits, has also had a negative impact on the social apostolate. This formational emphasis has made the social apostolate of little or no appeal to many Jesuits because working in social ministries is usually not very conducive to building a 'successful career', unless it involves teaching positions in prestigious universities (and this is certainly a possibility today in the academic field of forced displacement) or top jobs in national or multinational social justice related institutions. Moreover, very few Jesuits in formation have been destined to study the social sciences and, until recently, as few were given opportunities for real formation experiences in this field beyond short 'exposures'. Unfortunately too, very few of our 'best' people (in terms of gifts and talents) have been destined to the social apostolate.

Another regrettable issue is that our apostolic practice in many of our social ministries seems to suffer from a high degree of "assistentialism" (also prevalent in other Church institutions) which creates an asymmetric inequality with those we seek to aid. This in juxtaposition with the faith-justice option which demands greater equality, closer contact and mutual recognition and sharing. Unfortunate too is the fact that many of our institutions that provide social services as well as those involved in advocacy initiatives have found it very difficult to collaborate with one another, thus underutilising a rich resource for tackling justice problems in our world. We are getting better in this area (at least at the theoretical level as promoted by the last two General Congregations 35 and 36) but we are still so often concerned with our own 'small problems' that we miss or forget the bigger ones. Paradoxically, while some of our social ministries do find it difficult to collaborate with one another (even when serving similar 'populations' or 'audiences'), other institutions outside the social sector (parishes, universities and schools, spirituality houses, communication centres, for example), are often keen to support the work of our social institutions. This was certainly my experience while coordinating our Jesuit Refugee Service initiatives here in Australia (2008-2011).

1.1.5.4. Obstacles related to Jesuit spirituality and ecclesial trends

Finally, some aspects involved in both the living out of our spirituality as well as our place within the Church and current ecclesial trends have also undermined the faith-justice option. We will take up the issue of spirituality in the social apostolate in the next section, so here we will only mention Álvarez's observation that spiritual experience in our societies in recent decades has been centred more on the individual, tending to look at God within ourselves rather than in historical events— "what happens in life". Of course, this growth in personal faith and spiritual awareness in itself is not a negative thing, unless it leads us to believe that we have "to wait to change ourselves in order to serve the Kingdom". Both things have to go together. In the ecclesial context, this more individualistic approach (as well as other factors such as a rise in fundamentalism and the development of a 'culture of fear') has translated into living our faith more ritualistically, through the sacraments, under the "weight of the priesthood" and as a preoccupation with defending the hierarchy and tradition:

These trends give the impression of an over preoccupation of the Church with itself [...]. An unbending attitude in defending the Church doesn't help the faith-justice mission [...]. Today there are many Christians confused by the distance between the proclaimed message and the witness offered by the Church. In fact, awareness is growing that justice within the Church itself leaves much to be desired in the form of inequality and a lack of sharing and internal democracy. These trends have also affected us Jesuits in so far as we belong to the Church and work within. Among us too there is a retreat into our own structures and an enormous prudence in most of our manifestations. In this sense we lack the freedom that many of our companions had in the past.¹⁶⁶

Arguably, in the last few years, through his words and actions Pope Francis has tried to close the "distance between the proclaimed message and the witness offered by the Church" and many have followed his lead, and that is a positive note. Similarly, Álvarez concludes his presentation on a more positive note, emphasising again that although he had been asked to "meditate on our sins" following the model of the *Exercises*, there are indeed real signs of hope and light. He believes most of us feel more called to the faith-justice mission each day as we realise that "greater apostolic fruit comes from the interplay of faith and justice". Could we argue that this more positive assessment is indeed descriptive of the Society's mission to the forcibly displaced? How do Álvarez's comments above fare in terms of the Society's commitment to the care of forcibly displaced people since GC32?

1.1.6. The last four General Congregations and the ministry to the forcibly displaced

¹⁶⁶ ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, "Current Religious and Ideological Trends as Obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission", p. 15.

Ministering to the needs of the forcibly displaced has certainly been a concern of the last four Jesuit General Congregations, consistently characterising it as an apostolic priority for the Society—in particular in terms of the ministry of the Jesuit Refugee Service—though references to this apostolate have tended to be brief. As mentioned above, it could be argued that this particular area of our social ministries has had a level of ‘prestige’ attached to it which other social justice initiatives have lacked.¹⁶⁷ Certainly, the field of forced displacement continues to grow in the areas of academia, human rights law, policy making and service provision. And though a very secular field, in many places around the world where non-government organisations serve the forcibly displaced, either in refugee camps or urban settings, the Jesuits and companions (through the Jesuit Refugee Service) have often been given the tag of ‘religious’ and been identified as being part of a faith-based organisation. Some would say, as we will see later in this chapter, that this is what gives JRS its distinctive character.

GC33 only mentions this ministry to the forcibly displaced briefly, listing it as one of the main areas (among seven) which requires special attention by the Society due to “the harsh conditions of millions of refugees in search of a stable home”—a problem which Father Arrupe had asked for special attention to.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, GC34, after mentioning that two-thirds of refugees come from Africa (at that time in 1995), devotes only one paragraph to the plight of the forcibly displaced, calling on the universal Society to support, in particular, the efforts of the Jesuit Refugee Service:

There are over 45 million refugees and displaced persons in today’s world, 80% of whom are women and children. Often lodged in the poorest of countries, they face growing impoverishment, loss of a sense of life and culture, with consequent hopelessness and despair. The Jesuit Refugee Service accompanies many of these brothers and sisters of ours, serving them as companions, advocating their cause in an uncaring world. The General Congregation appeals to all Provinces to support the Jesuit Refugee Service in every way possible. And we call on the international Society to join efforts with other international institutions and organizations to combat the injustices which uproot peoples from their land and families.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ In affirming this, I do not want to imply that most Jesuits (and some of their companions) have become involved in this ministry with the purposeful intention of seeking ‘honour, prestige or recognition’ (though that might be the case for very few), but rather that because of the nature, magnitude and tragic consequences of the issues that the ministry to the forcibly displaced seeks to address, this apostolate has gained much wider recognition and, in some cases, praise and accolades, not common to other social ministries.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. GC33, D. 1, 45.

¹⁶⁹ GC34, D. 3, 16.

As for GC35, short references to service and ministry to the forcibly displaced are made in several places in the first three decrees, regarding the painful reality in which they live;¹⁷⁰ the need to reintegrate them into the community and reconcile them with God¹⁷¹ and the effect of environmental degradation as a cause of their displacement.¹⁷² The main reference to the forcibly displaced is found at the end of Decree 3 where, as we mentioned earlier, migration and refugees are included in the list of global priorities for the Society. Here too the work and approach of the Jesuit Refugee Service is affirmed:

Ever since Fr Arrupe called the attention of the Society to the plight of refugees, the phenomenon of forced migration for different reasons has increased dramatically. These massive movements of people create great suffering among millions. Therefore, this Congregation reaffirms that attending to the needs of migrants, including refugees, internally displaced, and trafficked people, continue to be an apostolic preference of the Society. Moreover, we reaffirm that the Jesuit Refugee Service adhere to its present Charter and Guidelines.¹⁷³

Finally, in GC36 reference to the Society's ministry with the forcibly displaced appears in connection with its call to be an agent of reconciliation with humanity, amid "the shocking forms of suffering and injustice that millions of our brothers and sisters endure".¹⁷⁴ Among these various forms of suffering, three have appeared with consistency from many of our Provinces and Regions: (1) the injustices and inequalities experienced by marginalised peoples; (2) fundamentalism, intolerance, and ethnic-religious-political conflicts as a source of violence, and (3) the displacement of peoples (refugees, migrants, and internally displaced peoples)¹⁷⁵:

In the face of attitudes hostile to these displaced persons, our faith invites the Society to promote everywhere a more generous culture of hospitality. The Congregation recognizes the necessity of promoting the international articulation of our service to migrants and refugees, finding ways of collaboration with JRS.¹⁷⁶

We will address later, and in greater detail, the promotion of this 'culture of hospitality' in regards to forcibly displaced people. Moreover, and as expressed in the previous chapter, part of this promotion resides in the ministry of reconciliation to the receiving communities:

Those who have all the necessities of life and live far from poverty also need the message of hope and reconciliation, which frees them from fear of migrants and refugees, the excluded

¹⁷⁰ Cf. GC35, D. 1, 6.

¹⁷¹ Cf. GC35, D. 2, 13.

¹⁷² Cf. GC35, D. 3, 33-35.

¹⁷³ GC35, D. 3, 39.

¹⁷⁴ GC36, D. 1, 25.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. GC36, D. 1, 26-28.

¹⁷⁶ GC36, D. 1, 26.

and those who are different, and that opens them to hospitality and to making peace with enemies.¹⁷⁷

Yet, as important as these direct references to the forcibly displaced in these documents are, equally important is to consider how the main themes taken up by the Congregations affect the Society of Jesus' apostolate to them. As mentioned earlier, GC34's emphases on and approach to justice, evangelisation, culture and interreligious dialogue are all areas whose implementation directly influences its work with the forcibly displaced. As is the encompassing theme of GC35's Decree 3 on reconciliation—a paramount issue not only in the lives of those who have been expelled from their homes by conflict and violence, but also among communities and even nations affected by the nefarious globalisation of sinful structures beyond their control:

A political consequence of globalisation has been the weakening of political sovereignty experienced by many nation-states all over the world. Some states feel this phenomenon as a particular type of global marginalisation and the loss of national respect. Transnational interests, unconstrained by national laws and often abetted by corruption, frequently exploit the natural resources of the poor. Powerful economic groups foment violence, war, and arms trafficking.¹⁷⁸

The reality is that basically all the issues that affect the poor and marginalised in the world, also affect the forcibly displaced, who in addition bear the challenges of having to face them in countries (or places) other than their own, where they also experience suspicion, lack of acceptance, and xenophobia. In such dire conditions, it is often the faith, spirituality and religious traditions and customs of these 'crucified peoples' of the world that give them hope and keep them going, often for long periods of time. Those involved in the social ministries of the Society of Jesus, and in particular in its apostolate to the forcibly displaced, are called to understand, respect and learn from these traditions. And at the same time, when appropriate, they are also called to express and share their own faith and beliefs. As companions in the service of faith and promotion of justice in the Ignatian tradition, this faith component is articulated in the spirituality of the social apostolate. As we continue our journey towards providing a practical application of the Spiritual Exercises for the forcibly displaced, we begin the next section by exploring the role of Ignatian spirituality in the Society's social ministries.

¹⁷⁷ GC36, D. 1, 31.

¹⁷⁸ GC35, D. 3, 26.

1.2. Ignatian spirituality and the spirituality of the Social Apostolate

As cited earlier (footnote 8) Decree 32 of General Congregation 31, on the *Social Apostolate*, states:

Since, finally, every form of the apostolate of the Society of Jesus flows from its mission “for the defence and propagation of the faith and the progress of souls in Christian life and learning”, we must be very careful lest the social apostolate be reduced merely to temporal activity.

The Decree continues:

This is all the more necessary because in these activities men [sic] are often affected by one-sided “ideologies” and violent passions. Never more than in our day is it necessary therefore, that that “universal love which embraces in our Lord all parties, even though they are at odds with one another” ([Co 823]), should shine forth among the companions of Jesus. Our men should be looking only to this, that they are trying to restore “peace on earth”, a peace that is “based on truth, on justice, on love, on freedom”. We are not forbidden, therefore, to undertake those things which tend to infuse Christian principles into public life, provided that means in keeping with our Institute are employed, in the light of the Church's teaching and with proper respect for the sacred hierarchy [(Cf. GC28, d. 29, n. 16)].¹⁷⁹

Though written over fifty years ago, these words are still a valid and fitting cautionary reminder to ensure that our service and justice activities are always grounded in our faith and our distinctive Ignatian charism and spirituality.

1.2.1. The relationship between Ignatian spirituality and the task of commitment to justice

It is well known that Ignatius’ personal experience of God from the beginning of his conversion was an experience of the Holy Trinity. This Trinitarian experience of one God who loves the world and gives Godself up for its liberation (cf. Contemplation on the Incarnation, [SpEx 101-109]) is of course embodied in Jesus who, according to Josep Rambla “will be for Ignatius the concrete and ultimate expression of service to humanity in his time”.¹⁸⁰ This service to humanity for Ignatius, as we have mentioned before, will translate into a deep desire to help ‘souls’ through concrete actions, seeking to bring about God’s Kingdom especially for those in greatest need. From the time of his conversion, first in his years as ‘pilgrim’ and then during his stay in Rome, Ignatius will be deeply aware of those in greatest need and his relationship with the poor will be a constant in his life, linking “a special sensitivity for the poor and for poverty to his apostolic charism”.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ GC31, D. 32, 3.

¹⁸⁰ JOSEP M. RAMBLA, “Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice” in *Promotio Iustitiae* 119 (2015) 8.

¹⁸¹ RAMBLA, “Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice”, p. 9.

Ignatius comes out of his experience in Manresa “with *other eyes*, with another outlook on reality”, writes Rambla, seeing all things through God’s perspective. He articulates this outlook of the world by the Trinity in his *Spiritual Exercises* and wants all who engage in them to identify with this perspective in such a way that they finish them prepared to “love and serve, in all things” ([*SpEx* 233]) and to “seek and find God, in all things”.¹⁸² Ignatius’ desire is that as exercitants learn with the help of the *Exercises* to eliminate disordered attachments, they also learn to assimilate Christ’s ways of poverty, simplicity, humility, compassion and solidarity with those who suffer. Moreover, in imitating Jesus’ bearing of his own cross, they should also learn to grow in a willingness to bear similar suffering. As mentioned earlier, for Ignatius, friendship with the poor makes us friends of Christ.¹⁸³

But while Ignatius’ vision and outlook on the world are given shape in the Society’s foundational documents (cf. the *Formula of the Institute*, the *Constitutions*, *Spiritual Diary*, *Letters*), inspired in a spirituality in line with a commitment to justice and a preferential option for the poor, at this early stage of the Society there is no mention of an institutionalised and structural response to confront the challenges of poverty and injustice.¹⁸⁴ The progression to this formulation will take time—though individual and localised institutional projects and initiatives (as we saw with the early Companions) will abound throughout the centuries.¹⁸⁵ However, that progression will eventually lead to sowing the seeds of a recognisable Jesuit ‘social apostolate’, first articulated at the turn of the 19th century at the 24th General Congregation (1892)¹⁸⁶, and following Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum* issued in 1891 –the first encyclical to address the social problem in its entirety.¹⁸⁷ As we have also

¹⁸² Cf. *Monumenta Natalis*, V, 162.

¹⁸³ Cf. “Carta a los Padres y Hermanos del Colegio de Padua” (MHSI 22 Ep. Ign I, 572-577) in SAN IGNACIO, *Obras Completas*, 2nd ed., Madrid: Editorial Católica 1963, pp. 700-704. And as mentioned before, this has been the experience of many people in the apostolate of accompaniment of and service to the forcibly displaced, who often express how this ministry has strengthened and deepened their faith and relationship with God.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. RAMBLA, “Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice”, p. 12.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. RAMBLA, “Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice”, pp. 14-15.

¹⁸⁶ The Congregation urged that the Society “most vigorously support, through superiors and others of Ours, the spiritual care of men [sic], especially workers and the poor, and bring it about that, through the Spiritual Exercises and our sodalities [today’s Christian Life Communities] conducted in accord with the early norms of the Society, they might lead them with full zeal to every work of piety and charity [...]” (GC24, D. 20, 4). Cf. JOHN W. PADBERG, MARTIN D. O’KEEFE and JOHN L. MCCARTHY, *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations, A Brief History and a Translation of the Decrees*, St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1994, p. 487.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. LEO XIII, Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (15 May 1891); http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html. Accessed 19 June 2018.

seen, the fruits of those seeds would yield a great harvest at GC32 and the last four General Congregations which reinforced the direction taken since then.

Recapitulating some of the insights we have already referred to in the previous sections, Rambla points to four aspects of Ignatian spirituality “which foster a spirituality in the commitment for justice” and which must be present in the service to the forcibly displaced: 1) its integral and integrating relationship with the world in all its elements (cultural, social, spiritual) and its commitment to the transformation of the world into God’s Kingdom; 2) its special sensitivity for evangelical poverty and helping the poor and marginalised, including the forcibly displaced; 3) its seeking to achieve the greater glory of God and the common good, in every context and era, and as new challenges arise, and 4) its recognition that social action is required as part of evangelisation.¹⁸⁸ Of course, this ‘evangelisation’ does not refer to ‘conversion’ to the Christian faith, but rather to the proclamation of and witness to Christ’s gospel, his *euangelion*, and its values.

1.2.2. What Ignatian spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises contribute to a commitment that struggles for social justice

The way of ‘sentir’ and express the presence and action of God’s Spirit in the lives of men and women—both Jesuits and companions—in the Ignatian tradition, should inform their commitment to social justice and define how they fulfil this commitment. The *Spiritual Exercises*, understood as a manual for personal conversion, help deepen one’s union with God and free oneself—through discernment and indifference—from any disordered affections that get in the way of making an election for God and God’s creatures.¹⁸⁹ Their purpose is, in Saint Ignatius’ words, ‘to help save one’s soul’ ([*SpEx* 23]), but that is not all. For Ignatius, saving one’s soul is not a selfish endeavour—it gives one the freedom to help others save their souls as well. Thus, the fruit of the *Exercises* must be apostolic service and, for Ignatius,

¹⁸⁸ Cf. RAMBLA, “Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice”, p. 16. Clarke concurs with these points in his attempt to integrate Ignatian spirituality and what he sees as an emerging ‘societal consciousness’. Cf. THOMAS E. CLARKE, “Ignatian Spirituality and Societal Consciousness” in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 7, n. 4 (1975) 127-150. We will explore these themes further in the next chapter.

¹⁸⁹ “The ministry of the *Spiritual Exercises* is of particular importance in this regard. A key element in the pedagogy of the *Exercises* is that its aim is to remove the barriers between God and man so that the Spirit speaks directly with man [sic...]. Moreover, the pedagogy of the *Exercises* is a pedagogy of discernment. It teaches a man [sic] to discover for himself where God is calling him, what God wants him to do, as he is, where he is, among his own people” (GC 32, D. 4, 57).

a service that has to take place within an ecclesial context, as emphasised in different sections of the *Exercises* ([*SpEx* 18, 42, 170, 229, 351, 352-370])¹⁹⁰:

The *Exercises* can also help to form Christians who, having personally experienced God as Saviour, are able to stand back from the spurious absolutes of competing ideologies, and because of this detachment can play a constructive part in the reform of social and cultural structures. Thus, the ministry of the *Spiritual Exercises* is one of the most important we can undertake today. We should by all means encourage studies, research and experiment directed toward helping our contemporaries experience the vitality of the *Exercises* as adapted to the new needs which are theirs. Moreover, the spirit of the *Exercises* should pervade every other ministry of the Word that we undertake.¹⁹¹

Following from this, we could argue that the *Spiritual Exercises* should also be considered as a ‘manual’ for social transformation and action. In fact, as we shall see later, in certain instances it has been used explicitly as such:

The *Spiritual Exercises* turn around the great theme of freedom, though not in the form of human rights or political liberty, as the Bible treats great themes of divine and human justice without applying the categories of modern society and culture. Discernment is seeking freedom in daily living and working and in major decisions — to free us in the social apostolate to love God more, to show deeper compassion with those who suffer, to serve better the most vulnerable among our neighbours.¹⁹²

Thus, in the faith-justice mission, Ignatian spirituality in general, and the *Spiritual Exercises* in particular, should help Ignatian men and women to¹⁹³:

1. *Be in touch with concrete reality*, integrating all aspects of life but seen through the eyes of faith, which is to say with the eyes of love (Galatians 5:6). As a being in relation “with all other things”, one needs to understand the reality of one’s world in all “its variety, richness and complexity”. And each person also needs to reflect on the reality of their personal contribution to the sinful structures of the world (cf. in the *First Week* of the *Exercises*, [*SpEx* 55-61]) and the suffering it has caused others. Sharing life with the poorest, and being aware of the injustices and suffering imposed on them, help make this reality even ‘more real’. There is nothing, for example, that makes death more real than the death of a loved one, especially a parent or a child, and especially when their deaths

¹⁹⁰ In Ignatius’ ecclesial mysticism we encounter an evolution from his initial religious individualism to an ecclesiological emphasis—from being a solitary pilgrim to being a Christian rooted in the community with great fidelity for the Pope. And we should remember that all this happens in the midst of great challenges and difficulties he encounters with the Church as an Institution: in Alcalá Ignatius was imprisoned 42 days without knowing exactly why, in Salamanca 22 days, and in Paris, Venice and Rome there were other processes, but he never took any other advocate than God, on whom he placed all his trust.

¹⁹¹ GC 32, D. 4, 58.

¹⁹² SOCIAL APOSTOLATE SECRETARIAT GENERAL CURIA OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, “Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus”, p. 89.

¹⁹³ Unless otherwise referenced, the following section picks up some of the main concepts of the second half of Rambla’s article. Cf. RAMBLA, “Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice”, pp. 16-23.

take place under tragic or violent circumstances—sadly a common reality for many forcibly displaced people.

2. *Respond to the call to serve*: the concrete reality which informs one's spirituality also calls each person to action (*love is expressed more in deeds than in words*, cf. [SpEx 230]); to *help souls* in response to the ever-challenging question "what am I doing for Christ?" [SpEx 53], travelling to all the corners of the world for God's greatest glory and the common good. It is not, however, individualistic service, but service done in friendship and collaboration, in community. And it is also mutual, sharing from what one has been given with one's friends in love (cf. [SpEx 231]), always being open to the possibility that such mutuality can occur with anyone, including those one might think have nothing to offer.
3. *To be discerning in one's decisions and options*: so as to discover the truest needs and the best way to respond to them following "Christ's way", so that such response is of the greatest and more universal benefit and influence (cf. [Co 622]). The *Exercises*, imbued with evangelical wisdom, guide people in this search, helping them to free themselves from disordered affections that blind them to this pursuit, helping them to determine the best courses of actions—the best way to intervene—in their quest for justice. What is required is a 'lucidity of discernment' to help respond to the *what to do's* in whatever context and time they find themselves. What is required, as Pedro Arrupe would say, is not only to love, but to love discretely (*discreta caritas*): "in the struggle for justice, we need the gifts of council and discernment, the charism of spiritual discretion, to know how to separate, in all aspects of the world, what pertains to God and what pertains to sin".¹⁹⁴
4. *Find God's presence in the mission one has been entrusted*: Ignatian spirituality, as it is well-known, is about finding God in action. The concrete reality which informs one's spirituality also calls people to reflect and to respond in gratitude to the reality of how God sustains everything around them and labours in the here and now in them and in this world, inviting them to do the same and giving them the resources and gifts to do so (cf. [SpEx 234-237]). Work for justice then becomes a spiritual experience, regardless of the

¹⁹⁴ PEDRO ARRUPE, "Formación para la promoción de la justicia" in *La Iglesia de hoy y del futuro*, Bilbao/Santander: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1982, p. 357.

type of activity involved (prayer or contemplation, but also study or administration) because as Ignatius makes clear, “what makes an activity spiritual is not its nature, but the love which drives and informs it”.¹⁹⁵

5. *Prevent fear from paralysing one’s engagement:* a person’s spirituality not only immerses him or her in the concrete reality of the people they seek to serve and gives them the tools to discern how, but also invites them to reach out to this world knowing that, in following Jesus’ way—no matter what they do in the pursuit of justice—they will be regarded as sinners by some and as saints by others, even by the Church’s high authorities. This is the way of Jesus and the way of the gospel in a world filled with ambiguities, misunderstandings, particular interests and risks. People cannot allow their insecurities and fears to prevent them from doing the good within their power. As Ignatius used to say, if the things we do are good, and the means are not anti-evangelical, carrying them out is to collaborate with the work of God.
6. *Be men and women for others with joy and consolation:* though Rambla does not mention them explicitly, I believe two further aspects of Ignatian spirituality should inspire and underline the characteristics we have considered above. One of them is a particular attitude towards life that defines how people relate to others—that well-known Ignatian value which reminds us that we are called to see ourselves as ‘men and women for and with others’.¹⁹⁶ This means that all ‘actions, intentions and operations’ are to be oriented towards God and to what contributes to God’s Reign drawing nearer. This means also that people are not only called to serve but, if this contributes to God’s Reign, to allow others to serve them, to care for them, to accompany them. It means, as articulated in that well-known African proverb: ‘I am, because we are’, that we are intrinsically interconnected.

The other aspect involves two words—joy and consolation—and is spelled out in the third prelude and fifth point of the *Exercises* for the Fourth Week: “It is to ask for what I

¹⁹⁵ RAMBLA, “Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice”, p. 20.

¹⁹⁶ Of course, this is an ideal and, as with all ideals, it can be quite difficult to achieve. Yet, as Pedro Arrupe also reminds us: “Only the man of God, the ‘spiritual man’, in the sense of being elevated by the Spirit, can be the man for others in the long run, the man for justice, capable of contributing a true transformation of the world, who eliminates from himself structures of sin”. ARRUPE, “Formación para la promoción de la justicia”, p. 357. Of course, what he says about ‘men’ also applies to ‘women’. And it might be consoling to remember that being ‘people of God’ is first and foremost a grace, a gift of God.

desire. Here it will be to ask for the grace to be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord” [SpEx 221], and “Consider the office of consoler which Christ our Lord carries out, and compare it with the way friends console one another” [SpEx 224]. Ignatian spirituality is a spirituality of consolation (every increase in faith, hope and charity) and of joy. If Ignatian men and women fail to bring these attributes to their work for justice, then their mission will be incomplete. A careful reading of these two points shows that what they are being called to do is to be ‘channels’ of Christ’s joy and consolation—they are not their source. But with God’s grace and openness from their part, they can interiorise them in such a way that they become habitual in their way of proceeding. They are habits of the heart every person is called to strive for.

We will see in the last section of this chapter how these elements of Ignatian spirituality—as a spirituality in pursuit of justice—inform the Society of Jesus’ specific ministry to forcibly displaced people of faith, as it strives to understand the reality of their lives, find the best way to respond to their plight, learn from their courage and resilience, and experience the mystery of God in them. For now, we conclude this section with Claudio Burgaleta’s comments regarding various contributions made by Jesuits and companions writing about their experiences of Ignatian spirituality in their respective social justice ministries, as I believe they provide a fitting summary to some of the salient elements we have considered in this section¹⁹⁷:

As one would expect, Jesuit spirituality appears frequently in these testimonies. First and foremost, recounted is the legacy of the *Spiritual Exercises*, predominantly its pedagogy of reading the movements of spirits, its language of spiritual combat and spiritual freedom. The *Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* are invoked not only to understand the interior life, but the turbulence of a ministry committed to battling injustice, with the goal of applying these rules to become a contemplative in action. Crucial aids in the ministry of social transformation seem to be the spiritual freedom or indifference characteristic of the *First Principle and Foundation*, and the solidarity with the poor expressed by Christ in the *Contemplation of the Call of the King*. In addition, Christ’s way of proceeding expressed in the *Mediation of the Two Standards* (poverty, offering no resistance to insults, and humility, in sharp contrast with the logic of the enemy of our human nature—riches, honour, pride) finds resonance in the lives of many of the contributors. Their ministry among the poor echoes the school of thought that sees the *Exercises* as a conversion process culminating in the election or reformation of life. The election here is the process of choosing and being

¹⁹⁷ Cf. CLAUDIO BURGALETA, “Ignatian Spirituality & Social Justice Ministries” in *Promotio Iustitiae* 90 (2006) 119-124.

chosen by the poor, with all the dying to self and rising to a new life of commitment and companionship with the poor that this entails, a ministry similar to that of Jesus.¹⁹⁸

1.2.3. Applications of the Exercises within the Social Apostolate

Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* have been adapted and applied for all types of circumstances and audiences, and we will explore in detail the process and criteria of these applications in the next chapter. While in most cases efforts have been made not to deviate from Ignatius' text and method (with some not-so-helpful exceptions!), different emphases have been given to the *content* (for example in the choice of particular meditations and contemplations); to the *delivery* (places, format, media), as well as the *directives* given by spiritual accompaniers and directors to the receivers of the Exercises, in order to take into account their diverse needs and circumstances. Thus, throughout their history, and particularly in recent years, the Exercises have been adapted widely to address social justice issues—marginalisation, ecological degradation, gender discrimination, migration, persecution of indigenous peoples and dehumanisation of the poor—all with the view to promote a faith that does justice.¹⁹⁹

In this next section, we look at three of these issues and at how givers of the Exercises have sought to adapt and apply their content, method and delivery in responding to them. These include: (1) the struggle for liberation in Latin America; (2) the call for an ecological conversion and protection of our 'mother/sister Earth', and (3) the need to address a "legacy of systematic discrimination against women" (cf. GC34, decree 14). Rather than to present specific adaptations of the Exercises, our interest here is to explore those factors, circumstances and considerations givers of the Exercises have taken into account in order to meet the needs of peoples in the margins (and of our 'common home', the Earth) affected by these issues. As usual, our motivation in this exploration is to discern or detect possible criteria that can be used to come up with a valid method of application of the Exercises for the forcibly displaced, and which will guide the development of the Ignatian Exercises we will develop in chapter 5 for survivors of forced displacement—marginalised people themselves.

¹⁹⁸ BURGALETA, "Ignatian Spirituality & Social Justice Ministries", p. 121. In regards to other characteristics mentioned, the author adds: "While these are not properly Ignatian themes (community life as companionship, inter-religious dialogue, inculturation), the contributors refer to them in an Ignatian manner. That is, they mention them in their spiritual dimension as understood in the documents of the Society, and their role in this work of battling for social justice", p. 121.

¹⁹⁹ See CARLOS CABARRÚS, *Puestos con el Hijo: Guía para un mes de Ejercicios en clave de Justicia*, México: CIE 1993, as an example of this type of adaptation.

A summary of some of these criteria will be presented at the end of the section, after considering all three topics.

1.2.3.1. Latin America: a struggle for liberation, marked by solidarity

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, by the end of 2106 Colombia counted 7.4 million internally displaced people within its borders, ranking it first in the world for that particular grouping of forcibly displaced peoples. Dictatorial military regimes, conflicts over resources, widespread violence, protracted situations of abject injustice, persecution and marginalisation have also produced thousands of refugees in the last forty years from countries such as Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua and, more recently, Colombia and Venezuela. While a certain democratic progress has been evidenced in electoral processes of some Latin American countries in the past two decades, the upsurge in generalised violence (assaults, kidnappings, assassinations) in the last few years, has led to an increased deterioration in the social fabric of many of these nations, which in turn has provoked new waves of forced displacement.²⁰⁰

The Church, despite its shortcomings, has tried to be a prophetic voice in denouncing the sinful structures behind the social injustices and oppression that have plagued the poor and marginalised in those countries for many decades, at the same time providing concrete and practical services to meet their needs in diverse areas such as education, health, employment and advocacy for the human and cultural rights of its people. Through Liberation theology (first developed in the 1950s and 1960s) and other Latin American contextual theologies, it has tried to provide theological and faith-based underpinnings to its praxis and its mission to bring about God's kingdom in the continent. We have already seen how in the last forty or so years, the apostolic mission of the Society of Jesus has been deeply affected and reoriented to meet the challenges posed by these generalised situations of structural sin and injustice in its service of faith and promotion of justice. These social, political, economic and ecclesial contexts have also had an impact on the way the *Spiritual Exercises* have been reassessed for and offered to diverse populations affected by these adverse conditions.

²⁰⁰ Gang violence, for example, in the Central American countries of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala has conspired with economic desperation to drive an unrelenting exodus of young men and also entire families, seeking safety in other countries, mainly the United States. See, for example, Kirk Semple, "Fleeing Gangs, Central American Families Surge Toward U.S." in *The New York Times* (e-newspaper), 12 November 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/13/world/americas/fleeing-gangs-central-american-families-surge-toward-us.html>. Accessed 20 June 2016.

As it would be expected, the particular situation of Latin America and the Caribbean has helped highlight certain aspects of the content of the Exercises, which ultimately are decisive for their internal dynamic of discernment. Reflection on an ‘integral human liberation’ (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 26), for example—a theme of utmost relevance in this continent—underlined the liberating capacity of the Ignatian Exercises for those making them. And the same practice of the Exercises, refocused with these new ‘accents’, has proved effective in offering them to a new generation of exercitants.²⁰¹ We take a look now at two examples of this call for reassessment and application of the Exercises to address social justice issues from the perspective of Latin America: (1) a contextual reading of the *Exercises* by Ignacio Ellacuría, and (2) the guidelines presented in a ‘manual’ developed by the Latin American Centres of Ignatian Spirituality.

1.2.3.1.1. A Latin American ‘historicized’ reading of the Spiritual Exercises²⁰²

As we would expect, for Ignacio Ellacuría, a contextual reading of the *Exercises* from a Latin American perspective, requires a correct interpretation of both Christian salvation and historical reality—in other words, it must be a ‘historicized’ reading: “Finding God in the actualization of history is an essential problem for the theology, the pastoral action, and the spirituality, that is demanded in Latin America today”.²⁰³ For Ellacuría, the issue is one of reconciling the message of salvation with historical praxis, and because the *Spiritual Exercises* have as their goal a personal encounter with God’s will, he sees them as being a ‘principle of historicization’; in other words, they pave the way for the word of God to be received based on one’s own situation, and “they historicize this word of God insofar as they turn to historical, personal and circumstantial signs in order to enable that word to be

²⁰¹ Cf. CPAL, *Ejercicios Espirituales en América Latina: Para ayudar al modo nuestro de dar los Ejercicios hoy* 2010, 24. Cf. <http://es.slideshare.net/infocatolicos/directorio-eeenal2010cpal>. Accessed 19 June 2018.

²⁰² The content in this section is based on IGNACIO ELLACURÍA’s “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius” in *Spiritus* 10 (2010) 205–242, translated by J. Matthew Ashley from the original in Spanish: “Lectura Latinoamericana de los *Ejercicios Espirituales* de san Ignacio” in *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología* (1991) 111–147. See also, J. MATTHEW ASHLEY, “Ignacio Ellacuría and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola” in *Theological Studies* 61, n. 1 (2000) 16–39.

²⁰³ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, p. 207. As Ashley points out, “for Ellacuría, to understand how any complex of human concepts functions in a specific social location, shaped by a unique constellation of historical forces, is to ‘historicize’ those concepts: ‘Demonstrating the impact of certain concepts within a particular context is what is understood here as their historicization’”. For instance, he notes how for Ellacuría, within the particular historical context of El Salvador, the defence of private property as a basic human right in fact served to disguise and legitimise a system that attacked human dignity in general, and for the majority of its people denied in practice the right to own property. Cf. ASHLEY, “Ignacio Ellacuría and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola”, p. 24.

discovered [an acted upon] in the concrete”.²⁰⁴ The *Exercises* themselves are something active in that they are based on an election and focus on a praxis, their goal is to bring about the completion of a mission in the world, and they help exercitants make decisions that affect their reality and the reality of others.

After offering these introductory observations, Ellacuría proceeds with a historicized reading, in a very systematic way, of each of the main ‘sections’ of the *Exercises*. For him, the *Exercises* display in a historical process—that is perpetually recapitulated—sin, the life of Jesus, his death, and his resurrection, all situated between the *Principle and Foundation* and the *Contemplatio*. The person or subject of the *Principle and Foundation* is not someone who is only supposed to ‘receive’ and contemplate; rather, it is a person who is supposed to act, and to act in freedom and indifference. But the ‘action’, the praise, reverence and especially the service of God our Lord, is not yet totally clear at this early stage—it will fall to the rest of the *Exercises* to communicate what this service is, because that is where Jesus, the one who reveals God and our path in life, will be made present. For Ellacuría, even what the salvation of one’s soul means, which is presented as our end goal, is something that remains to be determined: the problem that remains open is how our desire for personal salvation is to be joined concretely with the necessity of historical salvation. He believes that Ignatius accepts the creation as a framework, but only as a first stage of that history of salvation that has sin as its essential point of reference: “Any interpretation of reality and of Christianity that does not take up sin as an essential point is a superficial interpretation, both of reality and of Christianity, and is not an Ignatian one”.²⁰⁵ In other words, the theological interpretation of Jesus’ death makes no sense without reference to sin—the sin of men and women, and the sin of the world: it is in historical sin that the evil of the world coincides with the presence or absence of God, where the grace of God acts and where the action of Jesus’ followers is required.

Sin in the First Week is already seen as sin from the perspective of the cross, and Jesus’ life—and with greater justification, his death—is the way it is because it develops historically in a

²⁰⁴ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, p. 207. Ellacuría adds: “Saint Ignatius’s *Exercises* use what is fundamentally an historical method, one that is very effective theologically for historicizing Christian faith and praxis. They try to posit one’s own history as the hermeneutical place for interpreting who one is and what God’s will is for oneself”, p. 208.

²⁰⁵ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, p. 213.

world of sin: his way of life sets the stage for the collision with the world that leads to his death. Jesus announced the reign of God, but in a historical situation that responded to him according to its circumstances. As followers of the historical Jesus, and as people of God, we now prepare the definite arrival—the actualisation—of God’s reign in our historical following of the Lord. This action has a public (and political) character and as such it is open to anti-Christian sentiments and backlash. The fundamental characterisation of this anti-Christian posture is formulated by St Ignatius in his meditation on the Two Standards (cf. [SpEx 136-148]), and expressed in three central terms (of the *first standard*) to which he gives a precise order—riches, honour and pride:

Basically, St Ignatius proposes it in individual terms, and does not pay attention explicitly to the same problem on social and national levels [...]. But the ‘materialist’ principle of riches as something that gives a specific shape to one’s life is clearly worked out in Ignatius [...]. In the same way, honour, based on having more, as an ideal that is trying to get higher, is a principle of alienation [...]. Pride would be the formulation most explicitly related to domination, insofar as it implies that all the rest should be subject to the one who has the highest social standing by virtue of the wealth that he possesses.²⁰⁶

According to Ellacuría, the historical dynamism that constructs our present world is based on these ‘values’ of the *first standard* (which give the socially dominant classes their power), but even “a purely historical vision shows that these values actualise a world that is the very form of sin and of evil: a world that permits and even requires that the greater part of the world is left out is, in itself, its own condemnation”.²⁰⁷

Ignatius lays out the fundamental characterisation of the Christian posture also with three central terms (of the *second standard*), with their own proper order: poverty, insults and humility. For Ellacuría, they are an expression of service, and can be found in the lives of those who inhabit the ‘third world’, not as a strictly political concept, but rather as a theological one, understood as the world of the poor, and especially that world of the poor that live in the great number of oppressed nations—the world of our current universal history, which is that of the concrete reality of international issues, including massive forced displacement. This third world as a theological concept situates the problem in a framework of active domination that entails the necessity of an active response in terms of liberation:

It gives value to each particular ‘world’ of the oppressed within the universal structure of oppression [...]. It sees this third world as a result of sin and as the victim of sin, but also as the place where God is concealed [...]. Seeing this ‘world’ from the perspective of sin situates its reality in the history of salvation [...]. Seeing it as the place of God’s scandalous

²⁰⁶ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, p. 224.

²⁰⁷ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, p. 226.

predilection offers the salvific key to history [...]. The third world, insofar as it is the result of sins of omission and commission on the part of the rest of humanity, has the characteristics of the servant of Yahweh: The wounded one is salvific for the one who approaches him or her with the desire to heal. The one who does not have anything finds out what the human being is and what he ought to do, when he does not put his trust in the riches that he has. God is present as saviour of the poor and, in the poor, of everyone else.²⁰⁸

This third world, where “God is present as saviour of the poor and, in the poor, of everyone else”, which has also the characteristics of the servant of Yahweh, and which points to the necessity of Christian values and of the historical significance of following Jesus, entails a decisive challenge to render Christianity efficacious by a return to these evangelical values.

Finally, the historical (and political) character of the Third and Fourth Weeks of the Exercises stems from the fact that it is through a death—and a historical-political death—that the glory of the resurrection is attained: “The power of sin dominates the way the historical world is shaped, and has to collide with the power of Christ that seeks that the world be shaped by grace” and by love.²⁰⁹ For Ellacuría, in this moment of the process that the resurrection is living through historically, the relation with the world and with God has to be fundamentally a relation of love. This is where we find the Christian basis for reconstructing the world as a home for God and for human beings. The love that Ignatius talks about is a love like the one that the historical Jesus lived out: it is a love that ought to show itself more in deeds than in words (cf. [SpEx 230]). It is the historical moment of free and personal praxis, of giving and communicating oneself as the typical form of Christian action:

There is a privileged action for communicating and encountering God, and it is the historical action of following the historical Jesus, as seen from the perspective of the power of the resurrection [...]. Jesus encounters God and communicates God in the life that he leads. This life is a comprehensive gift of himself in the proclamation of the reign of God in a specific socio-political world. Therefore, it is in the historical following of the historical life of Jesus that the genuine Christian contemplation in action is going to be present. God becomes present in all things, but in a special and specifically Christian way in the cries of those oppressed. God becomes present in every good action, but in a special and specifically Christian way in that historical action that liberates from the sin that oppresses the world.²¹⁰

Ellacuría’s ‘historicized reading’ of the *Exercises* is in line with his theologising contextually which we saw in the previous chapter, where the necessity of bringing theology to honestly face reality was emphasised: Christian salvation and historical reality cannot be considered separately. And his theological conception of the ‘third world’ as the world of the poor who

²⁰⁸ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, p. 226.

²⁰⁹ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, p. 235.

²¹⁰ ELLACURÍA, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius”, pp. 239-40.

live in the great number of oppressed nations is similarly expressed in his identifying the ‘crucified peoples’ of our world as *the* sign of our times in the light of the Gospel—those who, as the historical continuation of the servant of Yahweh, and because of their willingness to carry the burden of sin, become the ‘light of the nations’.

I believe his contribution, in terms of his reading of the *Spiritual Exercises*, is his argument of what the experience of the Exercises should all lead us to: joining our desire for—and fulfilment of—personal salvation concretely with the necessity and fulfilment of historical salvation for all, and discovering our particular mission (God’s will and desire) in our lives so as to contribute to this goal. As we have seen, the meditation of the *Two Standards* constitutes in essence an anticipation of what today we call structural sin. It highlights the fact that our process of conversion must include a confrontation with the social dimension, and that it should be expected that the election in the *Exercises* will also have a social dimension. But as we have seen, for Ellacuría our contribution (in helping God’s reign become a reality) should not be limited to our ‘areas of comfort’. It should go beyond and reach out to our marginalised brothers and sisters: *God becomes present in every good action, but in a special and specifically Christian way in that historical action that liberates from the sin that oppresses the world*. And that includes also the action of those in this oppressed world: “God is present as saviour of the poor and, in the poor, of everyone else”. In terms of forcibly displaced people, this assertion might also serve as consolation (and a challenge) for them, giving meaning to their suffering. Another challenge is to try and incorporate the social dimension into the Exercises in such a way that it becomes an integral part of the experience of those who receive them, not as a ‘method of indoctrination’, but as a way of becoming more aware of their call to actively participate in the transformation of unjust structures and become agents of social change. And this is what a Latin American directory of the Exercises has tried to do.

1.2.3.1.2. A Latin American way of offering the Spiritual Exercises

The directory created by Latin American directors and entitled ‘*Spiritual Exercises* in Latin America: to help our way of giving the *Exercises* today’,²¹¹ begins also with a long essay

²¹¹ Cf. CPAL, *Ejercicios Espirituales en América Latina: Para ayudar al modo nuestro de dar los Ejercicios hoy*. These “Ejercicios Espirituales en América Latina” is the result of almost five years of work carried out by one of the CPAL networks—the Confederación Latinoamericana de Centros Ignacianos de Espiritualidad

about the theme of promoting a faith that does justice. Its intent is declared right from the start in the prologue of the directory in addressing those giving the *Exercises*:

This Latin American manual assumes, in giving the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, the raw reality of our Continent, as in their own time did the documents [by the Episcopal Conference] of Medellin and Puebla, and more recently of Aparecida (Brazil). This urgency complements perfectly the wider concern of the Society of Jesus to integrate into the *Exercises* its present mission in the service of faith and the promotion of justice in dialogue with cultures and religions.²¹²

The publication, in responding to the historical moment in which the authors find themselves in Latin America, proposes a way or *tool* to contribute to the formation of authentic *missionary disciples*. With this intention, it offers the criteria for a reading which is typically Latin American and Caribbean of the spiritual pedagogy which is proper of the *Exercises*, as well as guidelines to assist givers of the Exercises in their accompaniment task (4).²¹³ It takes as its *composition of place* the Latin American continent itself and considers its socio-cultural, economic, and socio-political situation, as well as the issues of the environment, reality of indigenous people and role of the Church.²¹⁴

Addressing the issue of globalisation, it recognises both its positive and negative aspects, but argues that in order to remain faithful to the pedagogy and intention of the *Exercises* as givers we must promote a different globalisation, marked by solidarity, justice and respect to human rights (13). It also recognises that life in society, previously characterised by a higher level of peaceful and harmonious coexistence, is deteriorating gravely in many countries in the region due to increasing violence caused by an ‘idolatry of money’ and ‘disrespect for the dignity of each person’, among other things (15). The directory points out that indigenous people are continuously being threatened in their very existence, being forcibly displaced and dispossessed of their natural resources. In fact, decisions regarding these resources continue to

(CLACIES)—and is intended to be an updated version of the “Directorio de Ejercicios para América Latina”, produced in 1990 by the Latin American Centres of Spirituality.

²¹² CPAL, *Ejercicios Espirituales en América Latina: Para ayudar al modo nuestro de dar los Ejercicios hoy* 2010, 3.

²¹³ The numbers in brackets refer to paragraph numbers in the document.

²¹⁴ In presenting this ‘composition of place’, and addressing the mission of the universal Society of Jesus, the document makes reference to the 35th General Congregation: “God has created a world with diverse inhabitants, and this is good. Creation expresses the rich beauty of this lovable world: people working, laughing and thriving together are signs that God is alive among us. However, diversity becomes problematic when the differences between people are lived in such a way that people fight, killing each other, and are intent on destruction. Then God in Christ suffers in and with the world, which he wants to renew. Precisely here is our mission situated. It is here that we must discern our mission according to the criteria of the *magis* and the more universal good. God is present in the darkness of life intent on making all things new. God needs collaborators in this endeavour: people whose grace consists in being received under the banner of his Son” (GC 35, D. 2, 22).

be driven by foreign multinationals without any regard for their conservation; instead the earth is being “attacked, eroded and destroyed” (18-19). As mentioned earlier, the Church, despite its many faults and past mistakes, has been and continues to be recognised as a witness of Christ and announcer of his gospel, and has been a prophetic voice and an agent of service in particular on behalf of the poor and marginalised in such areas as health, education, work, housing, economy, culture and advocacy for human rights and reconciliation (19).

This is the context—the composition of place—that has to be taken into account when offering the Exercises in Latin America and the Caribbean, and so their giver must be someone who is well informed and well-versed on what is happening in our globalised world to help “open the eyes of the exercitant to the reality of the world that God wants to save, and from this reality then look for or discern what God is asking from him or her” (45). Directors should also be able to recognise the subjective situation and the social conditionings that determine the life of their exercitants to help them “progress in their concrete situations” (48). Finally, givers of the Exercises must also know and consider the culture and the spiritual processes that are an essential part of the people of Latin America, in particular among the poor and marginalised. This should include the culture and the history of the people, but should go beyond that, including anything that threatens the dignity of people and their communities, the reality of women and of the elderly and issues of domestic violence, indigenous peoples and abuses of any kind (50).

We can see how these guidelines or criteria translate into practical terms considering, for example, the first and second *exercises* of the First Week. As we know, the general purpose of these meditations is to obtain a vision and knowledge of the history of sin, with all its harsh reality and extent. Applied to the described context in Latin America, this should lead to an awareness of the effects of the sins of pride and injustice in the situation of poverty of the ‘clases populares’ (lower socio-economic class) in their societies, caused by the unbalance in the distribution of natural and other resources, the lack of care for the environment and the various forms of oppression, injustice and exclusions allowed by sinful social structures (97). Of utmost importance in these meditations is that exercitants recognise their responsibility as participants in this situation of injustice, lack of solidarity and death (98). Similarly, considering the meditation of the *Call of the King* (cf. [SpEx 91-100]) in the Second Week, this call should move exercitants to a desire to proclaim the Good News and denounce

prophetically any instance of structural sin and injustice—the outcome should be a loving adherence to the person of Christ and a personal conversion, oriented to a radical change of unjust structures (101).

Many other examples are provided in the document which we cannot address here, but their common emphasis suggests that any Christological knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth, who was sent by the Father to the poor and suffering, should compel a disciple to exercise a faith that does justice. To transmit this message and this mission to exercitants, it is imperative that the one who gives the Exercises undergoes a ‘socio-political conversion of heart’, which will help him or her ‘rewrite’ and apply the *Spiritual Exercises* based on a prayerful reading of the ‘signs of the times’, which also upholds the ‘true sentiment’ of the post-conciliar Church and its social doctrine and teachings.²¹⁵

The document is divided into several sections addressing various aspects related to the *Exercises* (their content, method, structure, purpose, etc.); the giver of the Exercises; the receiver; the different types of Spiritual Exercises that can be offered, and the process of the Exercises, going through the Four Weeks. A series of synoptic tables are also presented at the end of the document, outlining the various Ignatian texts, the objective of each exercise and the anticipated spiritual learning from each often connected to an aspect of the social dimension. The document then is truly a Directory and guide for givers of the Exercises to help them apply Ignatius’ text and procedure so as to “integrate into the Exercises the Society of Jesus’ mission in the service of faith and the promotion of justice” and to form ‘authentic missionary disciples’. And as a result of their experience of the Exercises, these disciples will not only understand the reality of injustice and oppression affecting a great proportion of the Latin American people but will also want to challenge the sinful structures that perpetuate such reality, which so contravene God’s project of abundant life for the world and *all* its inhabitants.

1.2.3.2. Our ‘poor’ Mother/Sister Earth

The contemporary debate over development versus ecological preservation, as well as the close relationship between the promotion of justice and the challenges posed by the degradation of the environment, has been a theme of universal social concern addressed by

²¹⁵ Cf. TETLOW, “Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades”, p. 702.

the Society of Jesus for more than twenty-five years.²¹⁶ The ‘ecological question’ raises issues such as our responsibility to future generations, sustainable development, and the fact that those most affected by the earth’s degradation are precisely the poor, whose survival directly depends on the use of the earth’s natural resources—the ‘option for the poor/option for the earth’ relationship. Arguably, our Mother/Sister Earth, because of the mistreatment and abuse it has endured and continues to endure, has now entered the ranks of the ‘poor and marginalised’.

The 35th General Congregation saw this ecological issue as one of the main “*Challenges to Our Mission Today*” (Decree 3), addressing it in terms of our need for reconciliation with creation: “Care of the environment affects the quality of our relationships with God, with other human beings, and with creation itself. It touches the core of our faith in and love for God [...]”²¹⁷ The Decree continues:

The drive to access and exploit sources of energy and other natural resources is very rapidly widening the damage to earth, air, water, and our whole environment, to the point that the future of our planet is threatened. Poisoned water, polluted air, massive deforestation, deposits of atomic and toxic waste are causing death and untold suffering, particularly to the poor. Many poor communities have been displaced, and indigenous peoples have been the most affected.²¹⁸

The Congregation thus recognises the link between the degradation of the environment and abuse of the earth’s natural resources and forced displacement—giving rise to what are now commonly referred to as environmental migrants, environmental refugees or ecologically displaced persons—and urges:

[...] all Jesuits and all partners engaged in the same mission, particularly the universities and research centres, to promote studies and practices focusing on the causes of poverty and the question of the environment’s improvement. We should find ways in which our experiences with refugees and the displaced on one hand, and people who work for the protection of the environment on the other hand, could interact with those institutions, so that research results and advocacy have effective practical benefits for society and the environment.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Already in 1995, the 34th General Congregation presented recommendations to Father General on the topic of ecology, based on the many postulates that came from all over the world. While the Congregation felt that it could not draft an appropriate decree on the subject (due, among other things, to limited time, lack of previous studies by specialists in the field and the broadness of the topic), it still redacted a few recommendations (cf. GC34, 20) to make sure the issue would not be forgotten and would be taken up in the future, as it was at G35.

²¹⁷ GC 35, D. 3, 32.

²¹⁸ GC 35, D. 3, 33.

²¹⁹ GC 35, D. 3, 35. GC36 took up again this theme of our responsibility for the care of the environment in connection with our call to be agents of reconciliation with creation: “Poverty, social exclusion, and marginalization are linked with environmental degradation [...]. The current economic system with its predatory orientation discards natural resources as well as people [...]. We Jesuits are called to help heal a broken world, promoting a new way of producing and consuming, which puts God’s creation at the centre” (GC 36, D. 1, 29).

Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, likewise highlighted the present ecological crisis brought about by the abuse of the earth's natural resources and the degradation of the environment which deeply affects all of us, especially the poorest in society.²²⁰ The Pope emphasised the duty of Christians to face the current challenges and do their part—even as small as it might be—to prevent further damage and deterioration. Such response not only requires positive and proactive actions but also a conversion of heart, mind and attitudes, allowing one's spirit and spirituality to be transformed.²²¹ This emphasis on common responsibility as well as the call to greater awareness and the need for an encompassing 'spirituality of creation' is not something new²²², nor is it the call for the *Spiritual Exercises* to be adapted and applied so as to make this "care for our common home" a priority, based on the holistic approach already present in Ignatius' text.²²³

²²⁰ FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home* (24 May 2015); AAS 107 (2015) 847-945; http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html. Accessed 21 June 2018. Pope Francis states: "We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature", 139.

²²¹ This is a key element in Pope Francis' encyclical (cf. 'Ecological Conversion', nos. 216-221): "'The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast'. For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion" (215); "Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them" (217); "The Australian bishops spoke of the importance of such conversion for achieving reconciliation with creation: 'To achieve such reconciliation, we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God's creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart'" (218); "The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion" (219). "This conversion calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness. First, it entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift" (220). Cf. FRANCIS, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*.

²²² See for example the work of ecological theologian MARK I. WALLACE, *Finding God in the Singing River: Christianity, Spirit, Nature*, Minneapolis: MN: Augsburg Fortress Press 2005. Wallace argues that the global environmental crisis "is a matter of the heart, not the head [...] we no longer experience our co-belonging with nature in such a way that we are willing to alter our lifestyles in order to build a more sustainable future", p. 27. However, we cannot turn our backs on this responsibility. As summarised by GC35: "Globalisation, technology and environmental concerns have challenged our traditional boundaries and have enhanced our awareness that we bear a common responsibility for the welfare of the entire world and its development in a sustainable and living-giving way" (GC 35, D. 2, 20).

²²³ Thus, the spirituality of the *Exercises* invites us to enter deeply into a world which reveals the grandeur of God, yet a world that has been broken by the blindness of human sin. We cannot remain passive and allow further degradation to take place; we are then invited to contribute to restoring the integrity of God's creation, as we search for and find God in all things and love all things in God. For an introduction to the relationship between ecology and Ignatian spirituality see J. LIBANIO, "Ecología" in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 669-673. Taking as starting point the internal dynamics of the *Exercises*, JAIME TATAY, in his article "Una lectura ignaciana de la *Laudato Si'*" in *Manresa* 87, n. 345 (2015) 327-338, suggests that the Ignatian tradition can offer seven main contributions to the contemporary debate on sustainability. Thus, the *Exercises* point us towards a: (1) spirituality of humility (we need to recognise that we are not the centre of the world, God is, cf. [SpEx 23]); (2) spirituality of thanksgiving

In fact, Ignatius' sacramental vision of the universe, which precedes the composition of the *Exercises* (see for example [Au 11]) and will also be articulated in them, is based on two pillars of Ignatian spirituality—creation first and then incarnation: “Because everything is created, everything is sacrament of the Creator. Because God made the world, the world is the habitat of God and *common home of humanity* to which all owe due respect. No one is authorised to possess it or mistreat it in its use”.²²⁴ As we well know, this sense of Ignatius' of the whole of the universe being gift, a grace that descends from above, and in which God continues to labour and inhabit for our sake, finds its greatest expression at the end of the *Exercises* in the *Contemplatio*. Further, as sacrament, the created universe and all that is found in it, offer the possibility of an encounter with God as the divine milieu through which God reveals Godself and waits for us to come to that encounter. And although it is true that in the *Principle and Foundation*, at the beginning of the *Exercises*, Ignatius asserts that all things on the face of the earth are to be used for the purpose for which we have been created (they are the ‘means’ to an end), he also implies that all these things were created by God for us and because of God's love for us. ‘Means’ as they might be, they cannot be used indiscriminately because doing so would be to try to separate God from that which God so loves—the common home God has given to humanity as gift.²²⁵ Because we not only find God *through* all these things but also *in* them, they require our reverence, respect and gratitude, and the more so because of the Incarnation: “the Incarnation of Christ has made creation holy, giving it a vocation: to be sister of the Son and place itself at the service of the Reign of God inaugurated by Him”.²²⁶ It is a vocation in which all people share as well, and which calls for a different way of imagining, understanding and narrating (as created beings), the history of salvation. We look now briefly at three authors who propose different ways of applying the *Exercises* to move forward in this endeavour.

for all we have received (everything is gift which descends from above, cf. [SpEx 237]); (3) spirituality of reconciliation (restoring broken relationships is key for an ecological conversion, cf. *Formula of the Institute*); (4) spirituality of lucidity (greater clarity to recognise our personal contribution to the deterioration of our planet and experience sorrow for it, cf. [SpEx 55]); (5) spirituality of sobriety (greater asceticism in our use of resources, cf. *Rules to Order Oneself in the Use of foods* [SpEx 210-217] to counteract the over-consumption characteristic of our Western world); (6) spirituality of action (every little thing we do can contribute to the care of abuse of creation, cf. [SpEx 230] and so our ecological conversion must touch all aspects of our lives, and we must examine our behaviour continuously to make sure it does, cf. the *Examen* [SpEx 24-43]); (7) an integral spirituality in accordance with an integral ecology, which requires a ‘bird's eye-view’ of the world, an incarnated ‘look’ that takes in all the elements involved which need to be addressed, cf. [SpEx 102].

²²⁴ JOSÉ A. GARCÍA, “Ecología y espiritualidad ignaciana” in *Manresa* 87, n. 345 (2015) p. 319.

²²⁵ Cf. GARCÍA, “Ecología y espiritualidad ignaciana”, p. 321.

²²⁶ GARCÍA, “Ecología y espiritualidad ignaciana”, p. 324.

1.2.3.2.1. Integrating Spirituality

What we need today, according to Alwyn Fernandes, is a ‘spirituality of integration’: one that connects prayer and life, includes all of our temporal and professional duties as important dimensions of our sanctification, and is permeated by an option for the poor”.²²⁷ To achieve this, he supports a ‘creation-centred’ spirituality which emphasises the universe—blessed and graced—as the proper starting point for spirituality, in contrast to the fall/redemption model which he argues has been the basis for our Christian theology for too long.²²⁸ Emphasis on the fallenness of humanity has led to an exaggerated preoccupation with human sinfulness and has taken away from our giving attention, as we should, to divine grace being encountered in all of God’s creation: “Creation-centred spirituality calls for a new attitude towards the earth, a stance of deep respect and reverence, a new humility, an expanded notion of the word ‘rights’ beyond just the human species, to include trees, flowers and all living beings”.²²⁹

Today’s spirituality should also be holistic, showing how everything in the universe is interconnected. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, we notice how Ignatius in fact has a holistic approach wanting to engage the whole person in his or her quest for freedom. And today’s spirituality should also be communitarian. Vatican II’s key concept of the Church as people of God has brought into focus the worldwide community. Thus, Fernandes suggests that the *Principle and Foundation* could be expressed collectively as: “We are created to praise [...] and all things on the face of the earth are created for human beings to assist them [...] and by this means to save humankind”. He believes that this kind of vocabulary emphasises the communitarian nature of salvation and the interdependence of persons, especially in the use

²²⁷ ALWYN FERNANDES, “Spirituality for today: contextualising the *Exercises*” in *Ignis* 19, n. 3 (1990) 137.

²²⁸ Possibly, the best-known proponent of this creation-centred model, at least in the Anglo-Saxon/Celtic world, is Matthew Fox (cf. *Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality* (1983); *The Order of the Sacred Earth* (2017)), and to a certain degree, also Thomas Berry (cf. *The Dream of Earth* (1988); *The Great Work: Our way into the Future* (1999)). Both have argued that the fall/redemption model has tended to lead to an excessive focus on the human to the exclusion of anything beyond or outside of it. As Elizabeth Johnson suggests: “Since theology is the study of God and all things in the light of God, shrinking attention to humanity apart from the rest of creation simply does not do justice to theology’s intrinsic mission. Even more, ignoring the cosmos has a deleterious effect insofar as it paves the way for theology to retreat to otherworldliness, disparage matter, body, and the earth, and offer interpretations of reality far removed from the way things actually work. We must engage the world”. Cf. ELIZABETH A. JOHNSON, “Turn to the Heavens and the Earth: Retrieval of the Cosmos in Theology” in *Vision and Values: Ethical Viewpoints in Catholic Tradition*, edited by Judith A. Dwyer, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press 2007, p. 57.

²²⁹ FERNANDES, “Spirituality for today: contextualising the *Exercises*”, p. 140.

and sharing of the earth's resources: "All the other things on the face of the earth have been given to mankind [sic] to lead them to this end".²³⁰

Reinforcing Fernandes' communitarian approach, José Ignacio García reminds us that in following the path of ecological conversion we must confront and try to limit two risks: a tendency to individualism (the opposite to communitarian spirituality) and a tendency to anthropocentrism, both of which make it difficult to recognise the deep connection that exists among 'everything real'. He points further to three aspects in Ignatian spirituality which promote ecological conversion: its emphasis on the mystery of the Incarnation; the ability to transform the contemplation of the mysteries of Jesus Christ into a commitment to life, and discernment as a tool to approach the real and deal with reality as it is.²³¹

1.2.3.2.2 "Christ in a grain of sand"

Through the *Spiritual Exercises*, Neil Vaney strives to use his broad grasp of scientific theories and discoveries to help raise exercitants' awareness of the intimate bond that exists between the world around us—as the 'home' with which we have been gifted—and the spiritual life which brings us closer to Jesus. In the *Introduction*, he states the purpose of his book:

It attempts to bring you to your own home, your mother earth, this planet, and to begin to see it with fresh eyes. Its goal is to open your gaze to see sky, trees, rocks, and rivers in previously unimagined ways. Seeing with new eyes, you will be ready to see Jesus—the cosmic child and Lord of creation—anew in the four weeks of *The Spiritual Exercises*.²³²

Crystallising his lifetime thoughts and reflections "around the parallels between the universe story and Jesus' story as presented in St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*", Vaney's book is designed as a commentary on the *Exercises* and as "a way of making the *Exercises* with a particular consciousness". Several 'Ignatian' and creation-related themes underpin his approach: God's constant and continuing acts of creation; God as our personal creator; the desires of the heart; creating a space for imagination; the fragility of our beautiful world; the significance of each person's life ("tiny universes in which the history of the cosmos is played out on a small screen"); the mystery of evil; the paschal mystery, and re-creation in

²³⁰ FERNANDES, "Spirituality for today: contextualising the Exercises", p. 141.

²³¹ Cf. JOSÉ IGNACIO GARCÍA, "Algunos puntos débiles y fuertes de la espiritualidad ignaciana en el camino de la conversión ecológica" in *Manresa* 87, n. 345 (2015) 362.

²³² NEIL VANEY, *Christ in a Grain of Sand: An Ecological Journey with the Spiritual Exercises*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria 2004, p. 14.

the wilderness. For Vaney, our understanding and image of God and Jesus is incomplete if we do not adopt our rightful place as human beings within creation, and yet:

It is only rarely that we turn our minds to the immensity of the cosmos in which we dwell and the tininess of men and women in the face of this vastness. We struggle to take in how the very size and age of the universe is necessary to have brought forth intelligent life. That the spacing and frequency of supernovae throughout space is exactly what was needed to sow the seeds of life—carbon, calcium, phosphorus and iron—barely crosses our minds. Destruction on a grand scale is the very precondition of life [...]. So much that vitally shapes our lives [...] is not visible to us. Becoming aware of this paradox can also be a part of the journey of faith of the *Exercises*.²³³

Following the structure of the 20th Annotation retreat, Vaney's book is divided in four chapters (weeks) which include thirty days of reflections. His innovation lies mainly in his 'ecological reflections' for each day, which connect Ignatius' well-known contemplations and meditations to scientific and nature-related themes. Thus, for example, reflecting on the contemplations of the Incarnation and the Nativity (cf. [*SpEx* 122]), he writes:

Here in the South Pacific, study of the mitochondria of Polynesian women has shown that all now living are descendants of just five women from the island of Samoa. At the time, these women could not have had the least suspicion of just how important their lives of hard struggle were to be. The interplay of biology and history is just one of the instruments that the God of surprises uses to draw peoples toward the outworking of his plans for the universe. Scripture too carries this same witness—that seemingly insignificant events witnessed by simply people in isolated places turn out to be the events on which the whole history and salvation of the world hinge.²³⁴

Vaney's reflections often emphasise this interconnectedness, not only between history and biology, but also between our understanding of the world (or lack thereof) and the way we relate (or are called to relate) to this world and to one another.²³⁵ The factors that cause massive forced displacements (wars, violence, persecution), for example, are more often than not also connected to the abuse of the earth's natural resources and conflicts that arise between competing interests for those resources. It would be hoped that a greater awareness and understanding of the fragility of our beautiful world would also help us acquire a greater understanding towards (and hopefully greater compassion for) the plight of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons—the most fragile of our human brothers and sisters.

²³³ VANEY, *Christ in a Grain of Sand: An Ecological Journey with the Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 22-23.

²³⁴ VANEY, *Christ in a Grain of Sand: An Ecological Journey with the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 79.

²³⁵ Vaney notes: "In creating a common culture that separates them from all other creatures, humans have evolved three distinctive characteristics: an ability to live a lifestyle virtually independent of their local environment, an extraordinary focus on their inner needs and desires, and the creation of a global economic system. This helps us to understand why so many modern humans seem to have lost any innate sense of limits. When their lives flourish, they seem to ask no questions as to what price is paid for this lifestyle by other creatures or by the ecosystems that lie outside their immediate awareness. If we follow the path of human expansion, we find a trail littered with the destruction of species and environments" VANEY, *Christ in a Grain of Sand: An Ecological Journey with the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 58.

Following the dynamics of the *Exercises*, Vaney's hope is also that by the end of the retreat, as exercitants ponder God's continuous labouring in the world in the *Contemplatio* (cf. [SpEx 236]), they will not only feel called to collaborate with God in this endeavour but will desire also to labour for the restoration of the damage that has been inflicted in our world-home.²³⁶ This is intended as a labour of love, undertaken in gratitude, not only as individuals but also as community for the greatest benefit and 'salvation' of all:

With such vision, work is distinctively human and spiritual because it is the human contribution to the ongoing transformation of the universe, as well as the place where we unravel our salvation in space and time. Work is both personal and relational, for in our work we know the universe and respond to it, while striving to uncover and tap its fullest potential. Work is built on the original covenant with God, which was a love story. The paradoxical quality of all successful love stories is that they are win-win situations. The more each partner gives, the more satisfying, fulfilling, and life-giving it turns out for both of them²³⁷. The sum of the outputs is much greater than the individual inputs. This happens because trust and cooperation promote generativity and foster imagination and vision.²³⁸

Fostering this undeniable 'common bond' and interconnectedness we share—not only through our personal interactions with one another, but also through how we work together, how we grow in awareness of the needs of others, how we respect and care for all living beings—all underpinned both by our belief that this is how God intended the world to be and by the manifold signs present in creation (if we choose to see them)—is something we can all benefit from. And as we saw in the previous chapter, it is also something we can learn a lot from forcibly displaced people of faith.

1.2.3.2.3. *Laudato Si'* and the giving of the Spiritual Exercises

²³⁶ What is known as 'restoration ecology' or 'ecological restoration' has actually evolved into a movement and an art/science from its small beginnings from around the 1930s in the American Midwest. It is "the attempt to heal and make nature whole through the science and art of repairing ecosystems that have been damaged by human activities [...through] various fields such as conservation biology, geography and landscape ecology, wetland management, rehabilitation of resource-extracted lands, and adaptive ecosystem management [...]. But beyond this, ecological restoration is the attempt to heal and make the human relationship to nature whole" cf. GRETIL VAN WIEREN, *Restored to Earth: Christianity, Environmental Ethics, and Ecological Restoration*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press 2013, pp. 2, 4. For some proponents of this movement, there is a rich spirituality that underpins these restoration practices as a way of service to others, and which helps us connect with the sacred in the land and in one another through healing experiences: "The heart of restoration spiritual experience is evidenced most clearly in the actual experiences of transformation and renewal that environmental restoration actions can engender. As with restoration of land, the healing of individuals is central to restoration-inspired spiritual and moral experience. The restoration of what might be called the personal heart in this context is both a healing of human consciousness and a healing of the relationship between the self and nature", VAN WIEREN, *Restored to Earth: Christianity, Environmental Ethics, and Ecological Restoration*, p. 94.

²³⁷ Cf. [SpEx 231].

²³⁸ VANEY, *Christ in a Grain of Sand: An Ecological Journey with the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 176.

More recently, Peter Saunders has taken up Pope Francis' challenge in *Laudato Si'* to do what we can to care for our common home by providing an Australian perspective for giving the *Exercises* based on the encyclical.²³⁹ An experienced giver of the *Exercises*, Saunders reflects:

Over the years that I have been giving or supervising the *Spiritual Exercises*, according to either the Nineteenth or Twentieth Annotation, I do not recollect the issue of 'caring for our common home' being raised by exercitants. I do not recall exercitants, after praying the *Contemplatio*, speaking about what they were going to do to change the way they lived so as to care for the earth more, or what they were going to do in the parish or their wider social community. My observation is that this has not been a serious issue in the *Exercises*. Yet now Pope Francis is saying it is a crucial issue at both the spiritual and social levels [...]. Pope Francis' encyclical is about asking people all over the world to wake up to the way we are living [...]. The question I have in giving the *Spiritual Exercises* now is: if an exercitant completes the *Exercises* without an increased awareness of the need to care for the earth and the poor, has the process been effective in today's world? I do not think so any more [...]. Caring for our planet is part of a Christian's journey. Christians in their turn "realise that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith" (cf. *Laudato Si'*, n. 64, quoting John Paul II, 'Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace', n. 15).²⁴⁰

Saunders then suggests ways in which *Laudato Si'* could 'fit' into the journey of the *Exercises*. In the First Week, for example, we could adapt some of the meditations on sin to focus on how institutional structures and practices, and in particular our personal lives, contribute to damaging the earth.²⁴¹ Since it is about developing greater awareness of our actions and the negative impact they have on our common home, using an 'Ecological Examen' for this Week and the rest of the retreat could constitute a powerful tool.²⁴² The giver of the *Exercises* could also give exercitants some excerpts from Pope Francis's

²³⁹ PETER SAUNDERS, "*Laudato Si'* and the Giving of the Spiritual Exercises: An Australian Perspective" in *The Way* 54, n. 4 (2015) 118-128.

²⁴⁰ SAUNDERS, "*Laudato Si'* and the Giving of the Spiritual Exercises: An Australian Perspective", pp. 119-20, 122.

²⁴¹ Recalling and expanding our earlier reference to the statement by the Australian Catholic Bishops (footnote 224): "In justice, it is an urgent task for Christians today to be reconciled with all creation, and to undertake faithfully our responsibility of stewardship of God's gifts. To achieve such reconciliation, we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God's creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart. God calls us to turn away from wrongdoing and to behave in new ways". AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, "A New Earth: The Environmental Challenge", 2002 *Social Justice Sunday Statement*. Cf. http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/files/SJSandresources/2002_SJSS_statement.pdf. Accessed 21 June 2018.

²⁴² Saunders makes reference to an 'Ecological Examen' by Joseph P. Carver who, introducing this particular form of Ignatius' prayer states: "Using the technique of the examen with an ecological lens allows us to reflect prayerfully on the events of the day within this larger world. We witness our relationship with creation, and we detect God's presence and direction for us within it. Further, just as the goal of any examen is a discerning heart, so the purpose of an 'ecological examen' is to recognise ourselves as creatures in and of the world: How is God inviting us personally to see creation, and how are we responding?" JOSEPH P. CARVER, "The Ecological Examen: Entering a new world of Ignatian Contemplation" in *America* (21 April 2014), cf. <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/ecological-examen>. Accessed 21 June 2018.

encyclical as texts for reflection during this and other Weeks. In the Second Week, as they journey with Jesus in his human life, exercitants could pray with scripture passages that focus on Jesus and nature, in particular with those with multiple allusions to the earth and its fruits. The contemplation of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross in the Third Week can also invite the exercitants to reflect on their experience of suffering and death in nature. And in the Fourth Week, as the resurrection of Jesus reminds us that after death there is new life and new hope, exercitants could also be invited to reflect on their experience of the seasons of the year—and particularly spring—to help them appreciate the significance of the Risen Christ for them. Finally, their contemplation of God's gifts and presence in all things, particularly in nature (the *Contemplatio*), could involve reflection on how they have experienced this loving Presence in their lives and the gratitude it brings, with a final focus "on what the exercitants could do for Christ in the world in caring for our common home, the Earth".²⁴³

While these adaptations might be helpful, for Saunders the best and more radical way for exercitants to become more aware of God's presence in nature and to experience that 'ecological conversion' Pope Francis speaks about, would be through a retreat in which exercitants spend some or all of their retreat experience walking in the wilderness:

The challenge for giving the *Exercises* in Australia, in the light of Pope Francis's encyclical, is to take exercitants out into the wilderness, to the rainforests, Eucalypt forests, ocean

²⁴³ Cf. SAUNDERS, "*Laudato Si'* and the Giving of the Spiritual Exercises: An Australian Perspective", p. 123. Patxi Álvarez likewise suggests other aspects of the *Spiritual Exercises* which, if emphasised in their delivery, could contribute towards achieving that 'integral ecology' proposed by Pope Francis in his encyclical. Cf. FRANCISCO (PATXI) ÁLVAREZ DE LOS MOZOS, "'Nacer de nuevo' para una ecología integral" in *Manresa* 87, n. 345 (2015) 339-349. Álvarez notes that the *Principle and Foundation* (cf. [SpEx 23]) states that the human person has been created to praise God, and through this praise to recognise that everything is a gift which proceeds from God. Thus, praising creation (cf. [SpEx 234]) is a way in which we can grow in and develop an ecological mysticism (p. 345). One of the 'gifts' of the First Week of the *Exercises* is that, in inviting us to consider sin and its consequences, it also asks us to bring into consideration the reality of our circumstances (cf. [SpEx 56])—of the places where we live, the people with whom we interact, the work we carry out, the consequences of our actions and the suffering of those who are affected by them. Unless we enter into solidarity with the pain of the world—of the earth and of the poor—it will be very difficult to experience the conversion Pope Francis talks about (pp. 344-345). As we contemplate Jesus in the Second Week we see someone totally dedicated to the vulnerable and defenceless (this calls for a change in our sensibilities towards those who suffer) and someone with great capacity to contemplate nature and be amazed by it (this calls for a change in our sensibilities towards creation, p. 346). Contemplating Jesus' passion in the Third Week highlights our helplessness, our inability to effect change as quickly as we would like and reminds us that at times all we can do is to accompany those in need, to be present, to persevere in our efforts to effect that change (p. 347). Finally, the *Contemplation to Attain Love*, at the end of the Fourth Week, reminds us of our common bond as creatures called to collaborate in solidarity with the Trinity (to labour) so that God's plan of redemption can continue to edge forward: this perspective makes us feel responsible of creation and of all human beings, defenders of life in all areas of life (p. 348).

coastlines and peninsulas, and the central and western deserts: those parts of the country that have retained the landscapes that existed before European settlement.²⁴⁴

For Saunders, the experiential essence of Ignatian spirituality means that if we truly want people to appreciate God's presence in nature, then we have to invite them to experience it, be overwhelmed by it, be awed by it: "Through the wonders of creation is filtered the Wonder of the Creator shining through all that is made".²⁴⁵ The stillness in the wilderness allows us to truly meet God as the ground of our being. Saunders concludes:

Pope Francis has declared that 1 September each year will now be a world day of Prayer for the Care of Creation [... He] is making it clear that care for our common home is a priority for the Church and the world. I believe it should therefore be a priority in the giving of the *Spiritual Exercises*, whereby the director should give serious consideration to how he or she will adapt the *Exercises* in a way that invites the exercitant to contemplate in the context of caring for the earth: What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What will I do for Christ?²⁴⁶

Not all, but many of the ex-refugees who have resettled in Australia (and in other receiving nations) come from countries and cultures with deep connection to nature and to the land, in particular as a place of bond with their ancestors. Some of them have cared for the lands, cultivated it, depended on it for their livelihood. And some have even had to protect them against potential exploiters of its resources and richness. Living in and of the land, they have had a great awareness of 'our common home' most of their lives. An experience of nature as suggested by Saunders, not only for short retreats, but also as part of the *Exercises* in daily life, could be then of 'great benefit to their souls'. And of course, *light Exercises* with creation and nature-related themes will also have to be included in the offerings that we seek to produce in chapter 5.

1.2.3.3. Women and a feminine vision and experience of Ignatian Spirituality and the *Spiritual Exercises*

At first glance, it might seem a bit unexpected to include in our short study 'women' in general as an example of a marginalised group for whom the *Exercises* have been applied and

²⁴⁴ SAUNDERS, "Laudato Si' and the Giving of the Spiritual Exercises: An Australian Perspective", p. 124. The author continues, "Living in the cities along the coastline of Australia, we have managed to disconnect ourselves from the spiritual dimension of the country. Taking people away from the city into the wilderness in an Ignatian way would encourage them to reconnect with the Spirit within them. Meeting God in the wilderness is a rich part of our Christian tradition", p. 126.

²⁴⁵ EUGENE STOCKTON, *Wonder: A Way to God*, Strathfield: St Pauls 1988 p. 23.

²⁴⁶ SAUNDERS, "Laudato Si' and the Giving of the Spiritual Exercises: An Australian Perspective", p. 128.

adapted. Certainly, many women in the world today—including in many developing nations—live comfortable, productive and even privileged lives. At the same time, it is also true that some of the most dehumanising instances of marginalisation, abuse and violence are endured by women every day, even in some of the most so-called ‘developed’ countries. Recognising this “legacy of systematic discrimination against women”, the 34th General Congregation noted:

It is embedded within the economic, social, political, religious and even linguistic structures of our societies. It is often part of an even deeper cultural prejudice and stereotype. Many women, indeed, feel that men have been slow to recognize the full humanity of women. They often experience a defensive reaction from men when they draw attention to this blindness [...]. There is a “feminization of poverty” and a distinctive “feminine face of oppression”.²⁴⁷

And since it is estimated that close to eighty percent of forcibly displaced peoples today are women and children (a larger percent also of girls than boys), it is more than fitting to explore the needs of this ‘group’, especially in terms of the insights we might derive from this exploration as we set out to develop particular *exercises* for forcibly displaced women.

From the outset, it is paramount to state that both women and men who write on the *Exercises* (on their content, methodology, approach, dynamics) and how they could or ‘should’ be given to women agree on one thing: they still need to be adapted to the needs and circumstances of *each* woman. Further, when addressing the issue of the adaptation of application of the *Exercises* based on the element of gender, it is acknowledged that there is considerable cultural variation in what is understood or “signifies” to be a man or woman, less in terms of universal biological factors (though even this has been disputed by modern science and especially in the last few years with the growing transgender movement, especially in Western countries) and more in terms of cultural diversity. In terms of the

²⁴⁷ GC 34, D. 14, *Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society*, 3-4. Acknowledging the role of Jesuits in this systematic discrimination, the Congregation asked for the grace of conversion: “We have been part of a civil and ecclesial tradition that has offended against women. And, like many men, we have a tendency to convince ourselves that there is no problem. However unwittingly, we have often contributed to a form of clericalism which has reinforced male domination with an ostensibly divine sanction. By making this declaration we wish to react personally and collectively, and do what we can to change this regrettable situation” (GC 34, D.14, 9). In terms of concrete steps/actions, the Congregation invited all Jesuits “to listen carefully and courageously to the experience of women. Many women feel that men simply do not listen to them. There is no substitute for such listening. More than anything else it will bring about change” (CG 34, D. 14, 12); and “as individuals and through their institutions, to align themselves in solidarity with women” through a variety of ways depending on their place and culture (cf. GC 34, D. 14, 13). In concluding the decree, the Congregation stated: “Above all we want to commit the Society in a more formal and explicit way to regard this solidarity with women as integral to our mission. In this way we hope that the whole Society will regard this work for reconciliation between women and men in all its forms as integral to its interpretation of Decree 4 of GC 32 for our times” (GC 34, D. 14, 16).

latter, the conception of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ traits “see them rather as tendencies which are likely to be more frequent in one sexual group than in the other”, and which have become the norm in particular cultures.²⁴⁸ That this is the case is evidenced by the use of such derogatory expressions as ‘tomboy’ or ‘sissy’ for women and men who seem to ‘deviate’ from these norms in those cultures.

While acknowledging these difficulties, many authors have tried to approach the *Exercises* from what is regarded a more ‘feminist’ or ‘feminine’ perspective, in the hope that some conclusions can be arrived at that can help givers of the *Exercises* (of both genders), and women exercitants, derive greater fruit and benefit from making the *Exercises*, which “in turn will add to the sum of human happiness, whether spiritual, social or political”.²⁴⁹ And because these general considerations in terms of the disposition, character and circumstances of a particular group of people (though of course not all the specific issues involved) might shed light on what to take into account when applying the *Exercises* to a particular audience (e.g. *ex-refugees*) we explore the issues involved at greater length than in previous examples.

As a way of introduction, it is also important to point out that extensive documentation exists showing that since the origins of the Society of Jesus (even before its official existence), both Ignatius and his first companions were spiritual accompaniers of, and offered the *Exercises*, to women.²⁵⁰ Nowadays, though we lack an exact statistical approximation it can be affirmed, at least empirically, that more women than men make, partly or in full and in a diversity of ways, the *Spiritual Exercises*.²⁵¹ Similarly, the participation in lay associations based on Ignatian spirituality (CLC, for example), generally includes a larger number of women than men among their members. And the same can be said among people who currently are being formed to be givers of the *Exercises* (be it lay or religious), and who later on are engaged in ministries, either part-time or full-time, in fields so diverse as education, social work and the spiritual formation of others. Undoubtedly, the

²⁴⁸ Cf. NEREA ALZOLA, “Women Helping to Give the Spiritual Exercises: Variations on a Theme” in *The Way* 49, n. 1 (2010) 45; original in Spanish: “Ejercicios Espirituales en clave de mujer: Reflexiones de mujeres que acompañan Ejercicios” in *Manresa* 81(2009) 43-57. There are also those who would argue that some of these traits have been imposed by dominant groups on others. In terms of gender-related issues, it would be revealing for example to consider applications of the *Exercises* adapted for the situation and circumstances of members of the LGBTI communities (or people who experience same-gender attraction) in their diverse cultures.

²⁴⁹ ALZOLA, “Women Helping to Give the Spiritual Exercises: Variations on a Theme”, p. 47.

²⁵⁰ Cf. SANTIAGO THIÓ, “Ignacio, padre espiritual de mujeres” in *Manresa* 66 (1994) 417-436.

²⁵¹ We can affirm this at least with some degree of certitude in Western countries, although personal limited experience of other contexts in countries of Asia and Africa seem to confirm this tendency.

participation of women in these areas has had a great impact on Ignatian spirituality and has been a determining factor in the way in which the *Exercises* have been experienced and in the way in which exercitants are being formed, both through their practice of the *Exercises* and in their lives afterwards.²⁵² We observe this reality not only in the practice of the *Exercises* and in thematic retreats focused on women, but also in an ever-growing production of books on the *Exercises*, both in terms of new translations and directories or spiritual guides composed by women or in collaboration with women.²⁵³

1.2.3.3.1. The role of women and femininity in the Exercises

There is no doubt about the importance that women have in the Ignatian imaginary and in the actual ‘paving of the way’ for exercitants as they engage with the *Exercises*. It is enough to recall the spiritual journey of Ignatius himself and the important role which several women had in his life. And here we are not only talking about the Virgin Mary²⁵⁴, under whose

²⁵² Cf. EILEEN BURKE-SULLIVAN, “Mujer” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana II*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, pp. 1306-307. Burke-Sullivan points out that women formed in Ignatian spirituality have different ways of experiencing God, different cultural expectations placed on them and “a humanity proper of women, different from men’s”. Therefore, they often have very different concepts of God, of the meaning of compassion, service, of accompaniment, of mission, justice, creation, and ways to approach sanctity, of God’s mercy and of relationships of power and lack of power. And in offering the *Exercises*, these differences are evident in particular in their use of language which describes—among other Ignatian elements—images of God, of divine judgment, of heaven and hell, using concepts that are more contemporary and more relevant and thus helping the exercitant’s prayer. In concrete terms, and of relevance to our study, this can be observed in the extensive and creative use of *Annotation 19* of the *Exercises*, which many women have undertaken to offer diverse forms of retreats, in order to take Ignatian spirituality to a greater number of the faithful, pp. 1307-1308.

²⁵³ Several women today write on the *Exercises* offering different perspectives based on their ‘ordinary’ lives. Among those better known in the Anglo-Saxon world is Margaret Silf. Her book, *Landmarks: an Ignatian Journey*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1998, based on the dynamics of the *Exercises*, is advertised as a ‘companion for our interior pilgrimage’, in our desire to fulfil the dream God has for each one of us. Another of her books, *Companions of Christ. Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living*, London: Canterbury Press 2005, and based on principles of Ignatian spirituality, has as its objective to help the reader discover by herself or himself what God means in their own existence, as well as ‘how to respond to Christ’s call in their lives’. Other titles by Silf include: *Taste and See*, *At Sea with God*, *Soul Space*, *Lighted Windows*, *Close to Heart* and *Wayfaring*. Another classic of this new genre of works on Ignatian spirituality and the *Exercises* written by women is the well-known work by KATHERINE DYCKMAN, MARY GARVIN and ELIZABETH LIEBERT, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women*, New York: Paulist Press 2001. Beginning with an acknowledgement of the very real obstacles which the *Exercises* pose to certain women, the authors then explore new interpretations for all these aspects, based on extensive research, pastoral practice and a broad knowledge of psychology and theology. Finally, ELISABETH MEIER TETLOW’s, *The spiritual exercises of St Ignatius Loyola: a new translation*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America 1987, provides a feminist version of the *Exercises*.

²⁵⁴ A short study such as this does not allow us to cover with greater detail the aspect of the presence of Our Lady as an essential element of the experience of the *Exercises*. To explore further this theme, see for example: SANTIAGO ARZUBIALDE, *Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio: Historia y Análisis*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2009, pp. 213-14, 309-10, 320-21, 327-28, 543-48; MARÍA CLARA LUCCHETTI BINGEMER, “La mujer en los Ejercicios: ‘enemiga’, ‘discípula’, ‘Madre y Señora nuestra’” in *Manresa* 66 (1994) 409-14; S. DECLoux, “Nuestra Señora en la Espiritualidad Ignaciana” in *CIS* 19 (1988) 11-141; PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH, “La Pascua de Nuestra Señora” in *CIS* 19 (1988) 143-159.

protection some of the key moments in Ignatius' life took place (we have already mentioned his devotion to Our Lady of the Way). Many other women, both religious and lay, were of great assistance to Ignatius himself and the newly founded Society. Similarly, Ignatius recognised the capacity of women to open up spaces for others to draw nearer to the mystery of God (cf. Jn 4:42).²⁵⁵

Already in the Second Week we find many women who, as protagonists in the life of the Lord, help exercitants identify the true attitudes of discipleship that lead to discernment of the divine will.²⁵⁶ And perhaps even 'more feminine' is the Fourth Week, lived through the appearances of the Risen Christ, the first of which is, according to the Ignatian text, to a woman—his own mother²⁵⁷—and through the *Contemplation to Attain Love*, read in the 'language' of lovers, which emphasises the concrete experience of loving and allowing oneself to be loved, and which demands from the exercitant a radical opening up, "which

²⁵⁵ Cf. LUCCHETTI BINGEMER, "La mujer en los Ejercicios", pp. 414-415. The author also points out that what in Ignatius' life and writings could today be called or understood as 'machismo' or misogyny, should be very carefully analysed using honest cultural parameters rather than anachronistic ones. And it is also using this hermeneutical key that the text of the 'famous' (or infamous) Rule 12, "The enemy conducts himself like a woman [...]" (cf. [SpEx 325], in the *Rules of Discernment of Spirits* for the First Week), should be read, pp. 398-401.

²⁵⁶ Cf. LUCCHETTI BINGEMER, "La mujer en los Ejercicios", p. 401. Thus we see that Elizabeth is the first one to proclaim *blessed* the fruit that is already developing in the pregnant womb of her cousin Mary (cf. [SpEx 263]). And the baby John that moves and 'rejoices' in her own body, having 'perceived the visitation our Lady made', is the palpable sign that Elizabeth is 'filled with the Holy Spirit'. Elizabeth reveals to the exercitant the salvific possibility that exists in opening one's being and body to the action of the Spirit. In speaking of Elizabeth and prophetess Anna in the temple, Ignatius reveals the central core of the *Exercises* and of the whole of his spirituality: the intimate and inevitable link that exists between contemplation and action, between experience and acknowledgement of the Lord and the irrepressible need to 'speak of Him to all', pp. 402-403. Margaret Scott adds that in looking at the mysteries of the life of Christ in the Second Week and the actual prayer that accompanies them, we also see the proper prayer of the feminine dimension of a person, which is both intuitive and interiorising, more so than the masculine one which reflects and translates into activity. She affirms that "a process of seduction, of falling in love with the person of Christ and his cause" is encouraged during this week. Cf. MARGARET SCOTT, "Los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio dados y vividos por una mujer" in *Manresa* 66 (1994) 360.

²⁵⁷ While acknowledging this privileged appearance to Mary, not all authors share this positive assessment of the feminine in the Fourth Week: "The church's selective memory about the resurrection raises problems for women during the Fourth Week. The tradition has too often forgotten the major role women have played as witnesses to the resurrection, and the text of the *Exercises* reflects this lack. Noticeably absent is Mary Magdalene's encounter with the risen Christ in the garden and her commission to tell the disciples that he is risen (cf. John 20:1-18). Correcting this omission opens up rich ground. Images of women witnessing to the resurrection and being faithfully present to Jesus provide strong models for contemporary women. For example, one thinks of Mary Magdalene, reinstated as 'apostle to the apostles', and her active leadership in the early church. Women played a major role in the paschal mystery. They exemplified faithful presence at the cross and tomb and serve as bridge to the resurrection", cf. DYCKMAN, GARVIN and LIEBERT, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women*, p. 231.

translates into a characteristic attitude of women: receptivity and total availability—in everything to love and to serve”.²⁵⁸

1.2.3.3.2. The Exercises lived and given by women to women

We have mentioned already how women, both those who give and make the Exercises, often have very different concepts of God and of many of the fundamental elements present in the experience of the Exercises, because of their personal experiences (let us recall for example an experience that only women can have: to sense the movement of life within their bodies, as energy of true revelation), as well as because of their diverse economic, political and socio-cultural contexts.²⁵⁹

Despite these differences, we should remember that the *Exercises* “are neither for men nor for women, but for pilgrims of both sexes who, on the journey, find themselves embraced by the maternal tenderness of God the Father”,²⁶⁰ and therefore what is most important is to allow oneself to be guided by the Spirit: what is given in the *Exercises* is a method, while how the content and dynamics unravel are ‘things of God’. In this sense, there would not be a need to accommodate the method to the gender of the exercitant, since the one giving the *Exercises* should only transmit the method and allow God to do the rest.²⁶¹ Yet, having said this, we cannot negate the prominence in the text of certain things that are ‘more proper of women’, such as the embrace of God and God’s tenderness, the feelings of shame and confusion (cf. [SpEx 48]), and the experience of pain and tears (cf. [SpEx 55]).

Neither can the differences that take place in the dynamics of giver-exercitant when both actors are women can be denied: a greater easiness in speaking openly about certain basic themes in the life of a woman that are generally better understood by another woman; a better

²⁵⁸ Cf. SCOTT, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio dados y vividos por una mujer”, p. 363.

²⁵⁹ Cf. JANET RUFFING and THERESA MOSSER, “An Option for Women” in *The Way Supplement* 74 (1992) 95-98.

²⁶⁰ Cf. SCOTT, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio dados y vividos por una mujer”, p. 355. Likewise, Scott believes that the *Exercises* possess an integrating capacity of the masculine and feminine dimensions in the interior of the person who lives this experience—this integrative dimension is observed more clearly in the Second Week, when Ignatius invites the use of both the judging and reasoning elements of the exercitant (associated more with the masculine) and on the other hand, the heart, affections and love (associated more with the feminine), p. 360. The author also finds that the supposedly more masculine and ‘militaristic’ language often cited as being prominent in the text of the *Exercises*, is complemented with a more feminine language, p. 356.

²⁶¹ Cf. SCOTT, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio dados y vividos por una mujer”, p. 357. And of course, as givers of the Exercises we must recognise that very seldom we ‘only transmit the method’, letting our own experiences, formation, and even biases dictate some of the material we might offer to our exercitants.

psychological complementarity and a more spontaneous connection.²⁶² However, despite these advantages, there are also challenges: the accompanier will need to be very attentive in avoiding projections of herself and in keeping the necessary distance and space for the accompaniment process—women tend to have a much more ‘confidant approach’ and this could facilitate a dynamic of transference in the Exercises. If the accompanier is a man, often a tacit ‘agreement’ of submission develops—he acts naturally as guide and protector and the woman also assumes it, allowing herself to be led and be protected.²⁶³ At the same time, it is also easier for a relationship of ‘director-directee’ to develop, which is not necessarily always a negative thing and can even have a beneficial effect, as long as the risk of establishing certain type of dependencies is avoided.²⁶⁴

1.2.3.3.3. Aspects to consider in giving Exercises to women

As we alluded to earlier, it is difficult to make generalisations regarding ‘all’ women exercitants in all cultures and conditions.²⁶⁵ However, we believe that it is useful at this point to explore and acknowledge certain aspects—in the different ‘sections’ of the

²⁶² Alzola believes that this is due in part to the way women listen: “As far as our listening is concerned, many women are skilful in adopting the right tone to show that they are truly interested and not cold or detached. They deliberately introduce variations of tone”, cf. ALZOLA, “Women Helping to Give the Spiritual Exercises: Variations on a Theme”, p. 49. And she confirms this special relationship that can develop between giver-exercitant when they are both women: “On several occasions, women have told us about their happiness at being accompanied by a woman, as they feel freer and better understood when speaking of their past experiences, stories and reactions. In general, we think that if a woman is accompanied by another woman, the communication becomes more relaxed, with a greater intimacy [...]”, p. 58.

²⁶³ DYCKMAN, GARVIN and LIEBERT, in their work, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women*, warn against this agreement degenerating into another form of discriminatory treatment against women. Taking Ignatius’ presupposition (cf. [SpEx 22]), they argue that this mutual admonition “does not apply more strongly to the one making the Exercises, nor is the assumption of correctness limited to the one giving the Exercises. Contemporary feminist epistemology corroborates Ignatius’ insight by recognising the relativity of all knowledge [...]. Ignatius’ presupposition will have particular relevance for those who accompany women in the *Spiritual Exercises*. These companions, especially if they are male, need to convey implicitly and explicitly their willingness both to learn from and be corrected by these women. The primary interpreters of the *Spiritual Exercises*, then, are those persons in the midst of them. This experience forms the basis for any generalisations about women’s experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Furthermore, this presupposition calls into question any notion of an elite director and a subservient directee”, pp. 61-62. Clearly these authors are trying to address what they see has been an issue of perceived dominance in the past and of undervaluing women’s own experience of the Exercises.

²⁶⁴ Cf. MAGDALENA PALENCIA and CHRISTA GODÍNES, “Desde nuestra experiencia de Ejercicios” in *Manresa* 66 (1994) 442. The authors add: “In woman-to-woman communication, everything seems to take place more naturally and with greater spontaneity; another woman will not be surprised or become impatient as easily because of digressions or details in a particular narrative, which is something more natural in women. On the other hand, in some cases, when a woman has to narrate something to a man, she gives greater attention to preparing the communication; she knows that she needs to be more precise, that it will be important to get to the concrete aspects fairly quickly and this, which demands an extraordinary effort, also helps her to become a more conscious witness of her own experience”, p. 443.

²⁶⁵ Unless other sources are cited, the ideas presented in this section have been summarised from the article by PALENCIA and GODÍNES, “Desde nuestra experiencia de Ejercicios”, pp. 443-447.

Exercises—that might contribute positively to the dynamics and experience of giving the Exercises to women. The objective—particularly for givers of the Exercises—is to become more aware of ‘what helps’ and ‘what constrains’ the process, so as encourage the former and avoid the latter.

Annotations and the *Principle and Foundation*

In general terms, it is accepted that women tend to be more emotional, affectionate and communicative, and much more sensitive than men to the world of symbols; women are also more open and more creative and, in a certain sense, more adventurous towards action and prayer. In practical terms, this means that most women will be more apt or skilled in recognising a God who is in love with God’s people (conjugal experience), a God who walks with God’s people and expresses God’s love to them with great liberality through everything that is within reach: nature, people and events.²⁶⁶ Conversely, for women, it is frequently difficult to welcome ‘indifference’ and remain long in it.

Male directors are also considered to be more abstract and at the same time to propose a greater number of points or instructions, in contrast to women, who will be more concise in their expositions, follow more closely Ignatius’ style, be more restrained in ‘presenting the history’ and more concrete in their applications. Male givers of the Exercises usually start more from theories, while for their female counterparts the point of departure is usually reality, giving more concrete examples.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ “As women we are familiar with a language that is sensual, symbolic and poetic; and as women who accompany other women in the *Exercises* we are happy at times to suggest a language of love [...]. We feel that many women find themselves at ease with this sort of language in moments of intimate loving contact with the Beloved”, cf. ALZOLA, “Women Helping to Give the Spiritual Exercises: Variations on a Theme”, pp. 52-53.

²⁶⁷ In her work, *Donde la maternidad se vuelve canto: apuntes para una teología de la maternidad*, Santander: Sal Terrae 2006, M^a DOLORES LÓPEZ GUZMÁN reminds us precisely that “Contact with reality is the first thing man [sic] counts on to attain knowledge. This is the reason that the point of departure [for her work] had to be a reflection about the environment and circumstances that currently surround women, with their doubts, queries, difficulties”, p. 18. Thus López Guzmán takes on one of the most significative experiences in the life of women, namely, maternity, “to try to discover how God’s Mystery is revealed in it [...]. Ignatius’ well-known maxim in which he exhorted to ‘seek and find God in all things’ has been the real engine that has propelled the achievement of this work”, pp. 17-18. Alzola expresses this reality of maternity in relation to the *Exercises* thus: “The woman, who is herself capable of conceiving, helps the exercitant to become the womb of the Mystery and to give birth. We are the midwives who help the birthing process; we are witnesses of the first vital cry because we have been there many times to help Mary as she gave birth (contemplating the Nativity)”, cf. ALZOLA, “Women Helping to Give the Spiritual Exercises: Variations on a Theme”, p. 54.

For male givers of the *Exercises* who truly want to help their female exercitants, it will be indispensable that they become more sensitive to their needs and nature²⁶⁸, adapt situations and language whenever necessary, and complement with alternative content and delivery formats, and to the extent that is possible, areas considered as common difficulties for women. Some of the things that could be done include: giving a greater focus of God as father and mother; rescuing women's role in the history of salvation (both in the Jewish tradition and the Christian era and including not only canonised saints, but also the early desert Mothers, women religious and lay women of recognised influence); and reinforcing within the *Principle and Foundation* the experience of a more maternal face of God—God's tenderness and sensitivity, expressed in creational aspects, and all other elements that make up God's more feminine side. It is important also to remember that frequently women take more time to contemplate God in the history and struggles of peoples, so it would be desirable to invite them to consider their own struggles, marginalisation and thwarted opportunities—particularly if they are gender-based—to help raise their awareness and identification to these issues.

First Week

Social sin and its structures generally provoke different levels of conscience in men and women, so the giver of the Exercises will need to be attentive to women's alternative interpretations, articulation and interiorization of issues within the social dimension, in particular in terms of understanding one's responsibility and involvement in sinful structures. In terms of understanding life from the point of view of faith—which comes from a loving God and leads us to God—women have a greater conscience of reality and value greatly family, friends and other human groups to which they belong, seeing their presence in their lives as gifts from the Source of all that is good. Although, they would like to respond with greater interior freedom to the creative word of the Father (and what that creative words asks of them), they find it difficult to face the continuous demands of making elections that arise from the process of seeking how to respond, and which have to be tested by the proof of faith. Commonly, women are not used to establishing surrender as a condition to love and to enter into commitment. They also find it difficult to foresee

²⁶⁸ Certain feminist groups warn us to be careful in the use of this language about 'nature', in particular when we make comparisons between the nature of women and men, and what is expected that they do, based on definitions which are considered arbitrary, and which generally place women in positions of disadvantage and discrimination. Cf. LAVINIA BYRNE, "Women and the Second Week" in *The Way Supplement* 74 (1992) 35.

challenges ahead and to accept that things might be hard. Aware of these ‘common difficulties’, the giver of the Exercises will do well to think in advance of more relevant ways to present some of the First Week concepts that might pose certain challenges for women (e.g. structural sin, indifference) to complement the content and approach given in the *Exercises* through using, for instance, more concrete examples, stories (their own and others’) and even examples from literature and art.

Second to Fourth Weeks

As a rule, women tend to find greater richness and multiple possibilities in the compositions of place in the various contemplations of biblical texts offered by Ignatius (particularly in the Second Week), being able to use imagination more easily, capturing the smallest details and identifying with them.²⁶⁹ Thus, for example, when they go deeper in their contemplation of the suffering of God’s people, this leads them to effective responses of service. However, it should be said that they are not able to approach with the same imaginative easiness all the meditations or contemplations: the meditation of the temporal-eternal Kingdom—partly because of the language used in its context—tends to be one of the more difficult to present.

On the other hand, elements in the rules of discernment and language of spiritual combat are, generally, taken up more easily by women. There is in them an affective and intuitive aspect which is more difficult to find in men. While the re-reading of ‘feelings’, joy, peace, etc., is easier for them, they find it more difficult to engage in discernment according to ‘rational movements’ and the rigour of the method. Similarly, they find particularly challenging the reality of the cross and the ever-present conflict that characterises the dynamic of the Third Week. Much easier and more attractive for them is the contemplation of the Resurrection and the role of women within it; however, the risk exists of believing that one has already entered

²⁶⁹ “In this context we believe that women are open to the multiplicity of meanings, to the insignificant and complex aspects of reality, which can be appreciated with both feelings and reason, making use of the narrative, the imaginative and the rational. With this advantage, we can enter more easily into what Ignatius is saying in his *Spiritual Exercises* and in his reference to ‘the inner feeling and relish of things’ (cf. [SpEx 2]). Cf. ALZOLA, “Women Helping to Give the Spiritual Exercises: Variations on a Theme”, p. 57. This emphasises the care and diligence needed in the selection of biblical passages used for the contemplations, as well as the ‘mirrors and lenses’ that are used for presenting and reading them, so as to avoid, in the negative sense, to offer images (especially unconsciously) which could be degrading or vilifying of women. In the positive sense, this careful selection of additional passages from the scriptures for the use of exercitants could contribute to make more visible those characters (generally women) who often remain invisible or absent in our biblical readings—for example, the woman who searches for the coin in Luke 15, who does everything she can to find her most precious treasure. Cf. BYRNE, ‘Women and the Second Week’, p. 37.

into the Resurrection and thus to avoid going deeper into the root of the *joy* which is what is asked for.²⁷⁰ Further,

The seeker may experience a tendency to allow uncertainty to pull her back into the “old”, forgetting that Christ is “new”, but she must resist whatever pulls her back into her former and familiar self. Recognising the post-resurrection experiences in her life proves key [...]. Dealing with joy and peace does not always occur in the way a woman expects it, so she should be aware of “romance novel syndrome”, which glamorises emotions and expects one to live “happily ever after”. Post-resurrection appearances are not necessarily ecstatic, dramatic or highly emotional. Consolation has many, frequently subtle, manifestations. A seeker often needs a companion’s assistance to recognise them.²⁷¹

1.2.3.3.4. Offering the Exercises to forcibly displaced women

In the preceding section we have attempted to bring together some of the main considerations that givers of the Exercises should take into account when offering them to women. A very important aspect in these considerations highlighted in the past few years—and which is particularly relevant to our presentation in this chapter—is the element of justice and the ‘option for women’ which this element requires. For this justice in the context of our faith and of the *Spiritual Exercises* to be a reality, the meaning and fulfilment of this ‘option for women’ has to be present in the conscience and consciousness of spiritual companions and givers of the Exercises. This consciousness, as we have shown, will condition their choice and use of biblical texts so they can be received in a constructive way. It will condition also their capacity to adequately honour the imaginative process of women in the contemplations of place suggesting (when necessary) more appropriate images (for example, non-patriarchal) for this imaginative exercise. It will also have an effect in their ability to recognise and capitalise on the potential for healing of experiences of exclusion suffered by many women in the past, particularly (in our case) by women who have been forcibly displaced.

For those spiritual companions called to minister to their displaced brothers and sisters, besides the multiple considerations offered in this section, this consciousness of ‘an option for women’ will demand from them immeasurable empathy, boundless sensitivity and vast

²⁷⁰ See MARIE-ELOISE ROSENBLATT, “Women in the Passion and Resurrection Narratives” in *The Way Supplement* 74 (1992) 40-53, for a reflection on the presentation of meditations of the Exercises for the Third and Fourth Weeks. According to the author, these should ensure that the chosen texts give voice to the experiences of suffering and of transformation in women, p. 42.

²⁷¹ DYCKMAN, GARVIN and LIEBERT, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women*, pp. 235-236.

receptiveness towards forcibly displaced women exercitants to whom they offer the *Exercises*. And this consciousness will also require from them an apprised knowledge of and an appropriate formation to address their very specific circumstances, conditions and disposition—many of whose aspects we will consider in the second part of this chapter and in chapter 4. As we end this section, we simply note that in responding to the plight—and also acknowledging the hope—of forcibly displaced women, two constitutive elements of the Jesuit Social Apostolate emphasised in the first part of this chapter are ‘made concrete’, namely, (1) the Social Apostolate’s all-encompassing ‘option for the poor’, and (2) its mandate to do all it can to challenge practices and transform structures that denigrate or obviate the dignity of specific groups of people—in this case, making real its ‘option for women’ and its ‘option for the displaced’.

1.2.3.4. Summary of some possible criteria for applying the *Exercises* for the forcibly displaced within the social justice context

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises* have been adapted and applied for all types of circumstances and audiences for most of their existence. More specifically, and as we have just seen, in pursuing the Society of Jesus’ mission to promote a faith that does justice, Ignatius’ *Exercises* have been adapted widely in the last few years to respond to the challenges presented by various social justice issues. We will explore in detail the process and criteria of general applications of the *Exercises* in the next chapter. However, having explored three of these social justice issues in this section—as well as suggested approaches for giving the *Exercises* to address them—it is fitting at this stage to distil from this exploration some possible elements or criteria that might be beneficial in applying the *Exercises* to our particular issue of forced displacement. Of course, it is intended that this exercise will act as an introduction (and be complementary) to our discussion on adaptation and application of the *Spiritual Exercises* in chapter 3.

We offer the criteria here in point (or number) form, following the order of the previous discussion of these topics, without trying to assign any order of ‘priority’ or importance to any of them at this stage. In general terms, these criteria for application of the *Exercises* include both elements of *approach* and *content*; or more precisely, they suggest how a particular approach influences the choice of specific content for the *Exercises* and the way it is presented. In terms of *approach*, in this case it is about applying the *Exercises* in such a

way as to invite exercitants to make them (and givers to offer them) with a particular consciousness—a social justice consciousness. In regards to the first topic—the struggle for liberation in Latin America—this approach relies on criteria that emphasise the following elements:

- (1) ***Every person is called to be an ‘agent of ‘salvation’.*** As we saw, Ellacuría, for example, posits this social consciousness in terms of how to join our desire for—and fulfilment of—personal salvation concretely with the necessity and fulfilment of historical salvation for all, and how to discover or discern, through the process of the Exercises, a particular mission (God’s will and desire) in our lives so as to contribute to this goal. Givers of these Exercises will need to help ‘open the eyes’ of their survivors of forced displacement exercitants to the reality of the world that God wants to save, and from this reality look for or discern what God is asking from each of them.
- (2) ***The poor, and their specific ‘salvific role’.*** Ellacuría also suggests that in the case of the poor—and all the marginalised, the persecuted, the forcibly displaced—their particular ‘salvific role’, as ‘the wounded of the earth’, resides in their capacity to welcome those who approach them with the desire to heal: “God is present as saviour of the poor and, in the poor, of everyone else”. How can forcibly displaced people offer healing to those ‘who approach them’? And how to provide opportunities for them to do so?
- (3) ***All are called to be agents of social change.*** The challenge, as we have seen, is to try to incorporate the social dimension into the Exercises in such a way that it becomes an integral part of the experience of those who receive them, as a way of becoming more aware of their call to actively participate in the transformation of unjust structures and become agents of social change—a call addressed to all, including forcibly displaced people who have often suffered themselves under these unjust structures. In other words, the objective is to apply the *Spiritual Exercises* so they can act as a way or tool to contribute to the formation of authentic *missionary disciples*.
- (4) ***The need to address specific social issues of injustice.*** This ‘communitarian nature’ of salvation, and the interdependence of persons, demands that ‘real’ issues of concern be addressed. In our previous discussion, for example, this means addressing questions that deal directly with the appropriate use and sharing of the earth’s natural resources and the recognition, in very concrete ways, of the full humanity of women (especially forcibly displaced women) that has been denied them for so long. In the case of forcibly

displaced people, this will require addressing, among others, issues of identity, of acceptance, of healing, and of their contribution to the mission of the Church.

- (5) ***Raising awareness of each person's particular contribution and fomenting it.*** While a valid method of application of the *Exercises* for the forcibly displaced would have to include this emphasis on social consciousness mentioned above, it will also need to take into consideration their particular circumstances. For example, it would need to ask questions such as: Do survivors of forced displacement 'accept' this idea of universal salvation as including them? Do they see themselves as being able to contribute towards this 'communal salvation' for others, and if so, how? And if not, how can the *Exercises* be adapted so as to promote the development and acceptance of such role?
- (6) It is in the ***historical following of the historical life of Jesus*** that the genuine Christian contemplation in action is going to be present: God becomes present in every good action, but in a special and specifically Christian way in that historical action that liberates from the sin that oppresses the world. What might this 'liberating role' of survivors of forced displacement of faith consist on?
- (7) ***A particular approach to the 'election'.*** As we have seen, the meditation of the *Two Standards* constitutes in essence an anticipation of what today we call structural sin. It highlights the fact that our process of conversion must include a confrontation with the social dimension, and that it should be expected that the election in the *Exercises* will also have a social dimension. This 'choice' should be expressed by survivors of forced displacement, as exercitants, through their desire to proclaim the Good News and denounce prophetically any instance of structural sin and injustice that affects them and those around them: the outcome should be a loving adherence to the person of Christ and a personal conversion, oriented to a radical change of unjust structures.
- (8) ***Personal responsibility.*** Of utmost importance in these *Exercises* will be that exercitants recognise their own responsibility as participants in any situation of injustice, lack of solidarity and death, as a prelude to this personal conversion.

In regards to the second topic—the call for an ecological conversion and the protection of the earth— this 'social consciousness' approach suggests a process of adaptation/application of the *Exercises* for the forcibly displaced that takes into consideration the following criteria:

- (9) ***Care.*** Ecological conversion calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit

of generous care, full of tenderness. This care of the earth as humanity's 'common home', and of creation in general, raises the question of both the self-care of forcibly displaced people and the care that is due to them by the universal community: are there particular issues (not only spiritual but in general) that get in the way of this self-care (e.g. mental health issues or access to resources) that need to be addressed? What and how much can survivors of forced displacement expect from their receiving communities and how to express those expectations to them, particularly (but not only) in terms of spiritual support and nourishment? As care for our common home is a priority for the Church and the world and should therefore be a priority in the giving of the *Spiritual Exercises*, care for the forcibly displaced—and their needs and challenges—has also become a priority for the Church, and should also be a priority in the way the Exercises are presented to them.

- (10) **Integral Relationships.** We have seen that care of the environment affects the quality of our relationships with God, with other human beings, and with creation itself: every little thing we do can contribute to the care of abuse of creation (cf. [SpEx 230]), and so our ecological conversion must touch all aspects of our lives, and we must examine our behaviour continuously to make sure it does. Similarly, Exercises for the forcibly displaced should include elements that promote these 'integral relationships' with God, with one another and with their receiving communities, helping them to examine their behaviour continuously to make sure these are affirming and life-giving.
- (11) **Restoration.** Care of the environment invites us to contribute to restoring the integrity of God's creation, as we search for and find God in all things and love all things in God. As survivors of forced displacement ponder God's continuous labouring in the world (as for instance in the *Contemplatio*, cf. [SpEx 236]), they should experience also a desire to labour for the restoration of the damage that has been inflicted not only in the world but also in their own relationships.
- (12) **A new narrative.** Ecological conversion invites us to see creation with new eyes and in previously unimagined ways. Through the Spiritual Exercises, survivors of forced displacement should also be invited to see themselves with new eyes and 'in previously unimagined ways', addressing issues (in particular those associated with their displacement experiences) that might cause them to have a distorted and damaging image of themselves; the purpose, as mentioned before, will be to help them 're-write' their life stories in a way that gives meaning and purpose to them.

- (13) ***Interconnectedness.*** Care of the earth also emphasises the interconnectedness between our understanding of the world (or lack thereof) and the way we relate (or are called to relate) to this world and to one another. Fostering an awareness of this undeniable ‘common bond’ and interconnectedness we share, should be a priority in Exercises for survivors of forced displacement, highlighting not only personal interactions with one another (of great importance for many of them who have often felt isolated and rejected), but also how we work collaboratively together (sharing one’s given talents), how we grow in awareness of the needs of others (sometimes difficult to do when one’s own needs are not being met), and how we respect and care for all living beings.
- (14) ***Common responsibility for our ‘common home’.*** Caring for our planet is part of every Christian’s journey, including the forcibly displaced. The *Contemplation to Attain Love* reminds us of our call to collaborate in solidarity with the Trinity (to labour) so that God’s plan of redemption can continue to edge forward. Entering into solidarity with the pain of the world—one’s own, of the earth and of the poor and of other marginalised people—is the key to experience the conversion Pope Francis talks about.
- (15) ***Greater awareness of one’s situation.*** Since caring for the earth requires developing greater awareness of our actions and the negative impact they have on our common home—of how institutional structures and practices as well as our personal lives contribute to damaging the earth—it has been suggested that using an ‘Ecological Examen’ for the First Week of the Exercises and the rest of the retreat could constitute a powerful tool. Similarly, Exercises for the forcibly displaced should help them develop greater awareness of areas in their current situation that might be in need of healing; specific ‘Examens’ should be developed and offered for this purpose.
- (16) ***Gratitude for life as gift.*** Ecological conversion entails gratitude and gratuitousness, in recognition that the world is God’s loving gift. While it might be difficult for survivors of forced displacement to see their displacement experiences as ‘gift’, they can still be encouraged to see their own lives as gift and especially encouraged to recognise the gifts they have and which they are invited to offer to others.

Finally, our exploration of how givers of the Spiritual Exercises have applied them so as to address the legacy of systematic discrimination against women (using the lens of ‘social

consciousness’) that still pervades many societies in the world today, has suggested the following criteria for the adaptation/application of the *Exercises* for the forcibly displaced:

- (17) ***Different ways of experiencing God.*** The insight that women formed in Ignatian spirituality have different ways of experiencing God and different cultural expectations placed on them is also relevant for survivors of forced displacement. In developing spiritual exercises for them, it should be remembered that they come from a variety of cultures and traditions which might have very different concepts of God and “of the meaning of compassion, of service, of accompaniment, of mission, justice, creation, and ways to approach sanctity, of God’s mercy and of relationships of power and lack of power”. And in offering them *exercises*, these differences will be made evident in particular in their use of language which describes their images of God, of divine judgment, of heaven and hell, of the causes of suffering and of perceived expectations, using concepts that are more culturally-based and more relevant for them.
- (18) ***Offering strong models.*** Images of women being faithfully present to Jesus provide strong models for contemporary women. What images, within their Church and local communities, could promote such positive models for survivors of forced displacement? Images that pay tribute to their cultural richness, that offer admiration at their resilience and courage in the midst of great adversity? How to promote and ‘enshrine’ these images as part of some of the spiritual exercises offered to them?
- (19) ***Developing greater sensitivity.*** For givers of the Exercises who truly want to help their forcibly displaced exercitants, it will be indispensable that they become more sensitive to their needs and nature, adapt situations and language whenever necessary, and complement with alternative content and delivery formats—and to the extent that is possible—areas considered as common difficulties for them. Some of the things that could be done include: use of simple language that takes into account possible difficulties with complex concepts in English (a second or third language for most survivors of forced displacement); giving a greater focus of God and Jesus as ‘beings-in-displacement-; rescuing their possible role in the history of salvation (as bearers of God’s ministry in their own profound way); and reinforcing within the *Principle and Foundation* the experience of ‘salvation’ in terms of God’s desire for them to live lives of abundance and fulfilment in the here and now, not only in the eschatological future.
- (20) ***‘Preferred’ companions in the journey of the Exercises.*** In terms of offering the

Spiritual Exercises for women it has been proposed that, in general, if a woman is accompanied by another woman, the communication becomes more relaxed and proceeds with a greater degree of intimacy. What might be the characteristics of a ‘preferred’ companion or spiritual guide for survivors of forced displacement making the *exercises*? What particular skills or proficiencies might be required of them? And how to develop them?

- (21) ***Choice of scriptural texts.*** As with the choice of scripture texts that seek to enhance women’s experience of the Exercises, great care and diligence will be needed in the selection of biblical passages used for the contemplations, as well as the ‘mirrors and lenses’ that are used for presenting and reading them. This is so as to avoid, in the negative sense, offering images (especially unconsciously) which could be degrading or vilifying of survivors of forced displacement, in particular in terms of their condition as ‘strangers’ or members of cultural groups that are not so positively regarded. In the positive sense, this careful selection of additional passages from the scriptures for the use of exercitants could contribute to make more visible those characters who often remain invisible or absent in our biblical readings—for example, Naaman the Syrian (a foreigner), who was the only man in the time of the prophet Elisha to have been cured from leprosy in Israel (cf. 2 Kings 5).
- (22) ***Understanding of evil, sin and suffering in the world.*** We have seen that social sin and its structures generally provoke different levels of conscience in men and women, so givers of the Exercises are encouraged to be attentive to women’s alternative interpretations, articulation and interiorization of issues within the social dimension, in particular in terms of understanding one’s responsibility and involvement in sinful structures. This precaution will certainly apply to survivors of forced displacement, many of whom (as we will see in chapter 4) have traditional worldviews that approach sin, evil and suffering from different perspectives where, for example, the natural and supernatural are seen as inextricably interwoven, and their versions of reality dictate a particular way of responding to these elements, with ideological assumptions usually hidden in those practices.
- (23) ***Prominent themes.*** In our exploration of the application of the Exercises to meet women’s challenges, we saw that Ignatius’ text gives prominence to certain things that are ‘more proper of women’, such as the embrace of God and God’s tenderness, the feelings of shame and confusion (cf. [*SpEx* 48]), and the experience of pain and tears (cf.

[SpEx 55]). While it would seem that these elements could also be of relevance to the experience of survivors of forced displacement (we will in fact address some of them in chapter 4), givers of the Exercises should also consider other themes that might ‘speak to’ or ‘touch’ more deeply the lives of their ex-forcibly displaced exercitants. Could they, for example, in their meditation on Hell base their composition of place on elements of their own experiences of ‘hell’ caused by forced displacement factors?

- (24) ***What best contributes toward the process.*** Following a similar consideration in applying the Exercises for women’s circumstances, it should be asked, “What ‘sections’ of the *Exercises* might contribute positively to the dynamics and experience of giving them to survivors of forced displacement?” Of course, the objective for givers of the Exercises is to become more aware of ‘what helps’ and ‘what constrains’ the process, so as encourage the former and avoid the latter. As we will see in chapter 5, some of the constitutive elements of the First Week of the Exercises could be used to capitalise their potential for healing of experiences of exclusion and rejection suffered by many survivors of forced displacement in the past.
- (25) ***Honouring differences.*** As when seeking to adequately honour the imaginative process of women in the contemplations of place suggesting (when necessary) more appropriate images (for example, less patriarchal) for this imaginative exercise, what might be more appropriate images for such imaginative exercise in the case of survivors of forced displacement? Some imagery linked to their countries of origin, or related to their specific traditions, or to nature?
- (26) ***Rules of discernment.*** As noted during our exploration of the application of Exercises for women, certain elements in the Rules of Discernment and language of spiritual combat are generally taken up more easily by women. As mentioned above, this would also be the case for many forcibly displaced people of faith for whom the natural and supernatural dimensions are inextricably interwoven. What implications would this have, for example, in the way the Rules of Discernment are presented to them? The concept of interior movements?

Clearly, other criteria for the application of Exercises for survivors of forced displacement could be derived from the three ‘social justice’ issues we have considered in the previous sections. Our objective in this brief exploration, as exemplified by the criteria we have proposed, has been to emphasise the requirement of including the aforementioned social

justice consciousness or approach when developing spiritual exercises for the forcibly displaced (chapter 5).

1.3. Conclusion and Summary of learnings for Part I

In the first part of this chapter (**section 1**), we have explored the Society of Jesus' commitment to social justice, articulated in a special way through its Social Apostolate. We have seen that for St Ignatius and the early Jesuit companions, the material and bodily concerns of those people they sought to help were as important as their spiritual needs. From the beginning too, Jesuits enlisted the aid of others to provide their social services, grounding these in institutions, either new ones they created or existing ones they supported, be it hospitals, prisons, orphanages, refuges for women at risk, or confraternities. Both practices—collaboration with others and working through institutions—would become part of the characteristic way of Jesuit proceeding and remain to this day. The early ministries of the Society covered seven specific areas: peacemaking; hospitals and prisons; ministry to the dying; to prostitutes; to orphans and daughters of prostitutes; to Jews and 'New' Christians, and confraternities and Marian congregations.

As our study revealed, these ministries (in different expressions) have remained a constant for the Society until today, including in its service to forcibly displaced people, particularly in the last forty years. During this time, in pursuing their ministry of peacemaking and reconciliation, Jesuits and companions have accompanied and served refugees and other forcibly displaced people escaping conflicts and wars all over the world; they have visited them in hospitals, prisons and detention centres on a regular basis, also running hospitals and clinics and providing financial and other resources for them. Like the early Companions, often they have also been called to help 'die well' those whom they accompany, making sure their passing takes place with dignity and care. Jesuits and companions today also strive to support and assist forcibly displaced people (especially women) forced to become sex workers, by offering them alternative options and training and through being involved in local and international advocacy initiatives against human-trafficking. In contrast to the experience of the early Companions—where most beneficiaries of their initiatives would have been Catholics—most forcibly displaced people who benefit today from Jesuit-sponsored activities and programs are not Christian, due primarily to their coming from areas of the world where Christianity is not the majority religion. Finally, the collaboration

between Jesuits and others that characterised the early Society's social initiatives has also been evidenced in the Society's ministry to the forcibly displaced, with Jesuits working side by side with lay people and other religious in teams, be it in Jesuit-sponsored initiatives (particularly the Jesuit Refugee Service) or in those set up by others.

We also saw that the 'Ignatian way' of approaching early initiatives in the social area was characterised by the conviction that physical presence is necessary to obtain concrete and real knowledge of the context and needs of particular populations, so as to discern the best way to engage appropriately with particular situations. This 'being present' for Ignatius and his companions was a way to witness to the love of God and to engage in friendship with all, but particularly with the poor, the marginalised and the forgotten. They believed (as their followers still do today) that this friendship with the poor could only be real if it is developed within an ambience of mutuality which encourages accessibility; is lived through a lifestyle that is simple and encourages availability; offers what we have without asking for anything in return (the gratuitousness of Jesuit ministries), and shows care and compassion more through deeds than in words. As with the First Companions, Jesuits and companions today not only seek to respond to immediate needs but plan 'strategically' to ensure that their initiatives will endure and have a lasting effect, and seek both to improve the lives of particular individuals, including forcibly displaced peoples, and also to address the structural causes of poverty, conflict and marginalisation that adversely affect their lives.

A brief exploration through the 'Characteristics of the Jesuit Social Apostolate' showed that beside these elements, the social ministry of the Society of Jesus is characterised by (1) its particular *sources of inspiration*—Christ and the poor; (2) its *fundamental principles*—community life (evangelical and apostolic) supports the work; no particular activity or approach is specified or ruled out, and insertion in the world of the poor is required; (3) its *work*—rooted (as mentioned above) in careful analysis and discernment of context, using several readings (cultural, economic, political and religious), and various secular sciences to inform its theological and faith-based approach; this process requires teamwork, cooperation and networking, as well as planning, evaluation and good management, coherence between social action and spiritual discourse, and good formation; (4) its *way of proceeding*—using prayerful, communal and apostolic discernment, and (5) its *hope*—in Christ and which finds expression in community and solidarity.

These ‘Characteristics’ have been in process of development since the origins of the Society and were given new ways of expression by the Decrees promulgated by three General Congregations of the Society of Jesus (GCs 32, 33, 34) which preceded their publication. We saw that the ‘common thread’ joining these and the two later Congregations (GC35 and GC36) was the articulation of the Society’s apostolic mission (cf. GC 32), in terms of its ‘service of the faith and the promotion of justice’. Of course, this was not a new mission for the Jesuits; in fact, in one form or another, this had always been the mission of the Society (as evidenced above), but it gained new meaning and urgency in the light of new challenges, needs and aspirations of the men and women of our world—a world ever more divided by greater injustices, not only individual but also structural injustices dominating the lives of nations and of the international community (cf. GC32). Some of the main challenges identified by the several Congregations have been: the large number of people in the world who have no knowledge of God and Christ, and a loss of the sense of the true God and of traditional values (cf. GC32); a need to concretise a ‘preferential option for the poor’ (cf. GC33); a growing international consciousness of a full range of *human rights* designed to protect the dignity of the person; exploitation of natural resources and the environment; evangelisation; inculturation (the dialogue between culture and the Gospel), and interreligious dialogue; the ever-increasing number of refugees and other displaced persons (cf. GC34); moving to the frontiers and building bridges; linking Jesuit identity and mission through faithful communities; fulfilling the Society’s mission of reconciliation with God, with one another and with Creation (cf. GC35), and the present ecological and environmental issues, as well as the need for careful discernment in searching God’s will for the Society and each Jesuit (cf. GC36).

It was pointed out that in the service of faith and the promotion of justice by the Society of Jesus (and in the spirit of good accountability and efficiency), it is necessary to return often to the guidelines and criteria offered by the above ‘Characteristics’ and the Decrees of the General Congregations on which they are based—and assess how closely its social and other apostolates are adhering to them—lest its mission be compromised. We looked at one such assessment by the previous coordinator of the Society’s Social Apostolate in Rome (cf. Álvarez de los Mozos). His conclusion showed that, despite tensions, challenges and reservations, there have indeed been real signs of hope and light showing that most Jesuits

and companions have taken up the mandate of GC32 and succeeding Congregations; that most of us feel more called to the faith-justice mission each day as we realise that greater apostolic fruit comes from the interplay of faith and justice. From my limited experience in the Society, I would agree with him, particularly in regards to the area of the Society's mission and service to the forcibly displaced. As we saw, this mission and practical response has been highlighted by the last four General Congregations as one of the universal Society's apostolic priorities, repeatedly asking all Jesuit Provinces to support the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service through personnel and resources.

As we recapitulate these findings, and for the purpose of our study, we can 'translate' them into several considerations and criteria to be used for the Exercises we will develop in chapter 5.²⁷² Some of these include: (1) finding creative and life-giving ways to promote peacemaking and reconciliation, including between new arrivals and their receiving communities; (2) the two-pronged task of peacemaking and reconciliation is also incumbent on the forcibly displaced—it is a responsibility they should be encouraged to assume; (3) having been victims of oppression and injustice, how do forcibly displaced people move forward, especially if other forms of discrimination still persist in their countries of resettlement; (4) how to assist them in 'moving' from being (or considering themselves as) 'victims' to perceiving themselves as 'survivors'; (5) how can the forcibly displaced express their own 'cultural brand' of Catholicism/Christianity (inculturation of the Gospel); (6) and how can they help us build bridges of understanding and dialogue; (7) the necessity of building discerning communities and homes that contribute to the nearing of God's reign; (8) finding expression to what the 'miserable and blessed' forcibly displaced can contribute to our lives; (9) if unbelief is linked with the deadening of one's conscience and one's inability to hear the poor, what can the forcibly displaced say to us to help 'awaken' our conscience, and (10) exploring the ways in which the forcibly displaced can challenge the Church to go beyond its concern for self-perpetuation and do all it can to proclaim justice within its service of faith.

²⁷² As mentioned earlier, Appendix I offers a more detailed presentation of these learnings in table format, pointing out the major themes recognised; the identified needs of the forcibly displaced to be addressed based on those themes; suggestions for possible Ignatian *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement to address these needs, and relevant resources from Ignatian, scriptural and ecclesial sources to help develop these *exercises*.

The **second half** of Section 1 then considered some of the characteristics of the spirituality of the Society's Social Apostolate, looking in particular at the role of Ignatian spirituality in its ministries' approach and the influence of the *Spiritual Exercises* in it. We saw first that for Ignatius, his Trinitarian experience of one God who loves the world and gives Godself up for its liberation was embodied in Jesus and in his predilection for the poor and their freedom, which became for him the concrete and ultimate expression of service to humanity in his time: 'to save souls'. From the time of his conversion, Ignatius' special sensitivity for the poor and deep awareness of their needs would be linked to his apostolic charism: *in all things to love and to serve*, for the greater glory of God and the common good, in every context and era, as new challenges arise. Thus, in the faith-justice mission, we could argue that Ignatius' 'hope' would be that *his* spirituality in general, and his *Spiritual Exercises* in particular, would help us, among other things, to: *be in touch with concrete reality* (and sharing life with the poorest, and being aware of the injustices and suffering imposed on them, help make this reality even 'more real'); *respond to the call to serve* (love is expressed more in deeds than in words); *be discerning in our decisions and options*, so as to discover the truest needs and the best way to respond to them following Christ's loving way (*lucidity of discernment* and *discreta caritas*); *find God's presence in the mission we have been entrusted* (nothing is purely secular); *prevent fear from paralysing us* (trusting that God will ensure the completion of our mission); and *be men and women for others*, with joy and consolation.

Hoping to shed more light on our own process of application of the *Exercises*, we concluded this **first Part** of chapter 2 exploring some factors and considerations that givers of the Exercises have taken into account in applying them to address three specific social justice issues; namely, 1) the struggle for liberation in Latin America; (2) the call for an ecological conversion and protection of our 'mother/sister Earth', and (3) the need to address the legacy of systematic discrimination against women. Both the theoretical aspects concerning the spirituality of the Jesuit Social Apostolate mentioned above, as well as the practical applications in the three given examples, rendered both possible criteria for the application of the *Exercises* to meet the needs of forcibly displaced people, and also additional considerations for our design of specific spiritual resources for them.

We have already summarised the criteria in the previous section. Among the additional considerations for the design of *exercises* we find: (11) how to learn to assimilate Christ's

ways of poverty, simplicity, humility, compassion, and solidarity, particularly in our engagement with those in need; (12) learning to see the world as the place where God's reign will be a reality and doing what we can to walk towards that reality; (13) what 'freedom' might mean for the forcibly displaced, and how they can attain it; (14) fostering service that promotes friendship and collaboration in community, where the least of our brothers and sisters are encouraged to contribute; (15) choosing where to put one's talents and energy in the service of the community—what the particular contribution of forcibly displaced peoples might be; (16) learning to overcome the fear that paralyses us and prevents us from labouring for God's reign; (17) responding to the call to be a consoling and joyful presence in the world; (18) further integrating the social dimension in the Exercises given to the forcibly displaced, so as to contribute to the creation of 'authentic missionary disciples' for and by the Church; (19) becoming aware of one's role and responsibility in the structural sin of the world, including from one's condition and situations of disadvantage; (20) becoming more attuned to God's continuous loving presence in creation; (21) what forcibly displaced people can do to help safeguard the integrity of our common home, the earth, based on their particular experiences; (22) encouraging, affirming and valuing the voice and experiences of forcibly displaced women when offering Ignatian Exercises to them, and (23) encouraging articulation of and receptivity to forcibly displaced women's contribution to the richness of the *Exercises*.

To conclude this first part of our current chapter, we recall Fr Pedro Arrupe's words, as then Superior General, to all Jesuit Major Superiors in his letter of 14 November 1980, as he launched the Jesuit Refugee Service:

St Ignatius called us to go anywhere we are most needed for the greater service of God. The spiritual as well as material need of nearly 16 million refugees throughout the world today could scarcely be greater: God is calling us through these helpless people. We should consider the chance of being able to assist them a privilege that will, in turn, bring great blessings to ourselves and our Society.²⁷³

And of course, these blessings have become a reality, many times over, as the Society has strived to fulfil its faith-justice mission in its service to our displaced brothers and sisters. We explore now some of the major aspects involved in answering this call to respond to the plight of forcibly displaced people, both in general, and through the specific 'way of proceeding' of the Society through its Jesuit Refugee Service.

²⁷³ Letter by Fr Pedro Arrupe, then Superior General, to all Jesuit Major Superiors, 14 November 1980, AR 18 (1980) 319-321.

Part II: Responding to the plight and challenges of forcibly displaced people

Introduction

As it was noted in the previous chapter, many forcibly displaced people of faith place their hope in God, trusting that in God they will find meaning to their suffering. They also hope that God will deliver them from their plight and pray and hope that God will send ‘good Samaritans’ to support them and help them along the way. Christians are called to fulfil this role of ‘good Samaritans’, to take up God’s ministry of love and compassion and to respond to their neighbour in need. Of course, this is not always easy to do. It can be difficult because the issues involved are so many and so complex that many people feel at a loss as to what to do, and because there are so many people in need that often they feel overwhelmed by the task. And it is not easy either because of the consequences that extending a helping hand to others might bring: inconvenience and disturbance of one’s comfortable life; a change in one’s way of perceiving the world, vulnerability, the risk of being misunderstood and even exclusion.

Of course, none of these reasons is powerful enough or valid enough to ignore the suffering of one’s neighbour. We consider now what and how an appropriate response to the plight of the forcibly displaced should be, both from a humanitarian point of view and from what the Catholic tradition has said on the matter. A compassionate response to the hope forcibly displaced people have placed on humanity is best manifested through the gifts of hospitality and solidarity—welcome and companionship—so we look here in greater detail at these two essential themes which we introduced briefly in the previous chapter, and in particular at the way in which they are envisioned within the Christian tradition. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, these values too have been among the guiding principles in the Society of Jesus’ institutional response to the forcibly displaced through the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service for the past thirty-eight years. We explore then the experiences, learnings and theological reflection amassed by JRS and combine this wisdom with the insights obtained in the rest of the chapter to offer some initial suggestions on how Ignatian spirituality, and the *Spiritual Exercises* in particular, might be used in order to nurture the spiritual lives of forcibly displaced peoples.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Some of the themes in Part II of this chapter were originally explored in my *tesina* and have been reworked and expanded here.

2.1. Why respond?

The human community, and in particular people of faith, share an obligation not remain indifferent to the plight of over sixty-five million forcibly displaced people in the world today. Their required action is a matter of humanity, of human rights and of being faithful to the faith they profess. In other words, their response is required because as members of the human community they share the responsibility of caring for fellow human beings, and as Christians, it is inherent to the mission they have been entrusted—to proclaim the Good News of salvation—a salvation not only for the afterlife, but also for the here and now that liberates people from any form of captivity and heals peoples' wounds—both physical and spiritual. In the end, a response is required because the ultimate goal should be the universal good for all.

2.1.1. A matter of rights

Kwizera Jean de Dew, a young Burundian refugee wrote from a refugee camp in Tanzania:

A refugee's situation is a difficult one. We are people with many problems. Our rights are not respected in our land of origin and often neither in the land of asylum. We are without a voice and when we try to speak, our voices are not heard. But we have our lives and that is our biggest hope. We shall one day return to our homeland, where there will be peace for all and we shall live together, build our lives anew, and have a chance to plan for our lives and our future.²⁷⁵

Our rights are not respected in our land of origin and often neither in the land of asylum. The real basis of all human rights is the dignity of the human person. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined this principle in its preamble: “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world [...]”²⁷⁶ There is great debate among the international community concerning the best way to respond to the plight of forcibly displaced peoples, but unfortunately not much agreement, as particular interests suggest different ethical systems and practical solutions as the bases for that response. But should rights be subjective to particular interests? This Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed without dissent on 10 December 1948 and representing “a worldwide

²⁷⁵ Cf. M. RAPER and A. VALCÁRCEL, “Refugees and forcibly displaced people” in *Christian Perspectives on Development Issues*, Ireland: GENPRINT 2000, pp. 82-83.

²⁷⁶ Cf. UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR), *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=eng>. Accessed 22 June 2018.

statement of ethical behaviour that member states have agreed to”, seems to suggest that they should not be.²⁷⁷

Justice demands that everyone be given his or her due, which in turn requires that the human rights of every human being be recognised. If we accept this assertion, an important corollary is that social justice is also a dynamic concept whose requisites only reveal themselves little by little, since humanity did not become conscious of every human right all at once. In fact, it is most likely that we will continue to enact new rights in the future—or expand existing ones—as we become aware of aspects that need special protection.²⁷⁸ This has certainly been the case in the field of forced displacement, for example in the development of areas such as the right ‘not to migrate’ (in contrast to the usually upheld right to do so) and the exercising of one’s faith and spirituality as a cultural right. The right ‘not to migrate’ has in fact become a leading principle of Catholic social teaching on migration promoted as the right of persons “to find in their own countries the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given talents”.²⁷⁹ In regards to

²⁷⁷ Cf. C. BAGHDADY and R. VANDERBERG, “Immigration in the 21st Century—The Need for an Ethical Approach: The Canadian Experience” in F. Baggio and L. Zanfrini, eds., *Migration Management and Ethics: Envisioning a Different Approach*, Milano: Polimetria 2009, p. 58. The authors point out that several articles of the Declaration are especially relevant to the topic of forced displacement and migration, including Article 22 (on economic, social and cultural rights), Article 23 (on the right to work), and Article 25 (on a standard of living adequate for health and well-being).

²⁷⁸ Cf. GONZÁLEZ-CARVAJAL, *El clamor de los excluidos*, p. 156.

²⁷⁹ POPE JOHN PAUL II, “Migration with a View to Peace”, *Message of the Holy Father for the 90th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2004* (23 December 2003), n. 3, proclaimed “first of all the right not to emigrate, that is, the right to live in peace and dignity in one’s own country”, cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20031223_world-migration-day-2004.html Accessed 22 June 2018. Hoeffner and Pistone point out that in recent years, besides being a common theme for Popes Benedict XVI and John Paul II (present also, for instance, in the latter’s 2000 and 2001 messages for World Migration Day), both the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and various conferences of bishops have asserted variations on this theme. See for example: UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS AND CONFERENCIA DEL EPISCOPADO MEXICANO, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope: A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration from the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States* (22 January 2003), n. 34, cf. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/strangers-no-longer-together-on-the-journey-of-hope.cfm>. Accessed 22 June 2018; and the PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi (The Love of Christ towards Migrants)* (2004), 29, affirming “the right of the individual not to emigrate [...] that is, the right to be able to achieve [one’s] rights and satisfy [one’s] legitimate demands in [one’s] own country”, cf. JOHN HOFFNER and MICHELE R. PISTONE, “But the Laborers Are... Many? Catholic Social Teaching on Business, Labour, and Economic Migration” in Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books 2009, pp. 89-90. On this topic, see also MARY DELOREY, “International Migration: Social, Economic and Humanitarian Considerations” in Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books 2009, pp. 31-53. DeLorey reminds us that: “The Church’s approach to migration has and will continue to include both the reduction of the need to migrate and the protection of those who have little choice but to do so. The long-term goal is equitable development for all peoples, so that migration is a choice rather than a necessity”, p. 51. In other words, as Donald Kerwin puts it: “The ‘right not to

living out one's faith as a 'cultural right', and as articulated in our previous chapter, "Catholic teaching recognises that people cannot express their faith or values in the abstract, but must do so in the context of their particular cultures" and in response to their specific circumstances. At the same time, "Catholic teaching does not affirm all cultural practices. It seeks to transform practices that do not respect human rights or further the common good".²⁸⁰

But beyond the concept of rights, there is a basic moral imperative that as human beings we are called to respond to: save lives. Morality has to do with right behaviour towards one another. Justice requires the righting of wrongs. The moral thing is to make sure that no human being suffers because of the actions of others. The just thing is for those responsible to repair the damage that has been done and to restore relationships. In the 'small', ever more interconnected global village, it has become increasingly difficult to separate the moral from the just thing, because most of people's actions have now repercussions which no longer absolve them from responsibility.²⁸¹

Human beings recognise the importance of human rights, justice and morality, but people of faith must not forget the fundamental role that charity should also play in their response to the needs of their neighbours: "Both charity and justice need to be present in those of us who have been re-born in Christ. The *First Letter of John* affirms that 'everyone who loves is born of God' (4:7) and that 'who does right has been born of him' (2:29)".²⁸² In fact, it could be argued that charity has gone always ahead of human rights, paving the way for them to be recognised. Justice has then 'codified' the demands of charity, mainly because civil laws are usually more adhered to in obedience than people's consciences. But charity impels us to

have to migrate' inspires the Church's overseas development work, its peace-building programs, and its advocacy for debt relief and fair trade". Cf. DONALD KERWIN, "Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person" in Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books 2009, p. 97.

²⁸⁰ KERWIN, "Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person", pp. 99-100.

²⁸¹ In response to the Lampedusa (3 October 2013) and other similar tragedies, the Jesuit Provincials of Europe and the Middle East and of Africa-Madagascar, issued a statement on 25th October 2013 on migration and asylum today. They reminded their countries that: "Europe must accept its share of responsibility for global migratory flows. Many European states or their corporations supply arms to Africa, often covertly. These arms supplies fuel conflicts, which, in turn, fuel migratory flows. Our world is so interconnected that we cannot place the border of our concern at the Mediterranean [...]. Whatever the reasons, the Lampedusa tragedy shows that we are called back to our basic human duty to save lives. We cannot escape that moral imperative". Cf. Statement of the Jesuit Provincials of Europe and the Middle East and of Africa-Madagascar, *Migration and Asylum today – "We cannot set borders to our concern"*. <http://www.sjweb.info/news/ensPDF.cfm?PubNumID=209&DownLang=1>. Accessed 22 June 2018.

²⁸² Cf. L. GONZÁLEZ-CARVAJAL, *Con los pobres, contra la pobreza*, Madrid: San Pablo 1991, pp. 115-116.

look beyond justice, so that people do not simply limit themselves to do what is required, and forget to look at each individual as a son or daughter of God, a brother and sister in Christ.²⁸³

There is no doubt that much of the forced displacement in the world today is a consequence of violations of fundamental human rights. Protection of the vulnerable is itself a right, and should be a prerequisite mechanism, enshrined in law,²⁸⁴ so as to safeguard the well-being of vulnerable people threatened with displacement: “Ethical norms of justice and human rights necessitate international refugee protocols and conventions that are not simply reactive but essentially proactive”.²⁸⁵ At the same time, these instruments need to be complemented by concrete actions. Campaigns, research and awareness-raising projects, public education and advocacy, all based on learnings gathered from the field, and rooted in solid Christian social teaching, must be undertaken to defend the rights of the forcibly displaced.²⁸⁶

2.1.2. A matter of faith in action: Catholic Social Teaching and the Common Good

²⁸³ Cf. F. J. DE LA TORRE DÍAZ, “Los pobres, la pobreza, la justicia y la caridad” in *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 88, n. 346 (2013) 547; and GONZÁLEZ-CARVAJAL, *Con los pobres, contra la pobreza*, pp. 117-118.

²⁸⁴ Yet, as Daniel Groody points out, the use of legal mechanisms to protect the vulnerable need to be developed using a broad understanding of the ‘law’: “Here many kinds of law are at work: laws of nations that control borders; laws of human nature that lead people to seek opportunities for more dignified lives; natural law that deals with ethical dimensions of responding to those in need; and divine law that expresses the Creator’s will for all people. The fact that so many migrants are dying in their efforts to meet basic human needs raises serious questions about current civil laws and policies and their dissonance with other forms of law [...]. When people cross borders without proper documentation, most are not simply breaking civil laws but obeying the laws of human nature, such as the need to find work so as to feed their families [...]. Moreover, crossing international borders without papers in most countries is an administrative infraction, not a felony; it is not a violation of divine law or natural law, and in such cases undocumented immigration should in no way be confused with serious criminal activity or threats to national security. Much misunderstanding and injustice occur when immigrants and immigration are perceived primarily as problems in themselves rather than as symptoms of deeper social ills and imbalances, as matters of national security rather than as responses to human insecurity, as social threats rather than as foreign neighbours”. GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 11. And as we have emphasised in chapter 1, theology can play an important role in broadening this understanding of law: “Amidst contemporary polemics around the legal status of forced migrants, theology and philosophy help expand the intellectual terrain by providing a broader understanding of law [...]. Theology not only breaks open and judges as inadequate a binary analysis of migration that limits it to categories such as legal/illegal, citizen/alien, and right/wrong; but also theology provides a clearer lens through which to read the complexity of reality and a more adequate framework for responding to the most vulnerable members of society and for building a civilization of love”, GROODY, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees”, p. 12.

²⁸⁵ Cf. O. AGBONKHIANMEGHE, “Justice for the Displaced: *The Challenge of a Christian Understanding*”, p. 47.

²⁸⁶ Some practical examples of these activities include: church organisations, non-government organisations and other advocacy groups which have joined to speak in opposition to the use of anti-personnel landmines and other ‘small’ weapons; speaking up for stateless persons and defending the rights of children not to be used as pawns and combatants in wars; highlighting the decline of protection for refugees in camps, when these become militarised or their civilian nature is compromised; speaking up against unjust government practices and policies regarding urban asylum seekers, detention of asylum seekers and inadequate procedures for determining refugee status. Cf. RAPER and VALCÁRCEL, “Refugees and forcibly displaced people”, p. 83.

Gaudium et Spes, the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World”, reminds us that:

Everyday human interdependence grows more tightly drawn [...]. As a result, the common good, that is, the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race (GS 26).

The foundation of the Catholic Church’s Social teaching is the proper understanding and value of the human person.²⁸⁷ It seeks to articulate the ethical implications of this proper understanding of the dignity of all individuals, and as such, in regards to forcibly displaced peoples, it can be argued that the “Catholic Church does not have an immigration policy so much as it has a person policy. Its singular contribution to the global debate on immigration lies in its reverence for the human beings at the heart of this phenomenon”.²⁸⁸ As we have seen, Catholic Social teaching has a long and rich tradition in promoting hospitality to the vulnerable stranger and defending those who have been forcibly displaced. Such tradition, as we would expect, has the Scriptures and the life and model of Jesus as the basis for its teaching: “Our common faith in Jesus Christ moves us to search for ways to treat all immigrants in a spirit of solidarity. It is a faith that transcends borders and bids us to overcome all forms of discrimination and violence”.²⁸⁹

Five principles emerge from this teaching, which help guide the Church’s response on forced displacement (remembering here that the broader definition used by the Church includes those forced to leave their nations due to unbearable economic conditions in their home countries, often grouped under the label of ‘migrants’ or ‘immigrants’): (1) people have a right to find opportunities in their homeland, but if these are lacking, (2) they have also the right to migrate to support themselves and their families; (3) in particular, refugees and asylum seekers, escaping war and persecution, should be afforded protection. At the same time, (4) sovereign nations have the right to control their borders, to determine whether

²⁸⁷ “[...] the guiding principle of all of the Church’s social doctrine is a *correct view of the human person* and of his unique value, inasmuch as ‘man [sic...] is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself’. God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man [sic] (cf. Gen 1:26), conferring upon him an incomparable dignity [...]”. JOHN PAUL II, *Encyclical Letter, Centesimus Annus*, on the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, (1 May 1991), no. 11; AAS 83 (1991) 793-867; cf. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jpii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html. Accessed 22 June 2018.

²⁸⁸ KERWIN, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person”, p. 93.

²⁸⁹ Cf. UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS AND CONFERENCIA DEL EPISCOPADO MEXICANO, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, no. 19.

protection is indeed required and to ensure that new arrivals do not pose a risk to their citizens.²⁹⁰ In balancing this tension between the needs of those who seek refuge and those who are able to provide it, 5) it should never be forgotten that the human dignity and human rights of all people should always be respected.²⁹¹ This respect should be reflected in government policies, in the provision of basic services (health, education, housing, job opportunities) and in making all possible efforts to create an atmosphere of hospitality for those who seek refuge. It might seem challenging to reconcile these principles, but it is possible to do so:

The Church recognizes the right of a sovereign state to control its borders in furtherance of the common good. It also recognizes the right of human persons to migrate so that they can realize their God-given rights. These teachings complement each other. While the sovereign state may impose reasonable limits on immigration, the common good is not served when the basic human rights of the individual are violated.²⁹²

This search for the common good also recognises that as long as the root causes for forced displacement—wars, injustice, religious intolerance, civil conflicts, environmental degradation, poverty—are not addressed, the movement of peoples will continue unabated. At the same time, the search for the common good also recognises the contribution that people from different cultures and backgrounds offer to their places of refuge. The common

²⁹⁰ Kerwin points out that according to anthropologist Olivia Ruiz Marrujo, this concept and understanding of ‘risk’ is central to competing migration paradigms (cf. OLIVIA RUIZ MARRUJO, “Immigrants at Risk, Immigrants as Risk: Two Paradigms of Globalization” in *Migration, Religious Experience and Globalization*, Gioacchino Campese and Pietro Ciallella, eds., Staten Island, NY: Centre for Migration Studies 2003, pp. 19-24.) According to Kerwin, “In Marrujo’s view, to conceive of immigrants ‘as’ a risk leads to an analysis of immigration through the lens of sovereignty, national security and national interest. By contrast, to see immigrants ‘at risk’ places them in a human rights framework, focusing on their hopes, needs and suffering. Catholic teaching insists that concepts like ‘sovereignty’, ‘national security’ and the ‘rule of law’, which are often used to impede the legitimate aspirations of migrants, must instead be put in service to them. Moreover, it moves beyond the ‘risk’ paradigm, urging that immigrants be treated as agents in their own lives and as full participants in the lives of their communities”. KERWIN, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person”, p. 93.

²⁹¹ “In a certain sense, the source and synthesis of these rights is religious freedom, understood as the right to live in the truth of one’s faith and in conformity with one’s transcendent dignity as a person”. JOHN PAUL II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 47.

²⁹² Cf. UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS AND CONFERENCIA DEL ESPISCOPADO MEXICANO, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey*, nos. 33ff. Further, when these rights are violated, such action puts into question the ‘moral basis’ of a nation to ‘control’ its borders: “The moral basis for the nation state [...] lies in its capacity to provide for the dignity and freedom of its citizens and for the human rights of all within its territory. The responsibility to provide protection to refugees, and to all persons who are found to be without the protection of any state, is shared by all sovereign states. When the maintenance of state sovereignty is valued above the protection of human rights, the moral basis of state sovereignty is called into question. Protecting citizens and residents is a broader obligation for a state than simply protecting territory. Human security, that is, security based on human dignity, is a higher value than state security. International relations arrangements can be assessed in view of the human security they provide for those persons without the protection of a state”. Cf. M. RAPER, “Precarious lives: Involuntary displacement of people in Asia Pacific today”, (18 January 2010) in *Eureka Street* (e-magazine) <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=18875#.U1Z04Su4bIU>. Accessed 22 June 2018.

good is best served when *all* people are able to make their own contributions to social and economic life, engage in productive work, and lead fulfilled lives. Society best functions when decisions are made seeking what benefits everyone, and not just the few, and when it recognises that all should be given the opportunity to realise their full human potential.²⁹³

Immigrant restrictionists often characterise ‘illegal immigration’ as a ‘quality of life’ issue, by which they mean the quality of their own lives. In Catholic teaching, the quality of everybody’s life matters; the common good cannot be interpreted to exclude or exempt any section of the population.²⁹⁴

The question, therefore, is not whether to stop migration altogether, but how to address and remedy the issues that make it a forced and imposed movement. Thus, Catholic Social teaching “emphasises the necessity of a global ethical framework that prioritises solidarity and justice for refugees and forcibly displaced people [...] where human rights and justice serve as the primary conceptual markers”.²⁹⁵ Forcibly displaced persons bear rights as every other human being and the securing of these rights poses the imperative to transform unjust structures that create dislocations and imbalances in all sectors (political, economic, social, spiritual) and in all organisations and institutions. The Church, furthermore, has the responsibility to question and oppose all forms of violation of these fundamental rights no matter the agents and circumstances of such violations.²⁹⁶

As we saw in the previous chapter, participation and solidarity are two other fundamental principles of Catholic Social teaching.²⁹⁷ Participation “is the voluntary and generous

²⁹³ The CCC states the following in relation to the common good: “The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. It consists of *three essential elements*: *respect for the person* as such—public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person; *social well-being and development* of the group itself, and *peace*, that is, the stability and security of a just order. Human interdependence is increasing [...]. The unity of the human family, embracing people who enjoy equal natural dignity, implies a *universal common good*. This good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to provide for the different needs [...] and certain situations arising here and there, as for example [...] alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families” (nos. 1906-1911).

²⁹⁴ KERWIN, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person”, p. 103.

²⁹⁵ Cf. AGBONKHIANMEGHE, “Justice for the Displaced”, p. 45.

²⁹⁶ Cf. AGBONKHIANMEGHE, “Justice for the Displaced”, pp. 45-47. The author continues: “In its clearest manifestation this teaching, tradition, or doctrine enables Christian theology to analyse the crisis of displacement, formulate an in-depth appraisal, and indicate effective responses to the structural causes of this tragedy. Stated differently, in the context of forced displacement, Catholic social teaching offers principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and guidelines for action”, p. 47.

²⁹⁷ Others, as a reminder, include: the principles of respect for human life, of preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, of association, of stewardship, of subsidiarity, of human equality, and the rights to work and family unity. As mentioned earlier, the Church insists on the right to movement in cases where a dignified working life is threatened by exploitation, economic poverty and discrimination. Keeping families together should be a guiding principle of social life, and this is as important in the case of forcibly displaced peoples as for the

engagement of a person in social interchange. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person”.²⁹⁸ Forcibly displaced people often do not feel they have the option to participate, either in decision making or in carrying out activities that have great bearing in their own lives, let alone in the lives and good of others. We will explore the concept of solidarity in more detail in the next section, but to highlight its important role in achieving the common good we recall here John Paul II’s words:

[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.²⁹⁹

2.1.3. A paradigm shift: from policies of exclusion to policies based on the rights of human persons

As we have tried to show in the previous sections, an appropriate, humanitarian and compassionate response to the plight of forcibly displaced people requires a paradigm shift: a shift in language, perception and approach, at the individual, local and international level. If people continue to speak of the ‘refugee crisis’, they will continue to see displaced people as an uncomfortable problem whose solution seems beyond reach. If they continue to perceive refugees *as a risk* to their way of life rather than fellow human beings *at risk* who require their assistance, they will concentrate their efforts in keeping them at bay. If they approach the arrival of people seeking refuge in their lands as a threat to their sovereignty and security instead of an opportunity to contribute to the universal common good, they will continue to draft immigration policies based on fear and use them to acquire political mileage in response to political pressure. Policies that will only respond to the short-term factors of this complex, world-wide phenomenon, without really addressing its long-term impact, focused on managing migration flows and keeping people on the move rather than on offering them sanctuary, protection and eventual integration.

Furthermore, while forced displacement is an inherently multilateral issue— involving sending and receiving nations, and a whole range of push and pull factors—migration

citizens of a country. Cf. JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE, *Keeping Hope Alive: Who Finds Refuge in Britain?* London: Andes Press Agency 1996, p. 82-83.

²⁹⁸ CCC 1913.

²⁹⁹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, on the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio* (30 December 1987), n. 38; AAS 80 (1988) 513-586; http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html. Accessed 22 June 2018.

policies are established almost exclusively by each national state, with the result that they often end up at odds with each other. With such deficiencies it is no wonder that immigration policies are mostly drafted using an exclusionary approach to migration³⁰⁰: “These exclusions can be economic (migrants confined to economic activities rejected by nationals, violation of labour rights), social (limited access to social benefits or pension benefits), cultural (required assimilation) or political (lack of political rights)”.³⁰¹ A paradigm shift then has to occur, whereby forcibly displaced people are no longer perceived and treated in terms of exclusion but of inclusion, and as it has already been implied, this can only occur if nation states adopt a human rights approach to migration/displacement. Doing so improves its management in at least three areas:

[...] it sets the priority on respecting the dignity of the displaced and on eliminating any possible abuses to which they might be subjected; recognises that their identity—including their cultural and spiritual dimensions—goes beyond their migration condition, and finally, it limits the power of the states themselves, where the temptation of sovereignty is to adopt an approach where obligations towards foreigners who have no claims on the state [in our case, particularly asylum seekers] are deferred.³⁰²

Another important consequence of this approach is that in general, when undocumented arrivals are admitted as persons with rights—rights that can be claimed in the receiving state—this in fact changes their ‘natural’ condition from excluded to included: “Although perhaps in a minimal and unsatisfactory way, recognising the rights of migrants is recognising that they belong. Recognition because of exclusion is substituted by recognition because of entitlements. This is a minimal but real basis for incorporation.”³⁰³ Needless to say, the Catholic Church’s approach to migration is inclusive and upholds this human rights approach, which it sees as being in line with its social teaching and principles. To ensure such inclusion, its ‘policy’ or position is that any migration policies towards the displaced should always be examined against four of these basic principles.³⁰⁴ We have alluded to them already but present them again here as a way of summary:

³⁰⁰ BATTISTELLA, “Migration and Human Dignity: From Policies of Exclusion to Policies Based on Human Rights”, p. 178.

³⁰¹ Cf. BATTISTELLA, ‘Migration and Human Dignity: From Policies of Exclusion to Policies Based on Human Rights’, p. 181.

³⁰² Cf. BATTISTELLA, ‘Migration and Human Dignity: From Policies of Exclusion to Policies Based on Human Rights’, p. 181.

³⁰³ Cf. BATTISTELLA, ‘Migration and Human Dignity: From Policies of Exclusion to Policies Based on Human Rights’, p. 181. Unfortunately, one of the reasons the protection of migrants and other displaced people is inadequate is that standards are not universally accepted or recognised.

³⁰⁴ Cf. BATTISTELLA, ‘Migration and Human Dignity: From Policies of Exclusion to Policies Based on Human Rights’, p. 188.

(1) *The human dignity of the person*, which as we have repeatedly stated is the foundation for our understanding of the human person (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 12-22). As a consequence of their dignity, people’s “rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all persons everything necessary for leading a life truly human” (GS, 26). When people’s dignity is threatened or negated in their countries of origin in any way, they have the right not only to find it somewhere else but also to be assisted in this search, and to deny this right is to deny dignity to human beings.

(2) *The common good*, “the sum total of conditions of social living, whereby persons are enabled more fully and readily to achieve their own perfection”.³⁰⁵ Rather than negating the right of states to regulate migration (as it is often feared), this principle recognises such right, while at the same time making sure that oppressive consequences are not created for anyone.

(3) *The universal common good*: the common good of any state “cannot be divorced from the common good of the entire human family” (*Pacem in Terris*, 98)³⁰⁶. *Pacem in Terris* also states that “the fact that he [a migrant or forcibly displaced person] is a citizen of a particular state does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in that universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of men [sic]” (25). (4) *Solidarity*: the Church’s moral teaching is ultimately founded on gospel values and thus believes that the goods of creation are meant for all: “the stronger and richer nations must have a sense of moral responsibility for the other nations”, which calls them to see those coming to their shores as ‘neighbours’ to whom they extend an invitation to share equally in the banquet of life (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 39). In regards to the underprivileged and marginalised, for the Church, solidarity—and for that matter, hospitality—is not an option, but a duty. We turn now to these two pillars of our social justice tradition.

2.2. Hospitality

We briefly introduced the topic of hospitality in our previous chapter, mainly in relation to the gift of hospitality that forcibly displaced people possess and want to offer to all. But what exactly does it mean to offer hospitality? To everyone? For how long? In which manner?

³⁰⁵ *Mater et Magistra*, 65. This encyclical, promulgated on 15 May 1961, was written by Pope JOHN XXIII on the topic of “Christianity and Social Progress”, AAS 53 (1961) 401-464. The title means *Mother and Teacher*, referring to the role of the church. Cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html. Accessed 22 June 2018.

³⁰⁶ *Pacem in Terris* is a papal encyclical issued by Pope JOHN XXIII on 11 April 1963 on nuclear non-proliferation, AAS 55 (1963) 258-304. The title means *Peace on Earth*. Cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html. Accessed 22 June 2018.

Hospitality is a complex subject. The mass movements of people today, both voluntary and forced, make the issue even more complex, for hospitality is no longer an individual issue, but a collective problem.³⁰⁷ One thing that is clear is that hospitality requires welcoming a stranger, trying to the best of one's ability and capacity to make her or him feel at home. Sometimes the offer of hospitality is voluntary; at other times it can be 'imposed' on people by circumstances. In some cases, they have even been asked to welcome those who were considered their enemies... until they became their guests:

In the origins of all civilisations we find the transformation of the enemy into guest: "You are not like us, therefore we kill you; you are not like us, therefore we listen to you". But the day the enemy becomes a guest, this is when the human community is founded. Ancient Greece celebrated hospitality as a reciprocal blessing and a mysterious link between the guest and the divinity. Homer wrote: "foreigners, beggars, they all come from God".³⁰⁸

Thus, in addressing this theme of welcoming the stranger, we do well to remember that two terms are always very close to one another: hospitality and humanity "to the point that copyists have sometimes confused the two and have ended up using one significantly in place of the other. These two words are always indissoluble: *hospitalitas* and *humanitas*".³⁰⁹ We approach this theme now, not with the intention of providing a comprehensive coverage of all the elements involved,³¹⁰ but as always with the intention of finding more 'reference points'

³⁰⁷ We could also ask, 'why be hospitable in the first place?' Torralba offers three arguments or reasons: 1) anthropological—as vulnerable and fragile beings we depend on one another for survival; 2) theological—the model of hospitality is found in the Trinitarian community of Persons who practice it among themselves; 3) anamnestic—as memory of the lived experience of Israel in Egypt, as an enslaved and exploited people. Cf. F. TORRALBA, "*No olvidéis la hospitalidad (Heb 13,2)*" *Una exploración teológica*, Madrid: PPC 2004, pp. 9-10.

³⁰⁸ Cf. O. CLÉMENT, *Dios es simpatía: Brújula espiritual en un tiempo complicado*, Madrid: Narcea 2011, p. 124. Original in French: *Petite boussole spirituelle pour notre temps*, Paris: Desclée De Brouwer 2008. And yet, the movement toward the stranger is not always so clear. As Zevola points out: "Human reflection can bring us closer and closer and yet there are shadows where faces are not fully revealed, leaving in us a lasting question: 'Is he coming as *hostis* (enemy) or *hospes* (guest)?' [...] and it is only through the shared light of a continuous revelation that we can progressively cover the distance that brings separation into solidarity. And this movement goes further towards a communion motivated by that still surprising statement made by Jesus: 'For I was a stranger and you welcomed me'". ZEVOLA, "What are you talking about to each other as you walk along?" (Lk 24:17): Migration in the Bible and Our Journey of Faith", p. 113.

³⁰⁹ Cf. CLÉMENT, *Dios es simpatía*, p. 128.

³¹⁰ The *Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology* gives an excellent summary of the religious background, meaning, and importance of hospitality in the ancient world, Older Testament and early New Testament times. That hospitality in the ancient world was considered a religious act is clear from several Greco-Roman myths where gods are depicted as travelling 'as helpless wayfarers seeking shelter and food'. Such appearances were really tests for the mortals who received them, and their fate, and the blessings or punishment they received, depended on the quality of the hospitality they offered to the gods. The memory of Israel as an exiled nation for some many years in Egypt (cf. Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 10:19), and God's care for them during their wandering years in the desert (Psalm 78), stand in the background for the call to the Jewish people to offer hospitality. A call which in the Christian Scriptures stresses hospitality to the poor, the helpless and the outcast—who receives them receives Christ (cf. Matthew 25:35-36; Revelation 3:20), who will recompense them in the end time because the poor cannot repay such hospitality (cf. Luke 14:12-14). The New Testament also presents Jesus as a generous host, particularly in Eucharistic contexts (cf. feeding the hungry in Mathew 14:13-21), as host at the Last Supper (cf. Mark 14:17-25), and in post-resurrection appearances,

that might help give us a clearer understanding (for our task of developing *spiritual exercises*) of both the role of hospitality in the complex field of forced displacement and in the living out a spirituality of hope by forcibly displaced people.

2.2.1. What hospitality does

Hospitality can be understood from different perspectives or given various emphases, though certain elements are considered essential. We look briefly here at three authors' 'definitions' to help us extract some of these essential aspects:

The German word for hospitality is *Gastfreundschaft* which means, friendship for the guest. The Dutch use the word *gastvrijheid* which means, the freedom of the guest [... this] shows that hospitality wants to offer friendship without binding the guest and freedom without leaving him alone [...]. Hospitality, therefore, means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.³¹¹

In his understanding of hospitality Nouwen stresses the importance of offering friendship and freedom to the one who comes knocking at our door. It is about creating a 'free space' where our guest is able to be himself or herself, without fearing that he or she might be expected to adapt to imposed norms or ways of behaviour. Because the stranger is precisely that, an 'unknown person', and we cannot be sure of his or her intentions, there might also be an initial perception that he or she might be in fact an enemy. This perception can only change through the offer of hospitality which allows acquaintance to be developed.

For Innerarity, hospitality contains an inherent sense of reciprocity, not only in the one particular instance of a host-guest relationship, but in that invariably we take turns being hosts and guests to one another. This means that our being *placed* in this world has a particular structure of reception and encounter: there is a freedom in giving and receiving that goes beyond the imperative of a give-and-take relationship.³¹² Thus, he emphasises the importance of mutuality (the *two-way street* of mutual ministry we alluded to in chapter 1) in

breaking the bread (cf. Luke 24:13-35) or preparing a meal (cf. John 21). The early Christian Church took seriously this emphasis on hospitality found in the Scriptures (cf. Justin Martyr's *Apology I*, 62, 5) and such welcome became a sign and symbol of the new religion (cf. Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oratio IV*, 111, *Contra Julianum*, PG 35, 648). Cf. M. FRANCIS, "Hospitality" in C. Stuhlmüller, General Editor, *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press 1996, pp. 443-445. As we saw earlier, in the Middle Ages, hospitality to strangers and pilgrims became a defining characteristic of monasticism. St Benedict, for example, devoted two chapters of his *Rule* to the theme—53 (quoted earlier) and 61, spelling out in great detail the ministry of hospitality that should be afforded all who came to the monastery.

³¹¹ Cf. HENRI NOUWEN, *Reaching out: the three movements of the spiritual life*, pp. 50-51.

³¹² Cf. D. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, Barcelona: Ediciones Península 2001, p. 13.

the encounter between host and guest. In fact, hospitality can produce such strong ties of solidarity between the two that it transforms into ‘family’ the one who is welcomed. This emphasis on mutuality and solidarity is also present in Russell’s definition of hospitality:

I understand hospitality as the practice of God’s welcome, embodied in our actions as we reach across difference to participate with God in bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis [...]. Christ as God’s Welcome is a metaphor for God’s action in reaching out to us and for our response. In Luke, Jesus is pictured moving from house to house, and table to table.³¹³

Her emphasis moreover is in seeing ‘God’s welcome’, the hospitality of God, as the model of our actions and offers of hospitality towards others. As such, our hospitality efforts have also a healing and redemptive power that can help transform situations of injustice and brokenness in this world. They are ‘efforts’ because we are called to ‘reach across difference’, to come out of ourselves and to collaborate with God in bringing closer God’s Kingdom.

Although not a theological virtue itself, it is worth noting here the relationship that hospitality holds with the three theological virtues. For the host and the guest, offering and receiving hospitality requires mutual trust and *faith* in the goodness of the other. The guest trusts that he will be welcomed and treated well, while the host has faith that the unknown guest will not repay her with violence or abuse. Although he cannot be certain, the guest *hopes* that the host will receive him, he puts his hopes in that welcome. And hospitality is a direct consequence of *charity* as universal love, without conditions or requirements.³¹⁴

2.2.2. A rich tradition: examples of hospitality in the Older and New Testaments

In its Instruction on ‘*The Love of Christ towards Migrants*’, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People states:

Welcoming the stranger, a characteristic of the early Church, thus remains a permanent feature of the Church of God. It is practically marked by the vocation to be in exile, in diaspora, dispersed among cultures and ethnic groups without ever identifying itself completely with any of these. Otherwise it would cease to be the first-fruit and sign, the leaven and prophecy of the universal Kingdom and community that welcomes every human being without preference for persons or peoples. Welcoming the stranger is thus intrinsic to the nature of the Church itself and bears witness to its fidelity to the gospel.³¹⁵

³¹³ Cf. L. RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality: God’s welcome in a world of difference*. Edited by J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press 2009, pp. 2, 113.

³¹⁴ Cf. TORRALBA, “*No olvidéis la hospitalidad*”, pp. 9-10. The author adds: “To the extent that we exercise the practice of hospitality we make ourselves into the likeness of God, Source and Horizon of all hospitality [...]. In this sense, hospitality is a social virtue, but it could almost be considered as a theological virtue, because it divinises the human person, it exalts her”, p. 24.

³¹⁵ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE, *Instruction Erga migrantes caritas Christi (The love of Christ towards migrants)*, 22.

The Bible is a narration of the history of salvation of the people of God; a people who from the beginning of creation have always been in movement, migrating, displacing, seeking refuge. The Bible in fact begins with the movement of God's Spirit over the face of the chaos (Genesis 1:1) and ends with John the Evangelist in exile, on the Isle of Patmos, writing the Book of Revelation: "The biblical story which begins with migration, ends with migration and exile. Between those two events the uprooted people of God seek safety, sanctuary and refuge".³¹⁶ And they seek and offer hospitality. As we approach this subject, it is important to remember that hospitality should be studied within the global context in which it develops, since the concept varies throughout places and times. For the purposes of this study, we look at some aspects of hospitality in the Judeo-Christian tradition as presented in the Older and New Testaments and the early Christian tradition. As we will see, hospitality, in fact, was one of the social practices most valued in both Testaments, considered basically from a double perspective closely interrelated: as a duty to welcome the stranger/the one in need (moral dimension) and as a blessing/reward for the host (theological dimension).³¹⁷

2.2.2.1. Older Testament

As we have seen, the memory of Israel as an exiled nation for many years in Egypt, and God's care for them during their wandering years in the desert, constitute the basis for the strong call to the Jewish people to offer hospitality to strangers and displaced peoples:

You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (*Deut. 10:19*) [...]. You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt (*Exod. 23:9*) [...]. When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God (*Lev. 19:33-34*).

Israel could not forget what it had lived through and survived thanks to God's protection and faithfulness.³¹⁸ And this memory would give the virtue of hospitality a significant place in diverse aspects of Israel's life:

³¹⁶ Cf. J. MARUSKIN, "The Bible: the ultimate migration handbook" in *Church & Society* 95, n. 6 (2005) 77-90, which provides a concise but detailed description of this 'migration history' through the Old and New Testaments.

³¹⁷ Cf. F. RIVAS, "Modelos de hospitalidad en la primera Carta de Clemente a los Corintios" in Carmen Bernabé and Carlos Gil, eds., *Reimaginando los orígenes del cristianismo. Relevancia social y eclesial de los estudios sobre Orígenes Cristianos*, Estella (Navarra): Verbo Divino 2008, p. 376.

³¹⁸ As these texts from the Older Testament show, the experience of uprootedness and forced displacement would lead the people of Israel to institute legal provisions that protected the rights and guaranteed the well-being of people in similar conditions, Cf. AGBONKHIANMEGHE, "Justice for the Displaced", p. 40. However,

Within the scope of biblical tradition, hospitality could be defined in multiple ways: as *law*, since it is already present in the moral and legal codes of the Old Testament; as *practice*, since it is exercised by the patriarchs of the people of God; as *custom*, because it is already described as a living tradition in the tribe of Judah; as *ritual*, since exercising hospitality implies a series of steps, routines, gestures and words which are repeated periodically; as *duty*, because it is lived as an imperative of quasi-categorical order [...] and as *moral value*, because hospitality is contemplated as horizon of meaning in the lives of many biblical characters.³¹⁹

We find numerous accounts of hospitality in Older Testament texts.³²⁰ A comparison between these texts reveals a typical or characteristic narrative schema in these accounts: 1) arrival of the guest; 2) welcome of the guest; 3) service to the guest; 4) words uttered by the guest; 5) listening to and welcoming the words uttered by the guest; 6) departure of the guest.³²¹ The visit of the three men to Abraham and Sarah (cf. Gen 18:1-16) by the oaks of Mamre, for example, follows this narrative structure. In analysing this text, and other similar ones, we observe that it is often God who sends the guest, as in the case here of the guest-angels, while in other cases the guest is someone who travels because of fidelity to God (cf. Tobit 7:1). In later Jewish tradition, to highlight the value of hospitality, it will be said that welcoming a guest is to welcome the *Shekina*, the divine presence.

Abraham welcomes the guests respectfully but at the same time quite earnestly since this welcome is recognised as the duty of service to guests. The strangers' words soon disclose their identity and mission, and at the same time, reveal a message. In all texts, the guest will be a bearer of some type of message, and generally, the reality of the Word of God will emerge through his actions and words. The 'turning point' in the narration takes place in the action of receiving, which includes both the initial attention and welcome to the guest and

this would occur through a process of evolution in time in "the long and progressive movement of Israel toward the Other, the stranger. Considering Israel's historical and religious experience the relationship with the foreigner can be viewed in three different ways: (1) The foreigner as object of compassion; it is first God who, after seeing Israel's condition in Egypt, and after hearing their suffering, intervenes to rescue them. And that is always confessed by Israelites while celebrating their Easter feast; (2) The foreigner as a subject in the relationship, in the sense that what Israel was once, a foreigner who has experienced the mercy of God, now becomes the main motivation to reciprocate the love of others, especially the poor among them (the three categories: orphan, widow and stranger). This comes strong in the prophetic tradition when society fails to show justice and compassion; (3) The foreigner in a reciprocal relationship, in the sense that we come to realise that there is not just one stranger but many strangers, and among them myself, too. So I am subject and object in the relationship with others, and this two-way relationship is seen in a reciprocity that becomes hospitality", ZEVOLA, "What are you talking about to each other as you walk along?" (Lk 24:17): Migration in the Bible and Our Journey of Faith", pp. 103-104.

³¹⁹ Cf. TORRALBA, "No olvidéis la hospitalidad", p. 8.

³²⁰ Cf. Genesis 18:1-16 (Abraham); Genesis 19:1-15 (Lot); Genesis 24:1-67 (Rebecca); Joshua 2:1-24 (Rahab); Judges 4:17-22 (Jael); Judges 6:11-24 (Gideon); Judges 13:1-24 (Manoah); Judges 19:1-25 (of a concubine); Judges 19:11-30 (Gibeah); 1 Kings 17:7-16 (a widow); 2 Kings 4:8-17 (a Shunammite); Tobit 7:1-17 (Raguel).

³²¹ Cf. I. FORNARI-CARBONELL, *La escucha del huésped (Lc 10,38-42): la hospitalidad en el horizonte de la comunicación*, Estella (Navarra): Verbo Divino 1995, p. 113.

then the welcome of his words. This disposition to listen to the words uttered by the guest, to listen to his message, points to a dual perspective in the action of offering hospitality: the host's home becomes a place of welcome of the one in need, but also the place where the Word of God is welcomed. The first action represents an opening to the guest in need, while the second an opening up of the one who offers hospitality, but who is in need to deepen his knowledge of the Word, of the Torah.³²² Following this schema, we could ask: "What message from God might a forcibly displaced person be bringing to us, as we welcome him or her into our home or country?"

2.2.2.2. New Testament

In the New Testament, hospitality is directly related with the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth, both through his words and actions. Through the incarnation and the arrival of Jesus as 'visitor', as guest in our world, the concept of hospitality changes radically. The welcome to the stranger is no longer based, as in pagan antiquity, in the belief that the guest is mysteriously protected by God. It is no longer based either, as in the Older Testament, in the idea that the guest could be a messenger of God. Now it is God, incarnated, who is identified with the forgotten, the lost and the humble. Whoever welcomes them, welcomes the Lord (cf. Mathew 10:40; 18:5; 25:35-43),³²³ for whom hospitality was an essential aspect of his public life and ministry. And to those who receive them (and him), Jesus offers and provides the 'hospitality of God':

[It is] clear how often in this Gospel [of Luke] significant events and exchanges take place in the context of meals and the offering (or non-offering) of hospitality in general. Hospitality, in a variety of expressions, forms a notable frame of reference for the ministry of Jesus. But there is more than that. Luke sees the whole life and ministry of Jesus as a "*visitation*" on God's part to Israel and the world.³²⁴

From the start this raises the question: how will this guest, this visitor be *received*? The critical point is that those who do receive him find that Jesus invites them into a much wider sphere of hospitality: the 'hospitality of God': "The One who comes as visitor and guest in fact becomes *host* and offers a hospitality in which human beings and, potentially, the entire

³²² Cf. FORNARI-CARBONELL, *La escucha del huésped*, pp. 114-115, 141-145.

³²³ Cf. CLÉMENT, *Dios es simpatía*, p. 126.

³²⁴ Cf. B. BYRNE, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press 2000, p. 189. We see instances of this divine 'visitation', for example, in the Visitation to Mary (a model of compassionate hospitality, who welcomes the Son of God, so he can fulfil his mission in history; cf. Luke 1:39-45); in Jesus' visit to Zacchaeus (the socially marginalised experiences the divine hospitality; cf. Luke 19:1-10) and in the *visitation* of the Risen Lord to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (the travelling 'guest' becomes a host; cf. Luke 24:13-35).

world, can become truly human, be at home, can *know* salvation in the depths of their hearts”.³²⁵ As we alluded to earlier, forcibly displaced people can have a similar effect in our lives: they who come as visitors and guests, in fact become our hosts, offering us a hospitality through which we can become truly human and find meaning in our lives. For it is in listening to and receiving the stranger and the foreigner that we become conscious of God’s revelation, and thus the guest becomes a source of God’s liberation and salvation, but also—depending on our response—of our own self-imposed judgement:

A God who knows what it is to be a foreigner and not be welcomed in his own house (John 1:11, he came to his own and his own did not receive him), but who continues to call at our own so that we will open the door to him: “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me” (Rev. 3:20).³²⁶

The new life in Jesus, the ‘new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead’ (cf. 1 Peter 1:3), sets the new Christians apart from the rest of society. Their common belief in the Lord establishes a fraternity, a new ‘extended family’, made up of the sons and daughters of God and Jesus’ brothers and sisters. And hospitality becomes an essential means to keep this extended family together, through very practical ways:³²⁷

[...] to modern readers this may sound banal. In the early church, however, hospitality was vitally important. Unless someone offered a room, the church could not meet at all [...]. Moreover, a wandering apostle like Paul himself was constantly in need of board and lodging. In short, the church could not function without hospitality, and this is why it appears so often in lists of virtues.³²⁸

Moreover, in their new way of life, hospitality represented a way through which Christians could solve issues of conflict with their neighbours, who not always accepted the reality to which they bore witness through their life together.³²⁹ In this life, they considered themselves ‘foreign residents’ whose only true homeland was now heaven (cf. Philippians 3:20), but could still feel welcomed wherever they could find a Christian community. That 1 Peter 4:9

³²⁵ Cf. BYRNE, *The Hospitality of God*, p. 189.

³²⁶ Cf. RIVAS, “Modelos de hospitalidad en la primera Carta de Clemente a los Corintios”, p. 397.

³²⁷ Cf. RIVAS, “Modelos de hospitalidad en la primera Carta de Clemente a los Corintios”, pp. 376-377.

³²⁸ Cf. ZIESLER, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, p. 303. Some examples of this emphasis on the virtue of hospitality include: *1 Timothy* 3.2: Now a bishop—overseer—must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher; *Titus* 1.8: For a bishop—overseer—as God’s steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled; *1 Peter* 4.9: Be hospitable to one another without complaining; *Romans* 12.13: Contribute to the needs of saints, practise hospitality, and *Hebrews* 13.2: Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

³²⁹ Cf. L. BRETHERTON, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company 2006, p. 113.

(*Be hospitable to one another without complaining*) should make a strong *invitation* to exercise hospitality shows that in certain communities this practice was no longer being carried as a habit, probably due to the high costs incurred and the abuse of hospitality by certain guests.³³⁰ But what should be especially remembered is that those who have been sent by Jesus do not ask for alms; they provoke hospitality, and when someone opens their home, then the Reign of God comes to that house, because opening the door to strangers, sharing table with them and listening to their words, is the best symbol of that radical reversal of values that Jesus calls the Kingdom of God.

2.2.3. What hospitality requires and what it gives in return

2.2.3.1. Offering hospitality

Hospitality is everyone's 'business' and every Christian's responsibility.³³¹ It is part and parcel of what it means to be members of the community of faith which is the Church, and thus we should be clear about what it requires. We believe that God makes Godself present to us through our interaction with other persons, so as Christians we extend a welcome to others on the basis of learning and trusting in the possibility that Christ is present in them. To welcome another person or group requires that we look at 'where they are coming from', and that we address the social context out of which our engagement arises. In other words, our hospitality needs to be 'situation-variable'. If for example we hear a person crying out in pain, hospitality demands addressing the issues of pain, not just offering comfort.³³² Hospitality, in particular when it demands welcoming a large number of people, requires sacrifice, since it can turn upside down one's comfortable life or create a heavy strain on one's already meagre resources. However, this sacrifice also needs to be shared, for we cannot expect a few to provide for the needs of many, especially if the few are already the poor of this world—so hospitality also requires *burden-sharing*.³³³

³³⁰ Cf. RIVAS, "Modelos de hospitalidad en la primera Carta de Clemente a los Corintios", p. 396.

³³¹ "Hospitality is not optional for Christians, nor is it limited to those who are specifically gifted for it. It is, instead, a necessary practice in the community of faith". Cf. CHRISTINE POHL, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian tradition*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999, p. 31.

³³² Cf. RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality*, p. 105.

³³³ "Practically, hospitality demands sacrifice. In various parts of the globe, concrete evidence exists of how a massive and sudden influx of refugees provokes a radical reconfiguration of the political, economic, and social landscape of host communities [...]. The disproportionate burden born by poorer nations offering hospitality to refugees translates into an ethical obligation on the part of richer nations to take more responsibility for meeting the needs of displaced people. In other words, considering the strain imposed on an already impoverished economy by unregulated refugee flows, the notion of burden-sharing assumes critical importance [...]", AGBONKHIANMEGHE, "Justice for the Displaced", p. 48.

For Christians, hospitality is best practiced when they are clear both about their own mission as an institution—to share the Good News—and the need to live out the hospitality they have received from God in ways that break down barriers between themselves and other people.³³⁴ And because Christian hospitality reflects this divine hospitality, when it is not provided it can be especially distressing. Particularly if we reflect on the liberality of God in our world of abundance, it is difficult to claim that we have ‘no more room’ or that our resources have been exhausted. When forcibly displaced people are shut out and are thus exposed to danger, or when homeless persons are left outside on freezing nights, it is rarely morally sufficient to say that there was not enough room.³³⁵ Part of the issue here is that ‘our resources’ are in fact everybody’s resources, that justice and solidarity and fraternity require an equal distribution of these resources and goods, as well as an equal distribution of opportunities. As we have seen in the previous section, this requires that institutional and structural conditions be created so that persons can flourish and have something to say about how they want their lives and communities to be shaped.³³⁶

Hospitality requires action in response to a request for shelter and welcome. But at the same time, it requires certain passivity, because one’s response in fact is to an invitation that the world is offering, frequently without one’s previous consent. Thus, passivity precedes activity. There are many instances in human relationships in which the initiative belongs to others. Within the context of hospitality as gift, the key is to live this invitation not as something that opposes freedom, but rather as something that is intensely voluntary: making oneself available to the requirement of the world, always attentive to what is ‘different’—to the other and the others. This is not always easy, because to the extent that this ethics of hospitality requires generosity, openness and a favourable disposition towards the unknown, it also demands an openness to instability, vulnerability and fragility. It is not easy, but it is an essential element of what it means to be human. Something would be lost in trying to eliminate all uncertainty from human life. If everything could be controlled, human lives would be impoverished.³³⁷ In fact, this is a well-known lesson too often forgotten.

2.2.3.2. Receiving from hospitality

³³⁴ Cf. RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality*, p. 118.

³³⁵ Cf. POHL, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian tradition*, p. 129.

³³⁶ Cf. RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality: God’s welcome in a world of difference*, p. 122.

³³⁷ Cf. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, pp. 13-14, 38.

In giving hospitality much is received in return. As we have asserted, welcoming the stranger is not only about helping or offering services or material things to others. It also implies a conviction that they have something important to say, that their words should be listened and welcomed. The stranger, the foreigner, the forcibly displaced, the one who is not like us, has something very important to unveil. Hospitality is to open the doors of one's home, but also of one's culture and one's heart. Something decisive—divine—can be learned from the one who is the most stranger and in need at the door.³³⁸ This openness can also foster unity without risking uniformity and can lead to communities being built out of difference, not sameness. People are able to discover new ways of being human by overcoming their parochial biases and ethnocentric prejudices. The 'either/or', the 'right or wrong', the 'win or lose', have no place in the giving and receiving of hospitality. Instead, there are numerous options for ways to faithfully express unity as human beings and 'build' humanity.³³⁹

As mentioned earlier, in the exchange of hospitality the first manifestation of general humanness is encountered.³⁴⁰ This is probably the reason that, when the duties of good hospitality are transgressed, it is regarded as something cruel, perhaps even justifiably punishable. Dante, for example, reserves the final, most glacial hell, to this perverse host.³⁴¹ Through this building of shared humanity, identities are also 'built'. The basic relationship between host and guest in the action of hospitality constitutes an example of the fact that identities are built in reciprocal relationships: there is not one without the other. Human beings have formed one another in an exchange of giving and receiving. Guests and hosts live in a certain kind of dependency. This capacity to give and receive, of acknowledging and

³³⁸ Cf. R. AGUIRRE, *Ensayo sobre los orígenes del cristianismo. De la religión política de Jesús a la religión doméstica de Pablo*, Estella (Navarra): Verbo Divino 2001, p. 119.

³³⁹ Cf. RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality: God's welcome in a world of difference*, p. 65.

³⁴⁰ In many cultures, the foreigner/stranger who arrived uninvited was considered a 'no person'; someone without rights, even the right to demand protection from the community, because there was no social relationship with him or her. The offering of hospitality constituted the beginning of that relationship. Bernabé describes how this process took place in early Christianity: foreigners had nothing to do with the origins, history and tradition of the new city they arrived at. They were strangers to all that constituted community there, an ordered space bounded by limits which separated it from all the rest, which was in turn considered threatening. To find orientation in this new community, the foreigner needed the protection of someone from within, who could help incorporate him into the community and could also answer on his behalf. This relationship, established between the new arrival and the head of a family who looked after him, is what we term hospitality. And it changed, at least temporarily, the status of foreigner who now became a guest. Cf. C. BERNABÉ, "Del Dios desconocido al Dios universal: los extranjeros, la ciudad y los inicios del cristianismo" in AA. VV., *El extranjero en la cultura europea de nuestros días*, Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto 1997, pp. 493-495. This new 'identity' as guest made the 'no person' into a 'person', and not just any person, but someone who had a privileged position, since he or she could now be received with honour. Cf. TORRALBA, "No olvidéis la hospitalidad", p. 15.

³⁴¹ Cf. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, p. 13.

being acknowledged, requires being disposed to give up certain claims, of recognising that we are always in one way or another indebted to someone else (cf. Romans 12:13). And once again, it requires a capacity to be vulnerable. But because that vulnerability is mutual, people are able to strengthen one another.³⁴²

Finally, hospitality allows for reconciliation to take place: “We are called to build communities of hospitality that foster reconciliation among all those [we] serve as a sign of the Kingdom in our world”.³⁴³ A hospitable environment can create an atmosphere of safety, radiating trust and kindness. For those who have experienced violence, in particular during most of their lives as in the case of forcibly displaced persons, trust, kindness, and safety are the things most sorely lacking in their lives. An atmosphere of trust makes human communication possible again. Hospitality, and all that it entails, reaffirms that violence is now past and provides a space for the vulnerability required by and for healing. Taking the initiative to offer hospitality is something we can do to create an environment in which reconciliation can happen.³⁴⁴

2.2.4. Engaging in active hospitality

Chapter 14 of the gospel of Luke begins with Jesus’ going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath (cf. Luke 14:1, 7-14). When he notices those guests who, arriving first at the banquet, inevitable go for the higher, more honourable place, he tells them a parable. He advises them that they should in fact choose the lower places, so that when the inevitable rearrangement of seats according to rank takes place, they will not be humiliated by being requested to move to a lower spot. In the final part of the passage, Jesus continues the theme of the banquet, turning now from the guests to the hosts and offering once again some counsel. He suggests that when offering hospitality and issuing invitations to others, we should not invite our friends and relations because they might be able to repay us and invite us back. Instead, he says, ‘when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind’—invite the asylum seeker, the refugee, the migrant, the forcibly displaced—because they cannot repay you! This might not seem practical or even

³⁴² Cf. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, p. 58.

³⁴³ From the letter by Adolfo Nicolás SJ, *Hospitality fosters reconciliation*, commemorating the 30 years of the Jesuit Refugee Service, 14 January 2011. http://jrsusa.org/Voices_Detail.cfm?TN=DTN-20110114105206. Accessed 22 June 2018.

³⁴⁴ Cf. R. SCHREITER, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1998, pp. 88-89.

make sense to us, but it is the true sign of hospitality—to welcome those who seemingly have nothing to offer. Though in reality, as we have been stressing all along, they do.

This is not to say that hosting one's loved ones is not hospitality. Of course it is. But we cannot stop there. One of the characteristics of offering hospitality as Christians, of practicing God's hospitality, should be that we are "constantly looking for ways to empower those who are seen and treated as outsiders in the institutions where we work and live".³⁴⁵ This is what we have learned from Jesus in the gospels. Within the context of Jesus' message, the advent of Christianity represented a place of welcome for the disinherited, a space for receiving the displaced and the indigent.³⁴⁶ We cannot limit the extent of hospitality to what is comfortable and uncomplicated. Instead, we must strive to make sure that:

[...] our practice of hospitality can be nourished and strengthened in relationships that point to God's concern to mend the creation and that are a sign of God's care, rather than a focus on human limitations. We know that what we do is inadequate, but we include God in the relationship, confident that the mending can be brought about by God, despite our limited efforts of hospitality. Hospitality is a gift of God to us, one that we need to practice, so that we are more open to its blessing.³⁴⁷

As mentioned earlier, this call to offer and extend hospitality can present a great challenge, both to individuals and communities. It is very important to acknowledge this with honesty and candour. People's lives can truly be changed, disturbed, turned upside down by opening their homes and their hearts to the 'foreigner', 'the forcibly displaced' and the 'stranger'. They might even be derided and despised by others who do not agree with their views, who resent their placing them—through connection or proximity—in 'harm's way' (whether this is only their perception and not necessarily a reality is not so relevant to them), or who 'simply' do not feel that other's problems are their problems. And the reality too is that there will be some people (even if a small minority), who will take advantage of their welcome and might even try to hurt them. Those offering hospitality might be willing and able to take on these risks, but they cannot judge others for choosing not to. What they can do in these cases is to share their views and understanding of this Christian virtue, model good examples of

³⁴⁵ Cf. RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality: God's welcome in a world of difference*, p. 14. The author adds: "[...] from this it would seem that hospitality can be understood as *solidarity with strangers*, a mutual relationship of care and trust in which we share in the struggle of empowerment, dignity, fullness of life. The word for hospitality in Greek New Testament is *philoxenia*, love of the stranger. Its opposite is *xenophobia*, hatred of the stranger. The ministry of the church is to be partners with strangers, to welcome those whom Christ welcomed, and thus learn to be a community in which people are made one in Jesus Christ in spite of their differences".

³⁴⁶ Cf. TORRALBA, "*No olvidéis la hospitalidad*", p. 147.

³⁴⁷ Cf. RUSSELL, *Just Hospitality: God's welcome in a world of difference*, p. 117.

hospitality and welcome, and encourage and support those who in time might be ready to take some initial steps in the road of active hospitality.

2.3. *Solidarity*

It is their common faith in Jesus Christ which impels Christians to search for ways that favour a spirit of solidarity among all peoples. In this quest, their starting point is the reality of God's solidarity with all—*not that we have acted in solidarity, but that God did so first* (cf. 1 John 4:10), which through Christ brought salvation and a deeper understanding of God's unconditional love for all. God's solidarity with humanity through the incarnation of Jesus makes possible humanity's solidarity with him, and through this solidarity with the Son people identify themselves as sons and daughters of God, and therefore, as brothers and sisters to one another. And their hope resides in this.³⁴⁸ This faith and hope encourage them to transcend all kinds of borders—not only physical, but also ideological, social, political, economic—and call them to overcome all manner of violence and discrimination, giving way instead to compassion and mutual care. Only through solidarity will it be possible to build relationships that are just and loving between rich and poor nations, between groups and individuals, and also between the rich and rich, the poor and the poor.³⁴⁹

The principle of Christian solidarity is based on Jesus' constant assertion, through his words and actions, that 'our' neighbour is every other human being, including those outside of our own group, including even those who are our enemies, those who might hate us and curse us (cf. Luke 6:27-35). In other words, the value for Jesus is not 'same-group' solidarity but 'human-race' solidarity.³⁵⁰ This is not to say that loyalty to and solidarity with our social group has no longer value, but it means that human solidarity becomes more important to us than any group solidarity: "The only way to ensure that none of our group loyalties ever

³⁴⁸ Cf. MARTÍNEZ-GAYOL, "Jesucristo: esperanza para el mundo", p. 60.

³⁴⁹ Cf. NOLAN, *Hope in the Age of Despair*, pp. 45-46.

³⁵⁰ As Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga reminds us in terms of the displaced: "Perhaps the problem lies in our failure to be the migrant's neighbour and our inability to work towards, as Pope John Paul II noted, 'a globalisation of solidarity' (Cf. *Ecclesia in America*, 55)". Cf. OSCAR ANDRÉS CARDINAL RODRÍGUEZ, "A Witness to Hope: Migration and Human Solidarity" in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008, p. xi.

becomes selfish and sinful is to subordinate them to the more basic value of solidarity with the human race”.³⁵¹

Solidarity with the human race also means that those who *have more* have the obligation to *do more* for those who come knocking on their doors, in need, in want. Of course, this obligation is not always met, especially in the case of forcibly displaced people. Part of the reason is that most asylum seekers crossing borders in search of safety stay close to their countries of origin. Somalians and Sudanese move into Kenya, Haitians cross into the Dominican Republic, Syrians seek refuge in Jordan. The countries in the Middle East take turns welcoming waves of refugees from one another, as conflicts erupt and die out in the various nations in the region. Only a few years ago (2010), Syria served as home for over a million Iraqi refugees; today, it is Syria’s neighbours—Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan—who welcome most of its over four million refugees. Of course, these numbers make those received by Southern European nations pale in comparison, even if these countries constantly complain and watch in fear as the number of asylum seekers knocking at their doors climb by a few thousand every year.

Solidarity also requires that the concept of freedom be adapted. Taking other persons into account, helping them, is one of the essential limits of one’s freedom. The ‘I am free to do what I want’ is not the freedom of the children of God. Human beings are all called to be responsible for one another and share, in the here and now, a common place, time and destiny. The freedom that God has conceived for the human person is a freedom which entails choosing to be responsible for the life and destiny of those who are around us. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”, one might ask. If one’s way of looking at life is truly based on one’s Christian faith, then ‘we have to be our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers’.³⁵² Of course, this means that one’s brothers and sisters are also one’s keepers, and that they have the

³⁵¹ Cf. NOLAN, *Hope in the Age of Despair*, p. 108. And according to Min, “It is in responding to this issue of global human solidarity that the Church most properly comes into its own. All the central Christian doctrines have to do with the common destiny of all humanity: their common subjection to the sovereignty of the one Creator and the saving providence of the triune God, their fundamental equality as creatures before God, their common redemption through the one mediator, Jesus Christ, their common eschatological call to share in the communion of the triune God as members of the Body of Christ, their social interdependence with one another in sin and grace”. MIN, “Migration and Christological Hope: Historical and Eschatological Reflections on Migration”, p. 190.

³⁵² Cf. CONFERENCIA DE OBISPOS CATÓLICOS DE CUBA, *Carta Pastoral “La Esperanza no defrauda”* (Romanos 5,5), 15 septiembre 2013. <http://www.zenit.org/es/articles/cuba-construir-un-futuro-mejor-que-el-presente>. Accessed 22 June 2018.

responsibility to help others in whatever way they can. In the case of forcible displaced people this means that they are required to make ethical claims on others not only as beneficiaries, but also as sources of theological and spiritual transformation. And this many of them do. In his Letter to the Whole Society of Jesus on the celebration of the founding day of the Jesuit Refugee Service (14 November 2005), former Superior General, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, emphasised this point saying: “Despite being kept in the shadow of injustice and evil, refugees are a witness to survival in the face of adversity. This directs us towards the light of the Lord”.³⁵³

2.3.1. How solidarity works

Solidarity with the human race does not mean that we have to respond to all people, in all situations, at all times. As Rama, an ethnic Karen Christian from Burma and former refugee who worked as a programme assistant for JRS in Thailand, put it: “Nowadays, I never say ‘no’ to people who ask for help. Even if something is beyond my capabilities, I say: ‘This is as far as I can go, but please let me ask someone else who may be able to find a solution’. This puts people at ease”.³⁵⁴ What Rama’s words remind us about solidarity is that we have to acknowledge our limitations and trust that others will pick up wherever we leave off. Solidarity *with* the human race has to include also solidarity *by* the human race. Each one of us is called to be in solidarity with one another and so build the ‘solidarity factor’ up. And what this does, as we mentioned in a previous section, is to serve the common, universal good. We recall John Paul’s words once again: *[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good*.³⁵⁵

Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that ‘loving our neighbour’ has global dimensions in an interdependent world. But that it also has personal dimensions that go beyond the feeling of *vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes* of others. The place to start is with oneself, and this personal dimension requires that people go beyond simple tolerance, that they go beyond even a ‘simple’ respect for and acceptance of others’

³⁵³ Cf. AGBONKHIANMEGHE, “Justice for the Displaced”, p. 43.

³⁵⁴ Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p. 31.

³⁵⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, on the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio* (30 December 1987), n. 38.

differences: “Indeed, solidarity is a commitment to the good of one’s neighbour which involves the radical *embrace* of the other”.³⁵⁶ It requires that they open themselves to others and that they exercise liberality in trying to understand other ways of life different from theirs, and that they strive to recognise what they can learn from them:

[This] liberality does not propose to disregard our own position, but rather to broaden the scope of what is possible, so that the horizon of what is valuable is not reduced to what is valuable in our own way of life [...]. We can do it because we know that our familiar world or our personal identity are interpretations that accept alternatives, that does not exhaust the scope of what is possible.³⁵⁷

Sadly, when people stay behind the walls of tolerance, or in fact retreat into their bunker of intolerance, they close themselves to these new possibilities. Then, they no longer see ‘neighbours’ knocking on their doors, but intruders or invaders that want to take over their homes and everything that belongs to them:

An analysis of immigration policies reveals that we have passed from a *gift* policy [...] to a *guilt* policy [...]. In the first case, the reception of immigrants is seen as a generous act of recognition of the Other as the holder of rights and bearer of legitimate cultural differences. In the second, it is viewed as a limited concession of rights to avoid jeopardising [...] national identity, since each concession is seen as a guilty yielding of sovereignty “in one’s own home” [...]. The shadows [...] are clearly visible: the stigmatisation of the Other as guest “in our house”, whom we tolerate temporarily produces feelings and attitudes of closure and xenophobia [...].³⁵⁸

This stigmatisation also produces feelings of frustration and anger. Yet, living and acting in solidarity also reveals that there is strong correlation between the well-being and happiness of others and my own happiness. Happiness describes a ‘space of movement’ within the understanding of what it means to have a good life, and in which what is good for me is not what is *exclusively* good for me, but could also be good for others.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ CUETO, “‘Out of place’: Exilic Existence in a HyperGlobalised World’, p. 9. Or in the words of Gustavo Gutiérrez: “[...] without friendship, without lovingness, without tenderness [...] there is no genuine deed of solidarity”. GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ, *Beber en su Propio Pozo*, Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones 1971, p. 159; cited in Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1988, p. 63. Original in Spanish: *Liberación con espíritu: apuntes para una nueva espiritualidad*, San Salvador: UCA 1994.

³⁵⁷ Cf. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, p. 154.

³⁵⁸ Cf. E. PACE “Between guilt and gift: the politics of identity and immigration policy in Italy” in D. Turton and J. González, eds., *Immigration in Europe: Issues, Policies and Case Studies*, Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto 2003, pp. 152, 156.

³⁵⁹ Cf. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, p. 41. Rogers emphasises this point: “The challenge in the new era of globalisation is not about integrating migrants and refugees within the parameters of their new homes but being able to enter into dialogue with them and their families so we can rediscover the need for mutual respect and solidarity that will bring forth justice and peace in the world. Removing prejudices and biases is the path to a new social order and social harmony [...]. We are aware that religion has always been a source of identity for the human person and for specific communities [...]. Faith encounters are opportunities for exchange so that we can choose voluntarily to enter into each other’s world to heal mutual hurts and to blend the best in each of us”.

2.3.2. Beyond tolerance—in “the shoes of the other”

Solidarity means putting oneself “in the shoes” of the other, trying to imagine, to the best of one’s ability, what it must be like to live in their situation and in their conditions. In the case of forcibly displaced peoples, it also means putting oneself ‘in the ragged and worn-out shoes’ of their constant anguish and fears, of dislocation and rejection, of exclusion and suspicion. Of course, it is impossible for most people to know—and perhaps more importantly to feel—what the life of a forcibly displaced person must be like, but exercising solidarity asks them to try. Most people have had experiences of some kind of displacement, within their countries or abroad, for shorter or longer periods of time: job transfers of themselves or their parents when they were children, study-abroad opportunities, volunteer experiences, cooperation/development programs. It is true that in most of these cases, the displacement has been a matter of choice, of personal decision. But recalling the sense of feeling lost, anxious and out-of-ease, at odds with their new environment and people around them, can help them gain an insight into the experience of forcibly displaced peoples.

Showing solidarity is certainly something that can be encouraged, and hopefully something that can also be ‘contagious’. I wonder whether this hope is what to a certain degree drives Pope Francis’ constant appeals to offer hospitality and show solidarity to refugees and others who have been forcibly displaced. And what is characteristic of Pope Francis’ appeals is that, while they are almost always practical and personal—placing one’s response within the realm of what each person is able to do—they are also a call to all as members of a global community and to the Catholic Church as an institution. An example of this was the plea he made at one of his regular Sunday Angelus reflections at the end of 2015, as the inauguration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy drew near:

Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees who flee death from war and hunger, and who have begun a journey moved by hope for survival, the Gospel calls us to be “neighbours” of the smallest and the abandoned, and to give them concrete hope. It’s not enough to say, “Take heart. Be patient” [...]. Christian hope has a fighting spirit, with the tenacity of one who goes toward a sure goal. Therefore, as the Jubilee of Mercy approaches, I make an appeal to parishes, religious communities, monasteries and shrines throughout Europe, that they express the Gospel in a concrete way and host a refugee family. A concrete gesture in preparation for the Holy Year of Mercy. May every parish, every religious

ANTHONY ROGERS, “Globalising Solidarity Through Faith Encounters in Asia” in Agnes M. Brazal and Fabio Baggio, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press 2008, p. 216.

community, every monastery, every shrine of Europe welcome one family, beginning with my Diocese of Rome.³⁶⁰

“[...] beginning with my Diocese of Rome”. Another element that characterises Francis’ approach to solidarity is that he does not ask others to do what he—or the Church he leads—would not do. Thus, to promote Catholic social teaching and ensure appropriate assistance to vulnerable people—especially victims of war, refugees and the sick—he established in August 2016 a new office aptly named the ‘Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development’: “This Dicastery will be competent particularly in issues regarding migrants, those in need, the sick, the excluded and marginalised, the imprisoned and the unemployed, as well as victims of armed conflict, natural disasters, and all forms of slavery and torture”.³⁶¹

According to the press statement announcing this initiative, part of the work of this new office will be to “deepen the social doctrine of the church and ensure that it is widely known and put into practice and that social, economic and political relationships will be increasingly permeated by the spirit of the Gospel”. In addition, “ensuring that local churches offer appropriate material and spiritual assistance to the sick, migrants, refugees and itinerant people also is part of the new office’s mandate”.³⁶² It is a personal, pragmatic and institutional approach which also seeks to influence “social, economic and political relationships” across the world. One of the first initiatives of the Dicastery was to convene an international forum on migration and peace, held in February of 2017. Francis’ speech at its plenary session was an opportunity to emphasise his concern and care for refugees and the forcibly displaced:

Before this complex panorama [of forced displacement], I feel the need to express particular concern for the forced nature of many contemporary migratory movements, which increases the challenges presented to the political community, to civil society and to the Church, and which amplifies the urgency for a coordinated and effective response to these challenges. Our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: *to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate*.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ POPE FRANCIS, *Angelus*, Saint Peter’s Square (Sunday, 6 September 2015). Cf. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2015/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20150906.html. Accessed 22 June 2018.

³⁶¹ POPE FRANCIS, *Instituting the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development* (17 August 2016), AAS 108 (2016) 968. Cf. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu_proprio_20160817_humanam-progressionem.html. Accessed 22 June 2018.

³⁶² Junno Arocho Esteves, “Pope establishes new office for promoting integral human development”, Catholic News Service, 31 August 2016. Cf. <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2016/pope-establishes-new-office-for-promoting-integral-human-development.cfm>. Accessed 22 June 2018.

³⁶³ POPE FRANCIS, Address to participants in the International Forum on ‘Migration and Peace’ (21 February 2017), AAS 109 (2017) 249-254; http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/february/documents/papafrancesco_20170221_forum-migrazioni-pace.html. Accessed 22 June 2018.

For Pope Francis, such *welcome* is necessary to counteract the rejection of one's neighbour, "rooted ultimately in self-centredness and amplified by populist rhetoric" and requires "a change of attitude, to overcome indifference and to counter fears with a generous approach". Practical as always, the Pope insists that a "responsible and dignified welcome of our brothers and sisters begins by offering them decent and appropriate shelter". *Protection* of these brothers and sisters is "a moral imperative which translates into adopting juridical instruments, both international and national [...] implementing timely and humane programmes in the fight against 'the trafficking of human flesh' which profits off others' misfortune". But protection is not enough. It is also essential to *promote* "an integral human development of migrants, exiles and refugees", and this

[...] takes place by attending to the inestimable goods of justice, peace, and the care of creation [...] providing fair access to fundamental goods for all people and offering the possibility of choice and growth. Also here a coordinated effort is needed, one which envisages all the parties involved: from the political community to civil society, from international organisations to religious institutions.

The final aspect is *integration*, which the Pope sustains (and as we have repeatedly emphasised) "is neither assimilation nor incorporation", but "a two-way process, rooted essentially in the joint recognition of the other's cultural richness". And for the Christian community, "the peaceful integration of persons of various cultures is, in some way, a reflection of its catholicity, since unity, which does not nullify ethnic and cultural diversity, constitutes a part of the life of the Church, who in the Spirit of Pentecost is open to all and desires to embrace all". *Conjugating* these four verbs, as the Pope puts it, imposes a three-fold duty to every person: a duty of *justice* (equitable distribution of resources for all and responsibility to ensure the common good), a duty of *civility* (affirming the centrality and dignity of the human person), and a duty of *solidarity*, which is "born precisely from the capacity to understand the needs of our brothers and sisters who are in difficulty and to take responsibility for these needs", and is needed "to counter the [prevailing] throwaway culture and give greater attention to those who are weakest, poorest and most vulnerable"—one's neighbours in greatest need.

2.3.3. So, who is my neighbour?

People's understanding of solidarity with the foreigner and the stranger will in the end depend on how they answer this question: 'Who is my neighbour?' Whenever Christians hear this question they usually associate it with the so-called parable of the *Good Samaritan* (cf.

Luke 10:25-37). As with all parables, its purpose is to teach a lesson which might guide a person in his or her journey of life and, as it is the case with all of Jesus' parables, this story asks people also to go beyond their set norms or schemas, to go one or two steps beyond their usual expectations and preconceived ideas.³⁶⁴ The commandment to love one's neighbour was already written in the law (cf. Leviticus 19:18)³⁶⁵, and so *wanting to justify himself*, the lawyer poses this question to Jesus—who is my neighbour?—so Jesus can affirm him and express before others that he is doing what he is supposed to: he is fulfilling the law. But instead of answering his question and providing a list of people who fall within the category of 'neighbour', Jesus tells him—and his wider audience—a story.

It is a story about someone who has been hurt and is in need. About some people who choose not to help him, and someone who does. About two people who are considered religious (by the listeners of the story) and one who is not. It is about someone who is shown mercy in his need, by the person he and most of Jesus' listeners would least expect. Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question then is that being a neighbour is showing mercy and acting with compassion towards those who are in need.³⁶⁶ Necessity is the basis of one's neighbourliness, regardless of whom the parties—the helper or the needy person—are, or of how similar to us (in race, nationality, skin colour, gender) or how close to us they are.³⁶⁷ In

³⁶⁴ In Jesus' parables, "the action (as well as the final intention) tends to be unique (two parallel arguments usually do not appear together) and is aimed at stirring the hearts of his listeners, not so much with a view towards mere moral action, but rather moving them to a deeper conversion: towards the acknowledgement of the 'reign of God' and its saving presence (and consequent adherence and following)". Cf. GESTEIRA, *Jesucristo, Horizonte de Esperanza*, pp. 71-72.

³⁶⁵ As cited earlier, it is interesting to point out that Jewish law also included the injunction not only to love one's neighbour, but also the stranger: *When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God* (Leviticus 19:33-34). Although this injunction is somewhat connected with the theme of regarding one's neighbour as someone in need, the command in this case, more specifically, has to do with a duty of welcome to a stranger, to provide hospitality, and to treat him/her as one's own, for that is how Israel had lived much of its history—as strangers in strange lands.

³⁶⁶ It is worth noting Jesus' question to the lawyer at the end of the parable: "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" (Luke 10:36). This is in contrast with the lawyer's initial question to Jesus "who is my neighbour?" Instead of answering this question, Jesus tells the lawyer how one should behave in order to be a neighbour to someone. In the process of being a neighbour, we too are gifted. This is why after the lawyer's response "The one who showed him mercy", Jesus commands him, "Go and do likewise". Cf. NURIA CALDUCH-BENAGES, "'El prójimo eres tú'. Lectura del Buen Samaritano desde la Vida Consagrada" in *CONFER* 56, n. 213 (2017) p. 38.

³⁶⁷ As Gustavo Gutiérrez puts it: "Being a neighbour and being a neighbourhood is the result of specific actions and deeds. The poor are not those who are nearest but rather those who are distant but who become neighbours through one's commitment to them. Strictly speaking, one has no neighbours. Instead, through commitment one must make neighbours. The migrants [and forcibly displaced peoples] for many reasons (such as their different culture) are likewise the distant ones. Although neighbourhood is always a relationship, entering the world of the poor requires a commitment to become their neighbours. Going through such a process—especially in

fact, they can even be one's enemies! Through 'being a neighbour' divisions fade, barriers come down. Finally, another important aspect of one's neighbourliness is that it requires active compassion. People do not wait to be asked for help, but actively look around and offer it when it is needed. It is then a way of life—and attitude to life—that opens new possibilities for relating to one another, based on the commandment of love and compassion. This attitude requires at the same time something that can be quite difficult to do for most people: to break down the wall of their own selfishness. While he could have looked only after himself, the Samaritan instead decides to care for the other. Here lies the radical difference between his attitude and that of the priest and the Levite. The Samaritan chooses not to cover his eyes before the stark reality before him. On the contrary, he becomes totally involved, and this attitude allows him to perform gestures of love, closeness, attention and generosity. He does not give in to the temptation to consider his life more important than that of the badly wounded man and turns and stops to succor him with his own hands.³⁶⁸

In the case of forcibly displaced people it could be argued that they are all in need and therefore that each one of them is one's neighbour. And that each person is called to find, to the best of one's abilities, ways to respond to those needs. This question of who is *my neighbour*, however, is not only addressed to those who have greater resources, who are able to provide humanitarian assistance, health, education programs, and options for improving other people's lives. This question is also posed to each displaced person in relation to his or her companions. There will always be one of them who is in greater need than the other. Especially in the case of those who fall through the cracks, who for one reason or another are not able to access any kind of assistance, it falls on their fellow displaced to act as their neighbour. They, in fact, understand each other's needs better than anyone else. Being a neighbour means sharing of what one has, and in the case of many forcibly displaced people, of whatever little one has.

What each person is called to then is a process of 'inner conversion' and 'outer expression', clothed in humility and compassion. For Christians, their common journey to be in solidarity with forcibly displaced peoples (and everyone else) has to be rooted in the way of Jesus, the

relationship to migrants—is a complicated affair precisely because theirs is a distant world". GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ, "*Poverty, Migration, and the Option for the Poor*", p. 83.

³⁶⁸ Cf. CALDUCH-BENAGES, "'El prójimo eres tú'. Lectura del Buen Samaritano desde la Vida Consagrada", pp. 37-38.

‘Good Samaritan’ par excellence. Rogers sees in this parable of the Good Samaritan ten simple and clear steps to guide people on this journey which, in our case, can help them also to reflect on the way in which they can enter into relationship with forcibly displaced peoples³⁶⁹:

Table 2.1. Ten steps for Samaritan solidarity

Rogers’ Ten Steps	Applied to our relationship with the forcibly displaced
1. To <i>pause</i> with the readiness to return naturally to a consciousness of the world around; this has to begin with our lives of contemplation.	Do I take the time to reflect on what the experience of forced displacement could be like? What it might do to any person, even to myself?
2. To <i>look</i> at the persons and be moved to compassion that has already been incarnated in our hearts and being.	Do I see in their faces, their gestures, their actions, the pain and trauma embedded in their hearts? What response do this arise in me?
3. To <i>get down</i> from our position and status in spite of the possible dangers; to be courageous. This calls for a conviction beyond verbalism.	Can I see in that asylum seeker, in this refugee, a person of equal value as me? Can I risk to meet her on an equal footing?
4. To <i>walk</i> toward the victims; to be ready to be a listening and learning Church. This requires an attitudinal transformation. It is movement from a sense of superiority to humility.	Can I see in this displaced person someone who can teach me something? Who can gift me with something?
5. To <i>stoop</i> and <i>share</i> personal possessions of the precious oil and wine; to give love requires us to be totally appreciative of the love that we have already received from the God of Love.	Am I willing to give without counting the cost? To risk being derided, even insulted, for welcoming someone who others might considered an ‘unwanted’ alien?
6. To <i>bandage wounds</i> as a caring act. Caring flows not from mechanistic service but a grace given to those who are ready for the self-effacement and humility of the servant Jesus.	Am I willing to ‘touch’ their wounds, knowing that opening myself to their pain will be painful? Imagine the pain of a refugee man whose wife and children have been violently killed in a war?
7. To <i>place</i> them in their own mode of transport. To share passion is a radical disposition to place the needs of others before one’s self interest and the aspirations of the poor and marginalised before that of communities and organisations.	Am I willing to walk the journey with them, in their own terms rather than mine? To welcome ex-refugees into my community knowing that because of their presence its essence will have to change?
8. To <i>transport</i> and <i>journey</i> with them to the Inn is indeed the hardest task since it is an ongoing accompaniment with tenderness and patience.	Am I here to stay by their side or am I simply someone who comes and goes when it suits my needs and time?
9. To <i>collaborate</i> with the Inn Keeper—	Am I able to let go of my ‘I am their saviour’

³⁶⁹ ROGERS, ‘Globalising Solidarity Through Faith Encounters in Asia’, p. 210.

another stranger who has become a friend and an ally to trust and to entrust with confidence.	attitude and work with others so the needs of the forcibly displaced are met in the best possible way?
10. To <i>promise</i> further support and help with more financial resources, personal friendship and advocacy.	How much more of myself and my resources am I willing to share with my forcibly displaced brothers and sisters?

Rogers further argues that “The wisdom that Jesus offers us in our commitment to accompany the poor and the marginalised is our only path to experience the fuller meaning of the love of God and neighbour”. This love of God and neighbour is both “dialogical and diametrical”:

We have an abstract concept of God but this God becomes relational when we seek the human face of God and the God of Jesus in human relationships. It is this same God of Love, whom we believe in and who invites us to manifest our love through charity and work for justice in the world (*Christophe Renders SJ*).³⁷⁰

2.3.4. *Hospitality and solidarity: developing ‘habits of the heart’*

So through their dignity, refugees have unknowingly offered me a glimpse of the Kingdom. I remember [...] how surprised I was to meet not human rags, but upright men and women. Schools were already at work well before we arrived and projects were not lacking. Our mission? It was first and foremost a look, that of hope: to recognise the seeds of the Kingdom. And then to feed them so the yeast would not suffocate and the dough would rise.³⁷¹

Hope is that ‘habit of the heart’ that qualifies a genuinely Christian attitude and conduct, giving the capacity to do and to endure what people must throughout their lives.³⁷² Everyone needs to nurture and foster this habit of one’s heart so that it does not lose its habitual character. How to do this? In terms of the seeds of hope people carry, they need to care for them lovingly and constantly. In regards to the seeds of hope of those who have suffered so much, as forcibly displaced people have, others need to extend that care through their offering of hospitality and their living in solidarity with them. In striving to do this, it is important to remember the ‘golden rule’: *in everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets* (Mathew 7:12). *Do to others as you would have them do to you*. This ‘doing’, as we have mentioned earlier, requires practical and tangible actions and strategies. But it also requires something which perhaps is not so obvious: it is a *doing of the heart*; in other words, an ‘interior doing’.

³⁷⁰ ROGERS, ‘Globalising Solidarity Through Faith Encounters in Asia’, p. 211.

³⁷¹ Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p. 118.

³⁷² Cf. CAMPS and A. ÁLVAREZ, *Esperanza cristiana y utopías*, p. 29.

The *Beatitudes* (cf. Mathew 5:3-16), which provide the ‘guidelines’ one is to follow in order to enter the Kingdom of God, reflect this type of doing. If they are considered attentively, it is clear that they deal with a special way of doing, because Jesus points out situations or attitudes rather than actions. Situations which in a way are independent of what people might do, like those of the afflicted, the persecuted, the insulted; attitudes that consist in being poor of spirit, meek, hungry and thirsty of justice, pure of heart. Even those who are called to be peacemakers and merciful (more ‘active doing’), are meant to build peace and show mercy not as isolated gestures, but as constant ways of being, which are reflected in constant attitudes of pacifying, forgiveness and compassion. The *doing* typical of a Christian then, of one who labours for the Kingdom, is a *doing of the heart*, a profoundly new attitude which is sign and fruit of God’s Kingdom and its proclamation.³⁷³

This habit of the heart, this doing of the heart, can and should be applied to one’s offer of hospitality and solidarity; they should not be limited to their literal sense of receiving a stranger in one’s house or putting oneself in someone else’s place, but should become fundamental attitudes toward one’s fellow human beings in need, which can be expressed in a great variety of ways. One’s response towards forcibly displaced peoples has to do with their having been shut out and shunned. This response is clearly present in Jesus’ option for the physically and spiritually marginalised, in his accepting to share in their pain and suffering, in his habit to encourage them and tend to their needs with great generosity.³⁷⁴

The Scriptures point out that no one should be left out of the banquet, of the table sharing, of the wedding feast. But it is not simply a matter of opening the doors so all can come in. Some are not able to reach the celebration, because of lack of resources, of infirmity, of ill-health, while others are prevented, kept captive, separated, left outside. In Jesus’ world, making sure everyone can get to the banquet requires extreme measures, like leaving the ninety-nine sheep to go out in search of the lost one. It is that attitude of a caring parent who

³⁷³ Cf. C. M. MARTINI, *¿Qué debemos hacer? Desconcierto e inquietud del hombre contemporáneo*, Santander: Sal Terrae 2013, pp. 27-28. Original in Italian: *Che cosa dobbiamo fare*, Milano: Edizioni Piemme 2011.

³⁷⁴ “We need to remember basic evangelisation attitudes if we are to become the migrant’s [and forcibly displaced people’s] neighbour: *accompaniment*, *encouragement*, and *generosity* [...]. Accompanying the migrant [...] means doing so through the path of suffering, of pain, of depression, and of carrying their crosses with them. And so the road that leads to spiritual brotherhood and sisterhood is precisely that of sharing in their suffering [...]. Encouraging migrants along the way [...] is also an important attitude we must learn from Jesus. Time and again throughout the Gospels our Lord animates, gives life and strength to those who in their suffering approach him. And generosity means sharing our resources equitably”. CARDINAL RODRÍGUEZ, ‘*A Witness to Hope: Migration and Human Solidarity*’, pp. xiv-xv.

looks everywhere for a lost child. Nothing else matters but that it is his or her child and that it is lost. People's response to the hope forcibly displaced people have placed on humanity requires that they do all that they can to make sure they do not only get into the feast, but are also able to get to it, to contribute to it and to enjoy it fully. They can do this not only as individuals, but also as institutions, as communities, and as nations. And one institution that has made this mandate and mission its own is the Jesuit Refugee Service.

2.4. The Society of Jesus' institutional response to the plight of forcibly displaced peoples: the Jesuit Refugee Service experience

I consider this as a new modern apostolate for the Society [of Jesus] as a whole, of great importance for today and the future, and of much spiritual benefit also to the Society [...]. In the light of our Consultation [...]. I have decided to set up within the Curia a service to coordinate Jesuit refugee work, which will henceforth be referred to as the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS).³⁷⁵

With these words Fr Pedro Arrupe launched the Jesuit Refugee Service on 14 November 1980. Moved to the core and profoundly shocked by the plight of thousands of Vietnamese boat people and refugees, he had written the previous year around Christmas time to Jesuit Major Superiors around the world asking them to do what they could, starting in their own countries, to respond to such a tragic situation. Later Father Arrupe would recall the extraordinary response. Material aid in the form of food supplies, medicine and money were swiftly made available and deployed. Jesuits from around the world responded to the call by their superiors for volunteers to share their pastoral and administrative skills and their know-how in different fields, while others began direct action using the media to influence government and private organisations to mobilise as many people and resources as possible.

Thirty-eight years later, the Jesuit Refugee Service continues to respond to the ever changing and increasing needs of forcibly displaced people around the world. It does so in very practical and concrete ways, guided by those principles of Catholic Social teaching and the Church's tradition of promoting hospitality and care for the displaced that we explored earlier in this chapter, as well as by its particular way of proceeding rooted in the Ignatian tradition. In this section we take a look at several aspects of this organisation, including (1) its history; (2) its specific way of proceeding in its service to the forcibly displaced, and (3) its core values. Throughout the years, JRS staff and volunteers have learned much from forcibly

³⁷⁵ From a letter by Fr Pedro Arrupe, then Superior General, to all Jesuit Major Superiors, 14 November 1980, AR 18 (1980) 319-321.

displaced people about peace, reconciliation, healing and ways to spread hope in the varied circumstances in which they find themselves (urban settings, detention centres, educational initiatives), and thus they have much to offer us in the way of theological reflection to obtain valuable insights into the spirituality of the forcibly displaced and ways of continuing to nurture their spirituality. We explore some of these learnings and insights at the end of this section.

2.4.1. A short history of the Jesuit Refugee Service: response to the greatest need³⁷⁶

Already in 1980 it was clear that the immense challenges of the crisis affecting forcibly displaced people could not be met on an ad-hoc basis. Greater organisational structure and resources would be needed to ensure a response that would be both effective and provide durable solutions. Thus, JRS was born, designed to be both a spiritual and practical response to the plight of refugees at that time, and to coordinate Jesuit efforts worldwide. Sharing Fr Arrupe's belief that this was a challenge every member of the Society of Jesus could not ignore, his successor, Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, affirmed the whole Society's commitment to this service to refugees and called it a "real test of our availability today".³⁷⁷ This meant that not only Jesuits, but also those working with them in their institutions and ministries—members of other religious congregations as well as lay people—formed part of the organisation from its very beginnings.

And from the outset, JRS' response was more than simply material. As Fr Arrupe put it, what was needed was a service that would be "human, pedagogical and spiritual". What was needed, from the beginning, was a ministry that would listen to refugees, to their problems, their concerns, their hopes and fears; a ministry that required *being with* refugees rather than *doing* things *for* them. As with the First Companions, the essence of this ministry was presence, which meant that JRS staff could never be far from the ground, from where

³⁷⁶ "The history of JRS is about the lives and hopes of people we know personally. This personal knowledge constantly transforms our understanding". Cf. JRS, *The Wound of the Border: 25 years with Refugees*, Rome: JRS Publications 2005, p.10. The history of JRS is a 'living' history, not only because it is a story that continues to develop and unfold, but because, as these words by Mark Raper SJ, former international director of JRS (1990-2000) show, it has been written (and lived) and continues to be written by refugees and forcibly displaced peoples who are the object and subject of JRS' existence.

³⁷⁷ As mentioned earlier, in 1983, the 33rd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus—its highest decision making body—reaffirmed the Society's concern for refugees, encouraging the universal Society to respond to the "sad plight of millions of refugees searching for a permanent home, a situation brought to our special attention by Fr Arrupe" (cf. GC 33, D. 1, 45).

refugees themselves were. This presence led to awareness of the issues directly affecting refugees, and through this knowledge JRS has been able to continuously design, develop and implement projects, as the needs and hopes of refugees have evolved within specific locations or changed from one place to another. This has included the provision of pastoral and sacramental care in some locations for specific populations, though there is still much to do in the area of spiritual formation and nourishment, which of course this thesis hopes to address, even if a small tentative way. Addressing these needs has meant not only providing services to meet them, but also finding ways to determine their causes, which in many cases were not only preventable but also unjust.

In the 90's, as JRS grew on the ground and expanded to many more countries³⁷⁸, this expansion was matched by the establishment of advocacy offices in Brussels (1994) and Geneva (1996). Direct service and efforts to ensure structural and institutional changes have always gone hand in hand: the concerns raised by JRS personnel on the field translated into advocacy issues at these international policy centres. And yet, despite this growth and expansion and the sheer number of projects and activities carried out by JRS, the organisation has continued to strive to keep bureaucracy at bay and to remain a 'light' organisation³⁷⁹, as much as possible flexible, always on the ground, ready to move with the people, to go where the need is greatest and to address challenges and needs that no one else is responding too.³⁸⁰ As we have seen, these essential 'criteria' are not new and not only reserved to JRS; they are the criteria set up by St Ignatius and his early companions in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus to help discern the priority of ministries to fulfil the Society's mission.³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ In 1993 alone, JRS was established in Croatia, Bosnia, Nepal, Liberia, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Peru, Zambia and Somalia. In 1994, the needs of the survivors of the massacre in Rwanda led to JRS cooperation with projects in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo). Cf. JRS, *The Wound of the Border*, p. 291.

³⁷⁹ "JRS opts for a personal style of presence, and deliberately keeps its administrative structure as light as possible. JRS is not normally equipped to undertake large-scale emergency or infrastructure projects" (Guidelines of the JRS, no. 6), cf. JRS, *Everybody's Challenge*, p. 18. As it would be expected, with the increasing requirements for project reporting, transparency, leadership and administrative sophistication demanded from non-profit organisations, upholding this guideline of being a 'light' organisation has not been easy. In addition, internal issues in JRS country and regional offices, particularly in the urban areas, such as stymieing corruption and finding adequately trained personnel have exacerbated this challenge.

³⁸⁰ Sometimes, be it because of security reasons, lack of existing response infrastructure, absence of other potential local partners, or because of limited financial resources, JRS' response to particular situations has had to wait. A current example is the ongoing political and civil crisis in Yemen that has 'produced' close to two million forcibly displaced people (as of end of 2016), both internally and across its borders.

³⁸¹ Cf. CONSTITUTIONS AND COMPLEMENTARY NORMS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, Part VII, nos. 622-623. In addition, JRS chooses situations where it can make a particular contribution because of its expertise in specific

The way of involvement of JRS has equally evolved throughout the years. Initially all its work took place in refugee camps, usually on the borders of countries neighbouring nations immersed in conflict and war. Some of these camps still exist today, after ten or twenty or more years of existence. And JRS remains there, if its assistance is needed. This aspect of JRS is very important, for one of the objectives of all JRS projects (and indeed of JRS itself as an organisation) is to move on once the needs that gave rise to these projects have either been met or no longer exist.³⁸² In recent years, as the refugee population has moved out of camps and into urban settings, especially into the larger cities of Africa or the Middle East, JRS has moved with them. The rise in numbers of internally displaced peoples (IDPs)³⁸³ around the world also meant that JRS activities had to be adapted for this new forcibly displaced population. And sadly (as we noted through a moving example in the previous chapter), one area that today requires more and more of JRS' efforts and resources is the ministry of presence, service and advocacy on behalf of asylum seekers kept in detention centres.

Today JRS works in over 50 countries around the world and the history of JRS continues to unfold. It is a history whose last chapter all of JRS workers and volunteers, and especially the refugees and forcibly displaced people they serve, would like to write. But this is not possible yet. As David Townsend SJ points out:

Refugees rewrite the history of the world, from the point of view of the dispossessed and powerless. They [...] reveal the structural sin embedded in the world's contemporary systems. They reveal a task still to be accomplished.³⁸⁴

Unfortunately, carrying out this task has become more challenging in the past fifteen years, as developed nations have either lost interest in particular local conflicts or have experienced

areas, because partners are already established there, or because its presence can enable others to become involved.

³⁸² Cf. *Guidelines of the JRS*, n. 15. A good example of this took place in Cambodia. After years of accompanying refugees along the Thai-Cambodian border, when these returned home in 1993, and services on the border were no longer needed, JRS set up projects in the country to assist them in their return, especially those who had been victims of landmines and left physically disabled. This work was conceived as part of a much-needed national reconciliation process. As this service became then a work of development, rather than something specifically set up for refugees, the responsibility was eventually transferred from JRS to Jesuit Service Cambodia.

³⁸³ As mentioned before, IDPs are persons who have also been forced to leave their homes, their lands and loved ones behind, but have remained within their countries of origin, without crossing international borders.

³⁸⁴ Cf. JRS, *The Wound of the Border*, p. 36.

‘humanitarian burn-out’. In the introduction to this thesis, we cited the tragedy that took place in the Mediterranean Sea in October 2013, where over 300 asylum seekers lost their lives on the way to Lampedusa. Several meetings of European nations ensued to discuss a way to prevent future similar tragedies, but no consensus could be arrived at, with the heart-breaking consequence that once again, in April 2015, hundreds of asylum seekers headed to Lampedusa, lost their lives. A similar summit of European nations failed once again to reach a consensus regarding an appropriate and humanitarian response to this crisis. This is symptomatic of the present climate asylum seekers face: increasingly neighbouring or developed nations refuse to accept them or try to send them back to their places of origin, even when it is still unsafe for them to return. Immigration policies, as we have already mentioned, have also become harsher throughout the world, becoming more oriented to excluding people rather than welcoming them. And a climate of hostility towards refugees means that their plight and their suffering are often ignored. And yet paradoxically, the reality is that some of the countries that have been asked to open their doors to refugees and have refused or have done so only in a tokenistic way (such as some Western European countries, the United States and Australia), have been responsible in creating refugee situations, as for example in Syria, through interference and continued sale of arms.

2.4.2. The Jesuit Refugee Service ‘way of proceeding’: accompanying, serving and defending the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced peoples

The simple fact that JRS exists, and is present where they are, is for refugees a sign of hope. But JRS will never consider itself as an institution that just accompanies people in hopeless situations. If JRS is present, it also works for advocacy. This is crucial because it is a question of justice.³⁸⁵

The motto of JRS is ‘to accompany, to serve and to advocate’ for the rights of forcibly displaced peoples. But this is more than a motto: these three pillars stand together and combine to generate and uphold hope. And this hope, as we will show further on, is real. JRS workers know, because they have heard it expressed and voiced by the people they serve over and over again, as in the case of Treza Debasay, an asylum seeker from Eritrea in a transit camp in Shousha, Tunisia:

Hope is the living bread for human beings, it is what gives them courage and widens their vision for a better life. Sr Elisabeth (JRS staff) brought a wave of hope for us refugees by visiting our tents even during the hottest weather here in the Sahara. Each day, she visits different communities of refugees, from Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and others.

³⁸⁵ Cf. JRS, *In the footsteps of Pedro Arrupe*, p. 15.

She tells us to be hopeful, to see a future beyond the daily stress and survival. The sisters are teaching many women how to make dresses, providing material for free to those who are interested. They are busy the whole day, going from one student to the next, to guide them as they sew. This pastime has served to divert our minds from the stress we are under, to help us relax while we work, to share our talents, and to spend time together. Try to imagine how difficult it is to build hope among refugees living in the open desert. But this is just what is being done by the sisters. Their names are printed in our hearts.³⁸⁶

2.4.2.1. Accompaniment

What Treza describes here is the essence of accompaniment. *Sister Elizabeth visits our tents even during the hottest weather here in the Sahara...* How to define ‘accompaniment’? Perhaps the first thing to remember is that to accompany means *being a companion*. While this might sound obvious, it is perhaps something people tend to forget too often and too easily. True companionship—a life-giving endeavour—can never be one-sided; it requires mutuality. Human beings are companions; they accompany one another, they share ‘bread’ together, that which nourishes and gives them life. As Fr Deogratius Rwezaura, former project director in the Kibondo Camps (Tanzania) puts it:

[Our work] was not just about JRS accompanying the refugees; we accompanied one another. Our goal and vision was to build a community of hope through prayer and worship, reconciliation, concern for the poorest of the poor, visits and care for the sick, and, most importantly, through the celebration of life together.³⁸⁷

The temporal quality of hope is such that the past, the present and the future combine to create a continuum that not only reflects a past-present/cause-effect dimension, but is also anticipatory of the future that is already being created in the present. Hope is nurtured in the today, in concrete ways (learning how to make dresses, celebrating life together), so that what is hoped for now can become a reality later, in a distant or not-so-distant future. And there is nothing more concrete than accompaniment and physical presence:

Moreover, presence can be a sign. That a free person chooses willingly and faithfully to accompany those who are not free, who had no choice about being there, is itself a sign, a way of eliciting hope.³⁸⁸

Accompaniment then is about reciprocity, about the mutual sharing of people’s lives. It requires a willingness to get to know the other and to allow oneself to be known by them, a

³⁸⁶ Cf. JRS, “Life is stronger than death” in *Servir*, n. 52 (2011) 5.

³⁸⁷ Cf. JRS, *In the Footsteps of Pedro Arrupe*, pp. 25-26. Fr Rwezaura continues: “We did not offer services to the refugees; we responded to their needs together [...]. We worked together and through this experience, we recognised one another’s strengths and weaknesses. We created a stimulating atmosphere in which to offer service and advocacy. Refugees identified with JRS and were part of our mission and family”.

³⁸⁸ Expressed by Mark Raper SJ, as he explained JRS’ ministry of pastoral accompaniment among refugees. Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s challenge*, p. 85.

willingness to learn to listen, to be accessible, to offer but also accept hospitality. Accompaniment is solidarity in action, bearing witness to injustices so they can be addressed and overcome, and being present in seemingly hopeless situations. Within the Christian faith, it is about living as Jesus lived, as the compassionate companion of the poor and marginalised, who still today and every day comes to us in the Eucharist, feeds us and makes himself present to us. And accompaniment is also a call to people of all faiths to witness to God's presence and God's love no matter how tragic the circumstances surrounding them (cf. JRS Charter). And in the case of JRS, accompaniment does not stand alone, apart from all else JRS does. As mentioned earlier, in JRS “we accompany as we serve and as we defend the rights of refugees”.³⁸⁹

2.4.2.2. Service

I think it is telling, though not surprising, that of the three pillars of JRS—accompaniment, service and advocacy—the one less written about in reflection documents about JRS' work throughout the years is service. It is telling because of the three, the one that actually appears in the name of the organisation is ‘service’. But it is not surprising because there is no doubt, looking at the hundreds of educational, health, development, counselling, self-reliance and many other projects that JRS has developed and implemented, that JRS has indeed provided great service to thousands and thousands of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. What is worth pointing out is the emphasis on the approach with which this service has been provided: service is always based on the needs of refugees as identified by the refugees themselves, always responds to these needs directly and practically, and is always offered not

³⁸⁹ These various characteristics of ‘accompaniment’ are expounded in JRS’ publication *Side by Side: Learning what accompaniment is all about*, Rome: JRS Publications 2013. These characteristics are framed by the JRS values of compassion, solidarity, hope, dignity, hospitality, justice and participation. It is worth here making a comment concerning this last value—participation—in light of this theme of accompaniment. As David Holdcroft, former regional director of JRS Southern Africa (2011-2017) reminds us (pp. 41-42 of this JRS publication), it is good development practice to involve the people served in the process of designing and carrying out of the projects that seek to meet their needs. But we cannot forget that as organisations providing those services we “come from a position of power relative to the people we wish to help”. As hard as we try, participation will never “resolve the power differential completely”. This does not mean, however, that accompaniment as expressed above in terms of ‘the mutual sharing of our lives’ is not a possibility. In fact, as Holdcroft notes, accompaniment *has* to be there “to challenge the power structure of the ‘provider-beneficiary relationship’ [...] and to create the spiritual and psychological space for humanity to reassert itself”. And this reassertion of humanity benefits both the forcibly displaced and those who walk with them, because regardless of our wealth, our resources, our training, we all are vulnerable, wounded and desire more than anything to be listened to and be accepted.

as a work of charity, but as a matter of justice.³⁹⁰ This approach is guided by the mandate given to the Society of Jesus with regard to the promotion of justice as an absolute requirement of the service of faith that we saw earlier (cf. GC 32, Decree 4), and informs the advocacy efforts of JRS in identifying the root causes that force people to flee, so that these can be addressed and hopefully remedied.

2.4.2.3. Advocacy

Unfortunately, and realistically, it will take a long time before such remedies can have their desired effect. So, in the meantime, JRS' advocacy efforts are also targeted to prevent further abuses being inflicted on forcibly displaced people and to improve their quality of life. As mentioned earlier, JRS advocacy follows the Catholic Church's expanded understanding of the word 'refugee' and thus encompasses victims of armed conflicts, erroneous economic policy, natural disasters and internally displaced peoples (IDPs). As stated in JRS' advocacy manual, it carries out advocacy through a wide range of activities:

Seeking opportunities to advocate for those whose needs are forgotten by others; addressing both the immediate needs as well as longer-term policy objectives of specific groups; being close to the people concerned, and supporting their hopes and aspirations; giving people the opportunity to tell their stories; creating spaces for dialogue between the centres of power and those who want to bring about positive change; tailoring [its] approach to make it appropriate to local conditions, reflecting local needs, resources and opportunities; and prioritising [its] efforts on the basis of the value that JRS can give to supplement the work of others.³⁹¹

Some of the primary areas and issues within which this advocacy takes place include: education, protection of internally displaced persons, food security, urban refugees, detention issues, protection to prevent return to unsafe countries, seeking durable solutions

³⁹⁰ It must be acknowledged, at the same time, that service towards the refugee 'cause' has required other forms apart from direct programs or projects. "For this reason I would say that our service to refugees through political analysis, research, reflection and public debate, in order to deepen the awareness of this great human tragedy of our time at all levels of public life, is perhaps more urgent today, when refugees face open hostility and closed borders in many countries, than a decade ago, when world-wide compassion and generosity extended them a warm welcome", thus wrote Fr Kolvenbach in a letter to the whole Society in 1990, cf. JRS, *Everybody's Challenge*, p. 53. A group of JRS workers at a seminar in Kigali in August 1995, answering the question 'What do you regard as essential to JRS?', replied: "JRS' style of service is human and spiritual, seeking the long term good of the refugees, while not neglecting needs that are immediate or urgent. Our service is pastoral and educational, most often with a training component". Cf. JRS, *Everybody's challenge*, p. 73.

³⁹¹ JRS, *Advocacy in Jesuit Refugee Service*, Rome: JRS Publications 2011, pp. 3-4. Looking at this list, it becomes clear that "advocacy [is] a multifaceted reality that assumes various concrete forms besides the defence of human rights. The guaranteeing of conditions such as education, microcredit schemes, income-generating projects, skills acquisition, and women's empowerment, all of which further the socioeconomic development of displaced populations, are among the different facets of advocacy". Cf. OROBATOR AGBONKHIANMEGHE, "Key Ethical Issues in Practices and Policies of Refugee-Serving NGOs and Churches" in David Hollenbach, ed., *Refugee Rights, Ethics, Advocacy, and Africa*. Washington: Georgetown University Press 2008, p. 228.

(i.e. voluntary repatriation, integration in countries of asylum or resettlement in third countries), landmines and cluster munitions, child soldiers, sexual and gender based violence, climate induced displacement and peace and reconciliation initiatives. As this list shows, the challenges are many and complex and require an in-depth knowledge and experience of the issues involved. This is the reason why advocacy cannot be separated from the two other JRS pillars of accompaniment and service. *Accompaniment becomes advocacy when an appeal is made by a JRS staff member, on behalf of a refugee, to an outside party that can provide help.*³⁹² It is this unique perspective on refugee issues, deriving directly from JRS' accompaniment and service, that allows its advocacy to offer help, hope and a voice to vulnerable people on the move.

2.4.3. Hope and hospitality: two basic values of the Jesuit Refugee Service

As stated in its *Strategic Framework* for 2012-2015, the mission of JRS is based on faith in a God who is present in human history, in all of its joyful and tragic moments. It is inspired by the compassion and love of Jesus for the poor and the excluded and by the seven core values which inform all the work it does: compassion, hope, dignity, solidarity, hospitality, justice and participation. With respect to hope, this value states: "JRS aims to give hope to refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. We provide a spiritual and practical response to their plight". In regards to hospitality, "JRS aspires to be hospitality in action. We walk alongside, accompany and offer hospitality to the most vulnerable, those 'at the frontiers of humanity'".³⁹³ Rooted in the Jesuit charism, it is the type of hospitality provided by 'homeless vagabonds':

Our model for Jesuit hospitality is not found in the gracious Benedictine monastery [...]. In as much as the Jesuit charism is so strikingly defined by our mission to go to those in need [...] we are invited to be hospitable as the itinerant Good Samaritan was [...] 'who saw in the man by the roadside, not a member of another race, but a brother in need' [Cf. Adolfo Nicolás]. The model of the Good Samaritan is then the model of a hospitable itinerant figure [...who showed that] the neighbour is the one who shows mercy.³⁹⁴

³⁹² Cf. JRS, *Advocacy in Jesuit Refugee Service*, p. 4.

³⁹³ JRS, *Strategic Framework 2012-2015*, Rome: JRS Publications 2011, p. 7. As one of the strategies to promote hospitality, the *Framework* lists "We will oppose xenophobia and all forms of marginalisation and exclusion, and defend the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to full protection", p. 14.

³⁹⁴ JRS, *Side by Side: Learning what accompaniment is all about*, pp. 100-102. The quote is from James Keenan writing on 'Jesuit hospitality?'. Keenan continues: "the parable [of the Good Samaritan] is first and foremost not a story about how we should treat others, but rather the story of what Christ has done for us [...]. [It] reminds us further that we seek right relations with others because Christ has first made right relations with us. Welcomed into his kingdom, all of us in JRS are in turn sent out, 'homeless vagabonds' that we are, to accompany others whom we find along the way. Our hospitality is not found in the quality of our dwelling place but in the fact that we accompany the other travellers until it is time for them, with us, to meet the Christ who will one day return to accompany us home", p. 102.

2.4.3.1. Hope and faith: what distinguishes the Jesuit Refugee Service

It is not easy being a humanitarian worker; to witness day in and day out scenes of human pain and suffering in some of the harshest and most violent places in the world. And yet, even as a relief worker one can choose to either remain ‘distant’ (in a professional sense, which means that you can still be sympathetic and empathetic to people experiencing such suffering) or become personally involved in the lives of those one serves. But if one chooses the latter, as most JRS staff do—one has to allow oneself to be touched and moved in such a way that their suffering becomes also part of you:

Working with refugees, I realise more and more that unless I give myself, it would be better that I gave nothing. People who are starving, homeless, friendless, so easily lose the sense of their human dignity. It is not enough to give them what they need. I must give in such a way that my giving restores their self-worth, their human dignity, in such a way that their hope and trust in mankind are rekindled.³⁹⁵

As Fr Kolvenbach once said: “it is much easier to [...] help in a way that you do not suffer. You just do your job. But this will not be the way for those who work in the framework of JRS”.³⁹⁶ This is part of that “giving of yourself” that Bill Yeomans speaks about in the above quote. Giving of oneself in such a way that it rekindles the hope and trust of the forcibly displaced in humankind. It sounds right and it sounds good, but it does not always feel right or good, in particular in those situations where people feel powerless to do much about the great suffering they encounter. It is at these times that the faith in a God who encountered suffering and made it God’s own, makes all the difference. And if this is true for most people, it is more so for the forcibly displaced themselves. A Burundian widow from Lukole camp in Western Tanzania once said: “God understands us because He has also lost a son”.³⁹⁷ The mystery and meaning of suffering encapsulated in one sentence. And because God understands, we may never lose confidence that God will answer our prayers, even if that takes a long time. Nathaniel, a former catechist working with JRS in Tanzania, and who had been a refugee most of his life, put it this way:

³⁹⁵ This reflection, shared by Bill Yeomans, an English Jesuit who accompanied refugees in Asia Pacific for many years before his death in 1989, captures the spirit of service of JRS. Cf. JRS, *In the footsteps of Pedro Arrupe*, p. 14. Father Kolvenbach echoes his words as he comments: “What is very clear is that JRS brings hope. Refugees understand that you are people who are interested in them, who really believe that they have a future. The way of acting of JRS is real grace. It is involved with people who are victims of injustice, of violence, of disorder, who are really in despair and it gives the best of itself so that refugees can come out of their despair”, p. 15.

³⁹⁶ JRS, *In the footsteps of Pedro Arrupe*, p. 17.

³⁹⁷ Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p. 18.

There are many difficulties and little joy for us refugees, yet it is impossible for a Christian to lose hope. The patience and endurance I need come from God. After more than 30 years of being a refugee, I am confident God knows when I will return home to Burundi.³⁹⁸

JRS personnel often talk about their encounters—seeing them as a gift for which they are truly grateful—with people of deep faith, who live out that faith not only through devotional practices but through great generosity, sharing what little they have, because they believe that is what the Christian gospel message—or the message of their own scriptures in other faith traditions—calls them to do. And this generosity leads to mutual sharing, to growth and the capacity to survive together in what otherwise would be an uncompromising environment.

By its essence, the giving of oneself should be a gratuitous act, because it is an act of love. Love is at the core of and the key to gratuity. Some might feel that it is politically incorrect to speak of engagement with forcibly displaced people in terms of love. Perhaps they think it is not professional enough. But throughout the years many JRS staff and volunteers have talked and written about their relationship with the forcibly displaced in terms of friendship, in the language of love.³⁹⁹ They talk about individuals, mentioning them by name—those whose names *have been imprinted in their hearts*; they are no longer ‘impersonal masses’ or simple statistics, but persons of value and gifts, with their own unique story and history.

For people of faith, their service to refugees is rooted in the sacred reality that each person has been created in the image and likeness of God, and deserves to be treated as such. Not all JRS workers would necessarily define themselves as ‘people of faith’. But if faith is regarded as that which gets people out of bed each morning (the belief that every human being has basic rights that can never be negated), as that on which they put their trust (the dignity and value of the human person and their capacity to respond in kind to generosity and compassion), as that which is the non-negotiable in their lives (the sacredness of life), then they *are* people of faith. For many JRS personnel, these ‘faiths’ are also accompanied by a belief in a God who has created each human person in love, to live life abundantly and to the fullest. And for many, this belief translates into practicing a particular set of rituals and

³⁹⁸ Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p. 33.

³⁹⁹ Clearly, ‘friendship’ and ‘love’ are not the same thing, but they do share common elements: care for the other, empathy, solidarity, self-giving, respect, a desire for the other’s well-being.

adhering to what are commonly called religious conventions; they are happy to be part of a church.⁴⁰⁰

As representative of the Catholic Church, JRS wears a distinctive badge. In fact, it is this religious ‘affiliation’ (seen from the outside), this basic and essential motivating aspect (as experienced from the inside) that I believe constitutes the greatest differentiating factor between JRS and other organisations. Even in countries where, for political or ideological reasons, JRS has had to register as a non-government charitable organisation (rather than as a religious one), it has never hidden purposely this fundamental faith value.⁴⁰¹ In camps, in detention centres, in urban settings, JRS is acknowledged as a religious, Christian organisation and, in most cases, this has not been a limitation or a hindrance to carrying out its work.⁴⁰²

Today, JRS is and operates as an agency. The choice of an agency profile is simply what we call in our language *an apostolic instrument*, to give greater effectiveness to JRS’ activities. In order to enter countries, to work in the camps under UN coordination and to cooperate with other groups in serving refugees, JRS presents itself as a non-government organisation, in the same way as a school or a university has a secular identity. Yet it is a faith organisation, and first of all a refugee service. We only have to open the bible to see that JRS responds directly to the commandments of the Lord. To work with refugees is already in line with the Gospel.⁴⁰³

Although it is difficult to estimate a percentage, it is safe to say that the majority of people JRS has served in the past thirty-eight years are neither Catholic nor Christian (it is, however, estimated that about 70% are indeed Muslims)⁴⁰⁴. If for no other reason, this is simply due to

⁴⁰⁰ In my years with JRS, I worked with people who joined JRS because they were attracted and impressed by its work with refugees, by its *ethos*, its way of proceeding, but who at the time claimed not to profess any affiliation to a religious community. Some, however, later expressed how their time with JRS, and especially through witnessing the faith of those they served (refugees and asylum seekers of many faith traditions) opened in their lives possibilities to explore a religious dimension they had not considered before.

⁴⁰¹ Doing so would go against the essential character of a Jesuit apostolate. As articulated in GC32: “We are members of a Society with a universal vocation and a missionary tradition. We therefore have a special responsibility in this regard. We have a duty to ensure that our ministry is directed toward incarnating the faith and life of the Church in the culture and traditions of the people among whom and with whom we work” (D. 4, 55) and those we seek to serve. Again this evangelisation element does not mean a requirement to convert others to the Christian faith; rather, sharing the love of God and the companionship of Christ in our lives is what should motivate us and give us the strength to do all we do.

⁴⁰² One such exception was the case of Fr Alexis Prem Kumar, an Indian Jesuit, who on 2 June 2014 was abducted by a group of unidentified men in Western Afghanistan while on a visit to a JRS-supported school for returnee refugees. Although a harrowing experience, he was finally and happily released eight months later. Sadly, a very different outcome resulted for Fr Frans van der Lugt, who was killed in Homs, Syria on 7 April 2014, while offering care and assistance to both Christians and Muslims affected by the civil war there.

⁴⁰³ Extract from Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ’s talk to the JRS Regional Directors, Rome, 23 June, 1997. Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s challenge*, p. 78.

⁴⁰⁴ Cf. ELÍAS LÓPEZ P. and JACQUES HAERS, “JRS: Faith doing Justice. Discernment from and with Refugees” in *Gregorianum* 93, n. 3 (2012) 553.

the geographical distribution of the areas of major conflicts in the world during this period of time: Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. And yet, in the best of circumstances—when they are not hindered by erratic assumptions, preconceived biases, unfounded fears—people of faith, regardless of their faith tradition, somehow learn to recognise a deep sense of commonality with other people of faith.⁴⁰⁵ In the JRS context, this applies equally to JRS staff as well as to the people they seek to serve. Shaina Aber, “an observant Jewish woman” and a staff member of JRS-USA (2006-2012), expresses this strong affinity in explaining what drew her to work with JRS:

It was this aspect [accompaniment] of JRS’ work [...] to offer friendship and be a witness to our common humanity and to the eternal and unconditional nature of God’s love—that was evocative of my own faith tradition and family history [...]. Stories of struggle and perseverance, reliance and redemption peppered my childhood [...] as a child I was taught to recognise that my faith tradition [...] calls me to act in accordance with the highest ideals of my faith. It is through contributing to the holiness and healing of the world that we live out our faith tradition [...]. As we accompany refugees in their journeys, those who work for JRS seek to be the human and physical embodiment of an empathetic, loving and eternal God [...]. At times of intense human suffering, the presence of God can be difficult to recognise. Yet, it is in the stories and struggles of refugees—in their ability to renew and reshape their lives after horrendous losses, in their will to survive and forge ahead, in their capacity to open their hearts once again to human kindness and love—that I have recognised the presence of the Divine.⁴⁰⁶

It is through contributing to the holiness and healing of the world that we live out our faith tradition. And this holiness and healing can take place through respect of another’s beliefs, even if they are in essence very different from our own.⁴⁰⁷ Rooted in their deep experience of

⁴⁰⁵ Working as it does in many countries where Christianity is not the religion of the majority of the population, means that some of JRS staff in these countries are also non-Christian. Attracted by JRS’ commitment and mission to reach out to refugees and internally displaced people, they join JRS, even if this means facing hardship and challenges. A young Muslim woman from Ambon island in Indonesia relates: “Difficulties soon arose. Displaced Muslims remained suspicious of JRS. To make matters worse, my mother was angry and afraid when she heard I was cooperating with Christians; I could be targeted as a traitor and even killed. I was threatened and my neighbours avoided me, spreading false rumours about me. This made me sad, but I persisted. I believed I was on the holy and true path of God, and he would protect me [...]. Gradually, my family started to believe in my work, especially my mother. She is so proud of me now, telling visitors at home of my service among displaced people. As one who believes in God, I always pray according to my faith. Before, I never bothered about other religions; in JRS I learned how to live with them, to love without distinction because all people are equal”. Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁰⁶ JRS, *Side by Side: Learning what accompaniment is all about*, pp. 56-60.

⁴⁰⁷ In one occasion, at a dinner in one of our JRS shelters in Sydney, I was asked by one of the asylum seekers staying there—a highly educated Iraqi doctor, who was also a deeply devout Muslim—to explain to him our Christian belief about the Incarnation. He listened carefully as I tried my best, clumsily I must confess, to explain what it meant for us as Christians to believe that God—in God’s profound and unconditional love for us—had decided to enter into the human condition and become man. I could see also how hard he tried to understand what I was saying. Yet, he could not. In his concept of God, as I understood it, the divinity could not become human, for it went against the very same essence of what God is. He actually apologised for not being able to agree with me. But he also thanked me, because he said that, for the first time in his life, he felt able to express his faith freely to a person of a different faith tradition. This religious freedom, as a right, is paramount in JRS’ pastoral approach to refugees: “JRS has a pastoral and human obligation to defend and

their God, forcibly displaced people have taught us much about hope, courage, solidarity and generosity. They have lost almost everything, but their faith gives them the determination to live and hope for a better future. And their faith impels us, as people of God, as Church, to do all we can so that they will not be disillusioned:

For the Church, the refugees are a constant reminder that the people of God is essentially a pilgrim people, never settled, always on the move, always searching, always reaching out further. We must be a Church of mission, not of maintenance, whose task is ever to question prevailing attitudes and structures, especially those that discriminate against the poor and oppressed.⁴⁰⁸

2.4.3.2. Hospitality: being welcomed by messengers of God

The JRS Charter states: “To accompany refugees is to affirm that God is present in human history, even in most tragic episodes [...]. In companionship with Jesus Christ and serving his mission in the midst of refugees, JRS can be an effective sign of God’s love and reconciliation.”⁴⁰⁹ Earlier in this chapter, we referred to the movement that can take place from hostility to hospitality. Fr Lluís Magriñà, former international director of JRS (2000-2007), beautifully summarises what this movement means in the context of forcibly displaced peoples and how such movement can lead to healing:

Hostility comes from ignorance, hospitality from openness. Hostility towards strangers is born in a heart with barriers, hardened and incapable of seeing richness in diversity. The collective hostility of the western world can be healed by learning from hospitality in other cultures. The shift from hostility to hospitality happens when one experiences welcome, the gift of opening oneself to the reality of an individual or a family of refugees.⁴¹⁰

promote this basic human right to freedom of worship, whether the refugees are Muslim, Buddhist or Christian. Conversely, no religious practice may be imposed on refugees either by force or through the ‘blackmail’ (whether subtle or not) of assistance offered exclusively to those who attend religious services.” Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s challenge*, p. 91.

⁴⁰⁸ Part of a statement given by a group of JRS regional coordinators at a meeting in 1985 in Chiang Mai. JRS, *Everybody’s challenge*, p. 71.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. *The JRS Charter*, no. 15.

⁴¹⁰ JRS, *In the footsteps of Pedro Arrupe*, p. 41. In his message for Lent 1998 (9 September 1997), John Paul II, using the scripture verse, *Come, O blessed of my Father, for I was poor, marginalized and you welcomed me!*, as his theme, emphasised the ever greater need to offer welcome in a world characterised also by an increasing hostility: “Every Christian feels called to share the pain and difficulty of the ‘other’ in whom God Himself is hidden. However, this opening to the needs of others implies a truly warm welcoming [...]. This atmosphere of welcoming is increasingly necessary in confronting today’s diverse forms of distancing ourselves from others. This is profoundly evidenced in the problem of millions of refugees and exiles, in the phenomenon of racial intolerance as well as intolerance toward the person whose only ‘fault’ is a search for work and better living conditions outside his own country and in the fear of all who are different and thus seen as a threat [...]. As regards these people, the welcoming of them remains a challenge for the Christian community which cannot ignore its obligation to respond so that everyone is able to find living conditions suitable to the dignity of a child of God!” Cf. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/len/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_09091997_lent-1998.html. Accessed 23 June 2018.

In the earlier story told by Treza, she spoke of Sr Elisabeth's visits to the refugees' tents, to their homes. Sr Elisabeth would have been welcomed in each one of these tents with care, with warmth, with joy. During her initial days in the camp, she would have been a stranger, yet another humanitarian worker who had come to the camp to offer help and services. And that she had done. But her presence in their homes, her efforts to come and meet them where they were, meant that she had given these refugee women the opportunity to act as her hosts. True accompaniment leads to true hospitality, where hosts and visitors exchange places, as each one welcomes the other into the other's 'sacred space', regardless of the physical conditions of those abodes.

Some of my most vivid and cherished memories of the three years I visited the Villawood detention centre in Sydney are the times when I visited several Sri Lankan families in the low security area of the compound. These families lived in small houses (usually two families sharing the facilities) and had access to a kitchen where they could cook their own meals. Invariably I would be welcomed with a very sweet hot cup of tea and biscuits and, on some special occasions, I would be offered a delicious meal of fish curry and rice. I would always arrive after the midday meal, so I usually ate alone, with the family sitting around me, watching me eat. At first this was a bit disconcerting and uncomfortable, but I soon grew accustomed to this situation. I remember particularly the first meal Reneka served me. The food was delicious, and I made sure to express my pleasure in eating it, not only through words (her knowledge of English was limited and my Tamil inexistent), but with gestures and signs and sounds of delight, for I could see how much pleasure she derived from my enjoyment.

I had met the family initially a few months before in another detention centre on Christmas Island, and at that time, because of the lack of facilities such as they had now, they had been unable to host me as they would have wanted. But she had promised that, if she ever made it to Sydney, she would cook me a meal I would never forget. She fulfilled that promise, several times over. The family was eventually given protection by the Australian government and allowed to stay in Australia. Reneka had given birth while she and her husband were still in detention. They wanted to baptise their son into the Catholic faith, and asked me to do the baptism, but we had to wait until they had been released. We could have done it in the detention centre, but they did not want a record of any kind that showed that

their son had ever been kept in a place of detention, and certainly did not want it to appear in his baptism certificate. Their son had been born on Easter Monday, so Reneka and Reuben chose to name him ‘Risen’ to celebrate the gift and mystery of new life in our Risen Lord. As Reuben put it so aptly: “we too have risen to a new life in this country we can now call our home”.

To me this family’s gratitude, affection and hope spoke of God. Their faith in God kept them going through some of the most difficult moments of their journey to Australia. During their perilous journey in a small, rickety boat, they thought several times that they would surely perish, but never doubted that God was with them: “He always protected us”. Years later, just a few months ago, we managed to meet again. One of the first things Reneka did was to show me, with great pride, a certificate of Risen’s outstanding progress in English in his first grade class. “He is a real Australian boy”, she said, her eyes beaming. Though they have been able to return to Sri Lanka for visits a couple of times in the past few years, Australia has become their true home. Their challenges, unfortunately, are far from over, but neither are their fighting spirit and perseverance.

2.4.4. A mutual journey of self-discovery: teachings and learnings on peace, reconciliation and healing

Conflicts can lead to wars and wars always lead to violence. These conflicts cause rifts between people and the violence that ensues ends up splitting them into bands of perpetrators and victims. But it is not always clear (especially to those deeply involved in large scale and long lasting conflicts) who is the perpetrator and who is the victim. For it is not uncommon that reversals of fortune turn one into the other, several times over. What it is clear is that in these cases division is always present, and peace is always absent. And the longer these conflicts last, the more difficult it becomes to unite warring factions and to re-establish peace. What makes it even more complicated is that in many cases these conflicts pit brother against brother, neighbour against neighbour, friend against friend. We might expect to be attacked, hurt and killed by an enemy, but what do we do when the one attacking, hurting or killing us used to be ‘someone like us’, even a close relative or a dear friend?⁴¹¹

⁴¹¹ “As people who have suffered multiple trauma and loss, refugees also need to regain internal peace. Many refugees find themselves paralysed by their distress. Some harbour resentment and even hatred because of wrongs inflicted. These feelings then become in themselves a reason to survive, at worst finding expression in armed struggle”. Cf. JRS, *Horizons of learning, 25 years of JRS education*, Rome: JRS Publications 2005, p. 76.

Following on the footsteps of the First Jesuit Companions, peacebuilding and reconciliation have always been key aspects of the ministry of JRS⁴¹², beginning at the grass root level, bringing together families in conflict, holding peace and reconciliation workshops, creating safe-heavens and spaces of healing.⁴¹³ I witnessed examples of such safe-heavens in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya during my short visit there about five years ago. These spaces are surrounded (and protected) by fences made of thorny bushes. From the outside, they are far from inviting, but once you cross the gate and enter one of these ‘sanctuaries’, a sense of peace and a feeling of hospitality envelops you. There are trees and bushes and even some flowers planted everywhere. Tables and chairs have been placed under the shade of these trees, so people can come, sit and talk about their differences. Several counsellors and facilitators, all of them trained by JRS, all of them refugees themselves, run different programs (which include massage and reflexology!) and counselling sessions. There is no room for recrimination, pointing of fingers or blaming here. The goal is reconciliation and fostering anything that leads to it. Witnessing to reconciliation is a role the Church should play everywhere, without exceptions, at all levels.⁴¹⁴ These safe heavens have been of great

⁴¹² As Peter Balleis, former JRS International Director (2007-2015) puts it: “Throughout its history JRS has always worked towards reconciliation, usually without naming it as such. We have engaged in community programs that involve peace education, dialogue and conflict resolution. Educational and psychological support, our areas of special focus, have fostered healing and hope. Our advocacy has promoted the search for truth and accountability necessary for reconciliation and justice. And our research has produced analyses of the causes of conflict and displacement”. JRS, *Recreating Right Relationships: Deepening the Mission of Reconciliation in the Work of JRS*, Rome: JRS Publications 2013, p. 5.

⁴¹³ And as we mentioned earlier in this chapter, these ministries of peacebuilding and reconciliation have been of paramount importance since the beginnings of the Society and continue to be so today: “We recognize the signs of God’s work, of the great ministry of reconciliation God has begun in Christ, fulfilled in the Kingdom of justice, peace and the integrity of creation [...]. The letter of Father General Adolfo Nicolás on reconciliation and the teaching of Pope Francis have given this vision greater depth, placing faith, justice, and solidarity with the poor and the excluded as central elements of the mission of reconciliation. Rather than ask what we should do, we seek to understand how God invites us—and so many people of good will—to share in that great work [...]. What GC 35 had identified as three dimensions of this ministry of reconciliation, namely, reconciliation with God, with one another, and with creation, assumed a new urgency. This reconciliation is always a work of justice, a justice discerned and enacted in local communities and contexts. The Cross of Christ and our sharing in it are also at the centre of God’s work of reconciliation. This mission can lead to conflict and death, as we have witnessed in the lives of many of our brothers”. Cf. GC 36, Decree 1, *Companions in a mission of reconciliation and justice*. 3, 21.

⁴¹⁴ Citing again Peter Balleis: “Our reconciliation efforts must be aware of and counteract all these levels of violence: from the macro-political level right down to the daily incidents at micro-level. We need to encourage people to recognise and repudiate sources and acts of violence, and to recreate right relationships with themselves and with others. Sometimes this means going against the current, to build communities that not only resist evil but respond with forgiveness and goodness [...]. Thus] we see how JRS teams and forcibly displaced people strive together for personal and communal healing, to create reconciled communities that are signs of peace and hope”. JRS, *Recreating Right Relationships: Deepening the Mission of Reconciliation in the Work of JRS*, p. 8.

importance especially for women and children, the most vulnerable, offering them a space for healing in an ever present harsh environment.⁴¹⁵

At a meeting in Thailand with Jesuits involved in the then new apostolate with refugees, Fr Arrupe stated: “I see a tremendous opening for the Society [in this new ministry], and not only as regards work among refugees. This work will be a school in which we learn many things.”⁴¹⁶ Working and being with refugees has taught JRS staff and volunteers about their own hatred and antagonisms, the lack of peace in their hearts, and the need for reconciliation and healing in their own ‘developed’ nations and in their communities. It is often said that the best students are those who are willing to learn and that an important part of teaching well is being able to foster that desire for learning and growth. If we think we have nothing to learn from someone, then there is little they can teach us. Thankfully, for those who have been part and continue to be part of JRS, their work with refugees has always been considered a school “in which we learn many things”. And it has always been “adult-based education”—within an atmosphere of mutual sharing, respect, openness, interaction, companionship and a sense of shared responsibility. The deep faith and unfailing hope of refugees “have led us to rediscover these spiritual values in our own lives [...] we have found Christ again in the faces and lives of these abandoned people, a Christ who is beckoning and calling us to follow Him”.⁴¹⁷

As I have repeatedly emphasised, I believe forcibly displaced people have much to share and contribute to host countries, either during limited periods of time, as they await safe return to their homelands, or as future permanent residents and citizens, where their contributions will be offered through a lifetime. And they are usually so grateful to their hosts that they feel compelled to keep giving back over and over again. They enrich these countries with new cultures and languages, with new perspectives and imagination. But the gift that is perhaps

⁴¹⁵ “The Safe Haven is the only facility of its kind in Kakuma. Women and children find temporary protection, shelter, food, education and psychosocial support at the Safe Haven when they encounter gender based violence in the community. Some of the residents have faced attempted forced marriage, abductions, rape and severe domestic violence. While JRS provides protection at the Safe Haven, UNHCR and partner agencies seek to help residents identify safe alternatives for sustainable living arrangements in Kakuma and beyond”. Cf. JRS’ *Newsroom* (in JRS International’s website), “Kenya: protection centre for women and children extended”, 27 July 2011. Cf. http://en.jrs.net/news_detail?TN=NEWS-20110801020150. Accessed 23 June 2018.

⁴¹⁶ Fr Arrupe pronounced these words on 6 August 1981, the day before he had the stroke (as he returned to Rome), which left him partially paralysed and permanently impaired his speech.

⁴¹⁷ Part of a statement given by a group of JRS regional coordinators at a meeting in 1985 in Chiang Mai. JRS, *Everybody’s challenge*, p. 71.

the greatest and the most needed (as we have also emphasised) is the gift of hope. It is amazing to see how easily and readily hope and solidarity emerge when a forcibly displaced person shares his story, her feelings, his life. I have seen it many times.

Part of it, I believe, is the message, but almost as importantly is the delivery of such message, in particular if the forcibly displaced person's faith and religious beliefs have been an essential part of her or his survival. In those cases, the message is shared without resentment, without guilt tripping, without remorse and often without blaming those who caused them so much pain. And the 'clue' to this, I believe, is the fact that forcibly displaced people cannot afford to live in the past: it is too painful, too soul-destroying, too disempowering. They can only afford to live in the present, think in the present, work in the present.⁴¹⁸ As we will see in chapter 4, for many of them the present continues to be a struggle: learning to adapt to new homes, cultures, languages in a land foreign to their own; or returning home to rebuild from the ashes what violence and hatred have destroyed. For many too, the trauma and pain they experienced will continue to haunt them, possibly throughout their lives. But they have to do all they can to continue living, moving forward, and this endeavour requires all the energy they have. Living in the present is another lesson we can learn from refugees.

2.4.5. Spreading the message of hope

2.4.5.1. Moving into the cities: urban refugees

In line with the global urbanisation patterns affecting especially developing countries, it was not unexpected that forcibly displaced people should eventually move out of refugee camps and into the cities. This movement has brought adverse issues of its own. Asylum seekers in urban settings often experience rejection, xenophobia, prejudice based on stereotyping, resentment, hatred and violence. In some developing countries this resentment would seem to have some foundation. Citizens of those countries, where resources are scarce, where poverty is the rule and where unemployment runs rife, see asylum seekers and refugees getting 'special privileges' and being offered opportunities that are not available to them.

⁴¹⁸ Clearly, many forcibly displaced people do harbour resentment and hate (for many years!) towards the perpetrators of crimes committed against them and many too find it difficult to forget the past. As we will see in chapter 4, for some the essence of their identity might be encapsulated in the phrase "I am a victim" and will refuse—or be unable to—move forward in the process of healing and reconciliation. In those cases, the task of those accompanying survivors of forced displacement is to do all they can to be effective agents promoting that process. On the other hand, those who are able to move forward can become, as expressed above, bringers of hope, peace and reconciliation in the sharing of their life stories.

This can certainly happen and JRS has had to be extremely careful in many situations to avoid creating inequalities that can lead to rejection of the very same people they seek to protect. One of the guiding principles has been to involve the local communities (and make them beneficiaries) of projects that JRS sponsors and sustains.⁴¹⁹ This not only avoids creating such inequalities, but also fosters integration and builds a sense of community. When you work side by side with the ‘other’, when you have an opportunity to listen to his or her story, to realise that they are not so different to you after all, and especially that they do not pose a threat to your way of life (and indeed can enrich it and enhance it), then you are more willing to let them stay and more open to welcome them into your home.

JRS has continued its policy of employing, as much as possible, refugees or ex-refugees to provide its services in urban settings.⁴²⁰ This moving account by Peter Balleis SJ, previous JRS international director (2007-2015), witness to the reason they can be so effective:

For me, accompanying Mama Marceline and Mama Jeanine (JRS nurses) through the streets of Johannesburg was like walking with two angels. Others may not recognise Marceline and Jeanine as angels, but the sick they visit know very well they are messengers of loving care, bringing words of hope and encouragement [...] How can women who have suffered so much keep reaching out to others who are suffering? Marceline and Jeanine are also refugees who lost their home and people they love [...]. I ask Marceline and Jeanine what keeps them going. From where do they get their motivation, compassion and patience? They know what it means, they reply. As refugees, they have their own tragic stories to tell. And “they are our people”.⁴²¹

They are our people. This assertion does not necessarily mean that they come from the same country. In a capital city like Johannesburg one encounters refugees from several neighbouring African countries—Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi. Marceline and Jeanine affirm this connection because they know very well what these refugees have suffered and understand what they are now going through. These ‘angels’, messengers of God’s love, have

⁴¹⁹ Earlier in 2013, JRS published its first handbook for working with urban refugees. The document, based on the experience gathered over many years in different parts of the world, presents first a list of the guiding principles that underpin JRS work in urban settings. It then details, in six sections, the major challenges faced by urban refugees: access to health, social and other basic services; securing livelihoods that not only provide economic self-sufficiency, but that also restore dignity, confidence and hope as well as promote integration; access to psychosocial and mental health support; access to education; access to material and basic needs; and protection and legal rights. Each challenge is addressed through two fundamental questions: 1) What are the underlying values and principles that JRS must safeguard as it addresses this challenge? and 2) How can JRS best address this particular need and implement responses based on practical methodologies and strategies? Cf. JRS, *Working with Urban Refugees: A handbook*, Rome: JRS Publications 2013.

⁴²⁰ “Whenever possible, JRS consults, trains and recruits refugees, and encourages them to participate in planning, implementing and reviewing projects”, (Guidelines of the JRS, no. 41). Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge*, p. 24.

⁴²¹ JRS, “Angels at work” in *Servir*, n. 55 (2013) 5.

been there before. *They are our people... they are like us.* Through their shared experience, any possibility of exclusion or rejection just melts away. How this contrasts with expressions like ‘they do not belong here’, ‘he is not one of us’, ‘go back to where you belong’!

In European cities, asylum seekers and refugees from African countries cannot ‘hide’. Their appearance betrays them, so that ‘he is not one of us’ (together with all that this attitude connotes) is the expression they continuously read in the faces of the people they meet wherever they go. I never fully understood the effect this has on a person’s psyche until I experienced something similar a few years ago. As part of my early formation as a Jesuit, I used to visit asylum seekers at the detention centre in Melbourne in my capacity as chaplain. After a year, some of the detainees got to know me fairly well. I was absent for the summer months and by the time I resumed my visits to the detention centre, I had grown a very dark beard. As I walked into the men’s area I was greeted by a group of Iranian asylum seekers. When they saw me, they all commented on it (most of them were now clean-shaven) and one of them, with a grin on his face, exclaimed, “you now look more like a terrorist than we do!” They all laughed and I shared in their laughter. Later on, when the visiting period was over, I told one the guards that I was ready to leave. He smiled at me and said, “Of course you are!” It took me a little while to realise that he thought that I was actually one of the asylum seekers. Unknown to me, I had dropped my visitor’s pass somewhere, so the guard assumed that I was joking about leaving. And he wasn’t about to let me go! At that point, one of the men from the group came over and said to the guard, “it’s ok, he is not one of us!” Still, the guard was not too convinced and only believed me when the other chaplain who was also visiting the centre told him that I was with her.

I still remember the fear and anxiety I experienced when I suddenly felt myself a prisoner there. In the years since I have also often reflected on those words, ‘he is not one of us’, and on what makes us feel that we are accepted and belong, or that we are ostracized, feared and rejected. And I have also wondered how is it that our appearance, which in turn connotes—whether accurately or not—a particular culture, background or religion, has so much to do with how we are treated. A few years later, when I let my beard grow again, I was reminded of this experience over and over again as I got on airplanes and people looked suspiciously and sometimes fearfully at my backpack; or as others left empty seats next to me in the train, or yet as others stared at me as I walked down the street. I believe experiences like these raise

challenging questions worthy of consideration. In living out their faith and mission, do most Christians truly believe that Jesus' message of compassion and justice is intended for *all* peoples, including those of other faith traditions, and especially for those who suffer from persecution, alienation or abuse? And if they do, how is this belief proclaimed? In the service of faith, directed towards the justice of God's Kingdom, how can Christians make sure that they do not create and promote an exclusive Kingdom? And what must they learn and understand about others in order to avoid falling into this trap?

2.4.5.2. Detention Centres

As mentioned in the previous chapter, some governments use detention centres (sometimes called transitional processing centres) to intern asylum seekers who arrive in their countries without identifying documents or visas. While most organisations working with forcibly displaced people would agree that such places might be needed (specially to carry out medical, identity and security checks), what they object is to such detention becoming arbitrary and indefinite. Sometimes these centres are built in very remote areas and, as expressed in chapter 1, this fulfils at least two carefully, well-thought out objectives: first, they intend to give the message to future asylum seekers that if they risk coming to these countries, they will be imprisoned, sometimes indefinitely, for no other crime than trying to escape persecution and death. Second, these remote, prison-like structures fulfil the purpose of keeping asylum seekers out of sight (and thus 'out of mind'), so that the general population can feel 'safe and protected'.⁴²²

However, these centres as well as other unfair detention policies (and in some cases illegal, since they breach international treaties and obligations, such as keeping minors and other vulnerable people in detention), that attempt to act as deterrents to 'prospective' asylum seekers, often fail to have an impact because most forcibly displaced people believe that nothing they might find in places of asylum can be worse than what they have left behind. Some might have heard about detention centres used for imprisoning people for months or even years while they wait for their asylum cases to be resolved. Yet, they trust that people will understand what they have gone through, that they will believe their stories, and that they will be welcomed and offered asylum. But in many instances, this is not the case. And few

⁴²² Even when detention centres are located within a city, sometimes they are disguised so well (no descriptive signs outside, high walls and fences surrounding the compounds, extensive fields all around) that neighbours do not even realise they are there.

things are more soul-destroying, demoralising and hope-killing to asylum seekers than being told their stories are not true.⁴²³ That and being kept indefinitely in prison without having committed a crime, not knowing when you might be let out.

As previously mentioned in our example about detention centres in Australia, the adverse psychological effects of detention have been well documented.⁴²⁴ I have often recounted the story of a young man I met at a detention centre where he had been kept interned for nine months. In his arm he sported a neat row of small orifices, nine in total, caused by cigarette burns—one for each month of his imprisonment, he had said. He was getting ready to add a tenth. The tragic consequence is that people who have already suffered so much in their lives are made to suffer even more. How to bring hope to these places? The JRS way: through presence and accompaniment, through offering services and through unfailing advocacy.

2.4.5.3. Education in the margins

From its beginnings, JRS has had an emphasis on education which has distinguished it from other non-government and international government organisations which deal with more basic issues such as food, water, clothes, medical assistance and shelter. These, of course, are sorely needed, but following its criteria for projects, JRS seeks to meet needs that others do not respond to. And while these basic needs are basic for survival, education is basic and essential for growth, development and creating possibilities for the future.⁴²⁵ Education is yet another aspect that highlights the specific ‘temporal’ experience of displaced peoples. Whether they have had access to formal education or not in the past, they recognise the

⁴²³ People who have worked and accompanied asylum seekers and refugees for a long time know that a ‘criteria of truth’ is not always the best way to assess their stories. Are all stories factually accurate? Not always. But those assessing asylum claims have an obligation to dig deeper into the reasons why this might be so. Sometimes asylum seekers are told (by others seeking asylum or people smugglers) to ‘embellish’ their stories or add some details because by doing so they will be granted protection. In some cases, asylum seekers are so deeply ashamed of what has happened to them, that they cannot bring themselves to tell their ‘true’ stories, as was the case with two young African men I knew who had been raped by their captors.

⁴²⁴ Cf. JRS EUROPE, *Becoming Vulnerable in Detention: Civil Society Report on the Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers and Irregular Migrants in the European Union* (The DEVAS Project), Brussels: JRS Publications 2010.

⁴²⁵ “No one [education] project is like the other. However, despite the inevitable differences, there is what we may define as a universal way of proceeding in the JRS approach to education. Projects across the world may differ one from the other, but ultimately they are underpinned by a shared set of principles and criteria which reflect the basic mandate of JRS and which have developed over the years. Chief among them is a stress on working in partnership with refugees and offering them the necessary support and training to enable them to eventually take over projects themselves. Another criterion is a preferential option for refugees who in some way are at risk of being vulnerable or disadvantaged, like women, landmine survivors, and those who are physically challenged”. Cf. JRS, *Horizons of learning*, p. 9.

importance that such education will have in their future and in the future of their children. And so, regardless of the precariousness of their present condition, they will make whatever sacrifices are required to have access to education—building makeshift schools themselves, sharing their meagre resources to provide for teachers when needed, walking hours to and from school. Through these initiatives education can have a transforming and enabling power not only for the children but for the refugee community as a whole, helping them to look beyond the trauma of displacement, rejection and exile and empowering them to charter the path of their own future.⁴²⁶

Education never fails to bring hope. This is the primary reason for the commitment of JRS to education, that it lights a candle in places of darkness like refugee camps and detention centres. The process of learning instils pride in refugees for what they achieve in their—often seemingly hopeless—present and gives them valid expectations for a better future. This tangible hope is life-giving, because it spurs refugees beyond mere survival to being fully alive.⁴²⁷

But just as education opportunities promise refugees hope in exile, their absence can often lead them to despair, because they recognise in this deficiency yet another barrier that renders them more vulnerable and powerless than before. Many of them resent bitterly having been forced to lose such precious opportunities for education:

Asylum seekers detained in western countries often face this predicament, they become obsessed with the frittering away of time. In Malta, Wedeb, a 15-year old girl from Eritrea, was detained for more than a year before the government adopted a policy to free unaccompanied minors. She would sit crouched in the corner of her crowded dormitory, clenched fists defiantly pressed against her cheeks to stem tears of helplessness as she said angrily: *The days are passing so fast, already so many months have gone by and we have learned nothing. What future is there for us when we leave?*⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ JRS has recognised this value from the start and has made education one of its key services and advocacy issues: “JRS considers access to education to be both a human right and a means to build peace and development. Education plays a critical role in sustaining the daily lives of many forcibly displaced people. JRS considers education to be one of the four fundamental pillars of humanitarian assistance, along with food, healthcare, and shelter. Like healthcare, education has a preventive [present] dimension and the potential to pay future dividends”, Cf. JRS, *Advocacy in Jesuit Refugee Service*, p. 8. This preventive dimension is linked to the capacity of educational programs to create a “framework of normalisation, dignity, and hope by offering a well-structured set of activities and social interaction”. Cf. ENTRECULTURAS, *Educación en tiempo de espera. Un derecho vulnerado para millones de personas refugiadas y desplazadas*, Estudios e informes 3, Madrid: Entreculturas 2010, p. 56.

⁴²⁷ Cf. JRS, *Horizons of learning, 25 years of JRS education*, p. 11. “A school, however makeshift, does introduce a comfortable and reassuring sense of normalcy to the unnatural and often very limited environment of exile. It sets attainable goals in the here-and-now, like a school-leaving certificate, and empowers parents to be responsible for their children’s destiny, and their own. These goals, which offer ‘something’ to take ‘somewhere’ makes the hoped-for future present, because their ultimate end is the acquisition of knowledge and skills to use in the country of origin or of resettlement. And this is achieved in very practical ways, by drawing on today’s perceived strengths and needs to shape a brighter tomorrow”, pp. 11-12.

⁴²⁸ Cf. JRS, *Horizons of learning, 25 years of JRS education*, p. 12.

As mentioned above, JRS has moved with the people, both literally and figuratively, as they themselves have moved. Initially, most educational activities were concentrated in primary education, but as the years went by and the childhood population grew into adolescence (supplemented by young people who were in that age range at arrival in the camps), secondary education became also a priority. Since 2010, JRS has moved into providing access to higher, tertiary education for refugees both in refugee camps and urban settings. Worthy of mention is the Jesuit Commons–Higher Education on the Margins (JC-HEM) project (now known as ‘Jesuit Worldwide Learning’) which through collaboration between JRS and Jesuit universities, provides access to higher education through using online technology in learning sites located within refugee camps and certain urban settings.⁴²⁹ One such site is located in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya, close to the border with South Sudan, which I also visited about five years ago. It is hard to imagine that such a place might even exist in this remote place located in the middle of the Turkana desert. And so, crossing the thorny bush fence that surrounds this ‘centre of higher learning’, is like witnessing a miracle. And in fact, it is short of one, as those who have set it up and maintain it would tell you. These ‘tertiary learning sites’ are proof that where there is a will, there is a way. And that, as forcibly displaced people never tire of assert, as long as there is hope, anything is possible.

2.5. Conclusion and Summary of learnings for Part II

In this chapter we have attempted to show how, from its beginnings, the Society of Jesus’ response to the needs of those in the margins has been both material and spiritual. Its varied social ministries have sought to serve people in all walks of life, including the forcibly displaced. As we have seen, such response has been characteristically Ignatian, both in terms of following the Jesuit ‘way of proceeding’ and allowing it to be imbued with its spirituality of the ‘real’, underpinned by the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius. In the last four decades, the Society’s institutionalised response to the plight of forcibly displaced peoples has been incarnated in the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service, guided by the mandate of GC32 to promote and live out its mission of a “faith that does justice”.

⁴²⁹ Access to tertiary education is provided at present in three camps and about five urban centres: Dzaleka camp, Malawi; Kakuma camp in Kenya; Mweso and Masisi towns in the Democratic Republic of Congo; camps near Gozbeida and Guerida in Tchad; Amman city in Jordan, and Herat and Bamiyan in Afghanistan. Cf. <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/jesuit-commons-higher-education-margins-jchem>. Accessed 22 June 2017.

As we have seen, this response has also been informed by a renewed understanding of the human and cultural rights of the forcibly displaced and guided by the basic tenets of Catholic Social teaching. These assert that the human community, and in particular people of faith, simply cannot remain indifferent to the plight of over sixty-five million displaced people in the world today. We must all respond because as human persons it is our responsibility to care for our fellow human beings, and as Christians, it is inherent to the mission we have been entrusted—to proclaim the Good News of salvation: not only a salvation for the afterlife, but also a salvation for the here and now, that liberates people from any form of oppression and promotes healing—both physical and spiritual. Ultimately, we are called to respond because we believe that what God desires is the universal good for all.

We have argued that our compassionate response to the plight of forcibly displaced people can best be manifested through the gifts of hospitality and solidarity—welcome and companionship. As we have shown, these values have been emphasised in our Judeo-Christian tradition from ancient times, both in the Hebrew and New Testament scriptures, in the writings of the early Fathers and Mothers and in the monastic tradition, and have more recently been highlighted as key elements of our Catholic Social teaching in numerous ecclesial documents. Hospitality stresses the importance of offering friendship and freedom to the one who comes knocking at our door; it contains an inherent sense of mutuality and reciprocity—not only in the one particular instance of a host-guest relationship—but in that invariably we take turns being hosts and guests to one another. And in following God’s welcome—the hospitality of God—as the model of our actions and our own offers of hospitality towards others, it has also a healing and redemptive power that can help transform situations of injustice and brokenness in this world. Hospitality, then, means receiving strangers into our homes with care, compassion, openness and an attitude of mutuality and self-sharing—all aspects of what we could summarise in two words: true friendship.

The principle of Christian solidarity is based on Jesus’ constant assertion, through his words and actions, that ‘our’ neighbour is every other human being, including those outside of our own group, including even those who are our enemies. Solidarity requires that we adapt our concept of freedom: the freedom that God has conceived for the human person is a freedom which entails choosing to be responsible for the life, the needs and destiny of our brothers and sisters. Solidarity requires that we put ourselves in other people’s ‘shoes’, that we open

ourselves to others and that we exercise liberality in trying to understand other ways of life different from ours, striving to recognise what we can learn from them.

Hospitality and solidarity have also been among the guiding principles of the Jesuit Refugee Service, as it has strived to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of forcibly displaced peoples for almost forty years, in response to the faith-justice mission of the Society of Jesus. This accompaniment has taken place through presence and through the sharing of stories in mutuality, of people's life narratives, both of the forcibly displaced and those who have sought to serve them. Those stories have been testimonies of how injustices have truly affected the lives of forcibly displaced peoples. They have been hard stories to tell and also difficult to listen too, requiring respectful and attentive listening, great empathy and compassion. But such 'story-telling' has also been necessary as a way of doing justice to the suffering of the forcibly displaced. Accompaniment, through direct knowledge of the factors that affect their lives, has led to advocacy in many different areas and issues, seeking to target the root causes of these adverse factors, to prevent further abuses being inflicted on forcibly displaced people and to improve their quality of life.

Offering 'services' as a way of justice has meant providing both spiritual and material sustenance to the forcibly displaced. For JRS, as a faith-based organisation, one cannot go without the other. The hundreds (perhaps thousands) of educational, health, development, counselling, self-reliance and many other projects that JRS has developed and implemented in the last thirty-eight years, since its beginnings, have indeed provided great service to hundreds of thousands of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. Their spiritual sustenance has included the provision of pastoral and sacramental care in some locations for specific populations, but also the 'care of their spirit' through words and actions that assert their dignity and value as human persons who possess great talents and gifts that can contribute to make God's reign a reality. For JRS, nurturing the spiritual life of forcibly displaced people has also been regarded as a way of doing justice, for it contributes towards putting into practice the aspirations people hold for a more just life together, based on compassion, solidarity and care for those in greatest need, where everyone is allowed to contribute towards decision-making processes and actions that affect their lives.

All of these insights just mentioned above, once again, will contribute to the development of our *spiritual exercises* in chapter 5. To conclude, in this chapter we have tried to show that applying the *Spiritual Exercises* to the context of forcibly displaced peoples is in line with the continuing mission of the Society of Jesus, and that it cannot be separated from its commitment to the promotion of justice in its service of faith. It cannot be separated either from the real-life experiences and narratives of the forcibly displaced. The *Spiritual Exercises*, as we know, also bring together a series of narratives: of God and Jesus, of ourselves, of those around us as well as the Christian-based narratives of creation and salvation. What propels the process and dynamics of the Exercises is our own personal narrative and how it connects—how we ‘connect ‘it’—to those other narratives and make sense and meaning of that connection. Each forcibly displaced person will bring his/her own personal story into his/her engagement with the Exercises, but from the perspective of the givers of the Exercises—and their capacity to support each exercitant in the best possible way—forcibly displaced peoples will also share some characteristics which the givers will need to take into account as they apply the Exercises to meet their needs and disposition. We look at this process of adaptation and application in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Application and adaptation of St Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises* Historical and theoretical considerations

Introduction

The question of whether the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius can be ‘modified’ or not has been amply considered and affirmed throughout most of their history. St Ignatius himself alludes to this possibility in his introductory notes to the *Exercises* (cf. *Annotations* 18-20) suggesting different options for making them. Ignatius’ development of the *Exercises* was an organic, ongoing process, based both on his own personal experiences and his reflections on these. While aware that his own learnings could be put into general guidelines that might be of help to others—Ignatius’ driving force in all he did—he was also aware that people’s ‘conditions, circumstances and dispositions’ could be very different from his own.¹ God treats

¹ Michael Ivens summarises the question of adaptation thus: “*Annotations* 18 to 20, contain the principles of all adaptation of the *Exercises*, i.e. the *Exercises* are an organic whole, and to make them in their entirety, whether in seclusion or in daily life, requires essential fidelity to the whole programme and to its order; but they are also a resource which can be used in many ways to meet a wide variety of situations and personal needs. Even in Ignatius’ lifetime and in the period of the *Directories*, the actual forms of adaptation developed beyond the strict limits of these three annotations. The process of adaptation continues into modern times, and so long as the general principles of adaptation are preserved, there is no need to try to fit every form of adaptation of the *Exercises* into one of these three annotations”, cf. MICHAEL IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, Text and Commentary*, Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing and New Malden, Surrey: Iñigo Enterprises 1998, p.18. This more ‘liberal’ approach is also espoused by Giuliani who suggests that “the three annotations 18, 19, 20 surely cannot encompass the social and cultural reality that is ours today [and] the wisest move is simply to give up regarding the 19th and 20th *Annotations* as the authorities which justify our setting up the ‘retreat in daily life’ and the ‘enclosed retreat’.” Cf. ALEXANDER LEFRANK and MAURICE GIULIANI, *Freedom for Service: Dynamics of the Ignatian Exercises as Currently Understood and Practised*, Gujarat, Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash 1989, p. 255.

each person differently and communicates with each one of them according to their needs and desires.²

Even during Ignatius' lifetime and soon after his death, the Exercises were already being adapted or applied to suit people's needs. As years, decades and even centuries went by, the Exercises kept being modified, sometimes—some would argue—in detriment of the original text or at least without much reference to it, so that the question of whether what was offered were Ignatian Exercises became an issue of great debate. Even today, there does not seem to be a uniform understanding or consensus as to what is meant by 'adapting' or 'applying' the *Exercises* (we will address this issue in more detail later in section 2.1.1.), not only because of how the meaning of these words is understood or interpreted, but also because of the ever increasing number of forms in which the Exercises are being offered: whether Ignatius' full *Spiritual Exercises* (30-day retreat or Retreat in Daily Life) or Ignatius' 'first' or 'light' Exercises. Even what these latter involve can sometimes give raise to disagreement. And then there is also the questions of the purpose for which the Exercises are given and the audience to whom they are offered. Perhaps we could say that the answers to most of the questions or points of discussion depend on what 'approach' is taken when offering the Exercises.

In this chapter, we look at some of the different issues involved in the modification, application or adaptation of the *Exercises*,³ keeping in mind that our aim is to explore how best to offer the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius (in its different modalities) to a particular 'audience', namely former victims of forced displacement such as refugees and asylum

² "That level of prayer is best for each particular individual where God our Lord communicates himself more—He sees, He knows what is best for each one and, as He knows all, He shows each the road to take. What we can do to find that way with his divine grace is to seek and test the way forward in many different fashions, so that an individual goes ahead in that way which, for him or her, is the clearest and happiest and most blessed in this life". *From a letter by Ignatius to Francis Borgia in 1548* (cf. *Letter 466*).

³ The need itself to use different words such as 'modification', 'application' or 'adaptation' to somehow describe this process of 'alteration' of the *Exercises* already points to the difficulty of reaching a consensus on this issue and, as mentioned, we will dedicate a particular section (2.1.1.) to this discussion. As a preliminary, it is interesting to note here the meanings assigned to corresponding terms in early Spanish use as presented in the *Diccionario de Autoridades*. Thus, *aplicar* is defined as "comparar, asemejar, apropiar una cosa con otra, y traerla al propósito de lo que se hace ú dice" (*compare, resemble, appropriate one thing with another, and bringing it to the purpose of what is done or says*); regarding *adaptar*: "acomodar, igualar una cosa con otra" (*accommodate, match one thing with another*); and *acomodar*: "componer, ajustar; proveer a alguno de lo que necesita" (*compose, adjust; provide some person with what he needs*). Cf. *Diccionario de Autoridades* (*Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana*), Edición Facsímil, A-C, Madrid: Editorial Gredos 1969, pp. 58, 78, 341-42. As we can see, the terms could be used almost interchangeably with minor subtle differences, and they all seem to encourage or advocate that whatever is 'applied', 'adapted' or 'accommodated' maintain strong resemblance to the original and fulfil the specific purpose for which the action is carried out.

seekers, who having survived the trauma of violence, dislocation, uprootedness, and death around them, have now found a new home in Australia. As we attempt to fulfil this endeavour, the hope is, as always, that our study will help us understand better the richness that lies within the *Exercises*.

This chapter is divided in three main parts: 1) a review of historical considerations in the process of application and adaptation of the *Spiritual Exercises*; 2) addressing the heart of the matter—an exploration of the main factors involved in a contemporary adaptation and application of Ignatius' *Exercises*, including a brief presentation on classical textual interpretation theory, and 3) an assessment of what makes spiritual Exercises Ignatian or, in other words, what are the minimums required for these exercises to still be considered Ignatian Exercises—as they are interpreted, adapted and applied to new audiences and circumstances; this assessment is followed by a summary of the characteristics of *exercises* based on Ignatius' 18th *Annotation* and by some practical examples of adaptations/applications of these *Exercises* in recent history.

The relevance of this chapter to our task of developing spiritual exercises for survivors of forced displacement is articulated in the following four main objectives: (1) to benefit from the lessons on application and adaptation learned from the past; (2) to consider the main factors required for the application and adaptation of the Ignatian Exercises for survivors of forced displacement (3) to distil the essence of what are 'Ignatian spiritual exercises', and (4) to provide practical examples of these applications/adaptations that could serve as models in the development of our own Ignatian *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement. Before looking at these issues, and in order to gain a general sense of the present situation, we begin with a brief summary of the current practices for giving the Exercises in the world today. Having done this, we will then look at where we have come from and possibilities for the future in terms of application and adaptation of Ignatius' classic text.

Part I: Historical considerations in the process of application and adaptation of the *Spiritual Exercises*

1.1. Practice in the giving of the *Spiritual Exercises* in the world today

It has been said that the Exercises are “applied” when the one giving them takes an exercise from the text of St Ignatius and offers it to the exercitant to spend time with it during his or her experience of prayer and discernment; in other words, when we apply Ignatius’ pedagogy of discernment and election to the exercitants’ experience.⁴ Up until the 1970s, many directors giving the full *Spiritual Exercises* tended to allow the concrete experience of exercitants to determine what texts should be given them with the consequence that subject matter such as the preludes or even entire exercises would end up being omitted. Instead of following Ignatius’ practice of giving ‘points’ (cf. [*SpEx* 261-312]), they simply suggested various texts from Scripture. Some would leave aside so much of Ignatius’ text that in practice, rather than applying the pedagogy of the *Exercises*, they would end up adapting the various subject matters to the Four Weeks of prayer. Nowadays directors tend to follow the text more closely, understanding that it is up to them to ‘re-create it’, based on their own personal experience and their experience of guiding others. Part of this ‘rewriting’ implies adapting the Exercises to each culture. But what is being ‘applied’ is something that is recognised as an Ignatian exercise. Taking into account the importance of personal desire, directors apply the ‘*id quod volo*’ to the exercitant’s experience of the pedagogy and dynamic of the *Exercises*.⁵

⁴ Cf. JOSEPH TETLOW, “Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, pp. 698-703. The summary presented here on the current practice of giving Ignatius’ Exercises and the different modalities or ways of offering them is mainly taken from this article by Tetlow. As we will see later in the chapter, some of his ‘classification’ or categories have been expanded, and in some instances the line of division, for example, between Exercises given according to the 18th and 19th *Annotations*, can become blurred.

⁵ Cf. TETLOW, “Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades”, p. 698. Of course, the personal desires of each exercitant will be just that—‘personal’, and the great variety of people making the Exercises today means that they will range widely. Who makes the Exercises today? People in a broad range of cultures from all over the world which demand that the Exercises be inculturated and adapted to their own; people who come from every social condition; mostly adults, though more younger people, including teenagers, are also making them; people connected to Jesuit and Ignatian networks (Christian Life Communities, colleagues in Jesuit and Ignatian institutions and schools, etc.); people who have various relationships with the Church, from very committed to those who are alienated from it; people who are not in the Catholic Church, in particular Christians of various denominations. In addition, the characteristics of these and other exercitants will range widely in terms, for example, of their religious initiation (from being thoroughly initiated in the faith through the Sacraments and religious formation to the religiously illiterate); their spiritual condition (from avid seekers to others who simply want to live a more interior life); and their disposition and preparedness. Finally, some who make the Exercises are heeding a call, a vocation; they come invited as part of a group and through regular routes such as schools or universities; and some come grappling with sinful structures in their lives including those recovering from all kinds of addictions. Cf. SECRETARIAT FOR IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY (SIS), “Notes Three for the One Giving Exercises” in *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XXXI, n. 94 (2000) 11-13.

The 30-day retreat, where the Exercises are made in silence and with personal accompaniment, continues to be the paradigmatic form of the Exercises.⁶ Nowadays it is usually given to people who come together as a group. While in Latin countries (Latin America, Mediterranean countries) the group usually gathers once or twice daily for talks or to be given points and then each exercitant receives personal direction, in northern Europe and North America, and usually in Asia Pacific as well, the practice is for the groups to only gather for meals and mass and otherwise to observe strict silence. In our country of Australia, this latter practice is widespread. One consequence of this is that the 'interviews' with the personal director are usually much longer (from half an hour to an hour) than in places where talks are presented, since part of that time is used by the director to give the points for prayer.

In some parts of India or Africa, the 30-day Exercises are preached when large groups (novices, religious) come together and those accompanying them are few. This practice might require both an 'adaptation' and an 'application' of the Exercises, which sometimes is needed not only because of the large number of exercitants, but also because of their limited theological knowledge or previous retreat experiences. In most cases (more typically in Europe), directors will try to keep their interventions short as directed in *Annotation 2*. In some places, 30-day Exercises are offered in stages (this practice began in Europe but now has spread to other continents), sometimes each Week being offered each year over four years (they could constitute the annual 8-day retreats for religious). This addresses the difficulty that some people have of taking a whole month off, but also some exercitants find this way more fruitful.⁷

While the three advantages of the month-long Exercises listed by Ignatius in *Annotation 20* remain—"merit" before God, "diligence and concentration", and openness to "union with

⁶ On this topic, see for example the now classic: GEORGE E. GANSS, "The Authentic Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: Some Facts of History and Terminology Basic to Their Functional Efficacy Today" in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 1, n. 2 (1969) 1-36.

⁷ Cf. TETLOW, "Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades", p. 699. One common form of these Exercises 'in stages' divides the 30-day retreat into three separate sections, containing the First Week, the Second Week, and the Third and Fourth Weeks together. In some retreat centres the separate sessions are offered in the course of a year, so that the exercitants can complete the Exercises within that year. In others, these sessions are offered at the same period or month over consecutive years so planning is made easier. One of the advantages of doing the Exercises in stages is that it provides a better opportunity to 'pace' the giving of the different Weeks according to the situation of the exercitant; thus, some might decide, together with their director, not to continue after a particular Week while others might need a break in between. Cf. SIS, "Notes Three for the One Giving Exercises", pp. 34-35.

God”—and while offering them to groups means that they have become more widely accessible, one of the disadvantages of giving them to groups is that the directors usually only get to know the exercitants once the group has come together—though in some instances they meet them during the preparation program before the Exercises, if one is provided. Also, it might bring together people who are not dealing with an election or a serious decision (a serious reform of life) and only look to make exercises of spiritual renewal or devotion. It is not that this practice is a mistake, but it is rather an ‘adaptation’ (e.g. Exercises as a ‘school of prayer’), rather than an application, and it raises the question of a better use of time or of using alternative forms of the *Exercises*, such as those based on *Annotations* 18 and 19.⁸

The Exercises according to *Annotation* 19 still constitute—at least in principle⁹—the complete Spiritual Exercises, which include an election or a reform of life (cf. [*SpEx* 189]), but now applied to ordinary life. They are usually referred to as Exercises in Daily Life or as the long retreat in daily life. *Annotation* 19 does not explicitly specify their duration (the ‘month’ mentioned in *Annotation* 4), but nowadays they seem to vary from four months to a couple of years—their length depends usually on the time available, but more commonly the Exercises last as long as the person making them needs, for “the more the exercitant enters into the full dynamic and inner process of *Spiritual Exercises*, coming to reform, decision, or election, the more entirely their movement through the Weeks depends on their own experiences”.¹⁰ Directors might have been accompanying particular persons as their spiritual directors for some time before offering them the full Exercises, though this is not always the case. One of the main advantages of this application of the Exercises (19th *Annotation*) is the long-term personal contact and relationship that develops with the exercitant; another is the interaction between the movements of the spirits in prayer with the movements in our ordinary/daily lives, which are particularly helpful in making realistic discernments. Perhaps the main challenge is for exercitants to find enough time and tranquillity every day for prayer for such long periods of time—some begin quite diligently but then the pressures of life overcome them, and this can lead to possible stress in having to continue the Exercises. There is no

⁸ Cf. TETLOW, “Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades”, p. 699.

⁹ The reality is that most of those who make these Exercises seem to need basic instruction in such areas as developing a personal relationship with God and different ways of praying. Only in rare instances they seem to be looking at making an election or a serious decision, and most would pray less than the two and a half hours proposed in *Annotation* 19. It should be acknowledged then that what today is usually referred to as ‘Exercises according to *Annotation* 19’ are really closer to what Ignatius describes in his 18th *Annotation*.

¹⁰ Cf. SIS, “Notes Three for the One Giving Exercises”, p. 47.

doubt that this type of Exercises has become widely popular in many parts of the world, with both Jesuits and lay companions (including non-Catholics) receiving formation to offer them to others. In some countries (e.g. Spain and Australia), these formation programs can be quite comprehensive and actually lead to specific qualifications as givers of the Exercises.¹¹ As expected, this formation is of utmost importance to make sure the authenticity of the Exercises is preserved.¹²

According to Ignatius, the Exercises based on *Annotation* 18 should be applied to basically two types of persons: those who after starting the Exercises are observed not to have the capacity or ability to complete them, and those who might not want or are not able to start the full Exercises.¹³ In practical terms, the former are usually found when the Exercises are offered to a group, but rather than only giving them some appropriate assistance and then sending them away, the practice is to keep them for the whole of the Exercises with the hope that they will continue growing in their knowledge of Christ to “preserve what has been acquired” (cf. [*SpEx* 18.10]).¹⁴ Those in the latter group are usually looking for greater or deeper meaning in their lives. According to Ignatius’ words, they are people “who [want] help to get some instruction and reach a certain level of peace of soul” (cf. [*SpEx* 18.4]). Most people who make these Exercises today—usually referred to as *light* or *simple* Exercises—would belong to the second group. These are practiced mainly in two ways: in daily life over weeks or months and in closed retreats of three or more days, though their formats vary widely depending on who offers them and where (e.g. through the spirituality ministry of educational institutions or based in a parish or in a retreat centre).¹⁵

These exercises, though they are detailed, should be *applied*—and it is here that Ignatius uses the term: “according to the disposition of the person” (cf. [*SpEx* 18.1]). It should be pointed out that what Ignatius is proposing here is a comprehensive way of Catholic life for people who have been well instructed in the sacraments and who are characterised for “the genuine

¹¹ In Australia, for example, the Jesuit College of Spirituality (which is part of the Melbourne University of Divinity) offers a two-year, full-time Master of Arts in Spiritual Direction which accredits participants as givers of the *Exercises*. Guiding/accompanying two exercitants in the Retreat in Daily Life is one of the requirements of the course, and some participants will also accompany, under supervision, exercitants making the 20th *Annotation* retreat.

¹² Cf. TETLOW, “Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades”, pp. 699-700.

¹³ In referring to the capacities and dispositions of retreatants/exercitants, Ignatius would talk about their *subiecto*. We will address this important Ignatian element in chapter 4.

¹⁴ Cf. TETLOW, “Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades”, p. 701.

¹⁵ Cf. SIS, “Notes Three for the One Giving Exercises”, p. 47.

attitude which we ought to maintain in the church militant” (cf. [SpEx 352]). Those who give them generally are convinced that the experience should lead those making them to greater involvement and service in the Church as well as to a greater understanding of a true ‘faith that does justice’. Unfortunately, only in a few cases are comprehensive programs offered today to faithful Catholics that would help them reach this level of commitment.

As we will see, those who offer the *Light* or *First Exercises* today rarely apply the program of simple exercises mentioned by Ignatius in *Annotation* 18, but rather adapt liberally materials and procedures from diverse sections of the text, including also materials from other sources. Perhaps this comes from trying to follow Ignatius’ introductory instruction in this annotation: “exercitants should be given, each one, as much as they are willing to dispose themselves to receive, for their greater help and progress” (cf. [SpEx 18.3]). In line with this instruction a great number of exercises and retreats are called ‘Ignatian’, even if they are not so in the true sense (we will explore later in greater detail what is needed for them to be truly Ignatian). Some of the adaptations of the Exercises are used to teach people how to pray, to help convince them that God accepts them and loves them as they are, or even to familiarise them with the Gospels. Unfortunately, it is rare to find programs that take in beginners to help them learn first how to pray and to benefit from spiritual accompaniment to later introduce and prepare them to—gradually through retreats and other experiences—for making the Exercises according to *Annotations* 19 and 20. Some Ignatian spirituality centres offer, for example, parish afternoon retreats or weeks of prayer with accompaniment. Jesuit and other Ignatian academic institutions adapt the Exercises to the needs of the students, parents and staff. Groups or individuals adapt them to *basic ecclesial communities* or indigenous communities. Some retreat houses offer *Ignatian* exercises based on themes such as human development or midlife crisis.¹⁶

Finally, two traditional adaptations of the Exercises which are still very popular today are the weekend preached retreat and 8-days retreat based on the *Exercises*. In the past, ten to twelve

¹⁶ Cf. TETLOW, “Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades”, pp. 701-702. A distinction is now made between ‘exercises given by Ignatian directors’ and ‘Ignatian exercises’. The former might include retreats on the AA Twelve-steps, Enneagram, personality types, images of God, role of women in the church. They might be ‘Ignatian’ in some sense since they borrow certain elements of the *Spiritual Exercises* such as silence and solitude, certain prayer periods, review of prayer and *Examen*, and some form of spiritual direction. While these practices might be common to various spiritualities within the Church, here they are explicitly taken from the *Spiritual Exercises*. While in general these retreats can produce wonderful fruits, the challenge always is to continue to assure the authenticity of the *Exercises*, p. 702.

meditations taken from the Four Weeks were offered during the weekend retreats, though, as mentioned earlier, nowadays they resemble more the *Light* or *First Exercises*. Almost always the given meditations will include mysteries of the life of Christ as well as contemplation on the love of God in one's life. Some of the other adapted practices from the Exercises in these retreats include silence, personal prayer and the *Examen* as well as some forms of discernment.¹⁷

The history of the eight-day retreats is as old as the *Exercises* themselves. They were recognised by the Directorium Officiale of 1599 (D33.34.43:10, 85-88, 95) as a reasonable adaptation for those who make the Exercises regularly (though in this particular directory the reference is to Jesuits making them). The Directory is flexible regarding the use and choice of materials and does not insist on the Four Weeks, but rather on what can be useful and of profit:

Además, cuando andando el tiempo aconteciere que se recojan hacer los Ejercicios, deberán hacer estos mismos algunas veces, por ejemplo, dos o tres veces, si no todos, a lo menos los de la primera semana y algunas de las meditaciones siguientes, como la del Reino de Cristo, Encarnación, Tentación del Señor, Institución del Santísimo Sacramento, Pasión y la que hay para alcanzar amor, según fuere oportuno y el tiempo lo permita (Dir 43:85) [...]. Por último, a los que ya están más avanzados en las cosas espirituales y más ejercitados en la meditación [...] pueden meditar lo que juzguen que les será útil para conseguir el fin que pretenden, pues es de creer que, ayudados del conocimiento que ya de antes poseían de los Ejercicios de N.P. Ignacio y de la unción del Espíritu, correrán por este camino sin tropiezo, más aún con gran utilidad (Dir 43:95).¹⁸

Since the time of the Restoration of the Society of Jesus most directors or preachers have tried to include elements or topics of the Four Weeks in the eight days. The current practice is actually closer to the Directory that invites the use of a great variety of materials and themes, according to the circumstances and needs. Sometimes the Exercises include materials for only one Week or follow a particular theme or resource (e.g. a particular Gospel or Church document or adapted to a specific audience such as a group of priests, teachers or religious).

¹⁷ Cf. TETLOW, "Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades", p. 702.

¹⁸ Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, Translation, notes and study by Miguel Lop Sebastià, Bilbao/Maliaño: Ediciones Mensajero/Editorial Sal Terrae 2000, pp. 340, 343. English translation from this Spanish text: "Also, when they retire later on to make the *Exercises*, they should make them a few times, for example two or three, if not all, at least those of the First Week and some of the following meditations, such the one of the Kingdom of Christ, the Incarnation, the temptations of the Lord, the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion, and the one to attain love, as time and opportunity permits (Dir 43:85) [...]. Finally, those who are more advanced in spiritual things and more exercised in meditation [...] they can meditate on what they judge to be useful to attain the end they seek, since it should be asserted that, helped by the knowledge that they previously had of the *Exercises* of our Father Ignatius and the unction of the Spirit, they will traverse this journey without stumbling and with even greater usefulness (Dir 43:95)".

The retreat can be either preached to groups or offered one-on-one as a directed retreat. This type of retreat can be reasonably called 'Spiritual Exercises' as long as the director advises the use of Ignatian practices that should certainly include silence and recollection, Ignatian meditation and contemplation, and applying the additions and preambles. Not all Ignatian directors do this in eight-day retreats, nor all exercitants need it, though the opportunity and utility of these practices in the Exercises has not greatly diminished.¹⁹ The eight-day retreat is often thought also as a good preparation for the thirty-day Exercises, helping those who are to make them "to develop good dispositions" (*Annotation* 5) and "to give them better understanding of Ignatian practices such as repetition and the review of meditation (*Annotations* 1 and 2; the *Additions* and *Notes*)" and can also help them begin to become more aware of the movements of the spirits in them.²⁰

Having explored through this short overview the different types of Exercises that are offered today, we now consider some of the historical factors involved in the process of application and adaptation of the *Spiritual Exercises* that have brought us to these present conditions and situation.

¹⁹ Cf. TETLOW, "Ejercicios Espirituales: Modalidades", p. 703.

²⁰ Cf. SIS, "Notes Three for the One Giving Exercises", pp. 40-41.

1.2. A brief history of application and adaptation of the *Exercises*

A rapid glance at the seminal work by Ignacio Iparraguirre on the history and practice of the *Spiritual Exercises*,²¹ reveals the surprising quantity and variety of forms, duration, contents and methods used to offer Ignatian Exercises from the beginning. In fact, when considering this variety, offering the complete Exercises could be said to have been rather 'exceptional' or 'extraordinary'. But of course, they were and still remain today the required reference point for all the other forms.

1.2.1. A contagious and creative apostolic zeal

As Iglesias points out, the exceptional nature of the whole or complete Exercises, and the decision to offer them or not, cannot be separated from the exceptional nature of the disposition of each subject or *subieto*, and his or her wanting to make a particular election or apostolic commitment.²² In fact, rather than a preference or predilection for a particular method of offering the Exercises, what we find is an apostolic zeal to do what is necessary to help souls. This zeal paves the way for developing very distinctive, personalised ways of helping others, which range from 'basic' spiritual conversation to offering the complete Exercises. In between we find several other types of *exercises* based on elements found in the full Exercises but adapted or applied according to the possibilities and contexts of the one giving them and the one receiving them.

²¹ Cf. IGNACIO IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia de la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio de Loyola, Vol 1: En vida de su autor, 1522-1556; Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio, Vol 2: Desde la muerte de San Ignacio hasta la promulgación del Directorio Oficial, 1556-1599, and Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio, Vol 3: Evolución en Europa durante el siglo XVII*, Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu 1946, 1955, 1973. In this thesis, these three volumes are referred to as *Historia, Vol 1, Vol 2 and Vol 3*, respectively.

²² Cf. IGNACIO IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?" in *Manresa* 70 (1998) 50. As expected, the decision of whether to offer the full Exercises also had to do with pragmatic considerations such as time, resources and the influence the prospective exercitants could have in their world, in terms of being multipliers and helpers for others, as can be seen in the following instructions: "Si no fuese a personas raras y dispuestas para disponer sus vidas por vía de elección (Only for those rare persons ready to dispose their lives on a path of election)", cf. *Instruction given for those going to the Council of Trent*, 1546, Epp I 386-389; "[...] si es que parecen ser aptos para el Instituto de la Compañía ([...] if they seem to fitting for the Institute of the Society)", cf. *To the Fathers sent to Germany*, 24 September 1549, Epp XII 239-242; "solamente a aquellos que se encuentren idóneos para el estado de la perfección y se disponen a ayudarse muy de veras (only to those who are ready for the state of perfection and who are willing to truly help themselves)", cf. *Letter to F. Jean Pelletier*, 13 June 1551, Epp. III 542-550; "para darlos exactamente precisaría hallar sujetos capaces e idóneos para ayudar a otros después que ellos fuesen ayudados (to be given exactly it would require to find able and ready subjects to help others after they themselves have been helped)", cf. *Letter to F. Fulvio Androzzi*, 18 July 1556, Epp XII 141-143. Cf. IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", footnote 5, p. 50.

One of the characteristics of this apostolic zeal, as Iparraguirre points out, is its contagious nature which ‘infected’ a large number of collaborators from the early days, some of whom started offering the Exercises to others even as they themselves were still receiving them.²³ And of course, as it would have been expected, Jesuit students soon joined the ‘official’ ranks of those offering some of the Exercises, in some cases to very large groups of people. In fact, not surprisingly, involvement in this ministry also became part of their formation and preparation, which was closely observed by their rectors and formators.²⁴

Many of these early givers of some part or form of the Exercises started to put down reflections of their own experiences on paper. These personal notes, filled with interpolations, annotations, glossaries and other additions, soon began to be circulated under the heading of ‘Ignatian’. The proliferation of these was such that the first Superior Generals (including Ignatius) as well as General Congregations had to intervene authoritatively to defend the “purity of the original text”, since “nothing should be added to this original text”.²⁵ One of the consequences of this defence, as we shall see next, was the development of *Directories* of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Despite this variety and proliferation of ‘exercises’, as it would be expected, certain characteristics or common elements could be discerned pointing to certain constant or uniform criteria that would help to identify them as truly ‘Ignatian’ exercises (the topic of the last part of this chapter). And it is clear that while the apostolic zeal might have led to a great variety of contents and forms, the experiential catechetical element was essential in order to provide the greatest benefit to each soul. And this continues to be the practice today, as givers of the

²³ “A typical example of the eagerness of those doing the Exercises under Faber to communicate to others the blessings received (*‘el bien recibido’*), is the dean of Saint Martin of Worms, who while doing them—and he was doing them ‘abiertos’ (not as a silent retreat)—was not able to wait, so he started to ‘exhort, many others, whom he knows, to undertake the Exercises’ (FM. 59; cf. F.57). Previously, in Parma, Faber himself, together with Láinez, had been able to bring together this group of collaborators, which included among others, parish priests who gave the Exercises to their parishioners (FM. 32). Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, p. 25. And such eagerness or zeal to help souls was of course not only limited to Catholics. Jerome Nadal, for example, still during the time of Ignatius, considered the possibility of offering the Exercises to Lutherans. Cf. JEROME NADAL, *Epistolae et Monumenta P. Hieronimi Nadal* (Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, 90A) Rome: Monumenta Historica Soc. Jesu 1964, Par. 228, p. 100.

²⁴ “After they themselves have experienced the *Spiritual Exercises*, they should get practice in giving them to others. Each one should know how to give an explanation of them and how to make use of this spiritual weapon, since it is obvious that God our Lord has made it so effective for his service”. Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Constitutions and Complementary Norms*, [408]. Also, “They could begin by giving the Exercises to persons with whom less is risked and consulting about their method of procedure with someone more experienced...” Cf. [Co 409].

²⁵ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, pp. 362-364.

Exercises strive to respond to a great diversity of cultural and faith contexts that seem to be ever-evolving, as well as to new circumstances and challenges, including the forced displacement of millions of people around the globe.

1.2.2. *The Early Directories*

The various 'directories' on the *Exercises* written between 1540 and 1599 constitute another important source regarding the application and adaptation of the Ignatius' text in the early Society (16th century).²⁶ In referring to the various ministries of the Society, the first Jesuit General Congregation of 1558 decreed that "Various directories are to be seen by Father General". While the reason behind such a statement can only be speculated, it seems to have had something to do with the desire to provide a 'true and genuine' method which all givers of the Exercises could follow, so as to be faithful to the method of Father Ignatius.²⁷ The so-called *Official Directory* of 1599 (Dir 43) thus had this intention in mind.

Interestingly, Philip Endean has pointed out that nowadays this *Directory* is best known for its mistakes, which in fact are real and present in its text, and that current givers of the Exercises have not found it very helpful precisely because of what they see as inconsistencies, ineptitude and lack of sensitivity to Ignatius' genius by some (though not all) of his early successors.²⁸ However, Endean contends that we can also find wisdom and good things in this and other *Directories*, if we can suspend our veil of negative judgement.

²⁶ In his review of the different approaches to the Exercises during the time of these *Directories*, Ivens notes that: "[...] in early Jesuit usage, the term 'making the Exercises' had a fluidity that has since been lost. Modern distinctions between 'ignatian retreats' and the Exercises, between 'the thirty days' and 'adaptations' are absent from their terminology; and the 'Exercises' may refer either to the full *Exercises* or to the whole gamut of ways in which elements of the doctrine and methodology of Ignatius' book could be put to use". Cf. MICHAEL IVENS, "The Eighteenth Annotation and the Early Directories" in *The Way Supplement* 46 (1983) 4.

²⁷ Cf. PHILIP ENDEAN, "Transitions and controls in early Ignatian retreats: The legacy of the Directories" in *The Way Supplement* 95 (1999) 117. Not that this issue was resolved with this *Official Directory*. In fact, as we well know, it has been a recurrent one in the history of the Society. Thus, for example, this highly desired 'uniformity' both among givers of the Exercises and their use of method is highlighted by a recommendation given by the 28th General Congregation to Father General to ensure the redaction and publication of an *Instruction on the Manner of Giving the Exercises*, taking into account the circumstances of the time, striving for their greater fruit and for the greater uniformity in the way of giving them. Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Decreta Congregationis Generalis XXVIII*, Romae: Apud Curiam Praepositi Generalis 1938; AR 9 (1938) 1-63; Titulus III, *De Ministeriis: De Exercitiis Spiritualibus*, n. 30.

²⁸ Cf. ENDEAN, "Transitions and controls in early Ignatian retreats: The legacy of the Directories", p. 117. It has not helped either that a certain degree of defensive authoritarianism is evident in their composition, written as they were at a time when there was still much nervousness about illuminism, (cf. ENDEAN, p. 125). However, Endean also points out, I believe quite perceptively, that these second and third generations of Jesuits never really *had a chance*, for when compared to Ignatius "[...] subsequent innovators will always see their present situation as lamentable and the founder as beyond reproach", p. 117.

What the 1599 directory says about the necessity of having a method to give the Exercises shows the preoccupation—but also an awareness of the real shortcomings of the original text—of Ignatius' early followers to remain authentic to his text:

Pero cuanto es útil esta práctica de los Ejercicios de que hablamos, tanto es también necesario tener algún método en darlos; ya porque no todos pueden tener la misma pericia y habilidad, ya porque no pudieron quedar expresadas todas las cosas en este libro de los Ejercicios Espirituales (y por eso hay en él algunos pasajes un poco oscuros, en cuanto a la práctica), ya finalmente también para que en todos los nuestros haya uniformidad, y no vaya cada uno interpretando los Ejercicios según su ingenio y parecer, de donde irían introduciéndose métodos nuevos y poco a poco diversos (Dir 43:10).²⁹

While it seems that Polanco believed that creating such a comprehensive *Directory* was part of Ignatius' plan, the nature and character of texts printed as "Ignatius' early directories" might seem to contradict this assumption: rather than giving fixed or rigid guidelines in them Ignatius seems to respond to particular questions as they arise.³⁰

Regarding this process of transition and application of the Exercises, Endean suggests that a particularly useful directory to consider is that of an Italian Jesuit, Fabio de Fabi (Dir 24),³¹ who highlights the need to resolve certain textual obscurities and practical issues concerning specific points in Ignatius' text. As an example, in chapter 4 of his 'Directory' he refers to Ignatius' *Additional Directives* on the review of prayer (cf. [SpEx 77]), which seem to imply the existence of criteria to determine whether a contemplation of meditation has been successful or not, and yet does not actually specify these criteria:

²⁹ Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, p. 321. The English translation from the Spanish: "And as much as this practice of the *Exercises* of which we speak is useful, it is also necessary to have a method with which to give them; either because not all those giving them can have the same aptitude and ability, or because not everything could be included in the book of the *Spiritual Exercises* (and thus we find in them certain passages which are a bit obscure in terms of practice), or finally so that among all of ours there can be uniformity, so as to prevent interpretation by each according to his inventiveness and preference, which could result in their being progressively introduced new and divergent methods (Dir 43:10)".

³⁰ ENDEAN, "Transitions and controls in early Ignatian retreats: The legacy of the Directories", p. 117. These texts, as Palmer points out, are usually either brief notes on isolated points, excerpts from writings of other kind (e.g. letters), or advice given by Ignatius to less experienced retreat-givers. Cf. MARTIN E. PALMER, editor and translator, *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Resources 1996, pp. 7-31. Endean also quotes Iparraguirre who expresses Ignatius' preference to transmit his ideas and spirit in private, intimate conversations: "Written norms [could become] rigid and dry in quality. The saint believed that handing on notes to his sons would be to hand on the method's stiff skeleton, deprived of the breath that gave it life", cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, p. 416.

³¹ Cf. ENDEAN, "Transitions and controls in early Ignatian retreats: The legacy of the Directories", p. 117. More than a 'Directory', Fabi's text comprises a series of observations he makes on the *Directory* by Fr Miró, (Dir 23), written around 1575, offering in particular a different way of organising his content, but also putting forth certain doubts concerning the Exercises and offering observations on specific points. Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, p. 211.

En la 5.a adición, después de los ejercicios de la primera semana, donde se dice 'si resulta bien la contemplación', preguntan algunos si se entiende que resulta bien la oración, cuando no son molestados al orar con pensamientos oportunos, o atacados por espíritus malos; o por el contrario, cuando luchan esforzadamente e intensamente contra tales movimientos malos. Pues así parece mayor el éxito y provecho de la oración, que si no sufren ninguna lucha o contrariedad.³²

Fabi's text is also representative of the ever-present tension between being faithful to Ignatius' text and method and avoiding arbitrariness of its use on the one hand (cf. Dir 24:3), and recognising that the needs, circumstances and experiences of the exercitant must be taken into account, on the other: "[...] no conviene estar de tal modo atados a la letra y orden consignado en el libro de los Ejercicios, que no pueda alguna vez ser cambiado con mayor fruto en favor de la libertad de espíritu, y de la luz de la divina gracia" (Dir 24:11).³³ Endean's insight into the difficulty of solving this tension is worth quoting here:

[...] in reality the only wisdom we can have on this point is an awareness that such unanswered questions are inherent to any attempt at creative Christian authenticity. New approaches to pastoral care and Christian practice, and indeed transitions in the ministry of retreats, will always—precisely because they are new—raise questions as to whether their novelty amounts to a new realisation of Christian charism, or a decadence to be repudiated. The Directories show the second generation of Jesuits struggling with questions of this kind.³⁴

And we cannot forget either that some of these new pastoral approaches are in fact trying to respond to circumstances which in some cases have never been encountered before. In our area of study, for instance, who could have thought of offering the Exercises to people who had spent most of their lives in refugee camps or been imprisoned for years in detention centres?

Finally, Endean reminds us that though the texts of the *Directories* do come from a 'different world', they can still be helpful to us not only "for what they tell us about our issues in the ministry of the *Exercises*, but also for what their differences from us might evoke [...]. At

³² Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, p. 215. The English translation from the Spanish: "In the fifth additional directive, after the Exercises of the First Week, where it says, "how well I did on the contemplation", some wonder whether they are supposed to consider a prayer successful if they are not plagued, while praying, by inopportune thoughts or assailed by evil spirits; or whether, on the other hand, when they battle strenuously and intensely against such evil movement. For it would seem to be greater the success and profit of the prayer in the latter case than in the former, when they have not undergone struggle or opposition" (Dir 24:18).

³³ Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, p. 214. The English translation from the Spanish: "[...] it is not convenient to be so tied up to the text and order consigned in the book of the *Exercises*, that it might prevent its being changed at times when doing so can provide greater fruit, by favouring freedom of spirit and the light of God's grace" (Dir 24:11).

³⁴ ENDEAN, "Transitions and controls in early Ignatian retreats: The legacy of the Directories", p. 121. Endean also suggests that we would do well to turn to Polanco to discern how, as givers of the *Exercises*, we should conduct ourselves (Cf. Dir 20:31), trying to learn as much as we can about our exercitants so we can adapt ourselves to them, both in the amount of information that we should provide (always avoiding to explain things too fully) and in the manner of language that is used to do so; p. 122.

times, too, the *Directories* give glimpses of a spiritual sensitivity which is simply the fruit of holiness and experience”.³⁵ Thus, the anonymous writer of *Directory* 26, probably written between 1580 and 1590 comments:

[...] Puede el que está bien ejercitado y es más avanzado en el espíritu, sacar sin esfuerzo de la meditación del juicio y del infierno gran alegría, gran amor y confianza [...] y no obstante, a pesar de ser tan ingrato, no solamente no le ha adjudicado Dios los mismos castigos, sino que le ha colmado de abundancia de gracias, y rodeado de divina protección; éste, digo, conociendo la gran misericordia de Dios para con él, se alegra y concibe la esperanza y el más grande amor de Dios (Dir 26:18).³⁶

1.2.3. The ‘Accommodated Texts’

As we have seen, the Exercises began to experience adaptations as soon as they were published, and in fact, even during the process of their creation. This is important because it reminds us that in our application of the Exercises to respond appropriately to varying pastoral concerns, we might need to add further material in order to make it easier for our exercitants to comprehend better Ignatius’ text and for them to derive greater fruit from it. This might include, as we shall see shortly, the use of additional Scriptural texts. Surely, the Spirit continues to inspire us to make this text even more accessible and beneficial!

Rogelio García Mateo explores the process of creation and adaptation of the Exercises by looking at some additional texts, which chronologically precede the ‘official texts’—the Autograph (with Ignatius’ handwritten corrections and first published in 1615); the Latin Vulgate of 1548; and the two editions (1541 and 1547) of the Latin *Versio prima*. The oldest manuscripts of the *Spiritual Exercises* (not printed editions), and which form part of the so-called *textus accommodati* or “the accommodated texts” (phrase coined by José Calveras to designate manuscripts of the Exercises that were incomplete or that included a commentary), are the ‘Text of John Heylar’ (H), dating from 1535-1536, and the ‘Cologne Text’ (C), dating from 1538-1539.

García Mateo contends that these and other earlier texts can “serve to clarify, to nuance and to amplify some points that remain uncertain in the Spanish text”. He points out that part of the

³⁵ Cf. ENDEAN, “Transitions and controls in early Ignatian retreats: The legacy of the Directories”, pp. 123-124.

³⁶ Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, p. 227. The English translation from the Spanish: “[...] Spiritually advanced persons with much experience in prayer have no difficulty in eliciting great joy, love and trust from the meditation on judgement and hell [...] despite their ingratitude, God has not only not sentenced them to the same sufferings, but has heaped an abundance of graces on them and surrounded them with divine protection. Recognition of God’s mercy towards them fills them with joy, engendering deep hope and love of God” (Dir 26:18).

problem is Ignatius' fundamental writing style in the *Spiritual Exercises*, characterised by “brevity, loose clauses and economy of expression”, which use concise and pregnant phrases to “express a complex set of ideas”.³⁷ It does not help either that the Spanish is almost five centuries old! Looking at these earlier manuscripts can help us understand some of the changes the *Exercises* experienced during their period of gestation. García Mateo reminds us that:

The composition of the *Spiritual Exercises* was a process that lasted twenty years. The experiences Ignatius had at Loyola and Manresa were generative and foundational, and he clearly reflected intensely upon them in writing. But we have no basis of knowing what the content of his notes was, and nor can we say with any certainty that he was using the expression ‘spiritual exercises’ before the mid-1530s.³⁸

It is only after 1535 that good historical sources—including these ‘accommodated texts’—exist which allow us to speak of a *text* of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Besides the two earliest manuscripts already mentioned, the most striking and original, according to García Mateo, is the one known as ‘the Exercises of Master John’.³⁹ While this text does not offer great new insights regarding Ignatius' method, it does so with regard to the content, as it contains extensive glossing and explanation:

Generally, the glosses are accompanied by scriptural quotations. Thus, as early as the first annotation, by way of explanation as to what is meant by ‘spiritual exercises’, we find quotations of Psalm 77:6 (‘I meditated at night with my heart; I was exercising and searching my spirit’), of Psalm 119:23 (‘your servant was exercising within your statutes’) and 1 Timothy 4:7 (‘exercise yourself in godliness’). These quotations considerably enrich what we understand by ‘spiritual exercises’, setting the asceticism of the original within a biblical context missing from the official texts.⁴⁰

In regards to the *Principle and Foundation*, an additional phrase is found in the ‘Exercises’: “[...] and to place ourselves at the arrival port of our pilgrimage—that is the supreme love of God and the exact observance of the commandments”. According to García Mateo, this phrase “brings out the eschatological dimension to the practical wisdom of the *Principle and Foundation*, and leads into two extra paragraphs bringing out the importance of watching and prayer, supported by Gospel quotations [...] and especially the importance of the *Examen*”. In

³⁷ ROGELIO GARCÍA MATEO, “The ‘Accommodated Texts’ and the Interpretation of the *Spiritual Exercises*” in *The Way* 44, n. 1 (2005) 101-102.

³⁸ GARCÍA MATEO, “The ‘Accommodated Texts’”, pp. 104-105. The author further emphasises that: “At Manresa, Ignatius *made* ‘his’ Exercises, and had the most important spiritual experience of his life. He made notes of this experience but we do not know what they contained. What we do know is that out of this experience there would eventually come the text that we know as the *Spiritual Exercises*. We can find some elements of this in the Alcalá trial processes, and in the ten letters we have that date from before 1535. But it is only after that date that we have good historical sources for speaking of a text of the *Spiritual Exercises*”, p. 106.

³⁹ Presumably, they refer to Jean Codure. Cf. MHSJ Exx (1969), pp. 507-590.

⁴⁰ GARCÍA MATEO, “The ‘Accommodated Texts’”, pp. 110-111.

regards to the *Examen*, this additional text says: “But for purging the spirit from its sins, nothing can be more useful than your assessing the drifts of your thoughts, words and deeds, and making an account of them, twice daily, at midday and in the evening”.⁴¹ We are thus able to understand better the “organic role” of the *Examen* within the *Exercises*.

As another example, we see that the meditation on hell, which as we know comes at the end of the First Week, is also glossed in this text with no fewer than 26 biblical quotations which are missing in the official texts, and the “Christ-centred meaning of the whole comes out fully in the final colloquy”.⁴² It is interesting to debate why these biblical references were taken out, in particular since the other Weeks of the Exercises are full of them. Paradoxically, new presentations of the *Principle and Foundation* in more recent applications introduce them back into the texts given to exercitants, so the ongoing process of development of the Exercises continues.

1.2.4. Early Jesuit practice⁴³

The *Official Directory* to the *Exercises* has a whole chapter on how others, besides Jesuits, can be given the Exercises.⁴⁴ Similarly, as expressed earlier, the early Jesuits certainly gave the Exercises to a wide audience, but little evidence has been recorded on how and under what specific circumstances. In the first of his three volumes on the *History of the Exercises*, Iparraguirre simply states that the Exercises were adapted: “Accordingly, St Ignatius would use the Exercises to the extent that this would help him achieve the goal he had in mind at each particular instance, as it was obvious that one form [of giving them] would adapt itself better to a specific circumstance than to another. From this diversity of purposes arose the variety of modalities used to give the retreat”.⁴⁵ Iparraguirre does mention that the process through which the *Exercises* were given depended on two circumstances: the environment in

⁴¹ GARCÍA MATEO, “The ‘Accommodated Texts’”, p. 111.

⁴² GARCÍA MATEO, “The ‘Accommodated Texts’”, p. 113.

⁴³ The summary of ideas presented in this section is based on an article by PHILIP ENDEAN, “‘Applying Such Exercises’: Early Jesuit Practice” in *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XXXII, n. 98 (2001) 41-64.

⁴⁴ Chapter 9 of the *Directory* is entitled “Classes of Persons for whom the Exercises are suitable” and after broadly dividing them into two classes (those to whom the full Exercises can be given and those to whom they should not), it proceeds to give guidelines on how to deal with other religious (Jesuits are considered in the following chapter), married people, ecclesiastics, persons of rank, very busy persons, the ignorant and unlettered and women. Cf. *Directory to the Spiritual Exercises of Our Holy Father Ignatius*, London: The Manresa Press 1925, pp. 35-44.

⁴⁵ Translation made from Iparraguirre's Spanish text that reads: “En cada momento [San Ignacio] se iba sirviendo de ellos en la medida que mejor le ayudaran para el fin que pretendía entonces, porque como es obvio, una forma se adaptaba más para una circunstancia que otra. De la diversidad de estos fines provino la variedad de modos usados en el dar el retiro”. Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 1, p. 7.

which they were made and the end goal that was sought. But again, he does not give specific details:

The environment was determined by the individual and personal character which the Exercises had then. This typical note regulates many of the activities, especially the accommodating of the basic Ignatian schema to each individual, and it is the key to understand many aspects of the method. St Ignatius, in addition to the frequent occasions in which the text itself is recommending this *adaptation*, insisted on this same way of thinking in his letters to the directors of the *Exercises* (MI. Epp. I, 388). The many and repeated times in which he insists that the full *Exercises* be given only to a few and selected individuals, and at the same time his desire that those of the First Week be offered to as many as possible, indicate clearly how he accommodated himself to the weaknesses of human nature.⁴⁶

In his second volume, we find some examples of retreats of various kinds given to diverse people (priests, seminarians, men religious, students of Marian Congregations, members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, women religious)⁴⁷, and in some instances of suggestions that they be withheld from others, in particular lay women!⁴⁸ The Official *Directory* does give room for exceptions, as in cases of a woman who “should be of such sound judgment, endowed with capacity for things spiritual, and possessing sufficient leisure at home, as to make it possible for her to go through all or the greater part of the Exercises”.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Translation made from Iparraguirre's Spanish text that reads: “El ambiente lo formaba el carácter individual y personal, que tenían entonces los ejercicios. Esta nota típica regula muchas de las actividades, sobre todo la acomodación a cada individuo del esquema básico ignaciano, y es la clave para comprender muchos aspectos del método. San Ignacio, además de las frecuentes ocasiones en que en el mismo texto está recomendando esta adaptación, insistió en el mismo pensamiento en sus cartas a los directores de ejercicios (MI. Epp. I, 388). Las repetidas veces que insiste en que se den los ejercicios completos a muy pocos y selectos, y a la vez sus deseos de que se extiendan los de la primera semana a todos los que se pueda, están indicando bien a las claras cómo él se acomodaba a la debilidad de la naturaleza humana [...]”, Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 1, p. 7. p. 164. Codina points out the different places in the text of the *Exercises* where this ‘adaptation’ or ‘application’ is encouraged. Besides the well-known references to *Annotations* 18 and 19, he mentions the flexibility of the Exercises in terms of its duration (e.g. *Annotation* 4 where Ignatius talks about ‘more or less’ thirty days), which will depend both on the judgement of the one giving the Exercises as well as the desires of the one receiving them; the varying number of daily meditations during the different Weeks; and the particular addition where the exercitant is encouraged to stay where she or he finds what he or she desires rather than moving forward with the process. Cf. ARTURO CODINA, “Flexibilidad de los Ejercicios” in *Manresa* 1 (1925) 18-24.

⁴⁷ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, pp. 211-233.

⁴⁸ In 1600, the then General Aquaviva writes to the Provincial for the Rhineland region, F. Teodoro Buseo: “We have already written on many other occasions that it doesn't seem worthwhile to give these Exercises to women. It is enough for ours to leave them with some spiritual books and recommend that they read them. At most you could teach them some method of prayer on their own in church, and give them some points for meditation that are more suitable for them”, cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, p. 226. Though these indications might seem quite drastic and severe, we need to remember that the social function and cultural formation as well as formal education of women in the 1500s was much more restricted, and that the maxim of ‘where greater fruit is obtained’ was always a deciding factor regarding the people to whom the *Exercises* should be offered.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Directory to the Spiritual Exercises of Our Holy Father Ignatius*, p. 44. Of course, as suggested, care should always be taken to avoid scandals or suspicion of ulterior motives when dealing with women!

Some data, however, is available on the practice of giving the Exercises to early Jesuit novices. Among other things, these reveal a lack of uniformity that might initially come as a surprise, but also shed some light on the initial attempts of applying the *Exercises* to suit the specific needs of the ones receiving them.⁵⁰

The variances had to do, among other things, with the different lengths of times spent doing the Exercises, the early introduction of a form of Exercises in daily life and even making them in stages with significant breaks in the process. As Iparraguirre points out, the reason for the 'irregularities' had to do with the appointed superiors as it was up to them to decide whether the whole Exercises, or only a part or sections, were to be given, considering the particular circumstances and conditions of the given novices.⁵¹ Among these conditions, the age of the new recruits caused problems as novices between the ages of 14 and 20 were given the full Exercises and in many cases this proved to be too much for them. Some simply had health issues that prevented them from undertaking such a rigorous probation all in one month. It is important to mention, however, that what we are talking about here is irregularities in making the full Exercises, and not whether particular novices completed them or not.

Regarding the length of time spent doing the Exercises, Iparraguirre points out that, based on the available data, this varied from two days to sixty-four days. Clearly, some of the novices would not have completed the whole of the Exercises, but while the tendency would have been that all completed all of them, those not able to do so for whatever reason should be given at the very least the exercises of the First Week and the beginning of the Second.

Those undertaking the Exercises within the context of their daily lives wrote about making them "around the house, during my ordinary services, not in retreat, not enclosed, not as the only thing we did", etc. While for some this would have been due to a requirement to fulfil the offices of the houses where they lived, for others it had more to do with a sense of making the Exercises as part of a larger process of probation where the various experiences and practices of the novitiate were considered as something like 'open Exercises'. Finally, Iparraguirre also

⁵⁰ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, pp. 265-284.

⁵¹ "Nadal said that the norm that would guide this Ignatian probation (period of testing) would be no other than the judgment of the Superior. Everyone, is true, should pass the test of the Exercises [...]. But they should do it in the time and manner which the Superior regarded as most convenient. It was not to be a uniform application without any distinction, but rather, intended to fulfil the prescription while taking into account the personal condition of each person". Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, p. 272.

gives examples of what seemed quite a frequent practice of giving the Exercises in stages, with breaks between the various weeks which could include even a period of several months.⁵²

1.2.5. The influence of the 'outside' world in applying and giving the Exercises

Iparraguirre concludes the third volume of his history of the *Exercises* with a chapter of 'final reflections' on their development throughout the 17th century. Beginning with the encompassing phrase "the *Exercises* contain within their essence the need for adaptation", he then proceeds to describe how the ideologies or approaches of the spiritual 'currents' or schools of that time influenced in turn the way in which the Exercises were offered in different places throughout Europe.⁵³

Thus, the concrete circumstances in which both the givers and receivers of the Exercises found themselves influenced the manner in which the method was followed or altered. Some Ignatian aspects could not be used because they did not fit within the given historical moment, but could have been used under other historical conditions—the renaissance person was quite different from that of the baroque (and of course, very different from the modernist or postmodernist of our times!) So, while there was what could be termed a 'permanent background', a basic necessary methodology needed for the Exercises to be considered authentic Ignatian Exercises, they also needed to be 'accommodated' to the spiritual movements of that era. Among these, Iparraguirre mentions *Christian Socratism* and *devout humanism* as well as the repercussions of the *anti-Quietist* and *anti-Jansenist* movements. A brief comparison between these gives us a sense of how these movements influenced then the giving of the Exercises and how their legacy still influences the way the Exercises are presented in different contexts today. It also gives us a sense of how current spiritual trends might affect the way we approach or offer the *Spiritual Exercises* in our present day.

The key aspect emphasised in the environment of *Christian Socratism* was the need to deepen a person's interior knowledge—*know thyself*. Thus, directors found themselves offering mostly retreats to individuals, carried out in perfect isolation, and giving prominent value to a process of introversion and reflection—the ideal method for the Socratic ideal of self-

⁵² Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 2, pp. 267-268, 271-272.

⁵³ The summary of ideas presented in this section comes from this chapter. Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 3, pp. 540-563.

knowledge, which also rigorously emphasised a demand for perfection and sanctity and for one's deification within an environment deeply charged with a sense of the supernatural. In a spiritual world impregnated by this mentality, elements such as the *Examen*, the analysis of the self, the care for *Annotations* and *Additions* and other Ignatian directives which focused on practicing the exercises with great perfection, found great importance. The Exercises were a source for great contemplation, spiritual rest and joy, and intimate conversation with the Lord.⁵⁴

Devout humanism, on the other hand, looked more towards the positive aspects of earthly realities. Rather than purification, directors tended to accentuate the need for integration. Exercitants were isolated less and the method began to be adapted more for groups, where less rigorous work was demanded. What mattered more was the concrete usefulness of the person than a fidelity to the method in itself. Because many of those who came to make the Exercises lacked the capacity or disposition to engage in deep personal work, rather than offering the strict Exercises in an environment of spiritual discernment, directors followed more an approach or methodology fit for 'rural missions'.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances the method would experience distortions. It still produced good fruits, but not the ones that would have resulted had the method been preserved. By necessity, the Exercises experienced a process of reduction, becoming more a practice that attempted to create a generic unity based on those elements that could be applied to everyone. This is also the period when *freedom* is given back its central role in the development of the personality of an individual and as the basis for spiritual progress. Greater importance is also returned to considering spiritual movements and the role of experience. Paradoxically, this practice of offering simplified Exercises to groups of people with little preparation or formation coincides with a return, for those who practiced the individual retreat, to a purer '*ignacianismo*'. These exercitants sought the internal process of divine action. They placed themselves in a state of election, wanting to learn to make adequate use of their freedom—this rediscovered value.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 3, pp. 541-543.

⁵⁵ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 3, pp. 544-545.

As *Quietism* and *Jansenism* emerged and began to spread, changes in the way the Exercises were offered continued. Fear of the heresy of *Quietism*, especially in Italy, meant that exercises to groups became the rule and some of the more passive elements were eliminated from the method. Thus, the Exercises were often reduced to a method that was too externalised and preoccupied with eliminating sins and acquiring virtues and which insisted strongly in the ascetic struggle. A sort of spiritual gymnastics was developed to purify the spiritual body which had become atrophied by excessive contemplative quietude. This was the moment for open exercises in churches and of the transformation of a method that had been designed for an intimate process into a series of practices of collective exaltation. The goal was indeed to give to the Exercises such an intensely accelerated rhythm that hardly any room was left for spiritual stillness.

The method used to present the various exercises became simpler, more concrete and more practical. While the aspects that the directors emphasised were still genuinely Ignatian—the internal dynamism of the method, guiding the exercitants, personal activity and reflection—because of fear, directors tended to become more inflexible, excessively restricting any personal initiative. They preferred meditation to contemplation, fixed norms to personal experiences. As mentioned, open exercises to persons with less spiritual formation became more widespread—they were preached to less and directed more, sometimes in great detail. As a consequence, individual exercises suffered much, always under the shadow of fear of illusions and deceptions that might inflict the exercitants. But, in this eagerness to follow a safe path, the intimate work and process of discovering the will of God became stifled.⁵⁶

Among others, the element which had the greatest repercussion in the evolution of the method of the Exercises in regards to *Jansenism* was its hostile attitude to all mysticism. As a consequence, greater importance and emphasis was given to the development of the field of spiritual experience. Thus, this anti-Jansenist reaction prevented the loss of an attitude of intimate and personal reflection. The fear of falling into the clutches of *Jansenism* opened the doors to joyful contemplation and stimulated contact with God. Thanks to the close guidance of the giver of the exercises, the intensified use of the Scriptures and the exhortation to reach the highest of sanctities, the pessimist Jansenist vision of God, religion and the world itself was greatly avoided and hopefully also prevented. The exercises to groups continued to

⁵⁶ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 3, pp. 549-551.

increase and be perfected in the new climate, while individual silent retreats in schools continued to decrease.⁵⁷

Iparraguirre's final comments at the end of this chapter in his book provide a helpful summary of the points we have tried to emphasise in our work in terms of the early applications of the Exercises. Thus, he acknowledges that:

Cuando existía sólo una forma de ejercicios, la del retiro individual, se fue insensiblemente desvirtuando su fuerza. Se seguía rutinariamente el sistema: Cuando en cambio se simultanearon métodos diversos, se fueron a la larga vivificando mutuamente. La confrontación obligaba a una revisión, a un perfeccionamiento. Ni era necesario forzar, como antes, el sistema para que pudiese entrar en él el que no poseía suficientes aptitudes o mostraba demasiada repugnancia a aquella forma. Podía elegir libremente otras.⁵⁸

These other options included ever increasing forms of light Exercises for 'simple' people who could be given little material. They might not have the capacity for deep meditations, but the good they received through them could not be measured. Many of them, for the first time, caught a glimpse of a new spiritual world. This 'accommodation' of the method to less formed people and, as a consequence, its further extension, became one of the main characteristics of the movement of the *Exercises* in the 17th century. At the beginning of that century, only a reduced number of people practiced them. By the end, there were thousands who, in one way or another, had familiarised themselves with the Ignatian practice, not only in Europe, but also in the Americas.⁵⁹

1.2.6. *Purification, liberation and updating of Ignatius' spiritual classic in mid-twentieth century*

Fast-forwarding to four centuries later, what could we say about the way ideologies or approaches of the present spiritual currents or movements are influencing the way the Exercises are being offered today? We have already summarised at the beginning of this chapter the various formats in which the Exercises are being presented to meet the needs of individuals and groups, their characteristics, traditions and cultures. As we saw, after a long

⁵⁷ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 3, pp. 551-555

⁵⁸ IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 3, p. 556. English translation from the Spanish: "When there was only one form of exercises, namely individual retreats, they gradually lost their vigour and depth, because the system began to be followed as routine. However, when diverse simultaneous methods emerged, they began to mutually give life and energy to one another. The confrontation forced a revision and a perfecting of the method. Further, there was no longer need to force the process so that those who lacked the necessary aptitudes, or showed distaste for that form [of Exercises], could engage in it. They could opt freely for other options".

⁵⁹ Cf. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia*, Vol 3, p. 562.

period of reductionism in the presentation of the Exercises, for the last forty or so years directors have returned to following Ignatius' text and to applying the dynamics and pedagogy of the *Exercises* more closely. This process of change was initiated by several Ignatian scholars and other givers of the Exercises (including Tertian instructors) who, starting in the mid-1960s, sought to recover a richness in the *Exercises* which they felt had been lost.⁶⁰ Thus, the issue of fidelity to the text of the *Exercises*, its interpretation and use, was taken up by Ignacio Iparraguirre and Luis González in their pastoral commentary to the *Spiritual Exercises* over fifty years ago.⁶¹ They hoped their contribution would provide adequate assistance and guidance to current (at that time) givers of the Exercises in their most important service to the Church. To achieve this, they considered the need of *purification, liberation and updating* of Ignatius' spiritual classic.

Purification in that they believed that some of the interpretations and adaptations the Exercises had been subjected to in previous years had been based on deviations or deformations of Ignatius' way of thinking and of his text. Among the sources for these false perspectives they identified: 1) a tendency to interpret Ignatius' *Exercises* with a scholastic mentality, seeing its text as a 'textbook' and thus explaining it and presenting it with classical definitions that are more abstract than real (thus the *Exercises* lose their practical component); 2) other commentators had missed Ignatius' dynamic spirituality, interpreting the text in static ways through given structures and forms, considering only isolated aspects of Ignatius' spirituality without making a connection among them; 3) some had interpreted Ignatius' theology which underpins the *Exercises* based on perspectives that were put forward during and after the Council of Trent, forgetting that his theological formation preceded the Council; 4) others had expounded the practice of the Exercises disconnected from the spiritual content that underpins it—while it is true that Ignatius did not propose a particular theology or doctrine, that does not mean that the Exercises lack such theological doctrine (the doctrine does not need to be explained but it is necessary to help the exercitants 'live it'); and finally 5), some had missed the most important role of the giver of the Exercises: to help the 'souls' get in touch with God and help them discover God's voice and rhythm within them; instead,

⁶⁰ Unfortunately, there are no comprehensive studies on the development and practice of giving the Exercises between the beginning of the 18th century and the middle of the 20th century. This is an area where much research still needs to take place.

⁶¹ Cf. LUIS GONZÁLEZ and IGNACIO IPARRAGUIRRE, *Ejercicios Espirituales: Comentario Pastoral*, Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos 1965.

they had become too passive, failing to encourage exercitants to take greater initiative in their discovery of God's presence in their lives.⁶²

Liberating the *Exercises* had to do with freeing them from the constraint of what these authors believed was a narrow set of reduced interpretations, based on a small group of commentators, usually very good ones, but which nevertheless were too few to contain the immense richness to be found in the *Exercises*. Thus, they tried to provide in their work as wide a historical compilation of sources, containing the greatest possible number of interpretations by authors of the most diverse tendencies and nationalities. Some might offer perspectives which are too limited or of little value, but others might add something, even a small contribution, to expand the already recognised richness of the *Exercises*:

Y, sin embargo, aplicando la luz que ofrece ese autor, caemos en la cuenta de que todo eso se contiene allí y de que ha sido la costumbre de contemplar esas verdades desde un punto limitado de vista la causa de que no hayamos caído en cuenta de la existencia de esas realidades [...]. La ventaja principal de nuestra excursión por la tierra de los autores de las más distintas regiones [...] es que nos ofrecen otras perspectivas, nos cambian la dirección habitual de nuestra manera de acercarnos, capacitándonos de ese modo para descubrir nuevas modalidades.⁶³

Finally, for the authors, the act of **updating** the *Exercises* was propelled by the need to respond to the pastoral needs of the people of their particular time.⁶⁴ The challenge was to link up the Ignatian principles presented in the *Exercises* with the realities of the world—to establish a life-giving connection between the Ignatian method and the real life issues of the exercitant. The deficiency that the authors identified here was the propensity of givers of the *Exercises* to forget the need to *apply* them. Instead, when they gave the *Exercises*, rather than applying them, they 'explained' the method and the text. To reverse this trend, Iparraguirre and González sought to present "everything that might serve towards the development of the spiritual life, to nurture and perfect it", including offering responses to the great spiritual

⁶² Cf. GONZÁLEZ and IPARRAGUIRRE, *Ejercicios Espirituales: Comentario Pastoral*, pp. xxii-xxiv.

⁶³ Cf. GONZÁLEZ and IPARRAGUIRRE, *Ejercicios Espirituales: Comentario Pastoral*, p. xxi. English translation for this Spanish text: "However, casting the light that a specific author proposes, we have come to realise that all [that he says] is really there, and that it has been our practice of contemplating those truths from a very limited point of view which has prevented us from hitherto discovering the existence of those realities [...]. The main advantage of our journey through the lands of authors of the most diverse regions [...] is that they offer us new perspectives, change our habitual ways of approaching things, and thus allow us to discover new modalities [for offering the *Exercises*]".

⁶⁴ We see this same concern stated in the documents presented in a week-long Conference celebrated in Loyola on the *Exercises* twenty-five years earlier, in the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Society of Jesus. Cf. *Estudios sobre Ejercicios: Semana celebrada en Loyola con ocasión del IV Centenario de la Compañía*, Julio 1941, Barcelona: Revista Ibérica 1941.

issues and problems faced by the exercitants as well as the most appropriate tactics to advance in the way of the Lord.⁶⁵

1.2.7. Applying the Exercises to the needs of survivors of forced displacement today

What are the ‘great spiritual issues and problems’ faced by 21st-century receivers of the Exercises? This is a complex question and one we are not able to tackle in depth within the limited scope of this study. But what is certain is that the impact of current secular trends and world concerns on these spiritual issues cannot be obviated, particularly when dealing with survivors of forced displacement. The phenomenon of massed forced displacement, we have argued, is one of *the* critical issues of our time, influenced by a complex range of factors and interests—political, economic, socio-cultural, religious—some of which we have already addressed in Chapter 1. We offer below a brief summary of those factors we believe should be taken into account when offering the Exercises to ex-refugees if they are to be both relevant to their lives and of lasting spiritual benefit.

- a) *Globalisation* of our planet earth is certainly inevitable and of course the universal phenomenon of forced displacement *en masse* provides an illustration of its effects; the question is what kind of globalisation will become predominant in this century, whether the major faith traditions of the world will provide any significant contribution to its development, and in terms of the *Exercises*, how it will affect the way in which some of its significant components are presented;
- b) *Adaptation, multiculturalism or inter-culturalism*: again, the question is which approach will be favoured as we face the challenges of increasing numbers of cultures and traditions coming together and of recognising and respecting the needs and rights of minority groups; the answer will determine whether the process is governed by competition and conflict or whether a more reasoned dialogue and collaboration can emerge; we address this particular issue of adapting and applying the Exercises to different cultures in the second part of this chapter;
- c) *Advancements of modern science* continue to bring forward major discoveries that challenge our assumptions and affect our unified understanding of reality—biological, physical, chemical, cosmological, anthropological, philosophical. In relation to the

⁶⁵ Cf. GONZÁLEZ and IPARRAGUIRRE, *Ejercicios Espirituales: Comentario Pastoral*, p. xxv.

Exercises, we can ask, for example, how these new understandings affect the articulation of Ignatius' *Principle and Foundation* and of our own? How do they affect the way we see and understand individual and structural sin and does this new conception affect our sense of personal and collective responsibility for the plight of the forcibly displaced?

- d) *Fundamentalism*: both religious and cultural which can lead to a refusal to see the value in the 'other', to acknowledge their dignity, and to dismiss the contribution of the 'other' to our life and the common good; can the *Exercises* help us become more aware of who this 'other' is in our lives? Can the way we present and offer them to the forcibly displaced assert their dignity and value as an 'other'—an 'existential trait' most of them share in their new countries of resettlement?
- e) *Inter-spiritual movements* which are characterised by a new and dynamic East-West dialogue (and North-South as well), both at the level of personal spiritualities and of world religions; these movements seek to emphasise the various faith traditions' shared collective views of interconnectedness (with all their ethical implications) over and above their differences or exclusive claims; how can the *Exercises* be enriched by the contribution of these various faith traditions and spiritualities to make them more accessible and relevant to survivors of forced displacement, many of whom have already been in touch with and influenced by them?
- f) *Living in the 'now'*: as the 'place' and time of existential encounter available to all people, free from (though not negating) instances of past individual or collective hurt, suffering and division. The 'now' is where/when the process of healing of the accumulated hurts, divisions and traumas that have come from our shared global history (and have dislocated and turned upside down the lives of most forcibly displaced people), takes place; the 'now' is the time and place when/where the rewriting of our common story takes place; the 'now' is when the Exercises are undertaken and when the Exercises can be used to contribute to the healing process of survivors of forced displacement;
- g) *Care of the planet*: calling us to a growing awareness of the exploitation, abuse and damage we have inflicted on our common home and of our personal and collective responsibility to reverse or at least arrest further degradation; as mentioned previously, efforts have begun to incorporate this theme of care for our common home in the content and presentation of the Exercises—an issue close to the heart of many forcibly displaced people because of their background and places of provenance;

h) Critical thinking: a general decline in the critical thinking skills across the world's population (wrought by media oversimplification, misinformation or outright distortion or lies through 'fake news') as well as a 'dumbing-down' of educational, informational and culturally supportive systems, has resulted in a primacy of highly individualised worldviews, characterised by a lack of factual knowledge and generally governed by media or pop-culture-based views of reality. More than ever before, a large percentage of the world's population seems to be at the mercy of biased punditry and uncensored political slogans that continue to serve the interests of the very few: we have already cited incidences of how this phenomenon has affected the intensification of negative attitudes towards forcibly displaced people seeking asylum and refuge; can the reflective and discerning elements of the *Exercises* and their emphasis on reality be used to counteract the damaging effects of this growing 'fantasy world' and its influence on so many people?

Clearly this list is not all-inclusive and some of the issues mentioned are not altogether new. And of course, we cannot expect that givers of the *Exercises* will be able to include all of these issues in their presentation or adapt their content to address them directly. But it should also be clear—and this is the point we have tried to emphasise all along—that unless they are aware of these issues and how they affect the lives of forcibly displaced peoples, they will fall short in their service to them as spiritual companions and they will also 'sell short' the efficacy and richness of the *Exercises* and what they can offer to them.

The goal of connecting the Ignatian principles in the *Exercises* with real life issues, and of trying to offer adequate responses to current spiritual—as well as other—challenges in the lives of exercitants, and in our case, to forcibly displaced people, is not new. At the same time, it is not enough simply to include some Ignatian content for a set of *spiritual exercises* or retreat to receive the label of Ignatian. How the content is applied and the method and procedure adapted to meet the needs of the exercitants are also important so that they can obtain the greatest benefit from the experience. This might be a bit more difficult to do in *Exercises* given to groups, but steps can be taken to ensure that a certain degree of individual attention is achieved. All of these issues bring us back to the topic of how best to adapt or apply the *Exercises* to the needs of survivors of forced displacement, which we address now in the second part of this chapter.

Part II: The heart of the matter: considerations for the application and adaptation of the Ignatian Exercises for survivors of forced displacement

As we have seen so far, the process of modification of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*—or of any spiritual classical text, for that matter—should consider, among other aspects, the intended audience (people's disposition, level of faith, individual and common history, etc.), the type of Exercises offered (*Annotations* 18-20), the context in which they are offered, the specific purpose for which they are given, and the resources available to present them. Moreover, the process of modification should not only involve possible changes in content, form and delivery, but should also address issues of textual interpretation, considering for example how the 'revised' text might be received and whether it safeguards the essence of the original text. We address these issues in two sections in this second part of this chapter. The first section deals with internal issues of the *Exercises*, including the organic relationship between text, giver and receiver of the Exercises; the second section looks at the more theoretical, but essential, question of what might be involved in the textual interpretation of a classical text such as that of Ignatius' *Exercises*. Our objective, as usual, is to extract any such learnings that might prove beneficial in the development of our Ignatian exercises for survivors of forced displacement.

2.1. An organic relationship: text, giver and receiver of the Exercises

As we know, the three main elements to consider in analysing the dynamics of the *Exercises* are: 1) the text and its method, 2) the giver of the Exercises (sometimes referred to as the director, guide or spiritual companion), and 3) the one who receives the Exercises (the exercitant or retreatant). Of course, a fourth element, without which none of this process or dynamic would make any sense, is the action of God's Spirit in each person.⁶⁶ Ignatius' objective in writing down his *Exercises* was to share what he had learned with others, so that he could help them in their journey to salvation. To save souls was his lifelong motto and finding different ways of doing so his lifelong project: his desire was for these souls to be totally filled by God's Spirit, so that each could be in total communion with God. Finding these 'different ways' of helping souls required well-formed and experienced givers of his *Exercises*, having an adequate understanding of the needs and condition of the receivers and, in many cases, a modification of his seminal text. In this section, we look at each of these

⁶⁶ Cf. PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH, "Ejercicios y Co-Autores (Conferencia a la Consulta de Roma, 18 de Febrero del 2002)" in *Revista de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* XXXIII, n. 99 (2002) 25-33.

elements and their relationships in terms of (1) the question of *application* or *adaptation* of the text; (2) whether the text or the needs of the exercitant should be given priority; (3) the giver-receiver relationship; (4) the receiver and readiness for different types of Spiritual Exercises, and (5) the giver and receiver of the Exercises and spiritual conversation as a graced point of encounter.

2.1.1. Application or adaptation of the text?

Scholars and practitioners of the *Exercises* offer a wide range of suggestions regarding the question of their application/adaptation, focusing on elements such as the perennial tension of what should be given greater priority—whether maintaining the integrity of Ignatius' text or taking into account the individual needs of the exercitant; issues of enculturation and language, and of how to make the Exercises relevant to people today. All of these are certainly significant issues to be considered in terms of our present audience: survivors of forced displacement have very specific needs and face particular challenges in the areas of interculturalization and new language acquisition, among others.

Most likely, the question of the possible modification or application of the *Exercises* would have had a different answer, had not Ignatius himself opened the possibility for such flexibility. Perhaps the *Exercises* would have been considered a 'closed text' and anything diverging from the original would have been seen as 'something else'. But of course, for Ignatius, whose own experience taught him that God deals with each person as an individual, this was not an option. And so in the opening sentence of *Annotation 18* of his *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius pronounces the famous phrase "*se han de aplicar los tales ejercicios [...]*". A common English translation for this phrase is that "In accord with the disposition of the persons who wish to take spiritual exercises [...] such exercises are to be adapted [...]" Though a better translation for the word 'aplicar' is 'to apply', possibly the main reason 'adapted' is used is that the phrase "such exercises should be applied" sounds awkward. At the same time, it is important to note that Ignatius did not write about 'adaptations' nor specifically about 'the' *Exercises*, but about *such exercises*.⁶⁷ Despite the current translation, Philip Endean suggests that we should insist on using Ignatius' *aplicar*, because it helps avoid two unfortunate misconceptions about the introduction of 'additions' to his text:

⁶⁷ He uses the verb 'apply' which in the Vulgate translation appears as *accomodari*, and in the *Versio prima* is *aptari*.

Firstly, “applying such exercises” does not involve a change in their fundamental reality, but rather a sensitive and appropriate manifestation of what they essentially are. “Adaptation” indicates a more or less justifiable adulteration, to be minimised as far as possible; it amounts to a change in what the author wrote. Applying Ignatian exercises is not like that; to apply the *Exercises* is to enhance them.⁶⁸

Here Endean succinctly compares the implied meaning in the two terms ‘adaptation’ and ‘application’. When used in regards to a text, especially to a timeless spiritual classic as the *Spiritual Exercises*, adaptation could imply the need to address a deficiency (even if brought about not by a shortcoming in the text itself, but by the need to use it in a different context, time or culture), and thus should be ‘minimised as far as possible’, less we taint or spoil the richness of the original or ‘pure’ text. On the contrary, when we ‘apply’ the *Exercises* to these new contexts, this implies that their richness is such that they are indeed timeless and can lead to great fruits not envisaged before, and this ‘enhances’ them.⁶⁹ Endean continues:

Secondly, Ignatius uses a verb, not a noun: *aplicar* denotes not the revised version of a text but rather an interactive process. In Annotation 18, Ignatius is not encouraging us to produce a simplified alternative to his text, standing alongside it permanently, but rather constantly to keep re-presenting the text we have in ever different ways, responsive to the person receiving the process.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ PHILIP ENDEAN, “‘Applying Such Exercises’: Early Jesuit Practice”, 44. García Hirschfeld concurs and insists that “aplicar no es abaratar ni rebajar un método; ‘se aplica...’ para ayudar a la persona: en sus malos momentos, animándola, haciendo que el acompañante ocupe el papel del buen espíritu (an. 7ª), u ofreciendo consejos para la desolación (an. 10ª or 16ª) [...]” Cf. CARLOS GARCÍA HIRSCHFELD, “¿Apostamos o no por una espiritualidad para laicos? Otra lectura de la anotación 18” in *Manresa* 67 (1995) 28. Translation from this Spanish text: “to apply is not to cheapen or lower the quality of a method; ‘we apply...’ to help a person: in their bad moments, encouraging him/her, allowing the accompanier to fulfil the role of the good spirit (Annot 7) or offering advice in cases of desolation (Annot 10 or 16) [...]”.

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that the issue of adaptation is a topic of debate that stretches over a variety of fields of study, including teaching, where adaptation is seen as a necessary and natural part of the teacher’s interaction with the textbook, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. Of course, the issue of how exactly one should go about adapting a text is not clear: “the process of materials adaptation is [...] left in the teachers’ hands, and it is largely based simply on their intuition and experience”, cf. C. SARACENI, “Adapting courses: A critical view” in B. Tomlinson, ed., *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*, London: Continuum Press 2003, p. 73. Identifying what actions comprise adaptation is a matter of debate. McGrath provides a relatively simple model of adaptation by suggesting that it consists of only making additions or changes to the original text. Any additional material that is not of the same type as that provided in the textbook is considered by McGrath to be *supplementation*, “adding something new...[after] recogni[sing] a deficit”, cf. I. MCGRATH, *Materials Evaluation and Design for Language Teaching*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2002, p. 80. While McGrath holds that supplementation is distinct from adaptation since it introduces novel materials, others suggest that supplementation is a part of adaptation, as a process carried out by the teacher that may include adding, deleting, modifying, simplifying, or reordering the content of a selected textbook.

⁷⁰ ENDEAN, “Applying Such Exercises”, pp. 44-45. Giuliani agrees with this approach: “The essential thing is to ‘apply’ the *Exercises*. What comes first is the spiritual experience of the retreatant, and it is to this experience that we apply the *Exercises* through adapting them. This adaptation is by no means a down-grading, quite the contrary. All the Exercises and all their different forms are applications to the particular case of each retreatant. And they will be all the better the more they are adapted to his personal experience.” Cf. LEFRANK and GIULIANI, *Freedom for Service*, p. 256. We see here how Giuliani brings together the two terms, application and adaptation and explains how one helps to bring out the other.

This second point is closely related to Ignatius' spiritual pedagogy of allowing the Creator to meet the person where he or she is, which he himself experienced in the time following his conversion. While the 'text' Ignatius used in his own process was different from his own *Spiritual Exercises*, that 'text' certainly influenced this later work. That 'text' included not only his illuminations and learnings at Manresa, but also what he learned still convalescing at Loyola and the fruits of his later process of reflection informed as well by the experiences and lessons learned from the many people to whom he later gave the Exercises.⁷¹ In fact, it could be argued that "applying" was in fact "integral to the process by which Ignatius actually composed his text, and should also inform how we read it and use it" today.⁷²

Another reason the language of adaptation (or even application) still seems controversial is that Ignatius raised the topic in relation to potential exercitants who in some way might be lacking or deficient: *rudos, con poca complisión, sin letras, de poco subiecto, de poca capacidad natural* (simple, uncultured or uneducated, of feeble constitution, unlearned, of little suitability and natural capacity, cf. [SpEx 18]). And while this certainly shows Ignatius' pastoral sensitivity, it has created the enduring sense that anything but the 'full Exercises' is indeed deficient.

While the first statement in *Annotation* 18 acts as a directive for the one giving the *Exercises*, the next sentence takes seriously into account the agency of the one receiving them: *según que se quisieren disponer, se debe de dar a cada uno, porque más se pueda ayudar y aprovechar*. A rough translation, without trying to alter the text for greater elegance, would be: "in accord with however they might want to dispose themselves, it should be given to each one, so that they can draw greater help and profit". We notice, in the next sentences of the annotation that Ignatius does not mention exactly what content should be given, but only offers some possible suggestions—again, it all depends on the disposition of the exercitant.

The one giving the *Exercises* must be attentive to this disposition and offer what is most relevant and beneficial to the one making them. However, we must be careful and not forget

⁷¹ "He said to me that as for the *Exercises* he had not produced them all at one time, rather that some things which he used to observe in his soul and find useful for himself it seemed to him could also be useful for others, and so he used to put them in writing: for example, regarding the examination of conscience with that method of the lines, etc. As for the elections, he told me specifically that he had drawn them from that variety of spirits and thoughts which he had had when he was in Loyola, when he was still ill from his leg", cf. *Autobiography*, 99.

⁷² ENDEAN, "Applying Such Exercises", p. 42.

what this profit is all about: growing in deeper intimacy and union with God. Ignatius' experience and our Christian belief suggest that this is something God desires too, and that God effects this greater union through the gift of God's Spirit. Further, we confess that the Spirit acts in ways we cannot predict or even imagine. In the end, the Exercises must be applied precisely because of this 'unpredictable' action of the Spirit.

We must also not forget that our experience of God does not begin with the Exercises. Each person comes to them with a particular history, and this history will determine how each one engages them. In the case of persons who have survived forced displacement, this reminder is particular poignant because, in most cases, their physical and psychic history will be peppered (or sometimes saturated) with incidents of trauma and violence, loss and pain, and their faith or spiritual history will be affected accordingly. As Howard Gray points out:

Thus, in the *Exercises* a person's prior religious history provides the best interior context for making the *Exercises*. The wise guide of the Ignatian experience should be alert to how history, as a pattern of God's prior communication to the one making the *Exercises*, defines the meaning of such terms as "disordered affections", "seeking and finding God's will", "great spirit and generosity toward their Creator and Lord", and "consolation, desolation, and temptation".⁷³

While this might seem logical, unfortunately many givers of the Exercises still overlook this maxim in their eagerness (often unconsciously) to use with new retreatants what has worked in the past with others. Not only can this practice result in offering exercises that are irrelevant and out of touch, but also in obviating the role of the Spirit in the whole process. But as Endean reminds us:

At the heart of Ignatius' *aplicar* is a sense of reverence for how God's Spirit can be at work in the person one meets, in ways that may in principle be surprising, unpredictable, and new [...]. The Ignatian *aplicar*, then, properly understood is anything but a watering down of the *Exercises*; on the contrary, it is only in interaction that the *Exercises* are fully understood.⁷⁴

So, givers of the *Exercises* must 'apply' themselves to grow into this sense of reverence and attune themselves to the prompting of the Spirit, trusting that the Spirit will compensate for

⁷³ HOWARD J. GRAY, "Joy and Friendship in the Fourth Week" in *The Way Supplement*, 99 (2000) 13. Gray continues: "the history Ignatius invites the one making the *Exercises* to integrate presumes another history, the religious autobiographical text of one's earlier experiences of God. Ignatian history is not objective but inter-subjective, i.e., God's communication to the retreatant's communication, the history "contained in the contemplation or meditation" (Exx 2). Thus, within the Exercises each scriptural event, each recollection of one's life, emerges within the consciousness of a retreatant as another episode in a lifelong narrative with God, a sustained dialogue, even when the person now making the *Exercises* had not previously realized God's presence: 'Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it' (Gen 28:16)", p. 11.

⁷⁴ ENDEAN, "Applying Such Exercises", p. 46.

their deficiencies and complement their gifts. In our efforts to develop spiritual exercises for survivors of forced displacement, we hope to be prompted by the guidance of the Spirit and, in following Endean, García Hirschfeld and Giuliani, we will do our best to 'apply' Ignatius' Exercises to meet their diverse needs.

2.1.2. The text or the needs of the exercitant

Application, adaptation, fidelity, identity, fundamentalism, flexibility, context, time, culture, interpretation, varying circumstances, exercitant's needs... These are all words that constantly appear in discussions concerning possible deviations from Ignatius' original text of the *Spiritual Exercises* as they seek to be applied and offered to people the world over. As we have seen, it has never been a question of whether such modification should take place, but rather of how, to what extent and of using what criteria.⁷⁵ And as we have already mentioned, one of the main issues of contention is whether to follow literally the structure and content of Ignatius' little book or give greater consideration to the rhythm of the exercitant. Even in answering this question, most givers of the Exercises would want to nuance their response: "It depends on whether..."

Though answers may vary and we might not be in agreement with all of them (or at least disagree with the priority or importance given to particular criteria), there is great value in considering how experienced givers and studiers of the Exercises have approached the issue of adaptability, for this can guide us in our own efforts to improve the quality of the *Ignatian* experience for ex-refugees. We have briefly considered how this application 'criteria' was developed in the early years of giving the Exercises (cf. *Directories*). A more recent study summarises the ideas and views on the adaptability and application of Ignatius' text as presented by authors in four magazines/publications on Ignatian spirituality in general and the Exercises in particular: *Christus* and *Cahiers de Spiritualité Ignatienne* (French-speaking), and *The Way* and *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (English-speaking).⁷⁶

⁷⁵ If we look carefully, at every step we stumble in the text upon the preoccupation of application. Thus, for example, the essence of the *Exercises* is to order *our particular life*; in the colloquies of the Third Exercise of the First Week we are asked to feel the disorder of *my* operations.

⁷⁶ Cf. PASCUAL CEBOLLADA, *Dar y hacer los Ejercicios. Concepciones de la práctica de los Ejercicios espirituales de Ignacio de Loyola en las áreas lingüísticas francesa e inglesa de Europa y América del Norte entre 1954 y 1992*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis submitted for the completion of the Doctorate in Theology, Centre Sèvres, Paris, 1993. Most of the resources which the author considers for his study are within the period ranging from the late 1970s to the early 1990's, though a few references are made to earlier publications, as the title of the thesis shows.

In analysing these articles, the author (Cebollada) concludes that while there is sometimes discrepancy among writers within a same publication, they usually tend to concur in their approach, which reinforces the thesis of “a linguistic cultural identity”. In general, the French-speaking contributors seem to give greater attention to the text itself. They talk of different ‘texts’ within Ignatius’ own and of its ‘law’ and ‘freedom’ usually without negative connotations, which might be found (e.g. in terms of ‘law’) among English-speakers, who might also object to the use of terms and images of sexist or militaristic character. The French-speakers in general also do not seem to feel the need to apply general principles of adaptation to particular cases. Of course this does not mean that in French-speaking countries the text is not applied or that in the English-speaking nations givers of the Exercises overlook its use. But each one does it following one’s own style.⁷⁷

All four publications seem to agree that the parts of the Exercises that require greater adaptation so as to take into account our contemporary vision of the world (and present-day realities such as the proliferation of forced mass movements) are the *Principle and Foundation*, some exercises of the First Week and the meditation on the *Kingdom*.⁷⁸ This should not come as a surprise, as most of the other parts of the original text have a strong scriptural base and Ignatius’ suggestions for prayer are more concise as well as less context/time based in those sections. Though not mentioned in this study, we would expect

⁷⁷ Cf. CEBOLLADA, *Dar y hacer los Ejercicios*, pp. 147-148. Thus, in *Christus*, we find an emphasis on the aspect of ‘fidelity’ to the practice of the Exercises, in particular fidelity to respecting the ‘word’ of the text to use it to achieve the goal which is intended. Though without spirit a text would be dead, we cannot forget that “it is the text that gives voice to the spirit”, p. 129. In *The Way*, though references are made to this respect for the text’s spirit, content, method, structure, dynamics or goal, greater priority is given to the question of adaptation, in particular warning, at different levels, of an ‘unreflective literalism’ (M. Ivens), and insisting on the responsibility of the director to accommodate the text to persons, contexts and the realities of each time which attempt to respond to specific contemporary issues, guided always of course, not by the personal opinion of the director but by the stirrings of the Spirit, pp. 133-135. Some authors in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, warn that in trying to be faithful to the text, directors should avoid ‘legalism’ (using it as a ‘legal code’) or fundamentalism, without taking into account problems of interpretation (meaning, literary genre, etc.) Cebollada quotes P. Endean who contrasts a ‘classicist’ to an ‘interactive’ approach. In the former, the implicit belief is that “God implanted all that mattered into the mind and heart of Ignatius” and therefore we cannot alter or adapt this ‘deposit’ of divine revelation, while the latter “places religious charism in the context of an ongoing relationship between God and a specific group of individuals”, p. 140. In the same publication, Roger Haight upholds the value of interpretation, not by changing the fundamental values of the text, but by upholding them, while making them ‘operative’, for new situations and persons “highlighting the distance between ourselves and Ignatius in order to create the freedom to make the reappropriation consciously and explicitly”, p.141. Finally, in *Cahiers de Spiritualité Ignatienne*, there seems to be a greater range in opinions, some giving more emphasis to the importance of following the literal text (cf. A. Chapelle), while others (cf. Gilles Cusson, Maurice Giuliani), opt for following the Exercises with ‘rigour’ and ‘freedom’, but favouring the latter, though also emphasising the importance for the director to know the original text well, pp. 143-145.

⁷⁸ Cf. CEBOLLADA, *Dar y hacer los Ejercicios*, p. 149.

that the sections on *rules*, (on penance, eating, thinking with the Church) would also require greater adaptation today. As mentioned earlier, this seems to be an issue of greater importance in English-speaking countries, where minority perspectives (i.e. feminine, indigenous), for example, are emphasised more—at least as expressed in their writings). In terms of the feminine perspective (as we saw in chapter 2), the issue appears to be not only a matter of language or terms being used, but also of understanding of specific life aspects from the point of view of women. Some authors (P. Sheldrake or Harnett, for example) have written that Ignatius' description of sin in terms of riches, honour and pride contrasts with the experience of many women, for whom their temptations or sins might be more often based on excessive dependency, passivity and low self-esteem.⁷⁹ While we might expect a similar gender-division among forcibly displaced people, we would also expect their understanding (and feeling) of sin to be influenced by additional factors linked with their displacement experience: disloyalty towards, and failure to fulfil expectations from, family and country, survival guilt, excessive 'selfishness' in placing their needs (in particular in matters of survival) above others', etc.

While contributors to the publications basically agree that in giving the Exercises to others we are not trying to duplicate Ignatius' own experience—in fact, it is agreed upon also that what we have received in his text is not an exact description of his own experience of the 'Exercises' either—Cebollada reminds us that still we cannot obviate the fact that everything does begin with Ignatius' experience. An experience that would have been influenced in some extent, as it would be expected, by his meetings with his own confessor and the books and other resources which were available to him at that time:

[La] experiencia [de Ignacio es] original y fundante, ya que permite una manera distinta de ver la realidad, a Dios, al hombre. Experiencia de Dios, que llega hasta el centro de la persona y la transforma. Su valor se mide no sólo por la intensidad con la que adviene, sino especialmente por su capacidad de provocar el cambio y de engendrar nuevas experiencias. Ignacio acompaña a otros que se "ejercitan"⁸⁰

Writing down the text of the *Exercises* allowed Ignatius to "channel his own experience, to express it, to generalise it for others" so it could be used and adapted. Part of their identity resides precisely in this *phenomenon* of transmission. Whether we call it 'spirit' or structure

⁷⁹ Cf. CEBOLLADA, *Dar y hacer los Ejercicios*, p. 138 (footnote 29).

⁸⁰ CEBOLLADA, *Dar y hacer los Ejercicios*, p. 150. Translation from the Spanish: "Ignatius' is an original and foundational experience, since it allows to see reality, God and humanity, in a different way. It is an experience of God that reaches far down to the core of the person and transforms it. Its value is not measured only by the intensity in which it is experienced, but especially by its capacity to bring about change and engender new experiences. Ignatius accompanies others that undergo 'exercises'".

or dynamic, the content of the text he gives has a specific sense which does not allow *all* interpretations (certainly not those which might go contrary to his goal of deepening one’s union with God or helping us to make an election), but which does leave an open door to other multiple interpretations at different times, which might even surpass Ignatius’ original intention. Thus, taking into account the *historical* (time) as well as *local* (context and culture) understanding of the text which has already been alluded to, it can be said that Ignatius’ Exercises are ‘relative’, not in the opposite sense to their being ‘absolute’, but in the sense that they are ‘relational’—related to other contextual factors. Thus, we could speak of a ‘recreation’ of the Exercises, which while transmitting Ignatius’ intuition and preserving that ‘spirit’, still opens new horizons which are not explicitly articulated in the text. One factor that might contribute to the preservation of this spirit is for the director, when engaging in this process of adaptation, to refer to the original text rather than other versions, themselves already adaptations to specific circumstances.⁸¹ Finally, and as Cebollada reminds us, though it might be a legitimate endeavour to assess the text on its own merit independently of its practice, its essence consists precisely in being ‘practiced’.⁸²

2.1.3. Adaptation and application through praxis: the giver-receiver relationship

As we have just mentioned, the key in establishing a relationship between the Ignatian text and the two other main elements—giver and receiver—of the Exercises is through their praxis. The ‘theory’ behind the Exercises was always intended to be put into practice. The *Exercises* are not simply to be read, but to be ‘lived’ and experienced. “Just as [...] are physical exercises [...]” [*SpEx* 1]. And as Iglesias points out, a key issue when putting the Exercises into praxis is not only what the text of the *Exercises* says or what the method requires at a particular stage of the process, but ‘who’ is the one (the soul) that we (as givers) must help and ‘how’ and ‘for what’ specific purpose at this particular moment in his or her life. In offering Exercises to survivors of forced displacement, these three questions will need to be asked constantly.

⁸¹ Cf. CEBOLLADA, *Dar y hacer los Ejercicios*, p. 152.

⁸² Cf. CEBOLLADA, *Dar y hacer los Ejercicios*, p. 151. Also, “Típico de los Ejercicios es que fueron redactados para poder ser vividos, practicados. Como dice Dhôtel, ‘ils ne dévoileront leur pleine intelligibilité qu’à mesure qu’ils seront faits’. Su condición de existencia es, pues, que puedan seguir siendo transmitidos. Sólo así conservan su identidad, ya que fueron concebidos para ello”. Translation from the Spanish and French : “Typical of the Exercises is that they were written to be lived out, to be practiced. As Dhôtel says ‘they will not reveal their full intelligibility until they are made’. Their condition of existence is, then, that they continue to be transmitted. Only thus will they maintain their identity, since they were conceived for this purpose”, p. 131.

This 'soul' could very well be 'incarnated', for example, in an ex-refugee woman who lost three of her children during the conflict that forced her to leave her home of forty years, who spent five years in a refugee camp waiting for resettlement, who has now spent two years in a new country and yet continues to feel like a stranger there, while feeling also alienated from God. What it is that she needs *most* at this stage of her life in terms of spiritual nourishment (besides other needs), and how she can attain it, might not be that clear (in fact it might take some time to clarify what this might be), but despite (or rather because of) this lack of clarity, the giver of the Exercises will need to ask herself this question at each stage of the process of spiritual accompaniment. This questioning will in turn determine the particular criteria followed in the use of the method, which as part of its essence contains this necessary applicability, and which in turn rules out any attempt at uniformity.⁸³ Iglesias uses the term 'personal inculturation' to refer to this very Ignatian intuition of what is required for the giver of the Exercises to be able to help the one making them.

At the same time, this 'personal inculturation' in adapting the Exercises to meet the situation and needs of the exercitant cannot but be affected by the personal experience of the giver, in particular when that giver sets out to develop a particular set of exercises based on Ignatius' own.⁸⁴ This should not surprise us, since this is how the Exercises came about in the first place. Exploring the sources of the *Exercises* Codina lists: the unction or anointing of the Holy Spirit, the *interior experience of Ignatius* in his own soul, his experience and relationships with others, the Sacred Scriptures and Ignatius' own personality, transformed by divine grace.⁸⁵ Codina also points out that no one can have an experience of the spiritual life unless he or she has experienced it in his interior life; neither will a person be able to guide others unless he or she has reflected experientially what goes on in him/her.⁸⁶ This aspect of interiorisation and the effect it has on the giver of the Exercises should not be underestimated.

⁸³ Cf. IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", p. 49.

⁸⁴ Tad Dunne, a spiritual theologian and acknowledged expert on the Exercises notes that in his view "no wise mentor [guide or director] actually 'follows the text'. Even those who claim to give the *Exercises* according to the book rely on a great deal more than the book. They use their *discretion* as a bridge between the old text and a flesh-and-blood retreatant trying to listen to the Spirit in a culture that would astound Ignatius". Cf. TAD DUNNE, *Spiritual Mentoring: Guiding People through Spiritual Exercises to Life Decisions—A Companion to Spiritual Exercises for Today*, San Francisco: HarpersSanFrancisco 1991, p. xiv.

⁸⁵ Cf. ARTURO CODINA, *Los Orígenes de los Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignacio de Loyola: Estudio Histórico*, Barcelona: Biblioteca Balmes 1926, pp. 73-74.

⁸⁶ Cf. CODINA, *Los Orígenes de los Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignacio de Loyola*, p. 73.

Directors who have had particular experiences might be best suited to guide others with similar experiences or to count on others to help them develop a particular approach to the Exercises—someone who has worked with people recovering from alcoholism or victims of sexual abuse and who has shared their lives, could apply, based on those relationships and experiences, Ignatius' *Exercises* to better meet their needs. The situations and conditions we face today are such that Ignatius could have never imagined, and they go beyond the practice of giving 'simpler' exercises to those who might be *rudos* or without suitability to receive them in full. What aspects would need to be considered, for example, to offer Exercises to women who have been victims of domestic violence, to remarried divorcees who are deeply religious and practicing of their faith, to those who have experienced forced displacement in their lives and have lived in 'exile' for the better part of their lives? Of course, we could not expect to find givers of the Exercises to be experts in all of these areas, but what we want to highlight here is the need for adequate formation and training for those givers who are indeed interested in ministering to particular groups, including survivors of forced displacement.

2.1.4. *The receiver and readiness for different types of Spiritual Exercises*

The question of whether the Exercises—in whichever of the forms prescribed by Ignatius in his *Annotations*—should be adapted to meet the specific needs and circumstances of an exercitant, should be preceded by another question, 'What type of Exercises is this person ready for?' And further, 'How do we know that he or she is ready for them?' Of course we can only find this out by getting to know the person well—and as we will see later, *spiritual conversation*, specifically as envisaged by Ignatius, is of the essence in this process.

As we pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, we should notice that the issue here is not whether a person is ready to make the full Exercises or not. Rather, it is about what is best for this person and his or her spiritual development at a particular stage in his or her life. Unfortunately, this issue of readiness has been for too long linked (in a negative way) with the issue of adaptation as understood from Ignatius' final *Annotations*. In regards to application of his Exercises, Ignatius writes in *Annotation 18* (cf. [*SpEx* 18]) of adapting them to the condition of those engaging in them, and he includes factors such as age, education and talent or ability. He combines or brings together all these factors in what he terms 'having *subiecto*', and because of the importance of this Ignatian element, we will explore in greater detail what

this means in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that while these initial terms do not have a negative connotation, the ones he uses next for people with certain 'limitations' do: "uneducated", "of weak constitution", "rather simple and illiterate", "of little aptitude", "of little physical strength", "one from whom little fruit is to be expected". Yet, while these characteristics seem to imply that these people would be 'second-best' candidates for the full Exercises, it certainly does not mean that for Ignatius they were 'less entitled' to benefit from his Exercises, and he constantly encouraged the use of shorter forms (not only in *Annotation* 18 but in other writings, in particular some of his letters) for the great majority of people⁸⁷:

About the *Spiritual Exercises* our father has commissioned me to say there should be a record in every group of what you thought right to adopt with men and also women (but let women come to the church to make the Exercises). He means the Exercises of the First Week, leaving them some method of praying according to their capacity, and this is not meant to be with any restriction of persons, provided they take a few hours in the day for that effect. In this way, the utility of the Exercises can be extended to many, up to the General Confession and some method of prayer as has been said.⁸⁸

Ignatius was a great pedagogue and this intuition was part of his genius. In fact, his suggestions in the 18th *Annotation* are simply principles of good pedagogy: take people where they are, do not give them things that might lead them to fail or to feel as failures, but do give them what they are able to do and want to do. And a good teacher also knows that different students learn particular subjects or topics in different ways—hence the importance of adaptability and flexibility. Taking people where one finds them and carefully and patiently moving toward the goal was Ignatius' most distinctive element of spiritual conversation.⁸⁹ And, as we will also see in the next chapter, though some people might not have been ready initially for the full Exercises, they may have been later, given the appropriate nourishment and formation.

Of course, for Ignatius that some people were not ready for the full Exercises did not mean that he was unconcerned about them. On the contrary, they are mentioned in regards to the

⁸⁷ Certainly, in early Jesuit practice, there does not seem to have been any discrimination against particular groups of persons: "And when we ask who were the people who might make the *Exercises* in this wide sense, the answer we get from the Directories is impressively all-embracing. Virtually no age-group, no social or religious category, no level of spiritual or educational attainment, seems excluded on principle [...]. The humblest class of exercitant is the *rudis*—the person lacking intellectual subtlety, reflective capacity and quite possibly literacy. Proceeding up the scale we find mention of 'the slightly more gifted', the gifted who seek only to purge their conscience; people with both the mental and spiritual aptitude for the full *Exercises* but who have neither the time to make them nor a compelling need". Cf. IVENS, "The Eighteenth Annotation and the Early Directories", p. 4.

⁸⁸ From a circular letter by Ignatius to Jesuit superiors in 1554, *MHSJ* 76, p. 106. Quoted by IVENS, "The Eighteenth Annotation and the Early Directories", p. 7.

⁸⁹ Cf. ELIZABETH LIEBERT, "The Limits of Adaptability: The Eighteenth Annotation in Developmental Perspective" in *The Way* 42, n. 3 (2003) 110.

ministries in which Jesuits are to engage.⁹⁰ Moreover, they were certainly not regarded as lower or second-class persons. As Liebert perceptively points out:

People unfamiliar with developmental theories often assume that higher is better. In one sense it is: more developed people have more tools to deal with what life brings them. But it does not follow that higher is holier. Holiness is about singleness of purpose, generosity and integrity regardless of one's developmental stage.⁹¹

As we have mentioned earlier, for Ignatius, the call was to help souls, all souls! His suggestion to Jesuits of his time to offer the full Exercises to those 'suited' for this labour-intensive experience was pragmatic: time then (at it is still today) was at a premium, and he wanted to reach those who could make the greatest difference in the Church and the world, as we see in his directives in the *Constitutions* in terms of criteria for choice of ministries.⁹²

Finally, it is also important to consider carefully what Ignatius says at the beginning of the 18th *Annotation*: "The *Spiritual Exercises* must be adapted to the condition of the one who is to engage in them [...]". Ignatius does not say: "for those who are not suited for the *Spiritual Exercises* we should offer other types of help". Further, Ignatius says: "Thus exercises that he could not easily bear, or from which he would derive no profit, should not be given to one with little natural ability or of little physical strength. Similarly, each one should be given those exercises that would be more helpful and profitable [...]". Thus, for Ignatius, 18th *Annotation* forms of the *Spiritual Exercises* are *Spiritual Exercises* as much as those of the 20th *Annotation* version. And as mentioned earlier, they may contribute to a "deepening of the inner life" (as well as provide space for a developmental stage change) so that giving the full Exercises might be possible in the future.⁹³ The question of readiness comes from where people are at, and whatever that place is, is a good place with which to begin.

⁹⁰ Cf. Letter of Ignatius to Giovanni Pelletari, 13 June 1551, in IGNACIO OF LOYOLA, *Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola*, selected and translated by William J. Young, Chicago: Loyola University Press 1959, pp. 247-248.

⁹¹ LIEBERT, "The Limits of Adaptability", p.120

⁹² "The more universal the good is, the more it is divine. Therefore, preference ought to be given to those persons and places which, through their own improvement, become a cause which can spread the good accomplished to many others who are under their influence or take guidance from them. For that reason, the spiritual aid which is given to important and public persons ought to be regarded as more important, since it is a more universal good. This is true whether these persons are laymen such as princes, lords, magistrates or ministers of justice, or whether they are clerics such as prelates. The same also holds true of the spiritual aid which is given to persons distinguished for learning and authority, because of that reason of its being the more universal good". Cf. [Co 622, 8, 9].

⁹³ LIEBERT, "The Limits of Adaptability", p. 120.

As it would be expected, it will be easier in some cases than in others to determine exactly 'where an exercitant might be at'. The holistic approach we have emphasised throughout this work suggests that a given point of departure for engagement with Ignatian *exercises* will be influenced not only by an exercitant's spiritual concerns or past faith history, but also by his or her living conditions and circumstances (physical and mental health state, meaningful employment or study, access to resources, etc.), relationships (past and present), external influences (political, economic, social and cultural in country of residence), and many other factors. While we might expect that in 'ordinary' or 'mainstream' circumstances (even with the difficulties associated with defining what is 'ordinary' or 'mainstream'), it might be easier to assess this 'place of departure', we should also expect that this will not be the case for most survivors of forced displacement, whose lives can be characterised as anything but 'ordinary'. We have already addressed in the previous two chapters some of the so-called 'external' issues that would have greatly impacted the lives of survivors of forced displacement. In the next chapter, we consider in greater detail the more 'internal' factors, as we seek to define or at least obtain a sharper description of an ex-refugee as '*subiecto*' of the Exercises. Of course, what we are seeking is not a 'one-fits-all' type of formula, but rather a set of guidelines or characteristics that might help us develop more relevant *spiritual exercises* to meet their needs.

2.1.5. The giver and receiver of the Exercises and Spiritual Conversation as a graced point of encounter

As we mentioned earlier, when someone approaches us with a desire to grow in his or her spiritual life, to grow into deeper intimacy with God, as Ignatian directors we will ask ourselves the question "What type of *Exercises* should we offer to this particular person?" We might not be thinking of a particular application or adaptation at this stage, though this might come later. Of course, the answer to this question will depend on the persons' previous spiritual experiences, their present context, their desires, circumstances as well as many other factors. And the only way to find out this information is through conversation or, more concretely, spiritual conversation. But what does this pillar of Ignatian spirituality entail? Michael Hansen succinctly summarises its essence as he writes:

Spiritual conversation is less about the content of a conversation than it is about the relationship between two people speaking and listening. While spiritual things make for spiritual conversations, what really makes a conversation 'spiritual' is the way each person holds the other in loving reverence as they converse. Each gives the other person deep respect,

each remains humble before the other, and each is open to being moved by the other. So when Ignatius instructs his men on how to converse, he begins with the humble awareness of the other, including the awareness that Jesus gave his life for the person conversing with them.⁹⁴

Reverence, respect and humility before the other—this was Father Ignatius' way of proceeding when engaging with others in spiritual conversation. Through this careful ministry of conversation, Ignatius cultivated in others the necessary personal gifts and generosity that rendered great benefits as time went on. So, for him, these conversations were usually only the beginning of what would generally become a journey which produced rich fruits, in particular in regards to his *Exercises*:

[...] The experience of the pedagogy of the *Exercises* began, for Ignatius, in the spiritual conversation—simple as it may be—concerning the basic elements of a spiritual life. It was only slowly, as these conversations developed, that he came to propose the more structured *Exercises* to the retreatant.⁹⁵

Thus, Ignatius' genius for spiritual conversation is closely related to the adaptations called for in the 18th *Annotation*, and hence the importance of this topic in our present discussion regarding the application of Ignatius' Exercises to meet the needs of survivors of forced displacement. Not only will the questions we ask ex-refugees to determine their needs, disposition, desires and hopes be important in and of themselves, but also 'how' we ask these questions will shape the answers we receive from them. More importantly, the quality of our conversation—assessed from among other criteria by the degree of our reverence, respect and humility before forcibly displaced people—will affect our relationship with them and the extent of the service we can provide to them as spiritual companions. Because of its significance, we explore in some detail some of the key aspects involved in this art of spiritual conversation, from the Ignatian perspective.

Writing about spiritual conversation, and appealing to the examples of Fathers Ignatius, Xavier and Favre, Jerónimo Nadal describes the necessary steps for this most essential ministry of spiritual conversation by Jesuits.⁹⁶ First and foremost, we should never forget that “Christ is the infinite Word of God and we are the ministers of this Word, for it is he who

⁹⁴ MICHAEL HANSEN, *the First Spiritual Exercises: A Manual for Those Who Give the Exercises*, Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press 2013, p. 35.

⁹⁵ LEFRANK and GIULIANI, *Freedom for Service*, pp. 251-252.

⁹⁶ Cf. JERÓNIMO NADAL, “Sixth Exhortation”, MHSJ MN 5, pp. 820-865, cited by THOMAS CLANCY, *The Conversational Word of God: A Commentary on the Doctrine of St Ignatius of Loyola concerning Spiritual Conversation, with Four early Jesuit Texts*, St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1978, pp.52-54. Nadal's comments appear in chapter 4 of the Exhortation on “Any Other Ministrations Whatsoever of the Word of God”, and we allude to them in the rest of this section.

sends us, he who teaches us, he who gives our lives meaning, he who gives us the grace to receive this message and know that it comes from him". In this ministry of the Word, spiritual conversation is an excellent method for helping our neighbour. While sermons and lectures are useful for groups, spiritual conversation offers "greater liberty and effectiveness because one can fit the words to the disposition and reaction of the individual" (cf. *Annotation* 18).

According to Nadal, what made Ignatius so good at this ministry was his "zeal for souls and his gift of discernment... [which] enabled him to endear himself to everyone he met". For Ignatius, the first thing to do was to concentrate one's heart and soul in loving the person you wanted to help. Despite any of their faults, he would always find something in them to love, even the good works they had done in the past, if he could not find any present ones. To do this, one ought to find out as much as possible about the person's present and past life and deeds, his/her abilities, intelligence, physical and emotional makeup, so as to anticipate their needs and disposition. A great deal of patience and careful listening is required here. And with survivors of forced displacement it demands also a great deal of sensitivity, consideration and care lest our solicitation of information is regarded as an imposition or brings to the surface unwelcomed or hurtful memories and feelings.

Further, the conversation should start with what the person wants to talk about, based on his/her interests and state of life. When meeting survivors of forced displacement for the first time, many people are eager to learn about their stories, about the hardships and challenges they faced during their displacement experience. They also assume that these survivors will want to share, if not all, at least part of their stories. Yet, many ex-refugees, in particular those who have been in their country of resettlement for some time, are often reticent to enter into a new relationship disclosing the most painful period of their lives. In time, they may be willing to share some of those experiences, but only when the time is 'right' for them. We can certainly learn from Ignatius about this ability to wait until the time is 'right'. For example, he was always careful not to bring out a person's sins or vices at the start but would wait for the person to bring these up first.⁹⁷ Instead, he would initially talk about the deeds of

⁹⁷ Interestingly, Ignatius' suggestions regarding a person who never broaches the subject of his or her personal problems or faults mirrors his suggestions in *Annotation* 18 for the "one who wishes no further help than some instruction and the attainment of a certain degree of peace: [They] may be given the Particular Examination of Conscience, [24-31], and after that the General Examination of Conscience, [32-43]. Along with this, let him be

holy people, the life of Christ, his teachings, and various good habits, speaking slowly, with gentleness and patience. Then he would watch carefully for an opportunity to give the conversation a religious turn towards the things of the Spirit—a method referred to by Ignatius as “entering by their door so as to come out by our door”.

Taking Ignatius as example, and using as his sources Ignatius' deeds, his teachings in the *Constitutions* and his letters and instructions to individuals and groups, Clancy summarises what he sees as the steps or qualities required in the ministry of spiritual conversation.⁹⁸ These expand on Nadal's elements presented above. As we briefly consider them, we should remember that they are proposed having Jesuits in mind as well as their ministries to help souls. But we should remember too, that they are meant as much for any spiritual accompanier today as they were then for this first generation of Jesuits.

Thus for Ignatius, the first step (or rather quality) to engage in this ministry was for the Jesuit to have a certain basic natural aptitude for it. And for Ignatius this included every person in the Society, from those in formation to the General of the order.⁹⁹ This basic quality should be built up by developing what Ignatius called ‘habits of modesty’—in speech, appearance and demeanour. His letter to Salmerón, Jay and Canisius on their way to the Council of Trent is a great example of this. As Clancy aptly observes, “[Ignatius] wanted his followers to translate in their external bearing the internal peace and humility that was the fruit of a profound faith and commitment to God”. That people should be attracted to a Jesuit who “showed his inner

given for half an hour each morning the method of prayer on the Commandments and on the Capital Sins, etc. [238-248]. Weekly confession should be recommended to him, and if possible, the reception of Holy Communion every two weeks, or even better, every week if he desires it. This method is more appropriate for those who have little natural ability or are illiterate. Let each of the commandments be explained to them, and also the Capital Sins, the use of the five senses, the precepts of the Church, and the Works of Mercy”. Cf. [SpEx 18]. Nadal points out that “[...] one can certainly find an opportunity to urge him to make a good confession, or even a general confession, to frequent the sacraments, to learn more about prayer, and to do works of charity with the motive of serving God”.

⁹⁸ Cf. CLANCY, *The Conversational Word of God*, pp. 14-34. Michael Hansen has also drawn up an equivalent list under the heading of ‘Ignatius, in his own words, for wiser spiritual conversations in daily life’, and has grouped Ignatius' way of spiritual conversation into seven approaches, which include: assume good in the other's statement and viewpoint, cf. [SpEx 22]; beginning at the bottom (“he should preserve the proper manner of proceeding, aiming at humility by starting from below [...]”), cf. *Letter 24*; go in the other person's door, cf. *Letter 32*; develop interior composure and maturity (“this will be much fostered by outward as well as inward gravity in your gait, gestures [...]”), cf. *Letter 18*; listen long and willingly (“In dealings with anyone, say little and be slow to speak [...]”), cf. *Letter 32*; remain in the middle way ([...] becoming all things to men), cf. *Letter 18*; speak with order, kindness, and love when urging spiritual progress, cf. *Letter 123*. Cf. HANSEN, *The First Spiritual Exercises: A Manual for Those Who Give the Exercises*, pp. 66-67. Translations of letters and their numbers given here appear in *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*. Translated by M. Palmer, J. Padberg, and J. McCarthy, St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 2006.

⁹⁹ Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, [Co 115, 349, 461, 624, 729, 802, 806].

peace by exterior composure”.¹⁰⁰ And in our case, that survivors of forced displacement should also feel at ease and safe in the presence of spiritual guides and companions who exude this Spirit-given peace and serenity.

As mentioned earlier, it was Ignatius zeal and love for his neighbour that made him so good at this ministry, and he expected nothing less of every member of the Society: they all should be “zealous for the salvation of souls” (cf. [Co 156]). Ignatius would often speak of holy desires in connection with this (cf. [Co 101, 424, 638, 790]), especially in his instructions to Jesuits being sent on missions, because he believed that each Jesuit should be convinced of the worth and importance of helping every single one of one’s neighbours, made in the image of God. As mentioned by Nadal above, they were to hold every person in great affection and love them truly, avoiding to speak ill of anyone, as Ignatius himself never did. This instruction of showing welcome and acceptance is particularly significant for survivors of forced displacement because many of them often feel unwelcome or not totally accepted in their new homes, even years after resettlement, because the colour of their skin, their faith tradition or their cultural background is different from that of the majority receiving group. Whether this is only a perception or reality is another question, but the feelings of rejection are indeed real. Givers of the Exercises to ex-refugees should keep this in mind and make an effort to transmit this sense of welcome and acceptance to them through words and actions in mindful and proactive ways.

Though the ministry of spiritual conversation was to be applied to all, since in reality Jesuits could not deal with all people, they should try to engage first with persons from whom greater fruit could be expected. This was the same for all Jesuit apostolates. Again, we see that Ignatius himself modelled these criteria throughout his life, engaging with different people in different places, always looking for the greater good of the Church. As expected, his counsels on the selection of ‘suitable’ people for Jesuit ministries elicited criticisms, especially in terms of accusations of misogyny and social elitism. However, as we pointed out in the previous chapter, Ignatius was a man of his time and his dealings with many women clearly show that his view of women in general was higher than that of many of his contemporaries. To counteract the charge of elitism, it is also enough to refer to the list of ministries that Jesuits

¹⁰⁰ Cf. CLANCY, *The Conversational Word of God*, pp. 16, 18. Similarly, this comes across in his instructions to scholastics going to class (cf. [Co 349]) and his guidelines regarding novices (cf. [Co 349]).

were expected to perform, as enumerated both in the *Formula of the Institute* of 1550¹⁰¹ as ‘works of charity’ and then again as ‘works of mercy’ in the *Constitutions* (cf. [Co 650]). Also, as Clancy points out, most ‘common’ people in the 16th c. ordinarily would have had little or no education and might have had difficulties understanding the Jesuits who tried to engage them in spiritual conversations: “The language they understood was the language of deeds and that was what Ignatius prescribed”.¹⁰² Ministering to the needs of forcibly displaced people has been a concern of the Society of Jesus for the last forty years, consistently characterising it as one of its universal apostolic priorities. It has certainly been a ministry of ‘word’—particularly in the area of advocacy—but mainly of deed through many service outlets. And it has also been a ministry of presence and accompaniment where many a spiritual conversation has taken place.

Finally, an important part of the holy gift of conversation was to know when and how to listen, cultivating silence, so as to understand the meanings and leanings and desires of those who speak. Once again, Ignatius provides the model for this in his well-recorded interactions, among others, with Xavier, Favre and later Nadal.¹⁰³ And as this process might take time—we know, for example, that he ‘pursued’ Xavier and Favre (and in a sense also Nadal) for many years—great patience might also be required.¹⁰⁴ Lastly, in winning over those persons, as previously remarked, deeds were usually of greater value than words: a well-known maxim considered one of Ignatius’ fundamental principles in the *Spiritual Exercises* (cf. *SpEx* [230]).

¹⁰¹ As we saw in the previous chapter, these included: teaching catechism to children and unlettered persons and the administration of sacraments (spiritual ministries), as well as reconciling the estranged, serving the sick in hospitals, and ministering to prisoners.

¹⁰² Cf. CLANCY, *The Conversational Word of God*, p. 25. And one has only to look at the background of those recruited for the Society to see that Ignatius had not set up a social barrier for the admission of Jesuits.

¹⁰³ As Nadal puts it: “He got to know men so well that he worked wonders with them. It was as if he could peer into a man’s soul and when he spoke men had to admit that he knew them better than they knew themselves”. Cf. MN, V, 833.

¹⁰⁴ “C’est par la conversation qu’il se gagna ses compagnons. Favre parlait avec Ignace dans des entretiens sans fin, pour le plus grand détriment de leurs études à tous les deux! Xavier sera saisi ‘par la douceur de ses paroles’. Et plus tard Ignace fera un devoir à ses fils de posséder la ‘gratia sermonis’ et de pratiquer la ‘conversation spirituelle’. English translation from the French: *It is through conversation that he will win over his companions. Favre will talk with Ignatius in endless interviews, much to the detriment for both of their studies! Xavier will be seized ‘by the sweetness of his words’. Ignatius will later make a point to his sons to possess the ‘gratia sermonis’ to practice ‘spiritual conversations’*. Cf. Maurice Giuliani, “Qu’attendait Saint Ignace des Exercices?” in *Christus* 10 (1956), p. 176. Based on Ignacio Casanovas’ study, *La Vocació del P. Jeroni Nadal*, Iparraguirre gives us a concise and insightful account of Nadal’s struggles, (recounting both his emotional and spiritual crises), to accept Ignatius’ invitation to join the Society: it would take ten years (since Ignatius’ initial invitation in 1535) before Nadal would surrender his desires for riches and honour and would join in the mission of the Society. Cf. Iparraguirre, *Historia*, Vol 1, pp. 202-204.

For Ignatius, every aspect of the ministry of spiritual conversation had as its goal the greater glory of God, by trying to find the most appropriate manner to deal with a person that could contribute towards this goal. For some this might lead to confession or to a greater knowledge of the truths of the faith through catechism lessons; for others, to an experience of the Spiritual Exercises of the First Week or even the full Exercises—all part of the Ignatian plan of evangelisation.¹⁰⁵

As it is well known, developing this art of spiritual conversation takes practice, trial-and-error, labour and patience, but without it all the givers' efforts to provide the best possible experience of the Exercises to the people they serve—in whatever form or application—would fall short. Clancy reminds us that the last means used by Ignatius' early companions to improve their spiritual conversation skills and method of dealing with others was to stay in touch with the Old Master, Ignatius himself, by means of frequent and detailed letters. In many of his responses to these Jesuits, the most important thing Ignatius gave them was encouragement. The art of dealing with others was a difficult one to learn and one should never be discouraged, even when progress was slow.¹⁰⁶

In this section we have explored the organic relationship between the text, the giver and the receiver of the *Exercises*. We will summarise its learnings as well as those of the next section—in terms of what might prove beneficial in the development of our *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement—at the end of the chapter. We now turn to the more theoretical, but essential, question of what might be involved in the textual interpretation of a classical text such as that of Ignatius' *Exercises*.

2.2. Hermeneutics and the *Spiritual Exercises*

Textual interpretation falls within the so called discipline of hermeneutics, a methodology concerned with how to interpret issues that arise from dealing with meaningful human actions and the products of such actions, especially diverse types of texts. The long history of

¹⁰⁵ It is interesting to note Giuliani's bold assertion linking the ministry of giving the *Spiritual Exercises* to the ministry of spiritual conversation: "Donner les Exercices, ce ne sera rien d'autre que substituer à une conversation spontanée et abandonnée aux hasards des inspirations divines, une conversation réfléchie et dominée par un plan plus ou moins rigoureux". English translation from the French: *To give the Exercises is nothing else but to substitute a spontaneous conversation open to divine inspirations with a planned conversation guided by a more or less rigorous plan*. Cf. Giuliani, "Qu'attendait Saint Ignace des Exercices?", pp. 176-177.

¹⁰⁶ CLANCY, *The Conversational Word of God*, p. 34.

hermeneutics means that both the issues and the tools it uses to address such issues have evolved considerable over time, so that even today there is no definite consensus on what ‘true’ or ‘truthful’ textual interpretation is.¹⁰⁷ The scope of this study prevents us from entering in depth into this debate, so our discussion is limited to highlighting those aspects which might give us a better idea of the complexities we might expect in applying and adapting Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises* to forcibly displaced peoples, and in particular how the text of the *Exercises* might be read, received and interpreted (cf. reader-response criticism) by people of such varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and whose lives have also been altered by extreme and traumatic circumstances.¹⁰⁸

2.2.1. The meaning of a ‘classic’

Dante’s *Divina Comedia*. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Homer’s *The Iliad*. St Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*. They are all considered ‘classics’. But how does a particular text, or any other work of art, for that matter, acquire this notable designation? David Tracy suggests that ‘classics’ designate those “expressions of the human spirit [that] so disclose a compelling

¹⁰⁷ As it has evolved in modern times, the field of hermeneutics has been defined in at least six fairly distinct ways. As Palmer points out, from the beginning the word has denoted the science (and later the art) of interpretation, especially the principles of proper textual exegesis. Progressively, the field of hermeneutics has been interpreted as: (1) the theory of biblical exegesis; (2) a general philological methodology; (3) the science of all linguistic understanding; (4) the methodological foundation of *Geisteswissenschaften* (‘humanities’); (5) the phenomenology of existence and of existential understanding; and (6) the systems of interpretation used by human beings to reach the meaning behind myths and symbols. These definitions not only connote several historical stages but also point to an important ‘moment’, approach or emphasis to the problems of interpretation. Thus, they might be referred to as the biblical, philological, scientific, *geisteswissenschaftliche*, existential, and cultural emphases and each represents essentially a standpoint from which hermeneutics is viewed. Cf. RICHARD E. PALMER, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press 1969, p. 33. For example, regarding the theory of biblical exegesis, an important hermeneutical relationship exists between the New and Older Testaments as Jesus interprets himself to the Jews in terms of scriptural prophecy, and further as the writers of the gospels and Pauline letters seek to ‘interpret’ Jesus to their audiences according to a certain system of understanding, cf. PALMER, *Hermeneutics*, p. 35. In terms of the phenomenology of existential understanding, Gadamer affirms that the hermeneutical phenomenon—of understanding and of the correct interpretation of what has been understood—should not be concerned primarily with satisfying the methodological ideal of science, but with knowledge and with truth. Cf. HANS-GEORG GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed., London: Sheed and Ward 1981, p. xi. After Heidegger, he asserts that hermeneutics is an encounter with ‘being’ (human reality itself) through language: “hermeneutics is plunged into the fully philosophical questions of the relationship of language to being, understanding, history, existence and reality”, cf. PALMER, *Hermeneutics*, p. 43. And Ricoeur approaches hermeneutics as a process or system of deciphering by which the deeper significance of symbolic texts (which have multiple meanings), is revealed beneath the manifest content (cultural emphases), cf. PALMER, *Hermeneutics*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸ Reader-response criticism is a school of literary theory that emphasises a reader’s (or audience’s) experience of a literary work—completing its meaning through interpretation—in contrast to other theories and schools which focus their attention primarily on the author or the content and form of the said work. Though literary theory had paid some attention to a reader’s role in creating meaning for a literary work in the past, modern reader-response criticism developed into a field of its own in the 1960s and 1970s particularly in the United States and Germany, through works by Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Norman Holland, Roland Barthes and others.

truth about our lives that we cannot deny them some kind of normative status”: *Human beings are created to praise, reverence and serve God [...]* (cf. [SpEx 23]). Together with Whitehead, he affirms that in them we find something valuable and important, a disclosure of reality which eventually transforms us—“indeed a realised experience of that which is essential, that which endures”.¹⁰⁹ And as something that ‘endures’ it is not confined by the limits of time. For Gadamer, “the classical is what resists historical criticism because its historical dominion, the binding power of its validity that is preserved and handed down, precedes all historical reflection and continues through it”.¹¹⁰ He affirms that, as Hegel says, the ‘classical’ is “that which signifies itself and hence also interprets itself”. In other words,

[...] that which speaks in such a way that it is not a statement about what is past, a mere testimony to something that still needs to be interpreted, but says something to the present as if it were said specially to it. What we call ‘classical’ does not first require the overcoming of historical distance, for in its own constant communication it does overcome it. The classical, then, is certainly ‘timeless’.¹¹¹

This timeless aspect ensures that new though related understandings of the same classic will occur with a similar force of revelatory power at later periods of our lives: “the text will still compel and concentrate our attention with the same kind of power of recognition of an essential truth about ourselves and our lives”.¹¹² And this will be true for each member of a community of accomplished readers over the centuries who further verify the classical status of a work of art.

Further, every classic contains its own plurality and encourages a pluralism of readings, as multiple as these ‘accomplished readers’ or as the emphases given to any one of the four basic elements in the totality of any work of art: the artist who creates the work, the work itself, the world the work creates or reveals, and the audience the work affects. For Ricoeur, these elements are constitutive of a ‘strategy of persuasion’ that has the reader as its end-point or target, starts with the author, and crosses through the work. And it is to this strategy of persuasion that the reader replies “in appropriating the world proposed by the text”.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ DAVID TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, London: SCM Press Ltd 1981, p. 108.

¹¹⁰ GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, p. 255. What we call ‘classical’ is [...] “a consciousness of something enduring, of significance that cannot be lost and is independent of all the circumstances of time [...] a kind of timeless present that is contemporaneous with every other age”, p. 256.

¹¹¹ GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, p. 257.

¹¹² TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 115.

¹¹³ PAUL RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*, translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd. 1988, p. 159. Three moments need to be considered then, to which correspond three neighbouring, yet distinct, disciplines: (1) the strategy as concocted by the author and directed

Without a reader to appropriate it, there is no world unfolded before the text. Thus, the act of reading becomes one link in the chain of history of the reception of a classical work by the public. And while the reader is *affected* by the work—in a combined experience of passivity/activity where the ‘reception’ of a text occurs through the very ‘action’ of reading it—in actualising the *reader* who has been *prestructured* in and through the text, the reader, in turn, transforms the text.¹¹⁴

2.2.2. *The interpretation of a ‘classic’ and the ‘community’ of interpreters*

The interpreter of a classic comes to the text as a subject holding a certain ‘preunderstanding’ of the subject matter of that text: his or her personal questions and opinions, expectations and desires, even fears and hopes, are present in that preunderstanding. And yet, although deeply personal and individual, this preunderstanding is never only personal nor static, because it is itself informed, both negatively and positively, by the history of the effects and influences of its culture.¹¹⁵ The subject of the interpreter, therefore, is always a social subject, formed by a particular community. Such is the case of receivers of the *Spiritual Exercises*, their ‘latest interpreters’, who are formed directly by their givers and indirectly by centuries of Ignatian retreat-giving tradition.

When interpreters approach a classic, they engage in dialogue with the text and this dialogue will demand that they concentrate, above all, on the subject matter of the text: the questions, responses, hints, resonances, feelings—the ‘world’ disclosed in front of the text through the text’s form. At the same time, in the actual praxis of authentic dialogue, interpreters recognise that in every act of interpretation, they are also applying the disclosure of the text to some

toward the reader; (2) the inscription of this strategy within a literary configuration; and (3) the response of the reader considered either as a reading subject or as the receiving public”, p. 160.

¹¹⁴ RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative*, Volume 3, p. 171.

¹¹⁵ TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 118. Gadamer argues that people have a ‘historically-effected’ consciousness, and that they are embedded in the particular history and culture that shapes them. However, the historical consciousness is not an object over and against our existence, but ‘a stream in which we move and participate, in every act of understanding’. Therefore, people do not come to any given thing without some form of preunderstanding established by this historical stream. The tradition in which interpreters stand establishes ‘prejudices’ that affect how they will make interpretations. Yet, these prejudices are not something that hinders our ability to make interpretations, but are both integral to the reality of being, and are the basis of our being able to understand history at all: “For this reason, the prejudgments of an individual are more than merely his judgments; they are the historical reality of his being”, GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, p. 257. Hermeneutically, this principle states that there can be no ‘presuppositionless’ interpretation. The hermeneutical circle, then “describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter [...]. Tradition is not simply a precondition into which we come, but we produce it ourselves, inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition and hence further determine it ourselves”. GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, p. 261.

preunderstanding of the tradition, often articulated through the larger conversation of the entire community of inquirers. As responsible social selves, interpreters want to observe what this wider community of inquirers has to say about their experience of this possible candidate for classic status.¹¹⁶ And while, as interpreter, I may resonate with other readers' understanding of a text but not totally accept it, their interpretations of these texts at once challenge mine and, by that challenge, inevitably transform, however subtly, my own interpretations of the same texts.¹¹⁷ For this reason, and in the spirit of this authentic dialogue, we should not discount any interpretation as 'worthless' or 'inaccurate', lest we deprive ourselves of rich and valuable contributions to a necessarily evolving tradition. And, of course, in our case we mean the contribution of forcibly displaced people, whose interpretative voices are yet to be heard in the interpretation of classics, including that of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

2.2.3. The author or artist of a 'classic'

We have seen that a major requirement for any claim to relative adequacy in interpretation of a text is contingent on the larger dialogue with the entire community of capable readers of that work. In some instances, major point of differences resulting from a pluralism of reading traditions depend on the major focus chosen to concentrate the interpreter's attention—the reader, the work, the world or the artist. The position presented here, for example, mainly relates to the tradition which focusses upon the reader's response or the reception of the work—a focus which inevitably concentrates attention upon the reader's original experience

¹¹⁶ TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 120. Ricoeur adds, "[...] the reception of the work and the welcome given what Gadamer likes to call the 'issue' of the text are extracted from the sheer subjectivity of the act of reading only on the condition of being inscribed within a chain of readings, which gives a historical dimension to this reception and to this welcome. The act of reading is thereby included within a reading community, which, under certain favourable conditions, develops the sort of normativity and canonical status that we acknowledge in great works, those that never cease de-contextualising and re-contextualising themselves in the most diverse cultural circumstances", RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*, p. 179.

¹¹⁷ As Tracy points out, "As a single interpreter, for example, I may recognise the challenge to my present preunderstanding of a text of Ignatius Loyola which Roland Barthes' vitalising reading now allows—even when I do not accept Barthes' reading of this text as the most relatively adequate one". TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 120. See ROLAND BARTHES, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, Berkley: University of California Press 1989, pp. 38-76. Ravier seems to support this view regarding Barthes' interpretation: "Je ne jugerai pas de la valeur du système psychologique de Roland Barthes; mais on peut légitimement s'étonner que, pour pouvoir l'appliquer à saint Ignace, il néglige toute une part de ce dont Ignace a fait confiance sur le langage de Dieu: il manque à Roland Barthes de connaître l'ensemble de la spiritualité ignacienne pour parler avec autorité des Exercices Spirituels et du Journal". ANDRÉ RAVIER, "Bulletin D'études Ignatiennes" in *Christus*, 76 (1972) 572. English translation from this French text: "I will not judge the value of Roland Barthes' psychological system; but one may legitimately be astonished that, in order to be able to apply it to St. Ignatius, he neglects a good part of what Ignatius has confided in the language of God: Roland Barthes lacks knowledge of the whole of Ignatian spirituality to speak authoritatively of the *Spiritual Exercises* and [his *Spiritual*] *Diary*". By way of an unusual contrast see KARL RAHNER, and PAUL IMHOF, *Ignatius of Loyola*, London: Collins 1979.

of the classic rather than upon the production of the classic itself.¹¹⁸ However, in this approach, the author need not be lost; not the author *behind* the work (the author 'reassembled' in biographies), but the author as *implied* author in the work and in the vision of reality disclosed by the entire legacy of a particular author.¹¹⁹ This author, no more than the interpreter of the classic, is a solitary self. The artist, too, is a particular, finite, social, historical self, with a particular history in a particular culture, employing a language (and sometimes creating one as in the case of a St Ignatius or a Shakespeare) that carries the entire history of the effects and influence of the tradition: "[...] and in living that finitude fully, the artist, the thinker, the hero, and the saint, gesture beyond it in acts of infinitude", undergoing a journey of intensification (the journey intensifies insofar as it reaches new depths of self-awareness and self-becoming), in order to discover fully and intensely their identities and fulfil their vocations.¹²⁰

As an embodied, finite self, standing in the 'stream' of an evolving and yet finite tradition, the *insignia* of an artist might not be then a striking originality in the sense of novelty (we know for certain that St Ignatius 'borrowed' heavily from his tradition), but his or her willingness to undergo this journey of intensification into particularity "to the point where an originating sense for the fundamental questions and feelings that impel us all, and a rare response in thought and feeling to those questions, is experienced"—and often experienced, as in the case of St Ignatius, as some kind of gift.¹²¹ Furthermore, every journey of intensification demands an expression:

¹¹⁸ As contrast, a different approach which focus instead on the intention of the author would argue that the essential question with which we are confronted in studying any given text "is what its author, in writing at the time he did write for the audience he intended to address, could in practice have been intending to communicate by the utterance of this given utterance. It follows that the essential aim, in any attempt to understand the utterances themselves, must be to recover this complex intention on the part of the author. And it follows from this that the appropriate methodology for the history of ideas must be concerned, first of all, to delineate the whole range of communications which could have been conventionally performed on the given occasion by the utterance of the given utterance, and, next, to trace the relations between the given utterance and this wider *linguistic* context as a means of decoding the actual intention of the given writer". Cf. C. MANTZAVINOS, "Hermeneutics" in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/#HermCirc>, first published 22nd June, 2016. Accessed 10 May 2018.

¹¹⁹ And it is his/her 'style' that conveys the author's presence not in terms of the original authorial presence but rather as this implied author: "In action, we express our character basically through our style. Those classic persons—the artists, thinkers, heroes, saints—who have forced themselves upon our imagination have produced their work by producing—discovering, recovering, rendering—a distinctive, unmistakably style". TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 129. We shall say more about this 'distinctive, unmistakably style' of St Ignatius at the end of this section.

¹²⁰ Cf. TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, pp. 124-125.

¹²¹ TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 125.

The hero, the artist, the thinker, the saint: each must express that understanding and that experience in a life, an action, a symbol, an image, a gesture, a text. Each must, therefore, risk the final moment of intensification and understanding: the moment of distancing of the self from itself in order to express, to render, to produce, a communicable, shareable, public meaning.¹²²

In this act of expression, artists risk alienation from their original experience, and yet they feel compelled to take this risk, driven by *unknown* forces, to contribute to the wisdom or well-being of the world. As we well know, for St Ignatius, his driving force, his motivation, was to help other souls in their journey to salvation, sharing with them what he had learned and had helped him in his own journey.

2.2.4. The 'classic' text

As an author concretises this act of expression into a text, this text—especially, but not only, the written text—fixes or codifies its meaning, while at the same time allowing that meaning to escape the confines of the author's intention, the original addressee's reception and also the original socio-historical source of the text. And thus the meaning of the text is opened up (and endures) for interpretation. A necessary condition for the preservation of that meaning—including a meaning with both excess and permanence as in the *classic*—is this distancing from the author, from the original audience, and from the original situation. Another necessary condition, in particular in a reader-response based literary hermeneutics, is engaging in the threefold task of understanding, explanation and application of a text. In this triadic structure, application—the end of the hermeneutical process—orients the entire process towards its goal, while primary understanding guides the process from one stage to the next by virtue of the 'horizon of expectation' it already contains.¹²³ Literary hermeneutics is thus oriented both by understanding and toward application—the function of interpretation in relating the meaning of the text to the present (and the purpose of our study!)¹²⁴ Moreover, it is the logic of question and answer that is expected to ensure the transition to explanation.

¹²² TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 126.

¹²³ Cf. RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative*, Volume 3, p. 174. For Gadamer, interpreting a text involves what he terms a 'fusion of horizons': both the text and the interpreter find themselves within a particular historical tradition, or 'horizon'. Each horizon is expressed through the medium of language, and both text and interpreter belong to and participate in history and language. As an interpreter seeks to understand a text, a common horizon emerges. This fusion of horizons does not mean interpreters now fully understand some kind of objective meaning, but it constitutes an 'event' in which a new world opens itself to them, thus resulting in a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

¹²⁴ For example, as Palmer points out, "[...] the element of application is integral in both biblical and juridical hermeneutics, for in neither case is it sufficient to understand and explain the text in a general way; it has to be made explicit in what way the text speaks to the present condition", cf. PALMER, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 187-188.

However, the primacy accorded in this process to *understanding* explains why reader-response based literary hermeneutics, unlike Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, is not totally bound by this logic of question and answer.¹²⁵ It regards the process of finding the question to which a text offers a reply—and reconstructing the expectations of a text's first receivers in order to restore to the text its original otherness—as already steps in 're-reading', standing second in relation to a primary understanding that allows the text to develop its own expectations. As Ricoeur points out:

The passage from the first reading, the innocent reading—if there is one—to the second reading, a reading at a distance, is governed, as we stated above, by the horizontal structure of intermediate understanding [...]. Reading includes both richness and opacity; rereading clarifies but in so doing makes choices. It is based on the questions that remain open after the first passage through the text but offers only one interpretation among others. So a dialectic of expectations and of questions governs the relation between reading and rereading. Expectations are open but more undetermined; questions are determined but more closed-in upon themselves. Literary criticism must take its stand on the basis of this hermeneutical precondition of partiality.¹²⁶

A third reading (as well as consecutive ones) brings about this effect by redoubling the logic of question and answer that governed the second reading. In asking "what were the questions to which the work was the answer?", this third 'historical' reading continues to be guided by the expectations of the first reading and by the questions of the second reading. From this it should be clear that the deceptively simple historicising question "what did the text say?" remains under the control of the properly hermeneutical question "what does the text say to me, at this stage of its history and of my present circumstances, and what do I say to the text?"

Thus, a transmitted text—be it the Bible or a Shakespearean play or St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*—has to be understood in the hermeneutical situation in which it finds itself; in other words, in relation to the present. This simply recognises that the 'meaning' of a text is not like a changeless property of an object but is always 'for us'. Nor does the insistence that a text be seen within the horizon of our present historical condition mean that the 'meaning' is absolutely different for us from what it was for its earliest readers. Hopefully, more than a few similarities will assert themselves! Since a great work lays open a truth of being (e.g. *Human*

¹²⁵ Ultimately, for Gadamer, the most important dynamic of conversation as a model for the interpretation of a text is 'the give-and-take of question and answer'. In other words, the interpretation of a given text will change depending on the questions the interpreter asks of the text. The 'meaning' emerges not as an object that lies in the text or in the interpreter, but rather an event that results from the interaction of the two: "It is a dialectical hermeneutics which opens itself to be questioned by the being of the thing, so that the thing encountered can disclose itself in its being". Cf. PALMER, *Hermeneutics*, p. 166.

¹²⁶ RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*, p. 175.

beings are created to praise, reverence and serve God [...]), we may assume that its *essential* truth corresponds to that which originally brought it into being—without asserting the idea of a perennially right interpretation. Only with the passage of time can we grasp ‘what it is that the classical text says and continues to say’. Only gradually does its true historical significance emerge and begin to address the needs, desires, questions and hopes of particular audiences in their very own circumstances, in a given ‘present’, especially, as in the case of forcibly displaced peoples, when that audience is still in the early stages of becoming an interpreter of that classic, and of being questioned and challenged by this classic.¹²⁷ Palmer summarises this process thus:

In hermeneutical dialogue, then, the general subject in which one is immersed—both the interpreter and the text—is the tradition, the heritage. One’s partner in the dialogue, however, is the text, already in the stark fixedness of written form. Thus there is a need to find a way through to the give-and-take of dialogue: this is the task of hermeneutics. Somehow the fixed formulation must be placed back in the movement of conversation, a movement in which the text questions the interpreter and he [sic] questions it.¹²⁸

This ‘movement of conversation’, of course, requires that the interpreter be aware of the text in the first place: forcibly displaced people will not be able to engage in the tradition, the heritage, of the *Exercises*, unless they are introduced to them. Is this important, even necessary? The answer to this rhetorical question, I believe, should be an unequivocal ‘yes’ lest, as expressed before, we miss out on their contribution to an already existing rich tradition.

2.2.5. Interpreting a religious ‘classic’

A theologian (be it systematic, spiritual, sacramental, etc.) is the ‘official’ interpreter of spiritual and religious classics. And like every interpreter of every classic, the theologian will enter the ‘adventure’ of interpretation following the basic stages or moments we have described so far. First, the theologian comes to the classic with a given preunderstanding of the fundamental views and questions of religion. These will include, for example, personal opinions on and responses to religion, as well as some relationship—be it conscious and/or unconscious, believing or sceptical—towards the religious or spiritual tradition (itself part of a pluralistic and changing process), whose ‘history of effects, influences and interpretations’ is carried by the language agreed upon and employed in theological discourse. Second, theologians will be aware of an existing claim exerted by these religious classics on them,

¹²⁷ Cf. PALMER, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 184-185.

¹²⁸ PALMER, *Hermeneutics*, p. 199.

brought about through an exposure to these classics and that will ordinarily involve some kind of incipient or radical faith. Thirdly, and once accepting this preunderstanding and claim, the theologian, as interpreter, will initiate some movement of dialogue with the subject matter, entering into the fundamental questions and responses of the classic religious texts, events, persons and symbols. Like all true dialogues, the theological dialogue should be marked by the emergence of both critical freedom and real appreciation in the face of the claim of the classic and its exertion of an unmistakable fascinating and awe-inspiring power.¹²⁹

In this dialogue, a systematic or spiritual theology should strive, furthermore, to provide an interpretation, a retrieval, a new application, that contributes towards the self-understanding of a particular religious or spiritual tradition for the current horizon of its ever evolving and growing community. In Christian tradition, of course, this self-understanding is itself grounded in the particular events, persons and symbols of Jewish and Christian history; and for Christians, decisively grounded in God's own self-manifestation in *the* classic event and person, Jesus Christ. Insofar as theologians perform their hermeneutical task well within this classical tradition they, like all interpreters, will contribute to the common good. To ensure that this does happen, however, whenever a classic interpretation of a particular classic religious tradition is produced, then that new expression should be accorded a public status in the culture. No less than any classic interpretation of any classic, the theological and spiritual classics are not merely 'private' to certain individuals or to particular traditions. Their authentically public status should be honoured and discussed as recognisable candidates for authentic 'publicness'.¹³⁰

Finally, in the theological interpretation of religious and spiritual classics, we need to be on guard against falling into two possible temptations: (1) to relegate the title of 'theologian' to only a few experts, thus disenfranchising a multitude of able and 'thinking-out-of-the-box' possible interpreters ; (2) to believe that there is little or nothing that can be added further in terms of interpretation of a religious classic such as St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, because it has already been around for five hundred years. Yet, knowing the 'letter' of a text does not mean fully knowing the 'spirit' that dwells in it. The 'matter' of the text is the threshold that leads to its interior rooms, an intimate space where deep and infinite meanings coexist. To

¹²⁹ Cf. TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, pp. 130-131.

¹³⁰ Cf. TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, pp. 131-133.

think that one already knows the text, or has exhausted its possible interpretations, because such text has already been read (or 'dissected') on other countless occasions, is a bias that hinders the reading process and understanding on the part of the reader. It is like thinking that you already know a house just because you have stepped onto the threshold.¹³¹ But it is also a bias that hinders our capacity to acquire new insights into possible rich applications of the text. It is like thinking that you already know all the possible uses of a tool because you have only used it in a limited number of ways.

Of course, all of this thesis is engaged in this process of interpretation and application of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* for survivors of forced displacement, whose outcomes will be presented in Chapter 5. At this point, however, it is fitting to offer an interpretative example of the *Exercises* from a particular 'horizon', namely that of inculturation—an essential factor in the lives of survivors of forced displacement since, as we would expect, most resettled ex-refugees come from different cultures to those encountered in their adoptive countries.

2.2.6. Interpreting and applying the Exercises from the horizon of inculturation

The process of inculturation involves adapting to and assimilating a new culture—understood in general terms as a set of beliefs, customs, institutions, attitudes, and other 'products' of human work and thought in regard to a particular social group or time. It also involves adapting to and assimilating new languages, signs and symbols as elements of communicative behaviour—tasks that most ex-refugees also need to learn to master in their process of resettlement. These elements are studied and analysed in the field of semiotics—basically, the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation. It is using the tools of this field of study that Xavier Quinzá tackles the challenge of exploring how to interpret and inculturate the text of St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* to modern contexts and exercitants, in order to facilitate their own interaction with and interpretation of the text.¹³²

¹³¹ Cf. CALDUCH-BENAGES, "‘El prójimo eres tú’. Lectura del Buen Samaritano desde la Vida Consagrada", pp. 27-46.

¹³² Cf. XAVIER QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio" in *Manresa* 70 (1998) 149-164. In order to engage with Ignatius' text Quinzá chooses, from among different methodological models of inculturation, the so-called 'semiotic model' of cultural analysis, based on his belief that this model has the advantage of describing better the specificity of each cultural context and of favouring the potential of the message transmitted.

Following Barthes, for Quinzá, in linguistic terms, the goal of the text of the *Exercises* is to *want to create a language to speak with God*.¹³³ That goal is as true for exercitants today as it was for Ignatius when he first wrote the *Exercises*, but one of the greater difficulties in actualising his text, according to this author, is precisely the austerity, preciseness and strictness of Ignatius' own textual style. Moreover, the *Exercises* are not a single but a multiple text—in fact, four texts in one: the *literal* text (from Ignatius to the giver of the *Exercises*); the *semantic* text which is the content of the former (from the giver to the receiver); the *allegorical*, which is the text 'lived out' by the *exercitant* (from the one receiving them to God), and finally, the *anagogical*, which is the one of interpretation and response: the sign that has been received (from God to the one making the *Exercises*).¹³⁴ And to study adequately the meaning of the *Exercises*, the process of how each of these 'texts' moves from the first to the final text must be considered. This involves looking at the *semiosphere*¹³⁵ of the *Exercises*—the way Ignatius' particular signs/symbols operate as an interconnected and homogeneous communication system.¹³⁶

To understand the semiosphere of the Ignatian discourse it is necessary to look at the cultural paradigms that functioned in the time of Ignatius and determine which of their elements are highlighted in the discourse of the *Exercises* to make them coherent and significant for their time, and whether or not these elements are still relevant to us today. And if not, which elements are, and how they can be best expressed for the needs of an intended audience. The words used in the *Exercises* presuppose the conception of an order of things characteristic of the time of Ignatius. And we should not forget that this is a time of transition, moving from

¹³³ Cf. BARTHES, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, p. 48. As mentioned earlier, though we might not agree totally with Barthes' psychological interpretation of Ignatius, some of his suggestions can be helpful in trying to understand how the Ignatian text and its methodology work, in particular Barthes' ideas about the 'multiplicity of texts' found in the *Exercises*, to which we refer further here.

¹³⁴ Cf. BARTHES, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, pp. 41-44. Barthes points out: "Thus we are dealing with a structure made up of [four] relays in which each one receives and transmits [...]. The function of this dilatory structure [...] is to establish at each relay of the interlocution two incertitudes. The first arises because, the *Exercises* being addressed to the director and not to the retreatant, the latter cannot (and must not) know in advance anything about the series of experiments which are gradually being recommended to him; [...] the second incertitude [...] consists of the following: will the Divinity accept the language of the exercitant and offer him in return a language to be deciphered? It is because of these two incertitudes, which are properly structural [...] that the multiple text of the *Exercises* is dramatic", pp. 43-44.

¹³⁵ 'Semiosphere' is a concept coined by Yuri Lotman in 1982 and now applied to many fields, including cultural semiotics. See, for example, YURI M. LOTMAN, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. By Ann Shukman, London: L.B. Tauris 1990. As mentioned, the semiotic tradition explores the study of signs and symbols as a significant part of communications. Yet, as different from linguistics, semiotics also studies non-linguistic sign systems.

¹³⁶ Cf. QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", p. 154.

the Medieval Era to the time of the Renaissance, and thus not only a new understanding of the self/person, of the role of humanity in the world and of values is changing, but language in itself is also evolving. Certainly, we could say the same of our own time, when language is constantly forced into evolution by the advances in technology, the new conventions of social networks, and the 'invention' of new terms to refer to new ways of relating to one another. In fact, the reason Ignatius' text seems anachronistic to us today, is not so much because of employing words that have now fallen into disuse, but rather because his words are associated with cultural paradigms which are different from those with which we are now associated.¹³⁷

Equally important is to consider how these cultural paradigms are expressed in the values of Ignatius' time. One such value that was very much alive in the religious imagination then was the motivation of 'helping others'. In fact, as mentioned earlier, this idea of 'helping souls' will redirect Ignatius' own life and give him the impetus to share with others exercises and practices to help them discern the new Christian ideals, as they evolved from medieval humanism to meet the political and social transformations of the Renaissance.¹³⁸ And this sudden change from one era to another also changes attitudes toward words. The medieval 'word' had firm and absolute authority and meaning. On the other hand, the 'word' in the Renaissance becomes more human, susceptible to various meanings depending on the intention, and thus more 'relative' and democratic: "the new power of language is based now on the strength of the plot given by the words, the linguistic power of symbols to organise situations, to promote specific manners of conduct and to create original perspectives [...]."¹³⁹

So, to act 'correctly' in this changing world in which the *Exercises* were written and practiced, it was necessary to undergo a rigorous selection of the values needed to determine the end goals within which one wanted to live. And, as we know now, Ignatius will organise

¹³⁷ Cf. QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", p. 155.

¹³⁸ Iglesias points out that what constitutes the genius of Ignatius is not *experience* in and of itself, but to have observed it and reflected upon it, to have detected in it a series of constants, and to have derived of this experience an exportable and universalising method, which others can use to help them live their *own experience*, equivalent, but never equal or a copy of Ignatius' own. Cf. IGNACIO IGLESIAS, *Actualidad de la Experiencia de Ignacio*, (EIDES collection), Barcelona: Cristianisme I Justícia 1992, p. 6.

¹³⁹ And thus, from a semiotic perspective, Ignatius becomes a 'logo-technician', a founder and creator of language, with the intent to provide each exercitant with the possibility of generating, with the resources made available to them, their own language with which to address the God they meet in the *Exercises*. Cf. QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", p. 156.

a whole series of rules based on this exercise of selection as well as create a method that will help choose *what is most conducive* to the end which is desired—the salvation of our soul.¹⁴⁰

Ignatius' text is also a marvel of articulation, divided as it is in units, classified, separated, limited and differentiated in the extreme. It has been rigorously codified to engage the totality of our 'mental terrain': prayer periods meticulously regimented, exercises grouped by weeks, ordering of the space and time of the retreat, etc. At the same time, its *internal irregularity* is another of its distinctive characteristics. Not all the material is homogeneous. Some parts are addressed to the giver of the Exercises, while others engage the exercitant. Further, within the *semiosphere* of the *Exercises*, together with the core elements of the material for meditation and contemplation in the different stages, we find a set of *documents* that act as *rules of application*, as *meta-language* of the experience. Thus, the *Annotations* are offered as means of 'control', in fact quite strict, to assure the internal coherence of the dynamics of the process; they are the *internal grammar*, which reveal the adequate play of language, which help verify our experience. The *additions* are intended to dissipate concerns and possible anxieties through using subtle details so as to allow God to intervene as simply as possible.¹⁴¹

As mentioned earlier, only by addressing in a concrete way the various textual levels of the *Exercises* can we attempt an adequate inculturation of this text. In terms of the *lexical* or *grammatical* aspect, Quinzá suggests that all archaic terminology should be actualised without any problems, substituting those words in the text that are incomprehensible for us today. A word of caution, however, in that we should not forget that there are many Ignatian terms that are difficult to translate correctly, and that at times it might be best to give their literal meaning, while offering, of course, an adequate explanation of that meaning (e.g. the *subiecto*, the *magis*, the Divine Majesty). And this also applies to non-archaic terms, which nevertheless have a very specific 'Ignatian' meaning: *discernment*, *application of the senses*, *consolation*, *desolation*, etc. As for the *descriptive* aspect of the text, this too renders itself to appropriate actualisation: it must be sensibly adapted to the contemporary imaginary of our time (e.g. images of Jesus or eschatological images of hell, the devil, etc.)¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Cf. QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", p. 157.

¹⁴¹ Cf. QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", pp. 158-159, and also BARTHES, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, pp. 52-56.

¹⁴² Cf. QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", pp. 160-161.

As for the *semiotic* aspect—the internal textual dynamic of Ignatius' *Exercises*—their intention is to articulate a *grammar of salvation*. They are a practice of appropriation and reception of the salvific signs of God's Word. Through these *signs from God* (anagogical text), in reference to our concrete environment and in our interacting with them, we discover the innovative potential of God's salvation for us (think, for example, of Ignatius' contemplations on the *Incarnation* and the *Nativity*, as well as his presentation of the *Principle and Foundation*, and how they invite us to consider in very personal terms, this potentially salvific reality 'for me'). Finally, the *recreated text*, produced by the exercitant himself or herself, encompasses the last aspect of inculturation—that of reception. Exercitants must orient their lives to *find what they desire*. This is why their 'text' is not written in advance. Only in the measure that such text is created or built from their real circumstances and in the living language of their cultural context, will we be able to state that it has achieved its purpose.¹⁴³

In summary, inculturating Ignatius' text will require both maximum fidelity and maximum creativity. Maximum fidelity because Ignatius' *Exercises* are neither anachronistic nor current; as the classical text they are, they hold both in tension. A mere adaptation of the text of the *Exercises* cannot be considered true inculturation. If we do not achieve and transmit their internal textual dynamics, we are not respecting their own culture, their own semiotic originality. And they will require maximum creativity, because without a great capacity of freedom in their reception, without inculturating the textual dynamic of the *Exercises*, they become insignificant. It is then not about simply 'copying' the spiritual contents of St Ignatius. Instead, it is about interpreting and applying his text in a way that it gives us the capacity to speak to God as he did. Without this inculturated appropriation, we as interpreters cannot establish the dialogical system to which the text is inviting us.¹⁴⁴ And without it, we might also lose the capacity of creating that 'language to speak with God', which is the goal of the text of the *Exercises*.

At this point it is good to ask, "what might such endeavour of inculturating Ignatius' *Exercises* look like?" And what can we learn from previous attempts that might guide us in our own to adapt and apply the Exercises for survivors of forced displacement? We look now

¹⁴³ Cf. QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", pp. 162-163.

¹⁴⁴ QUINZÁ, "El desafío de la inculturación en la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", p. 163.

at three such attempts coming from China, Kenya and India. As we do, we keep in mind the theoretical elements considered in the previous section: the movement between the different 'texts' present in the *Exercises*; the cultural paradigms functioning in these countries and how they are expressed in their foundational values as compared to those in Ignatius' time; and the various textual levels of the *Exercises* and how they in turn respond to these foundational values.

2.2.6.1. Chinese Women's experience in the practice of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises

The effect of inculturation in the adaptation and application of the *Spiritual Exercises* was the object of research in an empirical study on the influence of the Exercises and Ignatian spirituality in the formation of a group of Chinese women ministers and spiritual directors in evangelical churches.¹⁴⁵ This group of women, most of whom are professional ministers serving as church leaders for many years, have devoted themselves to apply the *Spiritual Exercises* in their ministry in the evangelical context.¹⁴⁶

In the interviews performed during the study, some of them mentioned the spiritual renewal they had experienced as a woman in the Chinese culture when practicing the Exercises. Because the traditional Confucian ideology from which they all originally came "intertwines with the political and social hierarchy and results in overvaluation of malehood as Chinese perfect humanity and undervaluation of Chinese women's womanhood", this ideal has given rise to an unwholesome self-image in many Chinese women.¹⁴⁷ In response to this, the author asserts that:

¹⁴⁵ Cf. PAN YI JUNG, "Chinese Women's Subjective Experience in the Practice of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises and its Application to Chinese Women's Spiritual Formation" in *East Asian Pastoral Review* 50, n. 3 (2013), 298-315.

¹⁴⁶ While instinctively one may ask what the appeal of a series of *exercises* written by a 16th c. Catholic Spaniard might have for evangelical Christians, some of the distinctive features of evangelical churches that have been identified (especially in the United States but in other contexts as well) might give a hint to the answer. Among these distinctive features we find: the normative value of Scripture; the significance of the atoning work of Christ; the necessity of conversion, and the imperative of evangelism—all factors constitutive for the dynamics of the *Exercises*. Cf. Kenneth J. Collins, *Promise of an American Religion*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2005, p. 41.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. YI JUNG, "Chinese Women's Subjective Experience in the Practice of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises", p. 303. The influence exerted by these ideological, political, socio-cultural and hierarchical factors cannot be underestimated. In terms of giving the Exercises for example, in this as well as other Eastern cultures, the relationship between the giver and the receiver of the Exercises assumes a new level: "Dans les cultures d'Asie orientale, chinoise et japonaise par exemple, la relation entre maître et disciple se veut une discipline. Le disciple s'attend à être guidé par le maître. Le maître, pour sa part, manquera à sa responsabilité s'il ne donne pas de directives, non pas rigides, mais fermes et exigeantes". Cf. GUILBERT GUERIN, *Une Pratique Pastorale Des Exercices Spirituels en Asie Orientale*, Montréal: Guérin 1995. English translation from the French: "In cultures

With the help of Ignatian spirituality, our interviewees reconstruct their womanhood with affirmed self-identity of being a woman from God's new creation and from their calling in Jesus Christ. In our findings, we come to the conclusion that Ignatian spirituality can contribute to counter Confucian influences and to improve Chinese women's self-image and self-value [...]. Most of our interviewees mentioned that through experiencing God's love and responding to Jesus' calling, they were able to live out their authentic self in God's kingdom.¹⁴⁸

A revealing finding of the study is that those interviewed were more inclined to grasp the meaning of the Spiritual Exercises from their subjective experiences than from the intellectual background of the text. In other words, they showed little interest in learning or exploring the theology of St Ignatius, but preferred to be guided by their personal subjective interest to interpret the text. Although the study does not mention it, it would be expected that such subjective approach would have a bearing—and a bias—among other things, in the material they offered to their exercitants as well as in the dynamic or even the method they followed in presenting the Exercises.¹⁴⁹

The study did mention that they were well versed in integrating and making use of the terminology and framework of the Exercises, but only as long as they found echoes of Ignatian spirituality in their personal experiences. We might surmise that one of the reasons for this could be related to their particular training in their home country. Yet, these participants' experience of Ignatian spirituality was actually not confined to the Chinese context, since many had joined Ignatian retreats organised in both European and North American contexts. Another possible explanation could be a reaction to the emphasis placed on Confucian philosophy and virtue of ethics of personhood. It would be important then to explore further the reasons for this phenomenon, which might have this cultural connection but might also be linked to their evangelical background.

of East Asia, China and Japan, for example, the relationship between master and disciple is intended as a discipline. The disciple is expected to be guided by the master. The master, for one, will fail in its responsibility if he does not provide guidance or directives, not rigid yet firm and demanding”.

¹⁴⁸ YI JUNG, “Chinese Women's Subjective Experience in the Practice of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, p. 304.

¹⁴⁹ The researcher acknowledges this limitation when she states that: “When the *Spiritual Exercises* are introduced or taught, more attention should be given to the author's theology, historical background, cultural influence, and hermeneutical approach. In our study, most of our interviewees obviously overlooked the objective approach in understanding the *Spiritual Exercises*. They also showed little awareness of their prejudice against intellectual and academic disciplines. This bias has to be addressed both in contextualising the Christian tradition and classics into Chinese women's spiritual formation and in introducing Ignatian spirituality to a Chinese Christian faith community”. Cf. YI JUNG, “Chinese Women's Subjective Experience in the Practice of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises”, p. 309.

Imaginative prayer was one component of the Exercises which was found to have significant influences in those interviewed, as it helped them to pay more attention to their usage of the five senses in mediation and contemplation. Before their exposure to Ignatian spirituality they never considered the use of the senses to listen to God and to encounter Christ. Similarly, they appreciated the holistic spirituality of the *Exercises*, which integrated both the intellectual (will, reason, memory) and affective (desire, imagination) inner faculties. Finally, they expressed that the adaptability and flexibility of Ignatius' exercises allowed them to adjust their approaches to prayer and express all of their thoughts, emotions, imagination and desires to Jesus. All these findings are indeed revealing and relevant to our present study and suggest several areas of emphasis that should not be overlooked: the significance given to one's own subjective experiences in the process of engaging and making the Exercises; the use of all the senses as well as of a person's combined inner faculties in prayer and, for the case of women survivors of forced displacement, the importance of one's perceived self-identity and the capacity of the Exercises to positively affirm it when it has been devalued or undervalued—sadly, a common occurrence in many of the countries of origin of women ex-refugees.

2.2.6.2. Africa: an adaptation to 'space'¹⁵⁰

We often think of adapting Ignatius' text to the needs and circumstances of the exercitant (the subject), but how often do we take into account the importance of 'space' in the dynamic of the Exercises? Chikere Ugwuanyi asserts that this is an often forgotten factor, but that its importance should not be underestimated, in particular when attempting to adapt Ignatius' Exercises to the African context because "the geographical entity called Africa has a uniqueness which makes it a very particular space affecting the dynamism of the *Spiritual Exercises*". And this is so partly because of the way "*embodiment* in Africa bears on how retreatants make sense of the world and on the worldviews [and values] they adopt".¹⁵¹

In general terms, it is recognised that certain spaces can contribute to or impinge upon our spiritual experiences—we breathe and think better in open spaces; we feel more constrained and distracted in crowded areas. The spiritual life requires both solitude and communal

¹⁵⁰ Cf. CHIKERE UGWUANYI, "Adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises: An Example from Africa" in *The Way* 53, n. 3 (2014) 56-67.

¹⁵¹ UGWUANYI, "Adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises: An Example from Africa", p. 56. For Uguwanyi this means that both the subject and the space it occupies must be taken seriously in spirituality.

relationships, and space helps to cater to both these needs. How many of us have not gone away to a deserted beach or climbed to the top of a mountain in search of those spaces for solitude and quiet? Ugwuanyi, however, argues that for Africans the topography of their continent is intrinsic to their spiritual lives—it is not a matter of getting away in search of particular places that nurture their spiritual hunger, their surroundings already do so.¹⁵² One of the reasons for this is the presence, in this large continent of Africa, of many traditional religions and the belief and acceptance by its people of a multiplicity of gods—“each people, each activity, and each natural event has a god that is responsible for it”—a belief that is seen as something inherently good. The other reason has to do with the particular physical features of the continent, which offer Africans a particular experience of contemplating God in nature, of experiencing an awe-filled encounter with the divine.¹⁵³

We encounter the importance of space in the *Spiritual Exercises* as early as in the 20th *Annotation*,¹⁵⁴ where Ignatius suggests that those who seek greatest profit from the Exercises should separate themselves from family, friends and occupation, “by moving out of one’s place of residence and taking a different house or room where one can live in the greatest possible solitude” (cf. [SpEx 20]). As we well know, Ignatius sees three benefits in doing this: the merit obtained before God by doing this in order to praise God our Lord; the ability to use with greater freedom one’s natural faculties or powers for seeking what is so greatly desired, and the capacity to reach greater unity with the Creator and Lord, and thus better dispose oneself to receive God’s graces and gifts. Thus, in the *First Prelude* of the *First Exercise* of the First Week, we are introduced to the concept of *making a composition* by imagining the *place* where the scene or action of our meditations is to take place (cf. [SpEx 47]). A practice that will run through the Exercises, and which is essential to assist the exercitant to re-live the events under consideration.

¹⁵² Cf. UGWUANYI, “Adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises: An Example from Africa”, p. 57.

¹⁵³ Cf. UGWUANYI, “Adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises: An Example from Africa”, pp. 61-62. As Laurenti Magesa expresses it: “African religious sentiments are that exclusivism amounts to reductionism of life and God. Life is larger than any one individual, community, or society can imagine and live it. The spiritual world, including God, has more surprises for humanity and the universe than any religious community can ever dream of”. Cf. LAURENTI MAGESA, *African Religion in the Dialogue Debate: From Intolerance to Coexistence*, Zurich: LIT 2010, p. 162.

¹⁵⁴ It is important not to confuse the use of the word ‘space’ by Ignatius which he uses in reference to time rather than geographical extension. Thus, for example, he speaks of the “space of half-hour/*espacio de medio hora*” for the *Particular Examen* [SpEx 19] or the “space of a Hail Mary/*espacio de un Ave María*” in making a mental preparation for an upcoming prayer period [SpEx 77], and “the space of a quarter of an hour/*espacio de un cuarto de hora*” to evaluate prayers [SpEx 77]. What is rather equivalent to our use of ‘space’ is Ignatius’ use of ‘place’, as in “imagining the place/*imaginando el lugar*” in the *First Prelude* [SpEx 47].

It is precisely in this 'seeing the place' that Ugwuanyi suggests we can connect the adaptation of the *Spiritual Exercises* to African geographical reality, using examples of its geographical wonders. Thus, for instance, we can suggest to retreatants to 'see' in their prayer the Great Rift Valley of Kenya-Tanzania instead of the plains of Jerusalem and Babylon in the meditation on the *Two Standards*. For the author this is not a matter of a "cosmetic attempt to replace biblical narratives with African equivalents [...but rather to] provide an affirmation that God is *actually* at work in African geographical space: we do not need to go to Jerusalem to worship God". And it would also help give the retreatants a sense of 'walking' more closely with God in a place that is known and familiar.¹⁵⁵ Finally, the author believes that this geographical approximation can help exercitants transport or appropriate the essence of certain meditations and contemplations into the reality of their lives, and thus enhance their retreat experience. So, for example, in terms of the aforementioned meditation of the *Two Standards*, he suggests that when guiding someone say from Kenya through this meditation...

I would start off by encouraging that person to enter into the narrative of Kenyan society, and how the question of land (re)distribution is foundational for the existence of the country. Then, I would present how the great plains of the Rift Valley are *the* theatre for outbursts of conflict, and also the laboratory for solutions to the problem. In this context, the retreatant would be guided into deeper meditation on how the land question is *essentially* a battle between the forces of evil and good [...]¹⁵⁶

For survivors of forced displacement, this issue of 'space' can arouse strong feelings, especially in regards to places connected to their ancestral lands and countries of birth—places from which they were forcibly evicted but which might still hold a significant 'place' in their heart and in their imagery. For some, returning to those lands and spaces in their compositions of place as they engage with the contemplations of the Exercises might be a welcome opportunity and might indeed contribute to an "awe-filled encounter with the divine"; for others, however, this might be too confronting or painful. So discerning spiritual guides or companions should introduce this particular aspect with care and only when they have a fairly good sense of the value of doing so.

One such value—which we have emphasised throughout this work—is the potential therapeutic or healing element for survivors of forced displacement of imaginatively returning

¹⁵⁵ Cf. UGWUANYI, "Adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises: An Example from Africa", pp. 64-65.

¹⁵⁶ UGWUANYI, "Adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises: An Example from Africa", pp. 65-66.

to these places. At the same time, the issue of having or finding particular places that help nurture the exercitants' spiritual hunger—the other main point raised by Ugwuanyi—should also be addressed. Does the exercitant already have access to some of these places? If not, are there other accessible spaces that can be offered to them? And if there are not, could anything be done to enhance their current living spaces to make them more conducive to prayer and spiritual nourishment? And returning to the issue of textual interpretation and appropriation, what can be done, in terms of providing these spiritually nourishing spaces, to enhance the dialogical engagement of these exercitants with the Ignatian text?

2.2.6.3. India: preparing for the *Exercises* through Shraddha, Vivek and Vairagya

Exploring and analysing the practise of the long retreat for scores of Jesuit tertians in India, six knowledgeable directors drew several conclusions revealing common essential elements in that experience.¹⁵⁷ Their findings pointed mainly to inculturated aspects that clearly resonated with experiences of the Exercises in other places in terms of method, content and dynamics, so here we present briefly only those aspects which varied significantly or showed new approaches to the giving of the Exercises. While acknowledging that until then (1999) interpretations, commentaries and translations of the text of the *Exercises* had been done by Western scholars, and therefore the *Exercises* needed to be refined and *re-told* for India, the directors also recognised that:

[...] the images and metaphors used in the *Spiritual Exercises* are not the central matter. The central matter, rather, is the inner dynamic and the transformative elements that run through each exercise and through the whole retreat. The shift from being willing to live for the world to wanting to live and die with Christ [...] happens in whatever culture. This “underground mysticism” goes on, whatever images are called on.¹⁵⁸

The author points out that in terms of the preparation to make the Exercises, most of the common elements found in other places (where tertianship programs are offered) are observed: engaging in ‘wisdom reading’ such as the *Autobiography*, entering into the practice of silence, sharing of life among the participants, and building a sense of a praying community supporting one another in this month-long undertaking. Some of the peculiarities in the Indian program include: the use of yoga meditation with a mantra, led by an expert,

¹⁵⁷ Cf. PAUL COUTINHO, ‘The Long Retreat in India’ in *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XXX, n. 91 (1999) 31-40. Though the article was published over fifteen years ago, some of the points made still hold relevance and are worth considering when looking at applications of the Exercises to different contexts and cultures.

¹⁵⁸ COUTINHO, ‘The Long Retreat in India’, pp. 32-33.

over a week or other period of time; developing an appropriate relationship with the director, and the use of Hindu spiritual practices as a vital part of the preparation for the retreat:

At the outset of the Spiritual Exercises the retreatants are helped to reach the preliminary requisites in the form of *Shraddha*, *Vivek* and *Vairagya*. *Shraddha* is to commit oneself in faith and trust to Scripture, to the dynamic of the *Exercises*, and to the one who directs. *Vivek* is to adopt the attitude of discernment. And *Vairagya*, which is born of *Vivek*, is to take the stance of detachment. Whereas in the past in India, retreatants have had many problems with one or all of these, at this time retreatants have few, and they enter the *Exercises* with the openness and generosity they demand.¹⁵⁹

It has also become a regular practice in India that exercitants spend about an hour together at the end of the day before the Blessed Sacrament, as prayer related to the application of the senses, and which constitute generally their fifth period of prayer.

One of the usual difficulties found in giving the long retreat to a homogeneous group of people who come together for a particular program (in this case Jesuit tertians) is what to do when certain individuals do not obtain the graces of a particular Week and yet need to 'move forward' with the rest of the group. A practice among these experienced givers of the Exercises seems to be for the director to move everyone in unison as group through the Weeks, while at the same time work with each exercitant on his own dynamic experience, allowing essentially each one to make an individual retreat. An advantage of a group such as this (in a program of tertianship that lasts usually between five and seven months and where the Exercises are usually done at the beginning of the program) is that if at the end of the retreat one or more of the exercitants has not 'finished' the Exercises, the directors, "unperturbed by this, simply continue with them in every-day life".¹⁶⁰

The experience of the Exercises helps to understand that each person is in a movement to the beyond, toward the God who created us in love. But also makes people aware, as Ignatius rightly pointed out, of the obstacles they place in this journey as a result of their sinful tendencies and acts of un-love. These directors have learned that the wisdom of the *Enneagram* can teach us a great deal about the typical, characteristic obstacles each puts in God's way, for "it gives us the intellectual means of understanding the affective appreciation

¹⁵⁹ COUTINHO, 'The Long Retreat in India', p. 34. The author continues: "Directors are finding that the *Annotations* and *Additions* are remarkably accurate as guides to Indian experience. As all serious directors do, they insist on the dispositions detailed in *Annotations* 5 and 20. This means two specific decisions: that the retreatants commit themselves wholeheartedly to the retreat and that they look to what God will call them to during the experience", p. 34.

¹⁶⁰ COUTINHO, 'The Long Retreat in India', p. 35.

of our core sinfulness. Discernment, then, means identifying those obstacles and choosing freedom” so we can discover our graced selves:

The Christian who looks into self long and quietly enough comes into contact with this core graced self (*Brahma Sakshatkara*). He [sic] comes in touch with a self that is continually changing and growing in God proportionately with his *Vivek* (discernment) and *Vairagya* (detachment), and this is a life-long process.¹⁶¹

It is clear that the main contribution of this particular attempt at inculturation of Ignatius' *Exercises* is the incorporation of Hindu spiritual practices to both enter into the process of the Exercises and to enhance the understanding and living out of some key Ignatian components, such as discernment and detachment from inordinate affections. The use of Eastern spiritual practices has become more prevalent and 'mainstream' in Western countries in the past few decades and many of these practices (e.g. meditation, yoga) have been adapted and incorporated into Christian practices (one of the better known promoters of this practice in the Ignatian world was Anthony de Mello).

Many survivors of forced displacement, including Christians, come from countries where animist or major Eastern traditions are practiced by the majority of its inhabitants, and as a result we should not be surprised to find that their own Christian practices have been influenced by these traditions. Moreover, and as mentioned earlier, people do not come to any given experience without some form of preunderstanding established by their historical makeup. The tradition in which we stand as textual interpreters establishes 'prejudices' that affect how we will make interpretations of that text: *Tradition is not simply a precondition into which we come, but we produce it ourselves [...]* This reminder should be an incentive for givers of the Exercises to learn as much as possible from their receivers about what aspects of their spiritual tradition are significant for them, including those aspects from other faiths. And they should also be attentive to the possible contributions of their receivers (in our case, survivors of forced displacement) to the evolving tradition of the *Exercises*.

Two additional aspects mentioned in this study are worth noting: (1) the flexibility required of givers of the Exercises when offering them to groups in order to accommodate the needs of individual exercitants—because of their previous 'extraordinary' history, the range of these needs among ex-refugees might be broader than usual; and (2) the development of an 'appropriate' relationship between the giver and receiver of the Exercises, taking into account

¹⁶¹ COUTINHO, 'The Long Retreat in India', pp. 39, 36.

diverse cultural expectations. As also mentioned in the example from China, in many Eastern and African cultures, this relationship can assume different levels and if not addressed adequately it could lead to negative outcomes. We will address this latter factor in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

2.2.6.4. Interpreting and adapting the *Exercises* for non-conventional religious 'seekers'

The use and adaptation of the *Spiritual Exercises* by non-Catholics for non-Catholics has become more and more widespread and some authors as well as practitioners have also begun to look into ways of offering the Exercises to an even wider audience. Among them is the Jesuit Roger Haight, who in his work has sought to interpret the *Exercises* for such broader audience, not excluding Catholics but more pointedly addressing Protestants and also people outside Christianity, members of other faith traditions and even those with no religion affiliation, who are looking for spiritual depth. Hence the title of one of his works, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*.¹⁶² While the intended audience of our study is Catholic survivors of forced displacement, we must recognise that their 'Catholicity' might not be the mainstream Western 'version' many givers of the Exercises (particularly in Australia) are used to, and in view of this, some of Haight's conclusions, particularly those relating to the use of language and 'shared' concepts, are worth noting here. Further, his exposition is also useful for us in that it links the theoretical concepts of textual interpretation presented at the beginning of this section with the interpretation, application and appropriation of the Exercises.

Haight sees the process of interpretation as entering into an 'inter-religious dialogue' or a broader conversation between diverse parties. He believes that if one wants to communicate with others, one has to speak a language the others can understand. But changing a language or idiom always entails a shift in the meaning of the subject matter, and we have to accept the fact that we have little control over how our words are interpreted by others: in the end, no pure communication is ever possible because reception always colours meaning. As we have seen, communication relies on symbols, and meaning shifts subtly with the differences in appropriating these symbols.¹⁶³ So, if we want to accommodate new listeners or partners in

¹⁶² Cf. ROGER HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers: Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books 2012.

¹⁶³ Cf. HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, p. xii.

dialogue, we will have to adjust basic principles, employ different strategies, and even test new language geared at achieving faithful communication.

Everyone who has given the Exercises understands this well. Regardless of what one's theology might be, even if others are not aware of it, one should not proceed as if it were an established presupposition and expect a successful communication of ideas.¹⁶⁴ One has to begin from spiritual experiences that are either shared or available to general recognition by others who will not share our presuppositions and frames of reference, and in doing so when communicating the Spiritual Exercises, this means that emphases and connotations will need to experience a shift:

For example, if Christian teaching assumes a latent sense of sin and guilt, how should a director of the *Exercises* address a person who does not experience guilt? Should a minister incite a sense of guilt in another so that he or she can then point to the offer of forgiveness to relieve it? Christians by definition understand Jesus Christ in a way that distinguishes him from all others. But how should Jesus of Nazareth be presented to the seeker who approaches him for the first time?¹⁶⁵

This question points to the extent to which connotations can be linked to 'insider-outsider' language. Again, unconsciously we can exacerbate this dichotomy not only by the language we use, but also by the symbols we refer to, the history we bring to mind, even the choice of setting or place where the *Exercises* are offered—whether it is an office in a Christian Spirituality Centre or at bench in a quiet and flowery park! All of these factors influence the way the Exercises are presented and received. Survivors of forced displacement have often been victims of this insider/outsider language, usually during their displacement experience, but also in their countries of resettlement, so givers of the Exercises should do what they can to avoid using concepts that perpetuate this language.

To accommodate an audience of *seekers*—those who precisely lack many of the presuppositions on which the *Spiritual Exercises* are built—forces the person presenting them to shift the aspect of any given consideration to a more accessible point of view. One has to appeal to that dimension of Christian faith language that is *analogous* to experiences present within other religions and human existence generally: the giver of the Exercises “must stress

¹⁶⁴ Paradoxically, as givers of the *Exercises* we know that we are not supposed to 'impose' our theology on an exercitant, but not to do this (especially unconsciously) is close to impossible; for one it will influence which material for prayer we offer the exercitant, what emphasis we give to particular themes, how we listen to the prayer and spiritual experiences of the one we accompany, and even how we understand those experiences.

¹⁶⁵ HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, p. xiii. This question of guilt, as we will see in the next chapter, is of particular relevance to survivors of forced displacement, many of whom indeed experience 'survival guilt'.

possibilities and options that are imaginable from multiple perspectives, and set out spiritual standards that have roots in our common human experience”, even if their own personal life experiences are ‘worlds apart’ from their receivers’.¹⁶⁶ Of course, seeking and finding the ‘possibilities and options’ that this analogous language can provide to forcibly displaced people engaging in the Exercises—so that the experience can be fruitful and healing for them—is the purpose of this study! But as we have stressed already, this ‘analogical movement’ should proceed in both directions. In other words, givers of the Exercises need be receptive to the possibility that their own spiritual language and understanding could be enriched by ex-refugees’ descriptions, concepts and imagery resulting from their experience of the Exercises, and be further willing to incorporate these into their own Ignatian ‘glossary’. The Spiritual Exercises, when they are engaged by non-conventional religious seekers or seekers of other faith traditions, can provide a very different view of the Christian story. Because of the Exercises’ emphasis on the Jesus of the Gospels, the historical basis of Christianity reappears now as the spirituality of Jesus, what he said and did in his ministry, and the effects this had on his followers: “The substance of Christianity then lies in the many appropriations of emulating Jesus, the praxis it entails, the social loyalties it recommends, and the commitments it generates” or, in other words and as mentioned earlier, the selection of the values needed to determine and achieve the new end goals that this following of Jesus requires.¹⁶⁷

Because the tradition in which we stand as textual interpreters establishes ‘prejudices’ that affect how we will make interpretations of a text, when people in a distant land or culture read a text from the past, they grasp its meaning as something that is partly similar and partly different from meanings that they have already experienced and know. When we understand meaning this way, the text appears both novel and familiar:

A classic text from a distant culture, therefore, bears meaning when it is appropriated by the one interpreting it. Appropriation means allowing a meaning that comes from another, from outside the self, to stimulate analogous possibilities of experience and action in one’s own life. Appropriation means accommodating oneself to a new meaning and at the same time creatively imagining its appropriateness in the different context in which one exists. Appropriation is interpretation.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Cf. HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, p. xiii. A giver of the Exercises might not have experienced the horrors of force displacement but might have had experiences of violence, of being forced out of particular groups, of having to accept situations in which he or she had little saying or was totally powerless.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, p. xiv.

¹⁶⁸ HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, p. 72. The author continues: “The historical study of the Exercises has shed enormous and fruitful light on the text. But the author’s intent, the circumstances in which it

And of course, appropriation is also application in praxis. To conclude, Haight argues that in terms of interpretation, application and appropriation of the Exercises three parameters must be considered: fidelity to the *Exercises*, intelligibility today and empowerment in our world.¹⁶⁹ We have alluded to these themes earlier, so only a few further comments are presented here as a way of summary.

In terms of *fidelity* to the Exercises, its critical interpretation cannot be based simply on a description of the meaning they mediate—through their particular set of symbols and stories, especially in regards to the person of Jesus—to people today without measuring it by the text. At the same time, the meaning of Ignatius' text cannot be limited to what historical analysis can reveal about it: "Interpretation has to work within the tension between the historical preciseness of Ignatius' conceptions, the particulars of his program, and their universality or potential to be appreciated and appropriated by all".¹⁷⁰

Interpretation also means to transform the meaning of past texts in such a way that analogously they bear the similar meaning for a present-day audience—*intelligibility today*—in a distinctively different historical situation. We can perhaps understand better what this means if we think in terms of a dialogue between two people. They might have different historical backgrounds or worldviews, different sets of presuppositions and premises, yet "there can be real communication here on the basis of a common humanity and the commonalities of a shared world to which each can refer". What is needed, of course, is a willingness and an ability to transcend the confines of our own limited experience and try to appreciate in some measure, (as difficult as this might be for non- forcibly displaced peoples),

was written, and what it responded to do not exhaust the meaning of the text. A classic text always bears still more meaning within itself. Positively, its words open the possibilities for new meaning. The *Exercises* can yield more than one correct interpretation of their import. Different and sometimes opposed meanings, usually based on different suppositions, can be found in the text, and they may be equally true to it", p. 72.

¹⁶⁹ For further consideration on these parameters, see HAIGHT, "Theology and Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises" in *the Way Supplement* 70 (1991) 94-99.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, p. 73. Further, such interpretation "[...] cannot limit the meaning of Ignatius' Exercises to what he thought, to his intentions or his specific worldview, to a sixteenth-century situation or horizon of consciousness, or to how his associates and companions understood him. The historical work on the Exercises is extremely important to ensure fidelity to the Exercises; but any reduction of the meaning of the Exercises to what historians can say about their past meaning effectively negates their relevance to our world today. Those who present the Exercises differently for different audiences know this", p. 73.

what is other than one's own experience, allowing ourselves to be affected by a meaning and truth different from our own.¹⁷¹

The principle of *empowerment*, when regarded from the point of view of interpretation, reminds us of the pragmatic value of what interpretation is for. All interpretation is ultimately practical. Its purpose is to open up possibilities for life in concrete history, in a present that extends into the future:

When it is applied to interpreting the *Exercises*, empowerment implies that the point of continuity between the meaning of the *Exercises* in the 16th c. and their meaning for anyone today, including a seeker, lies in an analogy between two relationships: between a pattern of life related to the 16th c. and a pattern of life related to the 21st. As the way of life that Jesus preached and lived related to first-century Jewish Palestine, and Ignatius' conception and practice of life relate to 16th c. Spain and Europe, so too should the interpretation of life proffered by the *Exercises* today relate to the 21st c. world of the exercitant.¹⁷²

Real possibilities today are not the possibilities of the past but of the present and future, not abstract but intelligibly coherent with the actuality of our world. Real possibilities are concrete and tied to options that can only be made in this concrete world, in relation to others around us and far from us, choosing or not to be in solidarity with them and with their plights. In trying to interpret, apply and bring the *Exercises* to survivors of forced displacement, we must make an effort to keep these three critical norms of interpretation in careful balance.

2.2.7. Challenging our 'prejudices': towards a value-based interpretation

As we have been asserting, we need to face the challenge of how interpret and adapt the language, symbols, theology and ascetics as well as the cosmological vision of the 16th c. found in Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* to our contemporary pastoral response to survivors of forced displacement across the world. At the same time, givers of the *Exercises* need to consider how the theological and scientific advances of the last five centuries might be calling them to revise the ways in which they understand the spiritual experiences of their exercitants, so they can better probe their operative worldviews and their understanding of reality and of their own spiritual experiences: clearly, not all aspects of a person's tradition or worldviews are positive nor life-giving and they need to be challenged, discerned, informed and modified when needed. As Tad Dunne points out, great advances have been made since Ignatius composed the *Spiritual Exercises* in the 1520s:

¹⁷¹ HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, pp. 74-75.

¹⁷² HAIGHT, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers*, p. 76.

[...] advances in psychology, scriptural theology, historical criticism, socio-critical analysis and the shift to method in philosophy. It is this last advance, the shift to method in philosophy, that raised the hermeneutical questions of how human knowing and will can be reliable.¹⁷³

Thanks to these advances, we have a much better understanding today of what influences people's views of the world, the way they construe and find meaning and truth and how these aspects can impinge upon or enrich their spiritual growth. In his work, intended to help guide givers of the *Exercises* in their spiritual mentoring, Dunne challenges, for example, our conceptions of what it means to 'discern spirits', how we understand the *symbol* of 'the Kingdom of God', our image of history and our comprehension of conscience as an 'arbiter of values'. In terms of discernment, he suggests:

The art of discerning spirits certainly has helped many men and women make wise choices, but it should now be complemented by an educated suspicion about the very beliefs and values that as children we trusted wholeheartedly [...]. We can no longer 'discern the spirits' without facing the deeper question of just how far our own tradition, our economic situation, and our own psyches prevent certain 'spirits' from ever moving in us in the first place. In my own experience, people who rely on discernment of spirits alone for their decisions seldom criticize institution or raise the possibility of their own neurosis.¹⁷⁴

We should not be surprised about this, since a monologue with our own self-awareness is not capable of realising its own radically false ideology or worldview. So Dunne suggests that this discernment of spirits should be complemented by a 'discernment of stories', by which he means a readiness to ask whether our desires could be overly restricted by a particular kind of myth; either collective or personal myths such as 'the Bible contains all the truths necessary'; 'asylum seekers are really only opportunistic queue jumpers who want to improve their economic condition'; 'I'm the middle child so I was neglected', or 'my acceptance by others depends on my success'. These myths can be all-encompassing in that they really determine our view of reality and how we relate to the world. And they must be challenged, Dunne argues, by alternative stories:

Our ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable stories depends on how educated we are in alternative stories. We need to understand the various philosophies that have shaped Western consciousness [...]. We can learn about the vastly different ways in which people regard themselves and their lives [...]. Retreat directors (spiritual mentors) who read only

¹⁷³ Cf. DUNNE, *Spiritual Mentoring: Guiding People through Spiritual Exercises to Life Decisions*, p. xiii.

¹⁷⁴ DUNNE, *Spiritual Mentoring: Guiding People through Spiritual Exercises to Life Decisions*, p. 20. An example of this can be the contradiction found in 'practicing' Christians who, while closely following religious customs and traditions, have actively supported dictatorial elites in their countries—regimes who practiced torture and ferocious political repression of their brothers and sisters in Christ. Cf. FERNANDO URBINA, "On Spirit and History" in C. Floristan and C. Duquoc, eds., *Discernment of Spirit and Spirits*, New York: Seabury/Crossroad 1979, pp. 120-121.

theology books [...] are usually dumbfounded at the behaviour of strangers. They have heard no stories of how the dynamics of the spirit might possibly work out in someone else [...].¹⁷⁵

We might be surprised when hearing that there are people who still deny the Nazi genocide, or who attribute the conflict between Sudan and Southern Sudan to merely religious divisions, or who believe that building a wall between Mexico and the United States will stop the mass displacement of young men and women from Central America fleeing violence and gang recruitment. Without alternative stories that challenge this type of misconceptions, decisions will be made by governments that continue to punish forcibly displaced people for doing what they can to survive. Even more tragic is when decision-makers enact such policies in their belief that they promote the greater good or presume them sanctioned by their 'religious' beliefs.

This in turn raises the questions of 'How do we make good decisions? And how do we know that they are good?' Our answers will depend on our understanding, feeling, image of what 'good' ought to mean, and this understanding, feeling or image, whether we realise or not (usually not!) will have a powerful effect on our consciousness and on the way we put meaning into the history we are part of. The manner in which we envision bringing about anything good restricts what we pay attention to, "making us partly blind and partly receptive", confining and channelling our problem-solving and creative abilities and influencing our image of order. We need to liberate our consciousness and widen our perspectives so we can address the faithless and destructive images of order that are all around us today and "take a conscious stand on an image that is both a sound philosophy and a faithful bearer of the paschal mystery of life that God has revealed through Jesus and the Spirit".¹⁷⁶ As givers of the Exercises the hope is that these wider perspectives will help both our exercitants and us discover how the Exercises can contribute to our being such 'faithful bearers' of God's mystery and faithful 'practitioners' of Jesus' way; to move beyond our limited histories and realities and 'see' who are the crucified people of God today who need us to stand with them in solidarity. And this applies to the crucified people themselves, also called to be in solidarity (rather than in competition or as adversaries) with those experiencing similar plights.

¹⁷⁵ DUNNE, *Spiritual Mentoring: Guiding People through Spiritual Exercises to Life Decisions*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁶ DUNNE, *Spiritual Mentoring: Guiding People through Spiritual Exercises to Life Decisions*, p. 61.

In seeking to make good decisions following the Ignatian tradition, givers and receivers of the Exercises must remember that these have been confirmed by the Church and tradition as *sapiential texts*—they are part of the Christian wisdom literature. The instructions from Christian wisdom about life and conduct, transmitted in part through the Scriptures, are a gift of the Holy Spirit. They look both ways: towards the human and the divine.¹⁷⁷ The Exercises, connected as they are so intimately with the wisdom of the Gospel—which teach about forgiveness, discipleship, redeeming suffering, joy of the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus—call on givers and receivers of these Exercises to constantly refer their movements and dynamics to the Gospel as they seek to adapt them to their contemporary contexts.¹⁷⁸ Regardless of the process we follow to interpret them or apply them, the Exercises still pose those fundamental and inescapable questions that each Christian must pose himself or herself as they confront the Word of God: ‘what does this demand in my life?’ ‘What options must I make if I do commit myself to the following of Christ?’ In this way the Exercises form part of Christian wisdom and invite us to engage with it and make use of its lessons from Sacred Scripture and Tradition.¹⁷⁹

For example, making use of these lessons and facing the sinful structures and behaviours in this world that cause so much violence and suffering, but also with the need to forgive our enemies and perpetrators (First Week), we discover that *hospitality*, as a biblical reality, impels us to transform the stranger into a friend. Jesus, who ate with sinners, invites with his forgiveness to refashion ourselves and recognise the possibilities of change in the world. Further, the following of Jesus in discipleship and mission of the Second Week reminds us that Jesus has come to call us *friends*, not servants—the Kingdom asks for community and communion among peoples of the world and present-day communications and technology can actually, if rightly used, contribute to this ideal. The Third Week of the Exercises is centred not only in the suffering of the historical Jesus, but also in the passion and death of so many other *Christs* throughout human history. The Third Week demands an apostolic *compassion*

¹⁷⁷ Cf. HOWARD J. GRAY, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales en un mundo secular” in JUAN M. GARCÍA-LOMAS, ed., *Ejercicios Espirituales y mundo de hoy: Congreso Internacional de Ejercicios (Loyola 20-26 September 1991)*, Bilbao/Santander: Ediciones Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 53-54.

¹⁷⁸ Among others, Gilles Cusson, Carlo M. Martini and David Stanley, have shown us how connected indeed are the Exercises with Holy Scripture. Cf. GILLES CUSSON, *Pédagogie de l'expérience spirituelle personnelle: Bible et Exercices Spirituels*, Montréal: Editions Bellarmin ³1986; CARLO MARIA MARTINI, *The Ignatian Exercises in the light of St. John*, Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash 1981; DAVID STANLEY, “Contemporary Gospel—Criticism and the Mysteries of the Life of Our Lord in the Spiritual Exercises” in *Studies in Religion*, SRSp 15 (1984) 25-50.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. GRAY, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales en un mundo secular”, p. 55.

that sees Christ (as the head) in the victims (the body of that head who is Christ) and those who suffer and are marginalised, and calls us anew to deep solidarity. And the Fourth Week celebrates the *joy* of the triumph of Jesus over sin and death, over the fears that limit the dreams and hopes of humanity. Christian joy is not an escape but a reality that gives meaning to suffering.¹⁸⁰

These themes—*hospitality, friendship, compassion* and *joy*—connect us with God: we can imagine the Holy Trinity stretching its arms and offering each of these gifts to us, but also asking us to share them with others as they have been received—freely and with great generosity—and therefore they also connect us with one another. Of course there are many ways in which we can offer these gifts to others; and many ways in which we can understand or interpret what they require of us depending on our cultural backgrounds and traditions, but also our family customs and individual values. The task of interpretation is constituent of our lives at many different levels; the question is what prejudices and intentions we hold as we embark on it. And in terms of textual interpretation for the purpose of adaptation and application, (especially for those who consider themselves the ‘stewards’ of a given classical text) the question is how to, in this process of modification, preserve the text’s authenticity.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. GRAY, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales en un mundo secular”, pp. 58-59.

Part III: Preserving the Ignatian authenticity of the *Spiritual Exercises*

The *Exercises* have been described as a timeless, living instrument.¹⁸¹ Yet their 'life' is not only dependent on the organic structure of its parts, the enduring dynamic and movement through those parts as they provide the 'truths' to be discovered, and the spiritual contents which reveal and help transmit the action of the Spirit in the lives of those who undertake them. The 'life' of the *Exercises*, and the shape or form in which that life is expressed is also dependent on those who use them, adapt them and transmit them. The *Exercises* might be a "timeless, living instrument", but the way they 'look', 'function' and endure, can change (and has changed) significantly through time and custom. Are they still the Exercises Ignatius created? Or have they, in certain instances, been changed to such a degree that they can no longer be recognised as such? Clearly, what these questions point to is the issue of authenticity.

3.1. What makes Exercises 'Ignatian'? What is the minimum required for them to still be considered Ignatian Exercises?

As we have seen, this concern for maintaining the authenticity of the *Exercises* has been present throughout time, basically since their inception and initial practice. The conclusions of the aforementioned conference on the Exercises in Loyola in 1941, attended and presented by members of the Spanish Provinces of that time, provide a fitting summary of the concerns involved:

The extraordinary dissemination that the practice of the *Spiritual Exercises* has reached in our days, besides the consoling fruits that they harvest, gives rise to the danger that the same *Exercises* be disfigured or distorted, by being offered by people who know little of the mind and spirit of Ignatius, and thus pass for Ignatian exercises those which are only so in name.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Cf. IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", p. 49.

¹⁸² *Estudios sobre Ejercicios*, p. 7. So the issue is not whether or not the *Exercises* should be adapted but avoiding the danger that they be 'disfigured' or 'distorted'. Teodoro Toni, one of the presenters at the conference, agrees that adapting the *Exercises* is a legitimate endeavour as it responds to the doctrine of St Ignatius, the orientations of the *Directory* and the tradition of the Society, and claims that the 'consecrated' word for this adaptation, as it appears in the *Exercises*, is 'application', and that this adaptation is necessary because of the great dissemination of the *Exercises* and the diversity of people to whom they are offered. Individual Exercises can undergo 'spontaneous' adaptation, while adequate application for groups can be achieved through recruiting homogenous groups and preparing specialised directors. At the same time, he warns against three pernicious excesses: 1) too much preoccupation with novelty which can dilute the traditional method and content of the Exercises, "sweetening the meaning of the Cross", as an example; 2) assuming that the Exercises are not intended to provoke a change in life ("Don't worry, Jesus is where you are, so you don't need to 'move' to follow him"), and 3) using the Exercises to propose specific activities or apostolates (no room is left for conversion or acquisition of virtues) or to talk about liturgy. This 'deformation' of the Exercises is not acceptable and we should do everything possible to avoid "introducing impurities, abusive mitigations, alterations and deplorable falsehoods in the practice of the Exercises of our holy Father Ignatius". Cf. TEODORO

The conclusions also state that *only* those spiritual exercises that are found in the book of St Ignatius and which are given following the method and procedure stipulated there, can be considered *Ignatian*. In addition, Ignatian Exercises must be characterised by the *organic unity* in which its parts follow one another, the *order of the material* or truths given for the personal activity of the exercitant, the *spiritual contents* which are part of the treasure of the *Exercises* (meditations and contemplations using Scriptures, *Rules*, directions and additions, etc.), and all of these applied to any type of person and always directed to gradually leading souls to get rid of disordered affections in order to seek and discover the divine will in the disposition of their lives for the salvation of their souls (cf. [SpEx 1]).

The conclusions also suggest a few guidelines to ensure retaining the *Ignatian* character of retreats given to groups (e.g. homogeneity as much as possible among selected participants so the Director's prescriptions can be of greater benefit for most or all) and gives a list—with corresponding reasons—of those groups of people to whom the Exercises should be preferably be offered.¹⁸³ As valid and helpful as these statements would have been at that time (it is difficult to argue against anything stated in them), they do fall short for our present situation. Partly, because that suggested degree of homogeneity is more difficult to achieve today, even among people who might share a similar culture, economic social status or profession, and partly because the conclusions address mainly the full Ignatian Exercises,

TONI, "Presupuesto básico de las Aplicaciones: Adaptabilidad de los EE de San Ignacio" in *Estudios sobre Ejercicios: Semana celebrada en Loyola con ocasión del IV Centenario de la Compañía*, July 1941, Barcelona: Revista Ibérica 1941, pp. 28-30.

¹⁸³Among these are mentioned *Exercises* for Jesuits, clerics, other religious, members of Catholic Action, teachers, business people, students (both in university and schools), children, the military, the middle class and workers. *Light Exercises* are also to be encouraged because "repeated experience has shown their singular efficiency in sanctifying individuals" and because they are an excellent means to obtain a further dissemination of the full *Exercises*. Cf. *Estudios sobre Ejercicios*, pp. 7-12. Some of the other documents presented at the Conference and compiled in the *Estudios* give guidelines and suggestions as to what is required and should be done to give the Exercises to each of these particular groups. What is interesting in these documents is that these guidelines have been based on questionnaires that presumably have been given to a wide range of givers of the Exercises, and based on those responses, a particular author has compiled responses into the texts presented here. As a rule, the guidelines emphasise two points: to stay true to the method and content of the Exercises to maintain their *Ignatian* character, and to adapt them to meet the needs, situations and conditions of the people who receive them. In this application, the discretion of the giver of the Exercises is also emphasised, and therefore, the appropriate formation of directors, who need not only to know well the text of the *Exercises*, but also the particular situation of those to whom they give them. For instance, in the example of Exercises given to small children, pedagogical principles are cited including what is regarded as the best tools to introduce them to the subject matter: using examples, stories and history, music and children's songs and engaging their imagination, while keeping the input short and simple. The document also provides an interesting and engaging example of how to present the *Principle and Foundation* to them!

while we know that the purpose and objectives of *Annotation* 18 (and in some cases, of *Annotation* 19) Exercises can vary substantially from those stated above.

Other questions arise as well. Do *all* 'spiritual contents' mentioned need to be included in an experience of the Exercises for them to be Ignatian? Is there any possible variation to the 'order' which would not upset the 'organic unity' which is required in the method but would benefit the progress of the exercitant more? What other issues should be considered? As we attempt to respond to these questions—so as to develop our own Ignatian Exercises for survivors of forced displacement—we should keep in mind an axiom of application which states that the more flexible and adaptable we want a method to be, the clearer, simpler and more definite its constitutive and identifying elements should be.¹⁸⁴ We now take a look at some of these elements.

3.1.1. Two initial responses

What makes for *truly* Ignatian Exercises? What makes a retreat essentially 'Ignatian'? In an attempt to answer the first question, Ignacio Iglesias suggests six essential characteristics of Ignatian Exercises:

- 1) having the *Gospel* as the central objective or nucleus of what is intended to be transmitted;
- 2) seeking the *divine service* as the goal towards which everything else is ordered or, in other words, the desire to live a committed life as Christians;
- 3) the disposition of the *subiecto*—his/her religious and human capabilities as well as his/her foreseeable capacity for Christian commitment—as criteria to determine what mode, manner or approach to use within the particular Ignatian method. As mentioned earlier, it is not about choosing only certain candidates (everyone is to be helped), but rather about selecting the appropriate form of the method which is most helpful for each person;
- 4) the Exercises are best transmitted through *conversation*—face-to-face, intimate, personal—between the giver and the receiver of the Exercises which requires and facilitates their mutual involvement;
- 5) in talking about '*light*' exercises, their '*light*' nature refers to the content that is used based on the capacities, preparation and level of active faith of those wanting to make them; certainly the method—be it because of the duration of the Exercises, their frequency, their follow-up, etc.—is not '*light*'; and finally,

¹⁸⁴ Cf. IGNACIO IGLESIAS, "... se han de aplicar los tales ejercicios" [18] in *Manresa* 65 (1993) 254.

- 6) a basic Ignatian prayerful dynamism that combines *prayer*, in its different forms and times, with the *Examen*, the observation and reflection of what takes place interiorly. This dual dynamism is essential to allow the human person to open himself/herself to God's communication, to the spiritual experience per se.¹⁸⁵

In answer to the second question—what makes a retreat essentially Ignatian—a core group of Jesuits working in the ministry of the Exercises in different parts of Italy, and addressing a variety of different formats being used to deliver the Exercises, came up with nine major elements:¹⁸⁶

- 1) *silence*, both in the external environment but especially interior silence which is essential to dispose the soul to the hear the Word, regardless of which adaption of the Exercises is used (open or close, to individuals or groups);
- 2) *the exercitant's personal prayer*, made “in the various manners and rhythms” of the different types of Exercises, and which has to be constantly submitted to discernment, both through the *Examen* of prayer and spiritual conversation with the one giving the Exercises;
- 3) this *spiritual conversation*, which should be frequent depending on the kind of Exercises and the number of participants, and should attend to the prayer experience and the movements of the heart, helping the exercitant in his/her search for deeper union with the Lord, making particular choices or elections, and reform of life;
- 4) the *points for meditation*, focused primarily on the Word of God—the “solid foundation of the facts”, cf. [SpEx 2]—and adapted to meet the personal rhythm of an exercitant or the situation of a group;
- 5) following the *itinerary* suggested by Ignatius—recalling foundational truths, following a time of purification (First Week), following of the Lord Jesus (Second Week), and initiation into the paschal mystery of Christ (Third and Fourth Weeks)—also adapting the

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Iglesias, “¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios “Leves?””, pp. 51-52. For Iglesias, these characteristics are succinctly summarised by Iparraguirre when he points out that: “in this method there is a minimum of considerations and a maximum of instruction” (“en este método hay un mínimo de consideración y un máximo de instrucción”), p. 52.

¹⁸⁶ MICHELE LAVRA and PIETRO SCHIAVONE, “The Characteristics of an Ignatian Experience” in *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XXIX, n. 88 (1998) 59-61. The authors mention that this article constituted a draft to a directory this core group has been working on: “A Directory: Our way of giving the Spiritual Exercises”, which in fact appeared the following year in their Ignatian spirituality journal; cf. CENTRO IGNAZIANO DI SPIRITUALITÀ, “Il nostro modo di dare gli Esercizi: Indicazioni e orientamenti sul ministero degli esercizi spirituali” in *Appunti di Spiritualità* 48 (1999), pp. 3-83. The earlier (draft) document noted nine characteristics, while the latter reduced them to eight, taking out number 7 (using the colloquies and fundamental meditations of the Exercises) in the draft.

- content to the type of Exercises but always keeping Christ as the centre, which should be the basis for all of the points for meditation;
- 6) the *ecclesial content*, recognising that “the whole structure of the book of *Exercises* [...] is suffused with a feel for the church”, that the one giving the *Exercises* “acts as a witness to the tradition of the Church”, and that “every option recommended in *Spiritual Exercises* as a guide for behaviour is squared with God’s will in the life of the Church”;
 - 7) using the *colloquies* and the fundamental *meditations* of the Exercises;¹⁸⁷
 - 8) *participation in Mass and the sacraments*, which “accompanies and completes the way of progressive union with and conformity to Christ”; and
 - 9) *the link between the Exercises and life*, as part of a journey that begins before making them and will continue afterwards, hopefully with a greater commitment to the Lord and the life of the Church.

The authors conclude by stating that: “The more our way of giving *Exercises* embodies these characteristics, the more they are to be considered *Ignatian*; the less our way embodies them, the further it moves from the Ignatian method”.

While both compilations are fairly similar, it is interesting to note the additional aspects mentioned in the second, such as the ecclesial context, the participation in the Mass and the use of other sacraments. Are these truly necessary for an experience of the Exercises to be called Ignatian? Clearly, in considering the aspects proposed it is also important to assign them a ‘weight’, as obviously some of them would have greater importance than others, in particular in different types of Exercises. In a later article Iglesias, for example, reduces his characteristics to three when considering the *Light* or *First Exercises*: *relationship*, *Examen* and ‘*authentication*’ or verification.¹⁸⁸ The *relationship* has to do with the advent in our human consciousness of a *You*, who both attracts our attention and our gaze, and by Whom we felt beholden or gazed at in some special way, so that somehow we feel compelled to utter as a child would the word ‘Abba’, of that Father who gives us a sense of security and protection. The *Examen* here is understood as the interior observation of what moves (Someone moves!) within me, and this observation is a sign that a dialogue has begun. And the *authentication* is the verification of our experience of God, by and with witnesses of that same God who can help us objectivise our personal subjective experiences. At the same time,

¹⁸⁷ This element was removed from the final document (or Directory).

¹⁸⁸ Cf. IGNACIO IGLESIAS, “Mínimos ‘ignacianos’ de los EE. Leves (anot.18)” in *Manresa* 74 (2002) 41-52.

to register, formulate and give name to what is happening in the exercitant is a way to assimilate it.¹⁸⁹ For Iglesias these are the three 'minimums' to be able to say that we are making Ignatian Exercises, at the very least in regards to the *Light Exercises*. But he adds that once these minimums take hold of exercitants, they will never *abandon* them; instead these minimums will continue to grow in them and with their faith, because they are minimums that belong to what is most intimate in us.

3.1.2. What is Ignatian is what is 'original' about them

At the 2001 European Conference on the *Spiritual Exercises*, Mark Rotsaert, affirming that adaptation is essential to the *Exercises*, addressed again the question of "What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*".¹⁹⁰ The *précis* to his article outlines most of the characteristics we have enumerated, both in terms of content and method, so far:

The *Exercises* are original in method because prayer is aimed at choosing a way to live. The Ignatian meditations are original, not only in content, but in their contribution to choosing [making an election]. The review of prayer, integral to discernment, reveals felt knowledge. Finally, on method, there are no *Ignatian Exercises* without a director. The content is original principally in the *Exercises*' emphasis on the risen Christ, rare for their time. Also original in some ways are the rules for discernment, and the insistence that the *Exercises* must go on while thinking along with the Church.¹⁹¹

Notable in Rotsaert's contribution here is his mention of the 'election' aspect of the Exercises which neither Iglesias nor the Italian Jesuits above included directly (in Iglesias case, most likely because he was referring mostly to 'light' exercises). A second question Rotsaert also addresses is more relevant to our study: "Are all the adaptations of the *Spiritual Exercises* real Ignatian exercises? As expected, the answer to this question is 'no', though precisely defining which ones are and which ones are not, is not an easy task. As has been mentioned earlier, the principal criteria for adaptation is always to do what helps the one who is making the Exercises find what he or she seeks, to find what they desire. This requirement 'to do what helps' appears in several places in the *Exercises*, which take into account such aspects as varying the length of the retreat according to the physical condition of the exercitants and

¹⁸⁹ Cf. IGLESIAS, "Mínimos 'ignacianos' de los EE. Leves", pp. 42-43.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. MARK ROTSART, "What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises" in *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XXXII, n. 98 (2001) 29-40.

¹⁹¹ ROTSART, "What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises", p. 29.

making changes in food and penances to help them obtain the graces prayed for and achieve the desired profit.¹⁹²

Rotsaert differentiates between 'spiritual exercises' and 'the' *Spiritual Exercises*. What distinguishes the latter—in looking at the Exercises of 30 days on which all other adaptations are based—is what is *original* in them. While most of the individual elements of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* are not specifically Ignatian—he uses the spiritual 'tools' of his time—the way he puts them all together is. Thus, original is the fact that the *Spiritual Exercises* are composed in order to lead to a choice.¹⁹³ Rotsaert points out that “there is no other spiritual book in the 16th century, no other prayer book that shows us a way to come to a good decision, to a good choice on how to manage your life by contemplating Christ” in a process of four weeks.¹⁹⁴

As we know, this process in the full Exercises includes important transitions and key texts all written by Ignatius (e.g. *The Call of the Temporal King*, the *Two Standards*, *Three Pairs of Persons*, *Three Kinds of Humility*, the *Principle and Foundation* and the *Contemplation to*

¹⁹² “The first note is that in the contemplations of this second week, according to the time each one wants to spend, or according as he gets profit, he can lengthen or shorten: if he lengthens, taking the mysteries of the Visitation of Our Lady to St. Elizabeth, the shepherds, the Circumcision of the child Jesus, and the three kings, and so of others; and if he shortens, he can even omit some of those which are set down. Because this is to give an introduction and way to contemplate better and more completely afterwards” [SpEx 162]; “According as age, disposition and physical condition help the person who is exercising himself, he will make each day the five exercises or fewer” [SpEx 205]; “Third note. The third: when the person who is exercising himself does not yet find what he desires—as tears, consolations, etc.,—it often helps for him to make changes in food, in sleep and in other ways of doing penance, so that he changes himself, doing penance for two or three days, and for two or three others, not. For it suits some to do more penance and others less” [SpEx 89]; “[...] For it happens that in the first week some are slower to find what they seek [...] it is necessary sometimes to shorten the week, and at other times to lengthen it [...]” [SpEx 4].

¹⁹³ And it is true that usually after any retreat we end up making certain decisions or choices: to continue in the path of faith that we have chosen, or to be more diligent in prayer, or to address an outstanding conflict with a friend or a family member. In fact, if we think about it, it is unusual *not* to choose to do something after a retreat. Of course, these are not life-defining choices—for decisions of this kind, making the full *Spiritual Exercises* would be advisable.

¹⁹⁴ ROTSART, “What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises”, p. 32. Melloni agrees and emphasises this original aspect of the *Exercises*: “The Exercises are directed towards the configuration of the exercitant to the image of Christ Jesus. This comes about in two simultaneous ways: on the one hand, through the contemplation of Christ's life, passion and resurrection, which imprints the image of Christ on the heart of the exercitant; and on the other, by discerning the concrete form of this Christic configuration in one's own life (i.e. the 'election', or the continuous decisions which have to be made) through the interior movements aroused by contemplation”. Cf. JAVIER MELLONI, *The Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition*, Herefordshire: Gracewing 2000. Original in Spanish: *Los Ejercicios en la Tradición de Occidente*, Barcelona: EIDES 1998, p. 51. He continues “[...] election is the most characteristic feature of the Exercises [...] This way of life centred on the election is that of offering. Hence the Exercises conclude with the 'Take, Lord, and receive' of the *Contemplation to attain Love* [SpEx 234]. This offering is nothing less than the response to all that one has received, which is life itself and the very capacity to offer. It is a matter of exchange between the Lover and the Loved One [SpEx 234]”, p. 52.

Attain Love), but it would probably not make much sense to try to incorporate all these texts in an Ignatian retreat of eight or five days, nor could we say that such retreat is not Ignatian because it missed considering some of these texts. It would seem more crucial to include other elements of the method in order for the retreat not to lose its label of 'Ignatian'.

In considering the *Spiritual Exercises* as a *school of prayer*, for Rotsaert the most important aspect of their process is to look at Jesus in the Gospel, listening to the Word of God in Scripture. The *Exercises* are also a *school of discernment*, so another element we cannot dispense with is the reflections after the meditations and contemplations, 'listening' to what has happened in the depths of our being, to the inner movements stirring within us: "this kind of reflection is perhaps the most Ignatian part of the method of the *Spiritual Exercises*: to listen to the Word of God and listen to how this Word of God touches me in my deepest affectivity. Ignatius calls this *discernment of inner movements*".¹⁹⁵ In other words, this reflection is the place of spiritual discernment of God's presence during our prayer. And a similar purpose is found in the *Examen* of conscience—that of seeing how God is present in all things and at all times in my life. And of course, this discernment should help us improve our lives, discover our purpose and meaning, and become the persons God has created us to be. So, if this kind of spiritual discernment is not present in a retreat, it would be hard to speak of giving 'Ignatian' *Spiritual Exercises*.¹⁹⁶

Rotsaert asserts that another indispensable element for having Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* is the presence of a guide. Not only does this person give the exercitant the text for prayer, but he or she is required to know as best as possible the person he or she is giving those exercises to, in order to adapt the text to this particular person's needs. To be able to do this, the guide

¹⁹⁵ Cf. ROTSART, "What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises", p. 33. This emphasis on reflection is found in the *Exercises*: "After finishing the exercise, I will, during the space of a quarter of an hour, seated or walking leisurely, consider how it went with me in the contemplation or meditation; and if badly, I will look for the cause from which it proceeds, and having so seen it, will be sorry, in order to correct myself in the future; and if well, I will give thanks to God our Lord and will act in like manner another time" [*SpEx* 77]. To understand well this concept of reflection is also important to consider what Ignatius says about *repetition*: "Third exercise. It is a repetition of the first and second exercise, making three colloquies. After the preparatory prayer and the two preludes, it will be to repeat the first and second exercise, noting and dwelling on the points in which I have felt greater consolation or desolation, or greater spiritual feeling" [*SpEx* 118]. And in the instructions for the Second Week, Ignatius adds: "[...] noting always some more principal parts, where the person has felt (*sentir*) some knowledge (*conocer*), consolation or desolation, making likewise one colloquy at the end, and saying an Our Father" [*SpEx* 118]. Thus, feelings and knowledge can go together, and we find several other places in the *Exercises* where both words are in fact used together, cf. [*SpEx* 62, 213, 313, 334, 345]. This knowing is not intellectual; it is knowing with our heart.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. ROTSART, "What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises", p. 35.

also needs to understand the process of the Exercises, and this supposes that the guide has made them before and is also well formed to be a good guide to others. The guide is not expected to discern for the exercitant but has to help the person to learn this ability to discern his or her inner movements.¹⁹⁷

As mentioned before, the originality of the *Exercises* lies more in its method than its content. The 'Ignatian' texts mentioned earlier, which lead the exercitant towards a choice or election, could be considered original, but it is their placement in the process of the Exercises that underpins their importance—so content and process complement each other.¹⁹⁸ What is not found in other spiritual writings of Ignatius' time in terms of content is his emphasis on the presence of the risen Lord as opposed to the emphasis given to the Lord's passion by other authors. And in terms of content, also original are Ignatius' rules at the end of the *Exercises*, especially the rules on discernment of spirits (found in other writers like Erasmus, for example, but not with the practicality given by Ignatius) and the rules for feeling and thinking with the Church. It is clear for Ignatius that "what one has discerned while making the Exercises must be lived in communion with the very concrete Church". Thus, it would be expected that all retreats and spiritual exercises inspired by Ignatius' text would have this ecclesial element so essential for Ignatius.¹⁹⁹

Rotsaert concludes his article looking at the different adaptations presented by Ignatius in his last three annotations. He reminds us that in his letters Ignatius counselled that the full Exercises should only be given to those capable of receiving them, such as learned persons who are trying to make a fundamental decision in the direction of their lives or persons able to transmit the fruit of the spiritual experience to others ('multipliers'). For other people, Ignatius suggests the two other options we know so well. While most of the 19th *Annotation* retreats in daily life are very Ignatian as they cover the whole process in method and content,

¹⁹⁷ Cf. ROTSART, "What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises", pp. 36-37.

¹⁹⁸ "[...] what is specific in the Ignatian approach, namely 'election' and the consequent discernment of the will of God in history, neither of which are to be met with before Ignatius. Certainly, the discernment of spirits is present in the tradition from the Desert Fathers on, but this discernment is not oriented towards a search of the will of God that converts human existence into a permanent 'election'". Cf. MELLONI, *The Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition*, p. 51.

¹⁹⁹ ROTSART, "What makes Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises", pp. 38-39. And this ecclesial aspect has to lead to self-giving, when required, to meet the needs of others: "The more Jesus relinquished Himself, the more He discovered the will of the Father. For the will of God is only love, and love is the gift of self without measure [...]. Thus the Exercises, beyond the formal frame of eight, fifteen or thirty days, constitute a way of living in God for the world and of living for God in the world". Cf. MELLONI, *The Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition*, pp. 53-54.

the 18th *Annotation* option is not so straight forward since many adaptations are possible. But he reminds us that to help distinguish whether these exercises are Ignatian or not, we should keep looking at what is original in Ignatius' text.

The three contributions presented above summarise what most experienced givers of the Exercises would see as needed for spiritual exercises to be considered Ignatian. Many of the characteristics overlap and the differences are mainly a matter of emphasis. Summarising, and in no particular order of priority, these elements are:

- 1) *Relationship*: with a God whom we can call 'Abba' and who we believe loves and protects us.
- 2) *Silence* in both the external and interior environments.
- 3) The *exercitant's personal prayer*, made in the various manners/rhythms of the different types of *Exercises*, submitted to constant discernment.
- 4) *Examen*: interior observation of what *moves* within me, which implies the beginning of a dialogue with a view to change.
- 5) A *giver* or guide who offers material adapted to a person's needs and helps the exercitant develop a capacity to discern.
- 6) *Conversation*—face-to-face, intimate, personal—between the giver and the receiver of the Exercises; the frequency of this *spiritual conversation* will vary depending on the kind of Exercises and number of participants; the conversation should attend to the prayer experience and the movements of the heart and should provide also external *authentication* or *verification* of the experience of God to help exercitants *objectivise* their personal *subjective* experiences.
- 7) The *points for meditation and contemplation*, focused primarily on the Word of God and especially the gospels, adapted to meet the personal rhythm of an exercitant.
- 8) Following the *itinerary* suggested by Ignatius in some manner—the dynamics and content of the Four Weeks.
- 9) The *ecclesial content and context*: the Exercises are suffused with a feel for the church and a call to participate actively in it.
- 10) *Participation in mass and the sacraments*, to enter more deeply in union with and conformity to Christ;
- 11) The *link* between the Exercises and *ordinary life*, as part of a journey that begins before making them and will continue afterwards, and the *divine service* as the goal towards

which everything else is ordered: the desire to live a committed life to the Lord and the life of the Church.

- 12) *Election*: the Spiritual Exercises contribute towards making an election, a good decision or choice on how to manage and orient our lives by contemplating Christ.
- 13) Taking into account the disposition of the *subiecto*—his/her religious and human capabilities and foreseeable capacity for Christian commitment; needed to determine what mode, manner or approach to use within the particular Ignatian method.
- 14) *Review of prayer*: further reflection to listen to what happened in the depths of our being in the meditations and contemplations—is integral to discernment and reveals felt knowledge.
- 15) Use of *rules of discernment of spirits*, in a very practical way, by Ignatius.

Seeing a comprehensive list such as this, once again raises the question as to whether each and every one of these characteristics or elements is required for spiritual exercises to be ‘truly’ Ignatian. Will we need to include them all in our exercises for survivors of forced displacement? As hinted at before, I think that the answer to these questions is ‘yes... but it depends’. Yes, because it is difficult to imagine offering Ignatian exercises without including these elements in some shape or form, and *it depends* because we have to exercise great *adaptability* and flexibility in the way (‘shape’ or ‘form’) in which we include them, according to the goal of particular exercises, the ‘audience’ making them, the circumstances in which they find themselves and the resources available, among other things. Because of their circumstances it might be very difficult, for example, for some exercitants to actually find places and moments of ‘external’ silence; in such situations, the emphasis would need to be on ‘internal’ recollection and tranquillity. For certain groups of religious sisters whose attendance to daily mass is an essential part of their routine (and more importantly of their spirituality), an absence of the daily Eucharist and perhaps other sacraments (such as Reconciliation) from the content of an Ignatian retreat would not only be a distraction but also counterproductive for their retreat experience. High school students attending a weekend Ignatian retreat might not need to be presented with the *rules of discernment* of spirits as they appear in Ignatius’ text, but it would be hoped that some elements of these rules would be included in an appropriate manner as part of their experience. Once again it is a question of adaptability and flexibility and, as also mentioned earlier, of assigning the appropriate ‘weight’ to these characteristics to ascertain their importance for different types of Exercises.

But, with the group of Jesuits and companions, givers of the Exercises in Italy, I agree that the more our way of giving spiritual exercises embodies these characteristics, the more they will be considered truly Ignatian.

3.2. Annotation 18: *Light or Simple Exercises*

The list of Ignatian characteristics presented above applies to Ignatius' *Exercises* in general (*Annotations* 18-20).²⁰⁰ Since our intention and goal in this thesis is to develop mostly Ignatian *Light or Simple Exercises* for survivors of forced displacement, we consider in this next section some of their specific characteristics as well as their methodological contents and dynamics.²⁰¹

3.2.1. General characteristics of *Light Exercises*

As it was for Ignatius and his companions, the basic criteria of applicability for the *Light Exercises* continues to be the receivers of the Exercises—their faith and their fundamental language of faith. At the time of Ignatius these two aspects might have been more homogeneous, but as we have already stated, still today to take a *subieto* at where he or she is at a particular moment in time is an essential element of the Exercises.²⁰²

Further, this is based on the conviction that each one of us, in our deepest self, has a radical orientation towards a God with whom we can develop an immediate and direct relationship. While this orientation might seem to be 'buried' by layers of all that surrounds our current lives today—while being in 'the world'—we believe that it is still there and can be uncovered

²⁰⁰ We will return to the above characteristics in more detail in chapter 5, assigning particular considerations to each one of them connected to the reality of survivors of forced displacement to ensure that the spiritual exercises we develop for them are truly Ignatian.

²⁰¹ In doing this, we follow closely Iglesias' comments in his aforementioned article. Cf. IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", pp. 53-60.

²⁰² García Hirschfeld reminds us that today, perhaps more than ever before, this taking people 'where they are' has to be linked to the present reality which points to a religious 'malaise' in our culture. He wonders whether we can actually talk about a spiritual life in our world, as we face various crises of values: "¿La crisis [...] ha dejado sin alternativas a la vida espiritual? ¿Es hoy la gente tan capaz como ayer de un compromiso cristiano? ¿Con qué lenguaje nos acercamos a las personas? [...] ¿Es posible hacer una lectura de la anotación 18ª, con el ánimo de aplicarla a nuestra situación? La anotación 18ª dice que los Ejercicios 'se han de aplicar' [...]. Quizá necesitemos hoy más que nunca pensar en cómo ofrecer ayuda a tanta gente que busca [...]". Cf. GARCÍA HIRSCHFELD, "¿Apostamos o no por una espiritualidad para laicos?", p. 27. Translation from the Spanish: "has this crisis left any alternatives to the spiritual life? Are people today as able to take on a spiritual commitment as they were in the past? With what language do we approach these people? Is it possible to make a reading of *Annotation* 18 that can be applied to this situation? This annotation says that the *Exercises* 'should be applied' [...]. Perhaps more than ever before we need to think about how to offer our help to so many people who are searching [...]".

through the Ignatian process of ‘conversation’, where a personalised encounter with another provides a space for a personalised encounter with the Other that can lead to unexpected developments. This, in effect, is part of the Church’s broader call and vocation: to be in dialogue with others and with the Other, announcing a God who we believe is essentially communication.²⁰³ In terms of the *Light Exercises*, precisely because of their adaptability to the one making them, a wonderful platform for this dialogue can be provided to help each person discover this God in what is deepest in each of them. Going to this deepest place can be scary and threatening for most of us, but even more so for survivors of forced displacement, for many of whom even the thought of going into this ‘deep place’ can be quite confronting. So a first goal or intention of the *Light Exercises* is precisely to help each person dispose himself or herself to enter this personal *sancta sanctorum* (cf. *conscience* in Vatican II documents) to find themselves, to listen and to observe.

But formulas or external rituals developed by others is not the way to achieve this disposition. Rather, it requires that we allow what is best in us to emerge or ‘come out’; in other words, to allow our deepest aspirations to surface. Unfortunately, many people often remain unaware of these deepest aspirations. And here lies, precisely, the Ignatian insistence to engage in the *Examen*, as a tool for self-questioning and self-observation of that unexplored self. For Ignatius, our desires (what inflame us towards/for God)²⁰⁴ point to a life given as gift and participated in by Someone, unknown to each of us, but where the best of us resides, which makes us capable to transcend ourselves.²⁰⁵ Once again, because of the flexibility of the *Light Exercises*, different types of *Examen* can be adapted, both in content and form (although of course still maintaining its self-reflecting core) to meet the needs of specific audiences, and several *Examen* options will be included in chapter 5 for survivors of forced displacement.

²⁰³ Cf. IGLESIAS, “¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios ‘leves’?”, pp. 53-54. We see an echo of this call in some of the Society of Jesus’ documents of its 34th General Congregation: “One way of serving God’s mystery of salvation is through dialogue, a spiritual conversation of partners, that opens human beings to the core of their identity. In such a dialogue, we come into contact with the activity of God in the lives of other men and women, and deepen our sense of this divine action: ‘By dialogue, we let God be present in our midst; for as we open ourselves in dialogue to one another, we also open ourselves to God’ (John Paul II)”. Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, Decrees of General Congregation 34, D. 4, 17.

²⁰⁴ “[...] cuantas un ánimo generoso, encendido de Dios, suele desear hacer”, cf. *Au* [9]; “Donde por la nuestra flaqueza humana y propia miseria no se hallase en los tales deseos así encendidos en el Señor nuestro [...]” (*Where through human weakness and personal misery the candidate does not experience in himself such ardent desires in our Lord [...]*) Cf. [Co 101].

²⁰⁵ Cf. IGLESIAS, “¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios ‘leves’?”, p. 54.

Another characteristic of the *Light Exercises*, as we have mentioned earlier, is that the experiences that are offered through them all have an element of initiation, of setting out on a road, on a process towards new possible experiences that might achieve greater maturity, including making the full Exercises in the future. Yet, even these cannot be considered definitive—all is in a state of flux, of process in the history of salvation. In this process of initiation, the common initial objective in offering the *Light Exercises* is to help the subject/*subiecto* to overcome his or her own inactivity or passivity, to become open to something new, to start moving forward, to start ‘exercising’.²⁰⁶ But this lack of ‘activity’ is not always self-imposed. In the case of many survivors of forced displacement, for example, this ‘inactivity’ or ‘passivity’ is not a choice but a consequence of their circumstances and the limited spiritual resources available to them to *start* ‘exercising’. Also, for many of them, rather than ‘starting out on a road’ it is about continuing on or returning to a road they were forced to abandon, sometimes for a very long time. This means that they might need to re-learn some ‘forgotten’ skills, but not necessarily start from a *tabula rasa*. Again, it is about adapting to the exercitants and meeting them where they are.

3.2.2. Methodological Contents and dynamics

The *Light Exercises* are characterised by the simplicity of their content. Rather than obscuring the evangelical message with grandiose textual analysis or exegesis, by using simple language, addressed to those who are ‘simple’, they aim to uphold the principle of offering the exercitants “what can be easily undertaken” [*SpEx* 18], so any barriers that might prevent them from allowing ‘the best in them’ to enter into relationship with the Other can be dismantled. To achieve this, certain basic principles are required.

Firstly, learning to talk face-to-face with God requires that we learn (that we be taught) how to recall *our personal history*, to observe it and decipher it, so we can take conscience of God’s continuous creating presence in us. Our approaching God in every ‘exercise’ always begins by placing ourselves in God’s loving presence—all of ourselves: memory, understanding and will: “with my mind raised on high, I will consider how God our Lord beholds me [...] (*alzado el entendimiento arriba, considerar cómo Dios nuestro Señor me mira*)” [*SpEx*75]. As Anthony De Mello has put it movingly, what we try to do is to “*behold*

²⁰⁶ Cf. IGLESIAS, “¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios ‘leves’?”, p. 55.

the One beholding you and smiling".²⁰⁷ It is that *beholding* that helps the *subiecto* re-orient him/herself towards the One whose love can no longer be doubted. The Ignatian pedagogy of the *Additional Directives* has particular application and creativity in the *Light Exercises* as they invite each person to respond and act from where they find themselves. Similarly, the different 'modes or methods of prayer' (cf. [SpEx 238-260]), as basic elements of this pedagogy, aim to help us discover our true nature as 'creatures', infinitely loved by the Other, who is "always greater" than ourselves.²⁰⁸ As we will see in chapter 5, the recalling of one's personal history will be an essential element for survivors of forced displacement in the re-authoring of their life stories in search of healing.

Secondly, a common objective of the various types of *Light Exercises* is to bring forth a sense of *gratitude*, leading the exercitant to ask "How can I repay the Lord for all the good that he has done to/for me?" (Psalm 116:12) or the "What ought I do for Christ?" (cf. [SpEx 53]). These are questions that in any process of the Exercises is good to get to as soon as possible, as they bring the exercitant to the heart of life itself: what it means to love God and others. This gratitude only comes about from realising the many graces and gifts with which God showers us every day, and this awareness is achieved, once again, through the use of the *Examen* and reflection (*reflectir*).²⁰⁹ It is through this process that our dispersed and divided lives, bombarded by innumerable distractions, can become centred and unified again.

Thirdly, in this we are helped by our spiritual companions and also by those around us, fellow 'seekers' who share our journey. More so than in Ignatius' time, *Light Exercises* today seem to be characterised by a *communal aspect* or dynamism, which tends to mutually reinforce the personal experience of the Exercises, while at the same time being able to maintain their personalised application. Of course, care or vigilance is called for here to avoid diluting the personal responsibility which the Exercises aim to arouse in each exercitant by somehow transferring it to a nebulous collective responsibility. In doing so, some of us can hide and thus avoid becoming truly involved and accountable in the lives of those around us,

²⁰⁷ Quoted in GREGORY BOYLE, *Tattoos on the heart*, New York: Free Press 2010, p. 22.

²⁰⁸ Cf. IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", p. 55. "This manner of praying [the First Method] is not meant so much to provide a form and method of prayer properly so called, but rather to supply a way of proceeding and some practices by which the soul may prepare itself and profit so that its prayer may be acceptable to God" [SpEx 238].

²⁰⁹ For a description of this particular Ignatian type of reflection, see ADOLFO M. CHÉRCOLES, "Reflectir" in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 1544-1546.

especially those in need. On the positive side, this communal aspect can also help us, as Church, to explore and discover our deepest identity based on a greater universal sense of human solidarity in response to a continuous growing individualism in many cultures.²¹⁰ And in the case of survivors of forced displacement, it can help them experience more fully that sense of human solidarity they so much need and desire.

Fourthly, as it has been mentioned before, what is sought is not to accumulate knowledge but to 'make exercises'; it is not about indoctrination either. Here we see a radical difference between these Exercises and the dynamics of certain preached retreats, which only by extension can be considered Exercises. In 'making exercises' as mentioned earlier, we find a great diversity of forms and rhythms among them, characterised in many instances by great creativity in the spontaneous development and use of autochthonous symbols and religious language in different cultures which seek to express what 'cannot be expressed' within a particular context and particular experiences of a group. In seeking to offer what each person can "well bear or profit from without fatigue" [*SpEx* 18], it is clear that to the essence of the method belongs a respect for a particular 'tempo' or 'rhythm' which cannot be accelerated or delayed: it is the essential respect for the 'movements' of a particular exercitant as they arise throughout the process. This is not to say that a variety of resources cannot be (or have not been) used to incite or rouse spontaneous movements: written materials, music, nature, silence, liturgy, etc.²¹¹ Once again, for survivors of forced displacement, special care will be needed to avoid accelerating or delaying their 'rhythm', lest further harm be inflicted on them.

Fifthly, and as mentioned in the Introduction, *Light Exercises* also offer continuity through periodic and successive encounters scheduled at strategic spiritual moments, forming a unity and a 'way' or 'road' which will require some form of accompaniment. Thus, in the *Annotations* we find what we could call a permanent program of "personal inculturation" throughout the process of the Exercises. In the long run this 'way', which the giver of the Exercises is called to accompany, can become a real process of 'permanent formation' which will be of great personal benefit. *Light Exercises* can stimulate us along the way, even those who have made the full Exercises in the past, by impelling us not to stop but to move on forward in our journey of faith as we attend to the questions God poses to each of us: "what

²¹⁰ Cf. IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", p. 56.

²¹¹ Cf. IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", pp. 57-58.

are you looking for?” (Luke 24:17) or that we pose to God: “what do you want of me, Lord”, or “where do you want to take me, Lord?”²¹²

Finally, *Light Exercises*, thanks to their flexibility of forms, expressions, resources and rhythms, touch human reality in very concrete and direct ways, thus opening up a broad range of *pedagogical options*, whose effects can lead to a greater understanding and application of the full Exercises. In applying this flexibility, it is important where the focus or emphasis is placed: either on a *method* or *content* which is modified by people or on *persons* who desire to be transformed through an experience aided by a method. Our own point of emphasis is on the persons—survivors of forced displacement and their circumstances—for whom we hope to adapt the method and apply the content. But in the end, people themselves, in their process, will end up re-creating the method, as it happened since the beginning with Ignatius: “He told me that he did not make the Exercises all at once, but rather that some things that he found helpful he thought might also be helpful to others [...]” (cf. *Autobiography* 99).

This brief exploration on the main characteristics of *Light Exercises* today, as well as insights into how to offer them, helps draw some conclusions. First, they are characterised for their dual aspect of catechesis and emphasis on lived experience, integrated together and using as point of departure the subject/*subiecto*—his or her real situation and disposition. Secondly, these exercises which could be labelled as ‘Exercises inspired in St Ignatius’—or other equivalent term (which we will develop for our own in chapter 5), to differentiate them from the *full Exercises* [*SpEx* 19-20], either in daily life or as a 30-day retreat, denote those exercises which take up significant elements of the full retreat and reproduce at some level the intent of the Ignatian method: to arouse a basic attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude manifested in loving deeds and to guide our lives as a real and personal exchange between God and the person (cf. [*SpEx* 230-231]).²¹³

It should be said that some of the points mentioned in the previous paragraphs would also apply to Exercises based on *Annotations* 19 and 20, and that is one of the reasons we have expounded on these characteristics with greater detail at this point. We turn now to some

²¹² Cf. IGLESIAS, “¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios ‘leves’?”, pp. 59-60.

²¹³ Cf. IGLESIAS, “¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios ‘leves’?”, p. 59.

examples.²¹⁴ As we explore their approaches in relation to the criteria given above—including an itinerary towards *holiness* understood as a deeper and more intimate relationship with God—we will point out those specifics in each which we hope to incorporate into our own Exercises.

3.3. Some examples of adaptations and applications of the Exercises according to Annotations 18 and 19

We cannot really speak of applications of Exercises according to *Annotation* 20, the full Exercises. Rather, as we saw in the Introduction to this chapter, what has become common practice is to modify or apply some elements of Ignatius' method to suit the circumstances of specific exercitants and groups: number of people, their formal education as well as spiritual formation, facilities, resources, etc. We can, however, speak of both adaptations and applications of the Exercises according to *Annotations* 18 and 19. Since our own exercises will be based primarily on what is recommended in *Annotation* 18, we will analyse these in greater detail. However, we present first a brief summary description of some *Annotation* 19 Exercises which offer some important insights as to how the process of application and adaptation can be carried out. Most of them also contain materials for application of *Annotation* 18 Exercises. All the examples given here have been chosen because of their variability either in method, cultural context, audience or purpose.

3.3.1. Examples of Nineteenth Annotation Exercises

The Exercises according to *Annotation* 19 in principle constitute the complete Spiritual Exercises, aimed at reaching an election or undertaking a reform of life (cf. [*SpEx* 189]), but now offered as part of (applied to) a person's ordinary life. Directors note that this experience of God takes characteristic shapes in each of the Four Weeks as exercitants pray through

²¹⁴ Of course, there are many examples of the *Light* Exercises taking place all around the world. *Manresa* Magazine dedicated one its volumes—70 (January—March 1998)—to present some of the variety of contexts in, and audiences to, which they offered. These included, among others: PEDRO H. ARRAIGA, “El ‘camino Ignaciano’ entre indígenas” in Mexico pp. 5-13; RAMÓN FRESNEDA, “Ejercicios leves a Universitarios (CVX)” in Madrid, as part of their pastoral university programme at Centro Arrupe, pp. 14-23; GUIDO JONQUIERES, “Ejercicios espirituales básicos” in Chile, which the author describes at the ‘lightest’ of Exercises, requiring very little time and acting as a first approximation to the Exercises, pp. 24-26; JOSÉ CORREA, “Encuentros semanales de Ejercicios Ignacianos” in Chile, to be done in *groups*, pp. 27-31; KATTY VAN CAUWELAERT, “Retiros espirituales para miembros de Comunidad Eclesial de Base” for basic Christian communities in Chile, given as three weekend silent retreats, one per year with the themes of ‘creation’, ‘God of life’ and ‘an encounter with Jesus’, pp. 32-36; MAGGIE LOAYZA, “Una semana de oración acompañada. Taller de iniciación” also in Chile, and presented as a week of prayer in an ecclesial context (parish, school) to introduce the Bible to people with none or very little experience of the Scriptures, pp. 37-42; and MICHELE LAVRA, “Ejercicios vespertinos” in Italy, over a week-long period that includes catechetical and prayer elements, pp. 43-48.

them. These Exercises likewise promote personal spiritual integrations. Directors also note how “those who make them not only grow aware of spiritual motions, the basis of discernment, but also learn how spiritual motions interplay with the human movements and ordinary emotions of daily life”.²¹⁵ We look now briefly at seven examples of this type of application of the Exercises.

3.3.1.1. A classic example: Choosing Christ in the World

Written by Joseph Tetlow, the complete title of this adaptation is *Choosing Christ in the World: 'A Handbook for Directing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola according to Annotations Eighteen and Nineteen'*.²¹⁶ The work, divided in seven chapters and an appendix, includes not only material that will be given to the exercitant, but also specific notes for the giver as well as a detailed description and plan for the whole process of the Exercises. It is a manual in the best sense of the word and in fact, the major contribution of this work, I believe, is the degree of detail (step-by-step instructions) it offers to givers, in particular new ones, through its 'Brief Notes' (chapter 6) and 'Director's notes' (chapter 7). Tetlow's exercises based on *Annotation 18* (he calls them 'Lightworks') cover fourteen weeks and are divided into three groups, each of which he suggests could be used for Advent, Lent and after Easter Sunday, the latter moving into everyday life the way the first followers of Christ did after his ascension.

3.3.1.2. A well-tried and effective retreat: A retreat to Comunidades Populares

This retreat in daily life developed in Barcelona, Spain has been offered since 1983 to a group of about 25 different people from various Christian communities, mainly lay, younger and older, and usually including some religious as well.²¹⁷ Though the retreat is based mainly on *Annotation 19*, it also has aspects of *Annotation 18* (and thus of interest for the development of our own *Exercises*), seeking to respond to the real needs of the exercitants, based on their life situation, in this case members of *Comunidades Populares*, (usually of low socio-economic status). Besides the four months of Exercises in ordinary life, the participants attend three 'intensive retreats' over a weekend each, at the beginning, middle and end of the retreat. These weekend retreats are seen as a reinforcement of the Exercises in daily life, but

²¹⁵ Cf. SIS, "Notes Three for the One Giving Exercises", p. 49.

²¹⁶ Cf. JOSEPH TETLOW, *Choosing Christ in the World*, 2nd ed. Augmented, St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources 1999. The material on 18th *Annotation* Exercises was added to the revised edition as an Appendix.

²¹⁷ Cf. FRANCESC RIERA, *The Exercises in Ordinary Life*, (EIDES collection), Barcelona: Cristianisme I Justícia 2014. Original in Spanish: *Ejercicios en la Vida Ordinaria (para comunidades populares)*.

they are also used to present the Ignatian themes that will be the material for prayer for the retreat.. In terms of objectives for the experience (which we also hope to replicate for our *exercises*), the organisers of the retreat express that they are twofold:

In the first place, we want to help make committed adult Christians, men and women responsible for making Jesus a force in the world, as distinct from passive ‘consumers of the Christian products’... As a second objective, we aim through these *Exercises* to bring a certain quality to the Christian communities to which the exercitants belong.²¹⁸

3.3.1.3. Orientations

John Veltri's *Orientations*—one of the earlier modern-day practical applications of the Exercises—consist of two volumes.²¹⁹ The first, *Orientations I*, is ‘a collection of helps for prayer’ intended as a guide for givers of the *Exercises* helping people who want to “get some instruction and reach a certain level of peace of soul” [cf. *SpEx* 18], so very much an application of the Exercises based on the 18th *Annotation*. Among the exercises included (and which we will use as basis for our own) we find: exercises on praying with scripture and the gospels in particular; on how to enter into retreat; healing of memories of oneself; remembering God's presence in my life history; and prayers for an increasing awareness of God's care, acceptance and love for us, and of our need for healing in our lives as we walk daily with the Lord. *Orientations I* also offers paraphrases of some of the Spiritual Exercises of the First and Second Weeks, helps in decision-making and various ways of reflecting on experience (*Examen*, review of prayer, repetition, etc.) and readings and prayers from some of the great spiritual masters.

Orientations II, divided in four sections, is a detailed manual for ‘beginning’ directors of *Annotation 19 Exercises* on how to direct a hypothetical exercitant along their journey of the Spiritual Exercises. Of particular interest to us as a reference is section 4, which contains notes for facilitators for small group sharing. Among the goals of the weekly small group sharing, which we hope to emulate, are: to give participants an experience of faith community; to develop a way of making the *Examen* in common; to help appropriate the language of the Exercises together; to experience the affective and faith support of others; and

²¹⁸ RIERA, *The Exercises in Ordinary Life*, p. 21.

²¹⁹ Cf. JOHN VELTRI, *Orientations: a collection of helps for prayer, Vol 1*, Guelph: Guelph Centre of Spirituality 1979; JOHN VELTRI, *Orientations: a manual to aid beginning directors of the Spiritual Exercises according to Annotation 19, Vol 2*, Guelph: Guelph Centre of Spirituality 1981 (this particular edition of the Vol 2 constituted the draft of the manual that was being prepared for publication).

to help sustain each person's generosity in undertaking the journey of the Exercises in daily life over a given period of several months.

3.3.1.4. Sacred Listening

Written by James L. Wakefield, a Protestant Pastor, this application of *Annotation* 19 can be used in an established spiritual program or as a self-directed retreat.²²⁰ Despite making changes in language (for example, he calls exercitants 'disciples') and some content (e.g. no mention of Mary) so they can be used by Protestant Christians (an 'inculturation' exercise), Wakefield tries to remain faithful to the method and pedagogy of the Exercises. This retreat presents some 'creative detours' from the usual retreat in daily life in other ways: givers are called 'companions' or 'listeners' and are not expected to have formal training beyond having a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and be 'mature and compassionate Christians' (though Wakefield recognises that this may entail some drawbacks, he is also pragmatic acknowledging that the number of formed spiritual directors is limited); the *Rules of Discernment* of the First Week are introduced, one or two at a time, during the second half of this First Week and used as material for specific prayer periods; and great care is given to explaining elements that might be new to or not widely used by brethren of the Protestant traditions, such as praying with *lectio divina*, the importance of feelings and emotions in understanding God's communication and personal revelation to each of us, and adapting the use of the General Confession at the end of the First Week.²²¹ Another fruit of this work, particularly relevant for our case—as we consider how to apply the Exercises to survivors of forced displacement—are the introductory chapters of the book. Because the purpose of the author is to provide a 'manual' for those giving and doing the Exercises, his comments and suggestions are very helpful as a guide of possible things to consider in this application.

3.3.1.5. Moment by Moment

²²⁰ Cf. JAMES WAKEFIELD, *Sacred Listening: Discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*, Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks 2006. However, Wakefield strongly discourages undertaking the Exercises without a companion.

²²¹ Robert Haight argues that "its nondenominational, pre-theological, and universally applicable essence" make of the *Exercises* not "a Catholic or Jesuit preserve, but [...] a Christian possession that is in fact readily accessible to all people and capable of nurturing a common ecclesial spirituality". Cf. ROGER HAIGHT, "The Spiritual Exercises as an Ecumenical Strategy" in *Theological Studies* 75, n. 2 (2014) 343.

Carol Ann Smith and Eugene Merz offer their own adaptation of a retreat in daily life in their work 'Moment by Moment'.²²² The title is based on the premise that "Our lives are given to us moment by moment by a God who is gracious, faithful, and energetically creative in interacting with us", and we give our response to God "moment by moment in the midst of the ordinary events of our lives".²²³ The book, divided in thirty-two moments or prayer sessions of two short pages each which can be easily read in ten minutes, is written for people who might only take a few minutes to pray daily but are committed to finding God in their full, busy and complex lives.²²⁴ Any of the *moments* can be used for reflection at any time, either by an individual, in conversation with others or as a group exercise, or even for a "random hour of reflection". The critical thing is to bring one's life experience to the prayer. Each *moment* contains the same elements: *desire*; *quotations* from the *Spiritual Exercises* and the scriptures; *further resources*; *questions* (the 'points' for prayer), *aids to discernment* (from the 'rules'); *suggestions* for concrete steps or action, and *the Examen*. All the Ignatian texts (*Principle and Foundation*, etc.) are also included as specific *moments* as well as the subject of making a choice or election. I think the major contribution of this work is that it presents a comprehensive and yet simple offering of the 19th *Annotation* (similar to what we are trying to do with our 18th *Annotation* version), and even though it is conceived in its format for 'busy' people, it could of course also be used by those who have more time in their hands.

3.3.1.6. An Ignatian Adventure

Another example of a very contemporary work based on the 19th *Annotation* comes to us from Kevin O'Brien, SJ.²²⁵ Following closely the Ignatian text, O'Brien offers prayer material for the seven days of each week, over a 32-week period. He introduces each calendar week with themes that run through the different prayer periods, including several Ignatian themes (ways

²²² Cf. CAROL ANN SMITH and EUGENE MERZ, *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press 2007.

²²³ SMITH and MERZ, *Moment by Moment*, p. 10.

²²⁴ SMITH and MERZ, *Moment by Moment*, p. 11. In terms of the retreat's duration, an interesting adaptation of the Exercises in daily or ordinary life is the one proposed by André Ravier. Like Smith and Merz, he also offers thirty-two sections (or 'days' in his retreat). However, rather than taking specific points or themes from each day of the full Exercises as they do and offering a simplified prayer, Ravier tries to incorporate almost all of Ignatius' meditations and contemplations by offering them as 'points'. In other words, he assumes that the exercitant will still only pray for an hour or two each day, but the content of that prayer 'period' is to include all the meditations and contemplations of each given day of the full Exercises. In effect, his retreat is more a combination of the both a 19th and a 20th retreats. Cf. ANDRÉ RAVIER, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola: A Do-it-at-Home Retreat*, translated by C. Michael Buckley, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1991. Original in French: *En Retraite chez soi*, Paris: Ateliers Henry Labat 1989.

²²⁵ KEVIN O'BRIEN, *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life*, Chicago: Loyola Press 2011.

of prayer, discernment of spirits, *Principle and Foundation*, the election, etc.) The guidelines of the book are easy to follow, and O'Brien makes it more readable by weaving in his own personal accounts of living out the Exercises in everyday life. His moving stories make it easy to see how the Exercises intersect with the real world and his personal style—simple, direct, concise, insightful—makes the work approachable and enjoyable. He has transformed what some consider Ignatius' 'dry' spiritual classical into a narrative that is at the same time faithful to the text, but also enjoyable to read (an important reminder for us to make our own *exercises* as approachable and appealing as possible). O'Brien adds his own narrative to Ignatius'—and of course to Jesus' own story—and combined they invite the exercitant to share his or her own.

3.3.1.7. The Power of Film: *Exercises in the darkness*

In this work two Canadian Jesuits, John Pungente and Monte Williams, take Ignatius' text to the movies.²²⁶ This 19th *Annotation* application of the *Exercises* is also very close to Ignatius' original text, divided in Four Weeks and covering the Ignatian themes of *the Mercy of God*, *Walking with God*, *A Passionate Love*, and *A Transforming Life*, respectively. Each *exercise* (forty-two of them are offered) is divided in two sections: (1) a presentation of the Ignatian content (through a scriptural passage and a quote from the *Spiritual Exercises*), the *grace* to pray for and the 'points' for prayer; (2) watching a film which is related to the topic/grace/content of the given exercise, accompanied by questions about the movie, the relationship of the movie to the theme, and the relationship of the movie to one's self in the exercise. The innovation of this retreat is to introduce people to the Exercises using contemporary popular films, but without them taking over or occupying the place of Ignatius' Exercises.

These are always presented first and the exercitants are invited to engage deeply with them and to stay with them for as long as they find fruit. What the films do, in a provocative and effective way, is to provide a 'repetition' of the exercise, using a different medium to help engage further the imagination and offer other ways of seeing and living the Exercises, where watching the film becomes the act of contemplative prayer. The authors argue that "Cinema is contemporary church", not only because in our postmodern world *image* has become

²²⁶ JOHN PUNGENTE and MONTY WILLIAMS, *Finding God in the Dark: Taking the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius to the Movies*, Toronto: Novalis 2004. The 'dark' in their title clearly refers to the idea of watching a film in a darkened movie theatre.

reality, but because what we see on the screen is 'God' for us, "inasmuch as it creates and defines what is real for us", so that the cinema "has taken on for most of our culture the effects and resources of religious worship". In our case, this provides another reminder of the importance of 'inculturating' our own *exercises* in appropriate and creative ways.

3.3.2. Examples of Eighteenth Annotation Exercises

Even though Ignatius speaks of *Annotation* 18 Exercises in reference to people who cannot engage in the full Exercises because of a perceived lack, we have a better understanding today of the richness they hold in terms of their applicability to countless situations. They are not 'second class' Exercises but have a purpose of their own and can indeed result in great benefit to those who engage in them.²²⁷ As Iglesias points out, José Calveras, in his well-known work on the fruits of the Spiritual Exercises, dedicates a good portion of his book to answer the question of what fruits could be expected from these 'reduced' Exercises, which he divides between 'light' Exercises and Exercises of the First Week: "It is interesting to note that, by centring the question on the 'fruit', [Calveras] establishes already the differentiation between the fruit of these Exercises and those of the full Exercises [...] on the one hand, and those of the 'preached' Exercises [...] on the other. With this, he is implicitly acknowledging, following Ignatius, their own entity and identity."²²⁸ We look now in more detail (since our own *exercises* will be also based on this *Annotation*) at five examples of this type of application of the Exercises. And, as a way of contrast and to aid us in better understanding their Ignatian character, we end this section with an example of Spiritual Exercises that might on the surface seem Ignatian, but in reality are not.

3.3.2.1. Itinerarios

²²⁷ On the relationship between fruits produced and 18th *Annotation* Exercises, see for example, ARTURO CODINA, "Un comentario de San Ignacio a la anotación 18" in *Manresa* 6 (1930) 314-319.

²²⁸ IGLESIAS, "¿Es la hora de los Ejercicios 'leves'?", p. 50. Among these fruits, Calveras lists *overcoming oneself* (which includes sorrow for past sins, a determination to correct defects, a desire to advance in the spiritual life and the practice of some bodily penance); *ordering one's life* (to progress in purity and perform one's spiritual exercises and pious practices), and *spiritual formation* (catechetical instruction, ascetical training and a general confession). In regards to catechetical instruction, Calveras asserts that "The Light Exercises [...] are indeed catechetical exercises [...]. They ought, therefore, to be held in high esteem, since now-a-days, more so than at any other time in the past, the teaching of the Christian doctrine has become a question of primary importance in the case of the great majority of the faithful" (and he made this comment almost 70 years ago!) Cf. JOSÉ CALVERAS, *The harvest-field of the Spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius*, Bombay: India Printing Works 1949. Original in Spanish: *¿Qué frutos se ha de sacar de los Ejercicios?*, 2a edición aumentada, Barcelona: Editorial Librería Religiosa 1950.

Prepared by the Centre of Spirituality 'San Ignacio' in Salamanca, Spain, *Itinerarios* is a series of five sets of *Light Exercises*, presented as: *Initiation into the experience of God* (1 and 2), *Deepening of the experience of God: Spiritual Exercises of the First Week* (3), *Deepening of the experience of God: Supplement to the Exercises of the First Week* (4), and *Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola* (5).²²⁹ Each itinerary in turn contains a series of prayer resources which vary in number depending on the particular itinerary. Each prayer resource fits in a single sheet of paper with writing on both sides and is illustrated with lovely crayon or pencil drawings.

The prayer resource is simple, containing a text that serves as the 'input' for meditation, and usually a reflection or a prayer text to help dwell deeper into the theme being meditated on. The 'points' for prayer are also very concise, usually a line or two, suggesting to the exercitant what to consider throughout the day and what to reflect on at the end of each day. Each prayer sheet can be used as prayer material for one or more days or it can be the material for prayer for a whole week. The suggestion is that it be used in this latter form to help assimilate it and savour it in greater peace and tranquillity. Each one of the five *itineraries* is divided into two parts: 1) practical exercises for prayer and 2) annexes. The first section (with the greater amount of material by far) constitutes the prayer material for the exercitant. The second section contains additional material to assist the process of the Exercises, with suggestions and clarifications for both the guide and the exercitant and with some additional guidelines for prayer.

The suggested prayer period is between ten to fifteen minutes or more depending on the possibility of each exercitant, preferably at the beginning of each day, so that one can 'hold' or 'savour' the message found within each theme throughout the day and at night reflect on the fruit that it has left in one's interior. Whatever time or period of day is chosen the important thing is to remain faithful to it. The Exercises can be done either individually or in groups and in both cases the role of the giver or guide is fundamental. If accompanying only one individual, the guide will always be attentive to the need of adapting the material to the characteristics and circumstances of the exercitant. Ideally, they will meet weekly and it will

²²⁹ Cf. CENTRO DE ESPIRITUALIDAD 'SAN IGNACIO', *Iniciación a la experiencia de Dios 1 and 2*, Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae 2009; *Profundización en la experiencia de Dios: Ejercicios Espirituales de Primera Semana 3*, Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae 2010; *Profundización en la experiencia de Dios: Complemento a los Ejercicios Espirituales de Primera Semana 4*, Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae 2011; *Ejercicios Espirituales de san Ignacio de Loyola 5*, Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae 2012.

be a time and opportunity for the exercitant to share what has happened throughout the week. When the retreat takes place in a group setting, the role of the guide will be to facilitate the sharing of each individual during their weekly meetings and ensure that commitment does not waver, always encouraging participation and the preparation of each meeting.

The first *itinerary*—in the first initiation into the experience of God—begins with the very basic but most important exercises of praying with the five senses. They are exercises in awareness, to help the retreatant learn how to see, listen, taste, smell and ‘touch’ better. The exercise on *touch*, for example, invites the exercitant to consider his or her own hands, how beautifully they are made, and how they can be used as instruments of good or evil. Then the exercitant is invited to consider Jesus’ hands, always open to people, always giving, healing, transmitting love and care. Other themes in this itinerary include opening the ‘doors’ to Christ, considering how we live out our relationships with others in love, the ways in which we can be of service to others, the God of life, sin and forgiveness, the call of Jesus, and the ecclesial aspect (Mary, the Church, communal celebrations).

The second *itinerary* is intended to help deepen the already lived experience of God through prayer in one’s daily life. The weekly prayer materials still consist of a single sheet of paper and the exercitant is invited to remain with each meditation for a whole week. In this itinerary, the first section always begins with the phrase “Prayer is...” and the rest of the phrase is completed by a short text that serves as introduction to the weekly Exercises. Two *exercises* are provided in each sheet which describe different ways of praying and include scriptural texts to help with prayer; the material finishes with a psalm or a poem or reflection related to the contents in the two previous sections. The ‘matter’ which is covered in each of the proposed exercises picks up, in a very simple way, the journey of the Exercises of St. Ignatius. It does not intend to follow step by step the text of the *Exercises*, nor does it name the different stages explicitly. Only the guide is aware of following this particular journey, which is divided into seven sections, which begin with the *Principle and Foundation* and end with the *Contemplation to Attain Love* and the *different modes of prayer*, going through the ‘Four Weeks’ In between. Ultimately, the objective of this itinerary is to walk another ‘step’ in the process of learning practical exercises for prayer which can facilitate one’s encounter with God.

As its title indicates, the third *itinerary* is indeed intended to further deepen the experience of God already developed in the first two by introducing exercitants to Exercises of the First Week. The weekly prayer materials still consist of a single sheet of paper, but a more structured format (based on Ignatius' Exercises) is introduced now consisting of six steps: *presence of God*; *petition* (for a particular grace); *composition of place, prayer text and points*; *colloquy*, and *other texts* related to the theme, for further prayer and reflection. The itinerary is divided into two sections dealing with the two major themes of the First Week: (1) we have been created by God in love and for love, praise and service, and (2) our involvement in the rupture of God's dream for us and God's continuing fidelity through God's forgiveness and mercy. The annexes in this itinerary, as expected, provide instruction and guidance for Ignatian elements linked to the First Week: introduction to prayer; a brief description of discernment and St Ignatius' Rules; the use of the Ignatian Examen and a presentation on the celebration of reconciliation.

The fourth *itinerary*, as its sub-heading also indicates, is intended as a supplement to its predecessor which introduced the Exercises of the First Week. It begins with an introduction to Ignatian prayer, followed by a few exercises of 'repetition' of the themes of this First Week, and then exercises on the call of Jesus, the hidden life of our Lord, some of the meditations of the 'Ignatian Day' (fourth day of the Second Week), Jesus' public life, the Reform of Life, and some contemplations of the Passion and Resurrection, culminating with the Contemplation to Attain Love. Each prayer sheet is divided in two sections: motivation (which is a presentation on the theme) and prayer, which includes the prayer points, most scripturally based. The fifth *itinerary* contains the full Exercises, beginning with the *Principle and Foundation* and then processing through the Four Weeks using forty-seven exercises. This is by far the longest of the *itinerarios*, with also the greatest number of annexes with instructions and clarifications for both the giver and receiver of the Exercises.

We have delved in greater detail into this particular adaptation/application of the Exercises because, as we will see in chapter 5, we will incorporate several of its elements and principles into our own exercises, both in content and in form. As with the authors of this work, our hope will be to provide also an initiation into, and deepening of, the experience of God for survivors of forced displacement, based mostly on the *Light Exercises* suggested by St Ignatius (*Annotation* 18) but also using some of the Exercises of the First Week and a few of

the last three Weeks. An introduction to prayer, in particular to the different types of Ignatian prayer, will also be needed, as well as several other catechetical materials to support and deepen their more personal and interior experiences. Simplicity of format, as with the prayer sheets of these *itinerarios*, will also be our design of choice, to ensure both that the receivers of our exercises do not feel overwhelmed by excessive information and that the materials are easily accessible and reproducible, given sometimes their limited resources.

3.3.2.2. The 'First Spiritual Exercises'

This is the title given by Australian Jesuit Michael Hansen to his book which presents 'four guided retreats' that can be made over a period of four weeks each.²³⁰ Hansen calls his book an adaptation of Ignatius' original *Light* or *First Exercises*. He names the four retreats: *Inner Peace in Divine Love*, *Inner Peace in Darkness and Light*, *Inner Peace in Friendship with Jesus*, and *Inner Peace in the Service of God*. In his introduction he explains that "each retreat is created for the gift of inner peace and a particular desire—these being the desire to experience divine love; to live in the light of mercy, healing, or freedom; to grow in friendship with Jesus; and to be of service to others".²³¹ This inner peace is a gift given to those who walk with God, and the purpose of the book is to help us be open to receive that gift. In these *First Spiritual Exercises*, six great additional gifts from God are sought through the four retreats: the great gift of the unconditional love of God, the gift of service, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of healing, the gift of freedom and the gift of friendship with Jesus. As expected, all of these gifts would also be of great significance to survivors of forced displacement and our hope is to incorporate them in some way in our own *exercises*.

The four retreats are presented in the first half of the book, together with some introductory and concluding texts given under the titles of 'Spiritual Desire' (describing the gifts listed above and a description of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* and *First Spiritual Exercises*)²³² and

²³⁰ Cf. MICHAEL HANSEN, *the First Spiritual Exercises: Four Guided Retreats*, Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press 2013. Hansen has also written an accompanying guide to this book, which we have quoted earlier, called *the First Spiritual Exercises: A Manual for Those Who Give the Exercises*, and it is intended for directors of these retreats. It provides indications on how to conduct the retreats as well as a guide on 'spiritual conversation', how to develop a support network of 'givers' of the *Exercises*, and suggestions for further reading.

²³¹ Cf. HANSEN, *the First Spiritual Exercises*, p. ix.

²³² Hansen asks "What makes the 18th *Annotation Exercises*, the 'First' *Spiritual Exercises* and responds: "To begin with, they are first in the spiritual journey. They are the first spiritual exercises learned by the pilgrim Ignatius seeking God's will. They are the first spiritual exercises he gave to others. They are the first exercises I might give to anyone who desires to make progress in their spiritual life today. Second, they are first in content.

‘Spiritual Progress’ (on keeping the graces received, receiving further exercises and becoming givers of these Exercises to others). The second half of the book provides ‘guides and helps’ for the retreat and afterwards: material on different forms of the *Examen*, and ‘Ignatian guides’ to enhancing Exercises, to twelve ways of prayer and to Christian Belief—materials that we plan to tap into as well. The book ends with a section on ‘Spiritual Conversation’ which also includes ‘Ignatian guides’ to spiritual journaling, conversation and discernment of spirits.

The *First Spiritual Exercises* retreats are given for twenty-one to twenty-five days in daily life. Prayer, in the form of a spiritual exercise, is made four days a week, over four weeks. A weekend exercise and Sunday Eucharist are also included. Each prayer day has a spiritual exercise and a reflection. Each retreat is structured to be experienced as a whole, with a dynamic that moves through all four weeks, while each week has, at the same time, its own dynamic. The exercise or prayer texts are chosen as both single texts and a network of texts. As single texts, they provide the context, relationships and the content of each exercise. As a network of texts, they offer different views, contrast of content, and masculine and feminine experiences. Each retreat deliberately introduces many different images of God in action, so that a variety of divine relationships may give the exercitant an experience of the extraordinary richness of knowing and loving God, of being loved by the Trinity.²³³

Each *First Spiritual Exercise* follows the same structure and is divided into five steps: 1) *preparation*, for focus and settling into a sacred space through reverence and humility, and a first reading of the prayer texts; 2) an *opening prayer*, which is a surrender of self—“I ask for the grace to direct my whole self to God...”; 3) an expression of *desire*, which gives the exercise its purpose and is essential; 4) the *prayer* itself, where using one’s imagination and the given prayer text/s, the exercitant enters into a gospel scene, meditates or takes the steps through a consideration; 5) a period of *conversation* with God, ‘talking as to a friend, about

They contain many ‘first’ exercises: the first principle of Christian freedom, first Christian prayers, first virtues, first morning thoughts, first creation, first sin, first methods of prayer, first fruits of the Spirit, first steps of discernment, and so on. Third, they are first in order and dynamic of the Exercises. One of the *First Spiritual Exercises* retreats includes all of the *first week* of the Full *Spiritual Exercises*. These and other first exercises must be made first before all the rest. Fourth, they are first in use. They are the first form of the *Spiritual Exercises* retreat ever given. Unlike the *Full Exercises*, they can be given immediately to everyone. They are a complete form of the *Spiritual Exercises* in their own right. And in Ignatian spirituality, they are not only an excellent place to begin, they are the only place to begin!” Cf. HANSEN, *the First Spiritual Exercises*, p. 15.

²³³ Cf. HANSEN, *the First Spiritual Exercises: A Manual*, p. 71.

one's prayer experience.²³⁴ Most exercises also contain three additional sections: 'spiritual direction' which might consist of an explanation of the theme presented or some background to the exercise or instruction on the purpose of the exercise and how to follow the process; a 'suggested prayer time', which usually varies from fifteen to forty minutes or 'as needed'; and the prayer texts to be used.

Any of these retreats could be done individually, but they are designed to be made as part of a community of faith, with the help of a guide or facilitator. Each week, the participants come together to share their experience of prayer, using the guidelines found in the 'Ignatian Guide to Spiritual Conversation' mentioned earlier. Journaling is highly recommended as an essential part of the Exercises' experience. Hansen calls the journal for these retreats 'the Listening Book', because it is also essential for remembering and discerning the graces received during each retreat. We will also appropriate several elements of this resource into our own exercises for survivors of forced displacement, including, among others: the emphasis on receiving the gifts of the Spirit, the basic format for each prayer period, specific practices of spiritual conversation, the dynamics of community faith sharing and the use of the journaling book or 'co-book' (our term).

3.3.2.3. The 'earthy' Exercises

Margaret Silf is one of the better known spiritual writers in the contemporary Ignatian Anglo-Saxon World. She has written several books on Ignatian spirituality, and one of her earlier and better-known titles is *Landmarks*, where she explores some of the main Ignatian themes from the *Spiritual Exercises*. Her book could be said to be a kind of 'preached retreat', where she chooses some Ignatian topics and then as 'director' gives an exposition on each topic, finishing with suggestions for prayer and reflection (points). Of course, she cannot engage the exercitants personally but does point out the importance of sharing one's spiritual experiences with wisdom figures we can trust, thus leaving the 'directing' to others. The author describes the purpose of the book saying:

The explorations in this book [...] are offered in the spirit of Ignatius in the hope that they may provide a few landmarks in the mysterious and sometimes hazardous terrain of our hearts as we make the journey inwards towards the pearl of great price, that lies both at our own deepest centre and far beyond our wildest imaginings. Landmarks help us to find our way on a journey, by giving us a *point of recognition* [...]. They give us confidence that we are not

²³⁴ Cf. HANSEN, *the First Spiritual Exercises: A Manual*, p. 72.

completely lost. They help us to find our bearings and discern the direction for the next stage of the journey.²³⁵

Silf's suggestions for prayers and reflection in this book can be considered *light Exercises* in that they deal particularly with themes that are usually covered in the preparation weeks and the First Week of the *Exercises*. Among these we find: exploring 'who, how and where I am' at a particular point of my life and where God is in the midst of these questions; the search for freedom; remembering the fragments of my life and history in the light of God's unconditional love; exploring those moments in my life where I have consistently drifted away from God; pondering the question 'Whose kingdom am I really serving?'; how to recognise consolation and desolation and my deepest desire in terms of 'God's will'; the way in which my desires influence my choices; recognising my attachments and exploring pathways towards detachment; recognising the evil one/the enemy in disguise; searching for truth and experiencing freedom; intimacy with God; meeting the Lord in imaginative prayer; finding God in all things and many others. Silf also touches lightly (only a few pages) on the meaning of the cross and the resurrection, and finishes her book with parts of the *Contemplation to attain love*, reflecting on how we will respond to the immense love that God has shown to us and the prayer *Take, Lord, and receive...*

The language Silf uses is one of the main reasons this application of the Exercises is particularly interesting as we consider our own. She expresses herself in similes and metaphors, usually using very 'earthy' language, with various images taken from nature and creation—the sun, sea waves, wind, seeds, watering, rivers, etc. The book is illustrated with simple drawings that bring these elements to life and engage and heighten the use of our imagination. A lovely example of this language is evidenced in the way she describes the four Weeks of the *Exercises* in relation both to our rhythms in life and to what happens on the earth and beneath the soil. She refers to these four Weeks as four layers: the weather, the soil, the rock and the fire.

The weather of ourselves, our moods and feelings, our dependency on God, our transience, our unreliability, our fragmented nature, now rain, now sunshine [...] *affected* by the deepest movements of our heart, and *affecting* every other creature on the Earth. The brokenness of sin, spanned by the rainbow of an unconditional love [...] the *First Week* [...]. Then the soil of our growing, learning, listening, sitting at the feet of the Lord, imbibing his goodness; sharing

²³⁵ SILF, *Landmarks*, pp. 28-29. A journey, as Silf points out, that needs to be 'walked': "Landmarks are no use at all unless and until you are on the road! They are effective only in that they *connect* where you are, in your own lived experience, to a point of recognition and orientation, for your own story and for the whole human story", p. 29.

in his earthly ministry; becoming, in him, in the person we truly are; taking root, following our deepest desire, striving up to the light, being pruned and tended [...] the *Second Week* [...] Then the splintering, shattering rock. The breaking open and the breaking down. The Calvary journey, with the Lord and in ourselves [...] the *Third Week* [...] And then, the earthquake of 'It is completed!' Earth splits open and its heart-fire flows free. Consuming and destroying, or quickening and energising. Destroying all that is not Truth, and transcending truth into Life. The fire of the Spirit, open the locked space of the tomb [...] the *Fourth Week*.²³⁶

It should be pointed out that Silf, though she is explicit from the start about the relationship between her book and the *Spiritual Exercises*, never talks about her suggestions for prayer as 'exercises'.²³⁷ As we mentioned earlier, for her they are 'landmarks' to help us set on the journey and find our way in our itinerary back to God. She provides a few of them to get us started, but recognises that the journey must continue. Her landmarks give us bearings and direction for the next stage of the journey, and that is what *light Exercises* are truly about. We will 'borrow' this image of 'landmarks' along our journey back to God from Silf (particularly in the way those 'markers' will be useful in helping ex-refugees to rewrite their stories) and attempt to find appropriate 'language' for our exercises (as she has done through metaphors and similes) that will truly speak to survivors of forced displacement.

3.3.2.4. 'Traditional adaptations' of the *Exercises*: two examples from Carlo M. Martini

As we saw in the Introduction to this work, Tetlow, in his presentation of the different modalities of *Spiritual Exercises*, mentions 'two traditional adaptations of the *Exercises*', namely the weekend preached retreats and eight-day retreats. The weekend retreats today, as Tetlow points out, resemble more the *light Exercises* we have been talking about here. The eight-day retreats, while in the past tried to include elements of the Four Weeks, nowadays employ a great variety of themes and materials to suit the circumstances and needs of the

²³⁶ SILF, *Landmarks*, p. 39. And as Silf very insightfully points out: "Perhaps this is one of the hidden graces of the *Exercises*, that we get in touch with these many different 'weeks' within ourselves, and in the inner movements of our hearts, and that we come to realise their total *interconnectedness*. We don't have to progress neatly and tidily from fallenness to resurrection, in our life with God. The pattern of redemption isn't a straight line, or even a wavy line. It isn't even a circle because each time we re-connect to our 'beginnings', the connection is different, and the circle is re-drawn in a different way", p. 37.

²³⁷ It is worth mentioning that there are many great resources that are based on the content and process of the *Spiritual Exercises*, but which do not even make a reference to them. Thus, for example, VAN BREEMEN'S *As Bread that is Broken*, which we cited in an earlier chapter. This book, written over forty years ago, has become a spiritual classic. Though the *Spiritual Exercises* are not mentioned in any way anywhere in the book, a look at its table of contents reveals that the author, a Dutch Jesuit, has used the *Exercises* as his guide to organise its chapters. The main themes of the Weeks of the *Exercises* are all there, from God's unconditional love to our brokenness in sin, to God's mercy and compassion and faithfulness, to the attempt to know Christ more and be more like him—in poverty, humility and gentleness—to his Passion and death on the cross and his hour of glory. Each chapter is rich in material for reflection, written simply but profoundly, continuously calling us to greater intimacy and deeper relationship with our God.

exercitants. Sometimes this means reducing them to five or six days. As we also mentioned earlier, the *Exercises*, connected as they are so intimately with the wisdom of the Scriptures, call on us as givers to constantly refer their movements and dynamics to the Gospel. A great proponent of this practice was Cardinal Carlo M. Martini. His book “The *Ignatian Exercises* in the light of St John”, to which we referred earlier, constitutes a transcription of an eight-day retreat or ‘course’ which the late Archbishop of Milan gave to a group of Jesuits in preparation for the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus. As such, it is a work developed for a very specific audience (as are our exercises for survivors of forced displacement)—one which would have been very familiar not only with the text but also with the method and dynamics of the *Exercises*. In fact, the specificity of the audience is highlighted in what Martini states is the purpose of the Exercises: “The purpose of these Exercises is to consider the relation between the Gospels and the *Constitutions* of the Society. They are Exercises where ample room should be left for prayer and for personal reflection on vocation in the Society”.²³⁸

In his preface to this work, Karl Rahner points out that the purpose of spiritual exercises of this sort is not so much “to lead to a radical ‘conversion’ or to master modern theological problems, as to foster a spiritual life that already exists, to give new impulse to inner movements that are already at work, to give growth to what is already alive”.²³⁹ He also points out that while Martini presents some of the basic themes found in the *Exercises*, he also offers particular themes which are “original and deserve the attention of the reader”. Again, both these points recall the summary given earlier by Tetlow in regards to 8-day retreats. They are certainly Ignatian, but with particularities. Martini’s is a preached retreat with two meditations presented each day, with the exception of one day where a meditation is given followed later on by an instruction on prayer and meditation, and he does cover the themes of the Four Weeks. It is a retreat for ‘presbyters’ as Martini calls the Jesuit participants.

Another particularity of this work is that Martini uses the specific theology of John’s Gospel, as distinct from that of the Synoptics, where almost all of the Scriptural passages suggested by

²³⁸ MARTINI, *The Ignatian Exercises in the light of St. John*, p. xv.

²³⁹ MARTINI, *The Ignatian Exercises in the light of St. John*, p. ix.

St Ignatius for his meditations and contemplations come from.²⁴⁰ We certainly do not intend to develop preached retreats for survivors of forced displacement in our work here, but Martini's approach is worth looking into—and that is why we present it here—as a model for adaptability and application for specific audiences. As an example, let us look at his presentation on the *Two Standards* as he sees it through the lens of the gospel of St John.²⁴¹

As we know, this meditation is the first in the period of election, but here, as it would be expected, is not an election of a new state of life but “a seeking of a new way of living the state in which we are”, pondering the movements within us in order to determine what God wants us to give up and what to encourage or support so we can live a life of truth as exemplified by Jesus and his standard. And of course, this is an objective that we would also desire for survivors of forced displacement engaging in our *exercises*. Martini reflects first on the main themes of this meditation: 1) ways of the enemy operating with a voice of authority not only in persons, but also in situations, groups, in ‘nothing excluded’, fostering our appetite for possessions, position and success; 2) the ways of the giver of life, which are the opposite and encourage above all humility; and 3) aim of the meditation, which is “to perceive the various movements that occur within me”, as they affect me concretely, so in the final colloquy I can ask for courage to follow the way of life. Martini then shows how this aim is reflected in the *Constitutions*, namely in the preservation of poverty and the avoidance of all ambition.²⁴²

He then turns to the Gospel of John, taking as point of departure chapter 6:66-69.²⁴³ Those disciples who ‘drew back’ did so because they finally realised that they had misinterpreted Jesus’ words and actions, thinking that he would help them achieve their personal aims of political messianism, political clericalism and advancement, and materialistic gain. In their fundamentalist literal interpretation of Jesus’ words (e.g. “I have come so that you may have

²⁴⁰ For Martini's rationalisation behind this approach, see CARLO MARIA MARTINI, “Biblia y Ejercicios” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 228-229.

²⁴¹ Cf. MARTINI, *The Ignatian Exercises in the light of St. John*, pp. 155-166.

²⁴² “Since poverty is like a bulwark of religious institutes which preserves them in their existence and good order and defends them from many enemies [...] it will be highly important for the preservation and growth of this whole body that every appearance of avarice should be banished afar [...]” [Co 816], and “It will also be of the highest importance toward perpetuating the Society's well-being to use great diligence in excluding from it ambition, the mother of all evils, in any community or congregation whatsoever” [Co 817]. Cf. SOCIETY OF JESUS, *Constitutions and Complementary Norms*, p. 402.

²⁴³ “After this, many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Will you also go away?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God’”.

life and have it abundantly”), they had misinterpreted what Jesus was really about. Yet even Jesus’ closest disciples constantly misinterpreted him. And Martini suggests that still today his words can be misinterpreted by those who are called to reflect on Jesus’ words to be bearers of Christ’s mystery to others, the *presbyters*. Jesus tells us “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6), and yet we get distracted in practices, books, considerations, new forms and renewals to try to figure out what we should do. Not that they are not needed, but at “a certain point it is Jesus who must make us understand the sense of all these signs, practices, books, means, helps”. Jesus is the sole source of renewal, but doing a thousand marginal things we forget the essential.

In the gospel we see that the attitude of the brethren of Jesus at Nazareth is the attitude of those who want to touch with their hands some success achieved through faith; that is, from the fact that Jesus is known, they will gain a personal success. Martini wants us to ask whether that could be some of us? Or in our zeal for the faith to be spread, do we fail to discern what are the means most suited to this end? Martini ends by suggesting that these are some aspects of the temptations experienced by the presbyters, which he invites his audience to consider and apply to their meditation. This is clearly an example of an application of one of Ignatius’ spiritual exercises to a particular audience (Jesuits) and for a specific situation and time (in preparation for the General Congregation). The ‘points’ are based on scriptural passages and their interpretation furthers Ignatius’ text but still retains the given grace which he suggests we pray for: to understand the tricks of the enemy so we can help ourselves guard against them and the truth of life in Christ, so we can imitate him. We hope to be guided by Martini’s insights as we adapt this particular meditation to our audience of survivors of forced displacement.

We can certainly learn a lot from Martini in regards to the art of adaptation and application of the Exercises, in particular the *Light Exercises*, to fit particular audiences and circumstances. In fact, he proposes that one of the reasons to use the Exercises ‘liberally’, and to come up with diverse and creative forms of offering the *Light Exercises*, has to do with the constraints and requirements posed by particular circumstances, as in the case for example, of offering them to large groups of people. Cardinal Martini argued that such application was not only acceptable but also recommendable in order to concretise the “special activity of the Spirit” which are the Exercises of St Ignatius, in particular in pastoral situations.

He believed that the *Exercises* could help respond to three major questions that permeated the lives of people at the beginning of the 21st century: 1) How to help others achieve or reach a spiritual subjectivity founded on the objectivity of revelation, at a time characterised by the primacy of the subject, by an ever increasing individualism and an almost widespread tendency towards individualising and privatising one's faith? 2) How to help people today, especially the young, to live their freedom not as arbitrariness or as permission to do anything, but as an autonomous capacity to choose what is good? and 3) How to live the primacy of interiority and of the evangelical values within a structure, at times stifling, as our strongly centralised and hierarchised Church could be?²⁴⁴

Martini saw part of the answer to these questions in the dynamics of the *Exercises* whose content is based in the *lectio divina* of the Gospels and the different events in the life of Christ:

It is a necessity that the faithful be formed in the *lectio divina*, not only during the days of the *Exercises*, but throughout their lives. A continuous *lectio*, of all of the Scriptures, complete, methodical, lived in the most intimate part of the subject; *lectio* that gets people in touch with themselves or with their interior world, with their fantasies or anguishes, but also with the *event of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus*, understood as background, model, motivation and strength for the practical, difficult choices in life.²⁴⁵

This belief in the power of the Gospel if properly read, studied and reflected led Martini to find ways of applying the *Exercises* for large numbers of people in his diocese. He strongly believed that they could certainly be considered 'light' exercises (and thus Ignatian) as those proposed by Ignatius—in other words, an initiation into prayer in a systematic way, during given periods of time and usually using a particular passage of Scripture. So, the goal was not to give a catechesis or homily, but rather to provide a true point of departure for personal meditation. Some of these adaptations included: Weeks of 'Open' *Exercises* to over 4000 people in the Duomo of Milan; the *School of the Word for youth*, given to groups of thousands of young people and later through a large number of churches; closed *Exercises* to about 200-300 people, and even talks or seminars with non-believers.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Cf. CARLO MARIA MARTINI, "Ejercicios Espirituales y momento actual: planteamiento del Congreso" in Juan M. García-Lomas, ed., *Ejercicios Espirituales y mundo de hoy: Congreso Internacional de Ejercicios (Loyola 20-26 September 1991)*, Bilbao/Santander: Ediciones Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 17-18.

²⁴⁵ MARTINI, "Ejercicios Espirituales y momento actual: planteamiento del Congreso", p. 18.

²⁴⁶ Cf. MARTINI, "Ejercicios Espirituales y momento actual: planteamiento del Congreso", pp. 20-23.

3.3.2.5. Spiritual Exercises based on Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Ignatian or not?

To emphasise the essence of what constitutes Ignatian Exercises as Martini has shown us, we consider another work that is based primarily on the Scriptures, and which could perhaps be considered an application of the *Exercises*: Joseph Fitzmyer's 'Spiritual Exercises based on Paul's Epistle to the Romans'. Fitzmyer's intention and objective is to *recast* the chapters of Romans into the form of meditations which can be used for reflection in retreats or other gatherings for prayer. As he explains:

Almost all the issues that surface in the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* as components or problems of [the] human condition are treated in the Epistle to the Romans. One may have to substitute Pauline modes of abstract expression for Ignatian contemplations or meditations on concrete incidents in the Gospel stories of the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and one will not find passages in the Pauline letters corresponding to the "contemplations" or "mysteries" of the Second, Third and Fourth Weeks of the Ignatian *Exercises*. The thrust of the Epistle to the Romans, however, is such that one can follow it and find in this epistle the Pauline way of putting many of the things that preoccupy Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises*, for there is a striking affinity in both writings.²⁴⁷

Though Fitzmyer is aware that the purpose of the Exercises (arriving at an election, making a choice about one's state in life, ordering one's affections) is different from that found in Paul's epistle (expounding his reflections for a particular community on the power of God's gospel), he points out that in many cases the Spiritual Exercises (or some form of them), are often made to 'revitalise one's spiritual life' (as in annual retreats, for example), and the present work is aimed at those persons. But could it be enough for Fitzmyer's exercises to be considered '*Light exercises*' or even Ignatian exercises simply because they cover some of the subject matter found in the exercises and because of the 'affinity in both writings'? Most likely not!

Actually, Fitzmyer never calls his exercises 'Ignatian'. He merely states that when "elements in the Ignatian *Exercises* are similar to or echo Pauline ideas, reference will be made to them in order that an Ignatian focus may also colour the meditation on the words and teaching of Paul".²⁴⁸ He does this, for example, in his meditation on Romans 1:18-32, where he expounds on the meaning and implication of the 'wrath of God'.

The exercitant will note in this passage of Romans certain elements that correspond to the Ignatian "Principle and Foundation" and to the initial meditations of the First Week of the

²⁴⁷ JOSEPH FITZMYER, *Spiritual Exercises based on Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company ²2004, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ FITZMYER, *Spiritual Exercises based on Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, p. 3.

Spiritual Exercises. Both Paul and Ignatius now confront sin in contrast to the purpose of human life; both also consider the role and purpose of other creatures in human existence [...]. By his presentation of the human condition without the gospel, Paul is in effect depicting what Ignatius does in the first exercise of the First Week, a meditation on the tree kinds of sin, that of the angels, that of Adam and Eve, and that of a person who has gone to hell after committing one mortal sin. The Ignatian threesome is not the same as Paul's, but both Ignatius and Paul seek to [...] get their readers to 'ask for shame and confusion' because of many grievous sins committed—in effect, because of their own sinful condition.²⁴⁹

Fitzmyer also borrows some of the *Exercises*' elements—the use, at the end of each meditation, of questions to provide 'points' for reflection and of a psalm as a 'platform' from which to enter into conversation with God (he in fact calls it a *colloquy psalm*). But the similarities end there. What he really provides is a resource to be used for prayer and for nurturing one's spiritual life, and though as a Jesuit his approach might be coloured by the *Exercises*, his meditations are not really Ignatian and certainly would not be considered an application of the Exercises. This, of course, does not lessen the importance and effectiveness of his work. It is simply something different from Ignatian Exercises.

²⁴⁹ FITZMYER, *Spiritual Exercises based on Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 32-33.

Conclusions

We know that for St Ignatius his *Spiritual Exercises* constituted a powerful tool of evangelisation. It is illuminating—and inspiring—to see the significance he attributed to them. Thus, in a letter to Manuel Miona he writes:

[...] Y, porque es razón responder a tanto amor y voluntad como siempre me habéis tenido y en obras mostrado, y como yo hoy en esta vida no sepa en qué alguna centella os pueda satisfacer, que poneros por un mes en ejercicios espirituales con la persona que os nombren, y aun me ofrecisteis de lo hacer; por servicio de Dios N.S. os pido, si lo habéis probado y gustado, me lo escribáis, y si no, por su amor y acerbísima muerte que pasó por nosotros, os pido os pongáis en ellos [...]. Dos y tres y cuantas veces puedo, os pido, por servicio de Dios N.S., lo que hasta aquí os tengo dicho [...] siendo todo lo mejor que en esta vida yo puedo pensar, sentir y entender, así para el hombre poderse aprovechar a sí mismo, como para poder fructificar, ayudar y aprovechar a otros muchos [...]²⁵⁰

As we read this earnest appeal to his friend, we perceive Ignatius' belief that his *Exercises* could touch the life of each individual, no matter his or her situation, condition or disposition. What was important was to offer the 'right' Exercises: those that would lead to the greatest spiritual benefit for each person. In other words, what was needed was to find the appropriate adaptation or application that would ensure the greatest spiritual fruits.

In this chapter, we have looked at some of the different issues involved in the modification, application or adaptation of Ignatius' Exercises, with the objective of exploring how best to offer the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius to survivors of forced displacement who have now resettled in Australia. The four objectives that have driven the structure and content of this chapter are: (1) to benefit from the lessons on application and adaptation learned from the past; (2) to consider the main factors required for the application and adaptation of the Ignatian Exercises for survivors of forced displacement; (3) to distil the essence of what are 'Ignatian spiritual exercises', and (4) to provide practical examples of these applications/adaptations that could serve as models in the development of our own Ignatian

²⁵⁰ IGNACIO DE LOYOLA, *Cartas Esenciales*, Introducción y edición Manuel Ruiz Jurado, Bilbao: Mensajero 2017, p. 58. The English translation of this Spanish text: "[...] since it is right for me to return the great love and goodwill which you have always had for me and shown in deeds, and since in this life I know of no way to repay even a particle of this debt except by putting you into spiritual exercises for a month with a person to be named for you, and since you yourself promised me you would do so, I beg you by the service of God our Lord, if you have already tested and tasted these exercises, to write me about it; and if not, I beg you by his love and by the bitter death he underwent for us to enter into them [...]. For the second and third time, and as many more times as I can, I beg you by the service of God our Lord to do what I have been saying to you [...] inasmuch as this is the very best thing that in this life I can think, perceive, or understand for helping a person benefit himself as well as bring fruit, benefit, and advantage to many others [...]."

Exercises for survivors of forced displacement. To meet these objectives, the contents of the chapter were divided in three parts.

Part I explored some of the historical considerations involved in the process of application and adaptation of the *Exercises*. We began this exploration looking at the current practices in the giving of the Spiritual Exercises, which showed that people making the Exercises in the world today come from a broad range of cultures which require that the Exercises be inculturated and adapted to their own. They are people from every social condition, who have various relationships with the Church, who find themselves at different levels of religious initiation and formation, and whose motivations and expectations range from avid seekers to those who simply want to live a more interior life. In terms of types or forms of Exercises, they range widely in format and content depending on whether they are offered according to *Annotations* 18-20, though in some cases the line of division between one or the other can become blurred. For instance, among most people making the Exercises today, only a rare few would seem to be looking at making an election or a serious decision, while a majority would require basic instruction in such areas as developing a personal relationship with God and different ways of prayer. So, what today is usually referred to as Exercises according to *Annotation* 19, are really closer to what Ignatius describes in his 18th *Annotation*. These general characteristics fit also the profile of the survivors of forced displacement to whom our exercises are intended, and in fact, this has been one of the main factors in our decision to offer them *Exercises* based on *Annotation* 18 rather than the other two.

The remaining content of **Part I** provided a brief historical survey of practices involved in the adaptation and application of the Exercises, and the factors that influenced them, in particular during the first century after they began to be widely propagated.²⁵¹ As our *first objective* in carrying out this historical study was to see what lessons could be learned from such practices that could benefit our own process of adaptation and application of the Exercises, we list some of the main learnings here:

- 1) The early adaptation/application of the *Exercises* was motivated by a deep desire to do whatever was necessary 'to help souls', which paved the way for developing very

²⁵¹ As mentioned earlier, unfortunately there are no comprehensive studies on the development and practice of giving the *Exercises* between the beginning of the 18th century and the middle of the 20th century.

distinctive and personalised ways of helping others, and which ranged from 'basic' spiritual conversation to offering the complete Exercises.

- 2) Many of the early givers of some part or form of the *Exercises* started to put down reflections of their own experiences on paper; this would soon lead to the development of *Directories* of the Spiritual Exercises, intended originally to defend the 'purity' of the original text, but some of which also became invaluable resources for later givers of the Exercises.
- 3) Within the great variety of contents and forms, the experiential catechetical element has remained an essential constant in order to provide the greatest benefit to each soul.
- 4) The ever-present tension between being faithful to Ignatius' text and method and adapting them to meet the needs, circumstances and experiences of each exercitant is inherent to any attempt at Christian authenticity; awareness of and faithfulness to that authenticity and how it is preserved is what matters.
- 5) Spiritual and secular movements and concerns of diverse eras have influenced the ways in which the Exercises have been offered in the past four centuries and continue to do so today; among the current secular trends and spiritual issues that should be taken into account in the giving of Exercises to survivors of forced displacement we find: globalisation, interculturalism, advancements of modern science, fundamentalism, inter-spiritual movements, a spirituality of 'living in the now', care for our planet, and the decline of critical thinking skills.

For our purposes, these learnings in turn translate into specific considerations and criteria for the *exercises* we will develop in Chapter 5, namely: (1) a motivation to do all that might be necessary 'to help the souls' of survivors of forced displacement in our application of the Exercises; (2) the need to provide a 'directory' or some other kind of document to accompany these *exercises* which details the process of adaptation/application and the best way to implement them; (3) the importance of maintaining the experiential catechetical component in these *exercises*; (4) and of holding the tension between being faithful to Ignatius' text and meeting the needs and circumstances of survivors of forced displacement—a tension that has been around since the beginning of the Exercises; (5) taking into account the above-mentioned current secular trends and spiritual issues in our world and how to address them and integrate them in the content and dynamics of *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement.

Part II, divided in **two sections**, addressed in detail some of the main considerations for the application and adaptation of the Ignatian *Exercises* for survivors of forced displacement (*objective 2*). The **first section** dealt with 'internal' issues of the *Exercises*, looking at the relationship and dynamics between its three main elements—the text and its method, the giver of the *Exercises*, and the receiver—and explored five areas: (1) the question of *application* or *adaptation* of the text; (2) whether the text or the needs of the exercitant should be given priority; (3) the giver-receiver relationship; (4) the receiver and readiness for different types of Spiritual Exercises, and (5) the giver and receiver of the Exercises and spiritual conversation as a graced point of encounter between the two. Among some of the main insights gained from this section and how they relate to offering the Exercises to survivors of forced displacement we find:

- 1) The application of a text involves an interactive process seeking to 're-present' (and thus enhance) an existing text in ever different ways, responsive to the needs of the forcibly displaced person receiving the process; it should not be regarded as addressing a deficiency in the text, which sometimes the language of 'adaptation' seems to suggest.
- 2) In regards to Ignatius' Exercises, the process of application invites its givers to enter into an attitude of reverence at how God's Spirit might be at work in the person receiving them. The Spirit could act in ways that givers could never predict or even imagine when applying the Exercises for survivors of forced displacement.
- 3) While it might be legitimate to assess Ignatius' text on its own merit independently of its practice, its essence consists precisely in being 'practiced', thus making them 'operative' for new situations and persons. We will not know how 'operative' the Exercises can be for ex-refugees unless we invite them to make them and offer them Exercises that are of relevance to their previous displacement experiences.
- 4) A key issue when putting the Exercises into praxis is not only what the text of the Exercises says or what its method requires at a particular stage of the process, but 'who' is the one (the soul) that we (as givers) must help and 'how' and 'for what' specific purpose at this particular moment in his or her life. We should never forget that while we speak of possible Exercises *for survivors of forced displacement*, considering them as an 'audience' with common characteristics, even these more 'specific' exercises will need to be applied to each person's needs.
- 5) The question of whether the Exercises—in whichever of the forms prescribed by Ignatius in his *Annotations*—should be adapted to meet the specific needs and circumstances of an

exercitant, should be preceded by another question, 'What type of Exercises is this person ready for?' And further, 'How do we know that they are ready for them in terms of where they are at in their spiritual journeys?' While we might expect that in more 'ordinary' circumstances, it might be easier to assess this 'place of departure', we should also expect that this will not necessarily be the case for most survivors of forced displacement, whose lives can be characterised as anything but 'ordinary'.

- 6) We can only resolve this question of readiness by getting to know an exercitant well, and *spiritual conversation* is of essence in this process. In regard to survivors of forced displacement, not only will the questions we ask them to determine their needs, disposition, desires and hopes be important in and of themselves, but also 'how' we ask these questions will shape the answers we receive from them. More importantly, the quality of our spiritual conversation—assessed from among other criteria by the degree of our reverence, respect and humility before forcibly displaced people—will affect our relationship with them and the extent of the service we can provide to them as spiritual companions. In our practice of spiritual conversation, we should never forget the steps or qualities recommended by Father Ignatius (cf. section 2.1.5).

The **second section** of **Part II** dealt with the question of what might be involved in the textual interpretation (within the discipline of hermeneutics) of a classical text such as Ignatius' *Exercises* and explored five specific elements: (1) the meaning of a 'classic'; (2) the process of interpretation of a classic by a community of interpreters; (3) the author/artist of a classic; (4) a 'classic' text and its various readings, and (5) the act of interpreting a religious 'classic'. This theoretical background was then used to engage in a hermeneutical reading of Ignatius' Exercises from the horizon of inculturation, chosen because of its being an essential aspect in the lives of survivors of forced displacement: as we would expect, most ex-refugees have come from different cultures to those encountered in their adoptive countries.

The process of interpreting and applying the Exercises from the horizon of inculturation required us to take into consideration (1) the movement between the different 'texts' present in the Exercises (literal, semantic, allegorical and anagogical), (2) the cultural paradigms that functioned in the time of Ignatius (to compare them to our own), and (3) how these cultural paradigms are expressed in the values of Ignatius' time as articulated in the Exercises, (so as to determine how they can be articulated by them in our own). We saw that in linguistic

terms, as expressed through their internal textual dynamic, the goal of the Exercises is to create a language to speak with God—to articulate a grammar of salvation—that could help exercitants receive and appropriate the salvific signs of God's word and revelation for them. To begin to discern what the structure and articulation of this 'language and grammar of salvation' might be for survivors of forced displacement (coming as they do from many different countries and backgrounds), we looked at three examples of attempts at inculturating Ignatius' Exercises—in China, Kenya and India.

In general terms, these revealed that (1) while the influence exerted by ideological, political, socio-cultural and hierarchical factors (particularly in hierarchical and patriarchal societies) cannot be underestimated, Ignatian spirituality (and the Exercises in particular) might be able to contribute to counter the negative and damaging influences of these factors; (2) exercitants were able to integrate and make use of the terminology and framework of Exercises more easily when they found echoes of Ignatian spirituality in their own personal, subjective experiences; (3) imaginative prayer, the use of the senses and the holistic approach of the Exercises (combining intellectual and affective faculties), were appreciated as instruments to help 'listen to God and encounter Christ'; (4) 'space' (physical, geographical) can exert a considerable influence in the dynamism of the Exercises and their appropriation by exercitants who have a close connection with the land and for whom their physical surroundings are intrinsic to the nurturing of their spiritual lives; (5) spiritual practices from other faith (non-Christian) traditions can help enter into the process of the Exercises and enhance the understanding and living out of some key Ignatian components, such as discernment and detachment from inordinate affections; (6) many Christian survivors of forced displacement come from countries where animist or other major Eastern traditions are practiced and, as a result, their own faith and spiritual traditions might have been heavily influenced by them, and therefore it might be a determining factor in how they engage with the *Exercises*. We hope to incorporate most of these insights in our *exercises* in chapter 5.

In addition to these specifically cultured-based examples, the last segment of this **second section** of **Part II** considered what an inculturated textual interpretation of the Exercises might require for non-conventional religious 'seekers' and exercitants of other religious traditions. While the intended audience of our study is Catholic survivors of forced displacement, it was recognised that their 'Catholicity' might not be the mainstream Western

‘version’ many givers of the Exercises (particularly in Australia) are used to, and in view of this, some factors, particularly those relating to the use of language and ‘shared’ concepts, were worth exploring. The particular ‘inculturated’ interpretation of the Exercises for this audience might be best approached as if entering into an ‘inter-religious’ dialogue or a broader conversation between diverse parties, where the importance of speaking a ‘language’ others can understand cannot be underestimated if faithful and meaning communication is desired.

The point of departure in this spiritual conversation has to be spiritual experiences that are either shared or available to general recognition by others who will not share our presuppositions or frames of reference. When communicating the Spiritual Exercises, this will mean that emphases on concepts and connotations will need to experience a shift towards that dimension of Christian faith language that is analogous to experiences present within other religious and human existence in general. At the same time, this opens the possibility that the spiritual language and understanding of givers of the Exercises might be enriched by ex-refugees’ descriptions, concepts and imagery resulting from their experience of the Exercises, challenging givers to incorporate these into their own Ignatian ‘glossary’. In some instances, and to a certain degree, this might demand from them a change in worldview and a process of discernment of their operative ‘stories’ to explore whether a particular and restrictive type of myth determines how they relate to the world, and whether alternative stories need to challenge this view of reality to bring it into conformity with the values of the Gospel.

Finally, the **first section** of **Part III** addressed the question (and *objective 3* for the chapter) of what is required to preserve the Ignatian authenticity of the Spiritual Exercises; specifically, what makes certain spiritual exercises ‘Ignatian’. Three possible responses were explored and a list of fifteen characteristics arrived at which can be found at the end of section 3.1.2. Since the goal of this thesis is to develop Ignatian *Light* or *Simple* exercises for survivors of forced displacement, the second section of Part III explored the main characteristics and methodological contents and dynamics of applying *exercises* according to *Annotation 18*.

It was pointed out that the first goal or intention of these Exercises is to help each person dispose himself or herself to enter into dialogue to discover God in what is deepest in each of them, and that this disposition can be achieved through the use of the *Examen*, as a tool for self-questioning and self-observation of the unexplored self. Another characteristic of the *Light Exercises* is that the experiences that are offered through them all have an element of initiation, of 'setting out' on a road or a process towards new possible experiences that might lead to greater maturity, including making the full Exercises in the future. They are also characterised by the simplicity of their content to offer exercitants "what can be easily undertaken" [*SpEx* 18], helping them to take conscience, as simply as possible, of God's continuing creating presence in them and of God's 'showering' them with blessings, in order to bring forth a deep sense of gratitude. Most experiences of *Light Exercises* today also seem to be characterised by a communal aspect or dynamism, which tends to mutually reinforce the personal experience of the Exercises, while at the same time being able to maintain their personalised application and respect the particular tempo or rhythm of individual exercitants. *Light Exercises* can also offer continuity through periodic and successive encounters scheduled at strategic spiritual moments, which can develop into a real process of permanent formation aided by a broad range of pedagogical options available thanks to these Exercises' *flexibility* of forms, expressions, resources and rhythms, which touch human reality in very concrete and direct ways.

The **last section** of **Part III** sought to respond to the *fourth objective* stated at the beginning of this chapter, namely to provide practical examples of applications/adaptations of Exercises that could serve as models in the development of our own Ignatian Exercises for survivors of forced displacement. Seven examples of applications according to *Annotation* 19 and five according to *Annotation* 18 (analysed in more detailed) were presented. After each case was considered, specific aspects that we hope to include in the development of our own *exercises* (in chapter 5) were pointed out. Some of these include: possible use of weekend retreats to bring together communities of pray-ers (survivors of forced displacement) of our *Light Exercises* in order to enhance the communal aspect mentioned above, to provide some continuing formation and to reinforce also the learnings and insights of the daily/weekly Exercises; collections of 'helps for prayer' from several of these sources which will constitute the basis for some of the *exercises* for forcibly displaced people; helpful suggestions for facilitators of small group sharing; 'creative detours' in the use of language and presentation

of some of the Ignatian contents; using a style that is simple, direct, concise and insightful to make the new *exercises* as approachable and appealing as possible; the use of other types of media (e.g. films) to engage further the imagination and offer other ways of seeing and living the Exercises; several suggestions for structuring or basic formatting for the new exercises; the use of the journaling book; the use of simple illustrations in the prayer materials to bring Ignatian elements to life and engage and heighten the imagination, and many others.

In this chapter we have argued that innumerable adaptations and applications of Ignatius' Exercises have occurred throughout time to respond to the challenges raised by ever changing circumstances, contexts and cultures. The criteria for applying Ignatius' text, as well as the practical way in which a particular adaptation has been carried out, has not been the same in the case of a French giver of the Exercises in the 18th century as for an African director in 21st century Kenya. Clearly, this is to be expected, and in most cases it is not a matter of whether one has been right or the other wrong, but whether fidelity to Ignatius' Exercises has been observed, while considering the special disposition and circumstances of the one receiving the Exercises. Of course, the authenticity of these adaptations and applications will continue to be a matter for discussion, as long as new understandings of Ignatius' text are put forward and new circumstances arise in response to our ever and rapidly changing world.

But engaging in the discussion is not without benefit. For one, it continues to keep us honest in our endeavours to be faithful to the spirit and methodology of the Exercises, recognising that Ignatius' experience of God, as different as it might be for exercitants in totally different times and contexts, can still say much to these persons and lead to transforming experiences in their lives. We have certainly not exhausted the richness of Ignatius' Exercises yet and continue to discover other treasures as they are applied to new situations and new audiences. In the next chapter, we turn to our particular audience—survivors of forced displacement—and explore their potential (their *subiecto*) as possible receivers of the Spiritual Exercises.

CHAPTER 4

From life-draining to life-giving existence Forcibly displaced persons as ‘subjects’ of the *Spiritual Exercises*

Introduction

In a context of prayerful solitude and silence, the aim of the Spiritual Exercises is to help people discover and discern more clearly the interior movements of their hearts—their various motivations and intentions as well as the more authentic and deeper longings and desires that drive them and guide them on their choices and decisions. The goal is to distinguish those movements that lead them to greater union with God, a richer and more abundant life, and greater discipleship and companionship with Jesus, from those that hinder and diminish their capacity for life-giving relationships and service:

The purpose of the Exercises is explained as being a conversion of heart resulting in a new quality or a new direction of life. Conversion is both a ‘turning to’ and a ‘turning from’. ‘Turning to’ in the language of the Exercises consists in seeking and finding the will of God, while the correlative ‘turning from’ is the process of getting free from the influence of ‘disordered’ drives and attachments that stifle love and impede integrity of intention.¹

This conversion or redirection of heart and freedom requires our action, our ‘exercising’ (cf. [SpEx 1])² but is not achieved only through Pelagian voluntarism; instead, it is the work of the Spirit with whom we ‘collaborate’ through openness, readiness and disposition of our understanding, our will and especially our affectivity to this work: “The Exercises have to do

¹ IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, Text and Commentary*, pp. 1-2.

² García de Castro reminds us that to go through the experience of spiritual exercises is above all to make an experience of *exercises*, to exercise oneself in some form, to be active with any of the elements that are present in our spirit—ánima/soul, since they are *spiritual* exercises. Cf. JOSÉ GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “¿Qué hacemos cuando hacemos ejercicios?” in *Manresa* 74 (2002) 11.

with the *conversion* of affectivity, with letting the Spirit enter our affectivity, change it and act through it”.³ This conversion requires also the ‘ordering of one’s life’, bringing it into line with the end for which we have been created (cf. [SpEx 23]), and making decisions and choices (‘elections’) accordingly (cf. [SpEx 21]). And in this journey of the Exercises we are accompanied and guided by others who have been on this journey before us.

Three ‘actors’ then participate in living out the process and dynamics of the *Exercises*: the one receiving them, the one giving them, and God. The main actor of course is God whose action in his creature, as just mentioned, leads to the conversion and transformation that is sought (cf. [SpEx 16]). The giver of the Exercises facilitates the process by providing a well-tried method, order and procedure. As for the one receiving the Exercises, what is asked of him or her is to dispose themselves to receive God’s graces (cf. [SpEx 20]). Of course, this is not always easy to do—in fact, it usually involves a great deal of work and angst—since each one of us comes to the Exercises with our own histories, particular circumstances and limitations, which might not be helpful in the process or might even become barriers to it.⁴

However, we also come with attitudes, dispositions and natural abilities and capacities which can be extremely helpful. Ignatius considers certain of these qualities essential for anyone wanting to embark on the full *Spiritual Exercises*—he calls possessing these qualities ‘*tener subiecto*’.⁵ For him, even if limitations are present, these can be worked on during the Exercises if a certain level of *subiecto* already exists. Moreover, not having *subiecto* at a particular stage in a person’s life does not preclude its being present at a later stage, for *subiecto*, as we will see shortly, is considered a ‘potentiality’ which can be developed.⁶

³ IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, Text and Commentary*, p. 2. These affections operate on many levels, “from that of quite transient feelings to the level where they affect a person’s way of perceiving reality, making judgements, choosing and acting”, p. 2.

⁴ Cf. KOLVENBACH, “Ejercicios y Co-Autores (Conferencia a la Consulta de Roma, 18 de Febrero del 2002)”, 25-33 (cited earlier in chapter 3).

⁵ This could be roughly interpreted as ‘having the capacity to act as a subject’, where ‘subject’ refers to an individual’s agency. But as we will see shortly, this is not the meaning that the word has always had. In his writings, Ignatius uses different forms of this term: sujeto, subieto, suieto, subject, sugeto, sugetto and *subiecto*, though the latter is the only one used in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the most repeated in the Ignatian works. While evolution of language might be a factor in the variations of the word, it might be also related to its novelty as a term in mid-16th century Europe. Throughout this chapter, we will use this preferred form of ‘*subiecto*’.

⁶ Particular circumstances play a very important part in determining whether this *subiecto* is present, not only in general, but at a specific time and stage in the journey of the person wanting to make the Exercises. For example, in most cases it would not be advisable for someone suffering from a debilitating chronic illness to engage in the full Exercises, as it could be too taxing on their health. And the same could be said about someone who is grieving the loss of a loved one immediately after this loss has occurred, as that particular issue might dominate negatively the content of the Exercises. However, this is not to say that the pain, suffering and even

Depending on a person’s experiences and circumstances, it might take some people longer than others, and some might never reach the readiness needed to undertake the full Exercises, because of physical, psychological or other constraints. This, of course, does not mean, that those not having enough *subiecto* for the full Exercises could not be helped otherwise, and in fact Ignatius mentions in detail options that can be offered to them (cf. [SpEx 18]).

These short introductory remarks already point to important issues which we will seek to address in this chapter, as we explore how best to adapt the *Exercises* in order to offer them to forcibly displaced people:

- What is understood by the ‘Ignatian *subiecto*’ and how do givers of the Exercises assess whether a person has ‘enough’ of it to embark on the Exercises?
- A person might have *subiecto* but not be *disposed* to engage in the Exercises; what does this *disposition* consist of and how can it be encouraged or nourished?
- In the case of forcibly displaced peoples, how might their particular experiences have affected their level of *subiecto* or disposition for the Exercises?

This chapter has been divided in four parts. Part I explores possible answers to the above questions as it looks at Ignatius’ concept of the *subiecto* in the person or subject who embarks on the experience of the Exercises. Based on current understanding of the place and relevance of psychological factors for exercitants engaging in the Spiritual Exercises, Part II considers some of these factors through the lens of forced displacement, in particular those that might hinder ex-refugees’ experience of the Exercises, and explores some of the ways in which their givers might address them to facilitate and enrich that experience.⁷ Part III explores some areas—related to these psychological factors—which, on the other hand, might contribute to survivors of forced displacement’s moving forward and beyond their displacement experience including: telling of personal stories; mourning and closure;

anger connected with that loss, could not be of great relevance in the experience of the Exercises at some later time. In terms of the potential fruit to be obtained, timing can also be of great importance. As an example, our experience with seminarians who come to our Centre of Ignatian Spirituality in Melbourne to make the full Exercises has been that it is better for them to do it later in their seminary studies than during their first year, as they tend to be more mature, better adapted to their new circumstances—living in a community of celibate men from different parts of Australia and the world—and in some cases have had some previous experience of Ignatian spirituality. Of course, none of these factors precludes God’s grace and the readiness of the exercitants to be open to that grace, but it usually does help them settle into the Exercises more quickly.

⁷ As mentioned in the Introduction, this thesis has two main ‘audiences’: the forcibly displaced people themselves (for whom Ignatian Exercises will be developed) and Ignatian spiritual guides, companions and directors—especially givers of the Exercises—who will be entrusted with their spiritual care and nourishment.

sustaining one’s faith and hope, and the need for forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. It considers also some aspects which are specific to the experience of forcibly displaced women.

We will suggest that one of these themes, an overarching, meta-theme that embraces all others is the theme of healing. Of course, there are many different types of healing and this topic can be addressed from various perspectives, including within the Exercises (later we explore, for example, this healing dimension in the context of the Exercises of the First Week).⁸ For forcibly displaced people who have resettled in another country, an important part of this healing involves finding meaning—both meaning that helps them make sense of the horrific pain and suffering they have gone through and meaning that gives them the motivation to move forward. Our premise is that engaging in the Spiritual Exercises (in its different forms) will contribute to this healing and search for meaning, so that forcibly displaced people can transform their suffering and life-draining and life-stealing experiences into a life-giving and creative existence. The forcibly displaced have much to offer the world, but they might need first to discover and realise this potential before they can offer it to others. Finally, as we have previously suggested, another essential component of this healing process for forcibly displaced people has to do with ‘feeling at home’ and feeling welcomed by the people of their

⁸ Other approaches to this healing dimension addressing issues both in the Exercises and in other areas, for example, include: NELLY ASTELLI HIDALGO, “Exercices ignatiens et guérison intérieure” in *La Pratique des Exercices Spirituels d’Ignace de Loyola: Actes du Symposium de Bruxelles du 1er au 6 avril 1991*, Bruxelles: Editions de l’Institut d’Etudes Théologiques 1991, pp. 147-170; NICOLE FABRE, “Peut-on-guérir de la haine?” in *Christus* 216 (2007) 448-453, on how to heal hatred; MICHAEL GALVAN, “Tell Me a Story: Healing Life’s Wounds” in *The Way* 29, n. 2 (1989) 136-145, on healing past wounds and one’s faith history through the experience of conversion and reconciliation; MICHAEL GOVAERTS, “Prayer and the Healing of Nature” in *The Way* 49, n. 4 (2010) 103-115, on prayer as an effective expression of creation’s desire for healing; MICHAEL IVENS, “Healing the Divided Self” in *The Way* 16, n. 3 (1976) 163-175, on acceptance and the pastoral care of ‘polarised’ Christians through a spirituality of patience and charismatic power; JAMES JUMA, “African Worldviews: Their Impact on Spiritual Direction, from the Perspective of Healing and Transformation” in *The Way* 52, n. 3 (2013) 91-104, on the impact of African world-views on the spiritual well-being, spiritual brokenness and the resolution of spiritual issues for African exercitants; CLÉMENT AN-DUNGH NGUYEN, “Pourquoi les soignants ont change d’attitude: Une lente prise de conscience de la dimension spirituelle” in *Christus* 242 (2014) 136-141, on taking into account the spiritual life of person towards physical healing; MAURA RAMSBOTTOM, “The Ministry of Healing” in the *Way Supplement* 17 (1972) 28-39, on the importance of integral (physical and spiritual) healing based on Jesus’ healing ministry; PENELOPE OLIVE “Models for Healing Prayer in Spiritual Direction: The Healing Ministry of Jesus; The Passion of Christ; The Consecration” in *The Way* 54, n. 1 (2015) 16-26, on the of prayer of healing for physical, psychological and spiritual ailments; JACQUES PASQUIER, “Healing Relationships” in *The Way* 16, n. 3 (1976) 208-215 on what makes a relationship ‘healing’ in the light of personal experience and of reflection on the gospel-vision of Jesus the healer; BRIGITTE SNELL, “Contemplation, the Healing of Memories and Anger” in *The Way Supplement* 59 (1987) 35-44, on growing in contemplation through trust and healing memories through prayer, remembering and repentance; DAVID STANLEY, “Salvation and Healing” in the *Way* 10, n. 4 (1970) 298-317 on the connection between Jesus’ acts of healing and salvation; JOAN TOOHIIG, “A Healing Moment” in the *Way* 16, n. 3 (1976) 216-217, on using communal review of life for self-knowledge as a tool for healing, and SUE TOPALIAN, “Where Healing Streams Meet: A Danced Retreat” in the *Way* 55, n. 2 (2016) 83-97, on using a dance retreat as a way of healing.

host countries. For this to happen, a recognition of the ‘other’, not only as a human being of dignity and value but also as someone whose presence enriches our lives, is essential.

Part IV of the chapter addresses some pertinent issues posed by present-day reality in Australia, as the country of resettlement and location where the Exercises we seek to develop will be offered to the particular audience in our study. These issues include some of the current challenges that both underpin Australia’s attitude towards forcibly displaced people and Australians’ attitudes towards religion and faith. As we indicated in chapter 1, while Australia’s situation is unique—particularly in terms of its multicultural heritage within a relatively small population—many other Western developed nations, ‘receivers’ of forcibly displaced people, share similar challenges. It is hoped then that this ‘excursion’ into the Australian experience will prove helpful for other contexts as well.

As in previous chapters, the relevance of this chapter to the task of developing Ignatian exercises for survivors of forced displacement can be articulated through four specific objectives. Following the assumption stated at the beginning of the ‘General Examination of Conscience’ in the *Exercises* (cf. [SpEx 32]), we assume (and maintain) that there are three kinds of factors that determine the ‘creation’ or make-up of a forcibly displaced person as subject of the *Exercises*—one that comes from ‘inside’ and the other two which come from ‘outside’. The division of the chapter into four Parts mentioned above reflects this assumption. The first ‘interior’ factor (*interior* in that it arises from the person’s “own freedom and desire” as well as his/her natural capacities), and which we have referred to already as ‘having *subiecto*’, gives rise to objective (1): to distil the essence and characteristics of the Ignatian *subiecto* so as to better design exercises that might help develop this potential in forcibly displaced people as future receivers of the Exercises.

The first ‘exterior’ factor refers to the psychological issues that might have arisen in a person’s psyche as a result of his/her displacement experience (Part II) and certain areas that might help to address them (Part III); two objectives linked to these Parts are: (2) to determine how these psychological issues might affect forcibly displaced people’s ability to engage in the Exercises, and (3) to explore the effect (in particular the healing dimension) that receiving the Exercises might have on these issues. Finally, the second ‘exterior’ factor refers to the specific circumstances in which survivors of forced displacement find themselves in their

resettlement countries and its objective (4) is to explore what the effect of these circumstances might be for survivors resettled in Australia in terms, for example, of their access to the Exercises, the opportunity to engage in them and the level of priority given to receive them.

Following the holistic and integral approach we have strived for in the previous chapters, the four Parts in this chapter are clearly distinguished—dealing with theological and spiritual, psychological, anthropological and sociological factors—but of course they also interrelated. The common thread is forcibly displaced people as subjects with potential to engage in the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, and the objective of discerning how these factors might affect that potential, so that ultimately they can derive the greatest benefit from this experience.

Part I: The Ignatian *subiecto*

As we saw in chapter 3, one of the essential considerations in the adaptation and application of a classical text such as the *Spiritual Exercises* is the language used. This is of particular relevance when a language different from the text’s original is used for such adaptation, especially if certain concepts—and the terms or expressions used to describe them—are not easily explained or translated. Further difficulties arise when the meaning of those terms/expressions in the original textual language is ambiguous or open to different interpretations at different moments in their history or in different contexts and cultures. One such example is the topic of this section, namely, the ‘Ignatian *subiecto*’. What complicates the matter further is that the understanding and use of the *generic* term ‘subject’ on which that of the *subiecto* is based, has also constantly evolved in the last several hundred years.

1.1. An evolving understanding of the ‘subject’

The term ‘subject’ as a noun expressing individual agency was ‘born’ in the Modern era in the Italian peninsula, partly as a reaction against certain long-established norms. Machiavelli, Luther and Copernicus provide examples of the awakening of a subjective conscience through their confrontations with their own communities’ political, religious or scientific discourses.⁹ We also find examples of subjective experiences at that time reflected in the arts and literature, theatre, paintings, as well as in biographies. Two examples of the latter are St Teresa of Avila’s *Vida* and Gonçalves de Camargo’s *Autobiography* of St Ignatius of Loyola, both portrayals of mystical subjects who are able to engage and have a mystical and subjective relationship with her or his Creator (cf. [SpEx 15]).

It is also during this Modern era that the subject goes from ‘*being subject [or subjected] to*’ to ‘*being subject*’, thus gaining greater apparent autonomy by being freed from certain duties and norms that previously confined or determined its existence (e.g. Man [sic] is created to... [SpEx 23]).¹⁰ Postmodernity, however, again sees the subject as more dependent, losing once

⁹ Cf. CARLOS COUPEAU and JAIME EMILIO GONZÁLEZ MAGAÑA, “Sujeto” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, p. 1663. The very short historic approximation on the evolution of the ‘subject’ which follows is based on this article.

¹⁰ The early Spanish use as presented in the *Diccionario de Autoridades* defines ‘subiecto’ or ‘sugeto’ as “qualquier persona indeterminada; se toma también por la persona de especial calidad; se usa también por la actividad, vigor, y fuerzas de la persona: y así suelen decir del enfermo mui extenuado: ‘no hai sugeto’”. REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, *Diccionario de Autoridades*, pp. 180-181. English translation: “any indeterminate person; it is also understood for the person of special quality; it is also used for the activity, vigour, and strength of the person: and so they say of the very tired sick person: ‘there is no subject’”. The latter meaning would be

again its autonomy because of the influence of language as means for communication. It sees language as a powerful instrument which can be used by particular ideologies for their own specific purposes, and which cannot avoid being ‘at the service’ of these ideologies. As a result, the subject cannot avoid being influenced by them.

Discussions or theories on the subject have been practically absent from major dictionaries and manuals of spirituality from the Middle Ages to Postmodernity, and present spirituality has not yet engaged much in this debate on the meaning of the subject in conversation with philosophy and theology. However, Ignatius did have a specific approach to the *subject*. For him, within the specific mystical context in which he uses *subject* or *subiecto*, it refers both to the person who engages in the Spiritual Exercises (in all its different forms) and to the Jesuit candidate (still in formation) or the vowed Jesuit who is being considered for specific roles within the Society of Jesus.

1.2. Having *subiecto* in the *Spiritual Exercises*

In the *Exercises*, ‘*subiecto*’ appears seven times, three in the *Annotations* [14, 15, 18] and four in the *Additional Directives* [83, 84, 87, 89], (see table below). As mentioned, for Ignatius, a person must possess or have *subiecto*—a particular set of attitudes, dispositions, capacities or abilities—in order to make the Exercises and profit from them, so they can in turn produce fruits for the benefit of others. The one giving them needs to ascertain whether this set of requirements is present or not. If not, there is even the danger that the one making the Exercises might be harmed by the experience.¹¹ If the *subiecto* is not present, then it is better to offer exercitants only some *light* Exercises (cf. [*SpEx* 18.8]).

Table 4.1. *Subiecto* in the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*

closer to Ignatius’ ‘having *subiecto*’. The Covarrubias dictionary expresses it as: “sujeto tomamos por la calidad de la persona, como ‘fulano es un buen sujeto’; conviene a saber tiene disposición para aquello a que le aplicamos.” S. COVARRUBIAS HOROZCO, “Sujeto” in *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana*, Madrid: Editorial Iberoamericana 2006, p. 1452. English translation: “we take for subject the quality of the person, as in ‘so-and-so is a good subject’, namely, it has disposition for that to which we apply it”. Again, we can see the proximity in this definition to Ignatius’ use.

¹¹ González Modroño points out, quite insightfully, that what Ignatius asks of the giver of the Exercises is not to make a careful diagnosis of the exercitant, of his or her natural capacities and abilities, but rather to assess whether he or she ‘lacks *subiecto*’ or not. This requires the giver of the Exercises to design a kind of internal schema of the possibilities and limitations of the exercitant. The main concern, besides the criteria of deriving the greatest possible benefit or fruits, is to avoid the Exercises’ being a negative or even harmful experience to anyone. It is well known that the Exercises, and in particular the First Week, can lead to damaging experiences, driving exercitants, for example, to wallow in self-pity, guilt or excessive scruples. Cf. I. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO ““El que los recibe’ (el ‘subjecto’. Disposiciones)” in *Manresa* 61 (1989) 327.

Subiecto in the Spiritual Exercises			
No.	Spanish Text ¹²	English Translation ¹³	Factors to Consider
14.5	De mirar la propia condición y <i>subiecto</i> , y quánta ayuda o estorbo podrá	bestow much thought on the strength and suitability of each person, and on the helps or hindrances one is likely to meet	There might be, for example, those who would like to enter religious life (or proceed with a specific vocation), but might not have the qualities or endurance to live this choice out. Based on their knowledge of the exercitants, the one giving the Exercises should counsel them carefully so that they do not make promises or commitments they will not be able to keep; this is of particular significance in the case of forcibly displaced people, whose abilities and endurance (especially in terms of mental health) might have been compromised by their displacement experience.
15.2	a todas personas, que probabiler tengan <i>subiecto</i> , para elegir continencia, virginidad, religión y	those who are probably suitable for it to choose continence, virginity, religious life, and	In the case of those who do seem to have the qualities or endurance for religious life (or a particular vocation), the giver of the Exercises should not urge them to follow this particular vocation, but allow the Creator to communicate directly with the devout soul.
18.8	que los recibe ser de poco <i>subiecto</i> o de poca capacidad natural,	sees that the one making them is a person poorly qualified or of little natural ability,	Not everyone is ready or suitable to engage in the full Exercises, (at a specific moment in their lives); for such as those, the giver of the Exercises should only give them <i>light</i> Exercises from which they can profit.
83.2	Sólo que no se corrompa el <i>subiecto</i> , ny se siga enfermedad notable.	provided that we do not weaken our constitution or bring on noteworthy illness	Observing particular penances can be helpful to derive greater fruit from the Exercises. One of the exterior penances is eating, where we abstain of food which is ‘ordinarily suitable’. But we must be careful not to harm our bodies, which in turn might affect our psyche, our prayer and our ability to communicate with God.
84.2	Sólo que no se corrompa el <i>subiecto</i> , ny se siga enfermedad notable;	provided we do not harm ourselves or weaken our constitution	A second way of exterior penance pertains to sleeping. Similarly, as before, we must be careful not to harm our being so as to create barriers that might get in the way of our relationship with the Lord.

¹² IGNACIO ECHARTE, ed., *Concordancia Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1996.¹³ Cf. GANSS, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: A Translation and Commentary*.

87.2	y todas partes inferiores estén más <i>subiectas</i> a las superiores;	and all our bodily faculties subject to the higher	Ignatius proposes three purposes for practicing penances; one of them (linked to the two previous examples) is so that we can have control over our bodily desires, so that these ‘lower’ faculties do not rule over reason. This is a different sense or meaning from what is understood as having <i>subiecto</i> .
89.3	y por juicio erróneo, que el <i>subiecto</i> humano no podrá tolerar sin notable enfermedad	and judge erroneously that a human being cannot endure such penance without notable illness	For some people, certain penances are more suitable than for others; however, we should be careful not to give up penances (which might help us obtain greater fruit from the Exercises) because we think we cannot endure them, both physically, but also emotionally and psychologically.

We look now at each of these cases, beginning with a detailed discussion of *Annotation 18*, followed by comments on *Annotations 14* and *15* and the relevant *Directives*. First, however, it is important to point out a few details on the issue of translations regarding the *subiecto*.

1.2.1. The issue of translations: English use

As we have just seen, the understanding of the ‘subject’ as someone *who has the capacity to act or be acted upon*, has evolved and received different interpretations throughout history. Ignatius’ own use of the term—as *subiecto*—though in agreement to a certain extent with some of its uses at his time, is unique to him and to the early sources of Ignatian spirituality. When giving the Exercises or speaking about the *Spiritual Exercises* in Spanish, it is a term usually left in Ignatius’ original form—even if it sounds strange to the way we speak now—because it is in fact not easy to find an adequate, more contemporary, term with which to replace it. Conversely, when it is translated into English, though the word ‘subject’ might be used in certain instances, it is often replaced by other words or phrases that try to get closer to what is thought to be Ignatius’ intended meaning. Thus, a comparison of three English translations from George Ganss, David Fleming and Lous Puhl shows:

Table 4.2. Comparison of translations of ‘subiecto’ in English

	Ignatius	Ganss	Fleming	Puhl

14.5	condición y <i>subiecto</i>	strength and suitability of each person	personal qualities	conditions and endowment of each individual
15.2	tengan <i>subiecto</i>	those who are suitable for	one who is fit	all who have the required fitness
18.8	de poco <i>subiecto</i>	person poorly qualified, of little natural ability	who is receiving them has little ability or natural capacity	the exercitant has little aptitude or little physical strength
83.2	corrompa el <i>subiecto</i>	weaken our constitution	person does not injure himself	harm to ourselves
84.2	corrompa el <i>subiecto</i>	weaken our constitution	person does not injure himself	harm to ourselves
87.2	<i>subiectas</i> a las superiores	subject to the higher	subjection to the higher	into greater subjection to the higher
89.3	<i>subiecto humano</i>	human being	human system	human nature

Thus, in David Fleming’s more classical *Literal Version*, ‘having *subiecto*’ is translated as someone who is “fit” [*SpEx* 15.2]¹⁴ or having specific “personal qualities” [*SpEx* 14.5] among which we find (in Fleming’s *Contemporary Reading*) the “natural endowments of personality, character and intelligence—all God’s gifts to us”.¹⁵ Ganss, on the other hand, translates this having *subiecto* as being “suitable” or having “suitability”—an expression that I think approximates more Ignatius’ meaning. Fleming expresses to have little *subiecto* as having ‘little ability’ (cf. [*SpEx* 18.8.])¹⁶, which is very close to Ganss’ having “little natural ability”.

Curiously, in his translation of the *Additional Directives* dealing with the *subiecto*, Fleming uses ‘subject’ in only one of these references [87.2], while in the other three he substitutes it for ‘person’ [83.2, 84.2] and ‘system’ [89.3]. For these references, Ganss uses ‘subject’ [87.2], ‘constitution’ [83.2, 84.2] and ‘human being’ [89.3].¹⁷ In [89.3] Ignatius uses the phrase *subiecto humano*—more in the line of a ‘human person’ or a ‘human being’ as translated by Ganss. However, I believe the other two references (Fleming’s ‘person’ and Ganss’ ‘constitution’ for [83.2, 84.2]), do miss in the translation the meaning intended by

¹⁴ DAVID FLEMING, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship—The Spiritual Exercises: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading*, Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1996, p. 14.

¹⁵ FLEMING, *Draw me into your friendship*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁶ FLEMING, *Draw me into your friendship*, p. 16.

¹⁷ As we indicated before, the word ‘subject’ in [87.2] is in fact followed by ‘to’, so it is being used more in the other sense of ‘something *being subject* to something else, or, in other words, ‘*being inferior to it*’. In these cases, Louis Puhl uses: “our lower faculties into greater subjection to the higher” [87.2]; “provided only we do no harm to ourselves” [83.2, 84.2], and “that human nature cannot bear it” [89.3]. Cf. LOUIS J. PUHL, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius—Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph*, Chicago: Loyola Press 1951, pp. 37-39. Unfortunately, the use of ‘ourselves’ in the above cases is not very helpful since it removes any specific connotation that can be derived from translating the word ‘*subiecto*’.

Ignatius by his use of *subiecto*: that special condition that makes the person suitable to undergo the full Exercises, which includes not only the physical but also the psychological well-being that he or she would need to have in order to faithfully and realistically consider following the Lord. And without doubt, Ignatius’ personal experiences, particularly early on after his conversion, are behind his concerns.

I think this is also the reason Ignatius is so keen that if certain penances are corrupting the *subiecto*, they should be avoided at once: “solo que no se corrompa el *subiecto*, ny se siga enfermedad notable” [83.2, 84.2]. Fleming’s translation *provided that the person does not injure himself*, and Ganss’ *provided that we do not weaken our constitution*, again seem to fall short in expressing the extent of damage that those penances could inflict on the exercitants and thus become a detriment in their capacity to engage fully in the Exercises. These English translations seem to refer mainly to the corporal or bodily effect that these penances could have on the person, whereas Ignatius’ use of the *subiecto*, while taking this into account, also addresses the interior person, the psyche and the movements of the person’s heart.

The purpose of these comments, of course, is not to criticise Fleming, Ganss or Puhl, but simply to point out the difficulty of finding adequate terms to translate Ignatius’ *subiecto*, which in turn can affect one’s understanding of how to assess the existence or lack of *subiecto* in one’s exercitants and, in our case, of the forcibly displaced people to whom the Exercises are given. Part of the complexity, as we have seen above, is that Ignatius himself uses the word in different ways, some of which conform to the different meanings given to it at his time. And of course, as mentioned in the previous chapter, we all bring to our interpretation of texts and language our presuppositions and ‘prejudices’ in terms of meaning and usage. With these ‘cautions’ in mind we explore now, in greater detail, Ignatius’ prescriptions for this important aspect of the *subiecto* in his *Exercises*.

1.2.2. The Annotations and Additional Directives

Through his own experiences, Ignatius learned that just as we cannot all walk or run or perform physical exercises in the same way, at the same pace and in the same places, so too we cannot engage in or carry out “spiritual exercises” in the same way. He learned that some

people have one rhythm and others another (cf. [SpEx 4]);¹⁸ and that some assimilate concepts and instructions faster than others, be it because of their psychological nature, their socio-anthropological conditions, their previous histories and experiences, or even their successes and failures, their desires and their dreams.¹⁹ For Ignatius then, it is of utmost importance for givers of the Exercises to get to know the ones who will receive them—their exercitants (‘ejercitantes’)—so as to apply the spiritual exercises to their condition, disposition and needs.²⁰ And, as it is well known, it is in *Annotations* 18-20, where Ignatius provides three different ways to offer the Exercises depending on these conditions and circumstances of the person or subject doing them.²¹ The ‘ideal’ or most suitable exercitant is described in *Annotation* 20: this person possesses the *subiecto* (including natural abilities and ‘stamina’) to make the full Exercises, desires to make all the progress possible and is able to ‘disengage’ and withdraw from the requirements and responsibilities of life. Both in Ignatius’ time and in our own, these constitute a minority. The ‘conditional’ exercitants (cf. *Annotation* 19) possess the same qualities at the ‘ideal’ but are constrained by circumstantial impediments

¹⁸ For a concise discussion on the importance of respecting the personal rhythm of each subject in making the Exercises from a psychodynamic perspective, see CARLOS DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2003, pp. 86-87.

¹⁹ It is interesting to note what some of the *Directories* say regarding the importance of taking into account these particular characteristics and inner dispositions of different exercitants to meet their needs. Thus, *Directory* 18, in describing “some things which in general the giver of the Exercises should observe” states: “También se podrá dilatar y prolongar el tiempo de la primera semana [...] o por el contrario restringirlo [...] puesto que unos hayan contrición más pronto, otros más tarde; y también unos más pronto y otros más tarde logran la devoción y el modo de meditar” [D18, 102]; (English translation: *It will also be possible to delay and prolong the time of the first week [...] or, on the contrary, to restrict it [...] since some find contrition sooner, others later; and also some sooner and others later achieve devotion and the way of meditating*); and *Directory* 21, ‘Responses of Father Lorenzo Nicolai’, responding to the 2nd Question “How many and which Exercises should be given in each week”, states: “Nada de esto se puede determinar, por razón de la varia condición de los que se ejercitan. Pues unos son más lentos, otros más ligeros en despachar cada uno de los Ejercicios. Unos son más ágiles en repetir los Ejercicios hechos una vez; otros repiten con gran desagrado. Otros a su vez necesitan ulterior estímulo. Algunos con poca cosa conciben el fruto que se han propuesto en los Ejercicios; otros finalmente son más capaces, otros menos capaces” [D21, 2], (English translation: *None of this can be determined, because of the various conditions of those who make the exercises. Some are slower, others are swifter in dispatching each of the Exercises. Some are more agile in repeating the Exercises done once; others repeat them with great displeasure. Others in turn need further encouragement. Some with little effort achieve the fruit that have been proposed in the Exercises; others are finally more capable, others less capable*). Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, pp. 130, 175.

²⁰ Cf. JOSÉ GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Ejercitante” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, p. 716.

²¹ Some *Directories* further subdivide the ‘types of Exercises’ to be given as well as the kinds of ‘subjects’ to whom they should be offered. Thus, in his ‘Instructions’ in *Directory* 17, Father Pablo Hoffeeo suggests up to nine in the section “De las personas y cosas en las que parece debe ejercitarse cada uno según su condición” [D17, 2-11]; (*Of the persons and things in which it seems each should exercise himself according to his condition*), cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, pp. 101-103. And Polanco, in Chapter 2 of his *Directory* 20, speaks of “Cuatro modos de proponer Ejercicios espirituales según cuatro clases de hombres” (*Four ways of proposing spiritual Exercises according to four types of men*). The first two allude to *Annotation* 18 exercitants (cf. [SpEx 18.2 and 18.3]), while the third and fourth refer to *Annotation* 19 and 20 exercitants, respectively. Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, pp. 141-144.

(work, responsibilities, etc.) which condition or influence the way they engage in the Exercises (i.e. in *ordinary life*). Finally, the ‘constrained’ exercitant is the subject of *Annotation 18* to which we now turn,²² pointing out, when appropriate, particular factors to consider in relation to forcibly displaced people. It is by far the longest *Annotation* of the twenty given by Ignatius and shows Ignatius’ wisdom and insight of the human person in its cognitive, affective and relational areas.

1.2.2.1. *Annotation 18*

Aimed as a specific guideline for the one giving the Exercises, *Annotation 18* is divided in two main parts. The first part offers the giver of the Exercises great freedom in terms of how to apply them according to the disposition, circumstances, abilities, needs and even desires of the one receiving them. In the second part of the *Annotation* the one giving the Exercises is entrusted with the ‘special mission’ of determining whether the one receiving them has ‘enough’ *subiecto* or not to move onto the Second Week and the process of election, and then on to the last two remaining Weeks. As we consider some of the criteria that Ignatius outlines to do this, it should be mentioned from the outset that Ignatius himself seemed to realise that this is something not easy to ‘quantify’. Moreover, the initial assessment based on these criteria is only part of the process to determine the degree of a person’s *subiecto*. While he or she might ‘look good on paper’ initially, as the exercises of the First Week progress, the one giving the Exercises might discover that certain exercitants do not have what it takes to move forward.

Table 4.3. *Annotation 18: text and considerations*

Text of Annotation ²³		To consider
<i>First Part of the Annotation: adaptation guidelines</i>		
18.1	<i>Según la disposición de las personas que quieren tomar ejercicios espirituales, es a saber, según que tienen edad, letras o ingenio, se han de aplicar los tales ejercicios,</i> The Spiritual Exercises should be adapted	The process of adaptation has to consider both the exercitant’s interior movements and desires as well as objective or external factors pertaining to them. Forcibly displaced people share the common experience of ‘displacement’ but care should be taken not to assume further ‘common’ traits, desires or

²² Cf. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Ejercitante” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, pp. 716-717.

²³ The Spanish text is taken from IGNACIO DE LOYOLA, *Ejercicios Espirituales. Texto cuidado y revisado por Santiago Arzubialde*, Santander: Sal Terrae 2010. The English text is from GANSS, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. Italics are used for the Spanish text and also in the English text to highlight certain relevant terms.

	to the <i>disposition</i> of the persons who <i>desire</i> to make them, that is, to their <i>age, education, and ability</i> .	conditions.
18.2	<i>porque no se den a quien es rudo o de poca complisión cosas que no pueda descansadamente llevar y aprovecharse con ellas.</i> In this way, someone who is uneducated or has a <i>weak constitution</i> will not be given things he or she cannot well <i>bear</i> or <i>profit</i> from without fatigue.	Ignatius is aware of the physical and psychological demands the Exercises can impose on people. Such demands could harm people of poor health. But also lack of formal education can place emotional and psychological burdens on people, when things are demanded of them which they are unable to achieve. In terms of forcibly displaced people, one should try to avoid at all costs subjecting them to any additional trauma; many of them would have in fact missed out on educational opportunities and still be suffering from physical pain. Moreover, the experience of the Exercises should produce fruits and benefits not only for the ones making them, but also for those they are called to serve.
18.3	<i>Asimismo según que se quisieren disponer, se debe de dar a cada uno, porque más se pueda ayudar y aprovechar.</i> Similarly, exercitants should be given, each one, as much as they are <i>willing</i> to dispose themselves to <i>receive</i>, for their greater <i>help</i> and <i>progress</i>.	The one giving the Exercises cannot force them on the ones receiving them but should encourage them to be open to all the graces that God might want to shower on them. Yet, it is the latter’s willingness and disposition which will determine how much they are ready to absorb, how much they want to be helped and the extent of progress or profit they are wanting to get out of the experience. For some forcibly displaced people, the willingness to dispose themselves might be there, but they might not know how to express it.
18.4	<i>Por tanto, al que se quiere ayudar para se instruir y para llegar hasta cierto grado de contentar a su ánima, se puede dar el examen particular [24-31] y después el examen general [32-43],</i> Consequently, a person who <i>wants help</i> to get some <i>instruction</i> and reach a certain level of <i>peace of soul</i> can be given the Particular Examen [24-31], and then the General Examen [32-43],	The one giving the Exercises should endeavour to understand the desires of the one receiving them, so that he or she can offer what is most suitable. Some people might be looking for greater knowledge in matters of faith, while others (as in the case of many forcibly displaced persons) for healing, peace or consolation in their lives.
18.5	<i>juntamente por media hora a la mañana el modo de orar sobre los mandamientos, pecados mortales, etc. [238-260].</i>	There is great value in even the most basic and simplest prayers, particularly in our day and age when having a grasp of even the basics of our faith cannot be assumed.

	And further, the Method of Praying, for a half hour in the morning, on the Commandments [238-243], the Capital Sins [244-245] and other such procedures [238; 246-260].	Therefore, it is not enough just to present the prayers suggested here by Ignatius, but proper instruction and explanation of them should also be provided.
18.6	<i>comendándole también la confesión de sus pecados de ocho en ocho días, y si puede tomar el sacramento de quince en quince, y si se afecta mejor de ocho en ocho.</i> Such a person can also be <i>encouraged</i> to weekly confession of sins and, if possible, to reception of the Eucharist every two weeks or, if <i>better disposed</i>, weekly.	The sacramental life of the church, as a community of faith, hope and love is also essential. Some people might not be used to receiving these sacraments frequently, even the Eucharist, so receiving encouragement to do so can be of great value. This encouragement might need to be accompanied with the imparting of catechesis. It is hoped that, as the receiving of the sacraments becomes part of a person’s life, they will become a source of spiritual benefit for them. This factor could be of particular relevance to some forcibly displaced people, especially younger ones, who might have missed out in receiving the sacraments at different stages of their displacement experience.
18.7	<i>Esta manera es más propia para personas más rudas o sin letras, declarándoles cada mandamiento, y así de los pecados mortales, preceptos de la Iglesia, cinco sentidos y obras de misericordia.</i> This procedure is more appropriate for persons who are rather simple or illiterate. They should be given an explanation of each of the commandments, the seven capital sins, the precepts of the Church, the five senses, and the works of mercy.	Catechesis is of utmost importance, especially in our contemporary, secular world, where there is a great deal of spiritual and faith-based illiteracy. Yet, a person could be found to have a great deal of <i>subiecto</i> at an early stage of their faith journey, even when lacking this literacy; and this would clearly apply to forcibly displaced people of faith who have had an active prayer life as a way of coping with their adverse situations.
<i>Second Part of the Annotation: determining the degree of subiecto</i>		
18.8	<i>Ansimesmo, si el que da los ejercicios viere al que los recibe ser de poco subiecto o de poca capacidad natural, de quien no se espera mucho fruto;</i> Likewise, if the one giving the Exercises sees that the one making them is a person <i>poorly qualified</i> [<i>de poco subiecto</i>] or of little <i>natural ability</i> from whom <i>much fruit</i> is not to be expected,	The greater the <i>subiecto</i> in a person the more fruits that can be expected from him or her—this is Ignatius’ fundamental concern in terms of determining the level of <i>subiecto</i> present in a person. The one giving the Exercises is expected to ‘see’, to discern, to quantify, this presence. Notice that Ignatius differentiates between <i>subiecto</i> and natural ability. For Ignatius the <i>subiecto</i> is a potential inherent in a person which can be further developed through prayer, instruction and grace; a person’s natural ability could also be developed but might not ensure their being

		able to engage in the full <i>Exercises</i> .
18.9	<i>más conveniente es darle algunos destos ejercicios leves hasta que se confiese de sus pecados;</i> it is <i>preferable</i> to give such a one some of these <i>light exercises</i> until he or she has confessed;	Ignatius’ pragmatism is expressed here: what is best or preferable for the person needs to be determined so that, within that person’s given limitations at a particular time, the greatest benefit can be derived.
18.10	<i>y después dándole algunos exámenes de conciencia, y orden de confesar más a menudo que solía, para se conservar en lo que ha ganado,</i> and then to <i>give</i> ways of examining one’s conscience and a <i>program</i> for confession more frequently than before, that the person may <i>preserve</i> what has been acquired.	The giver of the Exercises also needs to consider what the one receiving them will need so as not to lose the spiritual progress that has been achieved; for Ignatius this cannot be left to chance—a program needs to be thought out and helps provided to ensure this occurs; the presence of a community of faith will be of invaluable assistance in this area, especially for some forcibly displaced persons who might arrive on their own at their resettlement countries.
18.11	<i>ni en otros algunos ejercicios, que están fuera de la primera semana,</i> But this should be done <i>without going on</i> matters pertaining to the Election or to other Exercises <i>beyond the First Week</i>.	The person who has little <i>subiecto</i> should not move forward to the Exercises of the Second Week. In terms of ‘election’, however, while a change in form of life or other considerable change should be avoided, it would be hoped that even these <i>light</i> exercises would have an effect in the person’s direction of life.
18.12	<i>mayormente quando en otros se puede hacer mayor provecho faltando tiempo para todo.</i> This is especially the case when there are others with whom greater results can be achieved. There is no sufficient time to do everything.	Ignatius does not advocate that only those people who do ‘great’ things should be helped. All souls must be helped, but one needs to be pragmatic in terms of what help one can give and how much time one can offer to each. And, in view of the needs of the kingdom, one needs to be discerning when having to make choices.

The table above shows that, in terms of the ‘constrained’ exercitants of *Annotation 18*, the three factors that should be taken into account when applying the Exercises to them are “edad, letras, ingenio”; of these today we would speak more in terms of ‘maturity’, ‘education’ or ‘studies’, and ‘personal abilities’. In effect, what we are dealing with here is a profile of people who, because of possible limitations in their ‘constitution’ are not able to engage in the totality of the method and process of the Exercises as proposed by Ignatius. The purpose in offering ‘light’ Exercises (of the First Week) to these persons is to ‘help their souls’ as much as possible (*porque más se pueda ayudar y aprovechar*) [SpEx 18.3], giving them what they

can “well bear or profit from without fatigue” (*pueda descansadamente llevar y aprovecharse con ellas*) [SpEx 18.2], making sure at the same time not to burden them lest they are not able to “preserve what has been acquired” (*para se conservar en lo que ha ganado*) [SpEx 18.10].²⁴ The *Annotation*, as we have seen, details the contents that can be given to exercitants of this condition, according to their ‘disposition’ and ‘natural abilities’ or ‘capacities’—elements we consider later in this Part of the chapter.

Considering carefully the two parts of *Annotation* 18, it seems as if Ignatius had written it in such a way as to take into account the circumstances of our 21st century as much as those of his own 16th century. As mentioned, in the first part of the *Annotation* the giver of the Exercises is entrusted with a greater role as ‘formator’ or instructor in the faith, especially of those who have had little formal education in spiritual and doctrinal matters. Such basic faith formation is needed to complement the existing potential *subiecto* (second part of the *Annotation*) for those engaging in the full Exercises. While in Ignatius’ time this would have applied more to those who were ‘simple’ or ‘illiterate’, this ‘prelude’ or preparation of the *subiecto* is today more and more necessary, since we have now lost the social and religious structures that hitherto provided us with this formational support. Paradoxically, many forcibly displaced people, in particular those whose faith played a very important role in their survival, still would have experienced this nurturing of their faith through communities and within cultures where that support has been and continues to be present. As we shall see, these pre-displacement experiences, coupled with the experiences of displacement, would have helped them develop their *subiecto* in ways many givers of the Exercises would not have imagined or expected.

As already alluded to, all of *Annotation* 18 occurs within the scope of the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Yet, as it is well known, this so-called First Week does not necessarily last seven days. In fact, in contrast with the subsequent Weeks, Ignatius gives only five exercises for this period which usually comprise a single day of the retreat. In the context of *Annotation* 18, this ‘first week’ could be considered rather as a ‘stage’ in the spiritual life of a person which can last much longer. This is because in this phase something fundamental has to take place before an exercitant can move to the Second Week and to the meditation on the

²⁴ Cf. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Ejercitante” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, pp. 716-717.

Call of the Temporal King, namely, a redirection in the basic orientation of one’s personality, so that the person, in all its being, can actually hear this call and respond with an “offering of great worth and moment” (cf. [SpEx 97]).²⁵

The way in which *Annotation* 18 is written emphasises also Ignatius’ belief that the First Week could be experienced at different levels: more superficially, in which mere changes in conduct or greater sacramental practice are desired (cf. [SpEx 18.4]); or more profoundly, seeking certain level of transformation or even identification with Christ crucified (cf. [SpEx 18.3]). It is those who reach this deeper level—who experience this *metanoia* in a “radical sense of their existence” as human beings, according to Jon Sobrino—who then exhibit the *subiecto* required to move to the Second Week.²⁶ Ignatius invites the exercitant into this radical sense of existence through the meditations he offers on sin and its effects. They place the exercitant indeed at the extremes of human existence: the origin of evil and the ultimate consequence of sin in the meditation on hell. These meditations make it clear that one is called to a level of transcendence that marks the way one lives out his or her existence as a radical proposition—towards the end for which each of us has been created. Those who are not able or willing to perceive this, lack the *subiecto* necessary to move to the Second Week.²⁷

1.2.2.2. Annotations 14, 15 and the ‘subiecto’ directives

In the context of a person who is “proceeding with consolation and great fervour” and who might want to make a promise or vow in a hasty or not-well considered manner, *Annotation* 14 warns that the giver of the Exercises “ought to bestow much thought on the strength and suitability of each person, and on the helps or hindrances one is likely to meet with in carrying out what one wishes to promise” [SpEx 14.5]. Moreover, “the more unstable the director sees the exercitant to be, the more earnest should be the forewarning and caution” [SpEx 14.2]. Clearly, Ignatius’ concern here is that someone might want to “bite more than he/she can chew” in a moment of great spiritual passion or zeal. His use of words such as ‘strength’ and

²⁵ Cf. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO, “‘El que los recibe’ (el ‘subjecto’. Disposiciones)”, p. 329. Clearly too, the First Week is different in a qualitative sense from the others. For one, the type of prayer is quite different. In the Second Week, for example, the exercitant is called to contemplation, allowing himself or herself to be part of the scene and the action, whereas in the First Week he/she is asked to employ good or right judgement to assess the moral matters Ignatius presents. The Rules of Discernment of Spirits, in response to the temptations of the evil one, are also different in this First Week, p. 330.

²⁶ Cf. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO, “‘El que los recibe’ (el ‘subjecto’. Disposiciones)”, p. 330. González Modroño makes reference here to JON SOBRINO’s book *Cristología desde América Latina: esbozo a partir del seguimiento del Jesús histórico*, Texas: Editiones CRT 1977.

²⁷ Cf. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO, “‘El que los recibe’ (el ‘subjecto’. Disposiciones)”, p. 331.

‘suitability’ are, as we have seen, common expressions to refer to a person’s *subiecto*, and they can apply to any of his/her physical, emotional and spiritual aptitudes. In this case, however, the concern is for the future life of the exercitant rather than assessing whether or not a person should engage in the Exercises or move to a later Week.

Similarly, Ignatius’ use here of the word ‘unstable’ (*de ligera condición* in the Spanish), more than describing a pre-existing ‘condition’ of the one making the Exercises, seems to indicate the effects that the experience might be having on the person already making them. This recalls the earlier reference made to the possible adverse effects on an exercitant who is not ‘ready’ for the Exercises: such adverse effect might have long-term consequences if a life-changing decision is poorly made. One of the main objectives of the Exercises is to help exercitants get rid of their disordered affections, to help them develop their potential to be of greater service to others and to God, and “although a good work done under a [religious] vow is more meritorious than one done without it” [*SpEx* 14.4], a hastily made decision might have the opposite effect.

Annotation 15 (once again directed to the giver of the Exercises), deals with the case of those who do seem to have the qualities or endurance (in terms of *subiecto*) for religious life or another particular vocation. Here it is the giver of the Exercises who should not urge them to follow that specific vocation, but allow the Creator to communicate directly with the devout soul, “embracing it in love and praise, and disposing it for the way which will enable the soul to serve him better in the future” [*SpEx* 15.4]. It is this loving embrace that disposes the soul for service. So, this direct communication with God, this deeply personal encounter with the Creator, is characterised by a dual dimension of affection/praxis, of mysticism/real physical commitment, of contemplation/action. God’s embrace marks the orientation of the life of the soul—it is operative in its conduct and action, leading to a new configuration of the identity of the subject/*subiecto*, which in turn triggers a new way of situating oneself in life, of feeling, thinking and establishing relationships with others.²⁸

As previously mentioned, in the text of the *Exercises* the term *subiecto* also appears four times in the *Additional Directives* in relation to practices of penance, which are to be followed

²⁸ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, p. 58.

by those who are exercising themselves and have not yet found what they desire, such as tears, consolations, etc. These practices involve changes in food, in sleep and in other ways of doing penance (cf. [SpEx 83, 84, 87, 89]), whose benefit and effectiveness rests in their capacity to help exercitants come out of an attitude of complacency and routine that might be preventing them from receiving the desired graces. These, moreover, should be exercised with care to avoid both inflicting bodily harm (physical) upon the exercitants and also influencing the movements of their hearts (emotional and spiritual). They emphasise the element of ‘potentiality’ in having *subiecto* and the possibility to develop it further through physical and other means, for those who are so disposed or willing to do whatever might be of benefit to obtain greater profit from the experience of the Exercises.

1.3. The *subiecto* in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus

Ignatius expands the topic of the *subiecto* in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus, where the one having *subiecto* is above all the man (Jesuit) who is considered to be available and disposed to allowing God to place him in the situation and circumstances where he will produce most fruits. Moreover, he is the one who is able to commit to a mission as well as to making serious and significant decisions. According to the *Concordancia Ignaciana*, the *Constitutions* mention the *subiecto* fifteen times [Co 187, 206, 207, 215, 236, 274, 302, 334, 338, 343, 355, 367, 627, 667 and 682]. We present these first in table format in this section, following it with a brief discussion of the additional insights they might provide to deepen our understanding of Ignatius’ *subiecto*.

Table 4.4. The *subiecto* in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus

No.	Spanish Text ²⁹	English Translation ³⁰	Factors Considered
<i>Part 1 – The Admission to Probation (Complementary Norms: Admission to Probation)</i>			
187.1	para la profesión, si en algunos <i>subiectos</i> por causas especiales se juzgase conuenir	for profession, in particular cases where for special reasons it is judged conducive to the intended end of God’s greater service	Dispensing (lowering) age requirements for admission or probation
<i>Part 2 – The Dismissal of Those Who Were Admitted but Did not Prove Themselves Fit (Dismissal from the Society)</i>			
206.5	y necesario en todas cosas	necessary for them (members) to	To preserve subordination

²⁹ ECHARTE, ed., *Concordancia Ignaciana*, p. 1210.

³⁰ SOCIETY OF JESUS, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms*. Words in *italics* in the middle column in the table above refer to the English translation of the Spanish terms used in reference to the *subiecto*.

	serles <i>subietos</i> por Christo N.S.	be <i>subject</i> to these superiors in all things for Christ our Lord	of holy obedience in the Society; (<i>the sense here is different: to be under someone’s authority</i>)
207.1	y les sean más humildes y <i>subietos</i> , todavía por letras secretas se puede	that the <i>subjects</i> may have greater respect and be more humble and obedient [...] by means of private letters	to preserve authority and obedience in the Society
215.4	despedir a alguno, si fuese buen <i>suieto</i> en lo demás, verá la prudencia	to send someone away [...] if he should be a good <i>subject</i> except for this, prudence will consider	one who has given scandal to others might still be allowed to stay in the Society in some far-distant region
236.1	Si fuesen tales <i>subietos</i> que pareciese seruicio de Dios no	If they are <i>persons</i> such that it seems a service to God our Lord not to let them go in this way	accepting back some who might have left because of strong temptations or being misled by others
<i>Part 3 – The Preservation and Progress of Those Who Remain in Probation (Spiritual Formation of Novices)</i>			
274.1	la Yglesia y doctores della, debe <i>subietarse</i> a lo que en la Compañía	in the case of opinions divergent from what is commonly held by the Church and its teachers, they should <i>submit</i> to what is laid down in the Society	obtain uniformity of doctrine in the Society; (<i>again, sense here is of being ‘submissive’ rather than being a ‘subject’</i>)
302.2	que piden más reços y fuertes <i>subietos</i> , como la sacristía, portería, enfermería	which require stronger and more vigorous <i>men</i> , such as those in the sacristy, porter’s lodge, or infirmary	assign persons who have the appropriate physical constitution required for more demanding offices
<i>Part 4 – The Learning and Other Means of Helping Their Neighbour That Are to Be Imparted to Those Who Are Retained in the Society (Formation of Our Members after the Novitiate)</i>			
334.2	los demás deben de ser tales <i>subietos</i> , que se spere según razón que	the rest ought to be such <i>subjects</i> as give reasonable hope of turning out to be fit labourers in the vineyard of Christ our Lord	qualities desired of Jesuit scholastics to be stationed in the colleges
338.2	en la primera parte, y sean <i>subjectos</i> idóneos para sperar que saldrán buenos	in Part I, and they are <i>subjects</i> of such fitness as to give hope that they will turn out to be good workers in the vineyard	admittance of non-Jesuits (poorer students) into the Society’s colleges when there are not enough scholastics
343.9	mayores o superiores, que según los <i>subiectos</i> , tierras y condiciones y tiempos, se	superiors should provide for this according to the <i>persons</i> , places, conditions and times	whether scholastics might recite a part of the Hours
355.1	a lo que deuen estudiar vnos <i>subiectos</i> o otros, quedará así mesmo	when someone has aptitude, the better he is grounded in the aforementioned <i>subjects</i> the better it will be	the particular studies each scholastic should follow will be left to the discretion of superiors (<i>different meaning: ‘subjects’ as topics of study</i>)
367.1	occurentias varias y diuersidad de los <i>sujetos</i>	in accordance with the various cases and the diversity of the	superiors to decide when scholastics will study the

		<i>persons</i>	languages in which the Scriptures were written
<i>Part 7 – The Relations to Their Neighbour of Those Already Incorporated in the Society When They Are Dispersed into the Vineyard of Christ Our Lord (The Missions and Ministries of the Society)</i>			
627.1	pensamientos que le vienen en contrario, <i>subiectando</i> todo su sentir y querer al	thoughts that occur to him contrary to an order received, <i>submitting</i> his entire judgement and will to the superior's	when someone has to be moved and is not in agreement, he could represent; (different meaning: speaks of submission)
<i>Part 8 – Helps toward Uniting Dispersed Members with Their Head and among Themselves (Fostering Unity in the Society)</i>			
667.4	de manera que los <i>subiectos</i> se puedan disponer a tener siempre	so that the <i>subjects</i> may be disposed always to have greater love than fear for their superiors, though at times both are useful	relationship between members and superiors that fosters unity—superiors are to be regarded well and as good leaders
682.2	general congregación, no son todos los <i>subiectos</i> que están a obediencia	in a general congregation are not all the <i>subjects</i> under obedience to the Society	not everyone is required to attend a general congregation

As expected, the range of themes or topics included in the *Constitutions* in regards to the *subiecto* has much to do with organisational aspects of the Society of Jesus, from who to admit into the Order, to how to instruct those who stay and how they should relate to their superiors. Some of the qualities required in these men (to make them good candidates for the Society) are also mentioned, but in many cases they are implicit.³¹

To ‘have *subiecto*’ is equivalent to having great qualities, which produce much fruit if they are put to God’s service. On the contrary, not having it means that not much is expected of the candidate or Jesuit, because of being of ‘little natural capacity’ (cf. [SpEx 18]). The *Constitutions* also relate the *subiecto* to someone who is able to endure penitential practices which only those who are stronger can; and in fact, these people are actually strengthened even more by such practices (cf. [SpEx 89.2-3]). Finally, *subiecto* refers to those who are able to undertake those employments “which require stronger and more vigorous men, such as

³¹ Many of these qualities are also mentioned in *The Candidates Who should be Admitted, Part 1, Chapter 2*, [147-162]. They include: having a great number of natural and infused gifts, be men of good conscience, peaceful, docile, lovers of virtue and perfection, inclined to devotion, edifying for all, humble, well-disposed towards the Society and eager to help it for the glory of God [147-148]; in regard to their exterior, they should have a good appearance, health, strength for the bodily tasks assigned to them [151]; those who are difficult or ‘unserviceable to the congregation’ should not be admitted [152]; and those admitted to help souls in spiritual matters should have: sound doctrine, discretion and good judgement [154], good memory and capacity to learn [155], and be desirous of virtue and spiritual perfection, peaceful, constant and zealous for the salvation of souls [156].

those in the sacristy, porter’s lodge, or infirmary [...] who have the physical constitution required for [these] offices [...]” [Co 302].

Although the *Concordancia* does not include it, the English translation of the *Constitutions* also mentions: “For the more the subjects are dependent upon their superiors, the better will the love, obedience, and union among them be preserved” [Co 666.5]. Very especially helpful, among other qualities, will be the superior’s credit and prestige among his subjects, as well as his having and showing love and concern for them, in such a way that the subjects hold the opinion that their superior has the knowledge, desire, and ability to rule them well in our Lord (cf. [Co 667.1]). It is clear that those who are called be superiors are required to have a greater level of *subiecto*!

It would seem then that for Ignatius, in terms of those who would be admitted into the Society, they would need to have the *subiecto* for whatever the Society could require of them. Because for Ignatius the *subiecto* refers to the human person as a whole, and he assumes that every individual is unique and irreproducible, all their individual capacities should be considered in any decision made that affects them. In fact, not only the person’s qualities are of great importance, but also their limitations, for in some instances, whether for the benefit of the person or the universal good, Ignatius sees as perfectly valid to make certain exceptions.³² We see this, for example, in Ignatius’ openness to accept certain candidates from whom great fruit can be expected, even if they only have the *subiecto* to undertake *light* Exercises.³³ This practice of considering all the individual capacities of a person, together with his/her limitations, ‘for the benefit of that person or the universal good’ is of particular relevance when determining if a survivor of forced displacement should undertake the Exercises, including those prescribed in *Annotation* 18. In fact, it could be argued that, unless it has been objectively assessed that undertaking Exercises could cause adverse effects to the person, an effort should be made to offer the Exercises to them, regardless of their limitations, and especially because of these.

³² Thus, Ignatius states clearly that the *subiecto* must be taken into account to determine the admission or probation or profession into the Society, in vital cases as for example, when considering a person of ‘excessive’ age (Cf. [Co 187]).

³³ Cf. COUPEAU and GONZÁLEZ MAGAÑA, “Sujeto” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 1666.

However, regarding the *subiecto* of the *Constitutions*, as we have seen, and in terms of the full Exercises, Ignatius insists that the giver should look carefully into the condition and *subiecto* of the receiver and how much it can help or get in the way of ‘fulfilling the thing he would want to promise’ [*SpEx* 14], and in the case of potential Jesuits, life in the Society. Thus, while the *subiecto* who joins the Society is not exactly the *subiecto* who is able to move forward to the Second Week of the Exercises, there is certain relationship between the two.³⁴ There is the presupposition that the *subiecto* who is sufficiently suitable for the Second Week should be able to consider following the Lord in any state or path of life, even to the extreme consequences, including religious life (cf. [*SpEx* 15]), whether in the Society of Jesus or another congregation. In fact, this was quite common in the time of Ignatius. It could even be said that the characteristics which St Ignatius demands from the candidate to the Society is a concrete expression of the *subiecto* required for the Second Week.³⁵

1.4. Attitudes in the *subiecto*

So far, when referring to ‘having’ *subiecto* as ‘potential’ for making the Exercises, we have spoken of an exercitant’s attitudes, dispositions and capacities or natural abilities. Clearly these are not the same, and while they all contribute to the assessment of an exercitant’s suitability for different types of Exercises or none, we can observe in them a degree of evolution or levels of progression from (1) what exercitants can or cannot do (natural capacities), to (2) what they are able to dispose or prepare themselves to do, and finally (3) to what they can contribute to this *doing* and *disposing* of themselves through certain favourable attitudes on their part. While in some cases what is a ‘disposition’ and what is an ‘attitude’ might get mingled or confused, in others it can be more easily differentiated. We explore now each of these ‘building blocks’—attitudes, dispositions and capacities—of the *subiecto* keeping in mind, as usual, how they relate to the particular circumstances and conditions of forcibly displaced people.

In terms of attitudes, someone who has ‘enough’ *subiecto* to make the Exercises (particularly the full Exercises, though these would apply to a certain degree to other types as well) must

³⁴ To further explore the relationship between the *subiecto* in the *Exercises* and in the *Constitutions*, see for example, JOSÉ MARÍA RAMBLA, “El hombre de las Constituciones como prolongación del hombre de los Ejercicios” in *Manresa* 70 (1997) 359-372 and SERGIO RENDINA, “L’uomo degli Esercizi e l’uomo delle Costituzioni” in *Appunti di Spiritualità* 52 (2001) 21-74, as well as an earlier source, AA VV, *Ejercicios-Constituciones*. Unidad Vital, Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero 1975.

³⁵ Cf. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO, “‘El que los recibe’ (el ‘subjecto’. Disposiciones)”, p. 326.

be able to engage them with diligence and responsibility and, as Ignatius suggests in *Annotation 5*, to enter “upon them with great spirit and generosity (*grande ánimo y liberalidad*) toward their Creator and Lord” and be willing to offer “all their desires and freedom (*todo su querer y libertad*) to him” [*SpEx 5*]. Ignatius acknowledges the effort and stamina the Exercises will require, not only physical but also emotional and psychological, and to be able to ‘run the distance’ the exercitant will require a ‘storage’ of psychic energy which in contemporary psychology is referred to as motivation. The one giving the Exercises will want to examine the origin, degree, type and authenticity of the exercitants’ motivation: do they know authentically what they desire? Is it really a desire for conversion and reorientation of their existence towards God or are they entering into the experience to please others, or thinking that the Exercises might provide a solution to their psychological issues or emotional conflicts?³⁶

What is being addressed here is really the question of freedom and whether the exercitant will be able (will have enough *subiecto*)—or at least be initially willing—to surrender that freedom to his/her Creator. This question is key because this freedom, which Ignatius asks to be turned over to God, will constitute an essential element in the Exercises which exercitants will encounter several times throughout the four Weeks. Paradoxically, it is an invitation to exercise that freedom as if they had never surrendered it in the first place (cf. [*SpEx 135, 155, 234*]). The exercitant will have to make decisions over and over again in freedom, and God will not be ‘able’ to do anything without the desire and the election of the *subiecto*.³⁷

Other attitudes that will contribute to an exercitant’s *subiecto* include: a desire to make the Exercises and a sense of joy in having the opportunity to make them; a desire to make all the progress possible (*en todo lo posible desea aprovechar*, cf. [*SpEx 20*]); trust in God, trust in the giver of the Exercises and his/her competence and experience, and trust in the method (cf. [*SpEx 11*]); magnanimity and openness to what it might be required of him/her; a desire to cooperate in the process; self-discipline (cf. [*SpEx 12*]) and faithfulness to the process—the method, preparation and periods of prayer, with the giver, etc. (cf. *Additional Directives*, [*SpEx 73-90*], for example); and offering all one’s desires and freedom to God (cf. [*SpEx 5*]).

³⁶ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, pp. 90-93.

³⁷ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, pp. 90-92.

1.5. Disposition of the *subiecto*

The word ‘disposition’ or ‘dispose/d’ appears three times in *Annotation* 18 and in several other places throughout the *Exercises* (cf. [SpEx 1, 7, 15, 20, 39, 44, 72, 133, 135, 199, 205, 213, 220, 252, 234, 327, 335]). As we have seen, it is closely linked with Ignatius’ idea of having *subiecto*, and particularly with the possibility of developing one’s *subiecto* in those who lack it. Throughout the *Exercises*, the content of *disposition* or of *disposing oneself*, is presented basically in three ways: in terms of (1) preparation, (2) making an election and (3) surrender or self-giving.³⁸

The process of *preparation* refers both to aptitudes and capacities required to be able to undertake better and more profitably the Exercises (cf. [SpEx 18]) and to ready oneself to “receive graces and gifts from his divine and supreme goodness” [SpEx 20, 44, 135], in order to achieve their proposed goal of seeking and finding God’s will (cf. [SpEx 1]).³⁹ These graces will then dispose or prepare the devout souls for the way in which they will best serve God in the future (cf. [SpEx 15]). It is then a reciprocal process in which the exercitant’s own disposition (what he or she does) to embark on the Exercises with generosity and magnanimity results in being disposed (what the Divine Majesty does) for the greater service of God.

It is hard to imagine that someone who commits to making the full Spiritual Exercises might not be so disposed, at least initially. But it is possible that with time, as tiredness or struggles arise (in the 20th *Annotation* Exercises) or other commitments take precedence (e.g. in the 19th *Annotation* Exercises) the exercitant’s disposition might dwindle or be quenched. Such disposition might also be absent at the outset in cases of certain people (for example, diocesan priests or other religious) for whom their formation programs *require* them to make the Exercises. It is clear that this lack of disposition was an issue in Ignatius’ time and in the

³⁸ AVELINO QUIJANO, “Disposición” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, p. 647. García de Castro suggests that to ‘dispose oneself’ is the exercise in freedom of adequately preparing and directing the soul in order to more easily obtain the expected results from such exercise. To dispose the soul (the *ánima*) in principle could be any type of spiritual exercise directed towards “ridding [it] of all its disordered affections, and after their removal, of seeking and finding God’s will” [SpEx 1]; the one giving the Exercises can contribute towards this disposition, particularly when the one making them experiences desolation and temptations (cf. [SpEx 7]); of course, this act of disposing oneself is also grace which the *ánima* receives in the process of “approaching and attaining to our Creator and Lord” [SpEx 20]. Cf. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “¿Qué hacemos cuando hacemos ejercicios?”, p. 16

³⁹ This readiness and preparation is so important that when the disposition is not present (and therefore great fruit or benefit is not expected) it is advised not to give the Exercises to such persons, though other spiritual helps might be offered to them (cf. D4, 1-2). Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, p. 29.

early years of giving the Exercises, as the *Directories* make provision to address it and suggest counsel for such circumstances (cf. D4, 19; D3, 13):

Si algunos no parecen llevar disposición de ánimo tal que se pueda esperar de ellos mucho fruto, bastará dar los ejercicios de primera semana, y dejarlos con esta sed, hasta que dieren prendas para esperar mayor fruto (D3, 13).⁴⁰

As per *Annotation* 18, these ‘light’ exercises can include the prayer of the senses, the Our Father and other basic prayers, meditating on the Capital Sins, etc. But for Ignatius, the fact that these are basic and simple prayers does not mean that they are less effective. He believes that through them the souls will have an experience of God’s goodness and that, filled with emotion and wonder, they will want to ‘quench their thirst’ in God, making God the centre of their lives (cf. [SpEx 60-61]), which for Ignatius, of course, is his principle and foundation.⁴¹

The second meaning of disposition—making an election—takes centre stage in the middle of the Second Week, when Ignatius invites the exercitant to consider in which state or way of life he or she should serve the divine Majesty: “We shall also think about how we ought to dispose ourselves in order to come to perfection in whatsoever state or way of life God our Lord may grant us to *elect*” [SpEx 135.6]. Ignatius presents immediately after this preamble the Meditations on the *Two Standards*, the *Three Classes of Persons*, and the *Three Ways of Being Humble* to assist the exercitant in preparing for such an important election.⁴²

It is at the end of the Exercises, in the *Contemplation to Attain Love* that we find the best expression of a third meaning or understanding of what Ignatius refers to as disposition, namely, a *surrendering* or self-giving, both to God and to others:

Tomad Señor, y recibid toda mi libertad, mi memoria, mi entendimiento y toda mi voluntad, todo mi haber y mi poseer; Vos me lo distes; a Vos, Señor, lo torno; todo es vuestro, disponed a toda vuestra voluntad; dadme vuestro amor y gracia, que ésta me basta [SpEx 234.5-6].⁴³

⁴⁰ Cf. *Los Directorios de Ejercicios 1540-1599*, p. 27. English translation from the original text in Spanish: “If some of them do not seem to have the disposition or mood required [for the Exercises] so that much fruit could be expected of them, it will suffice to give them exercises of the First Week, and to leave them with this thirst for more, until such time when it would seem that greater fruit could be expected from them”.

⁴¹ Cf. QUIJANO, “Disposición” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 648.

⁴² This type of disposition encompasses some key elements of the spirituality of the Exercises: *indifference* (cf. [SpEx 23]); the meditation of the *Kingdom*: “offering oneself wholeheartedly for this labour” [SpEx 96]; the person typical of the ‘*Third Class*’: “desire to serve God our Lord better” [SpEx 155]; the *election* (cf. [SpEx 179-180]), and the *Contemplatio* (cf. [SpEx 234]). Cf. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Ejercitante” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 718.

⁴³ Ganss’ English translation of the Spanish Text: “Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will—all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to your will. Give me love of yourself along with your grace, for that is enough for me”.

We find here also another example of the reciprocal process mentioned earlier in which the exercitant’s utter disposition to surrender to God’s will and love, to be ‘used’ by the Creator as God best sees fit, gives the Creator ‘permission’ (because one forfeits one’s God-given freedom) to dispose of everything that God has given to us.⁴⁴ It is a final and total recognition that the Lord is *our* Lord, to whom we belong, in the best sense of the word. Arriving at this point too, is what was hoped for in the instruction given in the guidelines for the Exercises, in *Annotation 5*, and which we introduced in the previous section in terms of a desired attitude in the exercitant.⁴⁵

The persons who make the *Exercises* will benefit greatly by entering upon them with great spirit and generosity toward their Creator and Lord, and by offering all their desires and freedom to him so that His Divine Majesty can make use of their persons and of all they possess in whatsoever way is in accord with his most holy will [*SpEx* 234.5-6].

And it is, likewise, the fulfilment of the goal set out at the very beginning of the *Exercises* by Ignatius:

[...] is the name of spiritual exercises given to any means of preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God’s will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul [*SpEx* 1].

The phrase ‘ordering of our life’ used in Ganss’ translation (Fleming uses ‘management’) appears in the *Autograph* as ‘*disposición de su vida*’ (disposition of his life), and once we make this clarification we can see that all three of the meanings of ‘disposition’ mentioned earlier are present here: as exercitants *prepare* (1) their souls to rid themselves of all their disordered affections (of anything that might get in the way of giving themselves to God), they are free to make an *election* (2) so radical and final that they can *surrender* (3) themselves to God’s dream and will for them, ‘ordering’ their lives in such a way as to become the persons God has created them to be and producing the fruits that living such lives can engender.

It would be wonderful if this utter disposition and surrendering could be achieved once and for all at the end of the Exercises, but of course this is not the case. There is need to

⁴⁴ In English, the two main meanings associated with ‘disposing’ are (1) to get rid of by throwing away or giving or selling to someone else, which includes synonyms such as throw away, throw out, cast out, get rid of, do away with, discard, jettison, abandon, eject, unload; and (2) to incline (someone) towards a particular activity or mood, with synonyms such as encourage, persuade, predispose, prompt, lead, induce, inspire, make willing, move, tempt, motivate, actuate. While in most cases throughout the *Exercises* it is the second meaning that prevails, in this particular case, it is the first: we are inviting God to ‘give away’ all that God has given to us.

⁴⁵ Cf. QUIJANO, “Disposición” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 646.

constantly renew and nurture one’s disposition and the ordering of one’s life to fit God’s dream for us—the final surrender only comes as a result of the ‘smaller’ acts of self-giving a person offers each day. And this is true too since while one might become more aware of one’s disordered affections during the process of the Exercises, actually ‘getting rid’ of them might take a lifetime, while at the same time some of these disordered affections might be replaced by others as one progresses in one’s faith journey. But in terms of living one’s life in line with God’s dreams for us, the idea of ‘disposing ourselves’ can be a very helpful tool, and in fact, could become part of one’s daily prayer: *grant me O Lord your grace, so that I dispose my life this day to live according to your desires for me; that I may grow in readiness to discern and make the choices that will help me achieve this goal, and that I may grow in my capacity to give myself to you and to others.*

Once again this prayer is a reminder that one’s ‘disposition’—one’s efforts and desires—are indeed all grace: gifts of God to us. So another important part of one’s disposition is having the attitude of openness which we mentioned earlier in order to receive these gifts. And part of the role of the giver of the Exercises is to help those making them to “prepare and dispose themselves for the consolation which will come” [*SpEx* 7]. As we saw earlier, Ignatius gives this instruction in the context of the ones making the Exercises’ being afflicted by desolation and temptation, reminding the giver to act with gentleness and kindness towards them. This context is important for another reason, too. It is a reminder that moments of crisis have the potential to increase one’s disposition to receiving the gifts God wants to shower on each of us. It is in moments of need, of hardship and suffering—as most forcibly displaced people well know—that people turn most often to God and open themselves to God’s saving action.

Returning to the topic of the *subiecto*, and as mentioned at the beginning of this section, a person having *subiecto* would also possess this capacity for disposition, while those who lack *subiecto*, or have little of it, could possibly develop it as their disposition increases or improves. We could assume that anyone interested in advancing in their spiritual life would be open to this happening and in fact would desire it. But there are persons for whom their present circumstances, previous experiences and even future prospects, might get in the way of such desires. Some people who have experienced forced displacement, for example, might feel that they do not have the capacity to make decisions, even after years of having resettled in a new home, because that agency was taken away from them long time ago. Others might

not ‘have a self’ to surrender, or put in other words, their sense of identity, self-understanding and even self-acceptance, might have been almost totally erased. They might have a desire to dispose themselves, but may not be able to do it. And in certain cases, they might even find it very difficult to understand what this means. Yet, givers of the Exercises might be able to offer them some help. The capacities required by the *subiecto* of the Exercises as intuited by Ignatius provide some hints as to how to do this.

1.6. The capacities of the *subiecto* in the dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises*

In analysing the capacities required by the *subiecto* of the Exercises, González Modroño suggests three ‘abilities’ or capacities the person must possess: (1) to be able to accept oneself, (2) to make decisions, and (3) to take responsibility for those decisions.⁴⁶ Thus, it can be said that the *subiecto* referred to by Ignatius does have an observable and even qualitatively measurable ‘make-up’ (more than skills they are qualities), which the one giving the Exercises can use in determining whether a particular person is suitable to engage in them or not and what type of Exercises to offer to them. These abilities are linked to the radical understanding of existence mentioned earlier or, in other words, to being able to personalise one’s own faith in such a way as to be able to respond with freedom and commitment to God’s call.

Looking briefly at these three ‘abilities’, and as we will see in more detail in Part II of this chapter, (1) accepting oneself involves not only an acceptance of one’s limitations and weaknesses (God’s love is unconditional despite these), but also of one’s strengths and talents: if we do not believe we have anything to contribute to God’s reign, we might not be able to respond to God’s call or even believe that this call is addressed to us. (2) Most people today (at least in the developed world) are faced with so many options and choices that it seems harder and harder to be able to make decisions and commit to a particular option over another. Most people today seem to truly anguish over making decisions. But, as mentioned earlier, reaching a radical understanding of one’s existence can help objectivise these options and make decisions that are oriented towards the purpose for which one has been created. This further requires being able to rechannel all other longings and personal decisions so that they conform with and support one’s life choices, in such a way that there is no sense that

⁴⁶ Cf. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO, “‘El que los recibe’ (el ‘subiecto’. Disposiciones)”, p. 331.

these desires have been frustrated or truncated. Rather, these life choices confirm and give fulfilment to one’s longings and desires. Finally, (3) being able to take responsibility for decisions means that a person will be willing to accept their consequences and implications. There is no room for ‘blaming’ God if things do not go according to one’s plans.

These elements, and those we have mentioned in the two preceding sections, again reveal that the *subiecto* is something inclusive, broad, global and that its assessment cannot be restricted to one particular aspect. It is indeed a mixture, an aggregate, somehow related to the natural resources and capacities existing in a person. The *subiecto* is certainly something positive, but it does not necessarily mean that it is not plagued by limitations and even disordered affections. As mentioned earlier, these limitations and disordered affections are something that one can ‘work with’. For Ignatius, it would be more desirable to have these affections, regardless of how disordered, than have no affections at all.⁴⁷

The giver of the Exercises, in the process of assessing whether *subiecto* is present or not, can also be guided by the dynamics of the Exercises and the movement between the Weeks. These, for example, would require of the exercitant to accept himself or herself as a redeemed sinner loved by God (First Week), willing to choose a path to follow Jesus as a disciple (election), and accept the consequences of that decision with its challenges and hardships (Third Week) and benefits and joys (Fourth Week). In particular, in terms of the First Week, the *subiecto* must be able to deal with the anguish and affliction caused by the introspection which characterises this First Week of the Exercises, where the *I-examiner* confronts the *me-examined* often resulting in imbalances, unrest and discomforts. In other words, to have the capacity to ‘objectivise’ one’s own *subiecto* (inherited or developed) is crucial in the process of liberation of this self (abnegation) and the option for a new personal synthesis (to follow Christ). In fact, the criteria to measure up the *subiecto* can be found in the contents of the Second Week: to be affected by Christ, and follow him—at least in the meditations and

⁴⁷ Two important examples of this, as it is well known, are Francis Xavier and Peter Faber, quite different one from the other, but with very strong affectivities: one excessively sure of himself, the other insecure and sensitive. In both cases Ignatius intuited the potential *subiecto* in each of them. Faber, in particular, though showing great vulnerability and requiring four years of preparation and ‘formation’ of *subiecto*, would later become one of the great givers of the Exercises. Cf. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO, “‘El que los recibe’ (el ‘subjecto’. Disposiciones)”, pp. 328-329.

exercises—while leaving open the possibility to eventually choose Christ in one’s life in very concrete ways.⁴⁸

Another important aspect, which Ignatius could only have intuited in his time, but about which we now know much more, is that the different basic human abilities that determine the readiness of people for different tasks or programs (or types of Exercises) are acquired at different stages of development, and that such acquisition can be influenced by a wide range of additional factors. Those who are ready for the full Exercises for example, should, in terms of these basic human abilities, be able to work in and with their interiority and notice and name their inner movements, so that they can also engage in discernment of spirits (in terms of discernment); in terms of deepening their relationship with God, they should be able to deal directly with God, regardless of the direction and assistance provided by the accompanier or director (cf. [*SpEx* 15]), and in terms of the *election*, be able “to envision long-term goals” and use resources to attain them. Besides these, of course, the person must feel called to make the Exercises and, as mentioned previously, have the desire and generosity required to make them. Yet, in terms of stages of development, not all people might possess the human abilities listed above—not everyone might be developmentally ready for the full Spiritual Exercises and getting to this stage might take time.⁴⁹

Ignatius’ brilliance then was to intuitively recognise this, suggesting applying the Exercises according to the disposition of people and considering their age, education and ability, each of which can be linked to the idea of stages of development.⁵⁰ We should not assume, however, that all people of mature age who have had a broad-based education and who have also travelled extensively and experienced other cultures, would be ready for the full Exercises. They might not, in fact, have reached the necessary development due to other factors such as family history, social context, gender expectations, physical and psychological health

⁴⁸ Cf. COUPEAU and GONZÁLEZ MAGAÑA, “Sujeto” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 1667.

⁴⁹ Cf. LIEBERT, “*The Limits of Adaptability*”, p. 118.

⁵⁰ Liebert explores how structural theories of development, following Jean Piaget’s developmental stages, might help determine who is ready for the full Spiritual Exercises and who is not. In her view, the crucial transition occurs between the stages she calls ‘Conformist’ and ‘Conscientious’, respectively. In the *Conformist* stage the key reality is constituted by the group to which a person belongs, so that a person defines his/her welfare with reference to a group (family, peers, church) by conforming to its values and exhibiting behaviour, among others, that is rule-governed. In the *Conscientious* stage the key issue is self-identity, where a person is able to internalise rules, choosing and evaluating them for themselves. People in this stage also “see themselves as at once with their communities and society, also as distinct from them”. They also possess “the reflexivity and psychological-mindedness that accompany a developed and differentiated inner life”. Cf. LIEBERT, “*The Limits of Adaptability*”, pp. 114-117.

constraints, etc. But even if they have reached such development, there are of course other factors that might prevent them from engaging in the full Exercises, so “it remains imperative to take account of the real capacities of the exercitant: Is he or she in good health, or not? And what about emotional balance? How intellectually and psychologically flexible can he or she be, to accept being touch and changed profoundly and efficaciously by the Word of God?”⁵¹ These capacities, of course, are related to an exercitant’s cognitive, affective and relational components. Though these certainly overlap—they cannot be separated into isolated boxes or pigeonholes—this ‘compartmentalising’ approach can help the giver of the Exercises in the task of developing the ‘exercitant schema’ mentioned earlier, in order to assess the level of the exercitant’s *subiecto*.⁵²

1.6.1. Cognitive area

1.6.1.1. Language comprehension

In the cognitive area, the giver of the Exercises is looking for the possibility in the exercitant to learn and understand the language of the *Exercises*, not only its words or language structure but also the metalanguage that underpins it. While certain degree of literacy is certainly required here, it is more about a capacity to relate to this language and make it one’s own. As we saw in the previous chapter, the onus in making this language ‘receivable’ also falls on the giver of the Exercises, who should be make every effort to present it in a way more analogous to the experiences and context of the exercitants. It is not only a matter of changing words or diluting the richness of Ignatius’ text by oversimplifying it, but of ‘inculturating’ it to their context. For survivors of forced displacement this could mean, for example, addressing in the First Week the concept of structural sin in relation to the push factors that cause force displacement (which they would know first-hand); or in regards to the meditation on Hell, to base their composition of place on elements of their own experiences of ‘hell’ caused by those factors.

1.6.1.2. Self-analysis and perception

Within this cognitive area and during the First Week, the giver of the Exercises is also looking in the exercitant for a capacity of self-analysis and self-assessment, and whether this self-

⁵¹ Cf. FRANÇOISE GREFFE, “The Eighteenth Annotation” in *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XXIX, n. 88 (1998) 52.

⁵² Cf. GONZÁLEZ MODROÑO, “‘El que los recibe’ (el ‘subjecto’. Disposiciones)”, pp. 333-336. In the discussion that follows we use González Modroño’s presentation on these three areas in these pages and explore how they might be relevant to the condition of forcibly displaced persons.

assessment evolves throughout this Week into a self-perception. As we well know, this self-analysis is required for the Examen, and not everyone has it, sometimes because of blindness towards one’s own past experiences, and other times because of a deep fear to engage with them (the latter might be a more common occurrence for forcibly displaced peoples for whom such engagement might be too painful). If this is the case, it might be deemed that there is not enough *subiecto*, because without this initial capacity for self-analysis it will be very difficult to progress into the self-perception required for the Second and latter Weeks. On the other hand, there is also the danger of exercitants who are overly immersed in themselves: because of their inability to come out of their own self-analysis they cannot place themselves before God in a listening and discerning attitude. In any case, the capacity for contemplative prayer and of placing oneself in a gospel scene presupposes a *subiecto* who can perceive himself or herself in it, and this in turn presupposes a prior capacity of self-awareness and analysis.

1.6.1.3. Capacity for moral action

Also, within this cognitive area is what Ignatius would call ‘synderesis of reason’ or an inborn knowledge of the primary principles of moral action which direct the *subiecto* to do good and avoid evil. In a more personal sense, it means the capacity to discern and make one’s own the norms and values that direct or guide one’s life. In other words, it assumes a capacity to bring together, to synthetise in a very personal way, the exterior stimuli and models to which one is exposed with one’s own longings and desires, which in turn give one’s affections a new horizon and understanding.

One’s reality and the Scriptures shed light on each other in a creative way which allow exercitants to reorder their desires. Unfortunately, this ‘inborn knowledge of primary principles of moral action’ can be distorted by critical experiences or extreme conditions, such as those created by forced displacement, so the boundary between good/evil or right/wrong can become blurred. It would be expected that in most cases the capacity to discern between one and the other has not been altogether lost, but that it will need some ‘re-education’ to reclaim it. Of course, when making decisions within the context of the Exercises (especially the full Exercises, in which this aspect of decision making is essential), this moral capacity is not only presupposed but also indispensable.

1.6.1.4. Potential for development

Finally, it is important to remember that it is not expected that all the cognitive capacities will be fully present from the onset, but rather that there is evidence that they can be developed. To be able to do this it is helpful to possess other skills: to know and accept one’s limitations, awareness of one’s concrete historical reality, and a certain intellectual basis. And it is also important to remember that different types of Exercises will require different cognitive capacities. It might be very difficult for an illiterate forcibly displaced person to engage in the full Exercises, but that person might have no issues with ‘light’ exercises and derive great profit from them. Conversely, neither should we assume that lack of formal education precludes the needed developmental foundation to make the full Exercises.⁵³

1.6.2. Affective area

1.6.2.1. Altruism vs narcissism

Certainly, ‘negative’ criteria in this area, such as absence of emotional traumas or violent emotions that might distort one’s affective life (e.g. jealousy or feelings of revenge) are of great importance, and we will discuss these further in relation to the forcibly displaced engaging in the Exercises later in the chapter. However, positive affective criteria are also required of the *subiecto* capable of moving forward to the Second Week. One such positive criterion is the presence of altruism, or the capacity to come out of oneself to find personal fulfilment in a process of self-giving and service to the other (although a possible danger that should be avoided here is using other people for one’s own ‘apostolic benefit’ or fulfilment).

⁵³ Cf. MARTHA SKINNADER, “Who is the Nineteenth Annotation for?” in *The Way Supplement* 49 (1984) 59-69. In her article, Skinnader notes that living and working in a peripheral housing scheme in Glasgow she did not expect to do full 19th *Annotation* work, since “areas of multi-depravation do not house the educated or talented ‘engaged in public affairs or business’”. Despite the high rate of unemployment, limited secondary school education, religious illiteracy, and a host of other issues, she was able to engage some of the residents of the area first in a ‘program’ of prayer, then in imaginative contemplation and First Week ‘exercises’. Initially she felt that this would be her goal—an 18th *Annotation* retreat, but as she found herself in the presence of a group of people “who were showing a great desire to be open to God”, she decided to continue with the 19th *Annotation* retreat. What she found most important was to keep everything simple and she was confirmed that this approach did not get in the way of the experience of the retreat in daily life “because of the unerring way in which the prayer of each retreatant moved”. One her greatest joys from this experience is that already a companion has joined her—someone who wants to “share the gift she has been given by helping others through the *Exercises*”. She concludes that in answer to the title question in her article, the 19th *Annotation* is “for ‘very ordinary’ people (Exx 18) who cannot afford time or money to withdraw from thirty days, but who have a deep desire to open themselves to God in their lives, and to do his will”. Another project that offers overnight retreats and days of reflection (18th *Annotation* retreats) to the marginalised, and which has produced unexpected results is the ‘Ignatian Spirituality Project’ run in the United States for homeless people. Fr William Creed, who has run countless of these retreats explains that “the retreats feature plenty of discussion on such topics as recovering one’s story, fear and trust, and healing of memories. Participants share their personal histories and talk with their spiritual directors. They learn about meditation, praying with Scripture and contemplative and meditative prayer, and are led through an *Examen* that helps them see where God is in their own lives”. Cf. THOMAS W. DURSO, “The Heart of the Matter: Exploring the Spiritual Exercises” in *Ignatian Imprints*, Fall 2007, 11-17.

Further, altruism goes beyond an intention: it is a natural capacity and thus it is closely linked to the presence of *subiecto*. Without this capacity, we cannot confess Jesus as our Lord and we cannot move forward to a proper election. Unfortunately, it is often easier to detect the opposite of an altruistic person: an egocentric person, turned on himself or herself, narcissistic, and overly preoccupied with their own perfection. On the positive side, as a natural capacity, altruism can be developed, even if only present in small ‘quantities’ at the outset. Ironically, it is often found in forcibly displaced people of faith who, despite possessing very little in terms of material possessions, have often been asked to give of themselves in the service of others and have responded accordingly.

1.6.2.2. Imagination

A second aspect in this area is a capacity to engage in imaginative ‘fantasy’ and utopic ‘dreaming’.⁵⁴ As we know, Ignatius had great capacity for both, and thus we see the importance he gives to the ‘composition of place’ in the *Exercises*, which requires much imagination, starting with the First Week (cf. [*SpEx* 47, 65, 66]), but especially from the beginning of the Second Week (cf. [*SpEx* 91, 112, 122, 140, 143]). In fact, he seems to have been convinced that every single person had the capacity to think ‘graphically’ or imaginatively. Yet, as with any ‘capacity’, this imaginative gift is clearly more developed in some people than in others. Some exercitants would claim that they find it *impossible* to engage in the type of composition of place Ignatius demands in the Exercises, to the extent that some seem to resent being asked to do something they are not able to master. Yet, as we know, Ignatius highlights the use of all the person’s ‘human powers’ (cf. [*SpEx* 3]), something which would indicate the expectation that the exercitant can and should practice this imaginative method with his/her talents or strong points, as well as with his/her limitations or weak ones.⁵⁵ In the hypothetical case of someone who did not have *any* imagination, we

⁵⁴ Here fantasy is understood not as a pleasant situation or event that one thinks about and that one wants to happen, especially one that is unlikely to happen, or a type of literature that describes situations that involve magic; rather, it refers to a story or situation that one creates from one’s imagination that is not necessarily based on actual reality; in other words, it refers to the capacity and activity of imagining things.

⁵⁵ Cf. ECKHARD FRICK, “Imaginación” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, p. 990. Frick reminds us that these Ignatian exercises requiring the use of our imagination are not an end in themselves, nor a simple technique; rather, they are methods that provide a pathway to God, who is beyond our imagination and beyond any and all images, p. 990. In the same line, García de Castro adds that in Ignatian terminology, the contemplative exercises of the Second Week centred on the mysteries of the life of Christ are not primarily ‘exercises in imagination’. What ‘seeing with the eyes of imagination’ or by ‘the sight of my imagination’ (the ‘*vista imaginativa*’) does in fact is to prepare the pictorial context in which the mystery to be contemplated will unfold. Cf. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “¿Qué hacemos cuando hacemos ejercicios?”, p. 25

would have to say that this person lacks the *subiecto* to engage in the Exercises. At the same time, we should expect that in most cases, guided by an experienced giver, most people should be able to develop further this ability.

1.6.2.3. Investment capacity

This capacity for ‘imaginative fantasizing’, closely linked to our affectivity, also raises in us an intuition about what is to come, helping us to choose or make an election (cf. *The call of the Temporal King*, [SpEx 98]); in other words, to labour for something that we do not yet know but somehow sense in advance. This labouring also requires from us a capacity to invest ourselves and especially our affections in whatever reality we choose in order to give expression to our service for others—a capacity to establish relationships and allow ourselves to be affected by them. Thus, for Ignatius, the use of imagination must be purposefully active, still informed by the cognitive dimension, and connected to the affective and relational capacities, particularly in relation to the exercitant’s desires and graces prayed for in each of the Ignatian Weeks.⁵⁶

Recognising this ‘investment capacity’ or lack thereof, and the reasons for its absence, is of utmost importance in the accompaniment of all exercitants and the more so with people who have endured forced displacement. For many of them it might be too painful to ‘establish relationships’ again, especially new ones, having lost most of the people close to them. They might also lack the belief that they can actually be of service to others—they might have ‘heard’ too often the message, either spoken or implicit, that “you are useless and a burden to society” and have interiorised it as a result—and thus might find the idea of investing themselves in any reality or project unappealing or unrealistic. The task of the giver of the Exercises here is first to help exercitants identify and become aware of these possible barriers and second to provide possible avenues to address them. This might require not only spiritual accompaniment but also psychological and, in some cases, ongoing trauma counselling provided by specialists in these areas.

Finally, in this affective area it is sometimes easier to look for particular aptitudes in the exercitant: a capacity to deal with silence; to engage with solitude in an intimate way; to face anguish and accept the help of others in these cases; to overcome a sense of guilt or rather to

⁵⁶ Cf. FRICK, “Imaginación” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño, p. 993.

redefine it so that it does not become the guiding principle in their lives, and the capacity to fall in love and feel great enthusiasm for something or someone. Again, and as we will see later in this chapter, for many forcibly displaced people most of these characteristics or aptitudes could pose serious hurdles in their ability to enter fully into the Exercises.

1.6.3. Relational area

1.6.3.1. Ecclesial sense

One of the main objectives of the Exercises is to help exercitants develop a deep communal and ecclesial sense, *to think and feel with the Church*. Experience has confirmed that faith is communal, even in the contemplative life. Consideration of negative criteria here warns against lonely individuals, isolated and self-contained, even strange, who would hardly be suitable to move forward in the Exercises. On the positive side, what is sought is the capacity to live in communion within a community, to live one’s faith openly and one’s vocation as something ecclesial which gives sense to mutual service and fraternal correction. Without this, our faith will falter.

In regards to forcibly displaced people, two aspects are worth pointing out here. First, their experiences of violence and trauma might have led them to become these very ‘isolated and self-contained, even strange’ individuals, most likely as result of a loss of trust in others and a fear of being hurt by them again. Rather than dismissing these persons too quickly as ‘unsuitable’ for the Exercises, efforts should be made to ascertain the reasons for their isolationist tendencies and offer assistance (usually through counselling) as a possible remedy. Some people might not even be aware of this distancing from others and even appear as quite sociable and engaging of others, and this need to remain ‘protected and distant’ will only be evidenced once they start the Exercises. At this junction, it will be advisable to reassess whether the Exercises should be continued or adjourned until these issues are attended to.

A second important reminder is that a person’s understanding and experience of community can be quite different from another’s. We have already explored in detail various understandings and expressions of community (chapter 1) in particular when different cultures meet (or clash). As we saw there, what is desired is an experience of true life-in-communion between the various individuals and groups involved. Achieving this end takes a great deal of

time, energy and patience, and demands progressive steps. For some survivors of forced displacement, it might require first to integrate them into their own cultural faith communities before they can become part of the larger ecclesial local community. And part of that ‘integration’, as we have intimated several times before, will depend on their sense of feeling at home and being able to contribute in positive and concrete ways to those communities.

1.6.3.2. Dialogue

Another required ‘relational’ capacity is interpersonal encounter—a capacity for dialogue. It goes beyond simply ‘hearing’ what a person says: it requires listening carefully to what others are saying (and not saying) and how they express themselves. This capacity of dialogue is important because it measures the exercitant’s sensitivity to the reality of others, and because without it, prayer as a personal encounter with God most likely would not be possible. This difficulty could also be posed as the question: “How can we be sensitive to the reality of God who we cannot see, when we cannot be sensitive to the reality of others, who we do see?” Moreover, this dialogical aspect is also a reminder that spiritual accompaniers and givers of the Exercises also act as instruments of mediation for the exercitants’ communication with God, and as such, they should be prepared to engage with their exercitants in this process. And when dealing with survivors of forced displacement, this will require very careful and respectful ‘listening’ to what they are saying (and not saying), and how they express themselves verbally and non-verbally.

1.6.3.3. Authority figures

Finally, and again in terms of the relationship between the exercitant and the giver of the Exercises, a capacity to relate in a mature and adult way with authority is indispensable.⁵⁷ Conflicts, authority complex, dependencies, aggressions, can all give rise to ‘noise’ which will get in the way of listening to what one truly desires and what God desires for us. A relationship of Christian obedience is after all a relationship of friendship and presupposes being able to engage freely in dialogue. It is important to be aware that some forcibly displaced people might also experience difficulties in this area, in particular if they have suffered persecution or abuse under tyrannical or despotic authority figures during their

⁵⁷ Of course, “relating in a mature and adult way with authority” does not preclude being able to offer the Exercises to young adults, under particular circumstances. Cf. EMILIO GONZÁLEZ MAGAÑA, *El “Taller de Conversión” de los Ejercicios: Una oferta para jóvenes a la luz de las Anotaciones 18, 19 y 20. Extracto de Tesis Doctoral*, Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas 1998.

forced displacement experience. They might either resist the guidelines of the giver of the Exercises (perceiving them as impositions) or might become totally submissive or dependant on the approval of their directors.

1.7. The deepening of the *subiecto* as part of the mission of the giver of the Exercises

As we have seen, in regards to ‘having *subiecto*’, Ignatius’ purpose is to determine an exercitant’s capacity for mystical experiences through the Exercises and his capacity of service particularly as expressed in the *Constitutions*. Through a person’s *subiecto*, Ignatius approaches the theme of spiritual maturity as ‘potentiality for extrospection’ (to examine or observe what is outside of oneself) as well as for abnegation. Beyond earlier considerations of the ‘subject’ as a participle or noun (*something subjected to something else*), Ignatius’ idea of its being an *object* or *something* possessed by an exercitant is consistent with contemporary theories of human development.⁵⁸

Ignatius’ intention, however, it is not only for the giver of the Exercises to determine or discern the ‘amount’ of *subiecto* present in a person. This initial knowledge or discernment of the *subiecto* is an intermediate step towards the interior knowledge of himself or herself which the exercitant will acquire through prayer and discernment in the company of the giver of the Exercises, and within the intimacy of following Christ. And this internal knowledge, in turn, will reflect upon the initial ‘material’ and use it to obtain a new mystical synthesis. This process in turn is expected again to lead to greater interior knowledge and in principle also to an increase in the ‘amount’ of *subiecto* present in the person, and so the cycle starts over.

Keegan’s developmental approach might be helpful as reference to understand this process better. He reminds us that the “zone of mediating where meaning is made is variously called [...] the ‘ego’, the ‘self’, the ‘person’”. His emphasis is for ‘person’ to be understood to refer “as much to an activity as to a thing—an ever progressive motion engaged in giving itself a new form.”⁵⁹ It is then about ‘the doing (or the process) which a human is’ or, in the case of

⁵⁸ Cf. COUPEAU and GONZÁLEZ MAGAÑA, “Sujeto” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 1667.

⁵⁹ Cf. GEORGE KEEGAN, *The evolving self: problem and process in human development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1982, pp. 3, 7-8. Keegan continues: “The English language (in fact, all Western language) is not well suited to preserving this sense of the dialectical relation between entities and processes. Alan Watts (1936) suggests a magic trick [...]. Make a fist. Now we shall make your fist disappear. Ready? Okay—open your hand. You see?—or rather you don’t see—your fist is gone [...]. The so called thing (a fist) can be made to ‘disappear’ because it is not only a thing; disguised as a noun, it is as much a process (the act of

the Exercises, it is about the praying and discerning and growing in interior knowledge which the exercitant *is*, and which comes about through God’s grace.

The goal, then, is to discern who each one of us is: the ‘person’ each one of us God has created us to be and who we believe God desires for us to become. Clearly, the role of givers of the Exercises is to facilitate that process while avoiding imposing their own ideas on their exercitants of who they *should* be. Ignatius, as we well know, was deeply aware of this potential of our getting in the way of the Creator:

[...] en los tales ejercicios espirituales, más conveniente y mucho mejor es, buscando la divina voluntad, que el mismo Criador y Señor se comunique a la su ánima devota, abrazándola en su amor y alabanza, y disponiéndola por la vía que mejor podrá servirle adelante. De manera que el que los da no se decante ni se incline a la una parte ni a la otra; mas estando en medio, como un peso, deje immediate obrar al Criador con la criatura, y a la criatura con su Criador.⁶⁰

It is a danger faced by many involved in helping professions, as Keegan describes:

Those of us who are professional helpers have a dual involvement with meaning-making. What we know of the way our client holds himself and his world together can help us understand what his experience means to him, including his experience of being with us in a helping relationship. We are especially helped by our awareness of the fact that the way he composes himself is at once a kind of achievement and a constraint. And yet we are unavoidably meaning-makers ourselves. And for us it is the client himself and the things he says that make up those events which come to life in our own zone of mediation. How we will understand what we hear—or, better put, what we actually do hear—will be settled there where the event is made personal sense of, there where it actually becomes an event for us. The filters and lenses we use in listening to our clients bear periodic inspection.⁶¹

Of course, givers of the Exercises are not expected to be psychologists or therapists (though some are), but the point being made here by Keegan does apply to the art they engage in: that

closing your hand). Western grammars separate entities and processes as if the distinction were absolute. The Chinese, for example, do not [...]. Their thinking is less dichotomous, more dialectical. A writer has to strain to make the reader recover the process in the words ‘human being’; we talk about ‘a being’ and ‘beings’ [...instead of] human being as an activity. It is not about the doing which a human does; it is about the doing which a human is”, p. 8.

⁶⁰ Cf. IGNACIO DE LOYOLA, *Ejercicios Espirituales. Texto cuidado y revisado por Santiago Arzubialde*. English translation of the Spanish Text: “Still in the *Spiritual Exercises*, when seeking the Divine Will, it is more fitting and much better that the Creator and Lord Himself should communicate Himself to His devout soul, inflaming it with His love and praise, and disposing it for the way in which it will be better able to serve Him in future. So, he who is giving the Exercises should not turn or incline to one side or the other, but standing in the centre like a balance, leave the Creator to act immediately with the creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord” [SpEx 15]. Cf. FLEMING, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, p. 14.

⁶¹ GEORGE KEEGAN, *The evolving self: problem and process in human development*, pp. 2-3. Keegan continues, “They are themselves no less a kind of achievement and a constraint. In part, it is a professional helper’s persistent recognition that her own meaning for a set of circumstances might not be the same as her client’s that leads us to call her a sensitive listener; her understanding of what goes into the way her client makes meaning and what is at stake for him in defending it, that leads us to call her a psychologist; and her understanding of what to *do* with her understanding that leads us to call her a therapist. It is advisable that before people become therapists they pursue the first two callings”, p. 3.

the way they interpret meaning in what the exercitant shares is always coloured by the way they make meaning themselves, no matter how experienced as ‘unbiased’ directors they might think they are. Givers of the Exercises need to be highly aware of this reality and periodically inspect “the filters and lenses they use in listening” to their exercitants. Ignatius seems to have known this well instinctively; hence, his strong cautionary words.

This internal knowledge—known as *cardiognosis* or ‘knowledge of the heart’ in the oriental spiritual tradition—is thus placed in contrast to a more formal knowledge: a more institutional, conventional knowledge of the subject. In this way, spiritual accompaniment, instead of being developed into a ‘technology’ used to *create* a subject, becomes an art and a service, which helps introduce in the exercitant an objective distance between the own *subiecto* and the ‘soul’, understood in the Ignatian sense as the interlocutor of God.⁶²

To summarise, we recall that Ignatius does not refer to the *subiecto* in absolute terms. The Ignatian contribution to the *subiecto* consists in objectivising it in a formal way, with view to a particular goal. The *subiecto* is not a condition, nor an essence, but a potentiality for service and a gift from God. For the one giving the Exercises, to objectivise it (before even trying to assess it), is a prerequisite. And such objectification must be done using dynamic rather than static criteria in order to honour its gradually evolving reality. Nor does the *subiecto* encompass or exhaust the whole identity of the exercitant. Rather, the subject as it comes to engage in the Exercises is a minimum, a threshold, a potential. And this potentiality does not leave the subject in isolation. Instead, it opens it up to an ‘inter-subjectivity’ with Jesus, in prayer, starting from the Second Week, as well as with its ‘neighbour’ companions and superiors in the Society of Jesus, its co-exercitants, and with its neighbours in their apostolates.⁶³

⁶² Cf. COUPEAU and GONZÁLEZ MAGAÑA, “Sujeto” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 1668. In spiritual theology, ‘cardiognosis’ is considered a special gift or charism which God gives to particular people. Many early Fathers and Mothers of the desert were considered to be imbued with this gift, which they further developed through their ascetic practices and holy lives which allowed God’s grace to touch their lives more deeply. This made them great teachers and healers as they could discern what was in the ‘heart’ of the seeker and what they really needed to deepen their relationship with God. The term appears twice in the Acts of the Apostles (1.24, 15:8), in both instances referring to God’s knowledge of people’s hearts. St John of the Cross refers to it in his *Ascent of Mount Carmel*: “But it must be known that those whose spirits are purged can learn by natural means with great readiness, and some more readily than others, that which is in the inward spirit or heart, and the inclinations and talents of men [sic], and this by outward indications, albeit very slight ones, as words, movements and other signs” [26.14]. Cf. <http://www.catholictreasury.info/books/ascent/asc42.php>. Accessed 8 October 2017.

⁶³ Cf. COUPEAU and GONZÁLEZ MAGAÑA, “Sujeto” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 1668.

Part II: The *Spiritual Exercises* and psychological factors in the lives of forcibly displaced people

Much has been written on the difference between psychological or psychotherapeutical counselling and spiritual direction/accompaniment.⁶⁴ The former is often spoken of as a science, while the latter is often considered more of an art. Simply put, spiritual direction is about helping a person develop or deepen a more loving intimate relationship with God, while counselling seeks to solve a problem or issue of mental health. Yet, all experienced spiritual accompaniers would agree that it is impossible to separate or compartmentalise issues dealing with one’s psyche, one’s physical make-up and one’s spirit. Human persons are holistic, integrated beings and all three aspects of their existence are interconnected. It follows, therefore, that if one is ‘out-of-kilter’, the other two will also be affected.⁶⁵ As we saw earlier, this is a truism that the early desert Fathers and Mothers (following St Paul) understood well, so when pilgrims, disciples and seekers came to them for wisdom, guidance and healing, they took into account all three components of the person. Ignatius, no doubt, was well aware of this intrinsic connection and, in designing his *Exercises*, he used his natural insight into the human psyche to develop a method, process and dynamic that would engage the whole of the exercitant’s body, psyche and spirit.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ There are, of course, multiple psychological currents; in this case, we refer in particular to those connected to the ‘person-centred’ approach to psychotherapy and counselling (client-centred therapy) as developed by Carl Rogers (and his followers) and presented in such works as Rogers’ *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist’s View of Psychotherapy*. London: Constable 1961, and “Client-centred therapy” in S. Arieti, ed., *American handbook of psychiatry* 3, New York: Basic Books 1966, pp. 183–200. On the difference between psychological or psychotherapeutical counselling and spiritual direction/accompaniment see for example, ROBERT ROSSI, “The Distinction between Psychological and Religious Counselling” in David Fleming, ed., *The Christian Ministry of Spiritual Direction*, St. Louis, MO: Review for Religious, 1988, pp. 123–147, and EUGENE GEROMEL, “Depth Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction”, pp. 148–157, in the same edition. Quoting William Connolly (cf. “Contemporary Spiritual Direction” in *Jesuit Studies* (May 1975) 119–120), Rossi points out that what distinguishes the counsellor/psychologist and the spiritual director is what they consider the source of healing: “In counselling insight, healing and new directions result basically from the relationship between counsellor and client. In direction they result basically from the directee’s relationship with the Lord. The counsellor does everything he can to protect and promote the integrity and freedom of his relationship with the client. The director does all he can to protect and promote the integrity and freedom of the person’s receptivity and response to the Lord”, p. 141.

⁶⁵ Based on empirical experience, I strongly believe that this is the reason so many people in our so-called developed nations complain about not feeling ‘totally well’ or feeling that ‘something is missing’ in their lives. Their physical and psychological needs might be well attended to, but they neglect their spiritual self and as a result the whole person suffers this ‘unease’ which might even give rise to physical and psychological ailments.

⁶⁶ Concern for our bodily and physical needs is evident, for example, in his advice in the *Additional Directives* regarding posture and prayer positions, exterior penances, the ingestion of food (see also his *Rules to order oneself in the taking of food* (cf. [SpEx 210–217]), sleeping, and adjusting the physical environment around us during our prayer periods (cf. [SpEx 73–90]). Similar guidelines—some of them presented as modifications to the *Directives*—are offered in the *Notes for the Second Week* (cf. [SpEx 127–133]), which in addition include suggestions for appropriate times of prayer. Modifications are likewise offered for the Third Week (cf. [SpEx

2.1. The *Spiritual Exercises* and Psychology

As a wide range of literature attests, the relationship Psychology—*Spiritual Exercises* has been studied and articulated in great detail for at least fifty years.⁶⁷ The limited scope of this

206]) and the Fourth Week (cf. [SpEx 227-229]). And of course, Ignatius places great importance in the use of our senses for the contemplations (cf. [SpEx 106-108, 194, 222], and in the fifth daily *exercise* on the *Application of the Senses*. In the ‘First Method of Prayer’ (cf. [SpEx 247-248]), we are also asked to consider the appropriate use of our five senses, and the ‘Third Method of Prayer’ consists in praying according to rhythmic measures (cf. [SpEx 258-260]). Furthermore, and again as Ignatius knew well, it is easy to see that all of these considerations would have an impact on our psyche and mood and in how we proceeded in our meditations and contemplations. Thus, as an example, the *Fourth Note*, for the Fourth Week: “I will avail myself of light or the pleasant features of the seasons, such as the refreshing coolness in summer or the sun or heat in winter, as far as I think or conjecture that this will help me to rejoice in Christ my Creator and Redeemer” [SpEx 229.4]. For the relationship between spirituality and corporality (what pertains to the body) see, JOSÉ ANTONIO GARCÍA-MONGE, “Los Ejercicios corporalmente espirituales” in *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos*, vol. 1, Carlos Alemany and José A. García-Monge, eds., Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 294-309.

⁶⁷ An excellent example of this is the International Symposium on Psychology and Ignatian Exercises, celebrated in Salamanca (Spain) in September 1989, which brought together contributions from a wide variety of presenters, many of them experts in both areas of study. Colección Manresa published the presentations from the Symposium in two volumes entitled *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos*, Carlos Alemany and José A. García-Monge, eds., Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991. The connecting thread or topic for the different contributions was the theme “Transformation of the self in the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*”. The Colección Manresa edition also included a Bibliography compiled by Pascual Cebollada S., which contained most of the resources published on this topic between 1965-1990, (cf. vol. 2, pp. 473-490). Some of the more recent contributions include: CARLOS DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2003 (previously cited), and WILLIAM W. MEISSNER, *Ignatius of Loyola: the psychology of a saint*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1992. Many articles have also been published in various Ignatian journals. For example in *Manresa*: CARLOS DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO has authored: “El Sujeto que ha de elegir, desde la psicología I” in *Manresa* 73 (2001) 145-160; “El Sujeto que ha de elegir, desde la psicología II: Relectura del Texto Ignaciano” in *Manresa* 73 (2001) 285-302; “Los Ejercicios Espirituales, experiencia de reconciliación” in *Manresa* 77 (2005) 109-123; “Claves psicosociales del éxito. Reflexiones de cara a la ‘Cuarta Semana’ de Ejercicios” in *Manresa* 83 (2011) 71-92; “Las Anotaciones a los Ejercicios y el Psicoanálisis I” in *Manresa* 60 (1988) 3-20; “Las Anotaciones a los Ejercicios y el Psicoanálisis II” in *Manresa* 60 (1988) 115-134; “Dificultades y posibilidades hoy de la experiencia religiosa desde el área de la psicología” in *Manresa* 69 (1997) 319-332; JAVIER MELLONI, “La crisis como categoría antropológica y espiritual” in *Manresa* 85 (2013) 113-124. Some of the earlier contributions include: JESÚS MUÑOZ, “Táctica psicológica para la reforma del juicio en los Ejercicios Espirituales” in *Manresa* 24 (1952) 145-164; MIGUEL NICOLAU, “Valores psicológicos en la Teología y Espiritualidad de los EE” in *Manresa* 32 (1960) 17-32; FERNANDO JIMÉNEZ “Ejercicios Espirituales y Psicoterapia (I)” in *Manresa* 47 (1975) 135-152; FERNANDO JIMÉNEZ, “Ejercicios Espirituales y Psicoterapia (II)” in *Manresa* 47 (1975) 237-250; JACQUES LEWIS, “El director de Ejercicios Espirituales como factor de integración de lo psicológico y de lo espiritual para el ejercitante” in *Manresa* 51 (1979) 77-84; in *Christus*: MAURICE BELLET, “D’abord s’aimer soi-même” in *Christus*, hors série (Mai 2006), 24-34; ODILON DE VARINE et CLAUDE FLIPO, “Entretien sur l’accompagnement spirituel” in *Christus*, hors série (Mai 2006) 156-164; BRIGITTE-VIOLAINE AUFUUVRE, “Désolation spirituelle et/ou dépression” in *Christus*, hors série (Mai 2006) 201-212; BERNARD PITAUD, “Perdre sa vie pour la trouver” in *Christus*, hors série (Mai 2006) 262-269; NICOLE FABRE, “Peut-on-guérir de la haine? *Le long parcours d’une psychothérapie*” in *Christus* 216 (2007) 448-453; DENIS VASSE, “Le pardon et le sentiment de culpabilité: *L’orgueil, l’amour et le péché idem*” in *Christus* 216 (2007) 462-471. More recently, *Manresa* dedicated its volume 88 (October-December 2016) to ‘Psychology and Ignatian Spirituality’; the contributions included: MARÍA PRIETO and JOSÉ GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Psicología del perdón y Ejercicios Espirituales”, 317-328; ALFONSO SALGADO R., “Fortalezas personales y vida con sentido: aportaciones para el acompañamiento”, 329-340; RAFAEL JÓDAR and CARLOS DEL VALLE, “Emociones y mociones: aportaciones desde la terapia focalizada en la emoción”, 341-352; EDUARDO BOFILL and DARÍO MOLLÁ, “Interpretar, discernir, acoger: el síntoma a la con-moción”, 353-362; VIRGINIA CAGIGAL and PEDRO MENDOZA, “De la psicología de la persona a la psicología del sistema: encuentro con la espiritualidad ignaciana”, 363-372; JESÚS LABRADOR and JOSÉ CARLOS ROMERO, “Discernimiento ignaciano, diversidad e

study does not permit us to address all the issues related to the psychology of the *Exercises* or the possible psychological issues which exercitants might face that could affect their engagement with Ignatius’ *Exercises*. Our exploration here, therefore, is limited to those psychological issues which might assail survivors of forced displacement.

A foundational theme of the relationship between these two areas of study is the belief that human growth and fulfilment cannot be separated from spiritual growth, and that as people of faith—for Christians—their point of reference, model, and goal in terms of this fulfilment is Jesus Christ. Growth implies change, and as it is well known, the *Spiritual Exercises* are a tool for change, both for radical instances when one chooses a specific way of life (election) and for one’s continuous spiritual growth:

[...] the *Exercises* lead to a conversion which is the theological version of psychological change. Undertaken with “great spirit and generosity” [*SpEx* 5], they always lead to a new discharge of humanity, which in turn implies a transformation of the self. This process takes place at different levels in a person’s psychic and spiritual framework. The mission of psychology is to encourage health, ensure freedom, avoid manipulation, integrate the person. The role of theology is to reveal the God of Jesus whose liberating call constructs the person so that we can fulfil the creative dream of God in us.⁶⁸

All exercitants come to this spiritual experience of the *Exercises* with a particular history and a so-called psychological ‘baggage’. In some instances, as in the case of forcibly displaced people who have suffered great violence and trauma, this psychological baggage can be ‘packed’ with brokenness and woundedness which might inhibit the free flow of the Spirit in their lives and can also block the process and movement of the *Exercises*. The giver of the *Exercises*, though not usually a psychologist or psychotherapist can, however, make use of these sciences to contribute towards the healing process of an exercitant’s brokenness and woundedness as much as possible.⁶⁹ Ideally, this would take place before the person engages in the full *Exercises*, during the period of preparation for this experience, but in certain instances it can also take place concurrently, especially when the *Exercises* are offered as a retreat in ordinary daily life.

inteligencia cultural” 373-384; and IGNACIO BONÉ P., “Psicología de la gratitud y Ejercicios Espirituales”, 385-399.

⁶⁸ Cf. SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL DE PSICOLOGÍA Y EJERCICIOS IGNACIANOS *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos*, “Prólogo”, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁹ In most cases, spiritual directors are not trained counsellors or psychologists and should refer exercitants to mental-health professionals should the need arise. At the same time, it would be desirable that they possess certain skills in interpersonal analysis so they can detect the fundamental psychological tendencies of exercitants and the way these might affect the dynamics of their *Exercises*. Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, p. 20.

The religious experience in itself should not be considered as having the capacity to heal or cause harm in relation to these psychological issues, but it can certainly contribute in a significant way to one or the other (we explore this further in section 2.4). Every religious experience will be lived from the psychodynamic profile of each person and will be affected or influenced by any existing psychopathologies in them. In most cases, these should not exceed what falls within the range of ‘normality’, but the giver of the Exercises should try to be aware of any elements which, derived from a person’s psychobiography, might ‘blur’ their faith experience. The depressive personality, for example, will live his experience of faith from a “quenching of his desire”, the darkness of his belief and the frequent emptiness of desolation. On the contrary, the manic personality will live her faith as her life: from a permanent coming and going from one activity to another, with difficulty to maintain a serene listening posture and with a special lack of sensitivity to experience the conflicting dimensions of life. They are people who can hardly live that dimension of faith that embraces the silence of God.⁷⁰

As previously mentioned, the process and content of the Exercises, even in its most basic form as ‘light’ or ‘first’ exercises, ideally results in the transformation of the self. The protagonist as always is God, but the giver of the Exercises holds a very important supporting role: those who have experienced deep pain in their lives seek others whom they can trust and to whom they can reveal their history—their stories—of suffering. Listening to and holding these stories can be a huge responsibility but also a great privilege which givers of the Exercises might be entrusted with. This transformation of the self, in the context of healing, of freedom *from* the chains that bind us and prevent us from welcoming God’s grace and of freedom *for* an abundant and fruitful life, is the goal of the Exercises. And because as human beings we are always part of a community, local and global, this transformation of the individual self cannot but lead to a transformation of our society. This is what Ignatius always sought—for those who had experienced the Exercises to become women and men of service for others, especially for those in greatest need, following the model of our Lord, even to the extent, as He did, of surrendering our very selves in love. And this is where real freedom, psychological and spiritual, meet.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, pp. 19-20.

⁷¹ Cf. ALEMANY and GARCÍA-MONGE, eds., *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos*, “Prólogo”, pp. 13-15.

2.2. Psychological issues that might affect forcibly displaced people and in particular their ability (as *subjects*) to engage in the *Exercises*

Forced displacement affects many facets of a person’s life, ranging from the most tangible and basic external elements (safety, food, health, shelter, education) to a broad spectrum of psychological dimensions (effects of violence, persecution, dislocation, loss). While unwanted and often deeply painful, these factors,

[...] may also have positive consequences in so far as they may lead to the development of more appropriate coping mechanisms, deepen a sense of identity in individuals, strengthen cohesion among family members, and offer an opportunity for a more fundamental re-evaluation of one’s life. It is not uncommon for members of refugee communities to become extremely successful in a wide variety of activities and careers in the receiving country and to lead creative and fulfilling lives.⁷²

It should not be assumed then that all forcibly displaced people have developed some sort of psychological pathology because of what they have gone through. Most, if not all, would have experienced some degree of trauma associated with their dislocation but could have dealt with it in appropriate ways and overcome it. To understand this, it is helpful to think of other similar potentially painful events in a person’s cycle—such as the onset of a life-threatening illness, separation of parents, bereavement or voluntary relocation to a different country—and how most people are able to cope with these events. Of course, deeply traumatic experiences might in fact lead to mental-health issues that require professional help, but what is important is to recognise the danger of formulating the forced displacement narrative exclusively in terms of a psychology of loss or any other psychological model, or merely through a context or paradigm of pathology and deficit.

Unfortunately, refugees and others who have been forcibly displaced have in fact been commonly approached in terms of their psychological deficits, especially among mental-health professionals. The most common way of approaching their mental health issues has been through diagnosing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Yet, at least two main difficulties arise from this model: (1) in some instances it fails to incorporate ethno-cultural differences in the expression of traumatic stress based, for example, on belief systems of particular communities (thus making it difficult to argue for the existence of culture-free

⁷² RENOS K. PAPADOPOULOS and JUDY HILDEBRAND, “Is Home Where the Heart Is? Narratives of Oppositional Discourses in Refugee Families” in Renos K. Papadopoulos and John Byng-Hall, eds., *Multiple Voices: Narrative in Systemic Family Psychotherapy*, New York: Routledge 1997, p. 206.

indicators of the forced displacement experience), and (2) the emphasis on ‘disorder’ already suggests a deterministic pathological context. Critics of this model propose the more positive construct of PTSS (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) which might represent better the psychological impact of the forcible displacement experience.⁷³ In addition, more positive and non-judgmental mental-health approaches would highlight the resilience, resourcefulness and family-based support found among most forcibly displaced peoples—normal people reacting to abnormal circumstances—without discounting the deeply disruptive changes they have suffered in their lives. Thus, “refugees present perhaps the maximum example of the human capacity to survive despite the greatest of losses and assaults on human identity and dignity.”⁷⁴

Further, because forcibly displaced people do not belong to a psychologically pathological category, they might have little in common in their personalities, sharing only the characteristic of having had to forcibly leave their homes. At the same time, there is no denying that this one common characteristic could give rise to one or more psychological or mental health issues which need attention in the process of helping ex-refugees settle and flourish in their new homes, and of which spiritual directors should be aware as they accompany them in their journey of faith and deeper intimacy with God. In this section we look at five of these issues: trauma and violence; abandonment and rejection and feelings of not being loved; survivor’s guilt; feeling of worthlessness (of feeling they have nothing to contribute), and anger.

2.2.1. Trauma and violence

A common feature of all three stages of displacement—(1) leaving one’s homeland or home, (2) transit to a new situation, and (3) the process of arrival and settling in a new home—is trauma.⁷⁵ In these instances, forced displacement-related trauma may be defined as:

⁷³ PAPADOPOULOS and HILDEBRAND, “Is Home Where the Heart Is? Narratives of Oppositional Discourses in Refugee Families”, pp. 211-212.

⁷⁴ MARJORIE A. MUECKE, “New Paradigms for Refugee Mental Health” in *Social Sciences & Medicine* 35, n. 4 (1992) 520.

⁷⁵ People from refugee backgrounds will almost certainly have been exposed to traumatic events. These may have included: threats to their own lives or those of their family or friends; death squads; witnessing of mass murder and other cruelties inflicted on family or other people; disappearances of family members and friends; perilous flight or escape; separation from family members; forced marches; extreme deprivation—poverty, unsanitary conditions, lack of access to health care; persistent and long-term political repression; deprivation of human rights and harassment; removal of shelter; refugee camp experiences involving prolonged squalor, malnutrition and a lack of personal protection; privation of personal space with consequent disruption to personal and intimate relationships; interrupted or lack of education. Exposure to trauma and torture is not confined to adults. Many child refugees have witnessed horrific events and have suffered the effects of dislocation and

[...] psychic or spiritual injury incurred by the shock of having to leave, especially when such departure is accompanied by fear of the loss of one’s life and the real or possible loss of life of loved ones. Trauma can be a temporary experience of shock or loss, but in some instances the experience becomes ongoing and severe to the point of disabling the person in terms of normal functioning in society. In the latter case, it might be an instance of what is called medically *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD).⁷⁶

In terms of the three stages of displacement, the stress involved in leaving one’s home (1) may range from ‘culture shock’ experienced when entering into a new reality/place to traumatic memories of forced departure as well as concern or even fear for those loved ones who have been left behind. As this Burundian refugee expresses it:

1996 signalled the start of very great suffering for me. I received the news that my husband had been slaughtered in Burundi in July. The civil war in Zaire came to Uvira and we had to flee again [...]. With one of my children and some of my grandchildren, I walked many, many months, hiding in forests and villages, trying to reach a safe place. We were hungry; our feet bled, no skin left. We were separated and we lost each other. Finally I reached Tanzania with three of my grandchildren [...]. Today I live in Nduta with three of my grandchildren, whose parents are believed to be dead [...]. I am haunted still by the story of how my husband was killed, and I ache for the loss of my children and am troubled with not knowing if any are still alive. I worry about my grandchildren who are with me [...] who will care for them when I die? [...] At times I feel overwhelmed with sadness and suffering. When I remember all that has happened, I weep. I come to church, only prayer at church helps me. I know God has been with me, is with me. God helps me. *Rosalie, a Burundian refugee in Nduta camp, Tanzania.*⁷⁷

Identifying and naming the nature of the particular experience is the first step in being able to respond to it. An additional challenge faced by the sufferer is the fact that he or she has to deal with the experience being once or several times removed from where the experience

deprivation. In some regimes, children have been the specific targets of torture. Health assessments routinely conducted with refugee entrants to the state of Victoria (Australia) by the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST) indicated that seven in ten had experienced psychological or physical violence of some kind. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health: A guide for doctors, nurses and other health care providers caring for people from refugee backgrounds”, April 2012³, https://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/PRH-online-edition_July2012.pdf. Accessed 2 July 2018, pp. 46-47.

⁷⁶ Cf. ROBERT SCHREITER, “Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation” in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2008, pp. 108-109. Studies of survivor populations using clinical research tools indicate prevalence rates for PTSD of between 32% and 100%. Rates of depression of between 47% and 72% have been found in refugee and political detainee populations. 32% of adult Sudanese refugees in a North Ugandan refugee camps had PTSD. 20% of children had chronic PTSD. Most common traumatic events were: 90% forced isolation from others, 91% forced separation from family members, 83% lack of food or water. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, p. 49. In addition, key symptomatic features of post-traumatic stress disorder include: (1) *the traumatic event is persistently re-experienced*: recurrent and intrusive recollections of traumatic event, recurrent distressing dreams, acting or feeling as if the traumatic event is recurring, intense distress in response to reminders, physiological reactivity to cues reminiscent of event; (2) *persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness*: efforts to avoid reminders in thought or activities, marked diminished interest in significant activities, feelings of detachment from others, restricted range of affect, sense of foreshortened future; (3) *persistent symptoms of increased arousal*: difficulty falling or staying asleep, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response, p. 50

⁷⁷ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 61.

happened. As a result, the sufferer might not be able to revisit the place of this experience and so lay fears and anxieties to rest. Further, there might not be anyone in their new home able to understand satisfactorily the different elements, including context and content, of the experience (for example in cases of torture),⁷⁸ so that the healing process can be hindered by the inability to engage with the experience fully.⁷⁹

(2) In the process of transit to their new situation, the forcibly displaced may face innumerable physical and psychological challenges: disorientation at being in unknown and strange places, uncertainty in their future, lack of language and ‘urban’ skills, reliance on total strangers for their care and sustenance, among others.⁸⁰ When in transit—and this might include long periods of time in detention centre or refugee camps—the forcibly displaced

⁷⁸ While the prevalence of torture is unknown, health professionals and researchers often estimate that up to 35% of the world’s refugee population have had at least one experience of torture. It is important to know that experiences of torture vary. The word ‘torture’ is usually associated with the detention and brutal abuse of the individual. However, torture is also a strategy used by oppressive regimes and groups to destroy communities. Many different methods have been used and they continue to be refined in a way which maximise the climate of terror. Some common forms of torture are: severe beatings; prolonged and severe beating of the soles of the feet (falanga); deprivation of sleep and sensory stimulation; use of psychotropic drugs; electric shock (electrodes are placed on the body’s sensitive areas such as the tongue, gums, fingertips, genitals and nipples); burning with cigarettes, hot irons, burning rubber, welding torches, corrosive liquids; mutilation (extraction of hair or nails, cutting with knives, amputation of body parts, insertion of objects under nails); hanging by arms or legs for extended periods of time; isolation and solitary detention; sexual violence and rape of women, men and children; starvation and exposure to heat and cold; sham executions; water or submarine torture (the head of the victim is forced under water usually containing faeces or urine until near suffocation; a break is then allowed and the process repeated many times); being forced to maintain abnormal body positions for long periods; forcing victims to witness the torture of others, including loved ones. As for other traumatic events, torture rarely occurs as a single event. It is also important to consider that the traumatic nature of a horrific event lies in its meaning for individuals, families and communities. Understanding the helplessness, isolation, humiliation and degradation caused by torture is as important as knowledge of techniques used to inflict torture. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, pp. 47-48. For a more in-depth treatment of the effects of torture on forcibly displaced people, see, PETER HOSKING, ed., *Hope after Horror: Helping Survivors of Torture and Trauma*, Sydney: Uniya 1990.

⁷⁹ Cf. SCHREITER, “Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation”, p. 109.

⁸⁰ Asylum seekers face particular stresses owing to their uncertain migration status, limitations on their access to benefits and, in some cases, owing to experiences in detention centres. Recent studies indicate that this group is vulnerable to being re-traumatised and have particularly poor physical and mental health. Typical stresses faced by asylum seekers include: a limited capacity to plan for their future, develop social connections and a sense of belonging; detention centre experiences may compound a sense of injustice and loss of control and serve as painful reminders of persecutory practices in countries of origin; perceptions that they are not being believed by the potential host country’s government or that, compared with those groups granted permanent visas, they are being treated in a discriminatory fashion; feelings of powerlessness resulting from the limited control over their lives; exposure to unsympathetic or hostile attitudes in the media and the wider community (a particular concern for boat arrivals and those from Muslim backgrounds); no or uncertain access to family reunion; limitations on their access to the resources required for positive mental health (e.g. English language tuition, secure housing); stress associated with the refugee determination process during which they may be required to recount painful past experiences and be questioned about the accuracy of their story. This may leave people with a sense of shame and of not feeling believed. Many survivors feel that they relive their experiences every time they retell them. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, p. 50.

often feel depreciated, seen as nameless masses or as problems to be solved. As expected, this might lead to issues of poor self-esteem or sense of worthlessness in the future⁸¹, or ‘simply’, as Christine puts it, to unbearable loneliness, worry and fear:

I lost my father and my brother to the war, as well as other relatives and friends. People just left their homes, running in different directions, all seeking shelter [...]. I reached Kenya on foot after trekking for three days. Now I live in Kakuma camp. I feel very, very lonely, worried and afraid. *Christine, a Sudanese refugee in Kakuma refugee camp.*⁸²

(3) In the third and final stage, when the displaced must settle into their new home and situation, often they feel unwelcome or left to their own resources to find their way in the new setting.⁸³ Life can be extremely stressful and disorienting, affected also by memories of happier times: “There are always things I miss, always [...] but we are getting used to this new life”, (*Maria Prada, a displaced person in Barrancabermeja, Colombia*).⁸⁴ Other asymmetries likewise occur: discrimination, racism, xenophobia, outright violation of human rights. Along with legal and human violations, there is often also a failure on the part of the receiving culture to recognise the achievements and gifts offered by new arrivals, so any sense of mutuality or reciprocity is lost.⁸⁵ And there can also be a failure by the receiving community in understanding just how difficult it can be to settle into a new home.⁸⁶ The

⁸¹ Cf. SCHREITER, “Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation”, p. 110.

⁸² Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 52.

⁸³ As ex-refugees ‘make home’ in their countries of resettlement, they go through identifiable stages of adjustment: “There is a period of subjective well-being during the initial two months because they feel safe, often for the first time in years. After a few months they realise the difficulties presented by the new environment. In this period, the past is often idealised. Feelings of insecurity, isolation, resentment, unhappiness, guilt and inadequacy occur. After about six months, psycho-physical illnesses (in part due to changes of diet and climate), anxiety, depression, restlessness, fatigue, sleep and appetite disturbances, and recurrent dreams are common. There may even be psychotic symptoms. Paranoid delusions may occur which are compounded by the real persecutions they experienced in their home country. Sometimes there are suicidal or aggressive thoughts and acts. Most psychological symptoms are exhibited at about twelve months and within two years of resettlement. [Their] lives are usually quite productive after two years: they settle into homes, gain employment and undertake schooling. The incidence of psychological disorders after three years is at the same level as that of the general population. After five years, most of the adjustment has taken place. There are some vulnerable groups, such as women confined to home employment, who become the only unassimilated members in their family, unable to speak English and fearful of leaving home. The elderly, isolated from traditional supports, often become ‘shut-ins’ [...]. Children might develop behavioural problems, especially if they are separated from their parents or cannot communicate easily with them”. PETER HOSKING, “The Drama of Dislocation” in *Hope after Horror: Helping Survivors of Torture and Trauma*, Peter Hosking, ed., Sydney: Uniya 1990, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁴ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 123.

⁸⁵ Cf. SCHREITER, “Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation”, p. 110.

⁸⁶ While people from refugee backgrounds are often in relatively poor health on arrival in Australia, the early settlement period may be one during which they are exposed to further negative influences on their wellbeing. Many may experience ongoing grief associated with the loss of family and friends, culture and community. Anxiety is a common consequence for those facing continuing uncertainty about the fate of family members left behind. People who have survived horrific experiences may also have a profound sense of guilt, particularly if family and friends were lost to conflict or remain in difficult circumstances in their countries of origin or first asylum. For those exposed to severe trauma, some of the tasks of settlement (such as dealing with people in

reinstatement or reassurance of peace is of course essential to starting rebuilding one’s life, but it does not solve all the problems:

We had everything but now we have nothing. Our life is agony in peacetime. Materially we are broken but not spiritually. We don’t give up. In life we search for beautiful things. *Danica, a former beneficiary of the JRS soup kitchen in Sarajevo.*⁸⁷

A common element in all three stages that increases the pain of forcibly displaced people, and might exacerbate their trauma, is a pervading ‘culture of disbelief’ regarding their plight:

Much of the problem comes from one simple fact: we don’t believe refugees [...]. In other words, ‘the culture of disbelief’ can make us deaf to genuine cries for protection [...]. The place of JRS is by the side of the forgotten refugees, those who are unacknowledged and even despised. We must allow their cries of pain to be heard. *Lena Barrett, JRS Europe.*⁸⁸

Why do many people doubt refugees’ stories? Perhaps these stories are so horrific that they find it difficult to believe that anyone could survive some of the things forcibly displaced persons say. Or perhaps they fear being deceived by refugees who might want to get something from them. It might be true that some forcibly displaced people ‘embellish’ or ‘exaggerate’ their stories in the hope that in doing so they can increase their chances of being granted protection or being offered resettlement. In those cases, rather than judging them negatively, it is important to try to understand why they say the things they do. As we will see later, they might actually remember events in a particular way—as a coping mechanism to bear the trauma they have experienced—and might be extremely surprised when challenged with disparate facts regarding those events. And, most refugee advocates and counsellors agree that, for the most part, forcibly displaced people try to be truthful when sharing their stories; they need in fact to tell and retell what happened to them so they can embark on and complete their healing process.

Ideally, all ex-refugees should be able to access psychological counselling to address their issues of trauma and violence. Unfortunately, the counselling offerings might be limited, or they might not know where to go to access the appropriate services, or they might feel too embarrassed or ashamed to talk to anyone about their afflictions. But they should be

authority) may serve as painful reminders of past experiences, exacerbating existing psychological problems. Poor health can also serve as a significant barrier to settlement. For example, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, such as poor concentration, may interfere with the important task of learning English. Similarly, chronic pain, a common consequence of torture and war-related injury, may affect the ability to perform the day-to-day organisational tasks of settlement. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, pp. 24, 26.

⁸⁷ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 145.

⁸⁸ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 151.

encouraged to seek help in these areas, for unless they are addressed, they will continue to have a negative impact on ex-refugees’ lives.⁸⁹ Health professionals speak of ex-refugees who are still plagued by memories of the trauma they experienced over thirty years ago. Those involved in the nurturing of ex-refugees’ faith and spiritual growth (spiritual directors, pastoral assistants, parish priests, etc.) should encourage them to seek assistance in these areas when the need is identified. As mentioned earlier—and as we will continue to emphasise in this section and throughout our thesis when appropriate—our efforts to provide spiritual nourishment to survivors of forced displacement cannot be separated from efforts to provide assistance to meet their physical, emotional and mental health needs as well. Taking this into consideration, such spiritual nourishment will undoubtedly have to include spiritual healing of hurts experienced in the past. Among these, one of most common experiences for ex-refugees and other forcibly displaced people is to feel abandoned and rejected.

2.2.2. Abandonment, rejection and feelings of not being loved

Most of us, at some stage in our lives, will feel rejected, unwanted, unwelcome, unloved. Often such feelings do not persist for too long, except in people who have suffered traumatic and deeply hurtful experiences: physical abandonment by one parent; rejection of a life-time partner; expulsion from a community or group that gave a person meaning and purpose; unjustifiable blame for apparent ‘sins’ committed. Most forcibly displaced people will have suffered from one or several of these and other ‘life-denying’ experiences:

An 18-year-old girl lamented: “I am only young. The militia took me from my village and made me cook for the military and militia when they went out to commit acts of violence. At night they raped me. This sexual slavery continued for several days. I am now pregnant with my violators’ child. My people do not support me because they do not understand why I was

⁸⁹ Some of the key psychological sequelae of torture and trauma manifestations include: (1) *anxiety and helplessness*: panic attacks, pain, psychosomatic symptoms, startle reaction (physiological and somatic); confusion, apprehension, hypervigilance, anticipating the worst, intrusive memories of traumatic events, flashbacks, nightmares, sleep disturbance, constricted receptivity to information, dissociation (cognitive); avoidance and escape behaviour of potentially fear evoking situations, passivity, withdrawal, detachment from others, impulsive and/or aggressive behaviour (behavioural); (2) *loss*: numbness, denial, yearning, emptiness, apathy and despair, risk taking behaviour (grief); dependency, overly self-sufficient, guardedness, suspicion, fear of intimacy, fear of contaminating others with death (changes to relationships); pessimism, hopelessness, self-degradation, self-blame, suicidal thoughts and plans (depression); (3) *shattered core assumptions*: sense of betrayal, ready idealisation and devaluation of others, loss of meaning and sense of future of human existence, sensitivity to injustice, moral concepts affected, loss of continuity of self, loss of identity; and (4) *guilt and shame*: preoccupation with feelings of having failed to do something more to avert violence, use of fantasy to repair damage done during traumatic events, self-destructive behaviour, experience of pleasure inhibited, self-derogatory comments, and overly deferential behaviour. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, p. 52.

trapped for so many days without escaping. But the terror of the degradation and imprisonment of those days will never go away.”⁹⁰

And, as this young woman reflected, they might feel that the burden and consequences of what they went through might never go away, and wonder whether they might love or be loved again. ‘Love’, of course, can be defined in many ways and express varying levels of commitment—a preference, a liking, an emotional attachment, a sexual passion, a romantic engagement, a bond of deep friendship, a total self-giving. Yet, ideally, one essential element that should be common to most if not all of these expressions of love is *acceptance*.

All human beings crave to be accepted for who they are, despite their shortcomings and what might have happened to them. It has been said that “the distilled essence of love” is acceptance, so that when we do not feel accepted, something in us is broken.⁹¹ And such brokenness, because of this sense of lacking acceptance from ourselves, others and God can prevent us from experiencing the love of others and the unconditional love of God: “If I do not love myself, how can others love me? And if others do not love me, how can God, who knows my shortcomings and all the terrible things I have done, love me?” Some forcibly displaced people might see this “God doesn’t love me” as the reason for their suffering, for “God’s abandoning me”. And depending on their image of God, they might also explain it as their punishment for wrongs committed. They might still hold this belief even several years after resettlement in a third country, especially if they still struggle to adapt and fail to feel at home, and continue to feel rejected or unwelcome by the receiving community.

Acceptance involves a positive attitude towards another being. It involves being in favour of someone who is judged to be good.⁹² Too often, survivors of forced displacement feel that they are judged to be ‘not good’, or at least not good enough. They need to be reassured that

⁹⁰ Told to Peter Hosking, March 2000. Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 73.

⁹¹ “Nothing in human life has such lasting and fatal effect as the experience of not being completely accepted”, VAN BREEMEN, *As Bread that is Broken*, p. 9. Callaghan adds, “It is not simply that acceptance helps us flourish [...]. Rather, the degree to which we find acceptance is the degree to which we are alive. To be fully alive we require a great measure of acceptance: to have no acceptance in our lives is to be dead or on the way to death. To accept is to offer life; to reject is to remove life: this is true whether we are dealing with others or with our attitude to ourselves”. BRENDAN CALLAGHAN, “The Unbinding of Lazarus: A Psychologist’s View of the First Week” in *Way Supplement* 48 (1983) 60.

⁹² Cowburn puts it this way: “Love is acceptance and this is the taking of an interior attitude, not a decision to perform an action. In this case one person meets another, comes to know him, sees and appreciates his value and chooses to be strongly in favour of him”. JOHN COWBURN, *Love*, Melbourne: Jesuit Theological College 2005, p. 100.

they are indeed accepted for who they are—not only to be told but also shown through people’s actions and attitudes towards them. And they need the assistance of companions in their faith journey to believe once again (or for the first time) that God accepts them also—as they are, and not as they believe they should be.

For those who believe that they are not good enough or do not count, there is always a sense that they should do more, know more, be more—if not be altogether different: “If I could just...” becomes the mantra or rather the stumbling block that bars their way to approaching God: *If I could just like myself more; if I could change all the bad things that I’ve done; if I could just forget the past and let go of the hatred and resentment; if I could just be the person God wants me to be.* These are real, though false, yearnings and reveal the deep longing that is in one’s heart to experience the love of God. In most cases, hurts and wounds affecting people’s perceptions of God, and how God sees them in turn, have brought about these false yearnings. But if these wounds can be healed, then these false perceptions will also be healed and a path opened to that deeper relationship with God they so desire. Only then will they be able to appreciate the meaning of God’s words to Isaiah: “See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands” (49:16), and to Jeremiah: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (1:5), and realise that God speaks those words of unconditional acceptance to each person, each day. We will address these issues of acceptance and healing particularly within the context of the First Week of the Exercises in the next chapter.

2.2.3. Survival guilt

“I should have stayed in my country. I should have never left”. It is not uncommon to hear phrases like these uttered by forcibly displaced people, especially soon after arrival in their new home country. The reasons for these sentiments are varied, and they have to do either with challenges experienced in the settlement process or with issues connected to the present reality of their birth countries. As mentioned earlier, many forcibly displaced people find the first months of settlement extremely hard. Throughout their asylum experience many thought that once they reached a safe destination and were granted permanent protection there most if not all their troubles would come to an end. And yet, as days turn into weeks and weeks into months, the challenges continue to escalate: deficiencies in the new language, ‘culture shock’, difficulties finding appropriate housing, life-sustaining employment and adequate education

opportunities, and in the worse of cases, discrimination, prejudice and xenophobia. It might take years for some to feel that they have overcome these challenges and somewhere along that time line they will wish, not once but several times, that they had stayed in their birth countries. They might forget, in desperation and angst, how terrible things were there.

Likewise, prevailing circumstances in their countries of origin constitute a pull-factor for returning or making them wish they had never left: the suffering and pain, persecution and possible death of loved ones who are still there; feeling that they have abandoned their country and those who needed them to continue fighting for the rights of their people; sensing some kind of injustice in that they were able to leave behind violence and persecution, but there are so many others who could not do that. For many others, the basic question might be: “How is it that I’m still alive, when so many others perished along the way?” For some, the answer to that question will lead to a great sense of gratitude and a desire to ‘repay’ the kindness and assistance of all those who helped them get to safety. For others, the answer might be expressed in terms of “I don’t deserve to be alive”—a feeling that might endure for a long time and negatively affect their settlement experience. This feeling might constitute an extreme expression of what is known as ‘survivor guilt’ or ‘survivor syndrome’.

Survivor guilt is a mental condition that occurs when people believe they have done something wrong because they survived a traumatic event when others did not. While they might actually have done something ‘improper’ to survive (stealing or lying, for example), survivor guilt in most cases has to do with people’s *perception* of having done something wrong, when the reality is that they had no power to change final outcomes. So, what usually triggers survivor guilt are unrealistic expectations of how one should have acted or reacted in particular circumstances. A forcibly displaced person might feel guilty because he happened to be absent when rebel forces came through his village pillaging and killing friends and family, thinking that he could have done something to prevent this carnage had he been there. Another may experience guilt because her walking companions fell behind on their way to safety and never made it there, wondering if they might have survived had she stayed with them, even though they had encouraged her to move on. A mother might experience profound guilt for not having been able to find food to keep her little daughter alive, even if there was no way to get food anywhere. In none of these cases people’s actions were planned so as to survive at the expense of others, nor did they run away from their responsibilities.

Yet, these people and many others feel they have to be forgiven for surviving. Besides guilt, they might also experience shame, self-reproach, remorse, regret and self-condemnation, all of which can lead to deep depression or, in extreme cases, the felt need to end one’s life.

Among the symptoms found in people experiencing survivors’ guilt are: shock and disbelief, temporary loss of control of emotions (such as deep sadness, anger or aggression), difficulty sleeping, withdrawal from others, recurrent nightmares or frequent painful remembrances about the death or traumatic event. Some people may also have urges to get revenge (“payback”) from those responsible for the death of loved ones or the traumatic event. While these might be regarded as negative or unwanted reactions, an important thing to remember is that guilt is a common reaction to loss, and it can ultimately be part of a person’s healing process. Yet, if not addressed, these guilt-related symptoms may lead to serious psychological health concerns, such as depression, apathy or generalized anxiety.

To cope with guilt, it is first necessary to acknowledge one’s feelings and recognise that they are part of a normal reaction to hurtful circumstances. Sharing one’s feelings with a peer, friend or family member or even joining a support group can help greatly with the coping process, yet, one of the main difficulties in dealing with guilt is that people feel embarrassed or ashamed to seek out other people for support. Spiritual directors and faith-based communities can be of invaluable assistance here, especially for forcibly displaced people of faith, providing respectful, empathetic and safe listeners to these feelings. These communities, as well as friends and family, can also help those experiencing survivors’ guilt to turn their feelings into positive action, helping them make a contribution to the wider community and the greater good. Finally, as mentioned earlier, while feelings of guilt can accompany reactions to combat stress, they can also be a symptom of post-traumatic stress syndrome if they continue for long periods of time, and in such cases, it is important to seek professional help. From a spiritual point of view, faith-based contributions might include helping forcibly displaced people experience God’s forgiveness for the perceived sins they have committed, or embark on a process of healing of memories, or be affirmed in their goodness and value as sons and daughters of God.

We will return to the topic of guilt in the next section of this chapter in the context of acknowledging faults committed against others as an element of repentance. Whether it is

this type of guilt or survivor’s guilt that prevents a forcibly displaced person from experiencing the loving and healing presence of God in their lives, it will be of great value to them if their spiritual directors or companions are aware of and able to attend to the source of their guilt and not only its symptoms. Guilt might cause a forcibly displaced person to distance himself from his community because he already feels separated from its members (and yet others might not be aware of this and find his behaviour aloof or unexplainable), or because he feels like a failure, or he feels responsible for some damage or destruction which occurred at any of the three stages of displacement. Discerning the cause will facilitate the ‘cure’:

Each kind of guilt feeling also tends to favour its own remedy for sin. The feeling of being separated demands a reacceptance into one’s community. The feeling of having failed generates the need for a confession of one’s misdeeds. And the feeling of being responsible for some destruction calls for a restoration of things to their proper order.⁹³

We witness Jesus’ offering these remedies in his interactions with different persons—all considered sinners by others or themselves—in the scriptures. Thus, Jesus offers reacceptance into the community to the man with leprosy and the woman with the haemorrhage—both afflicted by ailments, in the eyes of Jesus’ contemporaries, because of their sins. Jesus meets the tacit and explicit confessions of the woman caught in adultery and of the thief at the cross with a refusal to condemn her and a promise for him of a definite place with Jesus in paradise. And Zacchaeus’ welcome of Jesus into his home—not only his physical dwelling but also his interior being—is followed by a promise of restoration to those he has harmed through half of his belongings. Praying these and other similar passages through the use of Ignatian imaginative contemplation can result in much healing for forcibly displaced people. This is not to diminish the idea of God’s justice and the necessity of living life according to the values of the gospel, but to emphasise that, despite our past mistakes, we are continually invited by God to ‘return home’, to the embrace of God, our overgenerous parent.

Finally, in the context of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and of the First Week in particular, givers of the Exercises should practise outmost care in helping forcibly displaced exercitants avoid ‘piling up’ more guilt on their consciences as they meditate on the effects and consequences of sin—both personal and collective/structural—especially, as mentioned earlier, if there is no

⁹³ TAD DUNNE, “Guilt and Healing” in *Review for Religious* 42, n. 1 (1983) 110.

sin to feel guilty about. On the other hand, givers of the Exercises should also be vigilant not to circumvent the topic of guilt altogether, because of fear of harming their exercitants. It is a very delicate balance yet, as we know, to learn to face the displeasure caused by healthy self-criticism is a challenge we all have to endure in the process towards maturity as human beings, and a necessity if we are to engage in a process such as that required for the Exercises. Without acknowledging ‘true’ guilt, there is no possibility of transformation or change and especially of conversion. But it does have to be ‘true’ or ‘healthy’ guilt so as to empower this conversion. The opposite—‘unhealthy guilt’—tends only to lead to self-punishment and self-destruction.⁹⁴

2.2.4. Feeling of worthlessness

We have already mentioned that often survivors of forced displacement feel that they are judged by others to be ‘not good’, or at least not good enough. They sense through people’s comments, stares and even silence that they are considered a burden to the societies that have welcomed them. The perceived message—whether real or not (and in some instances it is certainly real!)—is: “We shouldn’t have let you come here in the first place”. Unfortunately, it is a message that frequently confirms the forcibly displaced person’s perception of himself or herself, often characterised by low self-esteem or a depreciated self-image after many years of lacking personal agency or being labelled a ‘problem to be solved’. Despite the many gifts, skills and talents they possess, survivors of forced displacement might still feel worthless and believe they have nothing or little to contribute to their receiving communities.

Sadly too, this sense of worthlessness might be reinforced by the realities they encounter. Some of the wonderful skills they possess might not be valued or needed as much as in their home countries—think for example of a tropical diseases doctor specialising in Western African maladies or a literary expert in 15th c. Burmese literature. Many find that their professional credentials are not recognised in their resettlement country, or that they are required to sit very strict (and often culturally-biased) certifying examinations or to undergo long periods of probation, even after many years of professional activity in their home countries. Yet others, because of their scarce formal education or basic local language skills, might find it difficult to acquire new or specialised proficiencies, especially if they resettle at a later stage in life. In all these cases, their sense of value and meaning would be contingent

⁹⁴ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, *Psicodinámica de los Ejercicios Ignacianos*, pp. 103-107.

to what they *do*. In other instances, value and meaning would have been derived from who they *were* in their original communities: elders and wisdom figures, spiritual leaders and life-skills teachers; or from their recognised gender roles which might now be at odds or in conflict with those of their receiving communities.

Certain psychological factors, in response to past trauma experienced, can also prevent active engagement in life-giving and productive activities and therefore contribute to this sense of worthlessness. As mentioned earlier, forcibly displaced people’s ability to carry out everyday tasks and attend to basic needs can be seriously impaired by feelings of powerlessness and lack of connection to others. Their learning ability, so crucial to adjustment in their new country, can be seriously disrupted by poor concentration, memory impairment and sleep disturbance. They might also suffer from chronic and debilitating pain as a result of injuries or might experience psychosomatic pain, which can affect their capacity to engage and remain in fulfilling work. Their relationships with those with whom they interact on a recurring basis, such as employers or co-workers, as well as case workers, community support personnel and even parents of their children’s classmates, can be affected by distrust or loss of faith in people, which can be expressed in “anger and aggressive behaviour [stemming] from low frustration tolerance as a result of stress and lack of sleep, as a protest against loss, as a response to injustices and as a reaction to shame and guilt”.⁹⁵ Further:

[...] the early settlement period may be a time when people from refugee backgrounds have limited access to resources known to protect and promote health. They tend to be over-represented among the poor and to experience associated social and economic disadvantage; are concentrated in those areas of the labour market characterised by poor working conditions and remuneration and job insecurity; experience relatively high rates of both unemployment and underemployment; and are often housed in substandard and insecure accommodation. Lack of understanding, and in some cases active discrimination and racism in the host community, can further serve to undermine their sense of physical security and self-esteem.⁹⁶

All these factors might lead an ex-refugee to feel that he/she has nothing or very little to contribute to their new host country. And yet, as Viktor Frankl, holocaust survivor and the founder of logotherapy (existential analysis) never ceased to point out, we all need a purpose, a goal, something that gives meaning to our lives, in all forms of existence, even the most

⁹⁵ Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, p. 50.

⁹⁶ VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, p. 25.

brutal ones, and thus, a reason to continue living.⁹⁷ Without it, we fall into an existential vacuum, or feeling of meaninglessness, characterised by a state of boredom, apathy, lack of direction and emptiness, which might lead to constant cynicism and questioning the point of most of life’s activities.

While some of these issues can be addressed through counselling, other ‘strategies’, including spiritual accompaniment, can also promote recovery from torture and trauma-related problems to strengthen self-esteem, confidence and a sense of worth in people of refugee background. We have mentioned already the importance of acceptance and welcoming from the receiving community which can contribute greatly towards providing a predictable, stable and safe environment. Another strategy is to help forcibly displaced people set realistic goals which enhance control and a sense of achievement. Often, the newly arrived have unrealistic expectations about their educational and professional opportunities and also about their capacity to quickly find financially rewarding and prestigious-type of work, so in a way they set themselves for failure and further diminishment of their self-confidence. To avoid this, it is of essence to link them with supportive individuals and agencies that can help strengthen their personal resources, tackle realistic goals, offer coping and problem-solving skills and provide support when issues arise.

And of course, for forcibly displaced people of faith, the value of a supportive community cannot be underestimated. While members of that community can provide encouragement, practical assistance (e.g. formation and job resources), and a sense of belonging (a key element to nurture our sense of worth), their greatest benefit might be to invite new arrivals to actively contribute to the life of their parishes or faith communities, through their gifts of music, sharing of their faith experiences (particularly, the permanent presence of God throughout their forced displacement experience), their life-giving spirituality of hope and even ‘simply’ by their presence, especially in ageing and fast diminishing communities. We will see an example of this contribution in the fourth part of this chapter, among Sudanese-Australians. Finally, spiritual directors can invite survivors of forced displacement to reflect on their inherent value as sons and daughters of God, who desires for them fruitful and

⁹⁷ Cf. VIKTOR FRANKL, *Man’s search for meaning: an introduction to logotherapy*, London: Hodder and Stoughton 1964.

abundant lives and to recognise the God-given values each one of them possesses: regardless of a person’s circumstances, each one s has a role to play in making God’s reign a reality.

2.2.5. Anger

“Anger. That’s the pervasive feeling I have when I think about what they did to us”. That was the comment made by a Persian ex-refugee when I mentioned the topic of my research. Her faced showed it too. I did not know much of her story, but I knew she and her husband, both university-educated people, had to flee Iran because of their political views. They both had trained as engineers; she was now working as a cook and he did maintenance work in a hospital. Most of their siblings and their families had also left Iran, but their parents were still there. They had arrived in Australia over six years ago, but her anger and her bitterness were still so raw, she refused to call herself an ‘Iranian’. “I’m Persian”, she had said. As far as I could make out, no one in her family had been killed or physically harmed. Their parents still lived on their land and seemed to be safe, so I was a bit taken aback at her reaction. Whether she sensed that or whether she wanted to qualify her statement further she added: “They robbed us of our lives”.

When asked to describe feelings associated with their experience of displacement, many forcibly displaced people will admit feeling desperate, fearful, frustrated, forgotten, lost, unwanted, rejected, abandoned, unloved. Often, however, ‘anger’ is a glaring omission in their list. Perhaps this is because many people regard anger as an undesirable feeling and believe that expressing anger might reflect negatively on them or might go against the teaching of their religions or faith traditions—cultural conditioning, family upbringing or religious education have led many people to hold this view. So, instead of using the word anger, they might use more ‘acceptable’ terms such as annoyance, vexation, exasperation, irritation, indignation, displeasure or resentment to express that feeling. Yet, if there is a group that as a collective of individuals sharing a common characteristic has the ‘right’ to feel angry, forcibly displaced people are certainly it. As this young Persian woman expressed it, they have been robbed of their life as they knew it, and of everything that life entailed for them: family, friends, home, land, culture, language, safety, financial resources, physical and mental health, self-esteem, agency, peace... even faith and hope.

For many, moreover, these losses would have been accompanied by violent actions perpetrated against them or their loved ones, for no other reason than the fact they belonged to a particular ethnic, religious or cultural group. So, added to the harm, violence and loss is the ignominy of an injustice having been committed against them. It will not be unlikely then that, whether they recognise it or not, express it or not, many survivors of forced displacement will need to deal with issues of anger at some stage after resettlement, if they have not done so before. Otherwise, they might never come to experience the healing and peace they so much desire. Some, because their behaviour towards others demands it (instances of domestic or other kinds of violence, bullying of others, angry outbursts, rage, etc.), will require professional counselling. They, in a way, are the easier anger-related cases to identify and offer support to. Many others, however, will benefit from getting in touch with their angry feelings and finding constructive ways to express them. And of course, it is important to mention that some forcibly displaced people might have ‘anger issues’ unrelated to their displacement experience or which preceded it—our stories of early love and hate are embedded in the mind and can be carried forward through life.

As mentioned, the beliefs one holds about anger as an emotion—for example, “anger is a sin” or “anger always leads to destructive behaviour/actions” or, on the contrary, “anger is a normal emotion” or “I’m a good person even when I feel angry”—play an important role in determining how one will subsequently deal with it. For Christians (as well as people of other faith traditions), the challenge will be to see anger as a positive force and a source of personal and interpersonal growth, not as something to be feared and avoided. Most, if not all, of us can look back upon an incident in our own lives when we felt angry and wanted revenge, yet never really resolved those angry feelings, so that if we recall that incident even in the present, those angry feelings again come to the surface. In instances such as this, it is useful to note the flow of anger as it moves from origin to expression, because the key to dealing with anger effectively is through understanding its origins. Sometimes, what one believes to be the obvious source is not really so.

Usually, anger is triggered by one or all of four stimuli: a threat to self-esteem; injustice; frustration of a need or a want; and physical injury or harm. Whenever one experiences one of these stimuli, one automatically feels angry. While people have no control over the stimuli causing their anger, they do in deciding what might be frustrating, threatening to self-esteem

or unjust to *them*. This varies from person to person—what angers me may not anger you, because what is threatening or unjust or frustrating for me may not be the same for you:

The differences in reactions to stimuli can be traced back to an individual’s beliefs. This personal storehouse of beliefs and convictions about the inner self and the outer world determines the effect that particular stimuli will have. Thus, two people can experience the same situation and have very different reactions because their personal beliefs differ. Situations or circumstances never cause anyone’s anger. The real cause of anger is found in one’s beliefs. This reservoir of beliefs and convictions determines what a person will perceive as frustrating, a threat to self-esteem or an injustice.⁹⁸

Because many of one’s values and beliefs are determined by one’s culture and family background and circumstances, those accompanying forcibly displaced people in their journey of healing and wholeness—especially those who might have suffered great trauma and might be dealing with issues of anger—will do the newly arrived a great service by helping them identify that *belief* which is the real cause of their anger. Another important question is whether that belief is life-giving and growth-generating for them (particularly in their new circumstances) or whether it is a belief they might wish to change. For example, an East African ex-refugee might believe that it is the duty of a wife to stay at home and care for the husband and children and will feel angry if she decides to find a job to contribute to the finances of the home. He might mask his anger by complaining that dinner is never on time or that the children are undisciplined, but the real source is his frustration at his being perceived as someone who cannot provide for his family. But if he is able to understand that in most Australian households both parents work to make ends meet and accepts this as a fact, he might not feel less of a person because his wife works and instead will feel accepted.

Earlier we mentioned that many people find it difficult to express their anger because they assume that there is only one way to do so—violently and through hostility. Certainly, anger that is continually suppressed, repressed or stored will ‘explode’ eventually in a destructive way.⁹⁹ But one can also choose how to express anger, how its energy is changed and released

⁹⁸ LOUGHLAN SOFIELD, CARROLL JULIANO and ROSINE HAMMETT, *Design for Wholeness: Dealing with anger, learning to forgive, building self-esteem*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press 1990, p. 20.

⁹⁹ And in doing so, it can destroy both the person and his/her relationships. Stored anger will affect the person physiologically (e.g. heart attack, stroke, ulcers, high blood pressure) as well as psychologically—function as an explosive pressure cooker so that people explode at unexpected times over seemingly small things; mask itself in expressions that appear more personally and socially acceptable such as depression, boredom, passive-aggressive behaviour; or try to anesthetise feeling through substance abuse or other addictions. Sarcasm and withdrawal are other behaviours that often serve the purpose of preventing a person from feeling anger. Cf. SOFIELD, JULIANO and HAMMETT, *Design for Wholeness: Dealing with anger, learning to forgive, building self-esteem*, pp. 29-32.

as it passes through one’s belief system, so that it is constructive. One such method is based on the feel-think-talk-act process.¹⁰⁰

Feeling has to do with allowing ourselves to feel angry and to acknowledge this feeling. Before reacting, we move into a calm state that will allow us to *think* more clearly and identify the cause of the anger: What has triggered the feeling? What belief is the real cause of the anger? Label what has triggered the emotion. Do I feel attacked? Do I see injustice here, or do I feel wronged? Then rate the importance of the belief, for not everything that triggers anger is of equal importance. The following step is *talking* and its aim is to talk to someone to help us sort out and reflect on questions such as: Why are my feelings so intense over this incident? The goal of the listener is to help us gain insight and choose actions that will be constructive. Finally, before *acting*, we should look at the situation and the individuals involved before deciding upon the most appropriate action. “Do I want to go back to the person(s) and state my feelings? Do I want to follow a course of action that would be a more suitable response, given the cause of the anger? Do I want to channel my ‘anger-energy’ into a creative outlet? Do I choose to change my belief that caused the anger? Do I decide to forgive if in fact I’ve been injured or treated unjustly?”

As mentioned, our anger is roused by certain stimuli and is usually connected to the fact that one or several of our basic human needs is not being met, which also results in conflict. However, anger and conflict can also produce growth if the right conditions are available. One major condition required for individuals and groups to work through conflict is to establish a climate of safety and security. Security is also one of the most primitive human needs. Often it is only in the secure and safe environment of an intimate relationship, spiritual accompaniment or direction, counselling or therapy that people will feel free enough to explore the meaning of their anger. And in those spaces, they can come to realise that:

Anger and conflict do not always have to be divisive. Anger and conflict can spark greater self-knowledge and an appreciation of others in my life. What transpires between individuals after anger and conflict have erupted depends primarily on the beliefs and attitudes of those involved [...]. The search for the presence of God in anger and conflict can lead one ultimately to discover new life.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Cf. SOFIELD, JULIANO and HAMMETT, *Design for Wholeness: Dealing with anger, learning to forgive, building self-esteem*, pp. 36-40. Another four-pronged process includes the following steps: stop and breath; identify our judgmental thoughts; connect with our needs; express our feelings and unmet needs. Cf. MARSHALL B. ROSENBERG, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, 3rd ed., Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press 2015, pp. 141-160.

¹⁰¹ SOFIELD, JULIANO and HAMMETT, *Design for Wholeness: Dealing with anger, learning to forgive, building self-esteem*, p. 57.

For many forcibly displaced people this new life will need not only the absence of anger and conflict but also the presence of forgiveness and the willingness to seek reconciliation connected to past or present hurts. The concept of *willingness* to seek reconciliation has to be mentioned because in some situations reconciliation will not be possible. Reconciliation is a two-way process into which we cannot force another. I might be able to forgive, but I cannot demand that the other forgive me in return or even that he or she accepts my forgiveness. I might also be willing to forgive, but not be able to. We will explore in more detail these issues of forgiveness and reconciliation in the next part of this chapter. We do raise the issue here simply to acknowledge that it has been suggested that one of the most effective ways of dealing with anger is to help people learn how to forgive. The desire to get even and hurt the person whom we believe has caused us pain and hurt is a normal reaction to frustration, abuse, threat and injustice. Forgiveness is not a natural response—it is a learned one.¹⁰²

2.3. Some psychological tools that can aid in the giving of the *Exercises*, particularly in the context of forced displacement

Either because of the trauma they have experienced or because they have had no time to reflect on the impact of the forced displacement experience on their spiritual journey, many forcibly displaced people would derive great benefit from using therapeutic practices that emphasise both healing and developing greater self-awareness and interior knowledge of themselves. These practices would also help prepare those interested in making the Spiritual Exercises, particularly if such practices emphasise the spiritual dimension of the human person. We look now at three of these methods, namely, the Progoff Intensive Journal, Focusing and Gestalt experimental psychology.

2.3.1. *The Spiritual Exercises and Progoff's Intensive Journal*

The *Intensive Journal* of Ira Progoff is a method for interpersonal, intrapersonal and transpersonal development through writing, whose theoretical foundation is based on holistic

¹⁰² Cf. SOFIELD, JULIANO and HAMMETT, *Design for Wholeness: Dealing with anger, learning to forgive, building self-esteem*, p. 60. See also, RICHARD P. FITZGIBBONS, “The cognitive and emotive uses of forgiveness in the treatment of anger” in *Psychotherapy* 23, n. 4 (1986) 629-633 and D. BRANNAN, A. DAVIS and R. BISWAS-DIENER, “The Science of Forgiveness: Examining the Influence of Forgiveness on Mental Health” in *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*, vol. 2 (2016) 253-256.

depth psychology.¹⁰³ Progoff is one of a group of psychologists (along with W. James, C.G. Jung and M. Scott Peck) who believe that lasting personal healing will not take place unless the spiritual dimension of the person is taken into account. And here lies its possible relevance to the *Spiritual Exercises*.

The Intensive Journal’s methodology consists of a series of written exercises that help us identify the milestones in our life. The different chapters of our life are explored, starting with the present, which is the chapter we are living at the moment. The method then consists, through using written dialogues, in trying to clarify our relationships with other people, our body, works, groups and significant events that have made up our existence.¹⁰⁴ Finally, the person explores in more depth the spiritual or ‘transpersonal’ aspects that link him or her with ‘something’ beyond ourselves and which gives meaning to one’s existence. While the Intensive Journal has no particular doctrinal basis and thus avoids presenting a particular or concrete spirituality, it provides a pedagogy through which people are able to access their deepest experiences, their truest or deepest ‘I’, and their unconscious.

As such, in different parts of the world the Intensive Journal has been used with great effectiveness as preparation for the *Spiritual Exercises* (given to individuals) and also for processes of discernment. As we are reminded in the title for the Rules of Discernment for the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* (cf. [SpEx 313]), it is not always easy to be aware of the “various motions which are caused in the soul”: one’s thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, moods, inclinations and resistances, consolations and desolations, etc., that flow like a river in one’s consciousness and which contain hints and keys to discover God’s will (and dream) in

¹⁰³ Cf. JOSÉ VICENTE BONET, “Psicología y Ejercicios: Ejercicios y Diario Intensivo de Progoff” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 1510-1514. What follows is a summary of the ideas presented in this section. See also JOSÉ VICENTE BONET, “El Diario Intensivo de Progoff (DIP) y los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio” in Carlos Alemany and José A. García-Monge, eds., *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos: la transformación del yo en la experiencia de los Ejercicios Espirituales*, vol. 1, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 330-353.

¹⁰⁴ This process of writing is seen as necessary to make one’s feelings and experiences tangible for further development. As people read back what they have written, they may be surprised at what they find, but it is right there before them. The fact that they have written the content is also significant in that it helps them own it—it is they who are reflected in that content. The process of writing using the Intensive Journal is also intended to stimulate movement within oneself. One is no longer carrying around ‘thoughts in your head’, but having taken a further step by recording them one is able to interact with them, reflect on them and work with them. It is also emphasised that one does not have to like to write or be a good writer, since no one else will read what is written. Finally, the objective is not to write one’s life story, but to engage in the unfolding process of working with one’s unique set of experiences and emotions that embody one’s self. Cf. *Progoff Intensive Journal for Self-development*, <http://www.intensivejournal.org/about/aboutWorkbook.php>. Accessed 3 July 2018.

one’s life. This could be especially true for forcibly displaced people who have learned to suppress or avoid reflecting on these various motions, either as a mechanism of defence, or with the intention of dealing with them at “a later time, when I am ready”. The Intensive Journal is an exceptional school for the development of this capacity to develop greater awareness of the movements in one’s heart and soul. Its exercises, and the attitude of interior attention and passive receptivity with which they are carried out, teach people to perceive, each time with greater sensibility and objectivity, their interior experiences, as subtle and evasive as they might be. In some centres of formation for Jesuits, those newly arrived give four days to the use of the Intensive Journal, and then make the Exercises over six days, where some of them discern the degree of commitment to their religious vocation.

‘Crossroads’, one of the more elucidating of the exercises in the Intensive Journal is, in a way, the equivalent to the ‘election’ in the Spiritual Exercises, oriented to discovering personal potentialities, sometimes even hidden or forgotten ones, and to making decisions when facing the future. The journal writer reviews his or her life journey, identifying those moments in which he or she could, even though he/she did not, have followed another direction. This mental projection, if well done, by allowing oneself to be guided by the imagination more than reason and with great spontaneity, can offer enough clarity and trust to let go of present enterprises and follow different ones. This method can also be useful when one has to make a choice between two options and asks oneself which one to follow. As such, it could be considered also as an exercise that gives back ‘agency’ to the exercitant—a source of self-esteem so much needed by many forcibly displaced persons. This method is compatible and similar to the *Second Time* to make an election in the Exercises (cf. [SpEx 176]). The Intensive Journal can also be a useful tool of follow up after the Exercises, dealing with the old problem of how to maintain their ‘fruit’, or how to continue the process of deepening which started in them. The exercise known as ‘day-to-day journaling’ can be considered as equivalent to the Ignatian Examen, in writing, and can help people to record their internal experiences as they take place in their daily lives; once written down, they can return to them later.¹⁰⁵

2.3.2. The Exercises and Focusing

¹⁰⁵ As we will see in the next chapter, certain elements of narrative therapy and spiritual journaling follow similar approaches as the Progoff’s Intensive Journal Method.

Focusing is a psychotherapeutic process developed by psychotherapist Eugene Gendlin. It involves paying attention, in an open and non-judgemental way, to what the body *feels* and *knows* interiorly and allowing that ‘felt-sense’ to interact with words, images and symbols that articulate various meanings.¹⁰⁶ These images and symbols can then be explored and checked against the diverse sensations and feelings experienced. Focusing can be used, among other things, to become clearer on what one feels or wants, to obtain new insights about one’s situation, and to contribute towards change or healing of that situation.

Gendlin gave the name ‘felt sense’ to the unclear, pre-verbal sense of ‘something’—the inner knowledge or awareness that has not been consciously thought or verbalised—as that ‘something’ is experienced in the body. Yet, it is not the same as an emotion. This bodily felt ‘something’ may be an awareness of a situation or an old hurt, or of something that is ‘coming’—perhaps an idea or insight. Crucial to the concept, as defined by Gendlin, is that it is unclear and vague, and it is always more than any attempt to express it verbally. Gendlin also described it as “sensing an implicit complexity, a holistic sense of what one is working on”. According to him, the *Focusing* process makes a felt sense more tangible and easier to work with. To help the felt sense form and to accurately identify its meaning, the focuser tries out words that might express it. These words can be tested against the felt sense: the felt sense will not resonate with a word or phrase that does not adequately describe it. Gendlin observed professionals, writers, and people in ordinary life (“focusers”) turning their attention to this not-yet-articulated knowing. As a felt sense formed, there would be long pauses together with sounds that seemed to express some kind of recognition. Once the person had accurately identified this felt sense in words, new words would come, and new insights into the situation. There would be a sense of felt movement—a “felt shift”—and the person would begin to have the ability to move beyond the “stuck” place, having fresh insights, and also sometimes indications of steps to take.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Cf. CARLOS ALEMANY, “Psicología y Ejercicios: Ejercicios y Focusing” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 1514-1520. This section is a summary of the ideas presented in this article. See also CARLOS ALEMANY, “El Enfoque Corporal de Gendlin (Focusing) y los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio” in Carlos Alemany and José A. García-Monge, eds., *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos: la transformación del yo en la experiencia de los Ejercicios Espirituales*, vol. 1, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 354-382.

¹⁰⁷ The inner act of focusing can be broken down into six main sub-acts or movements (six steps): *clearing a space*; *felt sense*; *handling*; *resonating*, *asking*, *receiving*. A ‘focusing trainer’ may interact with a ‘focuser’ through these steps in this way: (1) “Take a moment just to relax. Now, inside you, I would like you to pay attention inwardly, in your body, perhaps in your stomach or chest. Now see what comes *there* when you ask, ‘How is my life going? What is the main thing for me right now?’ Sense within your body. Let the answers come

Focusing has been used as preparation for the Spiritual Exercises with good results. Practicing focusing before beginning the Exercises helps enter into the Ignatian experience from a different angle. Some of the advantages mentioned by exercitants which they have used in the development of the process of the Exercises include, in terms of *background attitudes*: in-depth listening of themselves, of their bodies, of the word; improved levels of receptivity, of being more open and more aware; basic trust in their own body as a place of wisdom which offers resources that are not always used; trust also on the process itself; peace and tranquillity as opposed to anxiety and restlessness; something that translates into knowing how to wait, give time to things, following a gentler, slower rhythm throughout the whole experience, savouring internally the contents and affections which facilitate the dialogue with God.

In terms of *methodology and results*, exercitants make the Exercises with greater bodily attention or awareness, which translates into greater care in preparing the body for prayer, and focusing on the body as the habitual place for the process of prayer: attention and awareness moves from being mental or intellectual to being more corporal and sensorial; this greater attention to sensations and affections favours that internal *feeling* and *savouring* of things (cf. [SpEx 2]) with concrete hints for later discernment; prayer done from the body requires fewer

slowly from this sensing. Let there be a little space between you and that. Then ask what else you feel. Wait again, and sense. Usually there are several things (*clearing a space*); (2) From among what came, select one personal problem to focus on. Stand back from it. Pay attention there where you usually feel things, and in there you can get a sense of what all of the problem feels like. Let yourself *feel* the unclear sense of all of that; (3) What is the quality of this unclear felt sense? Let a word, a phrase, or an image come up from the felt sense itself. It might be a quality-word, like tight, sticky, scary, stuck, heavy, jumpy, or a phrase, or an image. Stay with the quality of the felt sense till something fits it just right (*handling*); (4) Go back and forth between the felt sense and the word (phrase, or image). Check how they resonate with each other. See if there is a little bodily signal that lets you know there is a fit. Let the felt sense change, if it does, and also the word or picture, until they feel just right in capturing the quality of the felt sense (*resonating*); (5) Now ask: what is it, about this whole problem, that makes this quality (which you have just named or pictured)? Make sure the quality is sensed again, freshly, vividly (not just remembered from before). When it is here again, tap it, touch it, be with it, asking, ‘What makes the whole problem so _____?’ Or you ask, ‘What is in *this* sense?’; be with the felt sense till something comes along with a shift, a slight “give” or release (*asking*); (6) Receive whatever comes with a shift in a friendly way. Stay with it a while, even if it is only a slight release. Whatever comes, this is only one shift; there will be others. You will probably continue after a little while, but stay here for a few moments (*receiving*). If during these instructions somewhere you have spent a little while sensing and touching an unclear holistic body sense of this problem, then you have focused. It doesn’t matter whether the body-shift came or not. It comes on its own. We don’t control that”. E.T. GENDLIN, *An introduction to focusing: Six steps*, New York: The Focusing Institute 1996). Cf. http://www.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol_2234.html. Accessed 3 July 2018. See also, ELFIE HINTERKOPF, *Integrating Spirituality in Counselling: A Manual for Using the Experiential Focusing Method*, London: Jessica Kingsley 1998, pp. 51-60 for a description of these focusing steps, and for a description of the focusing method in practice.

content, thus avoiding the danger of indoctrination—a biblical phrase or some point in the Ignatian contemplation are enough to find that point where “I am fully satisfied” [*SpEx* 176], and where I pause. Through all of this, the prayer value of the petitions and colloquies is enhanced, helping many to centre or ground the whole of their prayer, without needing much more.

For exercitants who know the six steps or movements of this technique, focusing can also help them enhance some of the elements of the Exercises, and thus they can derive greater benefit from the experience. (1) ‘*Clearing the space*’ for the experience helps the exercitants in a very concrete way to become more present to themselves right before their prayer session by focusing on one point and setting aside any preoccupations or problems that could serve as distractions, and allowing them to experience their own positive inner space, where they are more than their results or problems. (2) The *felt-sense* can serve as guide to the internal Ignatian ‘sentir’, since this felt-sense contains our body register or record of how we are affected by a reality which has not yet been unfolded and whose message therefore we are yet unable to understand.

(3) *Use of images in contemplation*: those who practice focusing know that images, as words, are symbols which express something or things about something that is part of us as live beings. Focusing helps to be attentive and aware not only to/of the data given by the images, but also of how the person relates to these images and of the flavours and feelings that the images arise. The images in the contemplations thus become more vivid and more linked to the praying or contemplating organism/body, reaching there their meaning. (4) *Bodily resonance and Ignatian repetition*: the Exercises are a time to savour, to find deeper meaning in something that has not exhausted that meaning; focusing contributes to this precisely as a technique to savour and feel internally, by making the body—and not the mind—the protagonist of the experience. (5) *Questions and answers—hints for more bodily colloquies*: the practitioner of focusing will engage in the Ignatian colloquies using the bodily resonance of the *felt-sense*, which has left an imprint of each one of those questions in his or her body (e.g. “What have I done for Christ?”), will verify that imprint in her/his body, will allow it to explain itself symbolically in words, images or gestures, and will use this point of departure to begin prayer.

The most important parallelism between Gendlin’s focusing and the Exercises of St Ignatius, and which can be of great benefit to forcibly displaced people who carry so many ‘imprints’ in their bodies of their refugee experience, is the building up in both of the interior person. For Gendlin, this takes place by placing our corporal attention to places where we resonate with reality through our senses and our bodies—of great importance, as we have seen, to St Ignatius as well. It is there where we can give meaning to our experiences and change with them.

2.3.3. The Exercises and Gestalt

The main goal of Frederick (Fritz) Perls’ Gestalt psychology is to promote a person’s capacity to focus on the present, to live in the moment, which in turn reinforces people’s capacity to be in touch with themselves and the environment that surrounds them. Its basic philosophy can be summarised in terms of a triple ideal: the present-conscience-responsibility. Thus, Gestalt therapy is about helping ‘clients’ to live in the here and now, to be conscious of their present experience, stop wandering and allow themselves to experience what is concretely real, while letting go of all superfluous thoughts.¹⁰⁸ It is about ‘seeing’ and ‘savouring’ all experiences, both painful and pleasurable ones. And it is about accepting total responsibility for one’s thoughts, feelings and actions—it is about accepting who we are.¹⁰⁹ Particularly relevant to forcibly displaced people, one of the important goals of Gestalt therapy is to help people acquire a greater integration in their personality, assimilating those areas which had been left ‘divorced’ from their consciousness or conscious field. Thus, the method can help ‘clients’ to relive past events (with care and guidance) or experience again fantasies or dreams using both bodily gestures and postures and spoken or written dialogues.

As preparation for the Exercises, Gestalt therapy can be a helpful aid for assessing the Ignatian *subiecto* firstly as evaluation of a person’s psycho-spiritual integration, and as a

¹⁰⁸ WILKIE AU, “La terapia Gestalt y los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio” in Carlos Alemany and José A. García-Monge, eds., *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos: la transformación del yo en la experiencia de los Ejercicios Espirituales*, vol. 2, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 370-371. Au suggests that (1) the Gestalt approach regarding a person’s dreams can help enrich our practice of Ignatian imaginative contemplation; (2) this technique can also enhance the ability of the giver of the Exercises to guide the experience of prayer in exercitants by providing them with a better sense of their existential condition; and (3) the Gestalt process of decision-making corroborates and reinforces the all-encompassing Ignatian focus for the election and discernment, according to the three times suitable for making a good election (cf. [*SpEx* 170-188]).

¹⁰⁹ See for example RAFAEL JÓDAR ANCHÍA and CARLOS DEL VALLE CARBALLO, “Emociones y Mociones: Aportaciones desde la Terapia Focalizada en la Emoción” in *Manresa* 88 (2016) 341-532, on the use of Emotion-focused therapy in spiritual accompaniment. Among its possible benefits is the capacity to contribute towards emotional transformation as a result of acceptance of undesired emotions, p. 351.

realistic check of human health in the spiritual election of the Exercises.¹¹⁰ As we saw earlier, the Exercises are a process of *spiritual maturity* but also require, as part of good integration, a minimum level of *human maturity* (cf. [SpEx 18]), which includes having the capacity to perceive reality, feel with authenticity and make solid decisions in particular circumstances and in freedom (cf. [SpEx 169]). The exercitant must thus possess a clear enough self-knowledge since “in order to know what God wants of me, I need to know who I am”. In the Exercises to lean on the Lord (cf. [SpEx 234]) is a valid criteria of maturity without denying our need for others. Childish dependences, however, will make it almost impossible to respond to the God who invites us to take responsibility of our lives in the following of Jesus. To be able to make an election, which is key in the Exercises, presupposes a previous autonomy.

Secondly, the Exercises, as a call to conversion, demand a letting go of certain disordered affections (cf. [SpEx 21]) or life plans or projects which do not lead us to true life. To let go psychologically of things is not easy. Gestalt therapy invites us to review those unfinished situations in our lives which keep us ‘anchored’ or tied down and to put closure to them, so we can be freed from them.¹¹¹ This learning to let go must come before we can welcome new paths and situations. Thirdly, Gestalt therapy also emphasises the importance of awareness, of awakening to the truth that will free us: we are transformed when we can perceive more clearly. This awareness can help us recover our alienated or blocked potential, allowing us to grow in an integrated fashion. All our psychic history is present, in a way, when we can

¹¹⁰ Cf. JOSÉ ANTONIO GARCÍA-MONGE, “Psicología y Ejercicios: Ejercicios y Gestalt” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, pp. 1520-1523. Unless otherwise referenced, the remainder of this section is a summary of the ideas presented in this article. See also JOSÉ ANTONIO GARCÍA-MONGE, “La Gestalt y los Ejercicios Espirituales” in Carlos Alemany and José A. García-Monge, eds., *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos: la transformación del yo en la experiencia de los Ejercicios Espirituales*, vol. 2, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 383-396.

¹¹¹ Gestalt exercises in this area would help a person, for example, deal with one’s ‘introjections’ and ‘retroreflections’. *Introjections* are typically rules and messages that we carry around inside us that we have ‘swallowed whole’, without reflecting enough on them to see whether they are truly our own desires or rules or if they are things we have just ‘absorbed’ from the outside world. Every time we hear “I should” in our head/voice, it is a sign that we might be dealing with an introjection, and thus it is an invitation for us to take a closer look. To the extent that we have cluttered our personality with introjections, we have impaired our ability to think and act on our own determinism, and are led instead by self-duties, standards and views of ‘human nature’ that are imposed from the outside. *Retroreflections* are techniques we use to suppress needs and impulses that we are not able to satisfy (repression); they also include things that we give to ourselves because of being unsuccessful in obtaining them from others, such as attention, love, pity, punishment, etc. By addressing retroreflections, we can gradually begin to see the role they play in our interpersonal relations, and to see ourselves as others see us. If we are forever making demands on ourselves, for example, we are also, either implicitly or explicitly, making demands on others—and this is how we appear to them. If we feel angry with ourselves, we will feel angry with most people and things around us, usually without a reason for it.

perceive in depth, because when we perceive things actively we can actively select, complete, relate and integrate data. Ignatius’ Exercises are a school of analysis and assessment of one’s experiences. The consciousness examens (cf. [SpEx 24-32]), the attention to the movements and agitations of the various spirits (cf. [SpEx 177]), the *Rules of Discernment*, etc., constitute a constant exercise in awareness. The quality of this awareness of one’s consciousness is indicative of one’s maturity as an individual and of the depth of one’s spiritual experiences.

In Gestalt therapy the levels of consciousness or awareness are seven: *I think, I know (cognitive), I feel, I love, I know (felt knowledge), I am, Being*. (1) The one giving the Exercises must learn how to listen to what the exercitant reveals or hides through the words he or she uses to express what they *think*. The giver will pay close attention to determine whether the exercitant is “narrating things” to avoid paying attention to the Spirit through direct contact with his/her experience. More than narrating things, what is important is to express what has happened (cf. [SpEx 17]). (2) We *know* more than what we think we know. We have learned to communicate only a small part of our wisdom or knowledge. What we *know* often guides our life tacitly. The potential wisdom of our body sometimes is not consciously revealed to us, but it is there. So, at times we cannot plausibly explain decisions that have more to do with our wisdom than with our knowledge, with our common sense than with the logic of our concepts. Being in touch with the body appropriately can be a source of our becoming aware that in certain occasions, what is related to our bodies can go beyond our thoughts. It can be more spontaneously eloquent depending on the extent that we do not inhibit it and that we learn to understand its language. St Ignatius realised this and expressed it, for example, in the *Rules for Ordering oneself in the taking of food* (cf. [SpEx 210-217]) or the use of different postures in prayer (cf. [SpEx 76]).

(3) *I feel*. The world of our feeling can subtly escape our conceptual models. In some cases, forcibly displaced people do not know what they feel, or they do not allow themselves to feel—because it might just be too painful—and in others they might even hold within themselves contradictory feelings. Yet, becoming aware of one’s emotional area can entail a great source or energy of transformation. In the Gestalt vision, a chronic emotional blockage rooted deep in one’s infancy is part of the ‘illness’. To recover genuine emotions and to be able to express them is a path towards psychic health. The contemplative task of the Exercises, especially during the Second Week, bases its effectiveness in fostering or

energising the area of the ‘I feel’: *No el mucho saber harta y satisfice al ánima, mas el sentir y gustar de las cosas internamente* (cf. [SpEx 2]). In the process of identification with and following of Jesus, it is deep and authentic feelings that affect conduct and encourage vital decisions.

(4) *I love. Tell me what you love (where your heart is), and I will tell you who you are.* In the Gestalt vision also, becoming aware of one’s outlook on love, of one’s love, one is able to access the truth about oneself, the reality of the other and of the totally Other. Love has made us grow as persons and when we are capable of truly saying “I love”, we are giving the best fruit of our life. All of this is very present in the Ignatian pedagogy of the *Exercises*: “divest oneself of self-love, self-will and self-interests” ([SpEx 189]); “to ask for interior knowledge [...] that I may love him more” ([SpEx 104]); “to love and serve in all things” ([SpEx 233]).

(5) *I know (felt knowledge).* This knowledge goes beyond data knowledge or even our wisdom; it can be understood rather as a lucid dimension of love (cf. [SpEx 233]). This love is the only real way of knowing the other (cf. [SpEx 230]). Here lies the *discreta caritas*, the discerning of love as one of the primary fruits of the Exercises. (6) *I am.* Going deeper into our ‘awareness’ leads us to an intuition of the ‘I am’. Beyond my roles, feelings, conducts that give me hints of my identity, I reach at my ‘own self’ without denying any part of my existential footprint. I know who I am and simply what I am. (7) *Being.* The loss of the ‘self’ that is brought about in love has, in the gratuitous experience of being, its scope and its mystery. This is the language of faith, and it invites us to venture deeper into God and to lose ourselves in God to find ourselves in a new way. Grace and freedom, death and life. The *Contemplation to Attain Love* (cf. [SpEx 233]) that begins by recognising that we have been reached by Love, allows us to encounter in God the unity that we sensed. This mystical union with the Being of God allows each of us personally to know who I am, who, definitely, ‘I am’.

The common thread of the three therapeutic techniques we have presented in this section¹¹² is their focus on the emotional health of persons, helping them, among other things to deal

¹¹² Several other techniques are obviously available. For a survey of some of these other methods and their possible uses in relation to the *Spiritual Exercises*, see for example the various contributions in the SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL DE PSICOLOGÍA Y EJERCICIOS IGNACIANOS, *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos: la transformación del yo en la experiencia de los Ejercicios Espirituales*, pp. 231-406.

holistically with previous experiences in their lives, grow in awareness both of their past but especially their present circumstances and conditions, and be able to achieve greater personal agency and responsibility. These are desirable objectives for all, but especially for survivors of forced displacement whose experiences of trauma and dislocation have negatively affected these aspects of their lives. As we know, the Spiritual Exercises, help us deepen the love that finds God in all things and to discern our particular paths of service in God’s reign. As we have seen, some of these healing concepts and techniques can contribute to the spiritual transformation sought after in the Exercises and help exercitants enter more fully into the overall experience.

2.4. The impact of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices on psycho-sociological issues

Comprehensive research on the impact of religion and spirituality on physical and mental ailments has been widely and comprehensively carried out for at least a hundred and twenty years, ever since William James’ seminal work (1902) explored different forms of religious experience and their possible therapeutic effects.¹¹³ Evidence from such research has shown that religious and spiritual beliefs and practices can indeed help prevent many physical and mental illnesses:

[...] reducing both symptom severity and relapse rate, speeding up and enhancing recovery, as well as rendering distress and disability easier to endure. Especially important is that religious and spiritual factors can significantly affect the presentation of mental disorder. Furthermore, psychiatric patients have consistently identified spiritual needs as an important issue, and spiritual care as contributing to symptom relief and general well-being.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ WILLIAM JAMES, *The varieties of religious experience: a study in human nature (Gifford lectures on natural religion delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902)*, New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1902.

¹¹⁴ Cf. LARRY CULLIFORD, “Healing from Within: Spirituality and Mental Health” (2005), <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/LarryCullifordHealingSpirituality.pdf>. Accessed 10 July 2018. The content and references in this section are based on this illustrative article. Of course, not all religious beliefs and practices are beneficial and their potentially harmful effects—particularly those associated with religion—have been identified by health professionals (especially psychologists and psychotherapists) as well. William James, for example, found it necessary to differentiate between two forms of religion and two related personality types: he suggested that one form of religion is closely tied to psychopathology, the ‘twice-born religion of sick-souled individuals’, but he also argued that in some cases religion could be an important source of health for some of these people. And for those whom he called healthy-minded, religion was associated with a marked absence of signs of pathological ‘melancholy’. On the other hand, for Freud religion was not only associated with mental illness, it was mental illness—he called it a “universal obsessional neurosis of humanity” (cf. *The Future of an illusion*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1961, first published 1930). For Jung, on the other hand, religion was necessary for mental health (cf. *Modern man in search of a soul*, New York: Harcourt 1933) and like Jung, Allport (cf. *The individual and his religion*, New York: Macmillan 1950) considered religion to be a potentially important contributor to mental health; in fact, he contended that religion is “superior to psychotherapy” in that it focuses “upon the important human need for love and relationship to a degree that psychotherapy does not”, cf. C. DANIEL BATSON and W. LARRY VENTIS, *The Religious Experience: A Social-Psychological Perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1982, pp. 212-214. Some of the possible harmful effects linked with religion include: negative

In addressing the spiritual contribution towards the healing of illness, the point of departure is the principle that religious and spiritual beliefs and practices can help foster a *positive attitude* even in the most seemingly hopeless situations. Often, through adversities people become more resilient, mature and emotionally stronger, and while medical care still involves the relief of unnecessary pain and suffering whenever possible, spiritual sensitivity and awareness can add a powerful dimension when one’s human limits are surpassed: by focusing on both inner and external sources of strength, spiritual awareness fosters peace in the place of anxiety and encourages hope in place of despair.¹¹⁵

Because spirituality is linked to one’s search for meaning and purpose in one’s life, as well as a sense of belonging and of community, both in times of harmony and also when loss and bereavement, pain and suffering assail us, it can offer possible contributions not only to psychology and psychiatry but also to other medical fields. In fact, more and more medical staff and patients have come to realise the therapeutic value that elements such as faith, hope, belief in the ‘transcendent’ and other specific religious beliefs can have in the healing process. Some of the transcendence-related factors include: connectedness to a spiritual being or force, awe, inner strength and peace, serenity, harmony, detachment, consolation and sense of control over one’s life. Other factors, such as attitudes or approaches to personal relationships (e.g. kindness to and acceptance of others, selflessness, and forgiveness) and specific ‘codes to live by’, which go beyond religious affiliation, have also been found to contribute to the healing process.¹¹⁶

effects on psychological health associated with a person’s belief in a distant or intolerant deity; negative psychological effects on people of group disapproval involving criticism and loss of support; over-scrupulosity; risks associated with people failing to seek timely medical care and when people seek alternative, unsuccessful treatments; scriptural influences resulting in people stopping necessary medication; adverse effects on metabolism and medication use of religious devotees when fasting; becoming (as in the case of many forcibly displaced peoples) a victim of persecution because of one’s religious beliefs, cf. CULLIFORD, “Healing from Within: Spirituality and Mental Health”, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ Some recent studies on the positive effects of religion and spirituality on health issues include: J. SWINTON, *Spirituality and Mental Health Care: Rediscovering a Forgotten Dimension*, London: Jessica Kingsley 2001; H. KOENIG, M. MCCULLOUGH and D. LARSON, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001; LARRY CULLIFORD “Spiritual Care and Psychiatric Treatment: An Introduction” in *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* 8 (2002) 249-261; P. GREASLEY, L.F. CHIU and M. GARTLAND, “The concept of spiritual care in mental health nursing” in *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 33, n. 5 (2001) 629-637; LARRY CULLIFORD, *The Psychology of Spirituality: an Introduction*, London: Jessica Kingsley 2011; LISA J. MILLER, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Psychology and Spirituality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012; RAYMOND F. PALOUTZIAN, and CRYSTAL L. PARK, eds., *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 2nd ed., New York: The Guilford Press 2015.

¹¹⁶ Cf. WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, “*World Health Organisation Quality of Life and Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs: Report on WHO Consultation*”, Geneva: WHO 1998.

In fact, the significance attributed to these factors by the medical field is attested in several clinically tested screening instruments (used in conjunction with other psychiatric assessments, for example) that have been developed in order to provide a ‘spiritual screening’ and facilitate appropriate spiritual support to patients, based on their religious and spiritual history.¹¹⁷ It is expected that a person’s responses to these instruments will indicate his or her main spiritual approaches and concerns and based on these, an assessment can be made of what significantly helpful inner personal resources people have access to, but also what external supports from their particular faith traditions and faith communities are available to them. As we have emphasised repeatedly in regards to forcibly displaced people, the context—in their case, their forced displacement experiences, social dynamics, cultural traditions, psychological issues, among others—needs to be considered when making an assessment of a person’s spiritual needs.

Another evidence of the current importance attributed to spiritual and religious beliefs and practices in the healing process is the development of pastoral care teams in many hospitals which often include representatives (religious/ordained or lay chaplains) of various faith traditions, as well as the creation of ‘sacred spaces’ for patients and their families. Specific training to develop greater spiritual ‘intelligence’ and awareness is now offered widely to mental health professionals, and curricula on spirituality-and-medicine have been developed to include in medical and nursing school programs in various countries. Research methods continue to be developed as well which hope to provide more informative and reliable results on particular areas; the efficacy of ‘mindfulness meditation’ in the prevention of relapse or occurrence in cases of major depression, for example, has been of much interest in recent times. And as expected, protocols on professional boundaries, competency and ethics in the spiritual-medical area have followed suit.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Cf. M. KING, P. SPECK and A. THOMAS, “The Royal Free interview for religious and spiritual beliefs: development and validation of a self-report version” in *Psychological Medicine* 31 (2001) 1015-1023; R. HATCH, M. BURG, D. NABERHAUS and L. HELLMICH, “The Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale: Development and Testing of a New Instrument” in *Journal of Family Practice* 46 (1998) 476-486.

¹¹⁸ Cf. S. DEIN, “Working with patients with religious beliefs” in *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* 10 (2004) 287-295; C. PUCHALSKI and D. LARSON, “Developing curricula in spirituality and medicine” in *Academic Medicine* 73, n. 9 (1998) 970-974; D. LARSON, J. SWYERS, and M. MCCULLOUGH, *Scientific Research on Spirituality and Health: A Consensus report*, Rockville, MD: National Institute for Healthcare Research 1998; J. TEASDALE and J. WILLIAMS, ET AL., “Prevention of relapse/recurrence in major depression by mindfulness-based cognitive therapy” in *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 68, n. 4 (2000) 615-623; S. POST, C.

In the spiritual perspective, a distinction or differentiation needs to be made between curing a person’s symptoms (interventionist approach) and helping a person to heal (restorative dimension). This is significant because by focusing on the relief of suffering through addressing and overcoming the symptoms (a short-range though necessary ‘solution’), the more gradual process or journey to wholeness and healing which might in fact require the development of personal maturity gained through adversity, could be side-tracked or even considered as irrelevant. And this would be a loss, not only for patients but also for their carers and medical professionals. In fact, through engaging in the spiritual dimension of healing, many have discovered another principle of spiritual care—reciprocity—in which giver and receiver both benefit from their interaction. A final aspect that should be mentioned is that spiritual and religious beliefs and practices can provide that ‘silent space’ in which people come together in solidarity and compassion to share in grieving when not much else in ‘medical terms’ can be done, but where significant healing can still take place.

Beyond physical and even mental health, it is this quest for wholeness and holistic healing, for finding purpose and meaning, which survivors of forced displacement so deeply desire. In the next Part of this chapter, we explore some of the possible ‘content’—both experiential and psychological—that survivors of forced displacement, because of their particular circumstances, might bring on this quest and which givers of the Exercises will need to consider so as to respond in the most appropriate and relevant way to their spiritual needs.

Part III: Moving forward and beyond the forced displacement experience

When we think of the experiences of refugees, and forcibly displaced peoples in general, we often think of war, violence, dislocation, trauma. When we imagine their possible reactions to these experiences, we think of fear, desolation, anguish, courage, hate, hopelessness, despair, pain, resignation, woundedness, etc. And much of this is true. Yet, there are other responses we might not think intuitively about: a forcibly displaced person’s capacity for resilience, for hoping against all hope, for compassion and for boundless forgiveness. Some of these reactions or responses are ‘naturally’ instinctive, while others are purposeful, requiring effort and focused determination. They all intermingle in a narrative of displacement sometimes predominated by a feeling of emptiness and futility, but at others teeming with purpose and meaning.

Survivors of forced displacement want to move forward and beyond their forced displacement experience, leaving behind those feelings of ‘emptiness and futility’. They want to regain their agency in life, set goals for the future and contribute to the lives of others and the well-being of their new communities. Having looked into some of the psychological issues that might prevent them from doing this (and therefore the need to address them), in this Part III we explore some areas that might contribute to this moving forward. These include: telling of personal stories; mourning and closure; sustaining one’s faith and hope, and the need for forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. We also consider some aspects which are specific to the experience of forcibly displaced women. They are all important factors which givers of the Exercises need consider when offering spiritual resources to ex-refugees. To provide a better context and ground these issues in real life experiences, we continue the practice of sharing stories or short testimonies from forcibly displaced people throughout this section.

This Part III of the chapter is the longest and it needs to be so because, as mentioned, its content deals with *the* content that survivors of forced displacement will bring to their experience of the Exercises—their stories, their faith and hope, their need for closure, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. These are all issues that have been influenced by their past and that continue to ‘colour’ their present lives. And, more importantly for us, we believe that how these issues are addressed in the Exercises could have a significant contribution to their future: in how they experience deeper healing, find greater meaning and

purpose, discern their place in their communities of faith and even discover their mission within these communities. Thus, because these aspects can provide such valuable insights into the reality of survivors of forced displacement as ‘subjects’ of the Exercises we seek to offer, we address them in detail in this chapter and particularly at this juncture in our exploration. Finally, as we look at each of these elements, it is important to keep asking ourselves, as potential givers of the Exercises for survivors of forced displacement, “What if anything can the *Spiritual Exercises* ‘say’ to these issues that might give new intuitions or understandings in how to deal with them as we offer *spiritual exercises* to the forcibly displaced? How is each of these issues life-draining? How can they become life-giving? Of course, we hope to apply these learnings to the Exercises we will develop in the next chapter.

3.1. Let me tell you a story

The life of a refugee is not easy. What I would say to people who work with refugees is that they should be patient enough to listen with care to what we have to say. *Christine, a Sudanese refugee in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya*¹¹⁹

Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel once wrote:

You want to know about the kingdom of night? There is no way to describe the kingdom of night. But let me tell you a story [...]. You want to know about the condition of the human heart? There is no way to describe the condition of the human heart. But let me tell you a story [...]. You want a description of the indescribable? There is no way to describe the indescribable. But let me tell you a story [...]¹²⁰

A Hebrew proverb says that stories are told not to get children to sleep, but to awaken grown-ups. There is no doubt that in telling stories we ‘awake’ to meaning in our lives. As individuals and as communities we live through stories that give shape and objective to our experiences, filled with joys and sorrows. Stories make up history. History tells stories. As Christians, we derive our hope from living within a particular story—the history of salvation. Forcibly displaced people of faith also derive hope from this story, and they transmit this hope through their own personal stories of endurance, resilience, and survival—stories that also reveal their particular way of relating to God which, if we allow them to, can enrich our own. In listening to forcibly displaced people’s stories with this particular intention—unveiling their part in our shared history of salvation—we enter into the field of narrative theology.

¹¹⁹ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 53.

¹²⁰ Quoted in RICHARD LEONARD, *Where the Hell is God?* Mahwah, New Jersey: HiddenSpring/Paulist Press, 2010, p. x.

3.1.1. Understanding our ‘foundational’ story: Narrative theology and our shared history of salvation

Narrative theology teaches that the Scriptures are seen as the story of the relationship and interaction between God and God’s people, and that they help us discern how today we can play our part in this continuing story of salvation. In other words, if we read the Scriptures through the lens of narrative theology, we find that they propose or offer the founding experiences of all Christian life. Narrative theology comes to this conclusion by examining the relationship between narrative as a literary form and theological reflection. It is a relationship derived from the basic observation that “it is in the reading, telling and interpretation of narratives that humans derive their communal and personal identity as well as provide a basis for meaningful activity in the world”.¹²¹ Opening the Bible, readers discover a story—an unfolding account of creation, Fall, redemption and promised post-Resurrection consummation—that envelops their own story and places the question of hope and faith inescapably before them, “if this is the veritable narrative of God, how shall we respond?” Thus,

[...] it can be argued that divine revelation, rather than being seen as a set of abstract principles, ought to be seen as an event and understood as a narrative: in other words, the story of Exodus, the subsequent story of the Chosen People, the story of Jesus, his death and resurrection, these are the substance of divine revelation. Furthermore, it is precisely through narrative that God reveals himself to us, and narrative is his chosen means of communication. This would mean moving individual stories from the category of useful illustrative examples to the very heart of theology itself.¹²²

We see here two emphases essential to narrative theology: a restoring of Scripture’s significance as the story of God and the revelation of God in Jesus Christ (cf. Karl Barth) and how the divine story intersects our own individually, communally and universally.¹²³ The encounter between these two emphases has led theologians to explore the implications of this approach in various fields of theology.

Thus, one of the main proponents of narrative theology, Hans Frei, argues that though the Bible records ‘historical’ events, it is narrative itself that reveals the spiritual and theological

¹²¹ T. HARVEY, “Narrative Theology” in William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, eds., *Global Dictionary of Theology*, Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press 2008, p. 598.

¹²² ALEXANDER LUCIE-SMITH, *Narrative Theology and Moral Theology: the infinite horizon*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing 2007, pp. 1-2.

¹²³ Cf. HARVEY, “Narrative Theology”, p. 599.

meaning in them.¹²⁴ Richard Niebuhr has focused on the impact of narrative on the basic beliefs and convictions of Christians, and how their belief in the Word transforms their whole conception of what is appropriate, by questioning their understanding of the context into which they now fit all their actions.¹²⁵ And rather than approaching doctrine as a set of propositional truths that seek to explain transcendent realities (cf. systematic theology), George Lindbeck views doctrines primarily as ‘cultural and linguistic rules of faith’, which explains the ways diverse communities configure the narrative of salvation differently.¹²⁶ From a more philosophical perspective, Paul Ricoeur sees narratives as ‘configurations’ of reality presenting, through symbols and metaphors, a certain picture of the way the world is, but also of the way the world should be or should become. Thus, for Ricoeur, symbol precedes thought and, when derived from narrative, serves “as subsequent catalyst in the rational process of configuring experience into concordant rationality”.¹²⁷ The contribution of narrative theology to the field of Christian ethics has come primarily through Stanley Hauerwas who finds the ‘vision of the good’ through the biblical narratives which, if we permit them, can direct our activity in the world; in other words, for Hauerwas narrative describes both how we ought to see and intend the world.¹²⁸

Though the validity of the narrative approach has its criticisms (for example, that it does not provide a coherent movement either methodologically or theologically but rather a variety of methodological and theological concerns and appraisals, and that it can degenerate into an ‘each-to-his-own’ relativistic approach to Scriptural interpretation to suit one’s agendas) we can also see, from the few descriptive statements above, its diverse contributions to theology. Of relevance to us, is how the significance of biblical narratives can be found by asking how a reader might take the world depicted in them to be his or her own world, or by exploring how

¹²⁴ Cf. HANS FREI, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1974; and also by Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Basis of Dogmatic Theology*, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press 1975.

¹²⁵ Cf. RICHARD NIEBUHR, *The Responsible Self: An Essay on Christian Moral Philosophy*, Louisville: Westminster John Know 1999 [1963], p. 107. See also his *The Meaning of Revelation*, New York: Macmillan 1967.

¹²⁶ Cf. GEORGE LINDBECK, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age*, Philadelphia: Westminster 1984.

¹²⁷ Cf. HARVEY, “Narrative Theology”, p. 600. Cf. PAUL RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative*, vols. 1-3, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1984-1988, and also Ricoeur’s *The Symbolism of Evil*, New York: Harper & Row 1967.

¹²⁸ Cf. STANLEY HAUERWAS, *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection*, Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers 1974; also by Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 1981.

the characters and incidents of the story can become ‘types’ of the reader’s own world. To do this, it can be revealing to compare Frei’s and Hauerwas’ approaches or ‘versions’ of narrative theology. As mentioned, Frei emphasises how readers ought to stay close to the details of biblical narratives, in terms of how meaning is made through interpretation and practical reasoning.¹²⁹ He believes the Bible as a whole describes what we might consider another world, which we will discover if we pay close attention to the words and phrases of the biblical narratives. This flow and logic of the Bible as a narrative—a written account of connected events—not only describes a world into which we are invited, but it can also form us into being God’s people through Jesus Christ.

For Hauerwas, the questions that need to be asked are “How does the Christian narrative develop—how does its tradition unfold—over time through the life and practices of the church?” and “How does Christian discipleship and liturgical practice make sense of the biblical narrative?” In other words, for him the Bible only makes sense as it becomes interpreted and enacted within the life of the Church by its ‘witnesses’.¹³⁰ “For Hauerwas, what is required of a witness within the Christian tradition is that the form of a person’s life takes on the shape of the narrative of which he or she stands as witness”,¹³¹ that they make the Christian story their own, that they ‘own’ it. To the ethical-related questions “Why are we doing this?” or “Why ought we to do this?”, the answers will be contained in the traditional story that constitutes the heart of our Christian community’s identity. And this tradition has to be grounded in particularity, rooted in time, place and in the history of each community. As it would be impossible to understand the significance of the Decalogue without understanding also the history of the ‘Chosen People’, it would also be very difficult to explain the Christian understanding of the principles of respect of human life and the preferential option for the

¹²⁹ Frei’s concern is that the biblical narratives have lost their normativity and primacy within modern theology: “The eclipse of biblical narrative is a result [...] of slow developments within modern philosophy that prioritised a *mode of explanation* of particular features of narratives within the Bible over the ‘literal sense’ of those narratives. The basic features of Frei’s corrective proposal are to give more attention to the narratives, themselves, and less attention to *explaining* the ‘meaning’ or ‘truth’ of those narratives [...]. Frei works with the details of individual narratives, and he thinks that each narrative has its own ‘integrity’”. Cf. JACOB L. GOODSON, *Narrative Theology and the Hermeneutical Virtues*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books 2015, pp. 37-38.

¹³⁰ Cf. STANLEY HAUERWAS, *With a Grain of the Universe: The Church’s Witness and Natural Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press 2001.

¹³¹ GOODSON, *Narrative Theology and the Hermeneutical Virtues*, p. 45. Goodson adds: “Hauerwas grounds his reasoning [...] in his understanding of creation and, more importantly, why it is the case that we are not self-creators. We are given a story to participate in (or refuse), and it is not a story of our own making. Christians are those people who recognise this [...]. Christians do not make up their own stories but, rather, participate in God’s story, which means that the story continues with or without us”, p. 49.

poor and vulnerable without explaining also the Incarnation and Christ’s predilection for the marginalised.¹³²

Attention to narrative rather than to individual acts provides a key to understanding the individual person and that person’s identity.¹³³ Because each story helps to form and shape the person, we must decide not only how the stories of others shape us, but also whether or not we want to be shaped by these stories. As mentioned before, as Christians we are given a story not of our own making (it is God’s story of salvation) to participate in or to refuse to do so. If we allow the story of Jesus to shape us as Christians, we can discover ourselves in that story—a story whose unique quality rises out of the experience of Jesus’ Incarnation, revealing the healing and loving presence of God in people’s lives. And because Jesus lived through human life and death, his story enables us to find meaning in life and in death as an openness to a transformed life.¹³⁴ At the same time, any human embodiment of the story of Jesus relates an interpretation which we need to view as provisional. No one interpretation gives us the final and ultimate meaning of the ‘text’.¹³⁵

In a similar way, we can give ‘human embodiment’ to other biblical narratives in our shared history of salvation as groups or individuals depending on our circumstances. For forcibly displaced peoples, as we have mentioned in previous chapters, it is the biblical ‘travel’ stories which are of particular significance. These follow a ‘regular’ pattern: having a home, losing one’s home and the hope and attainment of renewed homecoming. In the biblical narratives, when God calls, people answer by leaving their homes. Abraham leaves the home of his ancestors; the apostles give up father, mother, and home. The call and the journey disrupts their placid lives. As these narratives are read (or incarnated, as in the case of the forcibly displaced), we find ourselves wandering with the Israelites through the Sinai or walking with Jesus, who has no place to lay his head, and remember the past saving deeds of God, trusting in God’s protection and in the support of our communities. For this is a truism: we cannot accomplish the journey by ourselves. We need the support of our neighbours; we need to have others with whom to share our journeys and stories.

¹³² Cf. LUCIE-SMITH, *Narrative Theology and Moral Theology*, p. 6.

¹³³ Cf. STANLEY HAUSER, EDWARD BONDI and DAVID BURRELL, *Truthfulness and tragedy: further investigations into Christian ethics*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 1977, p. 20.

¹³⁴ Cf. MICHAEL GALVAN, “Tell Me a Story: Healing Life’s Wounds” in *The Way* 29, n. 2 (1989) 138-141.

¹³⁵ Cf. GEORGE W. STROUP, *The Promise of Narrative Theology: Recovering the Gospel in the Church*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981, pp. 167-169.

3.1.2. *Stories that open our eyes and our hearts*

Although it is often quoted that a picture is worth a thousand words, and certainly images of forcibly displaced people can often reveal a great deal about their plight, this can never compare to listening to the stories told by them in their own words. It is imperative, therefore, that we take time and reflect upon these stories and the ways we are invited to respond to them. Volunteers or staff working with refugees might ask them to share their stories to learn about them, about their difficulties, their needs, so they can help them. Usually, in these cases, the information that is revealed is factual—a simple and straightforward record of events easily understood, but mostly devoid of an affective quality. That is not to say that refugees might not express, in some cases, a great deal of feeling—of pain, suffering, frustration, and anger—as they narrate their stories, but more often than not those feelings are restrained, withheld. But there is another level of story-sharing, in which these feelings can only be revealed when a deeper relationship is established between the narrator and the hearer.

In some cases, forcibly displaced people might initially choose to take refuge in silence, the price of recalling and articulating their experience being simply too high to pay. Others, however, might feel a responsibility, a deep-seated duty to recall and offer as many details, and as accurately as possible, of their terrible odyssey, for to “tell their stories accurately is an act of piety to those who have died and a testimony that gives value to the narrator’s life”.¹³⁶ The gravity of these stories demands that we listen to them with utmost respect. They stir up in us a response that might surprise us, that draws us into a space that might be new, unknown and frightening, and thus might incite us to run away, to avoid being drawn into this daunting place. It is in situations like this that we must make a decision, to either say “stop, I need to hear no more”, or to open ourselves to the possibilities that these revelations can bring:

Many times deep stories are told, sometimes at night, which are narrated with difficulty and make heavy demands on the hearer. They bless both the refugee and volunteer by bringing the two together. When this happens, both have acknowledged their mutual need. The volunteer has been able to communicate hope, a vision of the possibilities of life; the refugee has been able to free the volunteer for the kind of friendship that alone can help him or her bear the burden that the story imposes.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Cf. ANDREW HAMILTON, “On the borders of life” in Adrian Lyons, ed., *Voices, stories, hopes. Cambodia and Vietnam: Refugees and Volunteers. Members and friends of the Jesuit Refugee Service*, North Blackburn, Victoria: Collins Dove 1993, p. 153. Hamilton continues: “These stories include their readers but in the same way as they are included in religious ritual. We are included in events that remain mysterious to us and which are to be entered and pondered with respect”.

¹³⁷ Cf. HAMILTON, “On the borders of life”, p. 153.

As we are invited to listen to stories of displacement, we should do so realising that we hold a responsibility towards those who narrate these stories to try to understand what they have gone through, to ‘hear’ in them the testimony they give to the many who *have died* and to the more who have struggled for so long trying to uphold the value of dignity in their lives.

Listening to forcibly displaced people’s stories can then help us understand better their plight so we can debunk myths spread by those who would rather keep the ‘doors’ of our countries shut to those seeking refuge. Sometimes, the reaction of many people in developed nations such as Australia seems to imply that refugees have taken advantage of their plight to get here, as an excuse to make it to this country. But this perception could not be further from the truth:

Surely the only way to learn about the hope of a refugee is to listen to her. Our biggest temptation on seeing the distress of the refugees in Karagwe or Fungnido Camp, or in a city like Johannesburg or Nairobi, is to begin projects, to give material things, to decide en masse what the refugees need. They often arrive in exile without shoes, with only one torn shirt, hungry, without a clear plan. But they did not undergo this experience in order to get a shirt or shoes. Their human experience calls for respect. They are traumatised by violence, lonely, rejected, exhausted in body certainly, but also exhausted by losing their place in a stable society, and sometimes feeling guilty about what they did in order to survive. They want to be understood, to be heard. Their frequent question is, ‘Why is God doing this to me?’ They have a right to ask this question. But I cannot be asked unless someone listens. This is our primary role, to listen to the questions, to the longing and to the fundamental human need of the refugees.¹³⁸

And one of those fundamental needs is the need of healing. So stories need to be told also to help bring about this healing, as forcibly displaced people strive to make sense of their deeply painful past experiences:

Michelle fled from Burundi after spending over two years in the forest, seeking shelter from the fierce fighting around her and hoping that one day it would stop [...]. In the forest they lived in hiding, unable to cook, lest the smoke betrayed their location, and unable to move except at night, when they would search for edible leaves. Michelle lost two of her five children during those years in the forest. Her eldest daughter was shot dead as she bathed her child in the river, she was 20 years old. The child survived and is cared for by Michelle as her own. Michelle lost her own baby: she was shot while sleeping on Michelle’s back by a bullet which grazed her mother’s cheek. Many of the people living alongside Michelle in the forest also died: some of starvation, others when they stepped on landmines buried around the area to keep the people hostage.

As it became more and more clear that peace was not forthcoming in Burundi, Michelle decided to go to neighbouring Tanzania. Today, she has found refuge in a camp in western

¹³⁸ JRS International Director (1990-2000) Mark Raper SJ, speaking on “Pastoral accompaniment among refugees—the JRS experience”, September 1998. Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge: Essential Documents of Jesuit Refugee Service, 1980-2000*, Rome: JRS Publications 2005, p. 87.

Tanzania, and apparent peace. But she is not without sorrow and remorse. At times, she is stricken with guilt that she survived when those around her did not.

When I met Michelle, I soon realised she loves to talk, but it seemed to me as though she did not have anyone to talk to, to express her innermost feelings and fears. All those with her are equally tired, they do not have the energy to listen to her. Yet she needs to share her thoughts so much. When talking to me, telling me her story, it was as though she could not stop.¹³⁹

Some survivors of forced displacement might need to only share their stories once. Others, might need to do so many times over, until they are able to stop. As their companions we are invited to listen with patience and empathy to their stories—not only those about past events, but also their new stories and narratives as they are being developed in their countries of resettlement—and to be willing to be part of those stories and help shape them, if we are so invited.

Human experiences are organised in the form of stories—the ones we tell about ourselves and the ones others tell about us, and also the ones shared among members of particular groups of people, such as families, communities and ethnic groups. In other words, as human beings in relationship, people interact on the basis of:

[...] belief systems that shape their perceptions of themselves, of others and of their relationships. Moreover, these belief systems do not exist in a vacuum but form part of shared narratives [...]. In a sense, it could be argued that in so far as our lives are shaped by storied narratives, we can affect them to a considerable degree if we modified the way we represent them in our narratives. There is a reciprocal relationship between the stories we tell about ourselves and our lives; one affects the other in a way that we are both actors and authors of our stories.¹⁴⁰

This concept is the basic rationale behind a fairly new form of psychotherapy known as ‘narrative therapy’ and also of the process of healing of memories which we will explore later in this chapter.¹⁴¹ Through narrative therapy a counsellor seeks to help a person ‘co-author’ a new narrative about himself or herself by identifying their core values and the knowledge and skills they have in order to live according to these values, with the purpose of confronting more effectively the problems they face. The narrative therapist focuses upon assisting people to create stories about themselves and about their identities that are helpful to them. The story people tell about themselves and that others tell about them is important in this approach

¹³⁹ Told by Sarah Njeri, JRS Eastern Africa. Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 62.

¹⁴⁰ PAPADOPOULOS and HILDEBRAND, “Is Home Where the Heart Is? Narratives of Oppositional Discourses in Refugee Families”, p. 214.

¹⁴¹ Narrative therapy, together with logotherapy (cf. V. Frankl) and ‘meaning-centred counselling’, share the same orientation or approach, which is often referred to as ‘meaning-oriented positive psychotherapy’.

which claims that the story of a person’s identity can help determine what they think is possible for themselves.

Following this paradigm, forcibly displaced people should be able to modify their stories and develop new ones to help them make their past predicaments intelligible; moreover, they could also formulate their ideas regarding possible predictable developments in the future. The creation of these stories does not merely express a particular preference or view; rather, they constitute living realities which will determine how and where the forcibly displaced will locate “their own sense of identity” and how they will position themselves in relation to their families, communities and the wider network of institutions and society of their receiving country.¹⁴²

While individuals might opt for a particular narrative, groups might also do so and a new narrative can replace an older one as time progresses. In Australia, for example, the main orientation of most Vietnamese ex-refugees has been to put all their efforts into adaptation and the creation of a new home here, their host society, particularly in the case of the second generation—born in Australia of Vietnamese parents. As we will see later in this chapter, the Sudanese-Australian community, which arrived more recently, has tended to favour an emphasis on remaining connected, as much as possible, to their pre-war society. As expected, when a particular member of one of these larger communities chooses a different narrative, conflict arises. And as expected too, these conflicts are often inter-generational, with older ex-refugees continuing to be more focused on the past, while adolescents and young adults being more concerned to establish a future for themselves and their families in their new homes. In the next chapter we will explore in greater detail the techniques of narrative therapy and how to apply them in the design of our spiritual exercises.

3.2. Mourning and closure

The painful experiences of forcibly displaced people generally involve a process of dislocation and loss, of letting go, and even of mourning in various ways. We usually think of mourning when someone we love dies. But we can also mourn in many other situations. For the forcibly displaced there is the deep mourning they feel when they are forced to leave their

¹⁴² PAPADOPOULOS and HILDEBRAND, “Is Home Where the Heart Is? Narratives of Oppositional Discourses in Refugee Families”, p. 218.

country of birth. Leaving friends and family is among the most painful moments in anyone’s life, especially in violent and conflicting situations. It means the disintegration of one’s emotional world, as well as the weakening, if not altogether disappearance, of one’s support system. Most displaced people also mourn the loss of their homeland, as the affective relationship with the land is deeply powerful in their cultures, because through the land their ancestors continue to be present to them. The forcibly displaced also mourn their not being able to use their native language on a daily basis: resettling in a country where another language is spoken can be difficult and even traumatic. One’s ideas, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and knowledge are communicated through the medium of a shared language and a shared culture. Likewise, changes in scenery, vegetation, weather as well as the movement from a rural to an urban setting can take a toll on the psyche of the displaced. And they can also mourn the loss of their own health, both physical and psychological. From the moment they leave their home nations, displaced peoples are exposed to innumerable health risks ranging from malnutrition and having to eat ‘strange and indigestible’ foods, to exposure to infectious diseases and allergies.¹⁴³

The process of mourning is not just about getting used to and accepting what has been lost. It requires different stages and, depending on the type of loss, varying periods of time. Though not originally intended for all types of loss, the concept of the “five stages of grief” introduced in 1969 by Swiss psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross is helpful to give an idea of what this process of mourning might involve.¹⁴⁴ These “5 stages of grief” include: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. In ‘simple’ terms the progression could go something like this: *denial*: “This cannot happen to me!”; *anger*: “Why did this happen to me? Who’s to

¹⁴³ Cf. CARDINAL RODRÍGUEZ, ‘*A Witness to Hope: Migration and Human Solidarity*’, pp. xii-xiv. So, in a sense, the often-heard expression in refugees’ lips, “We have lost everything” is not an exaggeration, but an apt description of their experience of loss, where even their dignity and sense of meaning has been tragically compromised. In the words of Aung San Suu Kyi: “Those who work with refugees are in the best position to know that when people have been stripped of all their material supports there only remain to sustain them the values of their cultural and spiritual inheritance. It occurred to me that the Burmese expression for refugee is *dukkha*—the ‘one who has to bear suffering’. In that sense, none of us can avoid knowing what it is to be a refugee. The refuge we all seek is protection from forces which wrench us away from the security and comfort, physical and mental, which give dignity and meaning to human existence”. Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. ELISABETH KÜBLER-ROSS, *On death and dying*, New York: Macmillan 1969. Kübler-Ross created her model while working with people dying of cancer. Her stages were meant to apply to the phases of grief a dying person goes through, not those grieving the death of another person or other type of loss. There is no single pathway or progression through grief, and that is the main weakness of any attempt to stage grief like this. Kübler-Ross later stated that she never intended for this concept to be considered as a ‘neat package’ that described that single pathway. In fact, the different stages can be experienced multiple times, at the same time, and in any order.

blame for this?”; *bargaining*: “Just let me live or reach safety and I’ll do anything”; *depression*: “I am too sad and too overwhelmed to do anything”; and *acceptance*: “I’m at peace with what has happened and with what is coming”. Again, these feelings could be experienced in different order, or more than once, or more than one at the same time. Yet, in terms of the forced displacement experience, and some of the different aspects of loss mentioned above, they do give a good indication of what survivors of forced displacement might have gone through in the past and might be going through as they resettle in a new country, and what spiritual accompaniers should be aware of, so they can respond accordingly.

One of the main difficulties with mourning and reaching closure is that, because of the nature of the forced displacement experience, some people might never had had the time to go through the process. When fleeing, all they can focus on is surviving. While in the stage of asylum and waiting to be granted refugee status and protection, they are in a constant state of ‘limbo’ hardly conducive to engaging in reflection and mourning. So, it might not be until sometime after resettlement that they are able to engage in this process. But even then, they might feel that they are expected to move on and not look back on the past; to be grateful for the opportunities now given to them and seize them. And they may wonder whether they have the ‘right to mourn’ or even complain about what they have lost:

One of the major dilemmas refugee families seem to experience is expressed in a constant underlying tension between two polar opposite tendencies: on one hand, to privilege and remain loyal to the past, not to forget the home country and its ways, to honour the home culture and belief systems, to value the old, the pre-war relationships and connections, and to emphasise the previous styles and modes of being with their corresponding perceptions, values and aspirations; and on the other hand, to focus on the benefits of their current place of safety, to value the adjustment to their new life, to emphasise their new modes of being, to ensure maximum gain from new relationships and connections, to explore and benefit from the new life styles found in the receiving country, and to look towards the future ensuring that they make the best of their new opportunities.¹⁴⁵

People too may find it difficult to mourn because they do not know how or do not have the support to do so. Here, spiritual directors and faith-based communities can be of invaluable assistance, providing safe, respectful and caring ‘mourning companions’. They could, for example, help organise a mourning ceremony or some kind of liturgy to honour the memory of lost loved ones and put closure to that tragic event. For other losses—culture, language,

¹⁴⁵ PAPADOPOULOS and HILDEBRAND, “Is Home Where the Heart Is? Narratives of Oppositional Discourses in Refugee Families”, p. 218.

sense of belonging, etc.—they can assure ex-refugees that it is okay to spend time mourning these aspects of their lives; in fact, not only okay, but essential for their health and well-being.

Referring to the Christian symbolism of death and resurrection could be of help in some of these cases. In the same way as we are able to accept death and celebrate the promise of a new and transformed life afterwards, we can think of most changes and crises in terms of ‘death-rebirth’ experiences. In a way, we die to a part of ourselves every day, and daily too we are ‘born anew’. When it is time, letting go of what has given us comfort in the past can open up possibilities for new discoveries about ourselves and opportunities for new relationships and spiritual growth. Because we do not know what will happen when we do let go, it is an act of profound trust, of taking a ‘leap’ in the dark. Yet, forcibly displaced people have had to do this often in the past. It might be now time to do the same.

For some, engaging in a ritual or carrying out a ceremony within a prayerful and spiritual environment to put closure to an aspect of their ‘forced displacement’ experience might be a great source of healing. Others might want to perform a concrete activity—planting a tree, for example—to acknowledge through ritual a new beginning in the country of settlement, or embark on a pilgrimage or healing journey.¹⁴⁶ Working out together with forcibly displaced people the details of such rituals can in itself be a healing process. And once a particular ritual or prayer ceremony is developed, ex-refugees can help conduct them for others with similar needs and desires. A very important element in mourning is to have companions who walk along with us in that sacred journey to healing, and in particular those who understand so well what we have gone through, because they themselves have experienced it too.

3.3. Sustaining faith and hope

I thank God for all the good he has done in my life.
*Emma, a Rwandan refugee who was in the Bukavu camps in
Congo in 1996.*¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ About 100,000 Rwandans complete every year a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Kibeho. “It is in Kibeho that people find hope, solace and reflection, touching not only on their faith but on the very spirit of their country [...]. Today, the shrine of Our Lady of Kibeho represents a beautiful yet tragic amalgamation of the power of love and the depths of what hatred can cause. Most people making the pilgrimage to whom I speak talk of the compassion the Virgin Mary represents: with her grace, they find the power to overcome any obstacle. They want to honour her through their physical sacrifice, as she did for them in her miraculous life. Others tell me that they are making the journey to remember and reflect on those who lost their lives in [the genocide of] 1994, and Kibeho offers a chance of closure”. Cf. TOBIAS HEWITT, “Mother of the Word offers joy and closure” in *The Tablet*, 28 January 2017, pp. 15-16.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 28.

One of the major premises of this thesis has been that for forcibly displaced people of faith, it is *that faith*—and their *hope* in a better future for themselves and their loved ones—that has kept them going in the moments of greatest trial and tribulation. And as we have mentioned earlier, it is a great gift and privilege for spiritual directors—and other people of faith who accompany ex-refugees in their continuing spiritual journey—to share in their testimonies of faith and hope. Asking them the simple but deeply meaningful question: “Can you tell me something about the experience of God in your life” can give them ‘permission’ to share some profoundly significant and cherished moments of grace not only throughout their displacement experience, but in their lives as a whole. We already explored in chapter 1 some these aspects of faith and hope within the context of forced displacement, including their theological and spirituality underpinnings. In this section, we present some testimonies of faith and hope from forcibly displaced peoples at different stages of their displacement experience, as a reminder of the gifts of the Spirit they hold in their hearts, what they believe about God, and how the loving presence of Jesus in their lives, which helped them survive, can also help them move forward as they make sense of the suffering inflicted upon them.

They are stories about how a few words from the Lord can drive away fear:

When war broke out in Burundi, my country, I lived in fear for a long time. At night, I got little sleep: at the slightest noise, I would leap out of bed with fright. I remember spending the entire night on my feet, carrying my two children, for fear of being caught as we slept. One day, I read Jesus’ word: “Do not worry about your life [...]. Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? (Matthew 6:25, 27)” *Claire Ndayisenga*¹⁴⁸

About how, knowing that God has not deserted them, can make all the difference:

I do not curse God. I cannot forsake Him. I have lost faith in human beings, no army or group can protect helpless people like us. My only prayer is that I do not let myself lose faith in You. I have nothing else. *Antonia, a Sri Lankan refugee in India*¹⁴⁹

I am destitute, deserted by everyone, but protected by God. *Meenakshiammal, Sri Lankan refugee.*¹⁵⁰

And about how faith can be a source of strength and power to choose life:

I am convinced that all will be well with me always. Life, like love, is a choice. A choice based on faith, and this is why I will celebrate life and catch all thieves who strive to steal

¹⁴⁸ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 100.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 109.

away my joy. *Angelique Uwamahoro, a refugee from Rwanda who fled first to Tanzania and later to Kenya and died of an HIV-related illness in June 2000.*¹⁵¹

They are stories also about discovering Jesus and encountering him in the grimmest of places, in the least expected places, and being so profoundly moved by this experience to want to act like him, to be like him:

To live in detention with all this hardship and suffering was not easy for me. I had to work every day on my faith to get the strength to live with dignity. I decided to start reading the Bible and praying the rosary, which gave me peace. ‘God is in control of my future and my family is in his hands’ [...] this was my litany when I faced problems. I started to gather other detainees for Bible study and prayers. We encouraged each other to persevere in being patient with others, in being peacemakers, and not fighting over petty things.

At San Pedro [Immigration and Naturalisation Service Centre], I had an encounter with Jesus personified; the Romans made fun of Him, they took His clothes, they rejected Him. He was a prisoner and He suffered. I saw His passion when detainees were crying after being searched and naked; I saw Him when detainees were fighting for their rights and justice, when they were suffering and in pain and nobody cared about it. My heart was broken and my hands were tied. I could do nothing to help them, I was just another detainee. But I can say that I also saw Jesus’ face when people came to see us. *Ana Amalia Molina Guzmán, from El Salvador.*¹⁵²

They are stories of a hope so vast that somehow it gets them through unbearable pain, coming out ‘on the other side’ of that indescribable pain without resentment, despair or hate:

My life is not easy now, but I do not despair. I hope in God. I believe God is my Father and will not abandon me. One day I shall join my husband and my children and we shall be all together again. Ten of my children are dead, and my husband has been killed, but I do not hold it against anyone. I have no spite against anyone at all. Nor did my husband hate the Khmer Rouge. He did not want to avenge himself for the evil they had done. I am like him. If I meet the one who killed my husband, I will not hate him, for I have no hate in my heart: I have agreed to strip myself of everything. In any case, I am not the only one to suffer. It is a whole people, a whole country that suffers as well. But one day, I am sure, Cambodia will once again know happiness. *Anne Noeum Yok Tan, now resettled in France.*¹⁵³

Stories of hope sustained by the presence of others, by the support of others, by their humanity and care:

As a refugee who spent two years and four months in Wackenhut Detention Centre in Queens before I was granted asylum, I know how important it is to have support from people who come to help keep hope alive. I am a Christian, and I went to Bible study sessions in detention, which kept my faith alive when it was challenged every day. Refugees come to this country thinking it is a land of freedom—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from persecution. Detention almost killed my soul. Prayer and humanity saved me. *Adelaide Abankwah from Ghana, in a letter to the New York Times, February 2000.*¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 48.

¹⁵² Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 120.

¹⁵³ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 87.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 119.

And finally, they are stories that reminds us of the importance of allowing forcibly displaced people to be agents of their destinies and future, to be productive and useful, to allow them to care for others who have suffered as much as they have:

After years of moving from place to place, I finally settled in the Karenni refugee camps. I was asked to teach at the camp schools. Before long, however, I was selected for an internship in the Philippines. During my time away, I learnt more about human rights and I am now working with JRS in the field of education. We are busy supporting Karenni schools in a number of ways. I am happy I can use my education to assist my people in these difficult times.¹⁵⁵

All the stories just presented are narrated by women. Clearly, this is not because there are no forcibly displaced men of faith or because their stories are any less powerful or moving. But these stories have been chosen purposely as a way of introduction to our next section which highlights some special considerations affecting women’s forced displacement experience.

3.4. Women’s plight and resilience

It is estimated that 80% of forcibly displaced people in the world are women and children, a majority of whom are girls. As men, young and older, and even boys are ‘recruited’ by competing bands to fight wars, pillage resources and acquire power, their wives, mothers and daughters, are left to fend for themselves, and more often than not the odds are greatly against them:

During and after flight, women remain at risk. They are vulnerable to abuse by border guards and military personnel in the host country, fellow refugees, members of other clans/ethnic groups, and even members of their families: under conditions of stress and social disturbance, the incidence of domestic violence is known to increase. Women and girls often find themselves unprotected after separation from male relatives. They may be forced into prostitution as the only means of survival.¹⁵⁶

As expected, part of this vulnerability has to do with attitudes toward women in many countries and cultures where most forcibly displaced people come from—cultures that traditionally promote dependence and subservience of women, and where these are not necessarily regarded as negative attitudes, even by women themselves. Cultural mores and traditions might even provide a certain degree of protection to women in these places. Yet, in times of conflict, these principles are forfeited and as protection mechanisms succumb, women are regarded mostly as pawns to be used by the military or a rebel group’s advantage

¹⁵⁵ As told to Moo Hser, a Karenni working with JRS. Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 75.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 83.

in the games of war. It is not only that women are seen as easier prey, but their power is also recognised and feared and therefore must be controlled regardless of how this is done:

In our absurd contemporary wars of identity, the reproductive power of women is feared, since they can reproduce the enemy. In all wars, women are subjected to violence; in Rwanda this was done on a massive scale. There some women were allowed to live only so they would “die of sadness”. In Rwanda rape was a weapon to dehumanise and degrade a whole community for a political end [...]. Rape constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity. But law enforcement and judicial systems are usually so weakened as a result of civil conflict that justice is slow in coming for women. Moreover stigma and fear breed silence.¹⁵⁷

The use of rape and other forms of violence against women (torture, mutilation and sexual slavery among others) as a strategy of war is despicable and inhumane, but sadly is widespread.¹⁵⁸ Its consequences can damage a person’s life for a very long time. Women who have been subject to rape face particular concerns since they often suffer rejection by husbands or partners, other family members and even their communities.

Yet, despite the atrocities they might have endured, the resilience of many refugee women at times seems to know no bounds:

Women refugees are fighters, not only survivors [...]. In the midst of death, they fight for life at all cost. In the face of adversity, they rebuild, to ensure the continuation of life, their own, but mostly of their families. They have the courage to give new life in places of death”.¹⁵⁹

Because they are usually depicted as wretched and dependent victims, this capacity for boundless resilience is often obviated. But again, as Mark Raper, former International Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service, reminds us:

While the vulnerability of women during conflicts and emergencies is often stressed, the specific strengths of women are less frequently noted. Seemingly at greater risk when crisis strikes, women prove to have greater resilience in the longer term. Wherever people are

¹⁵⁷ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁸ The United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 80% of refugee women have experienced some kind of sexual abuse or torture. The high incidence of rape among East African women refugees is now well documented, as is the systematic use of rape by the Burmese military in Myanmar. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Promoting Refugee Health”, p. 47. Such violence is prevalent during armed conflict but also occurs frequently in camps and other places where women seek refuge. The breakdown of traditional protection mechanisms, a climate of impunity, and stigmatization of the victim all contribute to the high rates of rape and sexual harassment. In some instances, despite food insecurity, the fear of attack would prevent women from undertaking normal activities to supply food, water and firewood for their families and as a result would be forced into having sex to obtain food rations or other supplies. Because of this persistent insecurity and deprivation often women are unable, or afraid, to obtain medical, psychological and social support even in their resettlement countries. Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Sexual Violence and Refugee Women from West and Central Africa”, May 2005, <https://sexual-violence-and-refugee-women-from-west-and-central-africa+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au>. Accessed 3 July 2018, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁹ Jenny Cafiso, JRS International programs officer in JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 10.

darkened by the madness of war it is women who best offer the light of sanity. They have the power to create and promote peace. They renew and preserve humanity. War and flight are obviously not liberating events, but in such situations women take on new roles as the sole bread winners, as leaders of families, as the preservers of culture and historic memory. The men are either still fighting, and so absent, or held prisoner, or already killed, or perhaps despair has led them to alcohol. Ironically, the trauma of displacement offers opportunities for women, since it fractures former, strictly defined, social roles [...]. Women are often artisans of peace and stability.¹⁶⁰

Unfortunately, part of this ‘fracturing of strictly defined social roles’ for women might be thwarted again once they arrive in their resettlement country, especially if accompanied by their husbands or other male family members. And there are other concerns as well for women in this third stage of the displacement experience, as often they lack family and community support. In some cases, especially if they are experiencing a trauma reaction and might fear being alone, they might consider an unsatisfactory union (because of domestic violence or other abusive behaviour) better than having no adult relationship at all. In fact, their tolerance of their partner’s violent behaviour may be heightened by the knowledge of the trauma to which he has been subject.

In Australia, many ex-refugee women may be unaware of the laws prohibiting family violence. Also, often their inability to speak English well and a lack of knowledge regarding possible alternative housing, income and support services can make it difficult for an ex-refugee woman to leave a violent relationship. Because many ex-refugee women come from traditional societies in which there are strong cultural prohibitions against separation and divorce, the pressure on women to ‘keep the family together’ may also be particularly strong given the degree of trauma and dislocation to which refugee families have already been subjected. Women in ex-refugee families may be wary to involve police and legal personnel in family matters given their negative experiences of legal and law enforcement systems in their countries of origin. Finally, they may have difficulties in accessing legal and support services or may have fears that their confidentiality may be breached by these services.¹⁶¹

When alone, ex-refugee women might have to assume new roles and responsibilities as they face the burden of caring for their children without the support of partners or traditional extended family. They may be caring not only for their children but also for the children of

¹⁶⁰ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁶¹ Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Sexual Violence and Refugee Women from West and Central Africa”, p. 2.

family members who were killed or disappeared. And at least initially and for some time, they will do this while at the same time learning to adapt to a new language, culture and way of life. As mentioned, the trauma of sexual violence can seriously impact their physical and mental health long after it occurred and despite their resilience, feelings of shame, guilt, distrust, depression and low self-esteem may prevent them from seeking help or offering disclosure.¹⁶²

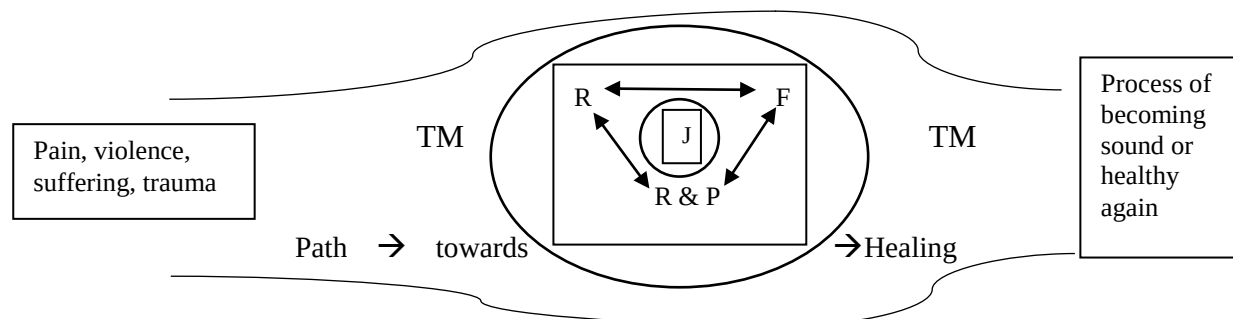
Thus, the obstacles placed in the way of forcibly displaced women are enormous, and the assistance provided to them should be commensurable at all levels—physical, emotional and spiritual. We have already explored in chapter 2 some aspects of what the Ignatian tradition might offer to nurture the spiritual life of forcibly displaced women, particularly through the *Spiritual Exercises*. They are, perhaps more than any other group, the paramount illustration of victims of the structural sin St Ignatius describes in the First Week of the *Exercises*. Many of them have already lived through hell and have cried out to God in “an exclamation of wonder and surging emotion” [*SpEx* 60] and with heartfelt gratitude for having survived that ordeal.

Through their self-emptying, their self-sacrifice and their self-giving in love to care for their families, their friends and strangers in need, they have followed the way of our Lord more closely than most (cf. [*SpEx* 104]). They have lived the Passion of Christ every day, suffering what Christ our Lord suffered in his human nature (cf. [*SpEx* 195]) for days on end, as asylum seekers detained “crying after being searched and naked”; as refugees subjected to inhumane suffering and pain while nobody cared about it; as internally displaced people without rights and voice; as human beings dehumanised by fundamentalist religious leaders and oppressive regimes. And yet, somehow, many of them have also managed to embody the joy of the resurrection and have become consolers of one another (cf. [*SpEx* 221, 224]). The challenge remains now to provide avenues for further healing. In many cases, this requires addressing issues of forgiveness and reconciliation.

3.5. Need for forgiveness, reconciliation and healing

¹⁶² Cf. VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (FOUNDATION HOUSE), “Sexual Violence and Refugee Women from West and Central Africa”, p. 2.

It is impossible to summarise in a few pages the deeply complex topics of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. Not only are they complex, but also highly contested as perspectives on these themes range widely over a large spectrum. Some authors, for example, speak about the duty of never forgiving the ‘unforgivable’. Others, argue that repentance should be a prerequisite to granting forgiveness, while others believe that it is still possible to forgive wrongdoers even if they do not acknowledge their crimes. Some contend that we should never forget the crimes committed against individuals and communities, while others claim that non-remembrance or letting go of the memories of these crimes might be desirable in certain circumstances. Most authors do agree that these topics are closely interconnected and that it is necessary to address them as a collective. That is what we strive to do in the following pages, focusing particularly on the ‘spiritual’ element of each of these topics. The figure below attempts to bring these themes together and to represent our particular approach to this discussion. As expressed throughout this work, regardless of particular theories or approaches, our belief is that the ultimate goal in addressing these issues should be to facilitate a path towards healing—physical, emotional and spiritual—for those who have been victimised and have suffered at the hands of others, as in the case of forcibly displaced peoples.



R: repentance; F: forgiveness; R&P: reconciliation and peace; J: justice; TM: truthful memory

One of the most prolific writers on these topics was Romanian-born American Jewish writer, political activist, professor, Nobel Laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. The following extract, addressing Germany’s youth on the ‘legacy’ of the Holocaust provides a pertinent introduction to our discussion:

The atrocities committed under the law of the Third Reich *must not* and *will not* be forgotten; nor will they be forgiven [...]. I have no right to forgive the killers for having exterminated six million of my kinsmen. Only the dead can forgive; and no one has the right to speak on their behalf.

Still, not all citizens who were alive then were guilty. As a Jew, I have never believed in collective guilt. Only the guilty were guilty. Children of killers are not killers, but children. I

have neither the desire nor the authority to judge today’s generation for the unspeakable crimes that were committed by that of Hitler. But we may—and we must—hold it responsible, not for the past, but for the way it remembers the past. And for what it does with the memory of the past.

‘Memory’ is the key word. To remember is to create links between past and present, between past and future. To remember is to affirm man’s faith in humanity and to convey meaning on our fleeting endeavours. The aim of memory is to restore its dignity to justice.¹⁶³

3.5.1. *The need to remember: truthful memory*

The worst experience I have ever had to endure, was the killing of my younger brother [...]. This was 10 years ago, but I will never forget it. His story is like a wound that never stops hurting.¹⁶⁴

3.5.1.1. *‘Memory’ in the *Spiritual Exercises**

We must hold [them] responsible, not for the past, but for the way [they] remember the past, and for what [they do] with the memory of the past”. Wiesel’s words, and in particular his injunction about what to do with the memories of the past, recall Ignatius’ approach to this topic of memory, especially in the First Week of the *Exercises*. Ignatius does want exercitants to feel responsible for their actions in the past, but his meditations are directed towards their feeling the experience of being forgiven sinners, as a consoling and revealing experience of God.¹⁶⁵ We find ‘memory’, as a capacity of the human person, present throughout the four Weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and even before in the *Annotations*, though tacitly expressed.¹⁶⁶ Though *Annotation* 3 does not mention memory—it does speak of the intellect and the will as well as the affection—this third ‘power of the soul’ is presumed to precede

¹⁶³ ELIE WIESEL, *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences*, New York: Summit Books 1990, p. 194. This requirement to remember the past, and to do what is *right* with the memory of this past, becomes a moral duty especially when the victims of the transgression are no longer present, because they have been killed. It is then not only the moral duty of their descendants, but of all of society, even of all humanity. Cf. VLADIMIR JANKÉLÉVITCH, *Le pardon*, Paris: Aubier-Montaigne 1967, pp. 1047-1048. For Simon Wiesenthal, this remembrance of the victims became the great moral duty of his life: “Survival is a privilege which entails obligations. I am forever asking myself what I can do for those who have not survived. The answer I have found for myself (and which need not necessarily be the answer for every survivor) is: I want to be their mouthpiece, I want to keep their memory alive, to make sure the dead live on in that memory. But we, the survivors have an obligation not only to the dead but also to future generations: we must pass on to them our experiences, so they can learn from them. Information is defence”, SIMON WIESENTHAL, *Justice not vengeance*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1989, p. 351.

¹⁶⁴ As told to Moo Hser, a Karenni working with JRS Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 76.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. ANTONIO GUILLÉN, PABLO ALONSO and DARÍO MOLLÁ, *Ayudar y aprovechar a otros muchos: dar y hacer ejercicios ignacianos*, Maliaño: Sal Terrae 2018, pp. 31-32.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. ANTONIO ALBURQUERQUE, “Memoria” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 1211-1216. See also, GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “¿Qué hacemos cuando hacemos ejercicios?”, pp. 18-19.

always and to take part in everything. It goes beyond the action of ‘calling to memory’ expressed in [*SpEx* 56]) or other similar references. Memory supports the work of the intellect and the will “in eliciting acts of the affections” (cf. [*SpEx* 3]) and producing the change of affectivity in the exercitant the Exercises seek, as he or she orders his or her life.¹⁶⁷

During the First Week, memory is first mentioned explicitly in the ‘Daily Particular Examination of Conscience’, when the exercitant is directed to ask God our Lord for the “grace to recall how often one has fallen into the particular sin or fault” [*SpEx* 25]. In the meditations on sin, the exercitant is asked to ‘call to memory’ the “sin of the angels” [*SpEx* 50] and how Adam and Eve “did long penance for their sin” [*SpEx* 51] and the “gravity and malice of the particular sin of anyone” [*SpEx* 52]. Likewise, in meditating on one’s own sins, the exercitant is asked to “call to memory all the sins of my life” [*SpEx* 56] and in the colloquy after the meditation on hell to “call to mind the souls who are in hell” [*SpEx* 71]. Through these exercises of memory, Ignatius wants the will of the exercitant to be affected and be led to greater love and gratitude, as he/she experiences the “shame and confusion” of a sinner who knows himself or herself saved—despite being so ‘insignificant’ and ‘deserving’ otherwise—by Christ who dies on the cross. In fact, all the preludes and colloquies in this First Week are clearly focused on this giving thanks to God for God’s inexhaustible patience and goodness to us (cf. [*SpEx* 48, 53, 60, 61, 65 and 71]). The shame the exercitant is called to experience is not that of one’s damaged ego but the shame of having discovered, despite one’s sinful behaviour, so much benevolence in God. Gratitude for such benevolence is what impels the exercitant to respond with “great spirit and generosity” and ask “What ought I to do for Christ?” [*SpEx* 53].

It is with that same attitude of deep gratitude and “deep affection” (with great love!) that the exercitant is asked to call back into memory all the gifts received—creation, redemption and “other gifts particular to myself” in the *Contemplation to Attain Love* [*SpEx* 234], and once again to reflect and consider what “I on my part ought in all reason and justice to offer and give to the Divine Majesty”. The answer, in fact, is nothing less than “all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and all my will”, given not as duty but as the mutual offering of a lover who wants to share all of oneself in response to the beloved’s having done the same

¹⁶⁷ ALBURQUERQUE, “Memoria”, in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 1211.

before.¹⁶⁸ For Ignatius, then, the need to remember, to ‘call back to memory’ one’s acts of ‘un-love’, has to do with the exercitant’s recognising God’s unconditional love and mercy in response, and evoking deep gratitude and experiencing deep consolation. And, as we will see in the next section, this will in turn have a healing effect on one’s memories. Most forcibly displaced people of faith have no difficulty in calling to mind, with deep gratitude, the many blessings God has given to them. But there are other reasons and considerations as to why, what, how and for how long they must remember.

3.5.1.2. The ‘why’, the ‘what’, the ‘how’ and the ‘how long’ of forcibly displaced peoples’ remembering

Memory is a passion no less powerful or pervasive than love. What does it mean to remember? It is to live in more than one world, to prevent the past from fading and to call upon the future to illuminate it.¹⁶⁹

Remembering... “to prevent the past from fading and to call upon the future to illuminate it”. Forcibly displaced peoples remember because they cannot avoid remembering. Some might say this is a gift; others might call it a curse. They remember the ‘before and after’ moment that changed their lives; the ‘good and the bad people’ who persecuted or welcomed them; the ‘lost and the saved’ that were left behind or managed, like them, to survive. They remember with heavy hearts, with tears in their eyes; with joyful hearts, filled with gratitude. They remember today, and they will remember tomorrow, and each day after that until memory, with life, fades. These aspects are part of the ‘why’, the ‘what’, the ‘how’ and the ‘how long’ of forcibly displaced peoples’ remembering. And of course, there is more.

3.5.1.2.1. Why remember?

It has been argued that forcibly displaced people and migrants have also a responsibility to remember at least for two fundamental reasons, one theological and one ethical. Theologically, to proclaim the great deeds God has done for them (cf. Mary’s Magnificat, Luke 1:46-47, 49) and to rejoice and give thanks for all such blessings, never forgetting that the God of the displaced is a displaced God as well (*Deus migrator*) and so remembering their

¹⁶⁸ The other references to ‘memory’ in Weeks 1 to 4 are given in the *Additional Directives* in relation to what will be more conducive to obtain the graces asked for in each of these; thus, in the First Week, “it is better to think about death and judgment” [*SpEx* 78]; in the Second, “to frequently call to mind the life and mysteries of Christ our Lord” [*SpEx* 130]; in the Third, “call often to memory the labours, fatigue and sufferings which Christ our Lord suffered” [*SpEx* 206], and in the Fourth, “call into my memory and think about things which bring pleasure, happiness, and spiritual joy, such as those about heavenly glory” [*SpEx* 229].

¹⁶⁹ ELIE WIESEL, *All rivers run to the sea: memoirs volume 1, 1928-1969*, London: HarperCollins, 1996, p. 150.

having being displaced is an act of *imitatio Dei*. Ethically, they should remember their origins and experience so that they can do *for other* displaced peoples what God has done *for them*. So, remembering that they once were displaced persons provides the ethical grounding for their just and loving treatment of others who have endured similar experiences.¹⁷⁰ But there is also a third reason to remember—to be able to forgive: “pour pardonner il faut se souvenir”.¹⁷¹ Only by bringing to memory the offence, the crime, the wrongdoing, can the survivor objectivise it and reflect on it. But this action of remembering also has an effect on the perpetrator. Both, survivor and perpetrator, are required to perform a ‘memory exercise’ to refine all the feelings attached to what happened and get closer, as much as possible, to the truth.¹⁷² So this third reason has to do with the ‘why’ but also the ‘how’ of remembering.

3.5.1.2.2. What to remember?

In terms of the ‘what to remember’, displaced people should not forget their culture, their religious heritage, and for those who follow the Christian tradition, they should remember their own brand of Christianity (so as to enrich the ‘brand’ of the receiving communities); and of course, they should also remember and honour their own individually unique experiences of displacement. While it is true that erasing from their memory traumatic and life-shattering experiences and suffering might be necessary for forcibly displaced persons to ensure their psychological well-being, ‘total forgetfulness’ could be detrimental not only to their spiritual development but would also prevent them from offering one of the most precious gifts they can offer to their host communities and the universal community—the gift of making known ‘the heart of an alien’. As God’s command makes it clear: “You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9). Our perceptions, attitudes and ethical behaviour towards the forcibly displaced will be shaped by this knowledge. Therefore, memories of forced displacement have to be recorded, preserved, archived and disseminated, as well as celebrated, through multiple art forms and liturgical celebrations.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Cf. PETER C. PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory”, p. 177.

¹⁷¹ VLADIMIR JANKÉLEVITCH, *Le pardon*, p. 1109. (Translation from the French: *to forgive it is necessary to remember*).

¹⁷² MARÍA DOLORES LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch desde la experiencia de la Shoah. Confluencia de las tradiciones judía y cristiana y retos para el entendimiento del perdón*. Tesis para la obtención del grado de Doctor, Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas 2009, p. 336.

¹⁷³ Cf. PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory”, p. 180.

3.5.1.2.3. *How to remember?*

Current emphasis on spiritual practices for reconciliation and peace-building stress the important role of memory and remembering to help victims in their journeys back toward God, their enemies and themselves. For Miroslav Volf, for example, memory of wrongs suffered can act as a two-faced tool:

[...] as a *shield*, it can help form our identity, bring about healing, produce justice by acknowledging the reality of wrongs, link us with other victims, and protect victims from further violence. Sadly, as a *sword*, it can also wound, breed indifference, reinforce false self-perceptions and reinjure.¹⁷⁴

For Christians, Volf suggests a triple act of remembering: (1) *remember truthfully* so as to be able to act justly, for “deceitful memories are unjust and therefore injurious memories”; (2) *remember so as to be healed*, for if we do not attend to wounds caused to us, they can wreak havoc in our lives and even harm others; (3) *remember so as to learn*, to avoid wrongs committed being repeated in the future.¹⁷⁵ In addition, Volf suggests that memories of two defining events from sacred history—Israel’s Exodus from slavery in Egypt and Christ’s death and resurrection on behalf of all humanity—should serve as a larger framework to regulate *how* we remember wrongs committed and suffered in our everyday lives.¹⁷⁶

In the Exodus story, the Israelites must remember not only that they ‘were slaves in Egypt’ but that ‘the Lord God redeemed’ them: “the command to treat slaves and aliens favourably rests on God’s deliverance in the past; the memory of past suffering and of God’s deliverance serves to underwrite the command to be just and generous toward the weak and needy”.¹⁷⁷ Further, Volf sees two main implications of applying this ‘sacred’ memory of the Exodus to ‘profane’ memories of wrongs committed and suffered in more recent times. One is the imperative of solidarity mentioned above, where we are called to empathise “with those who suffer and come to their rescue by struggling against their tormentors”. The other again is:

¹⁷⁴ Cf. PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory”, p. 182.

¹⁷⁵ MIROSLAV VOLFF, “Memory of Reconciliation—Reconciliation of Memory” in *Proceedings of the Fifty-ninth Annual Convention, Catholic Theological Society of America*, 59 (2004), p.1; Cf. <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/view/2084/4139>. Accessed 4 July 2018. López Guzmán points out a fourth act of remembering: *remember so as to honour the victims by recognising them as such in history*. Cf. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, p. 338.

¹⁷⁶ In both religious traditions—Jewish and Christian—memory has a central character since in both there is a continuous call to remember the salvific actions of God, among them, mercy and forgiveness. In both the Older and New Testaments, memory plays a very important role: as an invitation to the people of Israel to remember Yahweh’s promises and as an injunction to remember Christ’s words, actions and gestures. Cf. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, pp. 338-39.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. VOLFF, “Memory of Reconciliation—Reconciliation of Memory”, pp. 4-5.

the imperative to remember and remember truthfully. If the afflicted are to be delivered, their suffering cannot disappear into the dark night of oblivion, at least not until justice has been done. And if their deliverance is to be an act of justice rather than an act of violence that attempts to rectify one injustice by committing another, the wrongdoing of the transgressor will have to be remembered truthfully.¹⁷⁸

Volf believes that the action of Christ on the cross as he forgives and extends his arms to embrace not only those who have tortured him but all sinners, creates a space for them (for all of us) in God. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, further insists that God’s embrace of humanity provides a model for human beings: “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Romans 15:7). One of the main lessons from the sacred memory of the Passion is to remember the wrongs committed so we can pay the debt of justice to those who have suffered and, at the same time, protect others from injustice. Embracing all, restoring justice that opens the path to renewed communion between victims and perpetrators, protecting future generations—the memory of the Passion calls us all to place our memories at the service of the narrative of God’s final redemption.¹⁷⁹

3.5.1.2.4. How long to remember?

“But *how long* should we remember? In the book of Jeremiah, in the Hebrew scriptures, God announces a new covenant and then makes a promise: “[...] I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more” (31:34). Is this forgetting of suffering inflicted possible, or even desirable? According to Volf, in some instances, the answer to this question is ‘yes’.¹⁸⁰ Pointedly, and controversially, he asks:

But is it right to insist on the everlasting memory of suffered wrongs? Might it be salutary not just to remember but also, after a while and under certain conditions, to allow these memories to slip out of our minds? Might there be a season to remember suffered wrongs and then, when remembering has served its purpose, to let go of such memories? Might good remembering in some situations even *aim* at proper ‘forgetting’? Just to entertain these questions sounds

¹⁷⁸ Cf. VOLF, “Memory of Reconciliation—Reconciliation of Memory”, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. VOLF, “Memory of Reconciliation—Reconciliation of Memory”, p. 9. Volf concludes: “As Christ was raised, those who suffer will be raised with him. They are not locked up in their tormented past, unable to find freedom from it. Along with Christ they are on the path through death to resurrection, and what happened to him will also happen to them”, p. 8.

¹⁸⁰ Forgiving, as pardon of guilt or remission of debt, liberates from the past. This liberation is sometimes seen as analogous to forgetting: “God in forgiving ‘remembers your sin no more’”. Some forgetting is inevitable in human life; it may preserve sanity and to some degree support forgiving, but it is not a clue to its essence: forgiving is always a way of reckoning truthfully with what is wrong and hence is a way of remembering, in which the past wrong is not denied but deprived of its power to shape the future. It is not pure remembering, in which the past stays with us, but a remembering which enables the transformation of the past so that it no longer destroys joy, peace, and love”. HADDON WILLMER, “Forgiveness” in Adrian Hastings Kittel et al., eds., *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought: Intellectual, Spiritual, and Moral Horizons of Christianity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000, p. 245.

strange, even dangerous, to our ears as twenty-first century Westerners [...]. Yet for centuries the Christian tradition has claimed that to forgive rightly and fully means to be willing to let go of memories of wrongs.¹⁸¹

Volf’s qualifications here: “after a while and under certain conditions” and “when remembering has served its purpose” are very important because in using them it is clear that he is not simply advocating a trivialised ‘forget and move on’, but rather that in very specific cases the absence of the memory of wrongs suffered and inflicted can be desirable. He links this non-remembrance or not-coming-to-mind of wrongs suffered and inflicted to the prophet Isaiah’s vision of a new and glorious creation brought about by God: “For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever [...] for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight” (Isaiah 65:17-18). Volf further clarifies:

The not-coming-to-mind of memories of wrongs suffered is a divine gift—not a direct gift, but an indirect one that follows from the creation of the world of love. Consequently, one should never *demand* of those who have suffered wrong that they “forget” and move on. This *impossible* advice would be also the *wrong* advice. The “forgetting” of wrongs must happen as a consequence of the gift of the new “world”. Any forgetting other than that which grows out of a healed relationship between the wrongdoer and wronged in a transformed social environment should be mistrusted [...] “forgetting” is a consequence of God’s gift to the transformed self, enjoying reconciled relationships in a redeemed world.¹⁸²

What Volf is arguing for is the possibility of a ‘healthy’ forgetting or non-remembering. He goes further in asserting that in eschatological fulfilment “memories of suffered wrongs will not come to the minds of the citizens of the world to come, for in it they will perfectly enjoy God and one another in God” or, in other words, in ‘heaven’, “we will not ‘forget’ so as to be able to rejoice; we will rejoice and *therefore* let those memories slip out of our minds! [...] Our minds will be rapt in the goodness of God and in the goodness of God’s new word, and the memories of wrongs will wither away like plants without water”.¹⁸³ Thus, the proper *goal*, the appropriate *end* of the memory of wrongs suffered is “the formation of the communion of love between all people, including victims and perpetrators”.¹⁸⁴ This communion of love based on “a healed relationship between the wrongdoer and wronged” must also involve repentance and forgiveness, as we shall see in the next section.

¹⁸¹ MIROSLAV VOLFF, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2006, p. 132.

¹⁸² VOLFF, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, pp. 146-147.

¹⁸³ VOLFF, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, pp. 177, 214.

¹⁸⁴ VOLFF, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, p. 232.

Volf realises how controversial, and perhaps even offensive, his argument for what he sees as a fairer and perhaps even generous way (to the perpetrators of wrongs) of remembering might be. This mainly because since the beginning of the second half of the 20th century the overarching importance given to ‘remembering’ has been to do so for the sake of the victims—to honour and protect them, to render justice to them—fearing that a letting-go of the memories of these wrongs suffered might betray the victims and endanger the wider community. Thus, victims might scream in protest: “A done deed cannot be undone, and the wrongdoer is guilty—forever guilty—before God, in the judgment of humanity, before his own conscience. An indelible tattoo inked by our memory onto his forehead reading ‘Wrongdoer!’ is the least of the punishment he deserves!” But to this Volf responds:

And yet [...] We human beings—wronged and wrongdoers alike—are finite, fallible, fragile. We fall so easily into the snare of evil. Can we bear the weight of eternal memory? Would it be right for one horrible deed to mark us eternally, as some people believe that a single sin deserves the punishment of everlasting torment in hell? Even if such marking were fair, would love do that—the kind of love that wishes well and does good even to the enemy? Would we not wish to let go of the pain inflicted both by the wrong we have suffered and by our own guilt through letting go their memory, if somehow we could do so without detriment to ourselves or to our loved ones?¹⁸⁵

But, *how* do forcibly displaced people prevent this detriment to themselves and their loved ones? *When* do they arrive at this “remembering [that] has served its purpose” and the “transformed social environment” that opens the way to “the world of love” and receiving the divine gift of non-remembrance Volf speaks about? In expanding Volf’s ideas Phan suggests that, to achieve this goal, they (and all of us) must remember not only *truthfully* and *justly*, as we have mentioned already, but also *forgivingly* and *constructively*.

3.5.1.3. Remembering truthfully, justly, forgivingly, constructively

3.5.1.3.1. Remembering truthfully

Phan points out that this is required of both victims and perpetrators. He reminds us that forcibly displaced people tend to remember their past subjectively, sometimes exaggerating their pain and suffering while others erasing the most traumatic memories.¹⁸⁶ This usually happens quite subconsciously and so it is important to contrast those memories with whatever facts are available. Of course, this must be done with respect, gentleness and great tact to

¹⁸⁵ VOLF, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, p. 178.

¹⁸⁶ Kertész is particularly harsh about the possibility of distorting reality also on the part of the victims. Cf. IMRE KERTÉSZ, “¿De quién es Auschwitz?” (published in *Die Zeit* 48 (1998)) in *Un instante de silencio en el paredón. El Holocausto como cultura*, Barcelona: El Acantilado 2002, pp. 87-88.

prevent the victims from feeling that they are not believed, or worse, that we might think they are lying. And of course, remembering truthfully demands that the facts of the abuses perpetrated be known, and that the structures of deceit and violence of oppressive regimes be disclosed publicly. These must be recorded so they are not forgotten and must be recorded truthfully so ‘selective memory’ can be avoided. Selective memory makes personal accountability impossible, because it allows “perpetrators [to] shy away from the past and the acceptance of their guilt for the suffering of others”.¹⁸⁷ More importantly, knowing and disclosing the truth is essential because only the truth can reinstate the victims’ sense of self-identity and safety, foster healing and stop the cycle of violence.¹⁸⁸

Robert Schreiter talks about ‘narratives of the lie’ used to maintain violent control over a population by negating the truth of people’s own narratives: “the negation is intended not only to destroy the narrative of the victim, but to pave the way for the oppressor’s narrative [...]. The assumption is that the lie will come to be accepted as the truth if the original narrative can be suppressed or at least co-opted”.¹⁸⁹ Memory plays a role for keeping people connected to their own narratives, and truthful memory or remembering truthfully will recover and validate their true narrative and help heal those aspects of it that have been wounded. But this healing will only happen if justice becomes part of that narrative.

3.5.1.3.2. Remembering justly

To achieve reconciliation, disclosing the truth must be followed by doing justice. Justice that is not simply punitive (though it might include some kind of punishment), but that is corrective, so as to give wrongdoers an opportunity for conversion. This justice will require reparation and restoration. Even if such restoration does not erase the damages and pain inflicted, it is nonetheless a necessary action for the recovery of the dignity of the victims.¹⁹⁰ Remembering justly means that the reparation has to be appropriate and commensurate—as far as it is possible—to the damage inflicted. The goal, however and as stated above, is not to inflict commensurate suffering or punishment on perpetrators but that justice should seek to

¹⁸⁷ ROBERT VOSLOO, “Reconciliation as the Embodiment of Memory and Hope” in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 109 (2001) 37.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory”, p. 183.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. ROBERT SCHREITER, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1992, pp. 34-35.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory”, p. 183.

restore relationships by acknowledging the extent of the damage done: remembering justly is the affirmation of the pain caused.

3.5.1.3.3. Remembering forgivingly

The hardest thing to do in the process of reconciliation, this corresponds to Volf’s *remembering so as to be healed*. It is hard because forgiving (as the ‘non-remembering’ we discussed earlier), might give the idea that the violent deeds and unspeakable suffering that were perpetrated are being forgotten, which means betraying the victims and especially their dead. Of course, for the forcibly displaced, it is impossible to forget torture, persecution, repression, and so they might feel forgiveness is beyond their power. But rather than forgetting and forgiving, ‘remembering forgivingly’ is about forgiving *and* remembering: “Forgiveness begins with a remembering and a moral judgment of wrong, injustice, and injury”, followed by the complex process “of determining what restitution, compensation or penalty should now be levelled against the offender”.¹⁹¹ Ideally, this should be done by the victims or, in their absence, by those most affected by the offense. But such restitution, compensation or penalty should not be driven by vengeance:

Forgiveness, in politics or any other human relation, does not require the abandonment of all versions of punishment of evildoers. But it does require the abandonment of *vengeance*, and this is its second constituent element. Forgiveness gets its real start under the double impetus of judgment and forbearance from revenge. Forbearance opens the door toward a future that will not repeat the old crimes. Unaccompanied by forbearance in this very beginning, moral judgement often fuels new enmity.¹⁹²

Schreiter sees this ‘remembering forgivingly’ as a shift in power-holding: “in forgiving, we do not forget: we remember in a different way”.¹⁹³ It is possible to remember in a different way because “in forgiving, the balance of power has shifted from the oppressor to the victim: it is the victim, and the victim alone, who has the power to forgive. In forgiving, the victim breaks loose of the oppressor’s hold, becomes free of the power of the past, and is able to live by a story other than that of fear and suffering”.¹⁹⁴ Of course, this act of forgiving is not easy

¹⁹¹ Cf. DONALD W. SHRIVER, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press 1995, p. 7.

¹⁹² SHRIVER, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, p. 8.

¹⁹³ Cf. SCHREITER, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*, p. 66. Schreiter adds: “But we can remember in a different way after we have experienced reconciliation and extended forgiveness [...]. The ‘forgetting’ that we do in forgiving is an overcoming of anger and resentment, a being freed from the entanglements of those emotions and their capacity to keep us bound to an event. The freeing act of forgiving, done in its own good time, releases us from that bondage. In that sense of forgetting, then, we do forgive and forget—we forget inasmuch as we are no longer bound by those same negative emotions of the past”, p. 67.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory”, p. 184.

to do because, as mentioned before, it is hard to let go of wounds, resentment and the memory of having been abused.

Forgiveness is also hard because in many cases the perpetrators refuse to acknowledge their guilt, repent and ask for forgiveness from the victims.¹⁹⁵ In these cases, human forgiveness can only be modelled after divine forgiveness: out of gratuitous love and mercy, God forgives us not because we have repented, but even before we have done so.¹⁹⁶ “Repentance is not the condition but the *fruit* of God’s forgiveness”. Victims can forgive perpetrators, oppressors and torturers with the hope that this forgiveness will arise repentance and change. We will explore further this theme of repentance and forgiveness in the next section.

3.5.1.3.4. Remembering constructively

Corresponding to Volf’s *remember so as to learn*, this task looks to building a society where freedom and peace, equality and harmony, dialogue and the respect of every person’s dignity and human rights are ensured. But this can only happen if all areas of society—political, social, educational, cultural and spiritual—are addressed: a democracy that allows the exercise of civil rights but that also takes seriously personal and collective duties; social reforms that ensure structural justice; economic systems that provide for the basic needs of all, especially the poor and marginalised; educational and communication means that nurture the cultural and spiritual dimensions of human life. And the victims (in our case, the forcibly displaced) should be invited and allowed to contribute to the fulfilment of all of these areas.¹⁹⁷

3.5.2. The need to remember: healing of memories

¹⁹⁵ Speaking of Chile as one of the Latin American countries in most need of reconciliation because of its long history of polarisation, social conflict and violence, Aldunate points to the essential need of those in power to acknowledge their wrongdoing: “In Chile, the major impediment to reconciliation lies with the military leaders who contemptuously refuse to acknowledge their faults and to offer restitution”. Cf. JOSÉ ALDUNATE, “The Christian Ministry of Reconciliation in Chile” in Gregory Baum and Harold Wells, eds., *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches*, Gregory Baum and Harold Wells, eds., Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1997, p. 65.

¹⁹⁶ “With forgiveness on the cross, Jesus interrupted a closed narrative of enmity and opened it to reframe ‘enemies’ into friends, brothers and sisters, all children of the Father. ‘The friendship of Jesus Christ is the friendship of the One who makes us people who forgive’”. Cf. ELÍAS LÓPEZ PÉREZ, *Excessive Love amidst the Unforgivable: Political-Mystics & Mestizo-Forgiveness in Conflict & Peace*. Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor in Theology, Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit 2010, p. 523.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. PHAN, “‘Always Remember Where You Came From’: An Ethics of Migrant Memory”, p. 184.

To remember is to revive fragments of existence, to rescue lost beings, to cast harsh light on faces and events, to drive back the sands that cover the surface of things, to combat oblivion and to reject death.¹⁹⁸

3.5.2.1. Remembering ‘differently’ in the search for healing

To remember is “to rescue lost beings [...] to reject death”. Rescuing lost beings and rejecting death for survivors has much to do with their capacity to keep on living despite the horrific suffering they have been through; and not just to keep on living, but to live with purpose, with meaning, in wholeness. For survivors—including forcibly displaced peoples in their new homes—this process of becoming sound, whole, healthy again, has much to do with their capacity to heal their painful and traumatic memories. Of course, such healing does not mean forgetting or suppressing those memories. It entails, instead, a ‘detoxifying’ of the memories so they “no longer hold the victim hostage”. The process entails learning to remember the past in different ways. In other words, by helping to *remember differently*, the ministry of healing memories seeks to free victims from the bondage of the past by integrating such memories into their life stories in a constructive way. This takes place in two stages: first, gaining access to the memories and then, retelling and reframing them.¹⁹⁹ As mentioned earlier, many forcibly displaced people who have experienced torture, long-term persecution, extreme violence, trauma, and especially death of loved ones, will struggle accessing these painful memories. Suppressing them is a way for the psyche to protect itself. Certain images or fragments of those memories might come to the fore, some even as unwanted flashbacks that can be distressful and affect sleep patterns.

In order to help survivors recover these memories, safe and welcoming spaces need to be created. Therapeutic approaches by professionals would be extremely helpful in most cases, but unfortunately many victims do not always have access to these. An alternative option can be provided by ‘healing circles’ where sufferers can examine past events in the company of empathetic and sympathetic listeners.²⁰⁰ These small groups of people commit themselves to

¹⁹⁸ WIESEL, *All rivers run to the sea: memoirs volume 1, 1928-1969*, p. 150.

¹⁹⁹ “David G. Benner (cf. *Healing Emotional Wounds*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group 1990, p. 63) suggests that there are three main stages in the process of healing a memory: re-experiencing the pain, reinterpreting the hurt and releasing the anger. He suggests that these stages correspond to dealing with the emotional world, the intellectual clarifications, and the choices we go on making as a result. It is in this latter department that the work of forgiveness enables us to let out any anger we may still have and then let go of holding on to the pain and the people who gave us such inner wounds”, quoted in RUSS PARKER, *Forgiveness is Healing*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd 1993, pp. 122-123.

²⁰⁰ See for example, ROBERT SCHREITER, ‘Entering the Healing Circle’ in Stephen Bevans, Eleanor Doidge and Robert Schreiter, eds., *The Healing Circle: Essays Presented to Claude Marie Barbour*, Chicago: CCGM

listen to the stories of the victims until the healing process has been completed, offering total confidentiality and a place of welcome that helps restore the sense of trust many of them had lost through their traumatic experiences. It is in this faith and grace-filled space that memories are regained, accessed, told and retold over again “until a new set of relationships or connections are made”, thus reframing the story within the larger story of the sufferer.²⁰¹ A forcibly displaced woman, for example, who was raped by her captors and gives birth to a baby as a result, might eventually stop seeing that child as a reminder of that traumatic experience and see rather a beautiful daughter who needs her love and care.²⁰²

Healing of memories through integrating them into a person’s life story in a constructive way also gives the opportunity to appreciate all the aspects of the story—the context, circumstances, the ‘characters’ involved. People might even realise that they were not the main characters in the narrative after all, but only supporting cast members, or that they were playing the wrong role. For example, sometimes the path to healing can be obstructed because people hold on to the ‘image’ of themselves as victims and other/s as oppressor/s, when the reality is that but for a very small factor the roles could have been reversed (it was mentioned earlier how this has often been the case for forcibly displaced peoples). Another important element in ‘filling-in the rest of the story’ is that it can help reduce it (not minimise it or trivialise it, however) to a ‘size’ that can be managed. An ex-refugee might have lost her

Publications 2000, pp. 176-187. As we will see in chapter 5, we will incorporate this communal aspect for healing in our exercises through what we will refer to as ‘circles of healing in trust’.

²⁰¹ It might take many ‘retellings’ for this to happen: “How long or how often must a story be retold before it turns into a redemptive story rather than a burdensome, oppressive one? No one can ever know for sure. The moment of grace is precisely that—a moment of grace, when suddenly the perspective shifts, a new meaning is found, and a pathway appears, leading out of the deep tangle of memories, emotions and stories of death”. Cf. SCHREITER, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*, p. 46. But it also important to acknowledge that the healing of memories can never be utterly completed: “New events can trigger aspects of memory not reframed and retold in the healing process. Even recalling the memory itself can evoke new dimensions of pain or new insights into the past. For the [displaced person], the sense of loss of one’s homeland and the ongoing strangeness of the new place may continue to evoke painful memories. But finding a safe and welcoming space in which to explore those memories may be one of the most important things that a ministry of reconciliation can provide”, Cf. SCHREITER, ‘Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation’, pp. 120-121.

²⁰² An example of this concept of ‘healing circles’ put into concrete action is the women-led peace initiative of the Nuevo Futuro association in Colombia, on the border with Ecuador. The association was formed in 2014 within the framework of the peace negotiations between the FARC-EP guerrillas and the national government, in order to undertake actions with local impact for the defense of their rights as victims and women. Since its inception, “it has become evident that among the main achievements reached with this peace initiative are the exercises of memory which have been built with these women, through self-recognition and recognition of women as beings. This has allowed them to weave their own support networks in order to engage in processes of healing with relation to their life histories within the framework of the Colombian armed conflict”. Cf. JRS, “Colombia: a peace-building initiative from women on the border” (9 August 2017), <http://en.jrs.net/news-detail?TN=NEWS-20170725091046>. Accessed 9 July 2018.

best friend somewhere along her asylum or refugee experience and blame others or herself for her death. That guilt might have prevented her from acknowledging how many of her other friends actually survived and perhaps even her role in their survival. Once she is able to recognise this through incorporating and emphasising this part of the story, she might no longer experience that guilt as an overpowering force in her life.

3.5.2.2. What spiritual healing of memories involves

While this process of healing of memories can take place outside a faith-based framework (linked for example to psychoanalysis or psychotherapy practices), our focus here is in its spiritual context, particularly within the Christian tradition, where it has been used in various settings, such as healing retreats or individual spiritual direction.²⁰³ Basically, what it entails is focusing the healing power of Jesus, through prayer, on the memories (of events and relationships) of a person’s past which continue to exert a negative or harmful influence or control on that person’s present behaviour. The individual is encouraged to relive a particular hurting memory in the company of another person or group, into which the healing presence of Christ is invited, so as to bring about the desired healing through release of the harmful influence.²⁰⁴ It is an ‘Eucharistic’ or ‘anamnestic’ type remembering, where the memory is brought forward into the present not only as a mere mental act but which requires also, to some extent, a re-experiencing of the past event and of the power it still holds on the person. Some people describe this process in terms of allowing Jesus to ‘lord or rule over’ the memory which has acted as a barrier to a person’s growth and wholeness in Christ.

²⁰³ Several authors have written extensively on the topic of healing of memories in the spiritual context. In the English-speaking world, perhaps the best known are the Linns. Cf. DENNIS LINN and MATTHEW LINN, *Healing of Memories: Prayer and Confession - Steps to inner healing*, New York: Paulist Press 1974; DENNIS LINN and MATTHEW LINN, *Healing of Life Hurts: Healing Memories through the Five Stages of Forgiveness*, New York: Paulist Press 1978; DENNIS LINN, SHEILA FABRICANT LINN and MATTHEW LINN, *Healing the purpose of your life*, New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press 1999. In the Ignatian tradition, see also LYN HOLLEY DOUCET, *Healing troubled Hearts: Daily Spiritual Exercises*, Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press 2005, and BRIGITTE SNELL, “Contemplation, the Healing of Memories and Anger” in *The Way Supplement* 59 (1987) 35-44.

²⁰⁴ Cf. VELTRI, *Orientations*, vol. 1: *a collection of helps for prayer*, pp. 29-30. For Veltri, the elements of this prayer require six “simple” steps: (1) begin by resting in the presence of God; (2) recall his love and power; (3) ask him to bring to your mind the memories of the bad experiences of the past which affect you now; (4) be quiet and let them come to mind; (5) walk back into those recollections with Jesus and imaginatively reconstruct what would happen; (6) thank Jesus for his love and healing. “Sometimes this must be done more than once. You know when you are healed when the child or person in the memory is smiling and happy because of the presence and love of Jesus”, p. 30.

Of course, when working with memories there is a need to be extremely careful since the last thing one wants to do is to cause further harm or additional trauma to the person doing the remembering. Not only do people need to be ready emotionally to ‘go back in time’ and face what might be found there, but also be ready to take responsibility for their response to the events then and their ongoing behaviour as a result of them. This too is part of the ‘reframing’ mentioned earlier and of integrating memories into a person’s life story in a constructive way. In this process the opportunity is given to challenge and change one’s response to the past memory while accepting the choices made in the past and articulating the choices one wants to make for the future.²⁰⁵ I believe it is important to make sure people understand that this is an important part of this process and that they need to be willing to embark on it with that knowledge.

An example (a pastoral and experiential ‘excursus’) of how this healing of memories—involving a former refugee in training to become a priest in Australia—has ‘worked’ might be helpful at this stage.²⁰⁶ As part of his training, the seminarian would see a spiritual director every month. On one particular occasion, the young man shared the difficulties he was experiencing in getting along with some of his companions in training, and as he did so, he broke down in tears. Upon prompting by the spiritual director, the young seminarian acknowledged that he had had similar issues of conflict with co-workers and partners in the past. People had accused him of being distant and overly reserved. He knew where that came from: to protect him from the civil war that had erupted in his birth country, his parents had sent him and his sisters away to another country when he was only fourteen years old, while the parents stayed behind, trying to salvage their family business. It would take him years to realise that his inability to commit to close relationships had to do with the traumatic experience of being *sent away* at that most crucial developmental stage in his life. He was aware of his distant behaviour and seemed to have taken responsibility for it, yet he felt powerless to change.

During the session, and with the help of the spiritual director, the seminarian came to realise that subconsciously he resented and blamed his parents for sending him away. Rationally, he knew that they were trying to protect them, but the ‘little child’ in him still felt abandoned and

²⁰⁵ PARKER, *Forgiveness is Healing*, pp. 94-96.

²⁰⁶ Used with permission.

rejected. The spiritual director suggested to him that perhaps he might wish to engage in the prayer for healing of memories, going back to the moment when he said good-bye to his parents and inviting Jesus to also be there and to heal any hurtful feelings he might have. And if he felt the need to do so, to forgive his parents for ‘sending him away’.

That night during prayer, and in the presence of Jesus, he imagined his parents there with him; he thanked them for wanting to care for him but also told them how much it had hurt him to be sent away; how he had felt unwanted, even if that was not their intention. And he forgave them for all the pain and suffering he had encountered during several years of his life because of that traumatic experience. But he also remembered several people he had hurt—close friends—to whom he had ‘turned his back’ for fear of being hurt by them, and he also asked them for their forgiveness. And finally he forgave himself, and the ‘little child’ within, for the hurt he had caused others and himself. The whole process took more than an hour and was filled with tears. The young man later told his spiritual director: “I was so spent that I hardly had enough energy to walk back from the garden to my room. And yet, I felt lighter as if a great weight had literally been taken off my shoulders. I have no doubt that it was the healing power of Jesus acting in me”.

In acknowledging the hurt he had caused others, this young man took responsibility for the way he had responded to a painful experience that had affected his life so deeply. As we will see in the next section, this process of repentance-forgiveness can be the catalyst in freeing people from being prisoners to their past and choosing to respond to similar circumstances in a different way, through the healing power of the Spirit in them:

The journey of healing therefore is not so much to relive or re-experience the past but to gain insight as to how those moments still exercise an unhealthy hold over us today; to appreciate the way in which our choices reinforce their grip upon us; and finally, with the help of Jesus, to renounce this old order of slavery to our woundedness and to choose the pathway of new life in Christ.²⁰⁷

To relieve the past allows confronting issues people have avoided and gives them permission (and ‘the mission’) to experience fully what they have been denying to themselves since the moment they were hurt. The spiritual director’s suggestion that the young man go back to that moment when he felt most deeply the separation from his parents was extremely important, for forgiveness and healing to be truly effective have to come from that particular

²⁰⁷ PARKER, *Forgiveness is Healing*, p. 98.

time and place. Bringing back painful memories and reliving them also gives the opportunity to deal with particular people who harmed us and now might be dead or too far away for us to face in person, but also with people whom we would not want to hurt more. Knowing how hard and painful it was for his parents to ‘send him away’, the last thing this young seminarian would have wanted to do is to actually tell his parents in person how much he had resented them, and how much he blamed them for suffering experienced as a result of their actions. Doing this in prayer, in the presence of Jesus, is what he needed to do.²⁰⁸

Finally, an important reminder for those involved in this ministry of healing of memories is that as sufferers are helped to reframe hurtful stories (by reliving them through memories) within their larger stories, the importance of the feelings they share should not be trivialised nor denied nor should they be forced to move at a pace faster than they are capable of. In wanting the process of healing to ‘work’, the temptation might be to try to limit the time spent on dealing with feelings of anger or remorse or guilt associated with the past trauma and try to ‘reframe’ them too quickly. As mentioned earlier, the moment when the perspective shifts, and the person is ready to accept this new perspective, is a moment of grace and it cannot be rushed. This is a lesson experienced givers of the Exercises know too well.

3.5.2.3. Healing of memories in the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*

As mentioned earlier, in the meditations of the First Week, especially of the ‘particular sin’ (cf. [SpEx 52]) and one’s own sins (cf. [SpEx 56-61], Ignatius asks exercitants to call these ‘to memory’ in order to provide an occasion for them to *feel* and *relish*—*sentir y gustar*—the experience of being forgiven sinners, as a consoling and revealing experience of God’s benevolence, mercy and patience toward them. Clearly, a prolonged consideration of the forgiven sins (and of being a redeemed sinner) can also contribute towards purifying one’s image of God (cf. [SpEx 59, 61, 71]) and to come to terms, face to face, with evil in history and also in one’s personal history—the *enormous corruption it brought to the human race* [SpEx 51-52, 56-57]—without trying to avoid it nor exaggerate its presence in the world. At the same time, false pharisaic or guilty narcissistic attitudes towards evil (“everyone is so bad” or “I cannot be forgiven!”) are disqualified in Ignatius’ approach. For the exercitant, to

²⁰⁸ Parker argues that “It is not an over-simplification to ask a person to retell their hurting memory from the perspective of Jesus being present within it, because, in a very real sense, he was there, unseen at the time but nonetheless ready to heal and save if only we had eyes to see him. As the faith story is told so faith is released and the power to be healed is made ours through the grace of God’s loving presence”, PARKER, *Forgiveness is Healing*, p. 127.

“accept being forgiven” becomes, then, the healing personal experience sought after in this Week.²⁰⁹

It is an experience, at the same time, of healing of memories, since bringing to mind the hurt he or she has caused others should no longer paralyse the exercitant with excessive guilt or remorse. Through the colloquy of mercy, the exercitant can thank God for “granting me life until now” despite my sins and propose “with his grace, amendment for the future” [*SpEx* 61]. The dynamics of the First Week thus help to ‘reframe’ memories of one’s failings by integrating them into one’s life story in a more constructive way—they are not denied nor trivialised but seen with a different purpose. Rather than despondency, calling to mind these memories can now bring consolation, and it will be this divine consolation, constantly asked for in the colloquies, which will contribute to the change of affectivity in the exercitant and the reorientation of his or her life. And, although these meditations on sin in the First Week fall ‘outside’ the scope of *light* Exercises, we will plan nonetheless to incorporate them into the exercises we develop for survivors of forced displacement in the next chapter.²¹⁰

The consideration, through the First Week’s meditations, of the pervasive presence of sin in the world, of not only its individual dimension but also its societal and structural dimensions, brings into focus the reality of evil and its potential to wreak havoc in one’s life—an experience forcibly displaced people know all too well. Ignatius’ invitation to “imagine Christ our Lord suspended on the cross before you” and to consider “how it is that he has passed from eternal life to death here in time and to die in this way for my sins” [*SpEx* 53], can also be pondered within this societal dimension, thus reminding us that in fact Christ has died in this way for ‘all’ people’s sins—even of those who have persecuted forcibly displaced

²⁰⁹ Cf. GUILLÉN, ALONSO and MOLLÁ, *Ayudar y aprovechar a otros muchos: dar y hacer ejercicios ignacianos*, p. 32.

²¹⁰ As Ignatius himself notes, The First Week performs different roles depending on the Exercises offered: *light* (*Annotation* 18) or full (*Annotation* 20) Exercises. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, for the *light* Exercises Ignatius suggests that ‘some exercises’ of the First Week, not all of them, be used—only the Examens and the first method of prayer on several themes—to direct the exercitant towards confession, communion and an increase in his or her life of prayer. They are exercises to ‘purify the soul’, so it makes sense that they should culminate with the sacrament of reconciliation and a sense of purpose for following greater sacramental practice. For the full Exercises, the purpose of the First Week is really to purify one’s image of God by bringing the exercitant to an encounter with the God of infinite goodness and absolute forgiveness. While the Exercises we seek to develop for survivors of forced displacement are in broad terms *light* Exercises, we will include, when it seems appropriate and beneficial, Exercises from other Weeks, as well as other parts or meditations of the First Week. Because of the importance of this purifying of God’s image for many forcibly displaced people, as well as the healing of memories we have just addressed, we will plan to incorporate these meditations on sin, in some form, into the Exercises we develop in chapter 5.

people and might indeed have killed their loved ones. In bringing to mind painful memories, this view of Christ’s redeeming action for all might not take away the loss and hurt experienced, but it might contribute to heal those memories by reframing them and placing them within the context of Christ’s salvific action for all. Finally, in placing ourselves before the Crucified Lord and bringing to mind what he suffered for humanity, what was done to him because of his love for us can, through a process of identification and solidarity with his Passion, shed some meaning and purpose to one’s own suffering and also be a source of healing.

3.5.3. *The need to forgive: offering and accepting repentance*

Where there is repentance there is renewed hope, for offender and for victim. Repentance prepares the ground for healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation, between individuals and between groups.²¹¹

3.5.3.1. “Repent and live the gospel”

Jesus’ first words in St Mark’s gospel proclaim: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (1:15). Similar versions of this phrase are also found in Matthew’s gospel (in 3:2, expressed by John the Baptist and 4:17, by Jesus). Yet, in none of the gospels, does Jesus provide further details as to what will happen to those who do repent—John the Baptist does charge the Pharisees and Sadducees who come to him for baptism to “bear fruit worthy of repentance”. Yet, it can be inferred that those who do repent will be forgiven their sins.²¹² And Jesus’ assertion (as well as John’s) that the ‘kingdom of God is at hand’ is intended as a wake-up call to their listeners that ‘they’d better repent as soon as possible’ or they might run out of time, for the expected Messiah has indeed arrived.

The first words uttered by Jesus in Luke’s gospel, as he starts his public ministry, are recorded in 4:18-19. Entering the synagogue in Nazareth, he takes up the scroll and reads the beginning of the sixty-first chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,

²¹¹ SOLOMON SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, p. 219.

²¹² A contrite David says for example in Psalm 32:5, “Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the guilt of my sin”.

to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.

This passage, presented by Luke at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, has been referred to as ‘Jesus’ mission statement’: here Jesus lists the things he has come to do. In this passage, the Greek word ‘aphesis’—one of the standard words for *forgiveness* in the New Testament—is used to refer both to ‘freedom’ and ‘release’. Jesus then is proclaiming himself here to be ‘one who forgives’.²¹³ It has been argued that following from this Greek word usage, the second part of this passage could be translated as: *He has sent me to proclaim forgiveness to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to forgive the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour*.²¹⁴ Further, in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word most often used for forgiveness is ‘nasa’, which means “to have a weight lifted away”. And again, the Greek equivalent (‘aphiemi’) basically means to “let go” or “send away”. So, it would seem that at the heart of the action of forgiveness is the decision—by God or ourselves—to let go of sins (understood as barriers to and rejection of God’s love), so that we can have

[...] an experience through which we [are] freed into a new life of growth [...] forgiveness does not mean a denial of the past as if it never was. Rather, it means the removal of the effects of the past on the present. It is as if through forgiveness God has removed what has blocked our view of the way into wholeness for us. We are now set upon a road of healing and we must make the most of God’s grace to rebuild any ruined place within our lives [...]. So we can see that forgiveness is never an end in itself, a cul-de-sac of blessing and good will to others. It is rather a doorway of opportunity through which much healing and release is to be found. Also it will make demands of us which will undoubtedly involve us in repentance and personal renewal.²¹⁵

Repentance of the wrongs one has committed is essential to “rebuild any ruined place” in the lives of those one has hurt, but also, as expressed above, of the ruined places within oneself. We spoke earlier of survival guilt experienced by many forcibly displaced peoples, in particular those who lost most or all of their loved ones in situations of violence that provoked

²¹³ Forgiveness is a major theme both in the Older and New Testaments. We cannot address here the many facets of its complex meaning, usage and significance, but we will make reference to those most pertinent aspects found in these Scriptures when relevant to our discussion. For an introduction to this topic see, for example, RUDOLF BULTMANN, “aphiemi” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel et al., eds., abridged in one volume by Geoffrey Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1992, p. 88.

²¹⁴ PARKER, *Forgiveness is Healing*, p. 8. Parker suggests that: “Straight away this [understanding] broadens out the impact of forgiveness to include the healing not only of our sins but of the effects of such sins upon ourselves and those whom we may have damaged”, p. 8.

²¹⁵ PARKER, *Forgiveness is Healing*, pp. 8, 16-17. Jacques Derrida points out that forgiveness moves on the horizon of reconciliation, of the hope of salvation and redemption, of remorse or repentance, of sacrifice and atonement, in the great religious and spiritual traditions of forgiveness. Cf. JACQUES DERRIDA, *Pardonner: l’impardonnable et l’imprescriptible*, Paris: Herne 2005, p. 21.

their flight.²¹⁶ Many of them experience this need to be ‘forgiven’ in order for the overwhelming weight of guilt to be lifted, so they can let go of the painful past that still haunts them. In reality, there might not have been much they could have done to prevent the death of their family members and friends and their own survival might have been a matter of ‘good fortune’. Long hours of psychological counsel might help some understand and accept this. And yet, for many others, a lingering sense of “I should not be here, since they are not” still remains, which weighs heavily on them and which can only disappear when substituted by a sense of having been forgiven. It is a genuine and pressing need, but sadly there might not be anyone left to pronounce the words they so badly need to hear: “you are forgiven”. No one, except (as we have seen in the previous section on healing of memories) God. And what compounds even more their suffering—for real suffering it is—is the fact that they are truly sorry and contrite—they express genuine repentance (even if not required) and yet no release, no forgiveness, no absolution, is forthcoming.

3.5.3.2. The elements of repentance

In New Testament language (cf. Mark 1:15), to repent means to turn to God and turn from evil and sin.²¹⁷ Repentance also (according to Islam, Christianity and Judaism) should help to rectify the damage we have caused others by our sins, and all three faiths, in one degree or another, also place emphasis on repentance as a precondition for divine (and human) forgiveness.²¹⁸ Ideally, repentance should include four elements: (1) recognising and acknowledging our sin and feeling moral guilt and remorse for having committed it; (2) apologising to the person/s we have harmed—the ‘victim/s’; (3) repairing the injury we have caused; (4) if they arise, not succumbing to similar harmful behaviour in comparable situations to that in which we committed our offense.

²¹⁶ Of course, situations leading to survival guilt can take place any time along the forced displacement experience. I once met an asylum seeker in detention whose wife and two young children had drowned when the boat carrying them to Australia had capsized. He had tried to save them, but being a poor swimmer, there was not much he could do. Yet, he blamed himself and could not forgive himself for ‘letting them die’.

²¹⁷ To be forgiven and reconciled, we must repent, which means conversion of heart and life (Mark 1:14), forgiveness of others (Mt 6:12), reconciliation with the community (Mt 18:17-18) and with God (2 Cor 5:18-19). Christ handed over the ministry of reconciliation to his disciples (Mt 18:18; John 20:22-23). They were ‘ambassadors’ for Christ, urging people to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:20). They could exclude a sinner from the community (1 Cor 5:2-5) but after repentance he could be reconciled (2 Cor 2:5-8). Cf. JAMES CRICHTON, “Penance” in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought: Intellectual, Spiritual, and Moral Horizons of Christianity*, Adrian Hastings Kittel et al., eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000, p. 528.

²¹⁸ Cf. SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, p. 141. Some of the content of this section is based on Schimmel’s ideas presented in chapter 6 of his book on ‘The Essence of Repentance’, pp. 141-181.

3.5.3.2.1. Recognising one’s guilt

It is not easy for most people to admit to guilt and to having caused harmed and suffering to others.²¹⁹ Even in ‘clear-cut’ situations such as murder, rape, theft or violent attack, many people will justify their actions in such a way (“he made me do it”, or “she deserved it”, or “I didn’t realise what I was doing until it was too late”) that it minimises the extent of the harm caused. In conflicts between family members and friends, this is even easier to do. Yet, if one faces with honesty the consequences of one’s injurious acts, there is no way of denying the destructive and damaging effects they have. As Schimmel suggests,

When you commit an offense against someone, whether by an act of commission or of omission, you usually produce three deleterious effects. First, in doing evil you lessen your own moral status. You are a less worthy individual than you were before your offense. Second, you have caused pain, humiliation, or injury to your victim. Third, beyond the specific pain or suffering which you inflicted, you have breached a human relationship. As a consequence of your offense there is now a net increase in the quantity or level of bitterness, hatred, and ill will in your familial or social setting.²²⁰

One of the reasons people find it difficult to admit their guilt and repent for the damage done to others is that in most situations of conflict both parties involved have offended the other, albeit not to the same degree or measure of guilt. In a surge of self-righteousness, one expects the other to apologise first and repent before he or she does. Of course, in some situations, such as the abuse of a child by an older member of her family, the victim does not share in any of the guilt or blame, even if they believe they do (this is similar to instances of ‘survival guilt’ we mentioned above).

Likewise, in some ethnic conflicts, there is a clearly an aggressor perpetrating an offense against an innocent victim, in particular if a majority group (be it religious, racial or ethnic) oppresses and, in extreme cases, seeks the annihilation of a minority group. Yet, even if both groups have done wrong to each other (e.g. Hutus and Tutsis, Palestinians and Israelis, Sandinistas and Contras), to acknowledge that “neither antagonist is fully innocent of wrongdoing is not to say that both are equally guilty. Both may have to repent, but each has to

²¹⁹ Yet, the need to confess or articulate guilt is not a strange demand, alien to religious traditions but is part of the understanding of the process of reconciliation. The differences are centred on the form of confession (which is also found within the traditions themselves, such as public or private confession, explicit or implicit) and even in the exact content of the same, but not in the fact that it takes place—in most cases, it is considered as unquestionable [...]. Confession of one’s faults, therefore, has so much value, that it is considered part of repentance and a manifestation of justice. Cf. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, pp. 347-348.

²²⁰ SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, p. 148.

acknowledge its specific sins, its level of guilt and the reparation that it should accordingly be responsible for”.²²¹ Sadly, in the case of many forcibly displaced peoples, their aggressors do not acknowledge their fault: they might be blinded to the suffering they have inflicted by hatred or greed, believe that what they did was what others would have done to them were the circumstances turned around, or even feel justified by cultural, historical or religious reasons to inflict suffering on others. Unfortunately, this perpetuates violence, because when guilt is not admitted and fault is not acknowledged then victims might feel that revenge is the only course left to them.

3.5.3.2.2. Apologising

As difficult, and even counter-cultural, as admitting guilt and repenting might be for most people, it cannot be denied that these acts of remorse and repentance, expressed in an apology to the person/s who has/have been harmed—the ‘victim/s’—are of great emotional and moral value not only for them, but also for those repenting. In fact, Jankélévitch points out three successive stages in the healing process or, as he also expresses it, in the ‘return to life’ of the offender: remorse, repentance and penance.²²² In his analysis of remorse, Jankélévitch affirms that while it is true that remorse does not make up for the sin—moral pain does not save but is simply a witness that the power of sin begins to lose strength—yet it must be considered a symptom of healing and a prelude to the conversion that sets in motion the desired remission

²²¹ SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, p. 148. Every person is called to live up to one’s responsibilities and hold oneself accountable for one’s misdeeds. Deserved guilt feelings (when one is actually morally guilty) should not be separated from the objective evils one has done. Buber often held that the guilt-ridden person searching to deal with those feelings should undertake repentance, with its three demands of conscience: “[...] first, to illuminate the darkness that still weaves itself about the guilt [...] with a broad and enduring light; second [...] to persevere in that newly won humble knowledge of the identity of the present person with the person of that time; and third, in his place and according to his capacity [...] to restore the order-of-being injured by him through active devotion to the world—for the wounds of the order-of-being can be healed in infinitely many other places than those at which they were afflicted”. MARTIN BUBER, “Guilt and Guilt Feelings” in *Psychiatry* 20, n. 2 (1957) 122.

²²² Cf. VLADIMIR, JANKÉLÉVITCH, *La mauvaise conscience*, Paris: Editions Montaigne 1966, p. 151. Further, he reminds us that while forgiveness is the survivor’s concern, remorse and repentance correspond exclusively to the offender, cf. JANKÉLÉVITCH, *Le pardon*, p. 1142. Thus, remorse and repentance are a monologue or soliloquy—they depend solely on the perpetrator—in contrast to forgiveness, which is a dialogue, a relationship between, at least, two interlocutors. Yet, all of them are based on gratuity because they respond to an initiative of freedom. Cf. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, pp. 351-352. In other words, “[...] the deep freedom that forgiveness grants emerges out of the mutual care between the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven. Forgiveness cares for the victim and for the victimizer by restoring their mutual relationship. Forgiveness is not a one-way street, but a bi-directional relationship [...]. In this sense, forgiveness is a forgiving-alliance, which involves a forgiving-promise. Forgiveness implies the promise to avoid repeating the past evil (sacramental action of forgiveness), a commitment that implies an alliance for an everlasting life together”. Cf. LÓPEZ PÉREZ, *Excessive Love amidst the Unforgivable*, p. 520.

of debt.²²³ Only in authentic repentance can it be said that there is already a movement of love—a movement that for a Christian would be initiated by God—that leads one to action. A purifying repentance is that which integrates and transfigures the impurity committed into a new wholeness. The parable of the Prodigal Son (cf. Luke 15:11-32) returned to the fold is the story that best exemplifies it: someone who was lost and is found, who was dead and has risen.

This way of understanding repentance as a ‘return’ or ‘coming back’ follows closely the biblical notion of the penitential process. The Hebrew word that is at the origin of this idea is ‘teshuvah’ which, means precisely ‘to return’, not only to the past—one’s own or of one’s ancestors—but to God, and occupies a central place in Judaism.²²⁴

Ideally, an apology should be made to a victim by the offender face-to-face, as this is usually more psychologically powerful and more morally significant than when mediators are used or sentiments are expressed in writing. Attempts to express one’s sorrow and remorse in person, especially when it might require traveling long distances or other sacrifices, are signs to the victim of the sincerity of the offender. It is also more difficult for the latter to do it this way, as the perpetrator becomes vulnerable to the reproach of the victim or can witness firsthand the damage and suffering that has been inflicted. Yet, there might be cases in which the victim refuses to see the offender—it might just be too painful to come face-to-face with someone who inflicted so much damage, or the victim does not believe the person to be genuinely repentant or might not feel able to give that person ‘absolution’ or offer forgiveness. In these cases, the victim’s feelings have to be respected, and the perpetrator must find other ways to express his/her heartfelt remorse. And there might be other cases in which the person who has been hurt is no longer accessible or no longer alive. So, how can a remorseful offender offer apology and reparation when this is no longer objectively possible? An answer might be to do this vicariously through other people close to the victim in one way or another—family members or friends or, in the case of racially or ethnically motivated sins, to people who belong to the same social or ethnic or religious group as the victim. This might

²²³ Cf. JANKELEVITCH, *La mauvaise conscience*, Paris: Editions Montaigne 1966, pp. 158-159, 191-192.

²²⁴ Cf. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, pp. 359-363.

be particularly relevant to perpetrators whose violent actions caused others to flee and either perished during their flight or were forced to resettle in a different country.²²⁵

3.5.3.2.3. Repairing the injury

Repairing the injury one has caused might take the form of financial or other material compensation and should ideally be commensurate to the damage done, although it is not always possible to fulfil both these requirements. How can one ‘repay and repair’, for example, the death of a child lost in flight triggered by her attack on a small village whose inhabitants she knew well? Or how can one repair and repay the many years of psychological and emotional trauma and suffering experienced by someone he physically tortured?

If on the one hand the magnitude of what happened at Auschwitz demonstrates the need for the guilty parties to take responsibility for their actions, submit themselves to justice and repair the damage inflicted, on the other, the enormity of those crimes is precisely what denounces the impossibility of repairing the suffering. No one has the ability to give life back to the murdered, nor to restore the dignity crushed in those years, nor to compensate for the humiliations suffered. It is not possible, therefore, to place penance or any attempt at reparation at the same level as what was lost, because—as Jankélévitch recalls—what has been lost is unique and irreplaceable in three fundamental senses: first, because the experience of those who suffered the violence in their being has a private dimension that only corresponds to them (no matter how much we empathise with the victim, his experience belongs only to him or her); second, because each human being is unique, although she or he is seemingly like any other—for each person there is destiny and biography unique to the world; third and last, because the irreversibility of *becoming* who each of us is, prevents us from restoring reality as it happened in the past. When the value of the unique is lost, no degree of repentance, even if it is eternal, can return or dissolve what has been done.²²⁶

So, is one required to give up one’s own child as atonement for one’s sins or undergo similar torture to that he caused? Of course not. The ‘an eye for an eye’ approach only perpetuates violence, and it is hoped that most victims will not want to do that. The onus is on the truly repentant perpetrators to find ways not only to offer as close and appropriate reparation for the specific injury or pain they have caused, but also to find ways to heal and restore the broken relationships that have been breached as a result of their actions or lack of action.²²⁷ Thus,

²²⁵ “The function of this idea of substitute reparation and repair, which one finds in the religious traditions, is to provide the repentant wrongdoer with hope, constructive outlets for his guilt and sorrow, and therapeutic pathways for his soul. If he is sincerely penitent, he will always remember that there is nothing he can do to fully repair the damage and hurt he caused, but he need not therefore believe that repentance in such a circumstance can be of no value to him or to the world”. SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, p. 156.

²²⁶ Cf. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, p. 366.

²²⁷ Precisely, the meaning of ‘reparative penance’ is, according to Jankélévitch, to find a way between two undesirable possibilities: immoral forgetfulness and the impossible return to the status quo. And just as the choice to turn one’s existence happens in an instant, carrying out that decision takes time and, therefore, it can be seen, described and narrated. Cf. JANKÉLÉVITCH, *La mauvaise conscience*, p. 159. Allen Bergin, a prominent

someone who caused great harm to members of a particular family, community or group, even if those people are no longer accessible, can work towards restoration and healing through actions that contribute to the well-being of that family, community or group.

3.5.3.2.4. *Benefitting the community at large*

The benefits of guilt admission and repentance are not only for those who have been injured, but also for those who themselves recognise their evil doing. When most effective, they make the repentant oppressor a better person, heals him or her of their deserved guilt, repairs the injury caused another and can lead to the victim’s ability to forgive the offender and work towards reconciliation. It can even lead to a conversion experience where the offender undergoes a radical transformation towards greater faith, hope and love and a movement from alienation from God and others to communion with them.²²⁸ Repentance too can be the required response in order for a perpetrator to convince society/community that she/he can be restored to full and trusted membership in it. Thus, the benefit is also for the community at large, for the sins of one against another also affect those closest to them and have greater social repercussions beyond individual conflicts. Conversely, the efforts towards reconciliation by one person, as a testimony of one’s genuine repentance can also benefit not only the injured individual but also his or her community.²²⁹ It can even open the path to reconciliation between two antagonising groups.²³⁰

psychotherapist and psychologist of religion suggests that the repentance process should include: self-confrontation, self-control, and self-sacrifice. The latter, in turn, requires restitution, reconciliation, restoration, and forgiveness: “Self-sacrifice depicts the broad range of elements in the repentance process that are necessary to make repentance complete. This is not only a matter of restitution in the sense of returning a stolen item, but also of extending the necessary effort to alter the fabric of relationships, the negative consequences, or mistrust and broken covenants that need to be corrected. We often shrink from the effort required to make these corrections, but such self-sacrificing effort is an essential art of redeeming the situation [...]. Analysis of the social consequences of our actions requires the courage to face unpleasant facts about our conduct and unpleasant feelings people may have toward us [...]. What was broken should be fixed [...]. This requires going back and making amends in a way that is more profound than simply saying, ‘I’m sorry’. Where there are amends that cannot be made personally, individuals have the opportunity to compensate for the past by serving others in a profound and extensive way”. ALLEN BERGIN, “Psychology and Repentance” in *1994-1995 BYU Devotional and Fireside Speeches*, Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University 1995, pp. 30-34.

²²⁸ Cf. SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, p. 163.

²²⁹ Together with confession and request for forgiveness then, there must be a desire to give reparation, to contribute in some way to improving the wounded reality. And while it is impossible to return it to its original state, there is the possibility of building something new. Because of this, one of the reasons for penance is to look for ways that allow offenders to stop the dynamics of the evil they have unleashed in the world and instead promote a greater good. Cf. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *El perdón en el pensamiento de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, p. 372.

²³⁰ In conceptualising how religion can contribute to peace and reconciliation, Gopin suggests that repentance and forgiveness are two religious values that can be incorporated into conflict resolution strategies “if the challenge is presented equally to both sides of a conflict, and if it speaks to profound cultural and religious metaphors of both adversaries”. Cf. MARC GOPIN, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*. New York: Oxford University Press 2000, pp. 19-20.

3.5.3.3. Accepting responsibility and consequences

Similarly, as with guilt admission, despite these undeniable benefits of expressing remorse for one’s harmful actions, most people do not like to repent. They do not like to feel ashamed of themselves or admit of their faults to others because once they are in the public sphere their sense of self and pride (as false and negative as they might be) can be compromised. They might also be fearful of the consequences of their admission of fault. Indeed, criminal offenses can lead to prison or other punitive actions, causing a loss of power, status and financial advantages.

Sadly too, while repentance is already part of the religious worldview of Jews, Christians and Muslims, these days this seems to be more in theory than in practice. Schimmel argues that we need to “reintroduce the concept and language of repentance into our [secular] moral vocabulary and compass [...] convinced of the value of inculcating an ethos conducive to repentance [...] in our children at home and in school”.²³¹ But not only children—everyone needs to be schooled in the processes of self-examination and repentance. And one of the most important qualities or attitudes to cultivate in order to repent is empathy: trying to imagine the thoughts and feelings of the persons one has hurt. Even if people do not feel ready to repent, they must at least initiate the process in some way that tells the other that they are sorry for what they have done, would like to make amends and receive forgiveness.

Finally, how is the process of repentance and forgiveness in response to injustices perpetrated by one group against another relevant to an individual member of the perpetrator group? Is that person supposed to feel guilty and be remorseful for the crimes committed by his political party, military unit or ethnic group? The key element here is the determination of the degree of responsibility of particular persons in the harmful actions, for if they do not accept any

²³¹ SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, pp. 179-180. According to Schimmel, a move in the right direction are the practices espoused by the restorative justice movement, which are more conducive to repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation: “Its goal [of restorative justice] is making things right and creating right relations [...]. The first priority is to work toward the healing and restoration of victims [...] responding to their needs, including restitution [...]. The second priority is to hold the offender accountable for his actions, involving the offender in the decision as to how to make things right for the victim and the community which has also been harmed, with the goal of reintegrating the victim and the offender back into community [...]. Restorative justice opens up the possibility of talking about forgiveness in political and personal relationships, but [...] in a way that is defined by healing, right relations and a reconciliation that requires mutuality” (excerpted from the mission statement of a restorative justice working group cosponsored by the Centre for Restorative Justice of Suffolk University and the Boston Theological Institute, 30 August, 1999), cited in SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, p. 200.

responsibility (claiming for example that “I was just following orders” or “I didn’t realise the extent of the damage being done by my superiors or leaders”), then they will not consider themselves guilty and will not feel the need to repent, even if their actions caused actual direct harm to specific individuals.²³²

Perhaps the determination of responsibility comes down to the question of ‘choice’. Did that person have the ‘option’ not to follow the path set by the group (superiors, leaders)? The answer will depend on whether he/she was willing to accept the consequences of going against orders or antagonising the group. Many forcibly displaced people, for example, could claim that they did not have a choice when doing some of the horrific things they did to survive, even as part of a group (deciding for example to leave weaker members behind during flight). Perhaps, if survival was truly at stake, that might be true, but they do have the choice now to acknowledge the harm done, feel remorse, repent and ask for forgiveness to those they harmed directly or were indirectly affected by their actions. And for some, this is where the freedom and healing that has avoided them for so long might truly lie.

3.5.3.4. Guilt and repentance in the *Spiritual Exercises*

Of the seven times the term ‘guilt’ is used in Ignatian writings, four are found in the *Spiritual Exercises* and three in the *Constitutions*. In terms of the former, two references occur in the *Rules for distributing alms* (cf. [SpEx 343]) in the context of receiving donations and their appropriate distribution, so as to avoid being guilty of not discharging this function properly. A third reference is found in the section on scruples (cf. [SpEx 48]) as a possible benefit when doing spiritual exercises. Of greater relevance is the reference that appears in the note for the

²³² A different issue raises the question as to whether descendants of perpetrators or later generations of people belonging to certain ‘perpetrator-groups’ should accept guilt, repent and ask for forgiveness on behalf of their relations or predecessors to a specific group. This is an issue that has been debated widely in regards to the Holocaust and the apartheid regime in South Africa. As we saw at the beginning of this third part of this chapter, Elie Wiesel does not believe humanity should hold more recent German generations guilty for the sins of the Nazi regime during World War II and thus they needn’t repent or ask for forgiveness. For him, what is important is how we remember that tragedy and how that memory shapes the way we relate to one another today. Those who accept this view have asked whether Pope John Paul II’s offer of repentance and asking of forgiveness for the sins of Catholics who persecuted, tortured and murdered thousands of Jews in the name of Christianity over the centuries makes sense. Some argue that it does since, as members of the Body of Christ, we are all bound together (regardless of temporal presence) in a single organic whole; others object to this view on the basis that they oppose the concept of ‘collective guilt’ arguing that sin, in the proper sense of the word, is always the choice of an individual, personal will. For others, the Pope’s call to the Church to henceforth avoid the sin of anti-Semitism as a sign of repentance, falls short of what ‘true repentance’ should entail, arguing that more practical reparations for past offenses should be made. Cf. SCHIMMEL, *Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness*, pp. 210-213.

colloquy after the *First Exercise* of the First Week expressing one’s guilt or “accusing [blaming] oneself of some misdeed”. It appears in the context of describing how a colloquy is made “properly speaking, in the way one friend speaks to another, or a servant to one in authority” [*SpEx* 54], and thus this acknowledgement of guilt for a fault committed is presented as something positive: it is about nurturing one’s relationships by accepting that one does not always act as one should, and by accepting one’s responsibility for this and experiencing remorse and a desire to do better in the future.

Despite its few and occasional appearances, this experience of guilt seems to be for Ignatius an important element at the beginning of a spiritual journey. As we have just seen in our previous discussion, where there is sin, feeling guilt and grief will be of value if it leads to reparation. This feeling of repentance is characteristic of the good spirit: “In the case of persons who are going from one mortal sin to another [...] the good spirit [...] through their good judgment on problems of morality, stings their consciences with remorse” [*SpEx* 314]. On the other hand, “the enemy ordinarily proposes to them apparent pleasures [...] in order to hold them fast and plunge them deeper into their sins and vices” [*SpEx* 314]. It would seem that in this situation, these persons would not want or would not be able to feel or experience guilt.²³³

It is hoped, however, that for those who do experience guilt and remorse these will lead to repentance which, in some cases, will not only be expressed in words²³⁴ but also through acts of penance. In the *Exercises*, Ignatius divides these acts into interior and exterior penances, whose use he praises (cf. [*SpEx* 359]): Interior penance is grieving (cf. [*SpEx* 55]) for one’s sins (experiencing guilt and remorse) with a firm intention not to commit those or any other sins again.²³⁵ Exterior penance, a fruit of the former, is self-punishment for the sins one has committed [*SpEx* 82]. Exterior penances are done in three main ways which pertain to eating (cf. *Rules to order oneself in taking food* [*SpEx* 210-17]), sleeping, and chastising the body (cf. [*SpEx* 83-86]), and are performed chiefly for three purposes: to satisfy for one’s past

²³³ JORDI FONT, “Culpa” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, p. 541.

²³⁴ “After finishing the examination of all the commandments in the manner described above, I should accuse myself accordingly and beg grace and help to amend myself for the future” [*SpEx* 243].

²³⁵ To avoid committing such sins, the Exercises propose that the exercitant should ‘abhor’ or ‘detest’ the disorder in one’s actions so as amend oneself and put oneself in order; similarly, the exercitant should ask for the grace “that I may have a knowledge of the world, in order to detest it and rid myself of all that is worldly and vain” [*SpEx* 63]. Cf. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, JOSÉ, “¿Qué hacemos cuando hacemos ejercicios?”, p. 36.

sins—when there is conscience of having sinned (cf. [SpEx 37, 52])—to overcome oneself, and (as we saw earlier) to seek and obtain some grace or gift which one wishes and desires through ascetic practices (cf. [SpEx 87]).

Some of the prescriptions regarding the appropriate use of these acts of penance include: those exercising penances should always inform the givers of the Exercises about them and also be willing to obey their counsel regarding these, both in the spirit of good transparency and also so that the giver can “communicate spiritual exercises adapted to the needs of the person” [SpEx 17]; the penance should always be accommodated or suited to the nature and conditions of each person; it should help ward off the bad spirit in times of desolation and prevent being deceived by it (cf. [SpEx 319]), and it should help the exercitant find the right ‘mean’ or balance (cf. [SpEx 84, 350] in one’s relationships and activities, with the purpose of finding God in them.²³⁶ In the use of penances and particularly in the willingness of the exercitant to undertake them, there is a sense of movement, of a yearning to finish off something that was done in the past (which offended or caused harm) as well as a desire to proceed forward with something new or with new vigour and right purpose, and to show this intention, if not to others, at least to oneself and to God. Finally, in their desire to follow God’s desire for them, through the exercise of these penances the exercitants express their authentic disposition of searching, of wanting to discern this divine desire, not only for the general direction of one’s life, but also for particular decisions and choices.²³⁷ For survivors of forced displacement, one of the most difficult choices they will have to make is whether to forgive or not their wrongdoers.

3.5.4. The power to forgive: restoring communion

I shall name my child Clementine Ngiririkigongwe. Clementine, a reminder of God’s mercy. Ngiririkigongwe means ‘forgive me’, and ‘I forgive you’, so she will remember to do the same, always. *A Rwandese refugee in Tanzania*²³⁸

3.5.4.1. The choice not to forgive

We cannot demand that anyone forgive. It is a person’s prerogative to do so or not. For those who want to, as for the Rwandese refugee quoted above, we must provide paths or avenues

²³⁶ Cf. PASCUAL CEBOLLADA, “Penitencia” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, pp. 1432-1435, 1439.

²³⁷ CEBOLLADA, “Penitencia” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, p. 1434.

²³⁸ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 25.

(individual and collective) to facilitate this process. In the case of those who do not want to, or cannot, or are not yet ready to do so, we must find other ways to foster healing.

In her powerful statement, this Rwandese refugee does not only express a lovely sentiment but also points to two essential qualities I believe should be present in all acts of forgiveness if they are to have a lasting effect in the lives of those involved, both victims and perpetrators: a quest for restoration of communion and a commitment to healing of wounds, both at individual and societal levels. As L. Gregory Jones reminds us:

[...] forgiveness is not so much a word spoken, an action performed, or a feeling felt as it is an embodied way of life in an ever-deepening relationship with the Triune God and with others. As such, a Christian account of forgiveness ought not simply or even primarily to be focused on the absolution of guilt; rather, it ought to be focused on the reconciliation of brokenness, the restoration of community—with God, with one another, and with the whole creation.²³⁹

Robert Vosloo argues that this goal of forgiveness that leads to a “reconciliation of brokenness and restoration of community” is necessary to ensure that a dynamic view of repentance and forgiveness is upheld. This in contrast to a static view which “disconnects repentance and forgiveness from the past and the future, from memory and hope”. But, “without dealing with the past truthfully and without a [hopeful] vision of a common future, deeds of repentance and forgiveness become empty gestures”²⁴⁰ that do not contribute to lasting reconciliation, justice or peace nor to community building.

Jones’ belief that forgiveness is “an embodied way of life” echoes Jesus’ answer to the question posed to him by Peter: “Lord, if a brother sins against me, how often should I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus says to him: “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-22), or in other words, every time forgiveness is requested and needed, especially if its granting contributes towards building a harmonious and life-giving

²³⁹ L. GREGORY JONES, *Embodying forgiveness: a theological analysis*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1991, p. xii. And this reconciliation of brokenness and restoration of community might call us to forgive the unforgivable: “How to forgive the unforgivable? Our answer is: by facilitating an alliance with the enemy—between the victim and the victimizer. We defend that, ultimately, forgiveness takes place through making a *preferential alliance with the enemy* [...] ‘for-giveness’ is by nature ‘excess-giving’. It is excessive, first, because it is self-giving and, second, because the self is given back to the relationships with the one who is labelled an ‘enemy’. In contexts of gross violations of human rights, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide, forgiveness appears to lie beyond the limits of the human capacity for free choice. The mad, excessive love of forgiveness is the same as in the preferential alliance with the enemy”. Cf. LÓPEZ PÉREZ, *Excessive Love amidst the Unforgivable*, pp. 517-518.

²⁴⁰ VOSLOO, “Reconciliation as the Embodiment of Memory and Hope”, p. 26.

community.²⁴¹ Thus, forgiveness and repentance “have everything to do with our character and vision, our social location and historical situation. They are not merely about having the right views and doing the right deeds but about truthful embodiment—about being a certain kind of person”²⁴² who lives by these values, expressed in “specific habits and practices of Christian life”, which can be learned from others, as we learn others ‘crafts’,²⁴³ and increasingly developed as we ‘unlearn’ other non-so-charitable habits such as the need for revenge or the need to justify our behaviour and actions.²⁴⁴ Of course, this is not easy to do, or rather to ‘be’. Jones points to the example of German theologian and martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who embodied forgiveness in a costly manner as a reminder that we cannot ‘trivialise’ forgiveness either, simply to let ‘bygones be bygones, to get on with life’, or to make us feel better at the cost of supressing the past.

Certainly forcibly displaced people cannot be asked to supress the past and ‘just go on with their lives’. Nor does anyone have a right to demand from them that they forgive their perpetrators arguing that ‘if they call themselves Christian’, they should be able to forgive. True, forgiveness is a Christian virtue, but it cannot be treated in isolation with disregard to the pain and suffering experienced at the hands of others in the past. And people might not be

²⁴¹ Shriver argues that this aspect of forgiveness as community building, based on teachings and activities related to forgiveness appears in at least five settings in the Gospels: healings, prayer, eating, public enemies and discipline inside the new community. In the (1) healing scene presented in Mark 2:1-12, Jesus says to the paralysed man: “My son, your sins are forgiven” followed by “Stand up, take your bed, and go home”. In a society that linked illness with personal faults/sins, Jesus’ healing of this man not only frees him from a physical ailment, but also from a ‘communal barrier’ that prevented him from fully engaging in community life and exercising his rightful place within it; he is now able to do so; (2) the forgiveness-petition in the prayer of the Our Father is followed in Matthew’s gospel by the admonition: “For if you forgive others the wrongs they have done, your heavenly Father will also forgive you”, but if you do not, God will not (cf. Mt 6:12-15); (3) there are many stories in the gospels, in particular in Luke (cf. 19:1-10; 14:1-24) where a striking connection is made between “the physical presence of alienated people, the offer of forgiveness around a table, and the simple act of eating together there”; (4) Jesus’ words to the Roman soldiers who had just crucified him “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34) is the most striking example of the offering of forgiveness to ‘enemies’; (5) we find an example of community discipline subject to forgiveness in Paul’s Second letter to the Corinthians (12:20-21) where certain ‘defects of human social behaviour’ are forgivable if “given diligent personal and collective attention: quarrelling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit and disorder”, cf. SHRIVER, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, pp. 38-45.

²⁴² Vosloo, “Reconciliation as the Embodiment of Memory and Hope”, p. 28.

²⁴³ Cf. JONES, *Embodying forgiveness: a theological analysis*, p. xii.

²⁴⁴ Worthington suggests that there are five steps in the process of being able to forgive: (1) truthfully *recalling* and *recognising* the hurt to ourselves and others; (2) fostering a process of *empathising* with and feeling compassion towards the perpetrator, focusing more on the harmful actions than on the people who committed them, and trying to capture at least a glimpse of the vulnerability of the aggressor; we try to transform the emotions of resentment, bitterness, hostility, hatred, anger and fear for others such as empathy, sympathy, compassion or love; (3) offering forgiveness as an altruistic gift in freedom; (4) making a commitment to the act of forgiveness by articulating the experience of offering it, in order to make sure that it has an enduring effect in one’s life; and (5) holding on to this attitude and new found habit of the heart. Cf. EVERETT L. WORTHINGTON, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Theory and Application*, Routledge, New York 2006.

able to forgive, or at least might not be ready to do so yet. Miroslav Volf’s response to a question posed to him by Jürgen Moltmann at a lecture given by the former in 1993 is revealing here. Following from Volf’s suggestion that one should be able to embrace one’s enemies as God embraced us in Christ, Moltmann asked the Croatian theologian whether he could embrace the Serbian fighters who raped and murdered his fellow Croatians, burned churches and also committed other horrifying acts against humanity. After a while, Volf responded: “No, I cannot, but as a follower of Christ I think I should be able to”.²⁴⁵ Forgiveness is a Christian virtue indeed, but it is also grace, and this is something that Christians surprisingly tend to overlook in their discourse about forgiveness. Volf’s comment is a reminder that what one might not be able to do on one’s own, God can do in us—and that God will in fact do this is based on one’s capacity to trust, have faith and also hope.²⁴⁶

3.5.4.2. Pursuing forgiveness and reconciliation: openness and embrace of the other

Christians see forgiveness as leading to reconciliation paradigmatically enacted in the story of Christ’s Passion. Says Volf: “Without disregarding justice, Christ’s Passion points beyond the mere struggle for justice for the victims to a way of grace for the perpetrators and reconciliation for both”.²⁴⁷ He continues:

Reconciliation between human beings cannot proceed therefore in disregard of justice; it rather requires that the claims of justice be recognized as valid and be respected. The two lessons together—the lesson of unconditional grace and the lesson of justice—translate into the pursuit of forgiveness and reconciliation. In an act of unconditional grace, the claims of justice will be set aside, provided the perpetrators are willing to receive forgiveness of their misdeeds as forgiveness, which is to say, as long as they recognize themselves as sinners and thereby distance themselves from their deeds and restore to the victims at least some measure of what the original violation took away.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Cf. MIROSLAV VOLF, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press 1996, p. 9.

²⁴⁶ As López points out: [...] both the relations to the poor and to the enemy challenge the human capacity to gratuity and to love in the image of God. The poor call for our capacity to give gratis, because the poor cannot return the gift. The enemy calls for our capacity to give gratis, because to love the enemy is to give in excess, to self-give. In this sense, both the poor and the enemy become an opportunity for salvation, an opportunity to encounter God while loving from-with-like Him—the One who makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous (cf. Mt 5:45). Salvation, transforming borders into frontiers of encounter with the poor and the enemy, comes through gratuity and love [...]. This is so, because the enemy is the preferential *locus theologicus*, the preferential place where God reveals who He radically is: gratis relationship in excessive love, as on the cross when forgiving his killers, his ‘enemies’. Not only the poor, but also the enemy becomes an opportunity to experience God’s graciousness: giving without expecting in return (from the poor) and going beyond what seems to be right (loving the enemy). Cf. LÓPEZ PÉREZ, *Excessive Love amidst the Unforgivable*, pp. 519-520.

²⁴⁷ Cf. VOLF, ‘Memory of Reconciliation—Reconciliation of Memory’, p. 7.

²⁴⁸ Cf. VOLF, ‘Memory of Reconciliation—Reconciliation of Memory’, p. 11. As Jankélévitch puts it, the road to reconciliation requires the help of two interlocutors (whether individual or group): the offender, who is responsible for repentance, confession and at least the purpose of repairing the damage caused; and the

In other words, and as alluded to earlier, to achieve reconciliation what is needed is people who embody repentance and forgiveness, whose ‘character’ is focused on the type of ‘self’ each of us needs to be in order to live in harmony and right relationships with others. A key element here is the question of identity and of how one views ‘the other’ and his or her ‘otherness’. Vosloo argues that “Whether or how we will confess our guilt or forgive others is determined by the question: ‘Who are we?’” Moreover, he proposes that the way one replies to that question—in terms of one’s social, cultural and spiritual values and traditions, for example—has to include the aspect of “an identity characterised by openness towards otherness”, which should influence how one conceives justice and truth in the context of conflicts, not only between individuals but especially between groups and cultures.²⁴⁹

How does one symbolise and express in concrete actions this openness towards others? As mentioned earlier, Volf uses the notion of embrace²⁵⁰ (perhaps suited to some cultures more than others!) following the injunction of St Paul to the Romans also quote earlier, “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you” (15:7), and as a way of expressing that

[...] *the will to give ourselves to others and ‘welcome’ them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity. The will to embrace precedes any ‘truth’ about others and any construction of their ‘justice’.*²⁵¹

Of course, it is much more difficult to have this ‘will to embrace’ others after they have hurt, persecuted and killed one’s loved ones or oneself, as in the case of many forcibly displaced people. Yet Volf hopes that this offer of embrace is still possible in that “at the core of the Christian faith lies the persuasion that the ‘others’ need not be perceived as innocent in order to be loved, but ought to be embraced *even when they are perceived as wrongdoers*”,²⁵² as

victim/survivor, on whom the forgiveness depends. This relationship defines forgiveness, because it can be freely refused or graciously granted before time and without stopping to fulfil legal terms. Cf. JANKÉLÉVITCH, *Le pardon*, p. 1029.

²⁴⁹ Vosloo, “Reconciliation as the Embodiment of Memory and Hope”, p. 33.

²⁵⁰ Volf explains that this metaphor of *embrace* brings together the three interrelated themes that are central to this work: “(1) the mutuality of self-giving love in the Trinity (the doctrine of God), (2) the outstretched arms of Christ on the cross for the ‘godless’ (the doctrine of Christ), (3) the open arms of the ‘father’ receiving the ‘prodigal’ (the doctrine of salvation)”. VOLF, *Exclusion & Embrace*, p. 29.

²⁵¹ VOLF, *Exclusion & Embrace*, p. 29.

²⁵² ““But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us’ (Rom 5:6-8). This love of God goes beyond justice understood as transaction and equal treatment, an eye for eye. In doing so, God shows his divine gratuitousness and love that are capable of caring for the enemy by entering into an alliance with him”. Cf. LÓPEZ PÉREZ, *Excessive Love amidst the Unforgivable*, p. 520.

God did with humanity—all of us—through Christ in the cross.²⁵³ Yet, to feel secure, to protect oneself against the possibility of future wrongdoing, and to safeguard one’s identity (needed to establish any relation with an ‘other’), ‘buffers’ or boundaries that act both as ‘barriers’ and ‘bridges’ are needed:

[...] ‘identity’ includes connection, difference, heterogeneity. The human self is formed not through a simple rejection of the other—through a binary logic of opposition and negation—but through a complex process of ‘taking in’ *and* ‘keeping out’. We are who we are not because we are separate from the others who are next to us, but because we are *both* separate *and* connected, *both* distinct *and* related; the boundaries that mark our identities are both barriers and bridges.²⁵⁴

The purpose of these barriers then is not to foster exclusion but to help protect one’s identity through ‘differentiation’, so we can relate to one another, particularly when we consider each other a ‘stranger’: “the experience of encountering a stranger—like the experience of suffering—is important and creative, provided we know when to step back”.²⁵⁵ Volf concludes: “[...] we must refuse to consider boundaries as exclusionary. Instead, what is exclusionary are the impenetrable barriers that prevent a creative encounter with the other. They are a result either of expulsion or indifference”.²⁵⁶ Expulsion of those one fears, among other things, because they are different; indifference to the plight of others, and even to the contribution they can bring to one’s life. The antidote to this exclusion is the offer of embrace characterised by welcome and hospitality to all, including strangers and even wrongdoers. And in the case of wrongdoers, this opens the possibility of reconciliation as well.

3.5.4.3. Learning to forgive in the *Spiritual Exercises*

²⁵³ VOLF, *Exclusion & Embrace*, p. 85. Volf expands this notion of embrace in his description of the so-called ‘drama of embrace’, set in four acts. *Act one: Opening of arms* is a gesture of the body reaching for another and a sign of discontent with one’s self-enclosed identity; it is also a sign that we have created space within ourselves for the other to come in and that we have moved out of ourselves too as to enter the space created by the other. It is too a gesture of invitation. *Act two: Waiting* involves respect for the integrity of the other as the other cannot be coerced or manipulated into the embrace; it can only occur through reciprocity. *Act three: Closing of the arms* serves as the goal for it does imply reciprocity: in an embrace a guest is a host and a host is a guest. *Act four: Opening of arms again* means letting the other go, which in turn is the guarantee that the other is able to preserve his/her alterity. The open arms of the last act are similar to the open arms of the first act, opening up the boundary of the self and inviting the other to return, *Exclusion & Embrace*, pp. 140-147.

²⁵⁴ VOLF, *Exclusion & Embrace*, p. 66. Regarding this selfhood-otherness dichotomy, Paul Ricoeur adds: “the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other”. PAUL RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1992, p. 3.

²⁵⁵ WIESEL, *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences*, p. 73. Wiesel adds: “The question, therefore is, How should the contact, the exchange, occur? What should its nature be? Am I to approach the stranger in his language or mine? In other words: Must I make an effort to resemble him so as to better discover him? The answer, naturally, is no. For that would mean accepting his terms; that would mean submission and defeat, leading—finally—to dissolution rather than to affirmation of our identity”, p. 63.

²⁵⁶ VOLF, *Exclusion & Embrace*, p. 67.

From the preceding discussion it could be argued that what forgiveness requires is a change of heart, embodied in a particular way of life that seeks to restore community and communion.²⁵⁷ As we have seen, at the end of the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, the experience of knowing and feeling oneself a forgiven sinner arises a deep feeling of gratitude for God’s mercy and benevolence. Recognising that this love and benevolence is offered to all—including one’s enemies—can contribute towards healing one’s memories of pain and suffering. And it should unlock also one’s potential to forgive others, or at least heighten one’s desire to do so. Linked to the spiritual process, forgiveness can unfurl the possibility for transformation of feelings, thoughts and behaviours, and the dynamics of the Exercises—beyond the meditations of the First Week—can facilitate one’s capacity for forgiveness, shedding light on what this transformation might consist of.²⁵⁸

In the Exercises, the grace asked for repeatedly during the Second Week is “an interior knowledge of Our Lord who became human for me, that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely” [*SpEx* 104]. This deep desire to continuously follow Christ can in itself be therapeutic: to see and hear someone who is good and wanting to imitate him—to some extent wanting to be ‘like’ him or her—should make us better persons too. Ignatius, in fact, believed that through contemplating Jesus one could be transformed interiorly, becoming more “like” him to some extent—more Christ-like—and that in and through this transformation one could also be healed of that which limits people. Seeing Jesus’ generosity could help cure one’s pettiness; seeing him in his surrender could cure one’s selfishness; seeing him express and live mercy could cure one’s judgemental stance; seeing him in his poverty could heal one’s pride; seeing his capacity to forgive, even those who crucified him, might heal one’s wounded heart and increase one’s empathy, even towards one’s victimisers.²⁵⁹

In the Third week (cf. [*SpEx* 190-209]) in contemplating the Passion and Death of the Lord Jesus, Ignatius directs the exercitant to ask for “sorrow, regret and confusion, because the

²⁵⁷ Forgiveness then is not about focusing solely on the victims (what has happened to them, what their response should be, what is expected of others), but it should be broadened to include what Enright refers to as the ‘forgiveness triad’: what is required in forgiving others, receiving forgiveness and forgiving oneself. Cf. R. D. ENRIGHT, “Counselling within the Forgiveness Triad: On forgiving, receiving Forgiveness, and Self-forgiveness” in *Counselling and Values* 40, n. 2 (1996) 107-126.

²⁵⁸ Cf. PRIETO and GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Psicología del perdón y Ejercicios Espirituales”, pp. 317-328.

²⁵⁹ Cf. PRIETO and GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Psicología del perdón y Ejercicios Espirituales”, p. 324.

Lord is going to his Passion for my sins” [SpEx 193]. The contemplation of a God who appears as absolute weakness and radical passivity (the meaning of ‘passion’), and of the reaction of the ‘Innocent One’, who despite his pain and the agonising injustice he suffers still offers ‘healing’ to those guilty of his death, can also bring healing to the dark zones of ‘un-mercy’ that may have taken hold of the exercitant’s life. In psychology, the effect that this contemplation produces is called ‘modelling’: one learns from someone, a model, observing his or her behaviour, and that observation changes us and transforms us. Jesus’ forgiving attitude as a model of response of an offended victim against unjust aggression is a source of change and transformation: learning to look at one’s perpetrators as he did his, offers a virtuous lesson of forgiveness, empathy and compassion.²⁶⁰ Thus, Ignatius proposes a privileged path to achieve all of these: learn from the Teacher.

Contemplating Jesus’ Passion as a consequence of “my sins”, and then recalling one’s own lived experiences of being forgiven and receiving the gift of forgiveness, especially if undeservedly, can only but engender greater empathy in us. The Lord, as victim, who has the power and authority to condemn us to death, instead of being moved by anger, resentment or revenge, has shown untold patience and has “allowed me to live and [...] preserved me in life” [SpEx 60]. God remains unchanged in his love, empathy and sympathy towards us and shows his benevolence making us feel again consolation, as an experience of truth and joy. Forgiveness is offered as a true altruistic and disinterested gift. So, after remembering the deep and transforming experience of having been forgiven, it is now about offering someone else freely what we have freely received.

In other words, it is about allowing a received experience—in this case forgiveness—to act as model and motivation for one’s future actions of reconciliation. And it is God’s surprising response of love that has brought about the conversion of one’s freedom. It is moreover a response each person is called to reproduce and to commit oneself to—a commitment that is further expressed in the meditation of the *Eternal King*: “[...] yo quiero y deseo y es mi determinación deliberada, sólo que sea vuestro mayor servicio y alabanza [...]” [SpEx 98].²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ For Enright and Fitzgibbons, the effect of compassion is one of the mysteries in what they refer to as ‘forgiveness therapy’, whose origins are still unknown. Cf. ROBERT ENRIGHT and RICHARD FITZGIBBONS, *Helping Clients Forgive: An Empirical Guide for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope*, Washington: APA 2000, p. 83.

²⁶¹ English translation of the Spanish text: “I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision, provided only that it is for your greater service and praise”.

Finally, in the *Contemplation to Attain Love* the exercitant is asked to consider and experience a world that has been created and structured according to this divine love: all of nature, all of creation thus becomes a message of mercy and reconciliation as an echo or memory of a God who maintains forever his option of love for each one of us, beyond our faults, our sins, our acts of un-love. We are forgiven sinners, called to forgive in gratuity as the Lord has; called to be agents of reconciliation as Christ was.²⁶²

3.5.5. *The need to heal: reconciliation and acceptance*

A prayer for peace
 peace has no peace...
 peace is no more a white dove
 it's a cursed bird of prey
 a wild beast in search of people
 to make them fight...
 my native land is ill and pained...
 but I love you, dear mother country
 I love you even if I do not find peace
 I love you even if you are wounded
 and no matter what happens
 you will always be in my heart;
 dear brother, make your heart good
 say goodbye to arms and to viciousness...
 no more violence my brother, no more, no more...
 can't you see that the world wants peace?
 Lord almighty, with your power,
 can't you make the dove reclaim her colour?
 can't you make brave people anew?
 can't you give my country joy and love?
A poem by Daniela, from Colombia,
*written when she was an asylum seeker.*²⁶³

Having explored three of the elements—remembrance, repentance and forgiveness—in the path towards healing for forcibly displaced peoples (and other victims) who seek to move forward from their experience of violence, suffering and trauma, to becoming sound again, we address now the final component in this process—reconciliation.²⁶⁴ Much has been said

²⁶² Cf. PRIETO and GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Psicología del perdón y Ejercicios Espirituales”, pp. 325-327.

²⁶³ Cf. JRS, *War has changed our life, not our spirit, Experiences of forcibly displaced women*, p. 127.

²⁶⁴ In addition to the sources already cited, see JONAS GALTUNG, *3R: Reconstruction, Resolution, Reconciliation*, Gernika: Gogoratuz 1998; and JONAS GALTUNG, “Twelve creative ways to foster reconciliation after violence” in *Intervention* 3, n. 3 (2005) 222-234, in which, based on his experience as a mediator in many conflict areas, Galtung discusses twelve approaches to reconciliation; he concludes that no single approach is capable of handling the complexity of the situation after violent events, thus combining approaches makes more sense. He suggests that the parties involved in the conflict should be invited to discuss these approaches and together be able to arrive at the best combination for their own situation. Similarly, Lederach suggests five qualities of process and practice he believes can provide support for the complex challenge of seeking authentic

already about this topic in the previous discussions—all elements, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, are interrelated—both in terms of the general process towards healing as well as within the dynamic of the Exercises. We focus therefore in this section on the agents and factors involved in the reconciliation process for forcibly displaced people in the Christian context.

3.5.5.1. Agents of reconciliation

From a faith-based perspective (and in particular a Christian one), there are six *agents* involved in the process of healing and reconciliation for the forcibly displaced and migrants in general: the displaced person, his/her community, their descendants, the receiving (autochthonous) community, the pastoral ministers involved in the reconciliation process and the Church as a whole.²⁶⁵ The key for displaced persons is to overcome the trauma and hurt caused by their forced displacement experience to then develop a greater capacity to live healthily and productively in their new homes.

3.5.5.1.1. Displaced persons and their communities

Even if they arrive on their own, forcibly displaced people are never really totally alone. Their families and communities are always present in them and with them in varying degrees, and this is particularly the case of displaced people who have come from socio-centric cultures where a person’s identity, role and status can only be understood in terms of the community from which they originated. In many cases, it is a displaced person’s family, in particular their children and grandchildren, who constitute the deciding factor for leaving one’s country of origin. Isolated individuals might try to ‘ride the storm’ of conflict and war, but when dependants are involved, they must look after their security and well-being. And as

reconciliation. These include: (1) *reconciliation as relationship-centric*: as opposed to a focus on ‘issues’, in which the defining quality of practice is the building of trust among conflicting parties; (2) *reconciliation as accompaniment*: in which the emphasis is placed on presence, shared common humanity and a sense of walking “along-sideness” by people who can provide support in the journey of reconciliation between conflicting groups; (3) *reconciliation and humility*: rather than assuming a predetermined answer, humility would suggest a need to learn and accompany the building of process that is both rooted and responsive to the context and people; (4) *reconciliation and restoring the fabric of community*: by bringing together the ‘energies’ of truth and mercy, and (5) *reconciliation as a wandering in a desert*: pointing to the need to prepare well personally and communally before undertaking the hard journey of reconciliation as well as developing ‘longer-term’ lenses and commitments on the part of those who wish to accompany and support reconciliation. Cf. JOHN PAUL LEDERACH, “Five Qualities of Practice in Support of Reconciliation Process” in Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney L. Petersen, eds., *Forgiveness and reconciliation: religion, public policy and conflict transformation*, Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press 2002, pp. 195-202.

²⁶⁵ Cf. SCHREITER, “Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation”, pp. 111-113. Unless otherwise noted, the description that follows is based on Schreiter’s exposition in these pages.

expected, a person’s reconciliation process will be influenced by how the experience of displacement affected his or her loved ones, in particular if the experience was utterly traumatic for them.

3.5.5.1.2. Descendants

Often, parents and grandparents will try to protect the younger members of the family by remaining silent about the worst aspects of their displacement journey, especially if the children were too young to remember it personally. But often, recurrent erratic or unexplainable behaviour will betray them and reveal (or at least give a glimpse) of what they might have gone through and are trying to keep hidden. And such behaviour can often be disconcerting to the younger generations. It might not be until the end of their lives that some forcibly displaced people are willing and able to talk about their traumatic experiences, lest they be forgotten by subsequent generations.

Further, some forcibly displaced people might transmit, consciously or unconsciously, what is known as ‘chosen trauma’—a particular version of the trauma they experienced which becomes embedded in the identity of subsequent generations. Often, this selective narrative can affect them profoundly. An example might be an ex-refugee who was betrayed while in his birth country or during the asylum process by someone very close to him—a family member or best friend—and as a result developed an excessive distrust towards all people, including other relatives: consciously or unconsciously, he might transmit this trait to some of his children or even grandchildren.

3.5.5.1.3. Autochthonous community and pastoral ministers

Often the receiving community is the hardest group to engage in the healing and reconciliation process. While some receiving communities might be hostile and unwelcoming, others might be the opposite but still struggle to comprehend the context and circumstances of the new arrivals. They might feel at a loss on how to be a healing presence, especially if the healing process requires a long time. And new arrivals themselves might not trust others initially and thus delay this process of engagement with the autochthonous community. It is in these challenging situations that the role of pastoral ministers is particularly significant. And because the circumstances are indeed challenging, people in these roles need to be well-formed and specifically trained to face those challenges: knowledge of cross-cultural and

intercultural interactions, of displacement-related trauma, and even of the particular culture or ethnic group of people they are called to serve would be most relevant and desired. Pastoral ministers also need to have good self-knowledge of their own possible feelings of discrimination and even racism as well as of past traumas that might get in the way of effectively ministering to the new arrivals. In the worst of cases, they could even inflict much damage to them.

3.5.5.1.4. The Church

The final agent is the wider church, whose role as instrument of reconciliation could be not only important but also essential, especially in communities, societies and countries, where wars and protracted conflicts have created deep divisions among the parties involved and where much healing is required for them to move forward and beyond those conflicts.²⁶⁶ The ‘Church’ also includes the local church into which new arrivals settle—and whose role was discussed at length in chapter 1 which explored the characteristics of a spirituality and theology of displacement. Suffice it to say here that in terms of its healing and reconciling role, the Church must remember that both healing and reconciliation are not one-way processes. The forcibly displaced cannot be regarded as passive recipients of such ministry. In fact, they can contribute significant resources and insights not only into their own healing process but also towards the receiving communities’ own needs of reconciliation and healing by providing new perspectives and vision of what a church as *communio* is really meant to be.

3.5.5.2. Factors towards healing and reconciliation

²⁶⁶ Speaking of the process of reconciliation in South Africa right before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began its work, de Gruchy argued the important role of the Church in this process: “The Christian understanding of repentance, forgiveness, and reparation is of fundamental importance in helping to shape the national consciousness of what is required for healing the land, genuine reconciliation, and building a moral and democratic culture [...]. Moreover, the churches, together with other religious communities, have an indispensable pastoral role to fulfil which could go a long way to ensuring that the work of the commission achieves its goal of healing the nation. They have a ministry to the perpetrators of crimes: enabling them to come clean and helping them to become morally responsible citizens. And they have a special responsibility to help the victims tell their stories and, in doing so deal with deep hurts and anger. The healing of shame and memories, both personal and corporate, is a long and difficult task, but it is fundamental to the moral reconstruction of South Africa and central to the message of the gospel. Cf. JOHN DE GRUCHY, “The Dialectic of Reconciliation: Church and the Transition to Democracy in South Africa” in Gregory Baum and Harold Wells, eds., *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1997, pp. 27-28. See also, JOHN DE GRUCHY, *Reconciliation. Restoring justice*, Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress 2002, for a concise but elucidating discussion of a developing understanding of reconciliation within the Christian tradition, pp. 44-76.

Schreiter has identified four main factors in the Christian faith-based ministry of healing and reconciliation for forcibly displaced peoples: (1) understanding the Christian meaning of reconciliation, (2) pursuing justice for the displaced/migrants, (3) healing of memories and (4) recovering agency as a displaced person.²⁶⁷

3.5.5.2.1. The Christian meaning of reconciliation

The specifically Christian contribution to a broader reconciliation process, while having much in common with other methods of conflict transformation and therapeutic processes, has five distinctive elements: (1) *God is the agent of reconciliation*, the one who leads and resolves the reconciliation process—acknowledging this “has the added dimension of making the healing process a spiritual quest that both receives divine guidance and refrains from depending too heavily on one set of techniques or solutions to issues”; (2) *healing begins with the victim*, so that even if the wrongdoer refuses to change or is not present to engage with in the transformative healing activity, substantial healing through God’s grace can still take place in the life of the victim; (3) *the healing brought about in the reconciliation process takes the victim to a new place*, that is, in Christian language “God brings the victim into a new, transformed state that does not forget or negate the past, but rather puts that past into a new setting”; (4) *the migration/displacement story has to be reframed*: as we saw earlier in the section on ‘healing of memories’, this ‘reframing’ (a widely used psychological concept) can help give some meaning to the cruel and wrongful suffering experienced by the displaced person, of course not by dismissing what took place but by attempting to offer a new explanatory narrative of the event which upholds the dignity and worth of the victim; (5) *the healing process of reconciliation is never complete*, for there might be dimensions of the trauma that only surface at specific times in the victim’s life, often triggered by unexpected events or circumstances. Moreover, the full range of repercussions from a traumatic event can reverberate far beyond what might be initially perceived: several Vietnamese Australians, for example, who arrived in Australia as ‘boat people’ close to thirty years ago, have spoken publicly of still having to struggle emotionally and spirituality with the “repercussions” of

²⁶⁷ Cf. SCHREITER, ‘Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation’, pp. 114-122. The present discussion follows Schreiter’s exposition in these pages. See also CHRISTOPH SCHWÖBEL, “Reconciliation: From Biblical Observations to Dogmatic Reconstruction” in Colin E. Gunton, ed., *The Theology of Reconciliation*, London: T&T Clark 2003, pp. 13-38. Schwöbel attempts to reconstruct the place of reconciliation within the doctrinal scheme of Christian faith, arguing that through such understanding theology and the Church can also contribute to a use of reconciliation in political rhetoric.

what they had to go through not only to make it to Australia but also during the initial years after their arrival.

3.5.5.2.2. *The pursuit of justice*

The pursuit of justice for the forcibly displaced entails seeing justice not as an alternative to reconciliation, but rather as a condition for its fulfilment. In other words, this religious perspective believes that both justice *and* reconciliation are possible, even if it recognises that the justice achieved is often incomplete and unsatisfactory. But what is important is to engage in action which, according to Schreier, should include: an acknowledgement of wrongdoing on the part of the wrongdoer or of innocence of the victim; the overcoming of the asymmetries that have arisen; and the regaining of agency on the part of the displaced person. The acknowledgment of trauma involves issues of silence and of truth. Out of shame or the inability to express what has happened to them—because of language or cultural barriers or appropriate forums—the forcibly displaced might be obliged to remain silent about their painful experiences. But giving them opportunities and resources to voice the truth about what happened is essential for displaced persons to become once again *subjects* of their own history rather than *objects* acted upon: “breaking the silence allows the agent to participate in the historical process once again”. Breaking the silence can also reveal the innocence of the forcibly displaced (often considered as law breakers), and the wrongdoing of so many along the way—including their own governments and those of the receiving communities—that inflicted so much pain on them.

Through telling these stories of suffering, right relationships with the past can finally be restored and open the way to realign any associated *asymmetries*—past, present and future. Among others, these might include exploitation at the hands of people smugglers, injustices regarding housing, employment (in some receiving countries asylum seekers, for example, might not be allowed to work until their arrival application process is resolved and this might take years), and access to social welfare in the receiving countries. Asymmetries may also include inhuman detention practices during the asylum process and structural justice issues concerning appropriate and more humane legislation for the forcibly displaced, as well as settlement in new countries.

3.5.5.2.3. *Recovering agency*

We have already addressed in detail the topic of healing of memories in a previous section, so we move to the final element in the Christian ministry of reconciliation, recovering agency *as a displaced person*. This final dimension has to do with a person’s capacity to “function as a full and free person in accord with the Christian understanding of human dignity and equal regard” we saw in chapter 2. This process takes place through particular goals and tasks. An essential one is the movement from being a victim to becoming a survivor: “Being called a survivor indicates that one is no longer a victim, but also that the experience of having been a victim does not leave one without wounds and memories. Being a survivor often connotes an ongoing struggle not to slip back into being a victim once again”.²⁶⁸ And together with this movement there is also a sense of call, a vocation—a God-given grace—to help other victims who have gone through similar stories of trauma and violence and become a healer of others.

3.5.5.3. Reconciliation and the *Spiritual Exercises*

We addressed the relevance of the topic of reconciliation for the Society of Jesus, from its origins to the present day, at the beginning of this thesis (chapter 1).²⁶⁹ In this section we explore briefly how the experience of the Exercises might contribute to the process of reconciliation with oneself, by helping restructure and integrate dissonant aspects in the exercitant’s life. This approach is based on the premise that in order to be an agent of reconciliation with and for others, one has to have experienced this reconciliation within oneself. This section also brings together the elements considered previously—remembering and healing of memories, guilt and repentance, forgiveness—all necessary steps in the path towards healing and reordering of one’s life to grow in deeper union with the Lord and respond freely to his call and mission.

The spiritual process of reconciliation is based on the remodelling of one’s life mentioned earlier, which takes place through engaging the exercitant’s deepest affective ‘structures’ in order to achieve a more intimate and personal encounter with God and Jesus. In the context of

²⁶⁸ SCHREITER, ‘Migrants and the Ministry of Reconciliation’, p. 121.

²⁶⁹ See also CARLOS COUPEAU, “Reconciliación” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 1354-1440; Revista *Manresa* also dedicated its volume 77 (2005) to the topic of reconciliation which included articles by: CARLOS DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales, experiencia de reconciliación”, 109-124; SANTI THIÓ, “Ignacio: de la humanidad a la pacificación”, 125-138; ÍÑIGO ARRANZ, “Pacificar y reconciliar desavenidos en la primitiva Compañía”, 139-152; JOSÉ MARÍA FERNÁNDEZ-MARTOS, “Tejiendo reconciliación en las cárceles”, 153-160; PABLO GUERRERO RODRÍGUEZ, “El milagro de un territorio común”, 161-168; PEP BUADES, “Y también manifiéstese preparado para reconciliar desavenidos... entre turcos o cualesquiera otros infieles”, 169-178.

the Exercises, the goal is to ‘order’ these structures according to the anthropological schema of the *Principle and Foundation*, which addresses among other things, the ‘divided dimension’ of the human condition.²⁷⁰ As Ignatius puts it, “I assume that there are three kinds of thoughts in myself” [SpEx 32], thus recognising that there is a permanent interior struggle in us. Only one of these thoughts “arises strictly from my own freedom and desire; the other two come from outside myself, the one from the good spirit and the one from the evil”, and achieving an internal state of peace and reconciliation will only occur through a very attentive listening to what each of these two other ‘thoughts’ in us conceals and proposes behind its specific strategies (cf. *Two Standards*). To uncover this, in fact, is what the *Rules of discernment* try to do, so as to ‘orient’ those differences and oppositions which exist in the deepest part of one’s being, as an articulation of one’s deepest desires. This ‘internal state of peace and reconciliation’ is achieved in part through the gift of Ignatian indifference: that freedom with respect to everything—which is born from a fundamental polarisation in us—of desire of God and of God’s service and praise. A freedom with respect to wealth or poverty, honour or dishonour, health or illness—a freedom, in the end, with respect to life or death (cf. [SpEx 23]). Being indifferent to health or sickness, or to the possibility of a long or short life, expresses the most complete reconciliation with our condition as limited and dependent creatures.²⁷¹

Once reconciled with his or her human condition and all that this limitation and contingency encompasses, the exercitant must embark on an intense journey to reconcile himself or herself also with one’s own fallibility, while assimilating at the same time the acceptance and forgiveness that come from God’s unconditional mercy. As we have seen previously, this all takes place during the First Week of the Exercises which, among other things, addresses the possible deep-seated issues of guilt—that fierce field of internal struggle—present in the exercitant. At the end of this process, and acknowledging oneself as a forgiven, accepted and welcomed sinner, the exercitant, with a deep sense of gratitude, must decide now what needs

²⁷⁰ This endeavour, of course, is not new. For example, William Johnston (cf. *The Silent Music*, London: Collins 1974) has explored the physical and psychological dimensions of spirituality with particular reference to Zen meditation, and Bernard Tyrell (cf. *Christotherapy: healing through enlightenment*, New York: Seabury Press 1975) and Rosemary Haughton (cf. *The Liberated Heart*, London: G. Chapman 1975) have undertaken detailed analyses of the Christian’s relationship with Christ in the light respectively of the existential psychology of Thomas Hora and the transactional analysis of Berne and Harris. These and many others are concerned to re-establish the relationship of holiness to wholeness, and to show how a rightly understood faith-relationship with God is inherently healing. Cf. MICHAEL IVENS, “Healing the Divided Self” in *The Way* 16, n. 3 (1976) 170.

²⁷¹ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales, experiencia de reconciliación”, pp. 110-115.

to be done for the Lord (cf. [SpEx 53]).²⁷² The answer to this question will, however, demand a long and complex process of discernment in which new interior ‘battles’ will have to be fought, continuing that process of ‘ordering’ of one’s affectivities (cf. *The Three Classes of Persons*, [SpEx 149-57]). The process will require, among other things, discerning what is of greatest benefit (cf. [SpEx 211]), and what contributes toward an “order in regard to how one ought to conduct and govern oneself” [SpEx 214] and to become “master of oneself” [SpEx 216]. This surrendering of one’s affectivity to reason will contribute also to “more clearly perceive interior lights, consolations, and divine inspirations which guide one to the mean suitable to oneself” [SpEx 213]. As expected, in this process the Examens and the *Rules of discernment* would be of great assistance.²⁷³ Authentic reconciliation and harmony within oneself will only be made possible by a coherent confrontation of the internal discrepancies that inhabit each of us (cf. [SpEx 325-27]). But of course, during this Second Week, it will also be necessary to be alert not to confuse all harmony with oneself as a fruit of the spirit (cf. [SpEx 332, 334]).

Finally, in assuming the main objective of the process of the Exercises to be the election—an election that supposes an authentic transformation in the life of the exercitant—Ignatius takes great care to prepare the exercitant for this moment of the process, to make sure that whatever that election is and requires, it will be supported by the deepest dynamic acting within the exercitant. In other words, it is about uniting desire and choice: desiring and choosing what most leads us to the end for which one has been created (cf. [SpEx 23]). And to fulfil this objective, a whole series of ‘technical’ resources or tools are presented (the *application of the senses*, additional directives, ways of praying, Examens, etc.), as well as a particular selection

²⁷² Ignatius suggests that at this stage (the end of the First Week), the use of the sacrament of reconciliation might help contribute towards the exercitants’ ‘rebuilding’ of their ‘interior order’ and to reorient their life project to harmonise it with God’s plan and dream for them. Cf. JOSÉ GARCÍA DE CASTRO, “Confesión: espiritualidad y praxis” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 2007, pp. 382-383. And as it would be expected, it could also be a source of healing for the exercitant: “The wounds that emerge in making the Ignatian Exercises [...] are often what precede the deliberate sins and divine mercy examined in the First Week. Such wounds may have been caused by rejection, abandonment, neglect or abuse (physical, psychological, sexual); or [...] from the absence of the affirmation that a child needs from both father and mother. When such things become the source of shame or of misplaced guilt, it can be healing to bring them to a spiritual director. The experience of being really listened to, of being heard and understood, can already bring a measure of healing. To be prayed over with a laying on of hands by a director attuned to the workings of the Spirit can bring even deeper healing. To receive all this in the context of confession celebrated as a sacrament of healing can be more powerful still. However one defines sin, it would seem that, while we seek forgiveness for sin, we also need healing for wounds, and in the sacrament we should ask specifically for the healing that we need”. ERIC JENSEN, “Forgiveness and Healing: Confession and the Spiritual Exercises” in *The Way* 56, n. 1 (2017) 97, 99-100.

²⁷³ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales, experiencia de reconciliación”, 116-120.

of contents proposed for meditation and contemplation that must be carried out to ensure that desire and choice will harmonise intimately within the person. Before making an election, in effect, one must reorient the world of one’s affections—the world of one’s desires—as that source of energy which mobilises one’s decisions. In the end, it is not a matter of surrendering dutifully to a plan supposedly designed by God, but rather a matter of a spontaneous response that springs from one’s consciousness of being loved and of finding in praising, reverencing and serving the best way to realise and to fulfil what and who we truly are. This is the greatest sense of reconciliation and harmony with ourselves that we can aspire to.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Cf. DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, “Los Ejercicios Espirituales, experiencia de reconciliación”, 122.

Part IV: The Australian context: external factors to consider when planning to offer the Spiritual Exercises to survivors of forced displacement

Theology and spirituality are both contextual and the process of engaging in the Spiritual Exercises does not take place in a vacuum. It is affected by both ‘internal’ (e.g. the exercitant’s make-up, background, motivation, etc.) and ‘external’ factors (trauma-induced psychological issues, location, environment, spatial and temporal elements, etc.). Having looked at some of these ‘internal factors’—the attitudes, dispositions and capacities of the forcibly displaced (as well as their effect on their potential Ignatian ‘*subiecto*’)—and at some of the psychological aspects that might determine or affect how they engage with/in the Spiritual Exercises, we now consider in the last part of this chapter some additional external factors. These are linked to present-day reality in Australia as the country of resettlement and location where the Exercises will be offered to the particular audience under study. As mentioned earlier, the objective of this Part IV is to explore what the effect of these circumstances might be for survivors resettled in Australia in terms, for example, of their access to the Exercises, the opportunity to engage in them and the level of priority given to receive them.

We begin by looking at some of the current issues and challenges that both underpin Australia’s attitude towards forcibly displaced people and Australians’ attitudes towards religion and faith. While the comments made here can only be of a general nature, and there will certainly be a wide range of alternative interpretations in both areas, I believe that they do paint a fairly accurate picture—an apposite composition of place—in terms of what “people are doing and saying” (cf. [*SpEx* 106-108]) about them. To bring together these topics, we look at a particular study that explores the relationship between religion, spirituality and the forced displacement experience in this country. The last section focuses on a particular Catholic community, namely Sudanese-Australians, and their specific needs and challenges as an example of a community of survivors of forced displacement for whom the Spiritual Exercises could be a source of spiritual nourishment. We conclude the chapter with a summary of learnings and insights that will inform our development of spiritual exercises in chapter 5.

4.1. Challenges in present Australian reality

4.1.1. Racism and xenophobia

It is estimated that Australia’s history, in terms of human presence, dates back over 40,000 years. The indigenous inhabitants of this country, often referred to as indigenous people or aborigines, lived in transient communities spread throughout the continent, shared some common traits (for example, a nomadic type existence), but also had different languages as well as diverse socio-cultural characteristics. One important common feature was their ‘animist’ or ‘traditional’ spirituality, based on a belief in the presence of spirits—in particular in the land, animals and nature in general. Some of these characteristics remain today among the few hundred thousand surviving indigenous Australians.

The arrival of Europeans in the late 1700s brought with it momentous changes in all areas of human existence, disrupting the way of life of the original custodians of Australia’s land. The use of the word ‘custodian’ here is intentional and deeply relevant. While Westerners hold the concept or idea of ownership of land, indigenous people see themselves basically as carers or custodians of the land they inhabit. Thus, the land belongs to all and all have a responsibility to care for and protect the land to the best of their ability. This Western-world model of land ownership can help explain some of the current attitudes of many Australians towards forcibly displaced people: when someone arrives in Australia as an asylum seeker, for example, without a ‘proper’ visa sanctioned by the Australian government—in other words, “without a proper invitation”—that person is regarded as a ‘trespasser’ of private property. When a person sees herself as the owner of the land and its resources, then she believes she has the right to decide who and how many people should benefit from those resources and whether that limit has already been reached; in other words, she believes she has the right to decide who comes into the country, regardless of their plight and needs or of her responsibility to them as members of the human community to which she also belongs. And when someone sees himself as owning the land, he feels that he has to protect it and preserve its value (or its ‘values’) and ‘build walls’ to keep out others with seemingly different values, since they come from other lands and cultures—even if his own ancestors originally came from other lands and cultures—that might (even if he has no hard evidence to support this assumption) controvert his own.

Australians pride themselves in living in a country that offers a ‘fair go’ to all its people. This concept of ‘fair go’ basically implies that anyone who works hard, with discipline and perseverance, should be able to overcome obstacles, become whatever he or she wants and ‘make it’ in this country. Of course, in reality this concept is flawed since it assumes that all people have access to similar possibilities and resources to achieve prosperity and success, while well-documented research not only in Australia but also in other ‘developed’ nations in the world show that this is simply not true.²⁷⁵ Yet, it can be argued that in the Australian psyche this belief is still held as one of the characteristic traits of what it means to be ‘Australian’. Giving a ‘fair go’ to people implies also that one is disposed and willing to give everyone similar opportunities. However, in reality, this tends to be reserved to people who we perceive as being ‘similar’ to us, who we believe hold similar values to ours, and who will in no way alter or threaten our way of life.

Unfortunately, incidences of racism and xenophobia in Australia are not necessarily isolated but have at times become widespread, targeting specific groups of people such as young Indigenous Australian men or international minority groups. Examples in recent years include a string of attacks perpetrated on taxi-drivers of Indian origin in the state of Victoria (2008-2016) as well as instances of institutional racial discrimination against young Australians of African backgrounds at the hands of Victorian Police (2013-2018). Two minority political parties in Australia—One Nation and the Australia First Party—have built their political platforms on the basis of exclusion and xenophobia, tapping into fears of a growing sector of the population of ‘the other’ and the ‘visibly different’, including forcibly displaced people.²⁷⁶ Of course, there are many Australians who deplore this discriminatory treatment. Yet, for people who have experienced trauma, violence and discrimination before because of their ethnic background or religious affiliation, any physical or verbal attack, even by a vocal minority, can result in deeply negative consequences, including further trauma and mental health complications. And, in extreme cases, it might even lead them to seek retribution through violence.

4.1.2. *The rise of secularism*

²⁷⁵ See for example, TONY VINSON, *Dropping off the edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia*, Richmond, Victoria: Jesuit Social Services 2007.

²⁷⁶ Cf. TROY PITTWAY “African gangs myth shows fear is winning” in *Eureka Street on-line magazine*, 11 January 2018, <https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=54517>. Accessed 9 July 2018.

Another important element when considering how to provide spiritual nourishment to survivors of forced displacement resettled in Australia is the rise of secularism—or the diminishment of religious affiliation—in this country in the past few decades, and particularly in the past few years. While between the 2011 and the 2016 census the Australian population increased by 9 per cent, the number of ‘atheist’ Australians (those who ticked ‘no religion’ in the census) rose from 22 to 29.6 per cent, while a further 9.6 per cent did not state a religious affiliation.²⁷⁷ While for the first European settlers in Australia, religious adherence and practice were of great importance (both in terms of faith and also socio-cultural support), the census shows that these are now only exercised by a minority of their descendants (though 52 per cent of Australians still say they are Christian, this number is down from 88 per cent a generation earlier). Interestingly too, in the Catholic context, it is the latest arrivals to the country, especially migrants, who make up most of the congregations in many parishes.²⁷⁸ These would include people from the Pacific Islands (Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati), Vietnamese, Pilipino, Koreans, Sri Lankans and Indians as well as Latin Americans—people from developing nations, in contrast to the Polish, Croatians, and Italians who came to Australia after WWII.

This rise of atheism and secularism²⁷⁹ seems to reflect an increasingly powerful cultural trend among the Australian people. While it could be argued that Australians are evolving as a ‘godless’ and self-centred people who are more concerned about their present quality of life

²⁷⁷ Cf. AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS, http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_CENSUS_2011_B14, and <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/7E65A144540551D7CA258148000E2B85?OpenDocument>. Both accessed 9 July 2018.

²⁷⁸ The 2016 National Church Life Survey found that the proportion of participating Mass attenders born overseas was 34 per cent in 2006 and ten years later it was up to 43 per cent. Of these, 37 per cent were born in a non-English speaking country, which is much higher than in the general Australian population (22 per cent). Some 30 per cent of Mass attenders who took part in the 2016 NCLS speak English plus other language(s) at home. These figures seem to indicate that parishes are culturally diverse and could potential be a significant place of welcome and social inclusion for forcibly displaced peoples and other migrants. Cf. <http://cathnews.com/cathnews/30715-mass-attenders-increasingly-multicultural> and <http://www.ncls.org.au/>. Both accessed 9 July 2018.

²⁷⁹ Though both terms are often used interchangeably, in principle ‘being secular’ means treating everyone equally despite differences in one’s or others’ religious beliefs. An atheist is a non-believer in religion and the existence of God or a supreme power. It would seem that ‘secular’ would describe better the Australian reality. A 2017 Ipsos global poll on religious views, found that Australians are more comfortable with religious diversity than the international average. The poll, however, also found that a bigger share of Australians (63%) than respondents in most other countries (average of 49%) also think religion does more harm than good in the world. Even so, Australia had an above-average share who felt “completely comfortable” being around people with different religious beliefs to their own (84 per cent). It would seem that while many Australians do not have a positive view of religion, they are not necessarily translating this negativity to fear or dislike of individuals who have different beliefs to their own. Cf. <http://www.smh.com.au/national/ipsos-global-poll-two-in-three-australians-think-religion-does-more-harm-than-good-in-the-world-20171011-gyz7ii.html>. Accessed 9 July 2018.

than possible eternal salvation, it could also be inferred that many Australians are turning away from Christian churches, in particular, as a consequence of the clerical child abuse crisis and the institutional Church being perceived now by many as having betrayed those who trusted it and believed in it the most.²⁸⁰ But it may also be true that Australians are now more honest or realistic about their sense of commitment to any religious affiliation—they might have declared themselves ‘Christian’ in the past but were hardly involved in any of their churches—or are now professing instead other forms of non-institutional beliefs or spirituality.²⁸¹ This assumption would seem to be sustained by the fact that the apparent “rise of godlessness” seems to be widespread, with numbers of religious affiliation decreasing in every part of the country and across all age groups—the ‘no religion’ number in the census of people 65 or older, for instance, is double the number at the start of the decade. This shows that it is not only the young who are turning away from religion or who label themselves as ‘non-believers’.²⁸²

Most forcibly displaced peoples coming to Australia today are non-Christians. They are notably Muslims²⁸³: global movements of people as expected are tied to current wars and civil conflicts, and in the past couple decades these have occurred mostly in the Middle East. Some, however, are Christians and Catholics (from Latin America and various countries in Africa, Chaldeans from Syria, etc.) As we will see shortly, one of the main consequences of this rise in secularism is that many forcibly displaced people who are Christians (the group we are considering in our study), and who in most instances practiced their religion very devoutly in their countries of origin and derived their sense of identity from this practice, do not find in Australia the support from, and connection with, the churches they had belonged to before—a connection and support they had presumed to find in this country. Some are also disheartened at finding a church in Australia that is ‘dying’, while others experience confusion and conflict as their previous understanding of the hierarchical church is challenged: they believed in the

²⁸⁰ Cf. PATRICK PARKINSON, “Child Sexual Abuse and the Churches: A Story of Moral Failure?” in *ABC Religion and Ethics*, (e-magazine), 25 October 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2013/10/25/3877103.htm>. Accessed 9 July 2018.

²⁸¹ Cf. GARY BOUMA, “How religion rises—and falls—in modern Australia” in *The Conversation*, (e-magazine), 14 April 2017, <https://theconversation.com/how-religion-rises-and-falls-in-modern-australia-74367>. Accessed 9 July 2018.

²⁸² Cf. AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/7E65A144540551D7CA258148000E2B85?OpenDocument>. Accessed 9 July 2018.

²⁸³ Muslims today make up 2.6% of the Australian population, up 27 per cent since 2011. Cf. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/7E65A144540551D7CA258148000E2B85?OpenDocument>. Accessed 13 July 2018.

authority of the church as something that should be trusted and obeyed, but now they are given a very different message from their receiving communities. All of these factors, combined with their forced displacement experience, have important consequences in the nurturing (or lack thereof) of their spiritual and religious lives. We explore some of these consequences in the following section.

4.2. Religion, spirituality and the forced displacement experience

The number of studies seeking to determine the role of spirituality and religion in the lives of forcibly displaced people who have arrived in Australia in the last twenty-five years is negligible.²⁸⁴ This local neglect follows a universal pattern in the field of forced displacement studies:

Despite the diversity of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices that sustain many refugees and forced immigrants in their displacement, migration and integration into the host society, contemporary considerations among both researchers and policy makers tend to neglect the role of religion and spirituality as a source of emotional and cognitive support, a form of social and political expression and mobilisation, and a vehicle for community building and group identity. This neglect can also be seen in scholarly treatments of religion and spirituality among refugee populations.²⁸⁵

Yet, as we have seen, numerous personal testimonies of asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced peoples attest to the significance of spirituality and religion in their lives as a source of encouragement, strength and resilience, which they have been able to tap into during all three stages of their forced displacement experience—leaving their homeland or home, transiting to a new situation, and the process of arrival and settling in their new home in Australia. This sparse literature on contemporary religious and spiritual practices of ex-refugees reveals that this aspect of lived experience is relatively unexplored. As we saw earlier, spiritual and faith-based practices have been investigated in terms of their contribution

²⁸⁴ In contrast, a bibliography on the resettlement of refugees in Australia dealing with legal, sociological, economic, political, physical and mental health, and educational issues, lists 1451 items (45% written since 2010) between books, reports, Masters and PhD theses, and journal articles, Cf. KLAUS NEUMANN, “The settlement of refugees in Australia: a bibliography, 8th revised ed.”, 15 July 2016, The Swinburne Institute of Social Research, <http://apo.org.au/system/files/22941/apo-nid22941-68611.pdf>. Accessed 13 July 2018.

²⁸⁵ E. GOZDZIAC, and D. SHANDY, “Religion and spirituality in forced migration” in *Journal of Refugee Studies* 15, n. 2 (2002) 129. Paradoxically, in recent times religion and religious-related issues have received much more attention as a consequence of global events, in particular those fuelling the perceived conflict between Christianity and Islam. Ennis points out that according to G. BOUMA and R. LING (Cf. “Religious resurgence and diversity and social cohesion in Australia” in J. Jupp and J. Nieuwenhuysen, eds., *Social cohesion in Australia*, Port Melbourne: Cambridge 2007, pp. 80-89), “this global resurgence takes three forms: increased intensity in religiosity, increased importance in identity, and rise of puritanical extremes. These factors have resulted in an increase in religious engagement in the political process in many countries and increased intra-faith conflict between liberal and conservative groups in major faiths”, cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia, 1990s-2010*, p. 7.

to the mental health of survivors of force displacement and their benefit has been acknowledged. Yet, studies on the pastoral, religious and spiritual expressions and needs of forcibly displaced persons in general, and in Australia in particular, have been lacking. Two recent publications have provided a small but relevant contribution to fill the existing lacuna in this area. We consider these briefly now to continue ‘filling-in the picture’ of the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement who have resettled in Australia and as possible recipients of the Spiritual Exercises.

4.2.1. Survivors of forced displacement’s religious and spiritual experience: Melbourne 1990s-2010

This first resource²⁸⁶, originally submitted as a doctoral thesis and then published as a book, records the findings from interviews held with nineteen ex-refugees as well as refugees’ religious leaders, refugee practitioners, academics and cultural consultants. The participants were chosen from Somali, Iraqi, Ethiopian and Sudanese refugee communities, with eight of the participants being Christian, including a Chaldean Catholic from Iraq.²⁸⁷ Although more than half of the respondents were non-Christians, significant to our thesis is that these communities represent the latest ‘wave’ of forcibly displaced arrivals to Australia and thus the findings point to present needs in the country. The research question posed was: *What role does spirituality and religion play in refugees’ flight from their home country, their asylum experiences, and during their resettlement in the host country?* Three of the main objectives sought to (1) ascertain whether the refugee experience is altered by holding of religious beliefs, (2) examine any shifts in religiosity and religious affiliation within the individual during the refugee experience, and (3) determine whether the holding of religious and spiritual beliefs supports or hinders refugee settlement in a host country. Further, the study sought to make recommendations regarding the religious, spiritual, educational, welfare, settlement, and psychological needs of refugees at all stages of the refugee process.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Cf. SUSAN P. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia, 1990s-2010*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. This resource has already been cited earlier.

²⁸⁷ According to the researcher/author, the data of the qualitative study (which used a grounded theory style of approach) was gathered as a result of over 90 in-depth interviews, a minor questionnaire and numerous consultations conducted mostly with refugees. In terms of their spiritual or religious affiliation, the participants ranged from traditional to liberal and included some who considered themselves atheist, agnostic and Animist. They all had come to Australia as part of Australia’s humanitarian resettlement program and had been in the country for at least two years, and belonged to groups which were part of the most recent ‘waves’ of arrivals to Australia. Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, pp. 15-19.

²⁸⁸ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, p. 15.

4.2.1.1. Forcibly displaced people’s religiosity

The study found that prior to their displacement experience three quarters of the refugees (14 out of 19) had “traditional religious meaning systems”, in other words, their religious practices were in accord with what was ‘normal’ for their communities.²⁸⁹ In terms of the overall refugee experience—from beginning of displacement to resettlement in Australia—three quarters of the ex-refugees reported either religious experiences or religious coping. Several of them found existing and functioning religious communities in the asylum stage. Thus, for example, Christians who fled and self-settled were quickly linked to other religious communities. Most also procured work and welfare assistance through their religious groups. In regard to specific ‘religious experiences’, about a third mentioned God as a ‘flight companion’ and God sending ‘helpers’ when they had to flee. While in asylum (before settlement) about a half reported ‘miracles’ and visitations by/experiences of malignant or paranormal spirits. Religious coping strategies included: surrendering to God, ‘religiously transcending death’ and ‘taking one day at a time’. Once in Australia, about a quarter felt that God accompanied them all the time and nearly three-quarters talked of experiencing minor ‘miracles’, evil spirits, or paranormal events. Of importance is to note that those who reported such experiences while in Australia, also reported them in asylum, while fleeing and in their home country. This suggests a continuity of relevance in religious beliefs for many of those interviewed. Finally, more than half of the survivors of forced displacement commented that:

[...] their belief or their religion assisted them to cope with difficulties; for example, with their loneliness, differences in culture, difficulties relating to work or lack of work, and the perceived disappointment of life in Australia. A third commented that their religion assisted in coping with the psychological consequences of torture and trauma.²⁹⁰

It should be noted that this “perceived disappointment of life in Australia” is not uncommon in first generation arrivals. Unexpected challenges, inability to rapidly fulfil expectations—particularly in terms of study or work opportunities—and perceived or real lack of welcome

²⁸⁹ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, p. 63. The importance of these traditional religious meaning systems cannot be under-emphasised. As mentioned before, forcibly displaced people share the ‘trait’ of forced displacement (and the consequences that commonality brings), but they are also individuals who belong to particular groups, with specific cultural and religious traditions and rituals. In the case of people of East African background and their relationship with God, for example, it is in “the macro-cosmos where God is encountered. In this domain there is no distinction between the spiritual and the physical, material aspects of life. Religion is not only a sociological, theological and historical phenomenon, but also a psychological phenomenon located in the minds of human beings [...]. The micro-cosmos is the level where collective existence gives room for individuality”. Cf. JUMA, “African Worldviews: Their Impact on Spiritual Direction, from the Perspective of Healing and Transformation”, pp. 93-94.

²⁹⁰ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, p. 80.

can dash hopes maintained through the most difficult stages of the displacement experience. Thus, one concern is how to maintain this long-held hope, particularly through the use of spiritual support and practices.

4.2.1.2. Rituals

Religious rituals were also found to be of relevance—rated as being ‘of assistance’ to ‘of great help’—at the various stages of the forced displacement experience. As expected, if a refugee’s faith tradition was the same as the majority group’s in the place of asylum, it was easier to practice. Once in Australia, nearly all ex-refugees attended their places of worship, in some cases choosing their place of residence because of proximity to them. Nonattendance to religious services by a few of them was linked to distance from place of worship, work responsibilities or low income. Prayer was the most frequent ‘ritual’ used, particularly as a coping strategy:

For both Muslims and Christians, prayer emotionally assisted them at times of war and persecution, during flight, and in Australia; in particular, praying with religious leaders prior to flight and prayer during flight were important. Prayer increased for both Muslims and Christians in asylum, as this was a time of great need. In Australia, it seems that many prayed regularly.²⁹¹

Most of those interviewed spoke of being in a ‘prayerful state’ during all or most of their flight journey. During the asylum stage, attendance and participation in collective worship were heavily influenced by the desperation experienced in refugee camps and by the lack of other activities. It was also found that a large number of rituals were used to placate evil or provide protection. Most likely, this practice is connected to cultural traditions in the ex-refugees’ places of origin.²⁹² Probably connected also to these cultural practices are the examples most refugees gave stating the importance of critical-life-stage rituals such as funerals, memorial services, vigils and rituals for the sick used both during asylum and in

²⁹¹ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, p. 103. As expected, also among Christians some differences emerged. Religious artefacts, such as icons and statues of the Virgin Mary, were important for Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, Catholic Chaldeans and Assyrians, while for evangelical Christians (Ethiopians, Southern Sudanese), Bible study and support groups assisted with coping, p. 103. Prayer beads and the rosary were used by Muslims and Christians, respectively.

²⁹² In African world-views, for example, traditional beliefs and practices construct versions of reality that dictate a particular way of life, with ideological assumptions usually hidden in those practices, as the following comments show: “‘My child died because my parents did not carry out some ritual when she was born. Neighbours caused my son’s disappearance out of jealousy. My parents did not perform rituals at the scene of my son’s accident. That is why my daughter is sick’. In their cultural and traditional explanations [they seem] to embrace a communal rather than an individual approach: the lives of the whole family may be involved in explaining a situation”. Cf. JUMA, “African Worldviews: Their Impact on Spiritual Direction, from the Perspective of Healing and Transformation”, p. 99.

Australia. These included memorial services for family members who had died in recent conflicts both in Sudan and Iraq. For those services held in Australia the importance of having them at people’s communities and own place of worship was noted—a finding supported by the second study we will consider in the next section.

4.2.1.3. Religious frameworks

According to the study, nearly three-quarters of the ex-refugees interviewed viewed their refugee experience—including receiving their permit to reside in Australia—through various “aspects of their particular religious meaning system”. Among these, both Muslims and Christians viewed suffering in terms of their religious beliefs: for Muslims, “religion was a path of life and suffering was part of life’s journey, as either punishment for sin or a spiritual test or trial to be responded to with patience”. Christians framed and coped with suffering likening it to Christ’s passion and suffering on the cross and through connection with other biblical stories dealing with suffering. Yet, while Christians could question God’s purpose as to their suffering, this was not a possibility for Muslims, who considered doing so as blasphemy, as it implied doubting God’s purpose and plan for each person.

This belief that their lives were governed by or followed God’s plan for them, revealed a deterministic or ‘predestination-approach’ to life. And for some, holding on to the idea that life on earth is temporary and a prelude to an afterlife, helped them cope with the suffering they had experienced; as it also did believing that God had saved them because of their righteousness or religious beliefs. Finally, while many viewed the triggers for their force displacement experience—war, civil unrest, persecution—in religious terms, a few also saw them as a consequence of political and sociological factors.²⁹³

4.2.1.4. Shifts in religiosity

The study found that conversion and switching of faith traditions were not uncommon during the asylum (on-route) stage for Eastern Orthodox Christians and Chaldean Catholics.

²⁹³ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, pp. 122-123. Once again, within African world-views, physical and spiritual problems tend to be defined more inclusively than in the Western perspective: “Misfortune is frequently understood and defined in the context of spiritual conflicts or disturbed social relations that created an imbalance expressed in the form of a physical or spiritual problem”. Cf. JUMA, “African Worldviews: Their Impact on Spiritual Direction, from the Perspective of Healing and Transformation”, p. 98. And since the causes of many spiritual problems are generally understood in the context of traditional beliefs, it is often necessary that people’s ancestors and other family members also form part of the treatment for their ailments, p. 101.

According to the researcher, this was not so surprising, since shifts in religious traditions or religiosity was not a new phenomenon in the four birthplace countries of survivors interviewed, with history of this occurring over several centuries. The above mentioned Christians mostly switched to an Evangelical style of belief, be it either as a means of coping with their refugee experience, or due to lack of own religious leaders in their places of asylum, increased religiosity in refugee camps through religious education classes provided by specific groups, and the impact of the presence of Evangelicals “who appeared to target refugees” and had well-organised churches. Further, once in Australia, the study found that ex-refugees exhibited several trends in shifts in religiosity (strong religious feelings or beliefs), when compared with religiosity in their birth countries:

First, about half the refugees reported a shift to increased religiosity [...]. Some, but not all, of the reasons for this shift seem to be: (1) the freedom that religion enjoys in Australia, again as a coping mechanism; (2) the perception of moral corruption in the West; (3) a response to their new minority status; (4) the greater amount of free time; and (5) the aging process. Second, more than a quarter of the refugees [...] regardless of religion, shifted to more rigid religious views.²⁹⁴

Increased religiosity, of course, is not always necessarily a positive thing, in particular if it is also connected with a shift to what is perceived as ‘extremism’ or fundamentalism. An interesting incidental finding was the effect of the media and new technologies on the survivors of forced displacement once in Australia, with some experiencing comfort or support of their beliefs through watching religious programs.

4.2.1.5. Ex-refugees’ interaction with the ‘other’

An analysis of the refugees’ contact or interaction with persons of the same or different religious and non-religious beliefs, both in asylum and Australia, did not reveal specific conclusions (mainly due to the small number of people interviewed) but some trends did emerge. As expected, one tendency was for a refugee’s religiosity to prescribe attitudes to other beliefs encountered in Australia, sometimes positively, sometimes not. Thus, a number of Muslims gave examples of perceived or real instances of religious or ethnic prejudice towards them. Those who had previous contacts (en-route during the asylum stage) with people of other religious beliefs tended, in general, to have ‘softer’ or more accepting attitudes towards them once in Australia. At the same time, a few of the Christian refugees experienced surprises or shocks upon arrival:

²⁹⁴ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, p. 147.

A Sudanese reported being amazed by the many denominations, the number of old people, and the lack of families in churches. A more shocked response was reported by an Evangelical, who commented that “you [Australians] celebrate Christmas with drinking! The meaning of Christmas for me was because Jesus was born that day, born for my salvation”.²⁹⁵

As expected, involvement of religious leaders in their refugee groups’ physical and emotional settlement in secular and multi-faith Australia was found to be quite relevant. In several instances these leaders were involved, with the help of their communities, in sponsoring refugees and providing material aid to newcomers. Some religious leaders were found to have assisted ex-refugees with marital problems related to their settling into Australia, with various degrees of ‘success’. Cultural and gender norms might have created issues in the less successful interventions. Some leaders were instrumental in fostering ‘partnership’ across some Christian groups, while others did not feel the need to reach out to different faith communities. Finally, the study found that some, though not all, religious ex-refugees were shocked by Western freedoms, and a few were concerned about their children’s diminishing religiosity since arrival in Australia.

4.2.1.6. Implications for assistance to ex-refugees

As mentioned earlier, the final objective of the study was to “make recommendations regarding the religious, spiritual, educational, welfare, settlement, and psychological needs of refugees at all stages of the refugee process” in particular, but not restricted, to government agencies. As we have seen in the previous sections, the study found that in most cases religious beliefs supported (rather than hindered) refugee settlement in multi-faith Australia. However, it was also found that most support personnel entrusted to assist new arrivals with their settlement had only scant knowledge of a refugee’s religiosity or that it was restricted to a particular faith tradition. Thus, it was recommended that “some intra/interfaith programs [...] be jointly developed to facilitate a deeper and more conscious and comfortable engagement with the issues presented in [the] study”²⁹⁶ and be offered to support personnel.

As a consequence of the reported relevance regarding the role of religious leaders, it was recommended that a now defunct religious leaders’ course previously funded by the Australian government be reactivated and updated. Based on participants’ responses linking religious beliefs with mental health benefits, the study also recommended that government-

²⁹⁵ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, p. 156.

²⁹⁶ Cf. ENNIS, *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience in Melbourne, Australia*, p. 193.

funded psychological services be reviewed to see if they are appropriate for ‘religious ex-refugees’. Finally, several recommendations were made regarding information and education programs for refugees including: examining existing programs to determine whether they need to be modified so as to more appropriately assist survivors of forced displacement in adjusting to a multi-faith secular Australia, and providing more information and formation on ‘religion and acculturation’, using both pre-arrival and on-arrival settlement sessions. As mentioned earlier, this study included participants from several faith traditions. In the next section, we look at how some of its findings relate to the circumstances and reality of one of newest arrival groups to our country, namely Catholic Sudanese-Australian.

4.2.2. Pastoral Ministry to Sudanese-Australian Catholics in Sydney Archdiocese and Parramatta diocese

A study to explore the best ways to provide pastoral ministry to Sudanese-Australian Catholics in Sydney and Parramatta dioceses was carried out in 2016.²⁹⁷ The 2011 census recorded close to 20,000 Sudan-born people in Australia, mostly from what is now South Sudan.²⁹⁸ Most arrived as part of Australia’s Humanitarian Program after the year 2000, were Christian and young (being twenty-four years old or younger at time of arrival), and had had limited educational opportunities before arrival. This study is significant in that it profiles a population of fairly recent arrivals, looks at its faith experience, characteristics and present needs and, in terms of our thesis, in that most of these newcomers arrived as refugees: fleeing oppression within their own country, internal wars, transience, and years spent in refugee camps, particularly in Egypt, Khartoum (Sudan), Kenya and Uganda. Another important factor is that the majority would also have shared a history of being persecuted for their faith. As we will see, the study’s findings corroborate many of the premises that we have presented so far in this thesis and provide a relevant summary of the issues highlighted.

4.2.2.1. Background at settlement

²⁹⁷ An article based on that report and on which the comments in this section are based was authored by ANNE BENJAMIN, “Planning for Pastoral Ministry with Sudanese-Australian Catholics: Perspectives from Sydney Archdiocese and Parramatta Diocese” in *The Australasian Catholic Record* 94, n. 3 (2017) 274-287.

²⁹⁸ Approximately 31% of that population resides in the state of Victoria, while about 29% live in the state of New South Wales, where Sydney and Parramatta are located. Cf. Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/02_2014/sudan.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2018.

In terms of the background and circumstances of the Sudanese-Australians in the area surveyed, the report found that:

The challenges of settlement, language, learning new customs, finding employment, housing and schooling, especially for older children who had received scant, disrupted or poor quality schooling previously, were immense. In addition, there were the realities of a radical culture shock from the African communitarian lifestyle experienced in Sudan, coupled with the experience of living in tents in refugee camps in Egypt often for many years, and migrating to an individualised and materially opulent Western society; families suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome from coming out of war and refugee camps, having experienced loss of family members through war and/or various forms of abuse; a need to be introduced to the rudimentary aspects of living in a technological culture that others take for granted (e.g., how to use an ATM, how to purchase railway tickets); and a high level of distrust of government departments since refugees’ experience of government in Sudan was one of corruption and distrust.²⁹⁹

With so many challenges, it is no wonder that many Sudanese-Australians have found it hard-going. Couple with these—at times seemingly unsurmountable—obstacles in their new home is the hard reality of families and loved ones left behind in South Sudan and Sudan: countries still extremely fragile, deeply divided, where people are still persecuted and killed and where the crisis of famine continues to lurk unabated. Unfortunately, these compounded stresses and anxieties have led at least fifteen young Sudanese-Australians in recent years to take their own lives.³⁰⁰ And sadly too, most of the Sudanese community seems to feel that not enough support has been offered to help them face these great challenges. Because of this, and the common bond shared through their history of faith-based persecution already mentioned, many of them have come to regard the church as a haven where they expect solutions and support to be found.

4.2.2.2. Contribution to the Australian Church

The study found that Catholic Sudanese Australians have been determined in promoting and expressing their faith in their new home—yet another foreign land for many of them, who had spent many long years in refugee or transition camps. Among their contributions to the churches of Sydney and Parramatta, the study mentioned: a deeply rooted commitment to faith and worship as indicated by such programs as Bible studies, retreats and sacramental preparation conducted within the community; a level of devotion in stark contrast to the current Australian secularism; companionship and care for one another in times of grief and

²⁹⁹ Cf. BENJAMIN, “Planning for Pastoral Ministry with Sudanese-Australian Catholics”, pp. 275-276.

³⁰⁰ Cf. MOHAMED TAHA, “Suicide a ‘silent killer’ in some Sydney migrant communities” in *ABC News*, (e-magazine), 9 October 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-06/suicide-a-silent-killer-in-sydney-migrant-communities/5793468>. Accessed 10 July 2018.

mourning, despite the fact that many people still struggle with ongoing high levels of trauma and corresponding after-effects; particular gifts of leadership of exemplar individuals (though in some cases not recognised or given opportunities for greater development); the community’s confidence in enrolling children in Catholic schools; a love of music and life in liturgy; involvement of children in choir, dance and liturgy; and involvement of older youth in the teaching of children.³⁰¹

The community in general also shares a deep appreciation for the welcome they have received in the Australian church by both church authorities (bishops, local parish priests, pastoral workers) and parish and other communities, as well as for the encouragement they have been given to articulate their own pastoral needs. There is a great desire among the Sydney Sudanese Catholic Community to correspond to this welcome and encouragement by contributing their energy and talents to the local church.

4.2.2.3. Current pastoral ministry with Sudanese-Australians

The Sudanese Australian Catholic community initiated a meeting with their archbishop back in 2003 to seek assistance to meet their pastoral needs and support their spiritual life. They spoke of the importance of faith in their lives, of their being refugees because of it and how it sustained them through their suffering. They also highlighted their need to be able to receive the sacraments, have a local Sudanese chaplain, have a gathering place (“a Sudanese place for Sudanese people”), be able to give their children a Catholic education, and again of their desire to be part of the Catholic Church in Australia and contribute to the church and Australian society. This led to a very generous response by various institutions, groups and individuals—bishops, individual parish priests, religious and lay persons, teachers, principals, Catholic Education Offices, the St Vincent de Paul Society—which culminated with the establishment, among other initiatives, of the St Bakhita Centre,³⁰² the All Saints of Africa Centre in Blacktown and the creation of a chaplaincy for all African communities in the Diocese of Parramatta. On the importance of the St Bakhita Centre the study reports:

The centre’s ongoing significance for the community arises not just from the educational and child-care programs it has offered now for more than ten years, but from its existence as a spiritual home and a place of welcome for Sudanese-Australian Catholics. At one stage, the

³⁰¹ Cf. BENJAMIN, “Planning for Pastoral Ministry with Sudanese-Australian Catholics”, pp. 277-278.

³⁰² St Bakhita was the first Sudanese-born person to be canonised a saint. She experienced kidnapping and slavery before becoming a Canossian nun and spending her life of ministry in Italy.

archdiocese offered a Sudanese Air Fare Loan Scheme to enable family reunions and assist families in difficult circumstances.³⁰³

The All Saints of Africa Centre has provided a space for prayer (especially in times of mourning), sacramental and liturgy preparation, Legion of Mary meetings, choir practice, youth programs (such as homework preparation classes), courses for women in language, child care and craft sessions, family programs and community celebrations. Moreover, the Sudanese-Australian Catholic community has received continuous support from various parishes and parish priests, especially in rostering Eucharistic and other sacramental celebrations and providing pastoral care. They have also received long-term support from individual men and women religious and their congregations as well as from other agencies and individuals both for general needs and also for crisis situations. In the education area, Catholic schools and staff have played a very positive role in supporting Sudanese Australians to settle into local society and in mediating and bridging the entry to school for parents and children. In addition, there has been good collaboration with Australian Catholic University staff and students to provide a pathway to tertiary learning.

4.2.2.4. Ongoing and future pastoral needs

The needs articulated to the bishop and listed above continue to be very high priorities to the community.³⁰⁴ In addition, continuing needs for leadership-building for the next generation as well as for spiritual formation and support have been identified. Clearly, based on the findings of the report, the Sudanese-Australian community would be a prime candidate for offering the spiritual exercises developed in this thesis and could even function, depending on their interest, as a ‘trial group’. Of course, as mentioned in the preceding section, together with the forced displacement factors specific to this community, their own traditional beliefs

³⁰³ Cf. BENJAMIN, “Planning for Pastoral Ministry with Sudanese-Australian Catholics”, p. 277.

³⁰⁴ The report also identified basic survival and developmental needs, such as having access to affordable housing, improving language proficiency (specially to overcome obstacles to employment and successful completion of training), providing additional support to single-parent families, helping parents on a number of matters relating to schooling, and helping families deal appropriately with tensions created by their children and young adults living in two worlds of contrasting realities—a more ordered authority of home and the free and open society of Australia. In fact, ‘youth issues’ rated highly in the list of concerns, especially related to trying to keep the youth from getting involved in criminal activities. Sadly, Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that of those Australians born overseas, persons born in Sudan had the highest imprisonment rate—being under-engaged, undereducated and unemployed were cited as the main causes for this. While in principle, federal and local government programs should address most of these needs, as mentioned earlier, the Catholic Sudanese-Australian community looks to the Catholic church to provide assistance in these areas or at least to help them build bridges with the appropriate authorities and organisations. Further, many of these issues could potentially prevent full participation in Church and parish life. Cf. BENJAMIN, “Planning for Pastoral Ministry with Sudanese-Australian Catholics”, pp. 280-285.

and religious meaning systems would also need to be taken into account when offering these exercises and continuing spiritual direction.³⁰⁵ And the distinctive cultural expectations and assumptions of this community would need to be considered as well. As mentioned, Catholic Sudanese-Australians tend to look to the Church and its representatives (e.g. priests, spiritual directors) to help them solve their problems, be them spiritual, psychological or practical needs.³⁰⁶ And givers of the Exercises and spiritual directors should also be aware of potential problems in miscommunication that might arise from the use of particular language and gestures to describe spiritual issues, as there are clear distinctions between how spiritual and mental problems are understood and managed from an African traditional perspective and from a Western perspective.³⁰⁷ Ultimately, means of integrating African culture and belief systems into the spiritual healing process should also be explored as much as possible, including seeking the assistance of family members and significant others within exercitants’ communities to help with this process.

Finally, as already stated, there are many members of the Sudanese-Australian Catholic community who would like to become more involved in the mainstream church and local parish life and contribute more to the common good of Australian society, and there are good signs of members doing that already. The main issue here, as mentioned in chapter 1, is related to the balance between engaging in a mainstream parish and respecting the cultural integrity of any ethnic group. As respondents to the study suggested, exploring and articulating a ‘sense of mission’ to the local parish communities is a key next step in pastoral

³⁰⁵ For example, in line with traditional African world-views, many people do not tend to place much importance on a personal relationship with God, as they do not necessarily view their God as a personal one. This is of course a very different paradigm from the one in which Ignatius’ Exercises are based. Furthermore, most people would also stress the importance of adhering to traditional practices and to respect tradition, which underscores the role played by these traditional beliefs and practices in relation to spiritual issues. Cf. JUMA, “African Worldviews: Their Impact on Spiritual Direction, from the Perspective of Healing and Transformation”, p. 101.

³⁰⁶ In an African understanding of health and well-being there does not seem to be a clear distinction made between ‘body’, ‘mind’ and ‘soul’: “From the standpoint of an African world-view, the natural and supernatural are inextricably interwoven, and spirituality and health are strongly connected, to the point where the human body and the soul are not viewed as separate entities. By contrast, Western world-views place value on the laws of cause and effect, linearity, rational thought, objectivity, the belief in a ‘universal truth’ and the constancy of measurements [...]. This fundamental difference must be taken into consideration when Western spiritual directors are working in an African community”. Cf. JUMA, “African Worldviews: Their Impact on Spiritual Direction, from the Perspective of Healing and Transformation”, p. 102.

³⁰⁷ “Miscommunication between directees and Western spiritual directors is likely to cause problems on a number of levels. It may have a negative impact on the establishment of a rapport between the spiritual director and the directee, which is the first crucial step in building a helpful relationship [...] The spiritual director may misunderstand the directee’s world-view and struggle to come up with a relevant response. Miscommunication and the resultant confusion may lead to directees becoming dissatisfied with the interventions and services provided and discontinuing spiritual direction altogether”. Cf. JUMA, “African Worldviews: Their Impact on Spiritual Direction, from the Perspective of Healing and Transformation”, p. 102.

ministry with Sudanese Catholics. In other words, it has to do with answering questions such as: “What can the Sudanese community offer to local parish communities? What is their particular mission within the local church of a given place? And what gifts do they possess as a community and as individuals including, for example, as possible catechists and deacons and music ministers? Other questions raised in the review point to some possible answers:

Can the Sudanese community offer to mainstream parishes insights into the gruesomeness of war and conflict and become ambassadors of peace? Can they call on their own experiences to be prophetic about the place of refugees in our society? And to change attitudes about multicultural people in our society?³⁰⁸

Of course, related to these questions is the issue of a reciprocal response needed from local communities willing to invite Sudanese-Australians into their parishes. The report suggests further that such an exploration “might well provide a model to be used with other ethnic communities and the way dioceses organise themselves for ministry to all immigrants and refugees”.³⁰⁹ While the ongoing need to share and celebrate faith and life in one’s own language and culture is acknowledged as a way to help communities “forge continuity with their past and an orientation towards the future”, the report suggests that the time has come to seriously explore these questions, not only to provide pastoral opportunities for the Sudanese and other ethnic communities but also to enrich the pastoral and spiritual life of the Australian church.

Conclusion and summary of learnings: healing in action—from recipients to givers

What we fear, what I fear, in the face of the migrant or the refugee might not be so much their foreignness but rather their familiarity. They give flesh and blood to the quest for home, that most elusive of realities these days.³¹⁰

“Same but different”, is a popular logo or ‘motto’ found printed on t-shirts, stickers, mugs and many other forms of ‘art media’ today. Its popularity rests, I suspect, in that it appeals both to our sense of ‘familiarity’ or commonality (what helps us relate to one another) and individuality—what makes me ‘*me*’ and not someone else. In our case, I believe this phrase aptly summarises the issues this chapter has explored in regards to forcibly displaced people as ‘subjects’ of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Survivors of forced displacement are people like us—with *similar* aspirations, needs, desires, joys, challenges, in their “quest for home”. But they are also *different* from us, as a consequence of their forced displacement experiences and the

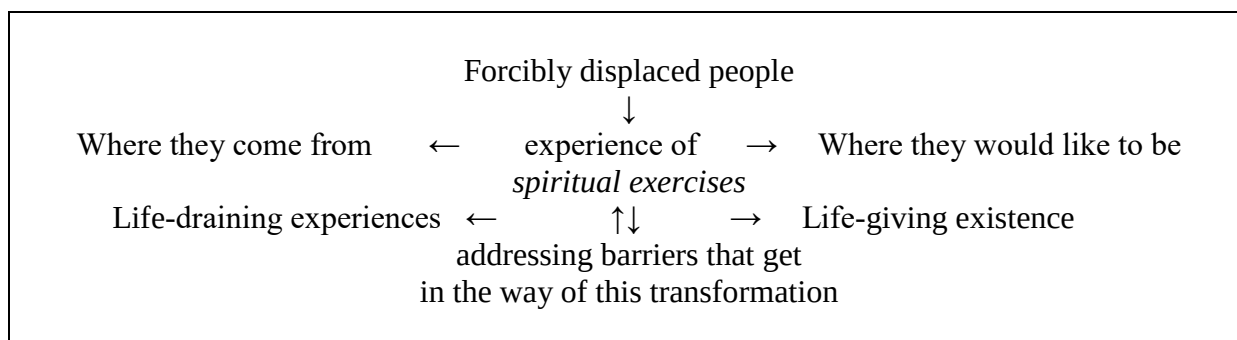
³⁰⁸ Cf. BENJAMIN, “Planning for Pastoral Ministry with Sudanese-Australian Catholics”, pp. 286-287.

³⁰⁹ Cf. BENJAMIN, “Planning for Pastoral Ministry with Sudanese-Australian Catholics”, p. 287.

³¹⁰ TIMOTHY W. O’BRIEN, “The Discomforts of Home” in *America* 217, n. 3 (7 August 2017) 32.

‘extreme’ circumstances related to these—extreme in that, under normal circumstances, few of us would have had to face similar traumatic life-changing events. Forcibly displaced people are also ‘same but different’. In fact, their commonality resides basically in their being victims and survivors of forced displacement. This means that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to meet their needs will not be adequate, and this includes responding to their spiritual needs. And for the purposes of our study, this means that what is *for the greatest benefit of each soul* will have to be discerned with great care.

As we have seen, the challenging journey through the Spiritual Exercises should culminate in harmonising one’s truest and deepest desires with those of God for each of us, concretely expressed in one’s love and service of God and the world as disciples of Jesus. The Exercises are a tool for transformation and conversion, helping overcome those barriers and disordered affections, whatever their source (including, in the case of forcibly displaced people, trauma and dislocation) that get in the way of fulfilling this goal. They offer a process through which people can move from where they find themselves to where they would like to be in terms of their relationship with, and service of, their Lord. In the context of forcibly displaced people, that desired movement must also include a healing process of life-draining experiences (barriers) to conditions that promote a life-giving existence:



And the healing process must begin in the present or, in Ignatian terms, people must be met where they are at, when they come seeking for spiritual nourishment. Unfortunately, a common disservice done to survivors of forced displacement, even by well-meaning companions, is to keep bringing them back to the past, wanting to know about their displacement experience, classing them in a special category (“the refugees”), defining them in terms of their loss. While these issues are important and many forcibly displaced people will be willing in fact to address them, it must be done in the context of their present

circumstances and with the goal of promoting healing, freedom, responsibility, growth and fulfilment. It is a continuous, painfully slow process, requiring persistence, patience and collaboration based on respect and mutuality. Survivors of forced displacement should not have to embark on this process alone, but neither should the receiving communities assume that they have all the answers, nor expect to remain untouched by accepting their invitation to be part of it. Through listening to the forcibly displaced, to their stories, desires, needs and aspirations to contribute to their host communities—their new homes—those receiving them can discern the best way to support them in their journey towards renewed wholeness.

This chapter, as previous ones, has endeavoured to explore the best possible way to offer Spiritual Exercises to forcibly displaced people so they can derive the greatest possible benefit from their experience. The central theme of the chapter has been ‘the forcibly displaced person as subject’ of the Exercises, and the key objective has been to try to answer the question: “Who is this ‘person’ and what factors can hinder or contribute towards his or her experience of the Exercises?” It was acknowledged that despite their common existential trait of ‘being survivors of forced displacement’, each survivor is still an individual with particular personal experiences, circumstances, culture, traditions, etc., and as with any other exercitant, givers of the Exercises will need to consider these personal elements as they apply the Exercises to meet the individual’s spiritual needs. At the same time, it was recognised that the forcibly displaced do share certain common factors linked to their displacement experience, and that awareness of these factors by givers of the Exercises could significantly enhance their capacity to support forcibly displaced persons in their spiritual journeys.

Following the holistic and integral approach strived for throughout the thesis, the chapter was divided in four clearly distinguished Parts, dealing with four ‘sets’ of factors which were identified as having a potential influence on the experience of the Exercises undertaken by survivors of forced displacement: Part I dealt with *theological* and *spiritual* elements looking specifically at the topic of the *subiecto* in the Spiritual Exercises; Part II explored some of the *psychological* factors—and their adverse effects—associated with the forced displacement experience; Part III focused on certain *anthropological* aspects and their possible contribution in helping forcibly displaced people more forward and beyond their forced displacement experience; and Part IV dealt with *sociological* factors linked to the reality, context and circumstances of the receiving community’s attitudes towards forcibly displaced people and

to religion and spirituality in Australia, as the country of resettlement and location where the Exercises for the displaced will be offered.

A brief exploration of the understanding of the Ignatian *subiecto* revealed it as an essential element to take into account when discerning first, whether to offer the Exercises to an individual or not (at a particular stage in his/her spiritual journey) and second, what type of Exercises to offer him or her depending on the existence and extent of their *subiecto*. To accomplish this task, givers of the Exercises would benefit from having a type of ‘internal schema’ to carry out an initial assessment of the possibilities and limitations (potential) of the exercitants in their engaging with the Exercises (based on this, we will in fact attempt to design a possible schema in the next chapter). Part I’s exploration also pointed out that the Ignatian *subiecto* is indeed a potentiality that can be developed. For our purposes, this is significant in that it will guide us in seeking to design Exercises that might contribute to deepen and develop further this potential in survivors of forced displacement, in particular in terms of their attitudes, dispositions and capacities for the Exercises within the cognitive, affective and relational areas. Ignatius stressed the importance of offering Exercises to people in order to ‘help their souls’ as much as possible (*porque más se pueda ayudar y aprovechar*) [SpEx 18.3], giving them what they could “well bear or profit from without fatigue” (*pueda descansadamente llevar y aprovecharse con ellas*) [SpEx 18.2], and making sure at the same time not to burden them lest they were not able to “preserve what has been acquired” (*para se conservar en lo que ha ganado*) [SpEx 18.10]. Of course, these are guidelines which will continue to guide us in the development of our exercises.

Some of the psychological issues Part II explored which might affect forcibly displaced people and in particular their ability (as *subiectos*) to engage in the Exercises included: trauma and violence; abandonment, rejection and feelings of not being loved and accepted; survival guilt, feeling of worthlessness and anger. Clearly, all of these issues could affect other individuals with different, non-displacement related circumstances as well, but they were chosen because they do seem to affect most survivors of forced displacement in some degree or another. Givers of the Exercises, moreover, should be aware that certain forcibly displaced people might continue to deal with some of these issues long after resettlement, either because they were not able to deal with them earlier (all their physical and emotional energy was spent in trying to survive and secure safety), or because it was too difficult or painful to do so.

Though givers of the Exercises are not expected to be psychologists, psychotherapists or counsellors, a certain degree of knowledge and formation in these areas is advisable to be able to identify them and suggest appropriate avenues to deal with them. Some psychological tools or instruments that can aid in preparing forcibly displaced people to engage in the Exercises were also explored—including the *Intensive Journal*, *Focusing* and *Gestalt* methods—as well as the impact that certain spiritual beliefs and practices might exert on some of these psychological issues.

Yet, and despite the limitations that these issues might have on survivors of forced displacement, another important learning is that it should not always be assumed that all forcibly displaced people have developed some sort of psychological pathology because of what they have gone through. Most, if not all, would have experienced some degree of trauma associated with their dislocation but could have dealt with it in appropriate ways and overcome it—we might think, for example, of other painful events in a person’s life, such as the onset of a life-threatening illness, separation of parents, loss of partner or other types of bereavement, and how most people are able to cope with these events. Of course, deeply traumatic experiences might in fact lead to mental-health issues that require professional help, but what is important is to recognise the danger of formulating the forced displacement narrative exclusively in terms of a psychology of loss or merely through a paradigm of pathology and deficit.

Part III explored some of the aspects that might help forcibly displaced people make sense of their displacement experience and contribute to their moving forward and beyond this experience into the future. These included: the need to firstly share their stories and secondly to reformulate and reframe them in a more constructive way which, without negating the harsh and painful reality of what they have lived through, can help them give meaning to that suffering and also liberate them from their nefarious influences; the importance of mourning and being able to give closure to certain aspects of their displacement narrative; the significance of sustaining one’s faith and hope, especially after resettlement; for women survivors, the importance to acknowledge gender-specific issues and how to address them; and finally, the need to experience forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation and healing. Of particular significance was the attention needed to the healing of past memories to contribute to the positive reframing of one’s story mentioned before. This Part also explored the possible

role of the Spiritual Exercises in dealing with these issues of remembrance, healing of memories, guilt and repentance and reconciliation, not only during the First Week but throughout the Exercises, and the learnings from this section will be incorporated in the next chapter.

Finally and as mentioned before, Part IV explored some pertinent issues posed by present-day reality in Australia, as the country of resettlement and location where the Exercises we seek to develop will be offered to the particular audience in our study. These issues included some of the current challenges that both underpin Australia’s attitude towards forcibly displaced people and Australians’ attitudes towards religion and faith. As indicated in the Introduction to this chapter, while Australia’s situation is unique—particularly in terms of its multicultural heritage and a relatively small population spread throughout an immense continent—many other Western developed nations, ‘receivers’ of forcibly displaced people, share similar challenges. It was hoped then that this ‘excursion’ into the Australian experience would prove helpful for other contexts as well. The main objective of this Part IV was to explore what the effect of these circumstances might be for survivors resettled in Australia in terms, for example, of their access to the Exercises, the opportunity to engage in them and the level of priority given by these survivors to receive them. The religious and spiritual experience of a number of forced displaced people recently resettled in Australia was explored, as well as the experiences and ongoing needs of a particular community—Catholic Sudanese Australians. And while each community of forced displacement survivors will have specific characteristics and needs, some common features worthy of consideration in seeking to provide for their spiritual care were identified, including: the possible challenges for forcibly displaced people in exercising their religious practices and rituals in an increasingly secularised society; the negative effects of racism, discrimination and xenophobia on many aspects of their lives, including their religious practices; their desire to contribute to the Australian church and to society in general, but also the potential tensions in balancing the demands of their ethnic ecclesial communities with the demands of their local Church.

In conclusion, this chapter has tried to explore many of the issues that will have to be considered to provide an adequate response to the spiritual needs of forcibly displaced people, particularly within the Ignatian tradition and through the use of the Spiritual Exercises. Surely, there are many others. It has continually argued that this spiritual nourishment cannot

take place in isolation, separated from other material and emotional needs of survivors of forced displacement, which also need to be properly addressed. And it has also suggested that the benefits derived from meeting their spiritual needs will in turn contribute to respond to these other needs, and once again, to their healing process.

For forcibly displaced people who have resettled in another country an essential component of this healing involves finding meaning: both meaning that helps them make sense of the horrific pain and suffering they have gone through, and meaning that gives them the motivation to move forward, with faith and hope into the future, believing that they have something to offer, something to contribute—as their mission—to the world and to the Church as people of God. But the self-realisation of this potential contribution is not enough. It needs to be welcomed by their receiving communities so forcibly displaced people can be not only recipients of grace and love but also givers of these wonderful gifts, in their own particular life-giving way. In our next and final chapter, we propose *spiritual exercises* within the Ignatian tradition, which we hope will not only help respond to the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement but also promote and nourish the gifts they seek to contribute for the benefit of all.

CHAPTER 5

Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

Introduction

The ultimate goal of the Spiritual Exercises is to attain deeper union with God and to reach such a degree of freedom that in all our choices and elections we will follow the paths that will give greater glory to God and will contribute to draw nearer God’s reign. Attaining this freedom—characterised by Ignatian ‘indifference’—is a life-long process, filled with graces but also fraught with challenges and obstacles. No one is immune to these, but for some people such challenges will be much greater than for others. This is certainly the case for forcibly displaced people. Throughout this thesis we have argued that the Ignatian Exercises, because of their capacity to be adapted and applied to a myriad of needs and circumstances, can contribute significantly to nourish the spiritual lives of survivors of forced displacement as they face these challenges. But, what kind of Ignatian Exercises are most appropriate for them?

As it is widely recognised, the full Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius (20th *Annotation*) are but for a limited number of people.¹ In time, some forcibly displaced people might be ready and

¹ “The *Spiritual Exercises* should not be given in their entirety except to a few persons; namely, those of such a character that from their progress notable fruit is expected for the glory of God. But the exercises of the First Week can be made available to large numbers; and some examinations of conscience and methods of prayer (especially the first of those which are touched on in the *Exercises*) can also be given far more widely; for anyone who has goodwill seems to be capable of these exercises” [Co 649]. See also [Co 277] which allows for

disposed for the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life (19th *Annotation*). But for the majority, what will be most conducive and of ‘greatest benefit’ will be the so-called 18th *Annotation* Exercises. The *spiritual exercises*² presented here are *exercises* which follow on ‘the footsteps’ of these *Annotation* 18 Exercises, which were also the first Exercises Ignatius gave at Manresa and Alcalá. What he offered those first ‘exercitants’ was the different methods of prayer, put into practice as they prayed the Commandments, Capital Sins and Works of Mercy, as well as prayer on the use of the senses. He also suggested to them to pray slowly—or according to a rhythmic measure—some of the traditional prayers such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary or the *Anima Christi*. He taught them how to make both the General and Particular Examen and advised them to go to confession each week, receive the Eucharist fortnightly or weekly, if possible, and to come and see him periodically to assess their progress.

It is clear that in following this practice Ignatius, rather than offering them instruction or advise, was in fact already giving them spiritual exercises to *do*—exercises which might be called of ‘initiation’ or ‘introduction’ into a deeper experience of God.³ It is not difficult for us today to identify in these first exercises the building blocks of what would constitute later some of the major themes and objectives of Ignatius’ full Exercises: the experience of a loving Creator God deeply involved in human history (*Principle and Foundation*); the reality of sin of the First Week in one’s existence in praying the Commandments and the Capital Sins and taking time for the Examen/s and confession; the concrete following of Christ of the Second Week in praying over the Works of Mercy; the passion and death of the Lord of the Third Week with the *Anima Christi*; the role of Christ as consoler of the Fourth Week, again with the Works of Mercy, and the *Contemplatio to Attain Love* through the prayer of the senses. And we find also some simple suggestions regarding discernment in the prayer of the Examen/s and Ignatius’ comments to these early exercitants on the alternating successions of consolations and desolations.

an “increase in devotion” and giving “all or some of the Spiritual Exercises [...] as may be judged expedient for them in our Lord”.

² In this chapter, the terms *spiritual exercises* or *exercises* written in *italics* and ‘lower case’ refer to the “Spiritual Exercises ‘to lighten the burden’” which have been developed in this thesis for survivors of forced displacement.

³ As John O’Malley suggests: “Although on one level the *Exercises* seems to be only an intensified catechesis, the daily conversations Ignatius held with individuals doing it indicate that a deepening of religious sensibilities, a new level of commitment and appropriation, was the true goal”. O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, p. 128.

We find then already an introductory schema or process to fulfil Ignatius’ objective in his full Exercises, namely, “to overcome oneself and to order one’s life” [SpEx21]. And this is done without mention of a particular program or using new language that might confuse a “person poorly qualified or of little natural ability”, but rather with the intention of doing all possible to assist anyone “who wants help to get some instruction and reach a certain level of peace of soul” and giving “each one, as much as they are willing to dispose themselves to receive, for their greater help and progress” (cf. [SpEx18]). The *exercises* developed and presented here are based on these principles and most of their content has been informed by the learnings obtained in the previous four chapters. Basically, nothing that has been thought to contribute to the spiritual nurturing and progress of survivors of forced displacement has been discarded; although, of course, it is impossible to include all aspects here either.

This final chapter, divided in three parts, charts the development of our Ignatian *spiritual exercises* for survivors of forced displacement. Part I deals with the design process of these *exercises*, starting with the three-fold criteria used to determine the structure, dynamics, content and overall format chosen for them (section 1). As noted previously, the guiding principle in the design of these *exercises* is to nurture the spiritual well-being of survivors of forced displacement through deepening their relationship with God and to promote healing in their lives. Section 2 looks at the way achieving this healing endeavour is attempted based on a structure supported by three ‘pillars’ or foundations, namely (1) an *objective*, (2) a specific perspective or *lens* and (3) a *tool*. The desired objective, as mentioned above, is finding the best possible way to promote and nurture this spiritual healing in the lives of forcibly displaced people; the chosen perspective or lens from which the *exercises* are envisioned and developed is, as expected, the *lens* of displacement—an existential trait shared by all persons who have been forced to leave their homes and who have been dislocated from their cultures and traditions. The ‘tool’ or strategy, based on insights obtained from the fields of narrative theology and narrative therapy, consists in helping survivors of forced displacement re-author or ‘re-frame’ their life narratives so as to infuse them with greater purpose and meaning, particularly in regards to events and circumstances that have caused them much pain and suffering.

Part II describes the criteria used to determine the content of the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”—the chosen name for these ‘collection’ of *spiritual exercises* for

survivors of forced displacement. Based on this criteria (informed in turn by the ‘data’ obtained from the previous chapters), five different types of *exercises* are presented. They each seek to address specific needs and challenges of the forcibly displaced identified throughout the thesis. Based on these criteria and the chosen structure and format, a particular sequence of *exercises*, designed to fulfil the set objectives (healing, deeper union with God, introduction to elements for future election) is proposed.

Part III, divided into two sections, look at this chosen structure and format for the *exercises*. Section 1 deals with their ‘character’ as 18th *Annotation*-based *exercises* and how this influences the way the *exercises* are structured. Section 2 (entitled ‘For the giver’) summarises some of the themes addressed in earlier chapters in regards to givers of the *exercises* and their relationship with their exercitants, highlighting some of their more specific functions and providing some brief suggestions for them to introduce the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’” to their receivers.

Part I: Developing the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

1.1. Three-fold criteria

As mentioned in the Introduction, the *exercises* developed in this chapter are based on Ignatius’ principles for offering 18th *Annotation* Exercises. Taking our particular audience into account, a three-fold criteria (requirements) was used to inform the design of the process, dynamics, content and format for these *exercises*. According to these criteria, they must (1) respond to the circumstances and experiences of forcibly displaced people; (2) meet survivors of forced displacement where they are in their journey of faith and, (3) be Ignatian Exercises. As we will see, the name chosen to designate these *exercises*, “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”, is intended to encapsulate these criteria as well.

1.1.1. *The exercises respond to the experiences and circumstances of forcibly displaced people*

One of the main premises of this thesis has been that the most pressing and continuous need of people who have experienced forced displacement is healing—of their bodies, their psyche and their spirit. Our intuition—supported by the studies and findings referred to in earlier chapters (particularly chapter 4)—is that this healing needs to be integral or ‘integrating’, and therefore, all these three ‘components’ of one’s being must be addressed; if one is left out, the others will suffer. Moreover, since these elements are so inter-connected, it is expected that improving the ‘health’ of one will contribute to a health improvement of the other two. So, although the main objective here is to address and nurture the ‘spiritual health’ of forcibly displaced people, we believe that in doing so, their somatic and mental health issues can also be ameliorated. Our ‘way of proceeding’ in this healing endeavour is based on a structure supported by three ‘pillars’ which include (1) an *objective*, (2) a specific perspective or *lens* and (3) a *tool*.

1.1.1.1. First pillar: an objective

Developing a path—or sequence or schema—that promotes and nurtures this *spiritual healing* constitutes the guiding principle in the design of our Ignatian *exercises*.⁴ It is

⁴ As it is well known, the two main or classical ‘schools of thought’ on the Exercises regard them either as a path towards deepening one’s union with God or as tool or instrument for helping exercitants make an election through good discernment. Of course, nowadays, most givers of the Exercises would strive to combine both

expected that this healing will take place in part by addressing those issues that somehow ‘bind’ survivors of forced displacement and prevent them from living ‘abundant lives’. Issues that have to do with the trauma and violence they have experienced and which have wounded their spirits: diminished trust ‘capacity’; betrayal; sense of unworthiness and of not being accepted; guilt and shame; anger; feeling that their voices are not heard; issues of repentance, forgiveness, justice, reconciliation and many others. In other words, what is being sought is a greater degree of freedom in the lives of survivors of forced displacement: freedom *from* oppressive or destructive situations, and ways of understanding and seeing themselves and of relating to others; and freedom *for* radically transformed ways of living which allow them to become more of their true selves in the healing and loving presence of their God.

This ‘healing’ and ‘freeing’ *objective* then is the main pillar that supports the structure and dynamics of these *exercises*. The other two are the particular *lens* with which to engage this process of healing and the specific *tool* to contribute to its advancement.

1.1.1.2. Second pillar: a *lens*

In the case of survivors of forced displacement, no other ‘*lens*’ or perspective for developing the *spiritual exercises* could be chosen other than the ‘*lens of displacement*’—an existential trait, so to speak, of all persons who have been forcibly displaced from their homes and dislocated from their cultures and traditions. Each person is a ‘being in movement’ on his or her journey back to God but, contrary to survivors of forced displacement, most people have the freedom to decide which paths to follow to get to their destination—even if they constantly end up taking the wrong turns! As expected, incorporating this perspective of displacement in the design of the *exercises* relies heavily on the learnings and insights obtained from earlier discussions, particularly from chapter 1 on a theology and spirituality of displacement: understanding, for example, displacement as the narrative of God’s ‘movement’ from divinity to humanity, or as an image of humanity’s ‘existential exodus’ on

these purposes in offering them to their exercitants, and the ‘differences’ in content and approach would be more in terms of the emphasis given to one or the other objective and the type of Exercises (‘light’ or full or combination of these) being offered. This is certainly the case with our present *exercises*. They are structured as ‘light’ *exercises* and, as mentioned, seek above all to promote and nurture healing in the lives of survivors of forced displacement (as exercitants) and would therefore be typically linked with the first objective (deeper union with God). However, and even though they *are* conceived as ‘light’ *exercises*, this does not preclude us from also offering certain *exercises* which might contribute towards developing attitudes, dispositions and capacities for making an election in the future. In fact, as we will see in Part II, and because we believe that this will contribute to the spiritual progress of survivors of forced displacement, some of the *exercises* developed are intended for this specific purpose. Once again, it is a question of emphasis.

its way back to God, or as a ‘sacred space’ of encounter with the ‘Other/other’. As it has been suggested, displacement also challenges the Church’s understanding of its ‘catholicity’ (universality), as it seeks appropriate ways to incorporate the experience of people-in-movement into the lives of existing communities of faith, and to discern their specific contribution to the Church’s identity and essence in order to become the Church ‘it is meant to be’.

In more personal or individual terms, the ‘lens’ or perspective of displacement sheds light on each person’s journey or movement towards maturity and fulfilment in Christ, often taking ‘detours’ along the way, at times following the *via dolorosa* on the footsteps of the Lord (himself an itinerant messianic preacher) carrying his cross (a theme of particular relevance to survivors of forced displacement), and other times being nurtured and supported by like-minded travel companions or even strangers ‘on the road’. This perspective of being in movement, of a community of beings-in-movement, also highlights the Church’s shared sense of mission and its role in the advent of God’s reign (pilgrim Church) and the specific role of each survivor of forced displacement in that mission (the Church as body of Christ).

1.1.1.3. Third pillar: a tool

The third and final pillar is the *tool* (also aptly described as a ‘strategy’) chosen to act as a connecting thread throughout the journey of these *exercises*, namely, a guided-reflection on the life-story of survivors of forced displacement. Or, putting it in other terms, an invitation for them to reflect on their life journeys with a view to *re-author or re-write their life narratives*. The choice of this strategy or tool is based on the learnings and insights provided by the fields of narrative theology (chapter 4) and narrative therapy (see below). The basic principle, as seen in the previous chapter, is that healing of events that have caused much pain and suffering in one’s life can be attained by re-addressing these events and ‘reframing’ them so as to give them an alternative, life-giving meaning. This does not mean that the painful events are forgotten or their importance is minimised or trivialised; rather, it means that they are seen and experienced in a new light, and as such, are re-written and understood in a new way within the whole of a person’s life narrative. In the design of these *spiritual exercises*, the assumption is made that for forcibly displaced people of faith, some of this new light can be shed by a new or renewed appreciation of their lives as an essential constitutive element in

the history of salvation, of God’s narrative of salvation; and that their suffering and experience of force displacement somehow has a meaning and a place within that narrative.

1.1.1.4. The three ‘pillars’ and considering the *Spiritual Exercises* through the lens of forced displacement

A possible one-sentence summary or ‘vision statement’ that brings together these three pillars and also encompasses the purpose, structure, process, content and dynamics of these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ might be expressed as: *Reflecting on and rewriting the story of one’s life, as a being in movement/displacement, towards healing in God.* It could be argued, moreover, that in broad terms this statement can also be fitting as a description of the content and process of the full Ignatian Exercises. In fact, by interpreting Ignatius’ Exercises through their hermeneutical keys of content, dynamic and objective, it is possible to link (1) the story of Ignatius, (2) his own journey of making the Spiritual Exercises, and (3) their gradual design and development, to the three aforementioned pillars of renewed narrative, movement/displacement, and healing, as outlined in the table below.

Table 5.1. Hermeneutical keys to understand the structure, process and dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises* through the lens of forced displacement

TOOL Rewriting the Narrative	LENS Movement/displacement	OBJECTIVE Healing
Ignatius		
From soldier to mystic	The “pilgrim”	From physical wounds and disordered attachments to wholeness and freedom in Christ
Ignatius and the <i>Spiritual Exercises</i>		
The <i>Spiritual Exercises</i> reveal the evolution of Ignatius’ life narrative, of how God led him throughout his life in his permanent search for, and fulfilment of, God’s desire in his following of Jesus.	The <i>Spiritual Exercises</i> are indicative of Ignatius’ pilgrimage –and process or movement—to allow himself to be led by God to the fulfilment of God’s dream in his life.	Ignatius’ practical experiences resulted in learning about the ways in which God acts/labours in humanity—with mercy and love—and the way in which sin becomes present in human history and in one’s personal history; he incorporated and developed these learnings in his Exercises to help bring about healing and freedom in the exercitant.
Hermeneutical Keys of the <i>Spiritual Exercises</i>⁵		
From the content of their	From their dynamic	From their objective

⁵ This summary is adapted from the work by CPAL, *Ejercicios Espirituales en América Latina: Para ayudar al modo nuestro de dar los Ejercicios hoy*, <http://es.slideshare.net/infocatolicos/directorio-eeenal2010cpal>, nos. 27-39. Accessed 19 July 2018.

meditations/contemplations		
* The narrative of God’s displacement from God’s divinity to humanity is a process of ‘kenosis’, of self-abasement and self-giving: as Christ comes to us suffering poverty and humiliations, so too the exercitant should desire these in his/her loving and following of Christ. * The call to stand under the banner of Christ (cf. [SpEx147]) and the Three Ways of Being Humble (cf. [SpEx 165-68]) are really about the exercitant’s process of self-abasement to imitate more closely and be more like Christ the Lord (cf. [SpEx 167]) * Ignatius asks the exercitant to rewrite his/her ‘narrative’ to follow not the narrative of the world but of Christ—to live the <i>magis</i> for God within the context of the ‘less’ of poverty and injuries. * This theological space of insults and poverty confirms that one’s election—the ultimate goal of the <i>Exercises</i>—is not guided by disordered affections. * A further verification occurs through the hierarchical Church by making sure one’s election does not contravene its teachings. * One’s narrative is part of the broader narrative of the Church even if they are in constant tension with one another.	* The <i>Spiritual Exercises</i> provide a set or series of wisdom-filled advices and guidelines to establish a personal dialogue—one’s prayer—with God, so exercitants can ‘hear’ and discern God’s will and desires for them. * The central point of this prayer is manifested in one’s petitions—asking for what one desires, especially that the Lord our God communicates directly with us (cf. [SpEx15]) and dispose us to the way that will best serve God, giving each the ‘sweet sense’ of confirmation (cf. [SpEx183]). * Significant to this dialogue—the prayer of petition open to contemplation—is discernment, to get to know the subtle deceits of the enemy through the movements in one’s hearts and one’s experiences of consolation and desolation. * Central to this discernment is to be able to recognise God’s will and desire in the process of building God’s Reign. * In all of this, there is a constant <i>movement</i> towards making oneself more open to God’s ‘embrace’, to letting go of whatever barriers (disordered attachments) get in the way of this happening; * This movement can be laborious and challenging but the exercitant is assured of the Lord’s constant companionship and support.	* The objective of the Exercises is to seek and find God’s will for the salvation (healing) of the soul [SpEx 1], by getting rid of one’s disordered attachments and thus be able to choose (election) what God desires for each person. * The process of election: in recognising personal and structural sin (in the Exercises of the First Week) as part of the problem of evil, one comes before the crucified Lord in awe and gratitude for not having suffered the full consequences of one’s actions and asks: “What ought I do for Christ?” [SpEx53]. * The contemplations and meditations of the Kingdom, the Two Standards, the Three Kinds of Persons, the Three Ways of Being Humble and the mysteries of the infancy of Christ, all lead to the election. * The Rules of Discernment of Spirits give further criteria to recognise good or bad elections. * The Exams and the meetings with spiritual guides are exercises that also help exercitants discern God’s call to their mission and help prevent deceit under the guise of good. * Renewed wholeness and healing brought about by the Exercises allow exercitants to take up their mission; * Carrying out this mission further increases one’s sense of worth, gives meaning to one’s life and contributes to further healing.

Although the *exercises* developed in this chapter are based on Ignatius’ principles for offering 18th *Annotation Exercises*, this brief consideration of his full *Spiritual Exercises* through the lens of displacement highlights some important criteria to be taken into account in the design of their content and dynamics: the process of self-giving and self-abasement in order to become more like Christ as an essential component of the exercitant’s new narrative; the

place of this personal narrative within the broader ‘narrative’ of the church; the constant ‘movement’ towards making oneself more open to God’s dream by overcoming one’s disordered attachments and thus be able to make ‘elections’ in freedom for the fulfilment of one’s mission; and the correlation between this movement to freedom and the healing action of God’s Spirit within a process of spiritual growth and prayerful discernment in order to fulfil God’s dream for each person to become one’s true self.

1.1.2. *The Exercises meet forcibly displaced people where they are*

As described in chapter 1, the experience of forced displacement has three clear stages, starting with (1) the *initial movement* from one’s country of origin or home. Though caused by a great variety of factors, these always include, in one degree or another: violence, trauma, persecution, and the leaving behind of one’s loved ones, one’s material possessions, land and culture, language, and sense of identity. For asylum seekers wanting to be recognised as refugees, the *second stage* (2) begins with the initial arrival to some kind of safe place, followed by a processing period to determine legal status (including granting of refugee status) and concludes with one of three ‘permanent solutions’ carried out in the *third stage* (3)—return to country of origin, settlement in country of first arrival or resettlement in a third country.

Usually second stage processes take place in one country (for most people a country neighbouring their homeland), though for some it can involve constant movement through several borders. For the internally displaced, it takes place within their country of origin, but in an area either within proximity to or quite distant from their original home. The length of time for this second stage can vary from a few months to several years, and the duration of this period is one of the main factors which determines the way in which the existing (receiving) communities behave towards the new arrivals.

As also mentioned, for some forcibly displaced persons the third stage might involve the return to their original homeland, though for many it will entail the settlement (or resettlement) in a third country. Sadly, some might actually live out the rest of their lives in the in-between country of the second stage (as for example, in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border). This third stage of settlement/resettlement can be further divided into three phases: (i) their initial arrival into the new territory—usually a ‘honeymoon’ period,

characterised by hopes and expectations in the new home—followed by (ii) another transition period, usually characterised by an ‘*inter space*’ of struggle or tension with the values and customs of the native and resident cultures at different levels: socio-political, economic, cultural, religious, linguistic—all of which will be factors in creating a new identity for the new arrivals. The last phase of this third stage will involve the creation and concretisation of this new identity over a considerable period of time. Depending on the age of the new arrivals and a series of other factors—extent of cultural differences, complexity of new language, previous formal education, opportunities for further study and work, among others—this last stage could require many years.

The main audience to which these *spiritual exercises* are addressed is people in the *third stage* (3), and in particular those who find themselves in that ‘*inter space*’ of uncertainty and of navigating the realities of their new homeland (phase ii). It is often during this phase that most forcibly displaced people seek to address issues which they have kept buried in the depths of their inner selves, be it because previously they had focused all their energies into ‘*simply surviving*’ or because they are finally given the time and resources to address those issues. Others, however, might not be ready or able to do this ‘*inner work*’ until much later (phase iii).

So, in designing these *exercises* ‘to meet forcibly displaced people where they are’, we have tried to take into account this variability of ‘*location*’ along the forced displacement spectrum, in particular in terms of where people are in their journey towards healing. While some might still be struggling to find new and life-giving meaning in their experience of displacement, others might have already done so and might be looking for greater clarity as to how to use their particular gifts and talents for the service of others.

‘Meeting forcibly displaced people where they are’ also has to do with considering at what stage of spiritual development they find themselves, their previous faith experiences and involvement in faith communities, roles which they might have exercised within them, etc. Some exercises, for example, will be more apt for people with little formal spiritual or faith formation than for trained catechists with many years of pastoral experience. Having said this, we are well aware that the ‘*simplest*’ of spiritual exercises can bring about great fruit even in the most experienced of spiritual and faith leaders. And it is hoped too that some of

the individual exercises can be of great benefit to some forcibly displaced people in any of the aforementioned stages, and in fact to others regardless of whether they have experienced forced displacement in their lives or not.

The exercises, however, are structured so as to follow a particular journey or ‘itinerary’ of faith, and ideally should be followed as presented. There is, however, no particular timeline or time constraints. In good Ignatian fashion, exercitants are encouraged to spend as much time in each exercise (from a single to several days) as long as profit can be derived from them. Some might choose later to go back to previous exercises on which they did not spend as much time originally, but which later on have become more relevant as similar or connected themes are presented. In doing so, of course they will do well to seek guidance from their spiritual accompaniers or small communities of faith and prayer.

Another important characteristic of these *exercises* is that the contents that make up their itinerary are not set or closed. Experienced spiritual directors or guides might develop additional exercises for a particular theme or stage of the journey which they believe might complement and enhance the given *exercises*. What is presented here of course does not cover the innumerable issues that affect the spiritual lives of all survivors of forced displacement. Ideally, however, any additional prayers or themes should be presented following the given format, so as to not unsettle the prayer pattern of exercitants, create confusion or give the sense that these additional exercises are not part of the journey of healing on which they have embarked.

1.1.3. *The exercises should be Ignatian*

We have written at length already on the topic of what makes spiritual exercises specifically Ignatian, particularly if they are part of a retreat or structured spiritual program. The table below (adapted from chapter 3) summarises the main Ignatian criteria we have sought to include in our ‘burden-lifting’ *exercises*, as well as considerations to take into account for offering them to forcibly displaced peoples.

Table 5.2. Ignatian Characteristics: what makes spiritual exercises ‘Ignatian’?

	Ignatian Characteristics	Considerations for survivors of forced displacement (SFD)

1	<i>Relationship</i> : with a God whom we can call ‘Abba’ who loves/protects us	To what extent has this relationship been developed in SFD and how has it been affected by their experience of forced displacement?
2	<i>Silence</i> in both the external and interior environment, essential to dispose the soul to hear the Word of God	SFD may want to avoid silence, to avoid remembering hurtful experiences; others may relish it if they live in a fast-paced world; what are the best places and circumstances in both instances to offer silence?
3	The <i>exercitant’s personal prayer</i> , made in the various manners/rhythms of the different types of <i>Exercises</i> , submitted to constant discernment, through the <i>Examen/Review</i> of prayer and through spiritual conversation with the one giving the <i>Exercises</i>	Prayer → Reflection → Examen of prayer → spiritual conversation → prayer; what is the best way to make this a smooth cycle? Should reflection/Examen and even spiritual conversation be done at times in groups? How to introduce the topic of discernment to people who might have had very few choices in their past lives?
4	<i>Examen</i> : interior observation of what <i>moves</i> within oneself, which implies the beginning of a dialogue with a view to change, a decision of a reform of life	How to develop a greater capacity for this interior observation? Begin with awareness of the world in general and then move to interior awareness? Which types of <i>Examen</i> for SFD could be developed to nurture such awareness?
5	The Exercises are best transmitted through <i>conversation</i> —face-to-face, intimate, personal—between the giver and the receiver of the Exercises which facilitates their mutual involvement; the frequency of this <i>spiritual conversation</i> will vary depending on the kind of Exercises and number of participants; the conversation should attend to the prayer experience and the movements of the heart and should provide also external <i>authentication</i> or <i>verification</i> of the experience of God to help the exercitant <i>objectivise</i> his/her personal <i>subjective</i> experiences	Need to develop particular guidelines for this spiritual conversation for the circumstances of SFD. Considerations would include: initial distrust, difficulty in sharing deeply about interior movements, difficulty in articulating these experiences in a second language; Need to build up this trust so conversation can take place fluidly and comfortably: how best develop this trust, especially with people who have learned not to trust others? How to help SFD understand the difference between objective/subjective experiences and help them develop a greater sense of their present reality to avoid the danger of living in the past?
6	There is no <i>Ignatian</i> exercises without a guide who offers material adapted to a person’s needs and helps the exercitant develop a capacity to discern	Who could these spiritual directors or guides be? In Australia? In other communities? What type of formation might they require as givers of Exercises to survivors of forced displacement?
7	The <i>points for meditation</i> , focused primarily on the Word of God and especially the gospels, adapted to meet the personal rhythm of an exercitant	How well do forcibly displaced people know the Scriptures? What effect has reading them have had on them? What particular scriptural passages should be used?
8	Following in some manner the <i>itinerary</i> suggested by Ignatius—recalling foundational truths, following a time of purification (First Week), following of Jesus (Second Week), and initiation into the Paschal Mystery of Christ (Third and Fourth Weeks); always keeping Christ as centre, which should be the basis for all of the points for meditation	Where to enter into Ignatius’ itinerary? As a prelude to it, is it necessary to offer a ‘school of prayer’? How to keep Christ as the centre? How much of Ignatius’ itinerary has to be included in the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’?

9	The <i>ecclesial content</i> : the whole structure of the Exercises is suffused with a feel for the Church and a call to participate actively in it; the one giving Exercises acts as a witness to the tradition of the Church	What does it mean to be a part of the church? Which Church? Local? Universal? The Church SFD left behind? How to foster this sense of belonging, acceptance and sense of mission in the Church?
10	<i>Participation in mass and the sacraments</i> , which accompanies and completes the way of progressive union with and conformity to Christ	These practices might be of great importance for SFD of faith, especially for some of particular cultures, where sacraments are essential but not always necessarily available; how to include them in the process of these Exercises?
11	The <i>link between the Exercises and life</i> , as part of a journey that begins before making them and will continue afterwards, and the <i>divine service</i> as the goal towards which everything else is ordered or, in other words, the desire to live a committed life to the Lord and the life of the Church	SFD might have a desire to serve God and others, but might not know what is the best way for them to do it—how to assist them in finding the most appropriate way for them? They might also have difficulties in recognising their gifts and talents as such—how to offer assistance in this process of recognition?
12	<i>Election</i> : the Spiritual Exercises contribute towards choosing/making an election or a good decision/choice on how to manage one’s life by contemplating Christ	What elections could SFD be wanting to make? How can they arrive at good decisions? How to determine when the necessary capacities for making such election are present?
13	The disposition of the <i>subiecto</i> —his/her religious and human capabilities and foreseeable capacity for Christian commitment to determine what mode, manner or approach to use within the particular Ignatian method	Remember that not all forcibly displaced peoples come with the same <i>subiecto</i> ; manner and approaches of offering Exercises need to be fitted to individual needs as much as possible; content might also need to be modified
14	<i>Review of prayer</i> as integral to discernment, reveals felt knowledge; <i>SpEx</i> as <i>school of discernment</i> : reflection after meditations and contemplations, listening to what happened in depths of one’s being in prayer	Helping SFD to become attuned to these inner movements: through stories? Allegories? Imaginative contemplation exercises? It might take some time (and require different types of <i>exercises</i>) to develop a greater discernment capacity
15	Use of <i>rules of discernment of spirits</i> , in a very practical way, by Ignatius.	Find appropriate ways to adapt them to meet the needs of survivors of forced displacement.

As expected, some characteristics will be more relevant for some *exercises* than for others, and some will have to be adapted to our particular audience (i.e. those dealing with steps towards making an election or decision or those presenting the rules of discernment of spirits), but in broad terms these elements will inform the design of the *exercises* presented here.

We will return to these three pillars and develop them in greater detail in the next section. However, it is helpful at this stage to explain the criteria and purpose for the choice of name for the present *spiritual exercises*.

1.1.4. The choice of the name “*Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’*”

There is great variety both in terms of content and of names used to refer to 18th *Annotation Exercises*. Writing from Parma, where he spent fifteen months together with Laínez (1539-1540), Faber described them as ‘first exercises’. Throughout the years, others have referred to them as ‘light’, ‘basic’, ‘first level’, or ‘of initiation into the experience of God’ (cf. Centro de Espiritualidad ‘San Ignacio’, Salamanca). In terms of content, as we have seen, they might include the suggestions offered by Ignatius in that annotation—praying the Commandments, Capital Sins, Works of Mercy, the use of the senses and the Examination of Conscience—as well as other basic exercises, the *Principle and Foundation* and some First Week exercises. But they might also include exercises or themes found in the other three Weeks.

Regarding the name for the *exercises* developed in this chapter, it was thought that rather than using one of the generic terms mentioned above (i.e. *light, basic, first exercises*), something more descriptive of, and relevant to, our audience should be adopted. ‘Spiritual Exercises for forcibly displaced people’ might have been the obvious choice, but even though these *exercises* have been developed with this particular audience in mind, it is hoped that other audiences might use them as well, at least partially. In fact, as the subheading in the title of the thesis points out: “Applying the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius to the context and needs of survivors of forced displacement resettled in Australia”, the precise target audience was ‘survivors of forced displacement who have resettled in Australia’, and some of the *exercises* included here—though not all—do address the needs and circumstances of this very group.

At the same time, a name was sought that somehow summed up the main purpose of these *spiritual exercises*, and thus ‘*Spiritual Exercises* for healing or towards healing’ initially was regarded as a possible option. However, the term ‘healing’ can be understood in many different ways, and of course, it could also be argued that many other types of Ignatian exercises also contribute towards a person’s healing process. After careful consideration, the name “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’” was chosen. Some of the reasons for this choice included:

1. All forcibly displaced people carry, in one way or another, a heavy burden—the burden of trauma, violence, challenges of resettlement, worries of loved ones left behind—and it is hoped that they would welcome anything (like these *exercises*) that might help lighten that burden.

2. At the same time, it could be said that every human person also carries burdens (their particular ‘cross’ or ‘crosses’), so this name could also be appealing to others.
3. This title also *plays* with both meanings of the word ‘lighten’: (a) to lessen a load and (b) to give light or illuminate; it is also suggestive of the term ‘light *exercises*’ which, as mentioned above, is used to describe this type of exercises.
4. The reality is that for most people (and especially survivors of forced displacement), lifting all of their burdens would be almost impossible; yet, easing or lessening them—making them less burdensome—might be just what they need to be able to continue and move forward on their life journeys.
5. Burdens are lightened (made less heavy) when they are shared with others, allowing others to help us carry them; both, the experience of forced displacement and spiritual journeys although very personal, are almost always undertaken with companions.
6. ‘Giving light’ to the burdens in people’s lives helps recognise them, address them and hopefully find ways to give meaning to them.
7. Sharing the burden of others and with others can also ‘lighten’ their meaning—shine light on them.
8. The tag ‘Spiritual Exercises for forcibly displaced people’ if needed for greater clarity, can be easily added as a subheading, without being repetitious.
9. The ‘logo’ used to help identify and ‘brand’ these particular *exercises*, (and which was adapted from the *Jesuit Refugee Service* logo) portrays firstly a group of forcibly displaced persons carrying heavy burdens as they begin the journey of these *exercises*; the ‘burdens’ are then progressively unloaded along the way, and at the end of the journey, most of them have been left behind, with survivors of forced displacement experiencing a ‘lighten’ feeling and being supported by the loving presence of God’s Spirit.

1.2. Design plan overview

As mentioned earlier, these Ignatian Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ seek to respond to the circumstances and experiences of survivors of forced displacement, meeting them where they are, so as to facilitate their being able to ‘reflect/rewrite their life stories, as beings in movement/displacement, towards healing in God’. Table 5.3 below summarises some of the most important aspects taken into account by these three pillars or criteria and shows how they relate to one another. Some of the content has already been mentioned and

other aspects will be addressed when the guidelines for the *exercises* are presented, so only a few additional remarks are given here.

Main headings. The holistic approach to these *exercises* is clearly expressed in the main headings of the three columns, each representing one of the pillars: psyche/mind—rewriting one’s story, (2) body—movement/displacement, and (3) spirit—healing/freedom. Of course, the essential interconnectedness of these three aspects or components of one’s being warrants overlapping between the three areas and makes their separation somewhat artificial. We acknowledge this but also the benefits of this partly artificial construction: (1) to ‘frame’ the structure of the *exercises* (both as individual *exercises* but also as they are grouped in themes), (2) to ensure that their contents address all three areas, and (3) to facilitate monitoring that the process and dynamics of the *exercises* are being followed.

Time. The overriding purpose of developing and following a path to spiritual, as well as other types of healing, is supported by the practice of recognising God’s presence and action in the whole of a person’s life story. It is a process that takes time, energy and effort, so the body (and its faculties) has to be appropriately prepared and strengthened for it and for its ongoing encounters with God. In this case, this is achieved through acquiring new skills and tools such awareness, prayer skills and greater capacity for reflection. The three-pronged process, furthermore, is continuous, and so in each case it begins with one’s past (its effects and influences), is developed and worked upon in the present (one’s reality with its gifts and challenges), and is oriented to the future (one’s re-authored and healed story).

Partners. As we have noted previously, four “partners” are involved in the process of praying and making the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”: the survivor of forced displacement, the giver of the *exercises*, the community (secular/faith-based, local and universal) to whom the person belongs, and of course, God’s Spirit. All four partners play a role in the three different sections or ‘pillars’, though the extent of their active role and the type of function each engages in varies depending on the ‘pillar’. Thus,

- (1) In the process of re-writing a person’s narrative (first pillar), it is her/his personal *reflection* that will play a more prominent role, though of course with the guidance of the Spirit and taking into consideration the effects of the various communities to which that person has belonged in the past and belongs to now.

Table 5.3. Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’: design overview

	PSYCHE/MIND – Rewriting one’s story	BODY – Movement/displacement	SPIRIT – Healing/freedom
Point of departure	THE NARRATIVE One’s own and Jesus’ life: both stories knitted together	THE FATIGUED BODY A long journey continues	THE WOUNDED HEART Broken but not destroyed
Purpose	See God in one’s story	Strengthen the body and its faculties	Put the ‘heart pieces’ back together
What to do with it/ Objective	Get the ‘facts’ straight Rewrite ‘my story’ so that meaning can be found in it, especially in the hurts/wounds	Prepare body for the journey starting from one’s own present situation	Discover its brokenness to then be able to heal it; and through healing move forward to be of service to others
Desired Learnings	Learning how to re-write and re-tell one’s story through the lens of faith to imbue it with greater meaning	<i>Exercise</i> the body: learning different ways to ‘walk’, to ‘see, listen, smell, taste and touch’; different ways to pray;	What does a broken heart/spirit look like? What is needed to heal this broken heart/spirit?
Instruments	Narrative theology: written prose/poetry; drawing (e.g. art therapy)	Different ways of prayer, of increasing awareness, of developing capacities	Developing awareness of issues in need of healing
God	God in one’s STORY: sustaining the survivor of forced displacement; labouring in him/her (cf. <i>Contemplatio</i>)	God in one’s MOVEMENT: through the lens of Jesus’ Cross, walking with survivors of forced displacement as they carry their crosses together	God in one’s HEART: the Spirit of God and the Spirit’s gifts; ‘seeing’ people in one’s heart with the eyes of the Spirit; giving of one’s heart to others
Time	Past: what has made up my story till now Present: my reality today—joys/ challenges Future: what I’d like my story to look like	Past: learned capacities and skills Present: the skills I need to develop Future: what I’ll be able to accomplish with these new skills	Past: a history of disintegration? Present: the pieces of my heart/spirit Future: continuous healing of the wound
The ‘Ignatian’ bit	Reflection, imagination, self-knowledge, discernment, election, mission	Ignatian prayer/s; imaginative contemplation with Scriptures, Examen	God’s love and mercy; recollection; Examen, spiritual conversation
The ‘Others’	Those who are part of my story	Those who walk/journey with me	Those who have broken my heart and those who can help mend it
Examen/s	Awareness	Particular	Healing, reconciliation
Partners in prayer	Me – reflection	God – Prayer	Giver/Spirit – conversation; community
External constraints	Time, space/place, commitments, finances, support of others, access to prayer resources including givers of Exercises; Secularism, antagonism towards religious practices, lack of support from local communities, etc.		
Internal constraints	Fears and sense of inadequacy; limited abilities and skills, including language; trauma, etc.		

- (2) One’s movement towards God (second pillar) occurs through one’s prayer experiences, as people learn to hear and discern God’s desires for them in connection with their own expressed desires and their place/mission in God’s reign; they also learn to make themselves more open to God’s embrace and to letting go of whatever barriers prevent them from acting with indifference and freedom.
- (3) The healing process (third pillar) is facilitated by the spiritual companion or giver of the *exercises* who, guided by God’s Spirit and through the dynamic of spiritual conversation, helps the ex-forcibly displaced person gather, internalise and consolidate the healing ‘lessons’ and gifts obtained. The acceptance of the communities to which the person belongs and finding his/her place and contribution to them will further consolidate and internalise the healing process.

The ‘Ignatian’ bit. As mentioned earlier, while all *exercises* are intended to be Ignatian, some Ignatian aspects will be more relevant for *exercises* in one ‘pillar’ or section than another. In the process of re-authoring his/her story, for example, the survivor of forced displacement will benefit particularly from exercises that help develop his/her imagination, reflective and discernment skills, greater self-knowledge, sense of mission and use of tools for making an election. These ‘tools’ will help him/her focus the direction of the narrative towards an alternative story with a more favourable future. Accompanying Jesus in his life ministry of displacement (and movement as an itinerant preacher) and towards the displaced (those in the margins), as well as practice in the different types of Ignatian prayer (i.e. Examen, repetition, imaginative contemplation) will constitute the salient Ignatian aspects of the second pillar. Exercises focusing directly on the healing process will include praying on Ignatian themes of God’s love, forgiveness and mercy (First Week) and the purpose of one’s existence (*Principle and Foundation*) among others, as well as growing in the art of spiritual conversation and in the practices of recollection and awareness. Throughout the journey of the *exercises* different types of Examen will be introduced in order to highlight or emphasise a particular Ignatian aspect linked to one or more of the foundational pillars.

Constraints. An important consideration in the design of these *exercises* has been what has been termed “external” and “internal” constraints. The latter are closely linked to the previous discussion on the disposition and characteristics of the *subiecto* (cf. chapter 4, including a history of trauma or mental health issues), while the external constraints have to

do with circumstances common to many survivors of forced displacement—limited access to resources (financial and service-based), time constraints, lack of access to spaces conducive to prayer and recollection—as well as constraints related to the circumstances of their communities and host nations: secularism, antagonism towards religious practices, lack of support from local communities, etc. While it is impossible to address all of these constraints, efforts will be made to take many of them into account, especially in developing the format and sequence of *exercises*.

In the section that follows we return to each of the three pillars which support the structure of the Spiritual Exercises ‘to lighten the burden’ and guide their process and dynamics. As mentioned, each one performs a particular function: (1) as an *objective* (healing); (2) as a *lens* through which to approach this healing (*displacement*), and (3) as a *tool* used to attain such healing (*narrative*). We have already dealt in some detail with the topics of *displacement* (chapter 1) and *healing* (chapter 4). However, we have only addressed briefly the topic of *narrative* in the discussion on narrative theology in chapter 4, so this pillar is addressed first and in greater detail in this section. The discussion that follows on the other two pillars seeks to gather and summon up the learnings from discussions in the previous chapters.

1.2.1. The tool: Narrative

Saint John’s narrative of the life of Jesus Christ and all that it entailed, from his Incarnation and public life through to his death, resurrection and glory, is centred around the ‘Word’: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). It is a ‘Word’ that became flesh, lived among us and whose glory we have seen (cf. John 1:14). ‘Word’ here is a Greek term, *logos*, but this *logos* means far more than simply ‘word’—*logos* is indeed the story itself:

Logos echoes with significances which give voice to the restlessness and tension embodied in the Christian message. It means not so much a single particle of speech, but the whole act of speech, or the thought behind the speech, and from there its meanings spill outwards into conversation, narrative, musing, meaning, reason, report, rumour, even pretence. John goes on to name this *logos* as a man who makes known his Father God: his name is Jesus Christ.¹

The story of Jesus according to John begins with one word, *the Word*. But, as MacCulloch points out, there is much more meaning and significance behind this one ‘word’ that one could ever imagine. In a similar way, the seemingly simple or ‘factual’ statement describing

¹ DIARMAID MACCULLOCH, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*, London: Allen Lane 2009, p. 19.

how one’s life began—I was born in... *Afghanistan, Burundi, Chile...*, encrypts a myriad of other unnamed data which is nonetheless greatly significant for the unravelling of each person’s life story. For the *place* of one’s birth has its own history and geography, its own beloved sons and daughters, despised traitors and inspiring heroes, a web of relationships past and present, as well as particular traditions, rituals and cultural mores. All of these aspects have helped define who each person is today, even if one no longer lives in one’s birth place. Adding another ‘simple’ phrase to the first: “*I was born in... the year of our Lord 1981*” might point to another set of yet veiled data concerning a person’s faith and religious beliefs.

Most people can summarise their lives in two or three paragraphs; perhaps a few more if they have lived for a long time or have been particularly notorious for their foibles or celebrated by their achievements. But there is so much more behind what a few single phrases might imply about a person. And, of course, what people choose to include in those short paragraphs, and the words they use to describe particular experiences and events, will give a particular ‘picture’ of who they are. If they are applying for a new job, they will detail in their Curriculum Vitae any relevant information that will help them secure the position that has been advertised. If they are introducing themselves to new classmates at university, they will include information such as place of birth, family connections, sports and hobbies, all in the hope of establishing connections with others through similar interests or backgrounds. In other words, how people present or describe themselves usually depends on the audience to which the information is given and the particular purpose intended.

These Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ also call for a description of one’s life, of who one is. Their *audience* is no other than each person, himself or herself and of course, God. But rather than seeking to recount events or relate data, these *exercises* are about ‘praying one’s life’. Praying one’s life means reflecting on where and how God has been in it and on the difference that this has made for each person in terms of how they understand themselves, their place in the world, and the purpose for which they have been created. The goals behind praying one’s life can be varied: people might want to become more aware of the many blessings they have received so as to express their gratitude to God with greater understanding and sensitivity; or they might seek to give a different meaning to particular events that have defined them, by seeing them from a different perspective, through a different lens, with a different light; or they might want to pray their lives so as to heal past

hurts and suffering, both spiritual and otherwise. The *spiritual exercises* presented here aim to fulfil all these objectives, but especially the latter: they are intended to help people *pray their life* into healing, peace and wholeness.

Doing this will require using all of a person’s faculties: memory, understanding, affectivity and will. These *exercises* are intended to help survivors of forced displacement recall those significant memories that need to be addressed and give name to the emotions connected to those memories; to help them understand the reality behind the circumstances that caused them pain, and how they connect to their present reality; to help them become more aware of God’s presence in their past and present experiences, and help them bring to fulfilment their desire to find life-giving meaning in those experiences for their life in the future.

1.2.1.1. Re-writing one’s story: Narrative Therapy

The theme of one’s existence—the ‘topic sentence’ of the first paragraph of one’s life story—is that God has created each person for a life abundant in joy, hope and love; for a productive and fulfilling life in which to share God’s loving and gentle presence with others. God has given each person the freedom to write in the details of the many paragraphs that will follow—the freedom to write their stories. They will be pregnant with accounts of joys and sorrows, anxieties and revelations, mistakes and insights—part and parcel of being human and of exercising one’s freedom in the choices one makes.

This freedom, however, is sometimes curtailed and decisions are made for and imposed on us—by the circumstances of one’s birth, by people who exert power over us, by policies in one’s country, by global economic interests, by conflicts and wars. These events and circumstances can derail people’s tracks, wreck their plans, spoil their life-giving and life-receiving choices. They might lead them down a path of self-destruction, or at the very least of depression, constant anguish and a sense of worthlessness. People’s freedom and agency to determine the kind of lives they want to live are taken away from them. Sometimes they do not even realise this; oftentimes, they know something is not right but cannot pinpoint what this is exactly. Frequently, they know what the ‘problem’ is but feel unable or powerless to tackle it. They would like to be once again the narrators of their own stories but “just can’t”.

Few other external events have greater effect in derailing one’s tracks than force displacement—being permanently uprooted from all that gave a person security and stability. Some people are able to overcome the effects of displacement, recover the self-agency taken momentarily away from them, and continue writing the story of their lives—once again abundant in joy, hope and love. Many others get stuck or are barely able to move forward, carrying heavy burdens, surviving at best. For them, a re-writing of their stories is necessary—a re-writing that sheds meaning on what they have had to live through, that helps them rediscover their gifts and talents, their ability to live fulfilling lives again. Therapy and counselling can be helpful in doing this, very helpful indeed. Nurturing a person’s spiritual life—in particular for displaced people whose faith has been a constant, an anchor in their lives—can also contribute greatly to set them back ‘on track’. This is one of the main purposes of these Spiritual Exercises ‘to lighten the burden’: to help survivors of forced displacement rewrite their stories through the lens of faith. To do this, these *exercises* utilise elements of a psycho-therapeutic tool known as “narrative therapy”.²

1.2.1.2. Externalising conversations

Narrative therapy seeks to assist people confront the problems and issues they face by helping them identify talents, skills, abilities and knowledge that might have become hidden or veiled by those problems. The idea is to help people rediscover ‘favoured experiences’ in their lives which can help them circumvent the problems that have stalled them on their journeys.³ One of the distinctive characteristics of narrative therapy is the use of ‘externalising conversations’. There are many ways of understanding this process, but perhaps it is best summed up by the phrase, ‘the person is not the problem; the problem is the problem’.

² Of course, we are not intending here to apply this form of therapy in full, but rather to make use of those components that might be relevant and helpful to the dynamic and objective of the spiritual exercises developed in this chapter. We believe that these elements can help ex-forcibly displaced people get back on track onto their foundational story with God as the centre in it. Their use is not intended to address or solve mental health problems but to nurture the spiritual lives of individuals. As usual, spiritual directors might want to advise certain exercitants facing mental health issues to seek professional help, either with narrative or other type of therapists.

³ The narrative metaphor as a therapeutic tool has emerged mainly from the work of Michael White and David Epston. See for example, MICHAEL WHITE and DAVID EPSTON, *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*, New York: W. W. Norton 1990; DAVID EPSTON, “Re-imagining narrative therapy: A history for the future” in *Journal of Systemic Therapies* 35, n. 1 (2016) 79-87; MICHAEL WHITE, *Narrative Practice: Continuing the conversations*, New York: W. W Norton 2011; see also, D. JEAN CLANDININ, ed., *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*, London: Sage Publications 2007; GERALD MONK, JOHN WINSLADE, KATHIE CROCKET and DAVID EPSTON, eds., *Narrative Theory in Practice: The Archaeology of Hope*, San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons 1997; SHONA RUSSELL and MAGGIE CAREY, *Narrative Therapy: Responding to Your Questions*, Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications 2004.

Externalising conversations attempt to move the focus away from a person’s tendency to self-judgement, blame, recrimination, guilt, and attack—exemplified by statements such as “I’m weak and that’s why I can’t solve my problems” or “I deserve what I’ve got because of my sins of the past”—and concentrate on the effects that a particular issue has on the person: “How long has this depression been influencing you?” Through a seemingly minor ‘linguistic shift’, a beginning is made in a process that helps the person understand how she or he might be able to reclaim her or his life from the influence of problems and reimagine her or his story so as to develop a more positive and healthier identity.

People develop stories as a way of understanding and making sense of their experiences. But not all of people’s experiences are included in the stories they choose to relate. In fact, as mentioned earlier, they might choose different experiences to knit together different stories depending on who they talk to, the circumstances in which they find themselves at a particular moment in time, and what they perceive as being approved standards of behaviour to which they feel they must comply. Sadly, the establishment of these ‘correct’ or ‘objective’ standards which determine what is a desirable, acceptable or appropriate way of life (which are often culturally and socially-based and decided upon by majority groups) often cause damage by constraining or confining people’s efforts to live lives of their own design. As it was seen in chapter 1, this is a very real issue for many indigenous peoples and other minority groups, including survivors of forced displacement resettled in third countries.⁴

1.2.1.3. Historicising and mapping the influence of the problem

Narrative therapists invite people to explore various dimensions of their situation to help them ‘deconstruct’ the problem or issue they present, so as to reveal tacit cultural assumptions that have contributed to the original construction of the problem, and how it has affected people’s views of themselves—what is called ‘*mapping the influence of the problem*’. For example, a survivor of forced displacement who feels that she has nothing to contribute to her new adopted country, either because of her lack of past formal education or her recurring mental health issues, might be engulfed in a spiral of depression or imposed isolation. Her ‘problem’ might be related to what she has been led to believe are ‘appropriate,

⁴ One of the most significant aspects of externalising conversations, is that within them, other far reaching considerations can be taken into account. When it is understood, for example, that history, politics, social norms and culture are determinant in shaping people’s identity and relationships with problems, it is possible to explore how issues such as race, culture, gender, sexuality, class, hierarchy and other power relations have influenced the construction of a problem. Cf. RUSSELL and CAREY, *Narrative Therapy: Responding to Your Questions*, p. 4.

desirable or recognised’ (i.e. culturally-biased) contributions and with seeing herself as utterly deficient to be productive in those areas. In order to rediscover her giftedness to others, it will be necessary to separate the perceived problem (inability to contribute) from the internalising processes of self-blame, guilt and recrimination that assail her. The goal of externalising conversations, then, is to locate the problem within the cultural meanings that impact a person rather than in some internalised pathological condition.

Another hallmark of narrative therapy is persistence: therapists will continuously ask questions and respond to people’s stories, seeking to provide opportunities to divulge as full an account as possible of their experience of the problem or issue, its *history*, and its influence on their current and future lives. Questions such as: “How would your life go forward if this issue of perceived inability to contribute or be productive to your new country continued to imprison you in your home?” or “What could be the effect of such isolation on you and your family?”, may allow this woman to speak of the future her story might predict. Because stories can sweep people along in their wake as they gather momentum, it is important to determine how this one might unfold if it continues its present direction. In cases where problems involve families, they can be enormously divisive and lead their members to impose blame on one another. Using externalising conversations, in contrast, invites them to work together against their problem.⁵

It might take a long time to rewrite one’s story; it will necessitate a series of ‘baby steps’, but each step can lead to a slight loosening of the hold of the old story and act as a building block for the construction of an alternative, healthier and more positive one. As pointed out, the narratives people construct about their lives do not encompass the full richness of their lived experience. They do, however, have real effect in shaping their lives:

A problem narrative emphasises certain experiences at the expense of others so that the coherence of the story line can be maintained. The ignored lived experiences go unstoried, the events unnoticed. They are never recounted or even understood. Aware of this tendency, the counsellor stays alert to the mention of such events, which are often spoken of in little asides or hidden in throwaway lines [...]. These “pruned” lived experiences can be

⁵ It should be pointed out that externalising is not about separating people from their actions, their responsibilities or the real effects of their actions. On the contrary, externalising invites participants to explore in detail those effects on themselves and all others affected by the problem or issue. It is through detailing these effects that externalising conversations can enable people to take a position in relation to the externalised problem and then engage with others in addressing its effects and minimising its influence. Cf. RUSSELL and CAREY, *Narrative Therapy: Responding to Your Questions*, p. 12.

developed into a more favoured story. In fact, we are keen to treat such prunings as cuttings that can be replanted, fertilised, nurtured, and grown into fullness.⁶

Although one might assume that people want to overcome problems rather than be overcome by them, it is important to ask them, as soon as that ‘slight loosening of the hold of the old story’ becomes apparent, whether they are willing to explore further their ability to find a more favoured story or whether they prefer to accept the one they have narrated to themselves and others until now. Not only does this respect the self-determination of the persons involved, but also grants permission (or not) to the counsellor to continue tackling the problem with them. Most importantly, when a person chooses to say no to a problem, the influence of the problem on his/her life diminishes.

This is also true when they are able to name out loud many of the difficulties they have been experiencing: they give the ‘problem story’ a *name* and can begin to construct an alternative story. Any subtle shift in the relationship of a person to the problem or issue can be an indication of the emergence of a new story, and so counsellors have to be ever attentive to such possible shifts or ‘positive-lived moments’ (also referred to as ‘unique outcomes’), so they can bring them to the awareness of the persons they seek to help.⁷ The goal is to help them become aware that they have already started to develop some potency or agency to take some action against the fears produced by their world having being turned upside down.

A question that might be asked to the woman in our example above, as she begins considering the fact that she might indeed be able to be a productive citizen could be: “How were you able to start finding meaning in life and going out when the world had really been tipped over on you?” or “Have you often seen yourself as someone with courage when you get to a really difficult place in life?” In these kinds of interactions, the intent is to ask the person to think about herself as a character in her own story who has strength that can be called on in the hard-hitting circumstances of life, and help her acknowledge that the abilities she is currently using to deal with the problem at hand are built on capacities accumulated from when she was younger, in fact, much younger. For example, to support the construction

⁶ MONK, et al., *Narrative Theory in Practice: The Archaeology of Hope*, pp. 13-14.

⁷ For example, after externalising problems such as ‘worthlessness’ or ‘excessive guilt’, an ex-refugee might discover that there are times when these are less influential in his life. These instances or ‘unique outcomes’ might be associated with a particular time, place, or friend. Or they might be associated with particular things he or she does at this time, thoughts he or she has, even physical or leisure activity he or she is engaged in. Over a period of time, these *unique outcomes* might become the building blocks for an alternative story-line.

of the story of herself as a courageous person, she could be asked: “Did ‘the problem’ try to talk you into thinking you were a fearful kind of person or defining you as a ‘fearful woman’?” This form of interaction acts as a re-authoring process that helps promote a person’s redescription of herself. In this case, she is becoming reacquainted with her capacity to stand up to difficult challenges. Any story of her courage and strength clearly does not fit the story of being overwhelmed by the problem she has been facing.⁸

1.2.1.4. Strengthening one’s alternative stories: supportive audiences and looking to the future

The new alternative story, still fragile and precarious, will need to be strengthen and reinforced with the help of an *audience*. In order for a person to make a successful departure from the identity created by the ‘problem narrative’, an audience—other family members, neighbours, friends, church community or anyone who is deemed of importance to that person—will need to bear witness to the emergence of this new identity or description of herself or himself. This is necessary because stories about oneself are not just personal inventions: “We learn them in conversation with significant people in our lives. We perform them in our actions, and the reactions of our audiences then become built into our stories about ourselves”.⁹

Moreover, because emotional and psychological relationships with significant people in one’s life do not necessarily end when they die, people can be encouraged to contemplate the imagined reactions of loved ones who, though dead or unreachable, are still very much alive in their hearts and minds (this is certainly the case for many survivors of forced displacement). And because human beings are capable of reflecting on their own

⁸ It should be clear then that externalising conversations do not only focus on problems but also on positive internalised qualities such as strength, competence and courage. As the development of qualities such as these is also a product of history and culture, it is possible to ask how their ‘sense’ has been developed in a person’s life, who helped create it, what sustains it, makes it possible and what specific problem-solving skills it may be linked to. This process can help people address the effects of problems in their lives by making these qualities more meaningful, relevant and accessible. Cf. RUSSELL and CAREY, *Narrative Therapy: Responding to Your Questions*, p. 9.

⁹ MONK, et al., *Narrative Theory in Practice: The Archaeology of Hope*, p. 21. And as this is the case with the creation of stories, so it is with the creation of problems: “narrative counselling is based on the understanding that problems are manufactured in a social, cultural, and political context [...]. The problems we encounter are multi-sourced, they are developed over a long period of time, and they come together through the medium of human language to construct and produce our experience [...]. From such a perspective, clients are viewed as being positioned by social and cultural factors that shape their desires, ambitions, and purposes”, p. 27. Again, narrative therapy does not see the person as embodying the problem; it seeks to locate the problem within the cultural beliefs as well as circumstances from which the problem emerged.

experiences, people can also be encouraged to be an audience to their own desirable actions, thoughts and attitudes, as they develop new or more positive self-descriptions. This can happen very effectively in prayer, and particularly through imaginative contemplation.

As alternative stories become more grounded, more ‘concrete’, it is appropriate to consider their future history by moving into the realm of possibilities. What could this newly discovered (or rather, re-discovered) courage mean for this ex-refugee woman? Might she have the courage to inquiry at her parish or community centre whether she might contribute as a volunteer in an area suited to her gifts and experiences for an hour a week, for two hours? Might she believe in her ability to learn new skills that could be put into service for others? As this new identity is reinforced and strengthened, might she be willing to share with others her new acquired knowledge and ability to unravel and overcome a debilitating problem and thus *contribute* to improve their lives, helping them discover their own talents, knowledge and skills which may be respected by and of use to still others in turn? This latter competency might be considered the completion of the process, where she has gained the status of an ‘expert’, which has now replaced that of the helpless, dependant person who initially believed she had nothing to contribute to others.

Of course, it will all not be smooth sailing; there will be setbacks; the process might take much longer than a person might expect or be too slow for someone who is anxious to experience rapid change. To avoid unhelpful and unrealistic expectations it is important to make clear that narrative therapy is not something that a counsellor uses to ‘fix’ a troubled person. A narrative therapist is never the problem-solver nor the ‘expert’ and the process will not yield the desired results unless the afflicted person understands that he/she is an essential partner with local expertise essential for the process to move forward—the therapeutic process is a deliberate yet respectful, mutual and reciprocal activity.

1.2.1.5. Power, language and meaning in relation to narrative therapy

In order to incorporate fully the ‘pillars-triad’ (creating an alternative story—displacement/movement—healing) into the development of the *spiritual exercises* for forcibly displaced peoples, it is necessary to consider carefully another triad involving the elements of power, language and meaning. These topics have already been alluded to in earlier chapters, so what follows is a short summary of how these themes inform the use of narrative therapy as a

healing tool and influence the content and methodology of the *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement presented here.¹⁰

The power of language, and how that power can be used for good or evil, has been alluded to earlier. The words one chooses to use and how one chooses to use them, the tone one uses in one’s voice, the emphasis one makes on certain words, the context in which one expresses them—all these can be used to express both affirmation or discouragement, respect or disrespect, welcome or rejection. Consider the seemingly ‘neutral statement’: “Last year, twenty-five thousand forcibly displaced people from eighteen different nations arrived in Australia”. If these words are uttered within the context of a speech on the benefits of multiculturalism and how people of different ethnic backgrounds enrich the Australian way of life, this statement could be regarded as expressing not only something positive but even something desirable and welcomed. If, on the other hand, the statement is included in a discussion on the rising costs of public health and used to imply that such arrivals are one of the causes of this rise in costs, the offer of asylum by Australia to survivors of forced displacement could be regarded as something negative and to be avoided in the future.¹¹

Another example is the too-often quoted phrase ‘the refugee problem’ used to encapsulate a myriad of complex social, political, economic, religious and anthropological issues. But as noted above, a ‘refugee’ is not the problem; the problem is forced displacement, its factors and causes and especially the harmful consequences it has on millions of people today. As mentioned in chapter 4, in the discussion on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Syndrome, mental health professionals—particularly in Western countries—have also tended to focus on people’s ‘deficits’ in ways that speak of failure rather than accomplishment, that produce social hierarchies (how one defines marginalised and ‘sub-competent’ people, for example), and that erode the sense of communal interdependence (seeing some people as assets and others as liabilities) and common purpose: the search for the common good for all is substituted by a search for greater economic productivity and perceived stability regardless of who is left outside its benefits.

¹⁰ Some of the ideas for the construction of the argument in this section are based on the exposition by WENDY DREWERY and JOHN WINSLADE, “The Theoretical Story of Narrative Therapy” in GERALD MONK, et al., *Narrative Theory in Practice: The Archaeology of Hope*, San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons 1997, pp. 32-52.

¹¹ It should be pointed out that an important assumption is made here that these survivors would indeed require expensive, long-term medical assistance, which might or might not be substantiated during the discourse.

Unfortunately, faith-based and spiritual endeavours have not fared much better. The use of spiritual language that focusses on one’s sinful nature and one’s inability to fulfil God’s will (once again pointing to deficiencies) has been habitually emphasised over God’s response of mercy and love towards God’s limited but beloved creatures. Moreover, the use of language that implies an ‘exact’ knowledge of *what* God ‘wants’ and *how* God wants people to live their lives according to a set of prescribed doctrines (established by those in power) suggests that human beings—and not God’s Spirit—are in charge of their lives, and that somehow God can actually be ‘controlled’. Sadly, this ‘logic’ also implies that one can lead a successful and pain-free life if one just follows these teachings. But this logic further castigates those who, like forcibly displaced peoples, have already suffered a great deal. In his latest Apostolic *Exhortation* on holiness, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, (*Rejoice and be Glad*), Pope Francis warns about two ‘subtle enemies of holiness’ which lure people (tempt them) to think and speak this way: Gnosticism and Pelagianism.

Gnosticism is one of the most sinister ideologies because, while unduly exalting knowledge or a specific experience, it considers its own vision of reality to be perfect [...]; by its very nature [it] seeks to domesticate the mystery, whether the mystery of God and his grace, or the mystery of others’ lives [...]. When somebody has an answer for every question, it is a sign that they are not on the right road. They may well be false prophets, who use religion for their own purposes, to promote their own psychological or intellectual theories. God infinitely transcends us; he is full of surprises. We are not the ones to determine when and how we will encounter him; the exact times and places of that encounter are not up to us. Someone who wants everything to be clear and sure presumes to control God’s transcendence.¹²

Pope Francis condemns Pelagianism as a doctrine of *will lacking humility*: “Those who yield to this Pelagian or semi-pelagian mindset, even though they speak warmly of God’s grace, ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style”.¹³ They have forgotten that everything “depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows

¹² FRANCIS, “Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* on the call to holiness in today’s world” (19 March 2018), nos. 40, 41. Cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html. Accessed 19 August 2018. Pope Francis adds: “Thanks be to God, throughout the history of the Church it has always been clear that a person’s perfection is measured not by the information or knowledge they possess, but by the depth of their charity. ‘Gnostics’ do not understand this, because they judge others based on their ability to understand the complexity of certain doctrines. They think of the intellect as separate from the flesh [...]. In the end, by disembodiment the mystery, they prefer ‘a God without Christ, a Christ without the Church, a Church without her people’”, no. 37.

¹³ POPE FRANCIS, “Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* on the call to holiness in today’s world”, no. 49. Cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html. Accessed 19 August 2018.

mercy” (Rom 9:16) and that *he first loved us* (cf. 1 Jn 4:19). Sadly, this mindset is found at all levels of the hierarchical Church, including its highest levels, which wield a great deal of power in creating asymmetries that further disenfranchise those who have little voice left to express their needs and concerns.

Every person therefore is called to attend closely to the way he or she uses language and to the positioning one relegates people to in one’s choice of words, as well as the way one organises one’s sentences. For it is through language that people also express meaning. The narrative approach suggests that meaning is not made for us; we make it; we produce the meanings of our lives, including spiritual meaning. Meaning arises in particular contexts rather than being given and then applied in those contexts. This approach implies that while the ways one speaks and the things one speaks about are part of one’s cultural heritage—they are handed down and are one’s tools for making sense—one can change the ways one speaks, and therefore, one’s ways of making sense are susceptible to change.

The words people use influence the ways they think and feel about the world, and how they organise and understand their worlds. Further, commonly accepted meanings can vary too. The same words can be used with different meanings in different contexts (think for example of the word ‘suffering’ as something to be overcome within a mental health context compared to its possible redemptive meaning within Christian theology; or of St Ignatius’ use of the word ‘indifference’ in the *Spiritual Exercises*), and different people make meaning differently, sometimes using similar words.¹⁴ It follows that to make sense of how forcibly displaced people understand their lives, one needs to understand the contexts, stories, histories, relationships and trials they habitually speak about and the meaning they assign to them. It follows also that different people describe reality differently, drawing on the stories or discourses that are available to them to make sense of the world around them—one person’s description of an event as a blessing could be countered by another’s description of it as a curse! And of course this is a two-way process, because stories can become

¹⁴ This is particularly relevant to the language used in mental health: “Words such as *happiness*, *sadness*, and *anger*, even *personality* and *self-esteem*, are often used as if they refer to some inner state of a person. The constructionist perspective challenges this view, suggesting that such words simply provide convenient ways of speaking about patterns of behaviour. The immediate experience of a person is never captured for certain by the words used to describe it. The constructionist framework makes it easier to rename one’s experience—to make sense of it differently [...]”. Cf. DREWERY and WINSLADE, “The Theoretical Story of Narrative Therapy”, pp. 46-47.

constitutive of one’s life, even against one’s will, when they are ‘storied’ for us by external forces.

Once people acknowledge that there are many valid ways of seeing the world, they become aware that certain accounts dominate, while others are less often heard. Narrative therapy seeks to harness these ideas about the power of language and how it influences the development of majority/minority discourses, which in turn influence how the self is formed and reformed. People can create ‘their world’ only in the terms that are available to them. How they *talk* about what happens to them depends on their starting point, and how they *explain* what happens to them depends on the questions they ask and the answers they choose or are conditioned to give. If the starting point for the force displacement issue is the question “How can the refugee problem be solved?”, people will continue to see the arrival of forcibly displaced people to their shores as a burden they have to carry. Conversely, if the starting point is the question “How can we offer solidarity to our forcibly displaced brothers and sisters and ameliorate their suffering?”, people might see their arrival as an opportunity to offer hospitality and their plight as an opportunity to actively address the factors that cause forced displacement.

Recapitulating, then, narrative theory suggests that the social rather than the individual is the primary ground from which to understand the problems faced by human beings: problems are the products of discursive conditions and ways of speaking which have driven the person into the problematic position in the story she/he is telling about her/his life. The stories people construct, based on the terms available to (or imposed on) them, can blind them to other possibilities (as in the case of a survivor of forced displacement who is repeatedly told she is a burden rather than an asset to her new community). Narrative therapists listen for alternatives to the ‘problem’ story the person is telling them—no account is so consistent that they cannot find elements that contradict the problem story. The *spiritual exercises* presented here aim, among other things, at pointing out elements that can contradict the problem stories, for example, of an ex-refugee who believes God inflicted such horrible suffering on her because of her failure to provide for her parents as ‘demanded’ in the Bible; or of an asylum seeker who is not able to reconcile his thirst of revenge against his torturers with Jesus’ teaching of forgiving one’s enemy.

An essential element in this process of rewriting one’s narrative, or creating an alternative preferred and more favourable story, is the belief that who people are is a constantly changing reality—their potential is not finite; their developmental paths are not set in stone. Whatever has been done to them, and whatever they do, makes a difference to where they will end up, but this process is also subject to change by voluntary and imposed influences on people’s lives. They have a major part to play in their own becoming, but they can never totally decide who they will be. They can bemoan this lack of certainty or accept it, and in doing so, exercise as much personal agency as they can, taking responsibility for the decisions they make and trusting in God’s Spirit to lead their way.

These *exercises* also seek to help survivors of forced displacement develop alternative stories that are enabling, that allow them to speak in their own voice, to see God as a permanent companion in their journeys, and to work on their problems themselves, trusting in the power of God’s grace. Often, problems are such because people feel unable to move forward from them—they have lost agency in their life. This is a common occurrence among forcibly displaced peoples whose agency has in fact been taken away from them, often for extended periods of time. As a result, the stories they tell themselves are disabling: they are no longer actors but passive recipients of whatever happens *to* them within the circumstances in which they find themselves. Therefore, a repositioning or reclaiming of their voice is required so that they become once again the tellers of their stories, not simply—and sadly—only listeners of stories told about them, and often imposed on them by ‘authorities’ other than their own. The objective is to enable them to speak from *subjective* positions rather than as *subjected* persons. Some might see this as a process of empowerment or consciousness-raising. In this thesis, it is a process of reclaiming their identity as daughters and sons of an unconditionally loving God who wants them ‘to get back on track’ and into the story God designed for each of them: one of lives abundant in joy, hope and love.

1.2.1.6. Narrative therapy and forcibly displaced people

In developing the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, we have been guided by the following aspects from narrative therapy discussed above:

1. *The person is not the problem; the problem is the problem*: a survivor of forced displacement is not the problem (despite what many governments and institutions and even individuals might claim); the problem is forced displacement and the dire

consequences that it can have for those who have survived it. Yet, many ex-refugees do feel that they are a problem and a burden to others and to society, so they need help in debunking that myth and reframing their displacement experience in a more positive and meaningful way within their stories. Some of the metaphors used to help problems become less centred in people’s lives include: ‘reclaiming’ one’s life or escaping from the effects of the problem; revising one’s relationship with the problem; educating, taming or undermining the problem.

2. *Externalising conversations*: separating perceived problems from internalised processes of guilt, recrimination and self-blame. Since prayer is conversation with God as with a friend, *spiritual exercises* can be used to invite people into these conversations so the dynamic of ‘separation’ actively takes place; this is similar to the Ignatian concept of getting in touch with one’s own reality and how one makes sense and derives meaning out of that reality; the support of spiritual guides and prayer companions is essential here.
3. *Mapping the influence of the problem*: aware of how the cultural, social and even religious assumptions and ‘objective’ standards of behaviour imposed on ex-refugees might influence the unhealthy ways in which they perceive themselves, these *exercises* seek to challenge these assumptions and standards by focusing on alternative Gospel-based values and standards.
4. *Helping develop an alternative story through emphasising a person’s capacities*: capacities they have had for a long time which might have been veiled or ‘forgotten’ because of the hardships they have endured; in particular, ‘spiritual’ capacities such as offering compassion, solidarity, consolation and forgiveness to others; humility, faithfulness, passion for God, care of one’s neighbour, praise and worship, the gift of presence, the gift of hope, of resilience; the *exercises* will make use of several narrative practices to generate *rich descriptions* of these alternative stories: witness of ‘outsiders’, remembering positive conversations, and the use of therapeutic documents and letters, as well as rituals and celebrations; it is important also to remember that people’s lives are not only about their difficulties and problems, or even their skills and strengths; it is also about their dreams and hopes, passions and abilities, achievements and desires—all these aspects of their life can be used to generate rich descriptions that will contribute to a more life-giving story.
5. *Creating an audience*: this involves *exercises* that encourage ex-forcibly displaced people to invite other family members, friends, church community or anyone deemed of

importance to them to bear witness of their new stories and description of themselves; this will include also loved ones who, though dead or unreachable, are still very much alive in their hearts and minds as well as themselves; the presence of spiritual guides and a community of prayer companions is also essential in this step.

6. *Preparing the future*: in particular, in terms of ‘dreaming up’ narratives of possible contributions they can make to society and their local and ethnic churches; but also to their families and nearby communities; and especially to themselves—to become again narrators of their stories.

As expected, some of these elements will be emphasised more than others in different *exercises*, but as a whole, they have helped determine the content of the *exercises* and channel their dynamic. Since the re-writing of one’s story through the lens of faith is such a significant aspect within the three pillars supporting the structure and content of these *spiritual exercises*, we present a brief example here to show how the use of the narrative therapy tools listed above might contribute to this re-authoring process. When appropriate, their use will also be pointed out in the guidelines to the givers of the exercises to help ‘monitor’ how their receivers’ process of re-writing their narratives is progressing.

1.2.1.7. Re-writing or re-authoring Anisha’s ‘problem story’

As mentioned before, people experience events in their lives which cannot be changed—traumas, losses and even violence which cannot be undone. But how they understand and interpret these events—what sort of story-line they place these events in—will determine their effects on them. And as we have seen, the story-lines people make up are shaped by many influences, relationships and broader relations of power. Four elements are required to develop a story-line: (1) events, (2) in a sequence, (3) across time, (4) organised according to a plot or theme, that eventually leads to a conclusion about themselves. If any of these elements is missing, it is not possible to develop a story-line. Thus, consideration of each of these elements is critical in the process of re-writing or re-authoring a person’s life narrative.¹⁵

¹⁵ For an introduction to the re-authoring metaphor into the therapeutic field, see DAVID EPSTON, “A proposal for re-authoring therapy: Rose’s revisioning of her life” in S. McNamne and K.J. Gergen, eds., *Therapy as a Social Construction*, London: Sage Publications 1994.

Many survivors of forced displacement who have resettled in a third country may feel that they are ‘worthless’, unable to make a contribution in their new homes, or struggle to find meaning in their lives. These feelings most likely have developed as a consequence of events linked to their displacement experiences but have now become such an intrinsic part of how they view themselves, that they see them as defining elements of their identity, even during a time before a conflict or other circumstances set their lives in motion.

For instance, an ex-refugee (‘Anisha’), might have come to the conclusion that she is indeed ‘worthless’ and if asked, could probably reel off a number of times when she has let others dominate her, or has not stood up for herself, or has let others down (whether she was able to act differently or not because of her circumstances does not change this perception) and so be quick to link these events together into a theme of ‘unworthiness’.¹⁶ A narrative therapist would want to understand this conclusion and seek to explore its history. She would also want to explore the effects that this dominant problem story of Anisha’s life is having on her now: how it is affecting her sense of self, her relationships, hopes and dreams. Externalising conversations and historicising this problem story together with Anisha might assist her discover that she has not always felt ‘unworthy’, and that in fact such feelings might be located within a history of inequitable gender relations/events in her life.

However, without an alternative story-line of identity she would remain extremely vulnerable to recurring negative thoughts about herself. The therapist therefore would be always on the lookout for moments, thoughts, actions or stories that might contradict her problematic story-line (*unique outcomes*), such as for example, her ability to look after her children appropriately while still in her birth country; her teaching skills put to use as a catechist in her town; her ability to provide companionship and support to many other women and children during the several years she spent in a refugee camp; and her continued ability now, despite the many challenges, to provide for her children without the support of her absentee husband. Anisha will need help to link together these *events across time* in a *sequence* according to a *theme* which might become the beginning of an alternative story-line—one that she might call ‘my story of resilience and perseverance’.

¹⁶ Though Anisha’s story is a hypothetical example, the elements in this description are certainly real and have been compiled from conversations with actual survivors of forced displacement.

The next processes of re-writing or re-authoring would involve a strengthening or ‘thickening’ of this alternative, preferred story, done with the help of a supportive audience and by looking to future possibilities which this new story might open up for her. One way of strengthening this preferred story is through ‘re-authoring’ conversations characterised by two types of questions: (1) inquiries into events and actions (‘landscape of action’) and questions in relation to the implications that the new story-line has for the person’s understanding of his or her identity (‘landscape of identity’).¹⁷ These re-authoring conversations (with both types of questions alternating between one another), would be particularly significant every time *unique outcomes*—possible shifts or ‘positive-lived moments’ contrary to the problem story—were identified.

Examples of ‘landscape of action’ questions would include: *Can you tell me a bit about what happened there? Where were you? Who else was with you? What were the steps you took to allow you to do what you did? What do you think was the turning point or catalyst that led you to be able to do what you did? Was this event unusual or has there been other times when you have done this kind of thing before?* ‘Landscape of identity’ questions invite people to reflect differently on their own identities and the identities of others through questions such as: *As you describe these times when you have been able to evade or overcome the influence of the problem, what do you infer this says about you as a person? When you attend parent-teacher meetings for your children, which require of you to somehow overcome your feelings of anxiety and inadequacy, why is it important for you to do this? And what does it say about your values in relation to your care of your children? What do you think it says about you that you care about them?*¹⁸

The purpose of this line of questioning is to return to the numerous *unique outcomes* or events which Anisha would have mentioned that contradicted her problem story. The objective is to imbue these events with significance and create opportunities for her to reflect on the skills which she used to make the *unique outcomes* possible and what her actions might say about her true, more desirable sense of identity. And of course, both sets of

¹⁷ These two categories of questions are based on Jerome Bruner’s conceptualisation in which every story consists of both a ‘landscape of action’ and a ‘landscape of consciousness’. Cf. JEROME BRUNER, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1986.

¹⁸ Cf. RUSSELL and CAREY, *Narrative Therapy: Responding to Your Questions*, p. 26.

landscape of action and of *identity* questions are intended to project the preferred story-line into the future.

Besides highlighting a person’s internal strengths, qualities and resources, these questions also seek to explore the intentions and purposes, values and beliefs, hopes and dreams, principles for living and commitments that shape people’s actions and help define their “internal states of identity”.¹⁹ The purpose is to trace the history of a person’s qualities and strengths, explore how they came to be meaningful to him or her, place them into story-lines and link them to the person’s values, hopes and commitments. If, for example, Anisha’s intention is to live her life helping her ‘neighbours’ as much as she can, it can be pointed out to her that her qualities of empathy and being a good listener will be of great benefit in this endeavour. In fact, she might not have thought of those qualities as being of great value until this is pointed out to her. It will be also important to connect her *purpose/intention* to the *value* or *belief* that supports it (e.g. her belief that God calls each one of us to be of service to our brothers and sisters), and to point out the *hopes* and *dreams* associated to this value (to make a difference in people’s lives using the talents and gifts God has given her). These hopes and dreams in turn represent a *principle of living* (being of service to others) and a *commitment* or what she ‘stands for in life’ (that she will do all she can to help others within her resources and circumstances). When people can clearly articulate their *principles of living* and what it is that they are *standing for in life*, the more likely they will discern what future steps are needed to act in accordance with those commitments, and the more likely they will succeed in re-writing their alternative stories.

As mentioned earlier, finding supportive audiences (close to the person) who can witness and authenticate preferred stories (in Anisha’s case, her ‘story of resilience and perseverance’), is an essential element to this process: one’s sense of self is in great measure socially constructed and exists in relation to other people. And because problems can be extremely successful at separating and isolating people from others, a vital aspect of the re-authoring work is to open spaces for connection and reconnection, so that significant people in the person’s life (even those who might be far away) can be aware of this new story of identity,

¹⁹ Cf. MICHAEL WHITE, “Folk psychology and narrative practice” in *Dulwich Centre Journal* n. 2, Adelaide: Dulwich Centre 2001.

acknowledge it and know how to respond to the new developments, sometimes in public ways through community celebrations and rituals. Another way to assist persons to stay connected to their new story is journaling, as the person can return to what she is written and be reminded of the progress she has made (as it will be explained later, this will be an essential component of the exercitant’s spiritual journey of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’). It is fair to say that when the consequences of the problem story are no longer predominant, the preferred, alternative story of identity has begun to take hold.

1.2.1.8. Narrative therapy and the Spiritual Exercises ‘to lighten the burden’

But how does this re-writing or re-authoring process of creating a new, preferred story-line relate to the *spiritual exercises* presented here, in particular in the absence of a narrative therapist? Or is the spiritual director or guide supposed to become an expert in this field? In answer to the latter question, though a spiritual guide or director or companion does not need to be an expert narrative therapist, it would certainly be desirable that he or she understands the basics behind this theory. The answer to the first question has to do with developing *the alternative, preferred story-line* that underpins the structure and purpose of all these *exercises*. And this can be summed up through the statement made at the beginning of this section on ‘narrative therapy’, that “the theme of one’s existence—the ‘topic sentence’ of the first paragraph of one’s life story—is that God has created each person for life abundant in joy, hope and love; for a productive and fulfilling life in which to share God’s loving and gentle presence with others”.

As with any story line, we can see that this ‘story’ contains a series of *events*, *across time*, and in a *sequence* according to a *theme* which leads to a *conclusion* about ourselves: the events, time and sequence are encapsulated in what is known as our ‘salvation history’ (and every single person’s story is part of that history); the theme is the purpose of our existence (to love, praise and reverence God so as live forever in God’s glory; cf. *Principle and Foundation*), and the *conclusion* about ourselves is based on our belief that God has indeed created us in love, continues to love us into existence and to love us unconditionally as God’s sons and daughters. And so Anisha is a creature wonderfully made, worthy of all the good that life has to offer and able to contribute, with God’s grace, to bring about God’s reign: not one single person is redundant, unworthy or undesirable.

Instead of using ‘landscape of action and identity’ questions, these *exercises* offer *statements* of *action* and *identity* to help ex-refugee exercitants re-write their life narratives according to this foundational story-line. In the case of Anisha, for example, and her problem story of ‘unworthiness’, some of the developed *exercises* that would help her overcome the influence of the problem and re-author her own future narrative would include: *statements of her identity before God* (‘I am loved unconditionally by God’; ‘I am wonderfully made, created with dignity and worth’; ‘Nothing can separate me from the love of God’, ‘God meets us as we are’, and ‘the courage to accept God’s acceptance’); *reflecting on the actual reality in her life, its positive aspects and her God-given gifts* (‘Seeing my reality with new eyes’; ‘Putting my house in order’; ‘Dare to become’, and ‘God has given me these talents’), and her *possible contribution as an active member of her church or faith community* (‘Assessing my service potential; “Where are you calling me to, Lord?”). They would also include *statements of identity* linked with her past that contradict her problematic story-line (‘Praying my life in the Lord’s presence’; ‘the Purpose of my existence’).

Statements of action would include some the external adverse aspects that have had an influence on her present reality: forced displacement factors (social and political influences) connected to *the tragic reality of structural sin* (‘Saying no to the God of life’; ‘the world we live in is a *mixed* world’); a history of *inequitable gender relations/events in her life*, particularly as a forcibly displaced woman (‘I’m a survivor, not a victim’; ‘Resilience in the face of adversity’), and the effect of *traumatic experiences* in her life (‘I need to know when the suffering will stop’; ‘Letting go of the one who loved me’); but it would also include positive external factors, such as experiences of *solidarity* (‘I have never been alone’), of *community* (‘The walk to Emmaus’) and *hospitality and welcome* (‘My home is your home’; ‘Come to me those who are burdened’) both before, during and after her displacement journey. Both sets of *statements* (reinforced through the *exercises* listed as well as others), would contribute to developing her alternative, preferred and more positive story-line of “resilience and perseverance”, ‘thickened’ with the help of a supportive audience (‘My tree of life’). Finally, this new story line would need to be connected to her intentions and purposes, values and beliefs (‘Seeing as Jesus sees’), hopes and dreams (‘Putting on Jesus’ way’ of life’), and principles for living and commitments (‘Being passionate about the things of God’), within the context of the purpose for which she has been created (‘The purpose of our existence’) and God’s calling her to become her true self (‘Putting our house in order’).

1.2.2. The lens: Displacement

To nurture the spiritual lives of survivors of forced displacement and help them re-author their life narratives into a more positive and meaningful story, it is necessary to use as point of departure their present reality. However, it is also necessary to try to know and understand how that reality came to be and particularly how it was (and continues to be) affected by their forced displacement experience. Of course, each survivor of forced displacement is a unique individual with a unique story, but many of them share certain commonalities. We have already addressed some of these by looking at some of their survival stories and testimonies (chapter 4) and also through our exploration of what a possible spirituality of displacement might look like (chapter 1). In this section, we try to complement those learnings by briefly addressing two questions: (1) “who are forcibly displaced peoples?” and (2) “what does it mean to have lived as a forcibly displaced person?” In answering these questions, the objective is to obtain a better idea of their present ‘sense of identity’—not only how this is affected by the way they perceive themselves, but also by the way they are perceived by others and even defined by them.

1.2.2.1. Who are forcibly displaced peoples?

As we have seen, forced displacement today, as never before, is a complex global phenomenon, affecting every continent and region of the world. A combination of factors—political, religious, economic, human rights, the environment—generates mass movements, causing people to leave their own country by a mixture of fears, hopes and aspirations which can be very difficult, if not impossible, to unravel. The complexity of the current issues is evidenced by the need to create new terminology that attempts to describe and define the situation and status of those forced to migrate:

We now distinguish asylum seekers, stateless persons, illegal immigrants, undocumented people and rejected asylum seekers. We also speak of mass expulsions, ethnic cleansing, forced migration, internal displacement, involuntary repatriation and imposed return.²⁰

This terminology is supremely important since it does not only ‘classify’ people on the basis of the cause or reason of their forced movement, but also helps determine what kind of protection and what rights and benefits, if any, they are entitled to. Thus, in addressing status

²⁰ Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge: Essential Documents of Jesuit Refugee Service 1980-2000*, p. 129.

determination one of the more contentious issues has been determining whether a person should be considered an asylum seeker or refugee or a migrant:

Asylum and immigration remain strictly different in nature and in scope: whereas asylum is seen as a human right—the right to seek asylum rather than the right to be granted asylum—for persons fleeing because of a reasonable fear of persecution, immigration refers to “voluntary” moves of populations triggered by socio-economic factors. The specific causes and conditions of the flight of asylum seekers allow them to apply for a certain protection which is legally defined under binding international or regional instruments. Indeed, the persons concerned are entitled to certain rights [...]. Despite this legal distinction, drawing a clear dividing line between the “forced” and the “voluntary” population flows is rather theoretical. In reality, the displacement phenomenon is often prompted by a mixture of overlapping factors; identifying the prevailing cause is therefore difficult.”²¹

It has long been argued that some of the factors which distinguish an asylum seeker or refugee from a migrant is the haste with which the decision to leave one’s home has to be made, whether a person has a choice or not as to his/her destination, and the coercion and fear which makes a person decide to move.²² *Fear* is in fact the determining factor. The term *refugee* is defined by the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 based on this aspect.²³ But since this definition refers only to individuals in *fear of persecution*, regional organisations in both Africa and Latin America have developed

²¹ Cf. S. BOUTRUCHE, “Immigration and asylum in the harmonisation policies of the EU: the need for balance” in D. Turton and J. González, eds., *Immigration in Europe: Issues, Policies and Case Studies*, Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto 2003, p. 76. The author suggests that, to meet the needs and protect the rights of the forcibly displaced, asylum and immigration issues should be thought of in a complementary way instead of the contradictory way which has long prevailed: “Putting a stress on the positive interdependence of these two issues would potentially allow for a more coherent EU policy in the field of forced and voluntary migrations [...]. Reconsidering the impact of immigration policy on the asylum regime also requires developing a set of rights for the immigrants themselves. The recent EU initiatives aiming at combating smuggling and trafficking of human beings must be welcome. They seem to initiate a change in the conception of the migrant, who is no longer seen merely as a smuggler but as a victim entitled to certain rights”, p. 86.

²² Cf. JRS, *Keeping Hope Alive: Who finds refugee in Britain?* p.72.

²³ “The term refugee shall apply to any person who as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”. Grounded in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of human rights 1948, which recognises the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries, the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted in 1951, is key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. It constitutes the centrepiece of international refugee protection today. The Convention entered into force on 22 April 1954, and it has been subject to only one amendment in the form of a 1967 Protocol, which removed the geographic and temporal limits of the 1951 Convention. The 1951 Convention, as a post-Second World War instrument, was originally limited in scope to persons fleeing events occurring before 1 January 1951 and within Europe. Removing these limitations, the 1967 Protocol gave the Convention universal coverage. Cf. <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html>. Accessed 22 August 2018.

definitions which more accurately cover mass displacements resulting from the social collapse brought about by various types of conflicts and human rights abuses.²⁴

The Catholic Church and other religious institutions have also sought to broaden the understanding of the definition to take into account these additional factors. Thus, following Catholic Social Teaching, Catholic organisations use the expression *de facto refugee* to refer to *all persons persecuted because of race, religion, membership in social or political groups, and to the victims of armed conflicts, erroneous economic policy or natural disasters* (n. 4). And for *humanitarian reasons*, this expression is used to refer to internally displaced persons, that is, *civilians who are forcibly uprooted from their homes without crossing national frontiers but who suffer the same type of violence as refugees* (n. 5).²⁵ In recognising the economic factors involved, the document states further that “in the case of the so-called ‘economic migrants’, justice and equity demand that appropriate distinctions be made. Those who flee economic conditions that threaten their lives and physical safety must be treated differently from those who emigrate simply to improve their position” (n. 4).

The difficulty in providing an all-inclusive definition of a refugee is thus symptomatic of the complexity of the issues in the field of forced displacement and of the diversity of agents involved we have referred to repeatedly. A person who is recognised as a refugee in Latin America may be no more than an asylum seeker in Australia. The Geneva Convention’s definition tends to be more restrictive, while the Convention of the Organisation of African Union’s is broader.²⁶ Some countries even use the Geneva Convention definition to restrict the right to asylum, aiming to keep asylum seekers at a distance. This complexity highlights the need to have agreement on terms, policies, and common ways of understanding issues, so there can be a concerted and strategic approach to deal with them. But the necessity to come up with legal terms, definitions, instruments for protection rights, etc. should never make us

²⁴ Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge*, p. 15. The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol have since been supplemented by refugee and subsidiary protection regimes in several regions, as well as via the progressive development of international human rights law. Some of these additional protection regimes include the Organisation of Africa Unity (now African Union) Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, adopted in Addis Ababa, 10 September 1969 and the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, adapted in Colombia, 19-22 November 1984, which sets out regional standards for refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama.

²⁵ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE AND PONTIFICAL COUNCIL “COR UNUM”, “Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity” (25 June 1992); cf. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/corunum/documents/rc_pc_corunum_doc_25061992_refugees_en.html. Accessed 22 August 2018.

²⁶ Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge*, p. 129.

forget that we are dealing with human beings whose individual lives have been altered, against their wishes and hopes, for the rest of their existence.

1.2.2.2. What does it mean to have lived as a forcibly displaced person?

As it has been alluded to, some of the most significant reasons for forced displacement and refugee flows include: wars, local and international conflicts, instability or the collapse of nation states that can no longer provide for their populations, repression by states of their own citizens, persecution involving a broad range of human rights abuses, prolonged economic insecurity, environmental dislocations and ‘natural’ disasters or catastrophes, famine, poverty, economic failure and religion.²⁷ Thus,

The breakdown of conditions that once provided with the means to survive in their traditional communities and in their own countries is accelerating the movement of people [...]. Environmental devastation [...] has emerged as a powerful motivation for a large-scale human displacement. Researchers estimate that 10 million people are already environmental refugees. The breakdown of sustainable community [...] is another of the major reasons for today’s massive forced displacements [...]. Ethnic conflict breaks down communities [...]. Again and again today’s conflicts target the family unit [...]. In our time any method of splitting the family is fair game. Children are abducted to become child soldiers.²⁸

Furthermore, the decision to flee or to take refugee may be augmented by very personal experiences such as the fear of immediate attack, rape or violence, the experience of detention without trial or of political imprisonment, or the experience of torture and repeated attacks or death threats.²⁹ Looking at these causes, it is not difficult to understand the oft expressed assertion that human rights violations lie at the root of displacement, and that often, “the social context of these human rights violations is characterised by lawlessness,

²⁷ It is paradoxical that religion should often be a factor in the root causes of forced displacement of peoples, but not surprising. In many cultures and nations religious beliefs not only affect an individual’s personal relationship with God, and how that God is perceived, but also determine patterns of behaviour, ethical responsibilities, and the way one is called to relate to people of other faiths. When seemingly irreconcilable differences arise, conflicts arise as well. Thus “religion has long been implicated in why people must seek refuge”. Cf. S. NAWYN, “Faith, Ethnicity, and Culture in Refugee Resettlement” in *American Behavioural Scientist* 49, n. 11 (2006) 1510. As pointed out earlier, “[...] religious aspects are frequently the most profound and demanding motivations both for xenophobic movements and for those who oppose them, based on attitudes which promote openness to the stranger in need. It would not be difficult to demonstrate how both possibilities are born from the radical ambiguity of religion. In effect, in the history of religions we find moments in which God looks after the helpless strangers, together with other moments in which God demands the harshest of separation from them, and even, violence against them”. Cf. R. AGUIRRE, *Ensayo sobre los orígenes del cristianismo*, pp. 99-100.

²⁸ Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge*, p. 139-140.

²⁹ Cf. JRS, *Keeping Hope Alive*, p. 72.

arbitrariness, and impunity”.³⁰ Considering all these factors and circumstances, what does it mean then to have lived as a forcibly displaced person?

Whatever the causes, all experiences of forced displacement have one thing in common: events, conditions or circumstances have made staying in one’s own country or home untenable, insufferable or impossible. These experiences also share other common characteristics: absence of other options (forcibly displaced people have been ‘forced’ to escape); having to leave everything behind (homes, properties, family, friends, loved-ones, culture, language); little or no welcome and hospitality in the places where the displaced search asylum and also sometimes where they are resettled (from distrust and fear to outright xenophobia); lack of safety and security in the present and the future (physical and sexual abuse, both in refugee camps and in urban settings, seems to be widespread); no delimited period of time for their suffering (their situation can become protracted in certain cases for dozens of years); very little or no opportunities for education especially after the primary years (and particular so for young girls); vulnerability to constant violence (both individual, institutional and structural); and in many cases, little or no access to the most basic of needs: water, food, and shelter. When a conflict affects a large part of a country’s territory, the humanitarian catastrophe becomes irreversible and the prospect of a lost generation becomes more than a possibility. Of course, it is always the women and children who are most vulnerable, with a greater risk of becoming victims of prostitution, of constant violence, of recruitment by rebel forces to fight wars they did not begin or even understand. As Lluís Magriñà, former international director of JRS put it concisely and pointedly:

The true history of wars around the world can be read on the faces of refugees. Entire generations in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe have known only life in a refugee camp. Communities are dependent on aid, cultures are eroded, and education is hard to come by. Hopelessness sets in, human dignity is sorely tested. To be a refugee means to live on the edge of society, socially and politically marginalised.³¹

Though this might seem too bleak a picture or an exaggeration, anyone who has lived in a refugee camp, even for a short period of time, will be able to attest to the reality of the description given above. A reality that continues to be mirrored more and more in urban refugee settings, as well. As expected, the difficult conditions that prevail in most refugee camps and in urban refugee encampments only contribute to exacerbate the violence and the

³⁰ Cf. AGBONKHIANMEGHE, “Key Ethical Issues in Practices and Policies of Refugee-Serving NGOs and Churches”, p. 226.

³¹ Cf. JRS, *In the footsteps of Pedro Arrupe: Ignatian spirituality lived in the service of refugees*, p 40.

abuse, to the point that they become the norm: either people give up trying to do something about it, do not ‘see’ the violence anymore, or are fearful of becoming its victims.

To have lived as a forcibly displaced person means to have lived in constant danger, in constant fear. Even when there seems to have been peace and a relative normality in their lives, the forcibly displaced have feared that violence and renewed loss might take place again. But despite this fear, many would have experienced signs of life and signs of hope: people falling in love, getting married, having children, daring to make plans for the future when they ‘got out’ or were ‘allowed in’. People daring to look for and find goodness in those around them. In the case of forcibly displaced people of faith, it was that faith that led them to find hope where no hope should be found. Their faith and hope gave them the capacity to believe that their lives could have meaning and were worth living:

As a Christian, my prayer and my faith give me strength to advocate for us refugee women. One of the prayers I recite daily is the Hail Mary. When Mary was blessed, the child of her womb was also blessed. I believe when God blesses women, others are blessed too. This supports my belief that if women are educated, others will benefit too: in their home, in the community, and in the nation. Indeed, it has been said that if you educate a man you educate an individual; if you educate a woman you educate a nation. *Mrs Wubu*.³²

In deciding to undertake advocacy for women’s education in the refugee camp in Guinea where she lived, Mrs. Wubu (quoted above) mentioned that she began by analysing gender roles in her home country of Liberia. Through that analysis she came to the conclusion that women should have equal rights and the same degree of representation as men. She saw that through her role she could help bring about, in the future, this needed change. Her *identity* as a woman and educator, her ability to effect change in the *place* where she lived, and the opportunity to have an influence on *future* generations, were all essential in her belief and hope that change could indeed take place. We explore briefly now these three essential aspects in all of our lives—identity, space/place and time—and the possible issues caused by the forced displacement experience which might need to be addressed to contribute towards healing in the lives of survivors of forced displacement.

1.2.2.3. Identity

Often times, when people working with the forcibly displaced describe their resilience, their courage and their capacity for survival, in their admiration they might give the impression of

³² Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p. 91.

idealising or even romanticising the situation in which they find themselves. Of course, this is not the case. As Pablo Alonso reminds us “There is no question of idealising exile or forced displacement. Let us not be confounded. Its sheer existence is evil [...]”.³³ Perhaps one of the most dramatic consequences of this evil is the dehumanising effect that it has on the displaced as their sense of identity is rapidly eroded and erased. One of the first casualties of this erosion of identity is the loss of an individual’s name. Proper names are replaced by collective terms such as ‘the refugees’, ‘the asylum seekers’, ‘the migrants’, ‘the forcibly displaced’, and sometimes by more derogatory epithets such as ‘queue jumpers’, ‘illegals’ or the all-encompassing damaging ‘they’. We know that emotionally and psychologically, human beings like to hear their names spoken, they need to be addressed in a personal way. Perhaps even more dehumanising is the use of numbers to replace displaced people’s names. This is common practice in centres of detention for asylum seekers. In trying to justify themselves, immigration officials argue that using numbers is the only way to cope with the large quantity of ‘residents’ in their centres, to avoid confusion between people with similar names and to make processes more expedient and efficient. But it is worth wondering how they would feel if ‘officer’ or ‘watchdog’ were the only names people used to address them, even when off-duty.

Displaced people’s identity has also been lost or eroded when they have lost the ability to perform the roles that for many years had helped define them. This is certainly true when speaking of professional roles such as being teachers, doctors, counsellors, carpenters, mechanics, farmers, but also of relational roles such as being a father, a mother, a daughter or uncle. *Who* one is in relation to another is *what* for many people determines *how* they see themselves and define themselves. In some instances, displaced people are able to recover these roles in refugee camps or in urban settings, or are even called upon to use their limited skills to fulfil these roles in the absence of those who have been formed to perform them. But often, this is not the case. Either their professional skills are not recognised in a foreign country or those professional roles are assigned to other non-refugee staff. This of course denies the forcibly displaced the opportunity to occupy their endless hours of ‘wasted’ time and denies them also their right to be productive, and to have a say in their own destinies, so that frustration eventually leads to despair and a loss in their sense of dignity: “Adults lose their roles, their skills and dignity. Communities are forced into dependency. Cultures

³³ Cf. JRS, *God in Exile*, p.17.

atrophy. Lost generations linger in legal, social and political limbo, highly ignored by the international community [...]”.³⁴ It is hoped that most would regain this lost sense of identity in their new homes of resettlement, though for some it might take a long time, and only happen after much anguish and hardship. Sadly, for others, this never happens and they linger in a state of ‘limbo’, without a sense of belonging or purpose.

1.2.2.4. Space: ‘real’ and artificial borders

During the period of forced displacement, the life of a displaced person, figuratively speaking, unfolds within four walls or within four three-metre high metal fences (in cells or detention centres), or within kilometre-long fences constructed with thorn bushes or barbed wire (refugee camps). This image of the “four walls”, however, is not always a metaphor—I met an asylum seeker once who had been kept locked up in a small suburban detention centre for more than five years because his country of origin would not allow his repatriation. Having visited him there several times, I can attest that those *four walls* were very real for him.

But even when forcibly displaced people are allowed to walk ‘freely’ in the streets, many experience an overwhelming feeling of being ‘boxed in’, of being ‘fenced-in’, enclosed. They experience ‘artificial’ but real borders and barriers that limit their freedom and their capacity to hope:

It is a fact that humans divide space in order to move with inclusions and exclusions (e.g. depending on passports or money), with more or less violent *borders* and peaceful *frontiers*. The different locus of each one determines movements and ways of feeling, thinking, willing, and acting in relation to others. Parties have to be aware of their *glocal* [global-local] *loci*, which is interdependent with other *glocal loci*.³⁵

For the forcibly displaced, these *ways of feeling, thinking, willing, and acting in relation to others*, have a lot more to do (almost in their entirety, some would argue) with exclusion than inclusion. They are kept locked-in to be locked-out, and to be left-out. And this reality is closely connected with the factor of identity mentioned in the previous section. Not only do forcibly displaced people experience an erosion of their own identity, but when they experience hostility and alienation, they are constantly reminded that they cannot aspire either to make their own the identity of their ‘host’:

³⁴ Cf. JRS, *Everybody’s Challenge*, p. 123.

³⁵ Cf. LÓPEZ PÉREZ, *Excessive Love amidst the Unforgivable*, p. 238.

Every social group generates rules of discrimination to safeguard their identity and differentiate themselves from others. Above all, the group safeguards with special zeal its borders, the places of contact—physical or cultural—with others, with the exterior world, because these contacts, which are unavoidable, threaten its identity. This is why, in the same way that gates to battlement walls are guarded or customs check-points are placed along borders, guidelines and norms are established and caution is called for when relating to strangers.³⁶

The consequence of this is that many forcibly displaced not only feel that they never ‘belong’ but also that *they are not invited* to belong. And of course, this is where the movement from hostility to hospitality, mentioned earlier, is truly necessary if the forcibly displaced are ever going to be able to fulfil their hope to feel once again at home. To feel at home despite the outward and interior differences that separate them from others: their race, the colour of their skin, their spoken and body language and even the way they use and live time.

1.2.2.5. Time: a mechanism of exclusion?

Time is of the essence for everyone, but for forcibly displaced people awaiting the end of their ‘exile’, hoping for a durable solution to their plight, it can become a source of great anguish and despair. A question often in their minds is: *Will we make it? Will we be resettled to another country before we die in another violent attack to our refugee camp, or die of illness or even of old age here?*³⁷ *Will we make it out of this detention centre and regain our freedom? Will this rickety boat make it in time to shore, to safety and liberty before it breaks apart?* Forcibly displaced people live time wondering whether they will make it, and they live time always in waiting. In refugee camps they wait for the handing out of food, to be assisted in the medical dispensary, for an opening in a formation or educational course. In urban settings, they wait for their protection cases to be finally resolved, for medical assistance and

³⁶ Cf. AGUIRRE, *Ensayo sobre los orígenes del cristianismo*, p. 100.

³⁷ A recent phenomenon has begun to occur in the past few years in the field of forced displacement: as a consequence of protracted stays in refugee camps (some for close to 30 years), refugees awaiting resettlement or the possibility of return to their home countries, have begun to die of old age. This ‘simple’ fact should be a source of great sadness to our humanity—being witness to the unfulfilled hope of those who hoped until death. Paradoxically, population ageing (and population decline) has become an issue of great concern in many European nations and the more developed Asian nations. Among the various policy reactions that have tried to find ways to deal with the complicated combinations of various social and demographic changes that cause population ageing, one that has received special attention has been replacement migration as means to offset population decline, especially at key working ages in the future. However, there is still no agreement among those working within the migration field as to whether stimulating immigration will provide any solution to the issue, or whether governments will take up stimulating immigration as a goal for yet some time. Cf. J. DíEZ-NICOLÁS, “The EU and Ageing Population, Implications for Migration Flows” in Antonio Marquina, and Tai Hwan Lee, eds., *Perspectives on migration flows in Asia and Europe*, Spain: UNISCI 2001, pp. 61-90; and S.-L. LEE, “Trends and Projection of Population Changes in East Asia: Population Ageing and Migration Flows in South Korea and Japan” in the same publication, pp. 33-59.

care in hospitals, for someone to offer them a job. Certainly they always wait for those three truly durable solutions to their plight: to be resettled, to be allowed to return to their home countries, or to be allowed to stay and live in their present host country. And they also wait for and hope that nothing will happen to them. Their existence is always at the mercy of time, and at the mercy of others who ‘own their time’.

It has been argued that the mechanisms of exclusion today have less to do with taking over spaces and territories than with appropriating the ‘time’ of others; that the new axis of social conflicts resides on imposing on others one’s concept and use of time. Whether they realise it or not, a good deal of the personal or collective decisions people adopt imply decisions about the time of others, in the past and in the future.³⁸ As mentioned earlier, for a refugee this might have to do with someone else’s decision on how long his application process for protection will take, or for an asylum seeker, how long she will be kept locked up in a detention centre. But what conditions this imposition of time even more is the difficulty inherent in the fact that ‘human times’ are not determined exclusively by the measurements of ‘physical time’, but rather “they contain categories that take into account personal dispositions, the character of a particular period, the social environment and the cultural moment [...]”

Human time is more complex than anything a given chronology can establish. Time determines meaning. An event is not limited to its taking place, but rather it takes place with a given, concrete relevance, and in accordance with that relevance, the past and the future are reorganised. The possibility and the need to reinterpret the past and to rethink the future in virtue of the events that take place in the present are part of the human condition which expands in time.³⁹

For many survivors of forced displacement, their past and their future have had to be reorganised according to the relevance of the death of a loved one, the loss of the only way of life they had ever known, the obliteration of their homes and cities:

[...] the past [determination time] is the irreversible intrusion in our lives; the future [hope time] is the openness to chances and possibilities; the present [freedom and realisation time] is the time of freedom, discernment and choice [...]. Parties can relate to the past through what we call ‘memory stories’ that had a referent. The memory story is [...] a story present in ‘*absentia*’ of a past that once existed. The person can relate to the present through what we call ‘present story’ that has a referent now [...]. Lastly, the person can relate to the future through what we call ‘anticipation stories’ [...]. An anticipation story can be a ‘fictional

³⁸ Cf. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, pp. 161-162.

³⁹ Cf. INNERARITY, *Ética de la Hospitalidad*, pp. 163-164.

story’ based on new creative combinations in the imagination which derive from previous old and new experiences thanks to one’s own personal or to other persons’ stories.⁴⁰

The purpose of these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, as stated earlier, is to contribute towards imagining (and fulfilling) ‘anticipatory’ or ‘fictional’ stories filled with meaning and purpose, accompanied by a process of healing and re-integration. A holistic time structure, past-present-future, constitutes then another criterion to help us understand the reality of forcibly displaced people of faith and in particular their living out their spirituality of hope as a way to articulate that faith. Past events have taken them to the situation where they find themselves now. It is here and in the today that their hope has to be nurtured, in concrete ways, so that what they hope for now—a new creative story—can become a reality in the future. And this hope derives from the past and present experiences of a community of faith that bases its ‘story’ on the past, present and future story of salvation brought about through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus.

1.2.2.6. Walking ‘the way of the Cross’ in hope

Before concluding this section, it is worth recapturing at this stage the connection, alluded to in chapter 1, between the exterior ‘topography’ of the journey of forcibly displaced peoples of faith and the interior ‘reliefs’ that shape the spirituality that sustains them—how they live out what they most value. As we have seen, their particular Christian spirituality is grounded on hope and, as such, it gives rise to a very specific theological vision which challenges current political, social, economic and cultural practices and priorities. This spirituality of hope is first and foremost about relationships, about caring and providing for others, even if this means being separated for long periods of time from those whom they love the most. This is the case, for instance, of parents who might sell their lands and many of their belongings to acquire a ‘safe-passage’ for their teenage children, to send them away and avoid their being conscripted into bands fighting conflicts or wars; or the case of refugee husbands and fathers who undertake the dangerous journey across borders to places where they hope to bring their families later. Often, many displaced people who embrace the Christian faith speak about Jesus as their refuge and the one who will always accompany them as they struggle to leave persecution and violence behind. While setbacks and difficulties are frequent, the essence of the ‘movement to freedom’ of these forcibly displaced

⁴⁰ Cf. LÓPEZ PÉREZ, *Excessive Love amidst the Unforgivable*, pp. 235-236.

people of faith is unambiguous: theirs is a journey marked often by surrender to God in hope, as they journey into the unknown.

It is also a journey marked by their constantly having to carry heavy *crosses* throughout the different stages of their forced displacement journey. Thus, their spirituality is also a spirituality of the Cross.⁴¹ We recall Ellacuría’s assertion that the ‘crucified peoples’ embody the defining ‘signs of the times’, constantly incarnating the tragic consequences of sin and the rejection of God’s self-offering in love: “These words are not rhetorical, but strictly Christological. They mean that in this crucified people Christ acquires a body in history and that the crucified people embody Christ in history as crucified”.⁴² And so, they have been at the heart of the church’s mission and the gospel message since Jesus first proclaimed the reign of God.

As also asserted earlier, it is clear that forcibly displaced people legitimately portray this historical incarnation of Christ crucified today. In some ways, it could be argued that forced displacement is a more specific manifestation or sign of the crucified people in the ways it so often robs people of their human dignity, if not their very lives. The reality of the journey of the forcibly displaced person today, then, can be interpreted precisely as “a way of the cross”: a ‘walk’ across ‘terrains and borders of death’. Even when they do not die physically, they undergo a death culturally, psychologically, socially, emotionally: a distressing movement from belonging to rejection in their ‘host’ countries; from connectedness to separation (from their families and loved ones and also their culture and traditions); from purpose to aimlessness (in the menial jobs they are delegated to perform despite their numerous qualifications); from being to ‘nonbeing’, and more often than one would want to imagine, from life to death. A concomitant tragedy is that despite the Christian call to be in solidarity with them and to protect and care for them, most people seem to simply ignore that call and their plight. Yet, as Groody poignantly points out, “[...] the idea that the [forcibly displaced] dying in the deserts are part of the crucified people implies that, unless we act to alleviate their suffering, we are like those who stood by and watched Jesus die on the cross”.⁴³

⁴¹ As Groody reminds us, “Crucifixion is not limited to biblical times [...] crucifixion can serve as a suitable metaphor or historical sign for the unjust human suffering in all generations”, GROODY, “Jesus and the Undocumented Immigrant: A Spiritual Geography of a Crucified People”, p. 309.

⁴² SOBRINO, *Jesus the Liberator*, p. 255.

⁴³ GROODY, “Jesus and the Undocumented Immigrant: A Spiritual Geography of a Crucified People”, p. 313.

1.2.2.7. The *Spiritual Exercises* and the societal dimension

It could be argued that, in light of this apathy and unresponsiveness to the plight of forcibly displaced peoples—and the poor and marginalised in general—the *Spiritual Exercises* could be offered or ‘administered’ as an ‘antidote’ to this human and spiritual ‘malaise’. Recalling Ellacuría’s argument expressed earlier, the Exercises should lead those who engage in them to join their desire for fulfilment of their personal salvation with the necessity and fulfilment of a historical salvation for all; they should also guide them to discover their particular mission (God’s will and desire) in their lives, so as to contribute to this goal as “authentic missionary disciples”.⁴⁴ It is, in other words, about highlighting the social dimension of the Exercises or imbuing them with a “societal consciousness”:

The term consciousness, as used today in such expressions as “consciousness raising” and “conscientisation”, has moral connotations, too. It has often been pointed out that the Latin *conscientia* means both “conscience” and “consciousness” or “awareness”. The latter term [...] has in it the element of call, challenge, and conversion. From this point of view, “consciousness raising” or “conscientisation” are apt terms to describe the aim of any program of spirituality, including the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius.⁴⁵

We have already mentioned how this social dimension of the *Spiritual Exercises* is present in every one of its constitutive stages (cf. chapter 2). It occurs expressly in the *Principle and*

⁴⁴ Volken sees a testimony of this commitment in the Jesuit Salvadorian martyrs: “I have been much struck by a comment Jon Sobrino makes on his slain Jesuit friends, the martyrs of the UCA in San Salvador. ‘It is not that they were outstanding in everything Ignatian, but they were outstanding in the essentials of the *Spiritual Exercises*’. He describes how they searched together to understand better and translate into their situation the key meditations of the Exercises. Like these Jesuits many others, who let themselves be guided by the vision and mission of ‘service of the faith and promotion of justice’, in many parts of the world, have come to experience the unique potential of the *Spiritual Exercises* to give depth and motivation required by this demanding call”. HENRY VOLKEN, “Response II to Paper on ‘Social Action’” in *Ignatian Spirituality in Jesuit Apostolate: International Symposium, Rome: 1-7 April 1991*, Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis 1992, p. 87.

⁴⁵ CLARKE, “Ignatian Spirituality and Societal Consciousness”, p. 131. And as GC32 reminds us: “The Exercises also help to form Christians who [...] can play a constructive part in the reform of social and cultural structures. Thus, the ministry of the *Spiritual Exercises* is one of the most important we can undertake today”, cf. GC32, D. 4, 58. In fact, much has been written on this topic of the societal dimension of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Some resources include: RICARDO ANTONCICH, *Ejercicios y liberación del hombre*, Lima: CISP 1982; RICARDO ANTONCICH, “Las dimensiones sociales de la experiencia de los Ejercicios espirituales” in *Fruto comunitario y social de los Ejercicios, Cuadernos de Espiritualidad* 143 (2004) 15-59; J. MATTHEW ASHLEY, “Ignacio Ellacuría and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola” in *Theological Studies* 61, n. 1 (2000) 16-39 (cited also in chapter 2); DEAN BRACKLEY, *Espiritualidad para la solidaridad: nuevas perspectivas ignacianas*, San Salvador: UCA Ed. 2010; DEAN BRACKLEY, “Traer fuego a la tierra. El compromiso cristiano y los Ejercicios de San Ignacio” in *CIS* 18, n. 84 (1997) 25-44; PAUL CASPERSZ, “The Social Dimension in the *Spiritual Exercises*” in *Promotio Justitiae* 59 (1995) 8-11; THOMAS CLARKE, “Person and society in the Exercises” in the *Way Supplement* 76 (1993) 53-60; JOSÉ ANTONIO GARCÍA, “Raíces ignacianas de la inserción. Recuperaciones urgentes” in *Manresa* 61 (1989) 45-54; HOWARD GRAY, “Changing structures” in the *Way Supplement* 76 (1993) 72-84; JOSÉ MARÍA RAMBLA, “Ejercicios para la fe y la justicia” in *Manresa* 55 (1983) 291-315; JOHN WICKHAM, “The Communal Dimension in the *Spiritual Exercises* Today” in *Review for Religious* 50, n. 1 (1991) 75-94, and AA.VV. “Espiritualidad Ignaciana y Praxis cristiana” in *Diakonia* 107 (2003).

Foundation (the purpose for which we have been created); in all the meditations of the *First Week*,⁴⁶ in the meditation of the *Call of the King*, in the *Two Standards* and in the *Contemplation to attain love* (love showing itself more in deeds than in words). In terms of the Kingdom contemplation, Ignatius has Jesus express it thus: “My will is to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of my Father” ([*SpEx* 95]). This apostolic vision clearly constitutes an essential element on the vision of Ignatian spirituality:

The Ignatian vision includes [...] a transformation of the life, individual and communal, of earthly pilgrimage, not merely an eschatological transformation at the end of time. What sensitivity to the societal dimension of the human will contribute to the traditional Ignatian Kingdom-mystique is an explicit awareness that the transformation of personal and interpersonal life carries with it and is affected by the transformation of the human climate. The Ignatian person and community, therefore, in setting goals of the spiritual quest, will include this third dimension. [...] the Ignatian apostle will set before himself or herself precisely the dream of a better world [...] verified not only in human hearts and relationship, but in structures, institutions and the whole climate of human existence. This contribution of societal consciousness is congruous with the symbol of the Kingdom [transcending] the purely private dimensions of human life.⁴⁷

As a consequence of this vision, it could be argued that Exercises that leave aside this social dimension would be failing in bringing about the desired conversion sought after in their process⁴⁸:

The instructions which introduce the *repetitions* of the *First Week* [*SpEx* 63] and the meditation of the *Two Standards*, constitute in essence an anticipation of what today we label structural sin. They highlight the fact that the process of conversion must include a confrontation with that social dimension, and in a way, a rupture with the traditions and tendencies of the social milieu from which we come. Because of this, the *Exercises* are a true school of formation for agents of social change, giving us that interior freedom needed to actively participate in the transformation of structures.⁴⁹

Since this decision to ‘actively participate in the transformation of structures’ is a matter of one’s own choice, of an election, the Exercises’ function here is two-fold: to help people walk

⁴⁶ Thus, the third grace of the triple colloquy of the First Week, for example, highlights this societal interpretation: *That I may have a knowledge of the world, in order to detest it and rid myself of all that is worldly and vain* [*SpEx* 63]. Here, in effect, the exercitants are asking for the grace to be able to identify the “environmental co-conspirators” in their inner sinfulness and the resultant disordered behaviour. Cf. CLARKE, “Ignatian Spirituality and Societal Consciousness”, p. 140.

⁴⁷ CLARKE, “Ignatian Spirituality and Societal Consciousness”, p. 139.

⁴⁸ As Paul Caspersz points out: “Hence to make the Exercises in our times without reference to their social dimension would be to truncate them, to make them irrelevant to the re-ordering of our existence in society and to introduce a certain schizophrenia into our life: one part, concerned about human beings, militating against the other, concerned about God. No, in our times, it should not be possible to make the Exercises well without reference to their social potential”. Cf. CASPERZ, “The Social Dimension in the Spiritual Exercises”, p. 8.

⁴⁹ ALEXANDER LEFRANK, “Ejercicios y espiritualidad laical” in JUAN M. GARCÍA-LOMAS, ed., *Ejercicios Espirituales y Mundo de Hoy: Congreso Internacional de Ejercicios (Loyola 20-26 September 1991)*, Bilbao/Santander: Ediciones Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, p. 249.

along this pathway to freedom and to help them make a good election, keeping in mind that the consequences of people’s decisions affect not only themselves but others, near and far, as well:

From the moment when he decided to save humanity ‘from within’, God was equally bound to extend his transforming action to those structures which bind a person to other people and to the universe. It is therefore to be expected that the election in the *Exercises* will have a social dimension. In this perspective, God not only directs the interior life of a person and his relations with others; he also influences his style of life and attitudes towards norms, values and institutions [...]⁵⁰

Every human being lives at three levels: individual, interpersonal and societal, though usually one or two of these dimensions is less developed than the others.⁵¹ In adapting the Exercises to the needs and requirements of an exercitant (including survivors of forced displacement), givers will need to keep these three levels (and their development) in mind not only when they offer material for prayer, but also in their role of accompaniers as exercitants examine their consciences and make particular elections. In other words, along with the desired conversion of heart, there is the imperative to build into the structure and process of the Exercises elements which favour this change of mentality that identifies and places humanity “at the new frontier of responsibility for the prevailing social disorder”. This implies, among other things, “liberation from perceiving reality with the eyes of the privileged in society; a critical perception of our own involvement in ‘structures of sin’, and a sense for the irreplaceable role of the poor in the transformation of these; an effective com-compassion with Christ suffering in his ‘crucified people’”.⁵²

Moreover, in order to do this and as Lefrank suggests, “[...] we need to go further and evoke an image, a sort of vision by means of which current expectations and hopes in society can be brought to life [and challenged], and it is preferable that this ‘vision’ should come from the

⁵⁰ ALEXANDER LEFRANK, “The Spiritual Exercises as a Way of Liberating the Social Dimension” in *The Way Supplement* 46 (1983) 56.

⁵¹ “Ignatian spirituality, both as *theoria* and as *praxis*, today needs to be integrally and newly experienced and conceived in the light of a new understanding of the human, in which the societal dimension is seen, together with the intrapersonal and interpersonal, as constitutive, and not merely as extrinsically environmental. [...]. To be a person is to be from, toward, for, and with other persons, to be capable of personal, dialogal relationships. It is this dimension of the human that is here designated by the term interpersonal”. CLARKE, “Ignatian Spirituality and Societal Consciousness”, 131-132.

⁵² VOLKEN, “Response II to Paper on ‘Social Action’”, pp. 85, 87. Caspersz further suggests that in “Introducing the social dimension, we shall have to introduce the concept of structural sin. In our colloquies we shall ask for strength to fight against the political and economic principalities and powers that crush the poor, poor persons and poor nations, that so powerfully allure the non-poor (and ourselves) to the values of self-indulgence, selfishness and limitless consumerism”. Cf. CASPERSZ, “The Social Dimension in the Spiritual Exercises”, p. 10.

retreatant himself”.⁵³ Thus, while theoretically it is possible to understand that sin has a social dimension and to see patterns of interdependence, in particular in the world today, it is of utmost importance that the exercitant be able to meditate on this fact of social interdependence by way of an explicit example that affects him or her as a victim rather than as a responsible party; only then can he or she “go on to discover his [or her] lack of freedom with regard to the norms, values, systems and goals of society”.⁵⁴ And one way of doing this would be to ask the exercitant to consider how he or she acts in the different areas of his or her life and about the quality and intensity of their relations with their surroundings.⁵⁵ Of course, for survivors of forced displacement this will not be a difficult thing to do, as many of them would have been victims of several ‘values’ and systems both of their societies of origin and of resettlement.

Finally, while the commitment to this societal dimension is present in the Exercises from the very beginning and is particularly highlighted in the meditation on the Call of Christ (where each person is invited to labour with the Lord and to cooperate in Christ’s lordship over the new world), if exercitants were to forget that they are only collaborators in this enterprise, they could centre this commitment unconsciously on themselves and either be discouraged in the face of failure or proud in the event of success. Hence a key word when considering the societal dimension of the following of Christ is poverty:

[...] in the first place spiritual poverty as a dependence upon the redemptive and strengthening power of Christ, and then exterior material poverty as a way of testifying that the aim is not to dominate or compel, but to invite and attract. It is only when my own vulnerability is visible to others that they can believe that I am at the service, not of my own power, but of love.⁵⁶

⁵³ LEFRANK, “The Spiritual Exercises as a Way of Liberating the Social Dimension”, p. 57.

⁵⁴ LEFRANK, “The Spiritual Exercises as a Way of Liberating the Social Dimension”, p. 58. It is then about moving from a theoretical (and distant) understanding of social sin to confronting it head on. As Brackley points out, throughout the Exercises, Ignatius advises us to ask for inner knowledge, to have a close ‘feel’ for reality. The problem is not that we are ‘distracted by’ reality, but that we are often very far from reality itself, lost in its peripheries or fringes, separated from the drama of life-and-death, and, therefore, very far from the terrain where God fights against death to bring about life in abundance. The important thing, he believes, is not going to heaven ahead of time. The important thing is to be present here and now. We are not called to the ascension but to the incarnation. God will resurrect us. Cf. BRACKLEY, “Traer fuego a la tierra. El compromiso cristiano y los Ejercicios de San Ignacio”, p. 42.

⁵⁵ Questions for reflection might include: “How does being from a particular ethnic background affect how I am perceived by others? Does my level of education determine how I am treated by others? Is my accent or my use of language used to pigeonhole me?” Conversely, it would still be important for the exercitant to reflect on questions that help him or her explore ways in which he or she is not a victim but a victimiser, even if unwittingly: “How does my use or abuse of natural resources impact the quality of life of those around me? How do my lifestyle choices affect those who unjustly are made to support such lifestyle?”

⁵⁶ LEFRANK, “The Spiritual Exercises as a Way of Liberating the Social Dimension”, pp. 64-65.

Though embracing this poverty at either or both of these levels has become increasingly difficult in today’s consumerist, materialistic and power-driven world, the more the reason that this approach to the societal dimension and commitment should be emphasised explicitly, lest it become a Pelagian endeavour and a new source of ‘disorder’ in the exercitant’s transformative and healing process.

1.2.3. The objective: *Healing*

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the main objective in the design of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ is to develop a path or schema that promotes and nurtures *spiritual healing* for survivors of forced displacement of faith, so they can attain a greater degree of freedom in their lives. It is hoped that this freedom will in turn allow them to take up their mission and find greater purpose and meaning in their lives through being people of service. In other words, and as stated earlier, what is being sought is a greater degree of freedom in the lives of survivors of forced displacement: freedom *from* oppressive or destructive situations and ways of understanding and seeing themselves, and of relating to others; and freedom *for* radically transformed ways of living which will allow them to become more of their true selves in the healing and loving presence of their God, and become also “true missionary disciples”.

We have already addressed this theme of healing in previous chapters, both in terms of the factors that have led to woundedness and brokenness in the lives of survivors of forced displacement and of possible areas and aspects that might foster and nurture their healing process. In this section, then, we focus mainly on the possible contribution that the content and dynamics of the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises (and very briefly, of other Weeks) might provide to such process and point out some relevant aspects in the ‘ministry of healing’ of spiritual accompaniers and givers of the Exercises. As we have often emphasised, our premise is that such healing will be facilitated and preserved by re-writing or re-authoring one’s damaged or injured life narrative into an alternative, preferred and more meaning personal story.

1.2.3.1. Acceptance, healing and the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises

Christian faith presupposes the assent not only to the truth that God exists and has revealed Godself in Christ, but also the assent that God first loved humanity into existence and continues

to love and accept each person unconditionally. Paul Tillich defines faith as “the courage to accept acceptance” and in this he means acceptance by God.⁵⁷ It requires courage to break down the chains of fear that might have held people captive, such as the fear of believing that God might indeed love them as they are and accept them as they are, because if this is true, then they might have wasted many years of their lives believing the contrary and such knowledge could break their hearts, once again. It requires courage to accept that they might need to let go of assumptions and beliefs that, though painful, have also given them some sense of comfort in the ‘known and tried’. Courage to accept that their lives might have reached a dead end and might indeed need change. It requires courage because if indeed God accepts them no matter what, then when things go wrong or disappoint them, they can no longer doubt God’s love for them. Finally, to accept acceptance demands great courage because if God loves us as we are, and accepts us as we are, then how can we not but accept ourselves too? How can the servant be more demanding than the master? It is easier for most people to accept that God loves humanity as a whole than to believe that God loves each person individually as God loved the Son (cf. John 17:23, 26).⁵⁸

To accept God’s acceptance demands the courage to allow God to transform those areas of people’s lives (thoughts, feelings, desires, attitudes, habits) that separate them from God. And as it has been expressed before, this is indeed the purpose of Ignatius’ Exercises: to open exercitants to an experience of God that will result in a conversion of heart and dispose them to follow a particular direction in life (cf. [SpEx 1]).⁵⁹ In the title for the Exercises of the First Week, Ignatius reminds us that the Exercises are about *overcoming oneself* and *ordering one’s life* so as to reach a decision free of influence from one’s *disordered affections* (cf. [SpEx 21]).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Cf. PAUL TILlich, *The Courage to Be*, 2nd edition, New Haven, CT: Yale University 2000, p. 165.

⁵⁸ Cf. VAN BREEMEN, *As Bread that is Broken*, pp. 14-15.

⁵⁹ The word ‘conversion’ does not appear in the *Exercises*, but it is a dynamic that underpins them, particularly in the First Week, when exercitants are called to turn away from a sinful life, or more often, to turn to a more devout life.

⁶⁰ For a study on the consideration of disordered affections from a psychological point of view see LUIS MARÍA GARCÍA DOMÍNGUEZ, “Qué son las afecciones desordenadas para Ignacio y cómo leerlas hoy desde la psicología” in *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos: la transformación del yo en la experiencia de los Ejercicios Espirituales*, vol. 1, in Carlos Alemany and José García-Monge, eds., Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1991, pp. 94-108. García Domínguez distinguishes ‘disordered affections’ as understood by Ignatius (those which get in the way or are in opposition to the criteria of ‘order’ offered in the *Principle and Foundation*, of indifference, and of rectitude and purity of intention/motivation at the time of a decision/election to serve and praise God), from psychopathological disorders and ‘bad’ or sinful affections’ that lead to sin. Disordered affections are not necessarily sinful; rather, they are motivated towards satisfaction of one’s self-love, self-will and self-interests (cf. [SpEx 189]), instead of the values implied by the following of the temporal king, p. 101. See also by the same author, *Las afecciones desordenadas: Influjo del subconsciente en la vida espiritual*, Bilbao/Santander: Mensajero/Sal Terrae 1992, and its

Of course, what he is talking about here is dismantling the blocks to freedom in people’s lives, so they can bring them into line with the end stated in the *Principle and Foundation* of *praising, reverencing and serving God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save our souls* (cf. [SpEx 23]).

Ignatius realises that things do get in the way of achieving this original purpose and the meditations of the First Week deal with barriers that arise from human beings’ personal rejection of God. This rejection can be caused by one’s disordered attachments or habits but, as we have seen, can also be grounded in past wounds and hurts that have opened up a chasm between a survivor of forced displacement and God. As we alluded to in the previous chapter, the meditations of the First Week are intended to call forth gratitude in the exercitant, so that a basic trust and experience of God’s creating and sustaining unconditional love is present. Ignatius invites exercitants to consider how God is the origin of all things since the beginning of creation. This theme is also foundational in the *Contemplation to Attain Love* (cf. [SpEx 230-37]), at the end of the *Exercises*, where God’s continuing sustaining action and labouring are presented. Thus, both meditations are fundamentally about the love of God.

And it is this aspect of the Ignatian framework that can contribute towards healing—so needed by forcibly displaced people—taking place during the First Week of the Exercises: for Ignatius, the only way to address one’s sinfulness and barriers is within the context of God’s unconditional love and mercy; for those doing the Exercises to realise and *accept* that God loves them despite their limitations and whatever might have happened to them throughout their displacement experience; that God loves the whole person and that these limitations constitute only part of who the person is. Once healing allows them to accept that they are “redeemed sinners”, unconditionally loved by God, survivors of forced displacement will be drawn to a greater desire to know more this Jesus, this Christ, who gave his life for them, “for me” (cf. [SpEx 53]), in love. We mentioned earlier that it is easier for most people to accept that God loves humanity as a whole than to believe that God loves each one of them individually. Yet, for many survivors of forced displacement, this personal connection with God and with Jesus is essential, because often they feel ‘excluded from humanity’. They need to ‘hear’ “I love you” from God not as a plural ‘you’, but as a very individual and personal ‘you’ singular. Somehow,

some ex-refugees have been able to ‘hear’ this throughout their displacement journey and that has made all the difference in their path to survival and resettlement. The gift of this interior knowledge of God’s and Christ’s love is a treasure that must be shared so as to become a source of healing for others.

1.2.3.2. Additional healing elements in the First and other Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises

The healing process in the dynamics of the First Week is not limited to the *Purpose* [SpEx 21], the *Principle and Foundation* [SpEx 23], and the meditations of that Week [SpEx 45-71] referred to above and in previous chapters. Other elements, including Ignatius’ image of God in this Week, the Examination of Conscience [SpEx 24-43], the General Confession [SpEx 44], and the Rules for Discernment of Spirits in the First Week [SpEx 313-327], can also play significant roles in this healing dynamic. And so can specific elements in the other three Weeks, particularly the Ignatian practice of imaginatively contemplating healing and other stories in the scriptures, considering Jesus’ stance and attitudes during his Passion, and the *Contemplation to Attain Love*. We look now briefly at some these potential healing contributions.

1.2.3.2.1. The Divine Majesty: Ignatius’ image of God

Ignatius’ image of God is very much grounded in his medieval worldview. Throughout the *Exercises*, and as he does particularly during the First Week, he will speak with reverence of the Divine Majesty as one of his favourite titles for God. It is a title that needs to be understood clearly, since while it expresses the respect and subservience that is owed to the Creator of all beings and things, it also expresses the care and love of God for God’s creatures. As we have seen already in the *Principle and Foundation*, for Ignatius God is a loving God who has created humanity out of love. Even when Ignatius talks about God’s justice, omnipotence, power, goodness and wisdom in contrast to humanity’s sinful nature (cf. [SpEx 59]), he does so not to emphasise its insignificance, but rather to highlight God’s love for all peoples despite that insignificance—the justice of God cannot be separated from the mercy of God. God is, above all, the compassionate One who cares for God’s creatures, and this is a point that givers of the Exercises should emphasise frequently.

We have mentioned already how damaging a false image of God can be for anyone, but particularly for people whose experience of trauma might have ‘confirmed’ such image—images, for example, of a God who seeks revenge for one’s lack of faithfulness; who does not

forgive one’s misdeeds; who keeps record of one’s faults; who punishes with severity one’s mistakes; who demands retribution and restitution; who controls one’s life; who expects perfection and can never be pleased no matter what or how much one does. Developing a healthy image of God is an essential element in spiritual healing, so people accompanying survivors of forced displacement in their spiritual journeys should make it a priority to identify any such unhealthy images (at some point, people’s toxic images need to be exposed for what they are, but in a pastoral, sensitive and effective manner) and work together with their exercitants to detect their source (those images would come from some deeply affective dimension of their inner lives and they will need assistance in peeling away the layers) and come up with possible, more nourishing and life-giving alternatives. In addition, since any transforming process needs communal support, it will be important to provide opportunities for faith-sharing groups: in faith sharing, individuals are exposed to other people’s images of God, which, in turn, can provide a gentle but effective challenge and corrective to their own notions.⁶¹

1.2.3.2.2. The General Confession

Based on his own experience, Ignatius was well aware of the healing power that the sacrament of reconciliation could offer a serious penitent and suggested that the greatest benefit from this sacrament might be obtained at the end of the First Week (cf. ([*SpEx* 44])). Having realised and felt the full burden of their own sinfulness and discovered God’s grace and unconditional love as a response, exercitants would experience a greater sorrow at this time in presenting to God all the sins and refusals to God’s love in their lives. Also, with a great self-understanding of themselves as ‘redeemed sinners’ always in need of radical healing, they could come to acknowledge that God alone is their Saviour and only source of this healing.

Those offering the Spiritual Exercises to survivors of forced displacement should therefore make sure that the sacrament of reconciliation is available to their exercitants at some stage in their journey together, should they wish to avail themselves of this sacrament. At the same time, givers of the Exercises should also be aware that as powerful as the sacrament of reconciliation can be towards offering healing in a person’s life, it can also be approached with unhealthy

⁶¹ SCOTT DETISCH, “Unhealthy Images of God: When Truth Becomes a Toxin in the Sacrament of Reconciliation” in *Human Development* 27 (2006) 45. Detisch, however, warns that for these faith-sharing groups to be effective, the facilitators of the groups should have some training in group dynamics (otherwise the groups will fail) as well as in identifying toxic images of God and making referrals to relevant health professionals when needed.

ideas, grounded in particular in the negative and un-freeing images of God referred to above. They should then be vigilant of tendencies that might point to this unhelpful behaviour. As Detisch points out:

[...] some penitents might come to the sacrament in order to feel that they have been brought back into God’s grace and have thereby averted whatever punishment God may have meted out; that they have won back God’s love. Others may come to retrieve a sense of righteousness that comes from dutifully confessing their sins, receiving absolution, and doing their penance [...]. [For] others [discovering] that they cannot by themselves become free of sinful or destructive habits nor the shame and guilt that accompany them [...] “confession” becomes the easier choice because it offers a quick fix of feeling some relief, at least until the next occasion of sin.⁶²

Underscoring the points mentioned in the previous section, Detisch advises that it is important to identify what people’s operative images of God are, and how these images unconsciously might influence their inner lives. In addition, because the sacrament of reconciliation is deeply grounded in a person’s need and desire to receive forgiveness from God, it is also important to emphasise that “God’s forgiveness is the *starting point* and not merely a result” (cf. Luke 7:36-50). God’s forgiveness, like God’s act of creation, is pure gift and is based in God’s everlasting love for humanity. That is why “the goal of the sacrament is not the forgiveness of God, which has already been offered, but the healing, conversion, and reconciliation that God’s forgiveness can bring about in us”,⁶³ as was noted in chapter 4.

1.2.3.2.3. The Examination of Conscience

In the First Week of the Exercises, Ignatius presents a way of making an examination of conscience not only to prepare exercitants for a general confession, but as a daily practice to encourage the reflective awareness necessary for anyone making the Exercises (cf. [SpEx 32-43]), and for that matter, for anyone who wants to experience growth in their spiritual journey. This daily practice is what we call today the Awareness Examen or Examen of Consciousness. Awareness of God’s presence in the different aspects of one’s life and of one’s behaviour as people invite or reject that presence, can lead to much healing. This can take place in particular for forcibly displaced peoples as they become aware of issues in their lives that are connected to

⁶² DETISCH, “Unhealthy Images of God”, p. 42.

⁶³ DETISCH, “Unhealthy Images of God”, p. 45. For additional guidance on this topic, see also: GEORGE ASCHENBRENNER, “The Inner Journey of Forgiveness” in *Human Development* 10 (1989) 15-23; WILLIAM A. BARRY, “Changing the ‘Default’ Image of God” in *Human Development* 26 (2005) 28-33; MICHAEL E. CAVANAGH, “The Perception of God in Pastoral Counselling” in *Pastoral Psychology* 41 (1992) 75-80, and ROBERT KENNEDY, ed., *Reconciling Embrace: Foundations for the Future of Sacramental Reconciliation*, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 1998.

past hurts or suffering (which they had not realised before) and to their usual responses when they arise. In some instances, it can also help reveal the source or cause of such response.

In addition, the Examen can bring light into other areas of people’s lives and reveal to them unconscious motivations, fears, dislikes, apprehensions, desires. Ignatius believed that God’s Spirit speaks to people through the interior movement of their hearts and that the best way to listen to God’s voice is through this daily prayer because this constancy helps them see patterns of behaviour and attitudes that otherwise they could miss. Many people in fact ‘miss’ recognising God’s unconditional love for them because they look for it in the wrong places—in ‘great signs or wonders’ rather than in the small moments of grace to be found in the ordinary happenings of their day. The Examen can be of great help here to redirect them in their search. And since the Examen can be adapted to pray and reflect on particular themes by slightly changing the reflection questions each day (for example, on spiritual freedom, particular emotions, habits, a particular relationship, etc.), several Examen prayers will be included, at different stages, in the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.⁶⁴

1.2.3.2.4. Rules for Discernment of Spirits in the First Week

Because discernment helps us identify our disordered attachments and tendencies, their sources and causes, it can be an invaluable tool in the healing of obstacles to a deeper relationship with God. The overall purpose of the Rules of Discernment is to deepen exercitants’ capacity to be in touch with the movements in their hearts and minds—what relates to the whole person, including their feelings, intellect and will (cf. [SpEx 3]). By noticing, understanding and distinguishing such movements, we can judge, sift through, and respond to them positively, and follow those that bring us closer to God and reject those that do not. The rules reveal how seriously a person’s feelings such as confusion and serenity, happiness and sadness, gratitude and indifference need to be taken.⁶⁵ As exercitants engage in the different contemplations and meditations, they are to be stirred by great feeling and experience powerful emotions such as shame and confusion (cf. [SpEx 48]), intense sorrow and tears (cf. [SpEx 55]), wonder (cf. [SpEx 60]), deep interior knowledge of the Lord (cf. [SpEx 104]), enlightenment (cf. [SpEx 139]),

⁶⁴ Cf. MARK E. THIBODEAUX, *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen: Fresh Ways to Pray from Your Day*, Chicago: Loyola Press 2015.

⁶⁵ Keating puts it succinctly: “The emotions faithfully respond to what our value system is—not what we would like it to be, or what we think it is. Our emotions are perfect recorders of what is happening inside”. THOMAS KEATING, *Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation*, New York: Continuum 1992, p. 19.

regret (cf. [SpEx 193]), interior suffering (cf. [SpEx 203]), gladness and intense rejoicing (cf. [SpEx 221]), and profound gratitude (cf. [SpEx 233]). These are all graces that exercitants pray for as they follow the journey of the Exercises; they *are* the purpose of the Exercises.

Unfortunately, some forcibly displaced people engaging in the Exercises may resist strongly experiencing such feelings and thus deny themselves the healing that could take place in their lives. Some do this by staying at the ‘level of the head’, by rationalising, analysing and theologising on the content of the contemplations and meditations.⁶⁶ For others, this might be an avoidance mechanism—feelings have to be avoided at all costs: since they are not rational, they cannot be controlled. For others, ‘getting in touch with their feelings’ in prayer might be totally foreign, and they might honestly be in the dark as to how to go about doing this. It is possible that as children or young adults they were taught that emotions should have nothing to do with prayer; or perhaps their personality traits orient them towards the intellectual side of things.⁶⁷ And yet others, who do succeed in getting in touch with their effective life, might find it difficult to share it with the Lord.⁶⁸ But, as mentioned, for healing to take place all the aspects of a person must be engaged, not only their intellect (which is necessary), but also their feelings and will. Some forcibly displaced people might have suffered so much that ‘making the decision’ to *take out all feeling* out of their lives has become their main coping mechanism. To ask them to engage their heart in prayer might be the last thing they want to do.⁶⁹ The Ignatian practice of imaginatively contemplating healing and other stories in the scriptures (particularly as presented during the Second Week) can be quite effective in doing this, because they embody a touchstone of truth that is universal. Christ’s words and the emotional responses of his hearers and

⁶⁶ Cf. LYN HOLLEY DOUCET, *A Healing Walk with St. Ignatius: Discovering God’s Presence in Difficult Times*, Chicago: Loyola Press 2002, p. 53.

⁶⁷ Cf. CAROLYN OSIEK, “The Spiritual Direction of ‘Thinking’ Types” in *Review for Religious* 44, n. 2 (1985) 209-219.

⁶⁸ Cf. WILLIAM A. BARRY and WILLIAM J. CONNOLLY, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, New York: Harper Collins 1982, pp. 74-75.

⁶⁹ Yet, in some instances, they might simply not be aware of the sources of their feelings of joy, anger, fear or affection. As with images of God, in many cases these feelings are grounded in experiences people had as small children, and if their displacement experience took place at this time, they might not remember (or might have blocked out) the events connected to those feelings. Some spiritual directors have found it helpful to introduce exercitants to the concept of the ‘Inner Child’ as a way to become aware of the issues that may affect their present attitudes and behaviour, and also as a way to heal those issues. An excellent introduction and guide to this type of work is the book by LUCIA CAPACCHIONE, *Recovery of Your Inner Child*, New York: Simon & Schuster 1991. Clearly, the spiritual director should be careful on how he or she uses this tool (in particular with people who have experienced a great deal of trauma) and monitor whether the issues that arise for an exercitant require counselling or therapy.

recipients of his healing power in these healing stories evoke similar emotions in us—it is the power of the Christ story meeting one’s own story.

Finally, givers of the Exercises should be closely attuned to forcibly displaced exercitants’ circumstances and needs so that they can discern when it is appropriate to explain to them specific Rules and terms used in them, such as movements or motions, consolation and desolation, good and evil spirits.⁷⁰ Language is of utmost importance here as some exercitants might associate these terms with meanings other than those intended for the Exercises. For example, in certain cultures where survivors of forced displacement come from, mention of ‘evil spirits’ might be regarded as un-Christian or anti-Christian. Interpreting these terms correctly is also particularly important when talking about spiritual healing of wounds because misunderstanding them could lead to deeper hurts. Two fundamental terms in this process of discernment—consolation and desolation—are good examples of this. Exercitants on a path towards healing could be in a state of consolation and yet experience still much pain and confusion which are necessary aspects of the healing process. And yet, if they do not have a good grasp of what this means, they might actually confuse this consolation for desolation and feel that all the effort and energy they have put into the process has been futile.

1.2.3.2.5. *Contemplating scriptural healing stories in the Second Week and Jesus’ Passion in the Third Week*

As mentioned in the previous section, imaginatively contemplating healing and other stories in the scriptures can also be a source of much spiritual healing. As exercitants listen to Christ’s words, watch his actions, and witness the emotional responses of the hearers and recipients of his healing power in these healing stories, similar emotions are evoked in them—it is the power of the Christ story meeting their own stories and responding to their own specific needs of healing.⁷¹ In contemplating the healing story of the blind man Bartimaeus (cf. Mark 10:46-52;

⁷⁰ A valuable introduction for these topics is found in MICHAEL J. BUCKLEY, “Discernimiento” in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao/Maliaño: Mensajero/Sal Terrae ²2007, pp. 607-611. See, also, IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 205-208; GANSS, *The Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 189-191, and GEORGE SCHEMEL and JUDITH ROEMER, *Beyond Individuation to Discipleship: A Directory for Those Who Give the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, Wernersville, PA: Jesuit Centre for Spiritual Growth 2000, pp. 181-192, for helpful presentations of these terms and concepts. A more contemporary and practical approach is presented by MARK E. THIBODEAUX, *God’s Voice Within: The Ignatian Way to Discovering God’s will*, Chicago: Loyola Press 2010.

⁷¹ It is interesting to note that among the fifty-one “Mysteries of the Life of Christ our Lord” that Ignatius provides for contemplation, he does not include any of the well-known healing stories. Though, of course, the greatest form of ‘healing’ is included through the contemplation on the Resurrection of Lazarus (cf. [SpEx 285]). In addition, there are four ‘miracles’ stories including: at the marriage feast in Cana, calming the storm, walking on the waters and the feeding of the five thousand (cf. [SpEx 276, 279, 280, 283]), respectively. Of course, Ignatius had limited

Luke 18:35-43), for example, and putting themselves in the scene, exercitants are able to listen to Jesus’ words to him as addressed personally to them: “*What do you want me to do for you?*”. They are words filled with promise, with expectation of great things to come, with the potential to respond to the deepest needs at the core of one’s heart. And whether borrowing the blind man’s words of response “*My teacher, let me see again*”, or using their own, exercitants are free to express those deepest needs and desires with the hope that they will be fulfilled. Likewise, for exercitants’ being able to hear Jesus’ words spoken to the paralytic: “*Son [or daughter], your sins are forgiven*” (cf. Matthew 9:2; Mark 2:5, Luke 5:20) addressed directly to them, can be a great source of consolation and healing of feelings of guilt, unworthiness, shame and remorse at their own shortcomings.

While this is not the place to explore in detail the characteristics and repercussions of Jesus’ ministry of healing, it is worthwhile, however, to point out some of the attitudes displayed towards Jesus’ ‘healing miracles’ by the evangelists, who clearly regard them as an integral part of Jesus’ message itself.⁷² For Saint Mark, for example, Jesus’ healing actions constitute the initial, frontal attack upon the devil’s kingdom of darkness: by breaking up the hold of evil upon the world (expressed in the release of the captivity brought about by sickness), Jesus seeks to re-establish in its stead the kingdom of God in history. It is no surprise, then, that Jesus’ first cure in that gospel is an exorcism (cf. Mark 1:23-27). And in fact, as Mark narrates Jesus’ various healing of diseases, he assimilates those accounts to the exorcism narratives. The other gospel writers sustain similar beliefs with their own nuances.⁷³

space for the use of these scriptural passages and his goal was to include those actions of the ‘God-Man’ that helped build up to his Passion and Resurrection; thus they included the ‘great mysteries’ so called, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation and Redemption, all part of God’s plan of redeeming and restoring freedom to human beings (as originally created). Moreover, in the *Exercises*, Ignatius presents this divine design as evolving by stages in the history of salvation. Also, we see that the ‘mysteries’ which have been provided highlight Ignatius’ intention of having the exercitant identify deeply with the Lord, his teaching and values, and to respond to his call for conversion and mission as his disciples (cf. [SpEx 275, 281, 282, 312]). Almost all of Ignatius’ topics, and in the same sequence, also appear in Ludolph of Saxony’s *Life of Christ*. Cf. GANSS, *Spiritual Exercises, Translation and Commentary*, pp. 187-188, 201. See also Santiago Arzubialde’s treatment of the topic in ARZUBIALDE, *Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio: Historia y Análisis*, pp. 635-684, and especially pp. 636-648, which support Ganss’ interpretation.

⁷² Thus we see in Acts 10:36-38, for example, how in describing how God sent his message to the children of Israel and made known the good news of peace to them through Jesus Christ, Peter cites no saying of Jesus but instead proclaims how “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him”. Cf. STANLEY, “Salvation and Healing”, p. 301.

⁷³ Cf. STANLEY, “Salvation and Healing”, pp. 307-308. Stanley points out that in Matthew, Jesus’ healing is associated with his preaching as the two most characteristic activities in the Galilean phase of his public life (cf. Mt 4:33), while in Luke, Jesus’ miracles are primarily symbols of that salvation which the Lord will confer upon humanity. Finally, John has, perhaps, stated this truth more clearly than his companions by drawing attention to

The relevance of bringing this to attention here is connected to the comments made in the previous chapter of the importance of taking into account the traditional religious-meaning systems of survivors of forced displacement. As mentioned there, many of these survivors belong to groups and cultures where there is hardly any distinction made between the spiritual and the physical or material aspects of life. In such worldview, for example, physical and spiritual problems tend to be defined more inclusively than in the Western perspective: misfortune is often understood and identified in the context of social and spiritual conflicts. Clearly, this understanding would also be more in line with the approach to healing of physical ailments which was held by Jesus’ contemporaries. Many survivors of forced displacement then, might approach Jesus’ healing stories from this perspective and believe that they too might be able to experience healing in such a way as to be released from the hold of ‘evil’ forces or influences which continue to imprison them as a result of situations of conflict, past and present. And this of course, gives these prayer experiences an even greater significance and power.

Healing too can be experienced in contemplating the different scenes of Jesus’ Passion, seeing how Jesus responds to the pain and suffering being inflicted on him with total impunity: without judgement, resentment, seeking revenge or holding it against his tormentors, but instead forgiving them and praying for them. Jesus accepted such pain and suffering as a consequence of the mission of love from the Trinity, surrendering himself to that mission and thus imbuing it with purpose, with meaning. Any person of faith who has experienced suffering and hurt at the hands of others can find solace and consolation in Jesus’ words and actions during his Passion—sharing and finding meaning for their own suffering in his; learning from him how to respond to the pain inflicted; learning to let go of resentment—including and especially survivors of forced displacement, who have faced so much violence and hardship in their lives as a result of the actions of others. As we have seen in the previous chapter, however, it is not simply a matter of ‘forgetting and forgiving’ what has been done to them—without seeking to achieve restorative justice and striving to bring about reconciliation between the parties involved—but is a matter of giving new meaning and understanding to that suffering so that healing can take place.

the nature of those acts of healing as ‘signs’ of one’s Christian faith, Cf. STANLEY, “Salvation and Healing”, pp. 311, 314, 317.

1.2.3.2.6. *The Contemplation to Attain Love*

It was mentioned earlier that both in the *Principle and Foundation* and in the *Contemplation to Attain Love*, Ignatius invites exercitants to consider both how God is the origin of all things since the beginning of creation and how God continues to sustain and labour in all of creation—including in every person—until now. Thus, in seeking to cultivate the exercitant’s trust and experience of God’s creating and sustaining unconditional love, both meditations are fundamentally about the love of God. Moreover, in the *Contemplatio*, in the grace desired for in the Second Prelude, the exercitant asks to be “stirred to profound gratitude, [that he/she] may become able to love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things” [SpEx 233]. The ultimate expression of that love, which “manifests itself more by deeds than words”, is the radical prayer of the *Suscipe*. It is a prayer of surrendering oneself totally to God, and of surrendering (disposing of) everything one ‘owns’, including the most important things one possesses: one’s memory, one’s understanding, one’s will and one’s freedom.

Yet, it is also a prayer of surrendering—and this is where healing can take place—of all that binds us, that takes away one’s freedom, of one’s disordered affections and attachments (aspects all of one’s memory, understanding and will). It is a radical acknowledgement that there are certain things in life over which many people (survivors of forced displacement included) have no control, no power, including the capacity to overcome hurts, resentments, feelings of revenge and violence, of unworthiness and low self-esteem. And with such radical acknowledgement comes radical freedom: “Give me love of yourself, along with your grace, for that is enough for me” [SpEx 234]. Moreover, exercitants can only utter this prayer (truly and in their hearts), in trust, believing that God will indeed act favourably, compassionately and lovingly towards them when returning the freedom God had originally gifted to them. In acknowledging also that God continues to labour in every person, exercitants are able to let go, to dispose of, any feelings or ambition of perfection in their lives, which can be so crippling and draining: God is not finished with them yet!

1.2.3.3. *The ministry of healing and givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’*

The role of givers of the Spiritual Exercises is multi-faceted. They are, among other things, guides, ‘professional’ listeners, spiritual directors and companions, providers of spiritual resources and agents of healing. Perhaps, most givers do not think of themselves in terms of the

latter function, but there is no doubt that they do perform it: by helping exercitants discard their toxic images of God and restore positive ones instead; by contributing to their feeling whole and sound again as they reflect and interiorise the unconditional love of God in their lives; by helping them restore broken relationships (with God and with others) as they engage in healing of painful memories before Christ with the assistance of these spiritual companions. These are all ‘healing’ actions because they all address instances of being or feeling ‘wounded’, either emotionally or spirituality.

The ministry of healing of givers of these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ encompasses all these instances. Yet, it calls for more than these because the main objective of these *exercises*, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, is to promote and nurture *spiritual healing* in survivors of forced displacement, with the purpose of attaining a greater degree of freedom in their lives. It is therefore essential for spiritual guides who embark on this particular journey of faith to understand what is required of them. What is *not* required is that they act as counsellors or psychologists seeking to resolve their exercitants’ mental health issues, though they can certainly refer them to these health professionals. What is being asked of them is to actively enter into a healing relationship with those making the *exercises* and to develop competencies that will allow them to carry out this function effectively and appropriately.

What do these competencies involve? In reality, they are capacities which are expected of any giver of spiritual exercises, though the difference here is that givers of *these exercises* are expected to use them and apply them purposely. In considering what makes a relationship ‘healing’ in the light of personal experience and of reflection on the gospel-vision of Jesus ‘the healer’, Jacques Pasquier suggests that this ministry of healing consists of three degrees or stages, and that these are suitably exemplified in the attitudes and responses of Jesus to the woman accused of committing adultery in John’s gospel (cf. (John 8:1-11), which have so many applications in our own lives. These three stages are best expressed through the three ‘ministries’: of *listening*, of *affirming* and of *freeing*.⁷⁴

1.2.3.3.1. The ministry of listening

The first step in the healing process is when one’s hardship, pain or suffering is truly perceived. It is only by reflecting together on the causes of the wound that one can begin to create a healing

⁷⁴ Cf. JACQUES PASQUIER, “Healing Relationships” in *The Way* 16, n. 3 (1976) 208-15 (already cited in chapter 4).

relationship. And this is what listening is all about: to listen attentively so as to appreciate the pain expressed behind the words, the fears behind the belligerence, the insecurity behind the severity, the bitterness behind the distrust, the guilt behind the contempt. And to hear it all without judging, assessing and especially without trivialising it. We see this stance in Jesus in the gospel passage referred to above—he is the one who really listens. In fact, through the whole scene he refuses to say a word until the Pharisees press him, and he only speaks to the woman at the end.

Jesus listens patiently to the Pharisees, to their words of self-righteousness expressed in their condemnation of the woman, and to their words of anger expressed in the challenge they place before him. More importantly, he ‘listens’ to the silence of the woman—to her guilt, her fears, her need not only not to be rejected for what she has done, but also to be accepted for who she is, without being judged or condemned. And he listens to her need for forgiveness.⁷⁵ Givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ will need to listen in this way to survivors of forced displacement—patiently, compassionately, non-judgmentally—to what they say and do not say, to what they are able to express and to what prevents them from speaking up, if they are to establish a truly healing relationships with their exercitants.

1.2.3.3.2. The ministry of affirming

The words that Jesus does utter to the woman in the end, though expressed as a ‘negative’ statement, are in fact pronounced in affirmation: “Neither do I condemn you”:

He has heard her guilt and her fear, and his response affirms her inner power to accept herself as she is, to accept her own responsibility, her own choice, her own sinfulness. To affirm is to say “yes” to whom this person is: to recognise and affirm that there is in each person the power of self-reconciliation, of growth, of becoming whole again. True healing can only come from within the person, from his own resources.⁷⁶

One of the greatest acts of trust we can give to one another is to allow this inner power to operate freely, at its own rhythm, while at the same time to do all that is possible to nurture it, to form it, to assert it. Having lost their self-agency for so long (or rather, having had it taken away from them), many survivors of forced displacement find it very difficult to believe that this inner power resides in them, and if they do accept that it might be real, they find it also very difficult to access it. Even when the desire is there, in many cases to do so will require

⁷⁵ Cf. PASQUIER, “Healing Relationships”, p. 213.

⁷⁶ PASQUIER, “Healing Relationships”, p. 213.

extraordinary courage, because it will mean accepting all choices—both the good and the bad—and taking responsibility for them and for their outcomes. As agents of healing, givers of these *exercises* can assist their exercitants in this process of discovery or re-discovery of their inner power, of the resources they possess to effect healing in their own lives, and affirm them and nurture them. And do so in such a way as to respect the Ignatian maxim of allowing the Creator to communicate and deal directly with the devout soul (cf. [SpEx 15]). Only God can heal these spiritual wounds—givers of the *exercises* are not strictly healers, they are ‘agents of healing’—for this “power of self-reconciliation, of growth, of becoming whole again” that resides in each person, can only from God’s Spirit, who ‘embraces the devout soul in love’. Givers, then, are called to ‘affirm God’s affirmation’ of the exercitant, making sure that he or she does not miss such affirmation, through carefully and non-obstructively (as much as possible!) pointing out instances of it during the journey of the *exercises*.

1.2.3.3.3. The ministry of freeing

The third aspect of this healing ministry, which in fact is both its goal and efficacy, is freedom. To begin the long process of ‘becoming’ one has to be freed from one’s internal bonds. And it needs to be both the freedom *from* and also the freedom *for* that we have alluded to before. We see that when Jesus forgives and heals, he also sends on mission. His final words to the woman in John’s passage “Go your way, and from now on do not sin again” carry the same message and have the same effect as his “go in peace”, or “your faith has saved you” (cf. Jn 8:11; Lk 7:5): that it is through an experience of forgiveness (freedom *from*) that one can find the freedom *for* mission, and the courage to enter into the liberating experiences of life and death. So, these three essential elements for growth in freedom are interconnected: *forgiveness, acceptance of one’s own responsibility, and mission*.

As we have already noted, forgiveness in the context of one’s self-healing process requires an experience of self-acceptance, and this is only possible when a person knows she is accepted, not merely in spite of her weaknesses but because of them. Forgiveness is also possible when one has consented to become vulnerable and to accept God’s continuing self-revelation of love. Saying ‘yes’ to God thus begins with saying ‘yes’ to oneself, because “one accepts the reality of being loved, of being accepted without any strings attached to this love: ‘*no one has condemned you, neither do I condemn you*’, are words of forgiveness because they are words of acceptance. Again, the ultimate point of forgiveness is when we come to the point of

forgiving ourselves. To be forgiven by others is a first but a necessary step”.⁷⁷ Moreover, this freedom which comes from forgiveness also contributes to the acceptance of one’s own responsibility, of owning one’s choices—which in turn means being accountable for that freedom—and of being what one has been called to become. And finally, this freedom opens the way to accepting one’s mission. This aspect of being sent is essential to the Gospel, but the acceptance of being missioned requires that people recognise and accept their own giftedness and realise that their unique gifts are for the whole of creation.⁷⁸

And it is in this area of *acceptance* that the main function of givers of the *exercises* within this *freeing* ministry resides: first ‘embodying’ acceptance—through their words and actions—of their exercitants as they are (to contribute to their own process of self-acceptance), and then assisting survivors of forced displacement to recognise and accept their giftedness, and the opportunities available to them to put these gifts to use, as they accept their own call to mission.

From this perspective, then, the healing process is not only part of a growth process but is also a constitutive aspect of the Christian mission. Paradoxically, it requires of the agent of healing to enter into an experience of powerlessness and vulnerability as well. No one can heal another person, but through one’s own powerlessness one can help reveal to others their inner power for self-healing, their strength, their giftedness. The main things that the healing agent can do is to be present to the wounded—totally present in a listening, affirming, freeing way—and to enter into this healing relationship with a deep respect of their own freedom, responding to each person where he or she is, with care, accepting them in their own terms, and encouraging them to take their own life seriously and to trust their own vocation. This will require from the giver of the *exercises* to avoid constantly trying either to protect their exercitants or to push them, to lead them or to restrain them. Instead, they will need to allow them to be free, to be ‘separated’, from the healing agent so they can become what they are called to be.

⁷⁷ PASQUIER, “Healing Relationships”, p. 214.

⁷⁸ Cf. PASQUIER, “Healing Relationships”, p. 215.

Part II: The Content of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

The purpose of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, as mentioned earlier, is quite specific: to help survivors of forced displacement grow into greater intimacy with God so that they can have the life God desires for them—abundant life. To achieve this, the *exercises* invite exercitants to look at their life—past and present—so they can (1) give thanks for the many blessings received along the way and (2) explore those areas of their life that might be in need of healing and, once they have been identified, engage in their healing process with the Lord. Part of this healing comes from being able to reframe or re-write their life narrative in a way that gives greater meaning to the struggles and difficulties they have experienced in the past—particularly during their forced displacement journey—*seeing* God’s presence in and action through them.

Part of the healing also comes from identifying those internal strengths, qualities and resources that have helped them in the past, and that have become meaningful to them, and then placing them into a story-line that links them with their desires, intentions and purposes, their values and beliefs, their hopes and dreams, and the principles for living (way of being in life) and commitments (standing for something) that define how they would like to live their future life (‘intentional states’). The goal is to help them acquire greater *agency* in their lives—for each of them to develop what is known as an ‘intentional state of identity’, which basically means that they are freer and more capable of making decisions that are life-giving and meaningful for them. The more clearly people can articulate their principles of living and what it is they are standing for in life, the more likely it is they will know what future steps they can take in order to act in accordance with these commitments.

2.1. Criteria for Content

While all the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’” have been designed with forcibly displaced people in mind, and as a set or ‘journey’ of *exercises* they are intended to fulfil the purpose and objectives mentioned above, not all of them deal exclusively with forced displacement issues. The life of a survivor is more than his or her experiences of forced displacement and his or her spiritual experiences go beyond these as well. Thus, some *exercises* deal with common themes such as ‘the love of God in one’s life’, or ‘one’s desire to

fulfil God’s dream for us’ and would be applicable to anyone. As such, many of these exercises are not exactly ‘new’ and have been offered with similar content and/or form by others in the past; what is ‘new’ about them is that they are structured seeking to meet the needs of forcibly displaced people. In other words, what makes them *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement is the context from which they (and any other person) approaches them. They are, therefore, *different* exercises, in this particular spiritual journey, and this is a very important point to stress to future givers of these *exercises*: they should have the needs and circumstances of survivors of forced displacement always in mind, even if certain *exercises* appear to be ‘generic’.

As mentioned in chapter 3, since spiritual practices from other faith (non-Christian) traditions can help enter into the process of the *exercises* and enhance the understanding and living out of some key Ignatian components—such as discernment and detachment from inordinate affections—some of these practices have been included in these exercises. If applicable and expected to foster greater spiritual benefit, additional practices could be incorporated. Also, while these Ignatian *exercises* are mostly Christ-centred and Scripture-based (Judeo-Christian scriptures), they have been developed in such a way that many of them could be used for people of other non-Christian faiths with few modifications.

Five types of exercises make up the content of these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’: (1) *exercises* specific to survivors of forced displacement; (2) *exercises* that provide an initiation into and deepening of one’s experience of God (common to all exercitants); (3) *exercises* that help develop prayer and other ‘spiritual’ skills as well as the disposition and capacities of the potential *subiecto*; (4) *exercises* designed as markers or ‘rest stops’ to take stock of one’s spiritual journey, and (5) *exercises* to act as constitutive elements or blocks to help ‘build’ the new, more positive, life-giving narrative of each exercitant. Some *exercises* will fulfil more than one of these functions.

The different types of *exercises* ‘weave’ into each other throughout the process, with the priority being placed on the *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement, while the others provide foundational support to enable exercitants to derive the greatest possible benefit from these. They do so by developing specific capacities and skills and by helping guide the process and dynamics of their spiritual journey—and the re-authoring of their life

narratives—as they engage with the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. The different types *exercises* are also grouped by themes and this will be shown in the prayer sheets, through the use of a common image on the cover of the *exercises* that make up that theme. A short explanation of the defining criteria for each of these types of *exercises* follows.

2.2. Exercises for survivors of forced displacement

These spiritual exercises have been developed based on the ‘raw data’ obtained from the four previous chapters to specifically address the needs and circumstances of survivors of forced displacement identified in those chapters.⁷⁹ They are the ‘core’, so to speak, of this journey of faith to which survivors of forced displacement are being invited. Clearly, people with similar experiences (even if non-displacement related) would benefit from these *exercises* as well. In Table 5.10 (found in Section 2.6 below), which charts the complete sequence of the whole of our *exercises*, a (FD) indicates this first type of *exercises*.

Below is a summary of the main themes linked to survivors of forced displacement that have been identified in the previous four chapters and which we seek to address in these exercises.

⁷⁹ An excerpt of the first table in Appendix I is shown below. Similar tables for each chapter and section have been developed and have provided the ‘raw data’ for the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.

Chapter 1 – Part I/Section 1: <i>In search of a theology of displacement and migration</i>			
Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc., scriptural texts, Church documents</i>
Reading the ‘signs of the times’; factors producing forced displacement	Forcibly displaced people (fdp) embody the joys and hopes, grief, anguish of our times	<i>Exercises</i> to help fdp understand that their suffering is historically linked	<i>Ecclesial</i> : GS; <i>SpEx</i> : First Week exercises and structural sin as caused of suffering
Displacement as a fifth mark of the Church	We need fdp in order to become the Church we are meant to be	“I am an essential part of the Church”	<i>SpEx</i> : ‘Rules for Thinking and Feeling with the Church’
Derogatory language and labels	To be known as a ‘label’ or a ‘number’ is dehumanising	“My name is...” “You are wonderfully made”	<i>Scripture</i> : ‘God knows me by name, as I am’ (Ps 139)
Forcibly displaced as the ‘crucified people’ of our day	Identify specific crosses fdp have carried in their displacement experience and beyond	Opportunity to place these crosses at the foot of Jesus’ cross	[<i>SpEx</i> 43]

As mentioned earlier, some of the themes in themselves could apply to other audiences as well—their particularity here is seeing them through the lens of forced displacement.

Table 5.4. Criteria and themes for developing exercises for survivors of forced displacement

Themes	Particular topics for possible exercises
Suffering	The suffering of FDP is linked to structural sin: the signs of the times and the causes/consequences of forced displacement (1,1,1) ⁸⁰ ; the specific crosses they have had to carry (1,1,1); mandatory detention (1,1,1); <i>SpEx</i> help us obtain vision/knowledge of sin (2,1,1); how SFD from different cultures view suffering in terms of religious beliefs (4,4)
Needs of SFD	to feel their voices are heard (1,1,1), be listened to (1,2); to be known as individuals and not as labels (1,1,1); to share their stories (4,3) and have them recorded (1,1,1); be able to live in-between two worlds ; to belong and feel at home (1,1,2); need to celebrate inclusive liturgies (1,1,1; 1,1,2); move beyond the victim label (1,2); when will the suffering stop? (1,2); maintaining the role religion/prayer had during displacement experience (4,4); being able to hold rituals (funerals, memorial services, for the sick) in their own place of worship (4,4); expectation to remain connected to countries of origin and provide assistance to those left behind (4,4); have local chaplain and religious leaders (4,4)
Healing	Finding meaning in life (writing my <i>P&F</i>); feeling at home and having sense of belonging; how my life enriches others’ lives (4,3); finding healing after trauma, violence and sense of helplessness, isolation, humiliation and degradation caused by torture (4,2); healing lost sense of trust and betrayal (4,2); healing loss of meaning and sense of future of human existence (4,2); healing different types of guilt (survival as well) and shame (4,2); healing feelings of rejection, abandonment, not being loved (4,2); that SFD are not good enough in eyes of others (4,2); past wounds and hurts affect people’s perceptions of God (4,2); to accept God’s acceptance demands courage (5,1); accept God’s forgiveness and unconditional love with gratitude (5,1); learning to believe in others (presupposition) (5,1); accept the truth of who I am (Examen) (5,1); what practical exercises can contribute towards healing —e.g. leaving in the present (4,2); healing one’s disordered attachments (5,1); healing false images of God (5,1); sense of worthlessness (5,1); healing one’s anger (5,1); remember so as to be healed (in forgiving we don’t forget but remember in a different way to overcome anger and resentment); healing of memories to integrate them into a constructive narrative (4,3); healing begins with victim/survivor even if wrongdoer refuses to change (4,3); requires creating a new narrative of traumatic event (4,3); healing process is never complete (4,3); healing leads to freedom and openness to embrace one’s mission , become a ‘promoter of God’s reign’ (4,4)
	Opportunities to experience mourning and closure of all that has been lost (4,3);

⁸⁰ The three numbers represent the number of the chapter, the number of the Part of the given chapter, and the number of the section of the given Part, respectively, where each theme has been identified. When several triads of numbers are given, this means that a similar theme was identified in several chapters/parts/sections of the thesis; when two numbers are given, they represent the chapter and Part of the chapter, respectively.

Moving forward	<i>maintaining</i> hope and faith in resettlement (4,3); need to <i>keep finding God</i> (sometimes in unexpected places) (4,3); presence of others sustain one’s hope (4,3); <i>remembering truthfully</i> (why, what, how and how long) (4,3); <i>remember so as to learn</i> and not repeat same mistakes (4,3); <i>forgiveness</i> as the <i>removal</i> of the <i>effects of the past</i> on the present (4,3); <i>dealing with guilt</i> in a way that the past does not have a hold on me (4,3); <i>repentance</i> and its <i>benefits</i> (4,3); <i>forgiveness</i> not only ‘absolution of guilt’ but focus on <i>reconciliation of brokenness</i>, restoration of community with God/others (4,3); <i>reconciliation</i> requires <i>justice</i> and <i>grace</i>, people who <i>embody forgiveness</i>, repentance and <i>openness</i> to the other and remembering that God is the agent of greatest reconciliation (4,3); <i>justice</i> even if partial as <i>condition</i> for <i>reconciliation</i> (4,3); actions toward <i>justice require</i>: acknowledgement of wrongdoing by perpetrator or innocence of victim, overcoming asymmetries and regaining agency by displaced person (4,3); <i>breaking the silence</i> to give SFD agency and voice (4,3); movement from being a victim to becoming a survivor (4,3)
SFD Women’s issues	Strength/resilience (1,1,1); a survivor not a victim (4,3); need to be <i>encouraged</i>, affirmed, valued (2,1,1); encourage women’s <i>narrative</i> style, love language for God (2,1,1); value of <i>maternity</i> (2,1,1); God in the <i>history</i> of their struggles (2,1,1); issues relevant to women (staying at home, keeping family together, keep things private) (4,3)
Values to live by	Resilience (1,1,2); solidarity (1,1,2), in friendship, tenderness and lovingness (2,1,2), and answering ‘who is my neighbour’ (2,1,2); hospitality (1,1,2; 1,2; 2,1,2); <i>humility</i> and <i>vulnerability</i> as Jesus’ values (1,2); <i>gratitude</i> (1,2); <i>Advent</i> people in <i>waiting</i> (1,2); <i>overcoming disordered</i> attachments to assimilate Christ’s values (2,1,1); doing what we do for God’s <i>greater glory</i> (2,1,1); people of <i>discernment</i> in <i>freedom</i> (2,1,1); people of <i>service</i> done in <i>friendship</i> and <i>collaboration</i> (2,1,1); <i>freedom from fear</i> that paralyses us from labouring for the kingdom (2,1,1); being a <i>consoling</i> presence in the world (2,1,1); <i>respect</i> and <i>advocate</i> for the <i>rights</i> of all including of SFD (2,1,2); search for <i>universal common good</i> (2,1,2); being <i>companions</i>, presence (2,1,2); developing a comprehensive way of Catholic life (3,1); <i>growing in holiness</i> as singleness of purpose, integrity (3,2); <i>shift</i> from living for world to wanting to live/die in Christ (3,2); rightful <i>understanding of freedom</i>—not arbitrariness to do everything but autonomous capacity to do what is good (3,2)
Criteria to engage in SpEx	Preparing SFD best to engage in <i>exercises</i> (3,2), in terms of personal <i>commitment</i> (3,2); readiness for what type of <i>exercises</i> (3,2); a person’s <i>prior faith history</i> provides ‘interior context’ for making <i>ex</i> (3,2); how people <i>experience sin</i> in their lives (3,2); what do I desire? (3,2); integral spirituality (affections, will, intellect) (3,2); <i>time</i> and <i>resources</i> (3,2) The <i>subiecto</i>: engaging <i>exercises</i> with <i>freedom, diligence</i> and <i>responsibility</i>; <i>attitudes, dispositions, capacities</i> and <i>abilities</i> a person brings to the <i>exercises</i>; <i>assessing</i> a person’s <i>subiecto</i> to determine what <i>kind</i> of <i>exercises</i>; how to develop its <i>potentiality</i> (greater awareness, freedom from what holds one captive); being disposed to find God’s will/dream for me; the <i>guiding principle</i> in my life (P&F); capacity to <i>surrender</i> oneself to God and for self-surrender and giving <i>for others</i>; capacity to <i>accept</i> oneself, <i>make decisions</i> and take responsibility for them; <i>shift</i> from self-analysis to self-perception; assessing the <i>cognitive, affective</i> and <i>relational aptitudes</i> of the subject (all 4,1)
	Being in touch with reality: not how I’d like things to be, but <i>how they are</i>

Everyday faith	(2,1,1); seeing reality, God/humanity in different way through <i>SpEx</i> (3,2); to be confronted with <i>another's</i> understanding of postmodern <i>reality</i> (3,2); internal faith should be expression of what is real: understanding <i>revelation</i> in one's life and one's community (3,2) Hope: <i>crisis</i> of hope (1,2); hoping <i>against</i> all hope (1,2); <i>shared responsibility</i> to hope (1,2); the <i>who, why, what</i> and <i>how</i> of our hope as Christians (1,2); in the <i>Scriptures</i> (1,2); <i>active, liberating</i> hope (1,2); different from <i>optimism</i> (1,2); <i>losing hope</i> in country of resettlement (4,4) Awareness of interior movements: what happens in me? (3,1); developing <i>greater personal awareness</i> by clarifying one's relationships with others/events (<i>Progoff</i>), articulating what one's body knows and feels (<i>Focusing</i>), and living in the moment (<i>Gestalt</i>) (4,2) Prayer: most relevant <i>types</i> for SFD (1,2); best way for me? (3,1, 3,2); <i>imaginative contemplation</i> (3,2) Spiritual conversation: <i>easiness</i> in <i>speaking</i> and <i>sharing</i> about things of God (3,1); <i>interacting</i> with reverence, respect and humility before another (3,2)
Belief and spirituality	God: <i>images</i> of God and as a fellow companion in displacement; God's <i>love</i> (1,1,2; 3,1); the <i>Trinity</i>; <i>always present</i> despite difficulties (1,2); healing <i>false images</i> of God (4,2); Jesus: as companion in displacement, margin-dweller, welcoming of all (1,1,2); The reign of God: <i>image</i> of the kingdom and one's role to help draw it nearer (1,1,2); seeing the reign as <i>potential</i> everywhere (2,1,1); The Spirit: <i>in</i> SFD (1,2)
Narrative	Stories in the memory of the Church (<i>salvation history</i>) and SFD's stories as part of that narrative (1,2; 4,3); we are in the <i>process of becoming</i> (1,2); exploring the <i>polarities</i> in our lives (1,2); sharing of one another's stories as way to <i>organise sense of past</i> and understand our <i>future potentiality</i> (2,1,2)
The Church	Survivors of forced displacement (SFD) as an <i>essential part</i> of the Church: what they can <i>contribute</i> to the local and universal Church (1,1,1; 1,1,2), as <i>instruments</i> of God's <i>saving power</i> (1,1,2), and 'measuring rods' of <i>eschatological</i> fulfilment (1,1,2), and <i>bearers</i> of <i>hope</i> (1,2), and what they as '<i>miserable and blessed poor</i>' offer us (2,1,1); called to <i>evangelise</i> (1,1,2), as <i>prophetic voice</i> on the place of refugees in society (4,4); primacy of personal <i>interiority/conscience</i> in contrast to centralised Church (3,2); <i>balance</i> between engagement in mainstream parish and their own (4,4)
Receiving communities	To be <i>welcoming</i> (1,1,1); address <i>biases</i>/prejudices/suspicion and stereotypes (1,1,1; 1,1,2); <i>recognising asymmetries</i>—SFD are not second-class citizens (1,1,1); changing <i>public perception</i> of SFD (1,1,2); allowing them to <i>share their gifts</i> (1,1,2); ongoing <i>pastoral care</i> and how best minister to SFD (1,1,2); mutuality in <i>sharing the work</i> of the gospel (1,2); <i>common identity</i> as people of God (1,2); creating <i>discerning communities</i> (2,1,1); <i>context</i> of receiving community—racism, xenophobia, secularism? (4,4); Australia as receiving community—freedom to practice one's faith, what does that mean? (3,1)
Social	Being agents of <i>peace</i> and <i>reconciliation</i> (2,1,1); a <i>faith</i> that promotes <i>justice</i>

dimension within faith	(2,1,1); moving from victims to survivors (1,2); building bridges of understanding and dialogue (2,1,1); the Church as bearer and proclaimer of justice; different types of justice (legal, rectifying, distributive, restorative) (2,1,2); transforming sinful structures around us by greater awareness of inter-dependence (3,2); CST : what it says about how to support SFD (1,1,2)
Inculturation	How do SFD express their ‘brand’ of gospel and foster this as a good thing (2,1,1); goal of <i>SpEx</i> — create language to speak with God (3,2); calls for awareness of people’s different presuppositions /frames of reference (3,2); expressing world’s values and paradigms prominent in today’s discourse (rights, individuality) (3,2); how <i>SpEx</i> might contribute to counter these which are negative (3,2); use of terminology in <i>SpEx</i> (3,2); use of shared languages /experiences others can understand (3,2); take into account individual groups’ traditional beliefs and practices for understanding of spiritual world, importance of family and community relations (4,4)
Gift of God’s creation	Finding God in creation (2,1,1); safeguarding our common home (2,1,1); experiencing an ecological conversion of heart (2,1,1); spending time back in nature (many SFD come from countries/cultures with deep connection with land) (2,1,1)

2.3. Exercises to provide an initiation into and deepening of one’s experience of God

These *exercises* are the ‘usual’ *light exercises*, common to all exercitants and identified to help grow in devotion, provide an initiation into the experience of God, offer catechetical formation, and deepen one’s personal relationship with Lord. In Table 5.10, an (ID) reference (for ‘initiation’ and ‘deepening’) indicates this particular type of *exercises*.

Table 5.5. Criteria and themes for developing exercises for initiation and deepening one’s experience of God

Themes and possible exercises	
C A T H O L I C	The faith we share Possible exercises: the love of the Trinity and being created in love; Jesus the Son of God; praying with the Ten Commandments and the Capital Sins; an ex-refugee’s <i>Creed</i>: survivors of forced displacement’s profession of faith.
	Developing a comprehensive way of Catholic life Possible exercises: God’s creation and plan for humanity; sin in us and in the world: “<i>What went wrong?</i>”; God’s plan of salvation: Jesus as the gift of love from the Trinity; being a Christian in the world in the model of Christ; “We are the Church” in service for the world.
	The ‘heavenly host’ Possible exercises: Mary’s ‘yes’ as a model to ‘our yes’; Mary’s <i>Magnificat</i>: a source of hope for the forcibly displaced; the community of saints continues to pray and intercede for us; growing in holiness.

A L	Following Christ Possible exercises: act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God; discipleship: a call to follow Christ today as beings in displacement on our way back to God.
I N I T I A T I O N	Learning to grow in awareness of God’s presence in one’s life Possible exercises: God is with us at all times; Where did God go? ‘Thinking God’ as part of our daily routine in life; introduction to one’s images of God, particularly those that might appeal to SFD.
	Being part of God’s creation Possible exercises: God has created everything for us; God has created us in love; “God is not done with me yet”: God continues to create us throughout our life journey.
	Known and loved by God Possible exercises: God knows us by name; God’s love came first; love is the essence of our existence; God’s desire for us is that we have life and have it in abundance; identifying God’s love for me in the people who have been foundational in my life.
	One’s deepest desires Possible exercises: God is the source of our desires; learning to centre our desires in God; what we are thirsty for: nothing can quench our inner most desires except for God; God’s dream for me and my own.
	We have been gifted Possible exercises: God gives us new life; gifts and qualities God has given each person; recognising the gifts of others in our lives.
	- Trusting the Lord Possible exercises: God invites us to let go of our fears; “Come to me those who are tired and weary”; the Lord is my strength; Jesus gives me strength; God has been my strength through my experience of displacement. - Learning to be like Christ Possible exercises: seeing like Jesus saw; listening to and putting into practice what Jesus says; embracing Jesus’ motivation; the compassion of Jesus; “I give you thanks Father”...; learning to be grateful as Jesus was.
D E E P E N I N G	God’s love frees Possible exercises: accepting the truth of who I am; ordering oneself: surrendering everything to Jesus.
	Principle and Foundation of our lives Possible exercises: God being passionate about the things of God; God is the foundation of our lives; the Beatitudes are the foundation of the kingdom.
	Learning to act like Christ Possible exercises: How do I love? “Love one another”; being in constant communication with the Father; Jesus teaches us what the kingdom of God is like (parables); Jesus the healer wants to heal us; do not judge; Jesus’ way leads us to conversion; being helpful as Jesus was; humility and vulnerability as Jesus’ values; Jesus’ example of freedom: not arbitrariness but autonomous capacity to do what is good;

D E E P E N I N G	Loving those we find difficult to love Possible exercises: Do as you would like others to do unto you; loving our ‘enemies’; loving those who have hurt us, abused us and mistreated us.
	Getting in the way of God’s dream for humanity Possible exercises: sin and evil as realities in our world; individual and communal part in sin; “Do not fall into temptation”; saying ‘no’ to the God of life by hurting others; one’s one story of sin and grace; a colloquy with Jesus on the cross; sin is a barrier to mission; God’s respond to our sin is mercy and gratitude.
	Suffering and Jesus’ way of dealing with it Possible exercises: becoming attentive to one’s pain; the parable of the vineyard and the killers; God does not respond in violence; Jesus deals with suffering showing forgiveness, hospitality, service and no judgement; Jesus on the cross: self-giving, transparency, obedience, trust and saying good-bye.
	Finding ways to heal through forgiveness Possible exercises: people in the scriptures who lived with a forgiving heart; learning to forgive; extending one’s arms so as to embrace.
	Principles for living as people of the resurrection Possible exercises: believing in the resurrection and the signs of the kingdom; the grace to be joyful and be messengers of hope; rising with the Lord; receiving God’s Spirit; living in gratitude for the daily gifts we receive; living in the present with awareness and joy.
	A woman’s life Possible exercises: learning to be ‘like’ Mary; the qualities of Mary as a woman and mother; Mary sings to the God of life; Mary and Jesus’ Passion—the suffering of a mother; the gift of maternity; uplifting women of faith in the Scriptures.
	Love of God’s creation Possible exercises: finding God in creation; safeguarding our common home; experiencing an ecological conversion of heart; a “walk in the wilderness”.
	Being called to mission Possible exercises: Jesus calls me to take up the mission he has entrusted me; “What are you sending me to, Lord?”; what I can offer to others even when I don’t have much to give; mission as encounter: in love, solidarity, gratuity, fidelity and consolation; doing what we do for God’s greater glory; our mission within the Church; living the Eucharist differently.

2.4. Exercises to help develop ‘spiritual’ skills and the exercitant’s potential *subiecto*

Besides seeking to develop a person’s *subiecto* (attitudes, dispositions and capacities), these *exercises* are intended to also develop exercitants’ ‘spiritual’ skills to better engage in this spiritual journey. As such, they are mostly *exercises* about learning different types of prayer and prayer ‘techniques’; about growing in awareness of self and one’s reality (for example, through mindfulness and the use of some of the therapeutic practices discussed in chapter 4);

and about increasing one’s competence for making decisions and growing in one’s capacity for discernment. In Table 5.10, a (DS) reference (for ‘developing skills’) indicates this type of *exercises*.

Table 5.6. Criteria and themes for *exercises* to develop an exercitant’s spiritual skills

Themes	Possible exercises
Prayer	• Silence: entering into silence through recollection; keeping the silence in everyday life; attitudes of the one who meets the Lord. • Imaginative contemplation: the power of fantasy and imagination; recalling moments of feeling deeply loved and being deeply joyful; introducing Ignatian contemplation and imaginatively with Scriptures. • Examen: introducing the <i>Examen</i> and different types of Examen for the circumstances of survivors of forced displacement. • Prayer of review and repetition: learning to dwell on that which has brought about greatest fruit; how to review one’s prayer. • Three methods of prayer: praying with the Ten Commandments and Capital sins; contemplating the meaning of each word of a prayer; praying according to rhythmic measures.
Awareness	• Mindfulness: learning to grow in awareness of oneself; living in the present. • Meditation: four pebbles: open crater (origin); river flowing (change); anthill (relationship); campfire (home); praying with the five senses. • Awareness of one’s reality: exercises based on Proffoff, Gestalt and focusing therapeutic techniques. • Growing in awareness of one’s desires: what drives us and guides us; what gives us energy.
Decision Making	• Values and motivation: wanting to fulfil God’s dream for us; how do I know what God desires of me, from me? The end for which we have been created. • Ignatius’ suggestions: the first and second methods of making a good and sound election.
Discerning	• In life: how to be a discerning person—understanding the ‘forces’ within us; becoming aware of our options and the consequences of our choices. • Discernment of spirits: understanding the movements of one’s heart; the consolations and desolations in one’s life; introduction to some of Ignatius’ rules.
Spiritual Conversation	• Listening: to others; to God in my life; listening with respect, attentively and with interest. • Speaking: easiness in speaking/sharing about the things of God; what contributes to the benefit of the other. • Attitudes: interacting with others in reverence, respect and humility; sympathy and empathy; upholding the presupposition of the other; holding the person in great affection.

Table 5.7. Criteria and themes for *exercises* to develop an exercitant’s potential *subiecto* in terms of his/her attitudes, dispositions and capacities

General	
A	• Desire to engage in the Exercises and to make them with a certain degree of freedom, diligence and responsibility (do what is asked), showing faithfulness towards the process
T	• Sense of joy in having the opportunity to make the Exercises
T	• Desire to make as much progress as possible (cf. [SpEx 20])
I	• Magnanimity and openness to cooperate in the process
T	• Enter into the Exercises with a great spirit of generosity towards God (cf. [SpEx 5])
U	• Willingness to offer all of one’s desires and surrender one’s freedom to God
D	• Adequate motivation (to supply the ‘stamina’ needed to run the physical, emotional and psychological distance): the giver of the Exercises will want to examine the origin, degree, type and authenticity of motivation
E	• Attitude of trust: <i>in</i> God; <i>in</i> the giver, and <i>in</i> the method (cf. [SpEx 11]).
S	Possible issues for survivors of forced displacement: curtailment of ‘freedom’; being able to justify taking time to make the Exercises among other pressing needs; appropriate motivation; lack of trust, particularly of spiritual companion. Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: what it means to be ‘free’; how to determine what is ‘really’ important; identifying one’s motivation; the ‘gift’ of trust.
Disposition as preparation	
D	• Seek to develop aptitudes and capacities required to undertake better and more profitably the Exercises
I	• Dispose oneself to rid one’s soul of all its disordered affections (cf. [SpEx 1])
S	• Prepare and dispose oneself “for the consolation which will come” [SpEx 7]
P	• Ready oneself to receive graces and gifts from the divine and supreme goodness (cf. [SpEx 20.10, 44.8] to achieve the Exercises’ goal of seeking and finding God’s will
O	• These graces will then <i>dispose</i> or prepare the devout souls for the way in which they will best serve God in the future (if this readiness and preparation is not present, and therefore great fruit or benefit is not expected, it is advised not to give Exercises to such persons, though other spiritual helps might be offered to them).
S	Possible issues for survivors of forced displacement: lack of awareness of one’s aptitudes and capacities; difficulty in identifying one’s ‘disordered affections’; difficulty in identifying graces received because of painful experiences. Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: numbering the gifts and talents I possess; identifying what separates me from God; recognising ‘graces’ in my life.
Disposition in making an election	
S	• “Think about how we ought to dispose ourselves in order to come to perfection in whatsoever state or way of life God our Lord may grant us to elect” [SpEx 135.6]
I	• Desire to enter into this chosen path as result of the Exercises, trusting that this is where God is calling;
	• Readiness to discern and make choices that will help in achieving this goal.

T I O N S	Possible issues for survivors of forced displacement: difficulties in recognising options and in making choices; lack of experience in discernment. Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: to decide well based on (i) my desires, (ii) my possibilities; discerning in love and truth.
	Disposition as surrendering or self-giving to God and others • “Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty my memory, my understanding, and all my will—al that I have and possess...” [<i>Suscipe, SpEx</i> 234.4-5].
	Possible Issues for survivors of forced displacement: might not have the capacity to make a decision for ‘surrendering’ (their agency taken from them long ago); not have a ‘self’ to surrender—their sense of identity and self-understanding having been ‘erased’; desire to dispose oneself might be there but also inability to do so; Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: re(dis)covering my agency; developing my sense of identity; learning to ‘dispose’ myself and of myself.
C A P A C I T I E S	General • Major considerations: Is the exercitant in good health? What about emotional balance? How intellectually and psychologically flexible can he/she be to accept being touched and changed profoundly by God’s word?
	• In general terms: (1) to be able to accept oneself; (2) to make decisions; (3) take responsibility for those decisions • Ability to personalise one’s own faith in such a way as to be able to respond with freedom and commitment to God’s call • In terms of <i>dynamics</i> of <i>Exercises</i>: be able to deal with the anguish and affliction caused by introspection and realisation of one’s sinfulness and imperfection; accept oneself as redeemed sinner loved by God (First Week); be affected by Jesus to desire to follow him and choose a path to do so as disciple (Week 2), and accept consequences of that decision with its challenges/hardships (Week 3) and benefits and joys (Week 4) • Human abilities for full Spiritual Exercises acquired in different stages of development: be able to work in and with their interiority and notice and name one’s inner movements, so as to also engage in discernment of spirits (in terms of <i>discernment</i>); able to deal directly with God, regardless of direction of accompanier (in terms of <i>deepening</i> relationship with God); able to envision long-term goals (in terms of <i>election</i>) and use resources to attain them. Possible issues for survivors of forced displacement: emotional imbalance (determine to what degree and whether counselling might be needed); limited ability to allow God to ‘get near’; lack of self-acceptance; inability to assume responsibility because of misunderstanding of what this means; moving beyond a ‘communal faith’ to a personalised faith, in particular when member of communal societies; not able to accept oneself as being loved by God; wanting to follow Jesus but unsure about how; difficulty in noticing one’s interior movements; self-autonomy in dealing with God; lack of ability to look into the future and long-term goals because such option has not been readily available. Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: the Lord wants to know me and be known by me; God accepts me and invites me to do the same; accepting the consequences of my

C A P A C I T I E S	actions; God loves me and delights in me; the Lord calls each to follow him according to one’s talents and desires; understanding my affective life; speaking with Jesus as with a friend (self-autonomy); there is the possibility of a future for me.
	Cognitive Area
	• Language comprehension: learn and understand the language of Exercises, not only words/language structure but also metalanguage that underpins it: certain degree of literacy required, but more a capacity to relate to the language and make it one’s own • Self-analysis and perception: required for the Examen; without capacity for self-analysis very difficult to progress into the self-perception required for the Second Week; the other side is exercitants too overly immersed in themselves; because of their inability to come out of their self-analysis they cannot place themselves before God in a listening and discerning attitude • Capacity for moral action: inborn knowledge (capacity for discernment) of primary principles of moral action to do good and avoid evil in the fulfilment of one’s longings/desires; can get blurred! • Potential for development: evidence that capacities can be developed: to know and accept one’s limitations; awareness of one’s concrete reality; certain intellectual basis. Possible issues for survivors of forced displacement: learning the ‘language’ of the Exercises; come to understand who they really are; difficulties in ‘listening’ to the Lord and others; blurring of one’s capacity for moral action because of past extreme experiences; inability to recognise one’s limitations and possibilities; being out of touch with reality. Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: ‘glossary’ and ‘grammar’ of the Exercises; identifying what moves me, what drives me, what gives me life, what takes it away; becoming a better listener; good or evil; living in a fantasy world?
	Affective Area
	• Essential: absence of emotional traumas or violent emotions that might distort one’s affective life (e.g. jealousy or feelings of revenge) • Altruism vs narcissism: capacity to come out of oneself to find personal fulfilment in a process of self-giving and service to another; it’s a natural capacity but can be developed (without it we cannot confess Jesus as Lord and cannot move forward to a proper election); opposite is egocentric person, narcissistic, overly preoccupied with one’s perfection • Imagination: capacity to engage in imaginative ‘fantasy’ and utopic ‘dreaming’ which raises in us intuition of what is to come, helping us to choose or make an election; not an end in itself, but helps us enter into the mystery to be contemplated (someone who did not have any imagination would lack the <i>subiecto</i> to engage in the Exercises) • Investment capacity: to labour for what we have chosen in order to give an expression of our service to others; also capacity to establish relationships and allow ourselves to be affected by them • Also, in general, in this affective area, exercitants should also have the capacity to deal with silence; to engage with solitude in an intimate way; to face anguish and accept the help of others in these cases; to overcome a sense of guilt or rather to redefine it so that it does not become the guiding principle in their lives, and the capacity to fall in love and feel great enthusiasm for something or someone. Possible issues for survivors of forced displacement: psychological trauma related issues; inability to give of oneself because of feeling there is no more to give; narcissism

C A P A C I T Y E S	exacerbated by victimisation complex; capacity of imagination but with tendency to the unreal; difficulty in re-establishing or being open to new relationships because of having lost most of the people close to them; lack belief that they can be of service to others, having too often heard that they are ‘useless’ or a ‘burden to society’ and have interiorised this message; idea of investing themselves in any project might feel unrealistic.
	Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: my sacrifices do make a difference; the Lord is my strength; no longer a victim; entering into a ‘scene’/composition of place; the need to relate as human beings; assessing my service ‘potential’; what is my life project?
	Relational Area
C A P A C I T Y E S	• Ecclesial sense: communal sense of faith where one feels free to engage in mutual service and fraternal correction; warning against lonely individuals, isolated and self-contained, strange (not suitable for Exercises); causes of isolation might be dealt with (e.g. lack of trust); also ideas of community differ • Dialogue: capacity for interpersonal encounter that measures the exercitant’s sensitivity to the reality of others; also needed for a personal encounter with God through prayer • Authority figures: capacity to relate in mature and adult way with authority, avoiding dependencies, aggressions, authority complex.
	Possible issues for survivors of forced displacement: feelings of distrust might have led to isolation; difficulty in finding one’s place in one’s community; feeling unwelcomed or not accepted; who would want to establish a dialogue with me; who would be interested in talking to me; issues with authority figures because of having suffered persecution under despotic authority figures; excessive dependency on others, particularly those in authority.
	Possible exercises to further develop ‘subiecto’: to learn to trust again; how do I fit in this group we call ‘community’; am I really welcomed and accepted for who I am; engaging in life-giving conversations; identity-autonomy-respect in relationships with authority.

2.5. Exercises designed as markers or ‘rest stops’ to take stock of one’s spiritual journey

These *exercises* will be used to invite exercitants to ‘stop and take stock’ of their experiences up to a specific point in their journey of making the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. The purpose is not to ‘assess’ or ‘evaluate’ how they are doing in the process—every person follows his or her own journey, at his or her own rhythm. Instead, these *exercises* are intended as ‘markers’ to help them develop a framework for their ‘reframed’ or reconstructed story, partly by reflecting on some of the major themes they have been praying on. Through these *exercises*, some of these major themes will also be introduced. Exercitants will also be invited at these ‘stops’ to reflect on whether they would like to return to previous *exercises* to obtain additional profit from them and to engage in specific rituals that will help deepen their healing experiences on this spiritual journey. In terms of the givers, these ‘stops’ will provide a more ‘formal’ opportunity to verify the ‘fruits’ obtained

by their exercitants so far, in determining whether and how to move forward with the exercises. In Table 5.10, a (RS) reference (for ‘rest stops’) indicates this type of exercises.

Table 5.8. Criteria and themes for developing exercises to provide opportunities for review, taking stock and ‘rest-stopping’

Themes	Possible exercises
On the Journey	• Starting point: Setting out on this journey of faith • God in my life: events that have marked my life; reviewing my life in the sight of God • First ‘rest stop’: begin to re-write one’s preferred narrative: where am I in this journey so far? What is new or has changed since starting on this journey? Where is God with me? My ‘new story’ so far • Second ‘rest stop’: assessing my intentions and purposes in the light of God’s love; my ‘new story’ so far • Third ‘rest stop’: assessing my values and beliefs in the light of Jesus’ way of being and acting; my ‘new story’ so far • Fourth ‘rest stop’: assessing my hopes and dreams as I face the reality of sin in the world, mine and other’s suffering, Jesus’ way of dealing with suffering and his healing action; my ‘new story’ so far • Fifth ‘rest stop’: assessing the healing action of Jesus and God in my life; my ‘new story’ so far • Sixth ‘rest stop’: assessing my experiences of discernment • Seventh ‘rest stop’: assessing my principles for living in the light of Jesus’ principles, living with awareness my present reality, as a person of prayer, of justice, and of hope; my ‘new story’ so far • Eighth ‘rest stop’: assessing my commitments in the light of the mission Jesus calls me to take up and my service to the church and to the world; my ‘new story’ so far; • At the end—ninth ‘rest stop’: my story at the end of this journey of faith; my life project and reform of life.
Introducing Major themes	• Use of imagination • Awareness • God’s love • Gratitude • Forgiveness • Overcoming one’s disorder affections through God’s love • Putting into practice Jesus’ way • In the way of God’s dream: sin and evil in the world • Suffering • Healing • Being and living as people of the Resurrection • The social dimension • Hope • The Church and our Communal Sense • Living with and in receiving communities • Mission

Healing Rituals	• Remembering those who have gone: memorial services, • Accepting the ‘dark areas’ of my life: reconciliation services • For strength and ‘cleansing’: anointing, other rituals for the sick • Mourning: writing a letter to those who have been lost; planning a tree • Celebration: the day I gave a party; celebrating one’s new life narrative.

2.6. Exercises to act as constitutive elements or blocks to help ‘build’ the new, more positive, life-giving narrative of each exercitant

These are *exercises* that deal with narrative, story-telling, and what is needed to identify and develop the new preferred story line being created along the journey of the *exercises*, using the aforementioned intentions/purposes, values/beliefs, hopes/dreams and desires, principles for living, and commitments people stand for. In other words, narrative as the way people organise their sense of the past, deal with their present reality and understand their future potentiality. As we have seen, four elements are required to develop a person’s story-line: (1) events, (2) in a sequence, (3) across time, (4) organised according to a plot or theme, that eventually leads to a conclusion about oneself. Also included here are *exercises* that highlight how the specific narrative of survivors of forced displacement is part of the larger narrative of salvation history (narrative theology). In Table 5.10, a NT (‘narrative’) reference indicates this type of *exercises*.

Table 5.9. Criteria and themes for developing *exercises* to contribute to re-authoring a new, alternative and preferred narrative

Element	Themes and possible exercises
Story telling devices	• Use of imagination; incorporate one’s personal experiences Possible exercises: imagine you were to meet God; 5 events that marked your life.
	• Develop characters, story-line or plot, various possible outcomes Possible exercises: 3 <i>exercises</i> to get you started; a walk with Jesus the toddler
	• Choose a theme (e.g. created for a purpose, change vs tradition, circle of life) and style Possible exercises: young Jesus and the woman who misplaced the coin; a day in the life of young Mary and her parents.
	Developing a new preferred story line
	• Intentions/purposes Possible exercises: the end for which I’ve been created; rewriting one’s <i>Principle and Foundation</i>; seeing with ‘new eyes’ (my reality, relationships,

Internal states of identity	situation).
	• Values/beliefs Possible exercises: what I have learned in life; my ‘non-negotiables’.
	• Hopes/dreams Possible exercises: “I have a dream”; my deepest desires.
	• Principles for living Possible exercises: my present reality; one day at a time; what I am grateful for.
	• Commitments that shape actions Possible exercises: at the end of my life they will remember; this is what I promise you.
Narrative Therapy Elements	• <i>The person is not the problem</i> Possible exercises: getting to know the ‘enemy’; I am more than <i>it</i> says
	• Externalising conversations (through prayer): separating perceived problems from internalised processes of guilt, recrimination and self-blame: “you have not always felt unworthy or felt a burden to others” Possible exercises: changing the rhetoric (rewrite sentences...); Jesus’ re-phrases (you are not unworthy).
	• Mapping influence of problem: challenge assumptions/standards imposed on SFD by focusing on alternative gospel-based values/standards Possible exercises: the fruits of the Spirit in you; what really matters/counts (not what society tells you).
	• Develop alternative story through emphasis on person’s capacities, internal strengths, qualities and resources Possible exercises: this is me! Building my capacity tree.
	• Develop alternative story through emphasis on person’s dreams and hopes, passions, Possible exercises: it’s not all about me—this is what I desire for the world; hoping against hope.
	• Develop alternative story through identifying <i>unique outcomes</i>: moments, thoughts, actions or stories that contradict problematic story Possible exercises: the day I changed the world; the child who knew it all.
	• Generate rich descriptions of alternative stories using: witness of ‘outsiders’, remembering positive conversations, therapeutic documents and letters, rituals and celebrations Possible exercises: a loving letter from my mother; a loving letter to my father; what I learned from ‘grandma’.

	• Creating an audience: living and no longer around Possible exercises: the day I gave a big party; remembering those who have gone and loved me.
	• Preparing for the future: dreaming up narratives of possible contributions Possible exercises: I know the future is hopeful; my one contribution to the world, or perhaps two.
For each exercise	Landscape of action questions/statements into events and actions Landscape of identity questions/statements in relation to implications of new story-line.

2.7. Sequence of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

Based on all of the previous themes and criteria, the following sequence for the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ has been developed.⁸¹ The table below shows the title of each *exercise*, as well as the theme and the kind of *exercise* (among the five types already mentioned) it corresponds to. In addition, it briefly states the purpose of each *exercise* to help fulfil the goal and objectives, dynamics and process of this spiritual journey for survivors of forced displacement. The criteria for the specific order of the *exercises* will be explained in the last part of this chapter, dealing with the structure and format of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.

Table 5.10. Charting the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

⁸¹ Many different resources have been used to help develop the *exercises* included here. We list here some of the ‘major contributors’, together with the reference information for those which have not been cited before. *On awareness and mindfulness*: SUSAN KAISER GREENLAND, *The Mindful Child*, New York: Atria Paperback 2010; THICH NHAT HAN, *A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles*, Berkeley, CA: Plum Blossom Books 2012; ANTHONY DE MELLO, *Sadhana, A Way to God: Christian Exercises in Eastern Form*, New York: Image Books/Doubleday 1978; ANTHONY DE MELLO, *Awareness: The Perils and Opportunities of Reality*, edited by J. Francis Stroud, New York: Image Books/Doubleday 1990; J. FRANCIS STROUD, *Praying Naked: The Spirituality of Anthony de Mello*, New York: Image Books/Doubleday 2005; *on women in the Scriptures*: EDWINA GATELEY, *Soul Sisters: Women in Scripture Speak to Women Today*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2002; KATHY COFFEY, *Hidden Women of the Gospels*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2003; *on desires, attachment on desires, attachment/detachment, discernment and freedom*: CAROL ANN SMITH and EUGENE F. MERZ, *Finding God in Each Moment: The Practice of Discernment in Everyday Life*, Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press 2006; CAROL ANN SMITH and EUGENE F. MERZ, *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life*; MARK E. THIBODEAUX, *God’s Voice Within: The Ignatian Way to Discover God’s Will*, Chicago: Loyola Press 2010; MARK E. THIBODEAUX, *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen: Fresh Ways to Pray from Your Day*, Chicago: Loyola Press 2015; MARGARET SILF, *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality*, Chicago: Loyola Press 1999. In addition, some resources provided material for several themes: JOSEPH A. TETLOW, *Choosing Christ in the World* (prayer); KEVIN O’BRIEN, *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life* (prayer, Principle and Foundation); J. VELTRI, *Orientations* (prayer); CENTRO DE ESPIRITUALIDAD ‘SAN IGNACIO’, *Itinerarios* (many of the initiation and deepening exercises).

No	Title of exercise	Theme and Purpose	Type
0	3 exercises to get you started	Narrative Let's start exercising! Develop narrative capacities	NT
1	Setting out on this journey of faith	Introduction to the spiritual journey; main points to consider as the journey begins	RS FD NT
2	Entering into silence	Learning to recollect oneself in silence in preparation for prayer	DS ID
3	Keeping the silence	Further practice in silence; becoming aware of the effect of our actions	DS ID
4	Growing awareness	Mindfulness/awareness (1) Learning to grow in awareness of oneself	DS
5	Past, Present, Future? <i>Present</i>	Mindfulness/awareness (2) Learning to grow in awareness of oneself	DS
6	Becoming more myself: a crater, a river, an anthill, a campfire	Mindfulness/awareness (3) Learning to grow in awareness of oneself	DS
7	God is with us, at all times	Learning to grow in awareness of God in one's life	ID
8	Where did God go?	Learning to grow in awareness of God's presence in one's life	ID
9	Think God!	Becoming accustomed to God's being a part of one's life; exploring one's images of God	DS ID
10	An appointment with God	Growing in familiarity with God	NT
11	Power of fantasy and imagination	Imaginative Contemplation (1)	DS
12	Feel loved and joyful again, and again	Imaginative Contemplation (2)	DS
13	Ignatian contemplation (1)	Imaginative Contemplation (3)	DS
14	Ignatian contemplation (2)	Imaginative Contemplation (4)	DS
15	God has created everything for us	We are part of God's Creation; everything is for us to encounter God and use for God's glory	ID
16	We are God's creation	God created us in love and continues to love us; it is a labour of love that never ends	ID
17	God is not done with me yet!	God continues to create us so we can become the persons we have been created to be	ID
18	Learning to name the 'problem'	You are not the problem: you are wonderfully made	NT
19	God knows me by name	You are not the problem: to be known as individuals, not as labels	NT FD
20	At this moment in time	You are not the problem: externalising conversations to change rhetoric about oneself	NT
21	I am God's first choice	You are not the problem: Jesus rephrases who I am; beginning to create an alternative story	NT
22	Love is the essence of my existence	Known and loved by God: a summary	ID FD
23	Life in abundance: God's desire for us!	God wants abundant life for each of us	ID
24	Taking stock of the journey so far	First 'Rest Stop': to gage where the exercitant is	RS

	(1)	in the journey so far; to begin to rewrite his/her narrative: what is new or has changed since starting on this journey; <i>my ‘new story’ so far</i>	NT

Desires, Principle and Foundation, and ordering of oneself leading to right intentions/purpose

25	My tree of life	Reviewing and recalling my life before God: the people who have been the ‘roots’ in my life	NT ID
26	Praying my life in the Lord’s presence	Reviewing and recalling my life before God: how God has been always present	NT
27	At this moment in my life	Where and how we find ourselves at this moment in our lives as a result of our past experiences	NT
28	Centring my desires in God	Desires and God: desires for fulfilment, to solve problems; to have healthy and loving relationships	ID
29	Dreamsires! (1)	God dwells within our desires: develop <i>subiecto</i> ’s capacity to dream; using imaginative fantasy and the ‘desire tree’ to discover/tap into our desires	NT DS
30	Dreamsires! (2)	Becoming aware of one’s deep desires each day; when first arrived in Australia; secret dreams and ambitions today	NT
31	Desire to find God	Nothing can quench our desires, except for God	ID
32	Most universal desires of all: the purpose of my life	Principle and foundation: end for which I’ve been created; the purpose of <i>my</i> existence	NT
33	Being passionate about the things of God	Principle and foundation: open to God’s labouring in us; freedom in using God’s gifts; we are created from/for	ID
34	God, the foundation of my life	Principle and foundation: intentions, motivations and purpose	ID
35	The purpose of <i>our</i> existence	Principle and foundation: we are created beings, united in God; we share a purpose	NT
36	Putting our house in order (1)	Overcoming oneself/ ordering oneself: overcoming disordered attachments and affections to assimilate Jesus’ values	DS
37	Putting our house in order (2)	Overcoming/ordering oneself: understanding what disordered attachments and affections are	DS
38	Recognising the sources of our disorder	Overcoming/ordering oneself: understanding where my attachments come from Mapping influence of problem: disordered desires	DS NT
39	The secret path to detachment	Overcoming/ordering oneself through detachment Mapping influence of problem: what really matters, not what society tells you	DS NT
40	Seeing my reality with ‘new’ eyes	Overcoming/ordering oneself: practicing detachment	DS
41	Practicing active indifference	Overcoming/ordering oneself: path towards detachment	DS
42	Total abandonment	God frees: surrendering everything to Jesus	ID
43	Nothing can separate us from God	Ordering oneself; develop <i>subiecto</i> : identifying what separates us from God	DS ID
44	God loves us unceasingly and	God’s love and mercy are boundless; we	ID

	offers us new life	experience God’s love through encountering Jesus; develop <i>subiecto</i> capacities when facing inability to accept being loved by God	DS
45	Let yourself be loved	God’s love frees us	ID
46	To love you, O God!	Being in a relationship of mutuality with the Lord: loving God in return	ID
47	The courage to accept God’s acceptance	God accepts me and invites me to do the same; develop <i>subiecto</i> capacities in terms of lack of self-acceptance, and of truth of who I am; accepting God’s acceptance demands courage	DS ID FD
48	Good meets us as we are	Healing our feelings of worthlessness by internalising that God accepts us as we are	ID FD
49	Good meets us where we are (1)	God’s love frees: becoming our true selves; what is required to be free; healing of one’s disordered attachments; accept consequences of one’s actions	NT DS
50	Good meets us where we are (2)	God’s love frees: freedom from fear leads to healing and openness to embrace one’s mission, to labour for and be a promoter of God’s reign	NT FD
51	Dare to become!	Develop alternative stories: capacities of an eagle!	NT
52	A city built on a hill cannot be hidden	Develop alternative stories: growing in awareness of gifts and talents God has given each of us	NT ID
53	Taking time to ‘look back’ (1)	Prayer of repetition: go back to particular exercises	RS
54	Taking stock of the journey so far (2)	Second ‘Rest stop’: assessing one’s intentions and purposes in the light of God’s love; <i>my ‘new story’ so far</i>	RS NT

Values and beliefs: the God we believe in; the Jesus we follow; the Spirit that sustains us

55	God invites us to share our lives: our burdens and our fears	Introducing one’s values and beliefs; we believe God wants to lighten our burdens, ease our fears	NT ID
56	The faith we profess: the <i>Creed</i>	Catechetical and initiation into experience of God	ID
57	Jesus: the displaced wanderer	Jesus as companion in displacement	FD
58	Embraced by the Trinity	Feeling the welcoming embrace of the God we believe in, who welcomes all	FD ID
59	God’s Spirit always at work	The Spirit is the source of our lives and all that is good in them; it connects us with one another	ID
60	Listening and putting into practice Jesus’ words	Listening to Jesus in my life; what are the barriers that prevent me from listening to him now?	ID
61	Seeing like Jesus did	The compassionate gaze of Christ invites us to see with new eyes	ID
62	Doing what Jesus said	Learning from Jesus; learning to be like Christ	ID
63	Jesus’ Father and our Father	Learning to trust in the love and care of the Father	ID
64	Unto us a Child is born	Contemplating the wonderful gift of the incarnation and the birth of Christ	ID
65	Jesus teaches us	Learning to become disciples of Jesus through his teachings	
66	Jesus heals us	Experiencing the healing power of God through Jesus’ healing miracles	ID

67	Jesus reveals God’s kingdom through parables	Getting a glimpse of God’s kingdom through Jesus’ parables	ID
68	Called to love	God’s love for us impels us to live out of love, starting with ourselves	ID
69	Loving the ‘other’ in need God and me To love one Another	Living out of love means caring especially for those in need	ID
70	Looking at others with benevolence	Changing our attitudes towards others in love; judging is not the way!	ID
71	Loving those we do not like	Moving towards forgiveness and reconciliation	ID
72	The way of the Kingdom: the Beatitudes	True and authentic joy is not the way of the world	ID
73	Gratitude and its benefits	Jesus teaches us to be grateful; introducing gratitude	RS
74	Taking time to ‘look back’ (2)	Prayer of repetition: go back to particular exercises	RS
75	Taking stock of the journey so far (3)	Third ‘Rest stop’ : assessing one’s beliefs and values in the light of Jesus’ way; <i>my ‘new story’ so far</i>	RS NT

Hopes and dreams: and what thwarts them—sin, suffering and pain and their consequences

76	Hopes and dreams: quenching our thirst for God	Introducing one’s hopes and dreams; only God can quench our thirst for satisfying lives	NT
77	Evil gets in the way of our hopes and dreams	Introducing the reality of evil and how it is expressed in the forced displacement tragedy	NT FD
78	A desert and a battlefield: temptation and sin	Temptation is not the same as sin; need to recognise and be on guard against temptations	ID
79	Evil has a history and a structure	Recognising the power and hold of evil in our lives	ID
80	God has given me the power to choose	I don’t always choose right! Being a sinner is part of my narrative, but a forgiven and loved sinner!	NT
81	God’s response to sin: forgiveness and mercy	To experience the forgiveness and mercy of God opens the future to us and fills us with gratitude	NT
82	The joy of knowing ourselves forgiven	Transforming our negative images of God into the image of a merciful and loving God, full of joy	NT
83	Becoming attentive to one’s pain	Dealing with suffering and pain in our lives, rather than avoiding it	NT
84	Being wounded	Looking at events in our lives that have given us pain to find meaning in them	FD
85	How to respond to the evil done to me?	Following the way of Christ dealing with suffering	ID
86	Jesus’ non-violent way	Jesus responds non-violently to the attack of his adversaries and asks us to do the same	ID
87	Jesus’ hour of suffering (1): hospitality and service	In his hour of suffering Jesus offers hospitality and highlights the value of service	ID
88	Jesus’ hour of suffering (2): facing anguish and betrayal	Experiencing Jesus’ pain during his Passion; learning to trust as he did in his Father’s care	ID
89	The Passion of God	Experiencing Jesus’ suffering and death, to respond in gratitude and love	ID
90	Mary, model of accompaniment in suffering	Spending time in silence with Mary at the foot of the cross, learning from her the gift of availability and trust.	ID

91	Taking stock of the journey so far (4)	Fourth ‘Rest stop’: assessing one’s hopes and dreams in the light of the reality of sin and suffering, but also Jesus’ way of dealing with it; <i>my ‘new story’ so far</i>	RS
92	The Power of memory	Becoming more aware of the things we bring back to mind during our day	DS
93	What prevents us from being whole	Identifying issues that might be in need of healing in one’s life: what is ‘not right’	FD
94	Healing of hurtful memories	Using a technique to heal past memories: one at a time	FD
95	Healing feelings of unworthiness	Dealing with feelings of rejection, of not being love, of abandonment, of not being good enough	FD DS
96	Belonging: our search for home	Home as the place where we are allowed to ‘be ourselves’, where we feel we belong and are accepted	FD DS
97	Recovering our capacity to trust	What to do when we experience betrayal and violation of our trust	FD DS
98	Healing the anger that consumes us	Learning to accept our anger as a positive response to injustice and to channel it towards change	FD DS
99	Guilt: the fierce field of internal struggle	Guilt as a normal response to hurtful events; learning to cope with guilt in appropriate ways	FD DS
100	Would you let me tell you my story	Allowing survivors to share their stories; fulfilling their need to be listened, to have their voices heard	NT
101	The Ignatian Examen	Learning to pray the traditional Examen	DS
102	Healing after grief: gift of mourning	Learning to mourn and put closure to painful experiences to move forward	FD
103	Sustaining faith and hope	Recalling the power of faith and hope in one’s life and finding ways to sustain it and sustain me	FD
104	Remember so as to be healed	Remembering truthfully and forgivingly; healing of memories through sharing them in ‘circles of healing in trust’	FD
105	The joy of a forgiven heart	Re-introducing forgiveness: to feel oneself forgiven: living with a forgiven heart	RS
106	Learning to forgive	Forgiving or at least learning to desire to forgive when not able to do so	DS
107	“Repent and live the gospel”	Learning to offer and accept repentance in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation	FD
108	Being agents of reconciliation	Forgiveness as a change of heart that seeks rebuilding community and reconciliation	FD
109	Embracing forgiveness and reconciliation	The act of ‘embrace’ as acceptance of others and openness to the ‘other’	FD
110	I will return to my father’s house: A reconciliation ritual	Using the passage of the Father and the two sons to reconcile aspects of our life with ourselves and God	RS
111	Finding meaning through enriching others’ lives	Healing through meaning-making by contributing to the lives of others	FD
112	Embracing the life that God gives us	Become more aware of the gift that my life is; asking God for healing in particular areas of life	FD
113	The healing power each of us holds	Being ‘ministers of healing’ through the gifts of listening, affirmation, and freedom	FD
114	Healing: it takes time	The process of healing has to be accepted, verified and validated by others	FD

115	Taking stock of the journey so far (5): healing rivers	Fifth ‘Rest stop’: assessing the ‘flow’ of God’s healing action in my life; <i>my ‘new story’ so far</i>	RS

Principles for living: as people of the resurrection; living in the present with awareness and following Jesus’ values

116	Being people of the resurrection	Learning to rejoice in the triumph of Jesus’ life and recognising Jesus’ appearances to us today	ID
117	Seeking and finding the beloved	Jesus’ appearance to Mary Magdalene: being found by what we lost and being named by God	ID
118	“See, I’m making all things new”	The Resurrection changed everything, forever; the experience of Mary; our experience of being loved	ID
119	The gift of the consoler	Contemplating the office of consoler which Christ our Lord carries out	ID
120	Putting things ‘back on track’	Through the resurrection the disciples are able to renew their commitment to Christ’s mission	ID
121	My soul glorifies the Lord	Singing one’s own Magnificat to the Lord in thanksgiving	ID
122	A Spirit of witness	The Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost establish continuity between Jesus’ mission and our own, guided by the Spirit of God	ID
123	Awareness that leads to gratitude	Responding to God’s gift to us, in the everyday moments of our lives	NT
124	Gratitude that leads to service, in love	The Contemplation to Attain Love and the <i>Take Lord and receive</i> prayer; becoming more aware of God’s sustaining action and labour in creation	NT
125	Joy and patience: resurrection in the world today	Patience recognises that the joy of the resurrection might have to wait, but the wait is worthwhile	FD
126	Living in the present where God is	Staying in the past or worrying about the future prevents us from living abundant lives; God can only be found in the present	DS
127	Being in touch with God’s reality	Integrating our lives and reality through ‘God’s reality’, through the lens of faith	FD
128	Nurturing our capacity to live in the moment	<i>Gestalt</i> and focusing on the present by becoming aware of what is happening ‘now’	DS
129	Paying attention to key moments in our journey	<i>Progoff’s</i> Intensive Journal and helping us to identify the milestones in our lives	DS
130	Letting our body tell us what it feels	<i>Focusing</i> as a way to ‘listen to our bodies’ and learn the lessons they are trying to teach us	DS
131	Facing the fears that paralyse us	Facing our everyday fears with the help of the Lord	DS
132	Gifting ourselves with forgiveness	Looking at positive ways of considering forgiveness and its benefits	FD
133	To be aware and to discern well	Learning what discernment is about and becoming aware of how we make ‘ordinary’ decisions	DS
134	Discerning with God’s help	Going through a process or discernment—of making a decision—asking God for guidance	DS
135	Discerning God’s voice within (1)	Introduction to discernment of spirits: the interior movements in us	DS
136	Discerning God’s voice within (2)	Understanding consolation and desolation	DS
137	Responding to consolation and	What to do in times of consolation; what to do in	DS

	desolation in your life	times of desolation	
138	Deciding as a discerning person	Following the four phases to good discernment	DS
139	When making an election	Some additional considerations and tools to help us make an election; seeking confirmation from God	DS
140	Helping build God’s loving project for the world III/15	Using the talents I’ve been given to contribute to make God’s reign a reality today	ID
141	Testing our decisions: channelling our affections	Meditation on the three classes of persons; looking at the dynamics behind our affections and their effects on our decisions	ID
142	Living humility as a way of love	Considering Ignatius’ three levels of humility as a progression to express my love for God and others	ID
143	Taking stock of the journey so far (6): a discerning heart	Sixth ‘Rest stop’: assessing my experiences of discernment	RS
144	Belonging to two worlds	Challenges in general, but particularly in terms of faith and worship	FD
145	Remembering Mary and honouring her	Learning from Mary’s story and spending a day with her: the model disciple	ID
146	Mary of Nazareth: listener, believer, disciple	The qualities of Mary that we are called to emulate: listener and doer of God’s word; accepting of the call; the greatest ‘mustard seed’; ceaseless pray-er	ID
147	Women in the Scriptures (1)	Learning from ‘hidden’ saints and doers of God’s word	ID
148	Women in the Scriptures (2)	More ‘hidden’ saints and doers of God’s word who represent those who suffer injustice and discrimination in our world even today	ID
149	To be a woman disciple	Challenges faced by women in their following of Christ	FD
150	Resilience and hope in discipleship	The experiences of forcibly displaced women of faith; their model of discipleship	FD
151	Prayer: our encounter with the Lord	Introduction to prayer and the attitudes to have in prayer; believing God listens to our prayer	DS
152	1 st Method of Prayer: Ten Commandments and Capital Sins	How we have lived out each of the commandments in our lives; and the vices-virtues as well	DS
153	2 nd Method of Prayer: contemplating each word of a prayer	Using Ignatius’ Second Method of Prayer to pray the Our Father, Hail Mary and other traditional or non- traditional prayers	DS
154	3 rd Method of Prayer: according to rhythmic measures	Using Ignatius’ Third Method of Prayer to pray traditional and ‘mantra-style’ prayers	DS
155	Asking for what we need: the prayer of petition	Following the ‘rules’ in the way we ask God to meet our needs	DS
156	Receiving what we need: the gift of death	Praying to be ready for death and seeing it as a gift from God	NT
157	Speaking the things of God: spiritual conversation	The grace of spiritual conversation; challenges and gifts that it offers	DS
158	Who is my neighbour? (1)	Introducing values for living the Christian life	RS
159	Who is my neighbour? (2)	Being a neighbour: a process of inner conversion and outer expression	NT
160	Bearers of hospitality to all	What hospitality entails as a Christian duty; how we are called to offer it and receive it	FD

161	Solidarity: “walking in the shoes of another”	What solidarity entails as a Christian duty; committing to the common good	FD
162	Humility and vulnerability as Jesus’ values	Cultivating humility and vulnerability as a shield against selfishness and arrogance	FD
163	Being ‘Advent’ people	Learning to wait for the Lord and for one another with joy and patience	NT
164	Being present to one another	The gift of presence is the greatest gift we can give to another; being present as God is present to us	FD
165	Compassion: the answer to every question	Compassion as a principle for living and acting towards others	FD
166	Honouring and respecting one another	Recognising the dignity and value of every human person as a son and daughter of God	FD
167	On growing in holiness (1)	Growing in holiness together as people of God and being part of the ‘middle class of holiness’, Francis	ID
168	On growing in holiness (2)	Pope Francis’ five qualities or attitudes to contribute to growing in holiness	ID
169	The justice God wants	Introducing justice and the social dimension	RS
170	Promoting justice: being people for others	Using Catholic Social Teaching principles to guide us in being ‘men and women for others’	FD
171	Being ministers of peace	What it means for you to be a minister of peace	FD
172	United with God in the practice of love	Being contemplatives in action and finding God in all things as a habitual way of life	FD
173	God’s reign: the world as God intended it	The kingdom of God is near; and we can help it draw nearer	ID
174	Choosing God, choosing life	Becoming aware of the things that give us life; of those that drain it; and choosing in freedom for life	FD
175	All creation is good in God’s eyes	Learning to appreciate the beauty and goodness of all things in creation	ID
176	The gifts of God’s creation	Seeking ‘ecological’ conversion and caring for our common home, the earth.	ID
177	Understanding and living hope	What hope is about and what it does	FD
178	Being ministers of hope	Our share responsibility to increase the ‘hope factor’ in the world	FD
179	My God, my rock, my strength!	Recalling the moments in my life where God has been my strength	NT ID
180	If God is for us...	What it means to be a son/daughter of God; God has wonderful plans for each of us!	NT
181	The power to change the world	If God gave you the opportunity to be Lord of all for a day, what would you do? How would change the world? And yourself! (be the change you want to see!)	NT
182	Taking stock of the journey so far (7): the heart of a disciple	Seventh ‘Rest stop’ : assessing my principles for living; <i>my ‘new story’ so far</i>	RS

Commitment: to mission, to what I stand up for in life

183	Jesus’ mission	To bring abundant life, proclaim the good news of God’s kingdom and seek out and save the lost	ID
184	Listening and responding to Jesus’ voice	Paying attention to Jesus’ words; listening in unexpected places	NT

185	I am called	How Jesus is calling each of us today	NT DS
186	What are you sending me to, Lord?	Trusting that Jesus will be with us in the mission he has entrusted to us	NT ID
187	Sharing my gifts, channelling my service	Becoming aware of one’s gifts and exercising them; the gifts of others to me	NT
188	My gifts in the service of the Church	Being part of the body of Christ, the Church, and offering our gifts towards its service	NT
189	Celebrating the Lord’s gift	Living and celebrating the Eucharist with joy	ID
190	A community of believers	What it means to be church: ‘called to assembly’ as the Body of Christ and the People of God	ID
191	A welcoming community of faith	Recognising the gifts ‘the stranger’ brings to our church as a faith community	FD
192	A sign to the world	Being church as a sign to the world of unity in diversity	FD
193	Walking (or sitting!) with the Lord	Living a ‘healthy’ spiritual life is about our relationships with God, others and ourselves	NT
194	Healing shall spring up quickly!	A ‘healing Examen’ with the Lord	FD
195	Three letters	‘Letters’ from one’s parents: “the son or daughter we love”; to son/daughter: “my hopes for you”; from a friend: “the friend I give thanks for”	NT
196	At the end of my life they will remember...	Eighth ‘Rest stop’ : assessing my commitments	RS
197	In return for benefits received	What I would like my contribution to the world to be	NT
198	Taking stock of the journey so far (8): reviewing my ‘life project’	Ninth ‘Rest stop’ : looking at areas of my life in need of reform	RS
199	God is on this journey with me always	My ‘new story’ at the end of these exercises; looking to the future	RS
200	Celebrating God’s gifts of life	Strengthening one’s alternative stories through celebrating with others; supportive audience	RS

Part III: Structure and Format of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

The Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ constitute a spiritual journey—a spiritual journey towards healing. It is not a new journey, but a continuation of the life journey survivors of forced displacement began on the day they were born. It is the same journey, but one which emphasises a particular purpose—healing—and follows a particular path to achieve that purpose. And like most journeys, it is a journey narrated through a story—the life story of each individual survivor of forced displacement. In following this new *path*, three stories actually converge: the story of the forcibly displaced person, God’s story/history of salvation and the story or spiritual journey of Ignatius captured in his *Spiritual Exercises*. The structure and format of these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ attempt to bring together these stories, always keeping in mind our particular perspective—approaching them through the *lens* of displacement—and utilising the chosen *tool* of ‘narrative development’. As noted, the purpose is to assist survivors of forced displacement to re-write their life narrative in a way that gives greater meaning to the struggles and suffering they have experienced in the past and, by discovering or re-discovering God’s presence in and action through them, acquire greater healing and greater agency in their lives.

In this last part of the thesis, we explore briefly two aspects regarding the chosen structure, format and dynamic for these *exercises*. The first section deals with their ‘character’ (as 18th *Annotation*-based *exercises*) and how this influences the way the *exercises* are structured; it also explains the criteria used to arrive at the specific sequence/order of the *exercises* presented at the end of Part II. Section 2 (‘For the giver’) recapitulates some of the themes addressed in earlier chapters in terms of the ‘giver-receiver’ relationship, highlighting specific functions required from the givers of these *exercises*; it provides also some brief suggestions for the givers to introduce the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ to their exercitants.

3.1. Structure of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

3.1.1. Their character as ‘light exercises’

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ are based on Ignatius’ 18th *Annotation* Exercises, which seek to help exercitants enter into and deepen their relationship with God, providing catechetical instruction through simplicity of content as well as opportunities for communal interaction, and offering exercitants what they can “well bear or profit from without fatigue” and “as much as they are willing to dispose themselves to receive, for their greater help and progress”, so as to “get some instruction and reach a certain level of peace of soul” (cf. [SpEx 18]). They include all of the elements—in one form or another—that Ignatius initially suggested in *Annotation* 18 (cf. chapter 3, section 3.2). Of course, as a ‘program’ for a ‘focused, structured and particular spiritual journey’—a journey towards healing—these spiritual *exercises* go beyond that.

Some of the *exercises* are intended to act as an initiation into prayer in a systematic way, starting from the basics as indicated by Ignatius. They have been developed with ‘beginner pray-ers’ in mind but more ‘experienced pray-ers’ will still find them useful, in particular if their prayer life has been ‘on hold’ for a while. As noted, other *exercises* seek to address spiritual needs linked to forced displacement issues while nurturing and deepening the exercitants’ spiritual journey in ordinary life, and their growing ‘in Christ’ and in their identity as Christ’s disciples. Following Ignatius’ implied guideline of ‘keeping things simple’, as much as possible, the *exercises* have been written as plainly as possible, using day-to-day language and avoiding complex terms. If these are needed for any reason, they are explained beforehand (e.g. Ignatian ‘consolation’ and ‘desolation’, Ignatian ‘indifference’, etc.) It is important to be aware of the fact that for many survivors of forced displacement, English is not their first language, and while they might appear fluent and conversant in ordinary English conversation, their reading comprehensive skills might be limited in different degrees, especially when more abstract concepts are presented to them.

As with other ‘light’ exercises, these *exercises* share common principles:

- (1) An intention to help exercitants overcome passivity, become open to new spiritual experiences and move forward through spiritual ‘exercising’;
- (2) an invitation to place themselves before God’s presence and bring their life story to God;
- (3) a common objective of bringing forth gratitude through greater awareness (e.g. use of the Examen) and reflection, so exercitants realise how many graces they have received;
- (4) a communal aspect to reinforce personal experience of the *exercises*;

- (5) a respect for the exercitant’s rhythm/tempo, and
- (6) besides the main healing objective, the main fruits expected include: ‘overcoming’ oneself, ordering one’s life, and a desire to nurture further one’s permanent spiritual formation, especially through catechetical and formation elements.

3.1.2. Charting the sequence of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

The progression of the *exercises* is based, first of all, on chronology. But rather than starting with the past, they begin with the present reality of survivors of forced displacement, inviting them to acknowledge that present reality—at each stage of the process—as it really is and not as they would like it to be. It is hoped that the *exercises* will contribute to this movement (how it is → how we wish it would be) into the future by addressing the issues in need of healing identified and expressed along the process. After considering the present reality, the *exercises* invite the exercitant to ‘re-live’ his or her past, both the events and consequences of their forced displacement experience, but also events and consequences of their lives previous to that experience, where they might identify qualities, capacities and resources that will help them re-author their present narrative into an alternative and more positive one for the future.

Secondly, the sequence of the *exercises* is based on a hierarchy of the “intentional states” mentioned above, which has been found more conducive for the task of re-authoring alternative narratives, starting from (i) intentions or purposes and moving through (ii) values or beliefs; (iii) hopes and dreams; (iv) principles for living, and finally (v) commitments or what one stands for. The way in which persons engage with these ‘intentional states’ shapes their actions and how they live their lives. Through identifying those internal strengths, qualities and resources that have helped survivors of forced displacement in the past and placing them into a story-line that links them those intentional states it is hoped that healing will occur. As for most people, there will be some issues over which survivors of forced displacement will not have control or have the capacity to change, but the ‘intentional state’ has to do with how they deal with them and respond to them. As noted earlier, the goal is to help survivors of forced displacement develop an ‘intentional state of identity’ that will contribute to make them freer and more capable of making decisions that are life-giving and meaningful for them. The more clearly people can articulate their principles of living and what they are ready and willing to commit to, the more likely it is they will know what future steps they can take in order to act in accordance with these commitments.

In terms of structure and sequence, these intentional states provide the five ‘blocks’ or sections into which the *exercises* have been divided. As mentioned above, each block begins with the present reality of the survivor of forced displacement. It concludes with an opportunity for the exercitants to assess the movement that has taken place through the process of the *exercises* in each particular block, both in terms of healing and of other ‘benefits’ obtained and of the progress made towards re-authoring their alternative and preferred narratives. This progress is expressed at each of these intermediate ‘end’ stages through an *exercise* that invites the exercitant to articulate ‘My new story so far’. As mentioned in the introduction, besides this personal story of the forcibly displaced person, the *exercises* seek to incorporate two other stories: God’s story/history of salvation and the story or spiritual journey of Ignatius captured in his *Spiritual Exercises*. These additional stories are ‘interlaced’ with the individual narrative throughout the journey of these *exercises* following the Creation-Fall-redemption-promised post-resurrection consummation schema as presented by Ignatius’ in his *Exercises*, and with the intention of discerning the role each exercitant, survivor of forced displacement, is called to play in this continuing story of salvation.

Thus, although not all of Ignatius’ Exercises (or adaptations thereof) are part of these *exercises*, the major themes of each of the Four Weeks have been included: the purpose of one’s creation; growing awareness of individual/societal sins; the unconditional love and mercy of God; the call to respond in deep gratitude to the invitation to follow Christ; learning how to do so in imitating his life of ministry; the possible consequences of one’s response and also the rewards; discerning how to choose (election) the best way of service within one’s circumstances and resources; deepening one’s relationship and union with God and seeking to serve others filled with God’s love. All of these themes are addressed through the *lens* of displacement and taking into account the perspective of survivors: how they understand, for example, Christ’s sufferings through their own; how they can overcome specific barriers that prevent them from seeing themselves as potential disciples of Christ; how to learn to find joy again. In order to accommodate the steps of the narrative therapy process—externalising conversations, mapping the influence of the problem, developing and strengthening alternative, preferred stories and consummating and affirming the new narrative into the future—the sequence of Ignatius’ Exercises (Four Weeks) has been adapted

when needed. Of course, this is possible when dealing, as we are, with 18th *Annotation* type Exercises.

As noted in Part II, the five types of exercises which make up the content of these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ ‘weave’ into each other throughout the process, with the priority being placed, as expected, on the *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement. Other *exercises* help exercitants derive the greatest possible benefit from these by developing relevant capacities and skills and by helping them in the process of re-authoring their life narratives. In fact, as shown in the sequence presented in Part II, the initial set of *exercises*, (prior to the first of the five ‘intentional states’ blocks, on ‘*intentions/purposes*’), addresses some of these needed capacities, such as developing one’s capacity for imaginative contemplation and growing in awareness and attentiveness to the promptings of the Spirit.

As mentioned earlier, and as Ignatius did, we have taken content, practices and approaches from others and have arranged it so as to create something with a particular ‘dynamic’, following on Ignatius’ *Exercises*. Givers of these *exercises*, and some people receiving them, will notice “textual interconnections” and the repetition of key words throughout the *exercises*, as well as recurring themes in various contexts. Earlier exercises are meant to prepare for later ones and later ones to have anticipated the fruits of earlier prayer experiences.

Recapitulating from the presentation in the first part of this chapter, the criteria for developing these *exercises* and structuring their sequence have included: (1) to address the needs of forcibly displaced people; (2) to adhere as much as possible to Ignatian principles; (3) to follow a structure or ‘narrative’ whose main purpose is to offer a process of healing and growth for the forcibly displaced; (4) to meet every person where ‘he or she is’ in their journey of faith at the moment of engagement with the *exercises*, and (5) to provide *exercises* which can be done individually (as per 18th *Annotation*), or as a sequence of ‘Exercises in Daily Life’ or as part of retreats of various durations. And finally, and as mentioned previously, though intended as an integrated journey of faith towards healing and greater union with God (as well as an introduction to making good decisions), the *exercises* will need to be adapted and applied, as always, to the needs of each individual exercitant. This means that some people might be ready to start later on in the process, rather than at the

beginning; or that the issues they need to deal with call for a re-ordering of the sequence (or even some content) of the *exercises*. These modifications are perfectly acceptable and in fact to be expected and encouraged when they can ensure ‘greatest benefit’ for the exercitant.

3.2. For the giver

Different aspects involved in the role of the givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ have been addressed throughout the thesis. The purpose of this section is primarily to summarise and highlight some of these specific functions concerning, among others, their roles in (1) assessing and contributing to the development of the potential *subiecto* of future exercitants, and as (2) ‘supportive audiences’ in strengthening these exercitants’ new stories and descriptions of themselves. The successful fulfilment of the latter function will be dependent, in turn, on (3) their natural abilities, developed skills and proficiency in the art of spiritual conversation and as (4) facilitators of communal prayer sessions (referred to here as ‘circles of healing in trust’). As givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, designed to meet the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement, they will also need (5) certain competencies, knowledge and skills in introducing the content and following the dynamics of these *exercises* to their ‘receivers’.

3.2.1. Strengthening the ‘alternative story’ through emphasising the exercitant’s capacities: developing the ‘subiecto’ in the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

We have already explored in detail the topic of the *subiecto* in chapter 4 in order to determine what things to consider when assessing the potential *subiecto* of survivors of forced displacement who will engage in these *spiritual exercises* and for determining what types of *exercises* would be of greatest benefit for them. The learnings from that discussion provided the ‘data’ used in Part II of this chapter to design *exercises* to meet both of these objectives. Of course not all of the aptitudes, dispositions and capacities/abilities listed there are expected to be found in one single exercitant, nor do they all hold the same relevance or weight when assessing a person’s potential *subiecto*. Further, and as mentioned earlier, what is sought is not well-developed skills but the potential for development of these aptitudes, dispositions and capacities.

In the case of survivors of forced displacement, not only are the ‘natural endowments of personality, character and intelligence’ of each individual of relevance but also how these

aptitudes and abilities might have been affected or influenced by issues linked to their displacement experience (e.g. trauma and violence, among others). These considerations have also been taken into account in the design of these ‘*subiecto*’ *exercises* as part of the ‘developing skills’ area mentioned in Part II. It is hoped that in praying these *exercises* exercitants will be able to overcome certain barriers that might prevent them from generating rich descriptions of alternative stories, such as inability to recognise one’s talents and gifts, difficulties in identifying one’s disordered affections, and powerlessness in regards to discerning and making choices, for example. The short summary below presents some of the main points on the *subiecto* which givers of the *exercises* should keep in mind as they monitor the development of their exercitants’ aptitudes, dispositions and capacities in the process of re-authoring their life narratives.

- (1) In regards to having *subiecto*, Ignatius’ purpose is to determine an exercitant’s capacity for mystical experiences through the Exercises and his/her capacity of service as expressed in the *Constitutions*. In other words, Ignatius approaches spiritual maturity as potentiality for *extrospection*—to be able to examine or observe what is outside oneself—and for *abnegation*.
- (2) The initial knowledge or discernment of a person’s *subiecto* is an intermediate step towards the interior knowledge of himself/herself which the exercitant will acquire through prayer and discernment, with God’s grace and the assistance of the giver of the Exercises; it is expected that this greater interior knowledge will contribute in turn to an increase in the potential of *subiecto*, and that a similar cycle will continue.
- (3) Since the *subiecto* is not a condition nor an essence, but a potentiality for service and a gift from God, it does not exhaust the whole identity of the exercitant; the subject as it comes to engage in the Exercises is a minimum, a threshold.
- (4) Ignatius’ criteria of age, education and ability can be linked to different stages of development.
- (5) For Ignatius, ‘to have *subiecto*’ is to have the necessary qualities to engage in the process of the Exercises *in order to* produce great fruits and *avoid* negative or harmful experiences.
- (6) It is important to recognise that the *subiecto* can be plagued by limitations and even disordered affections, but they are something ‘one can work with’.

- (7) The ultimate goal in developing these attitudes, dispositions and capacities is to grow into who each person *is*: the ‘person’ God has created them to be and who is believed God desires for them to become.

3.2.2. *Strengthening the alternative story through supportive audiences*

As mentioned in Part I, the new alternative stories of survivors of forced displacement, still fragile and somewhat unstable, will need to be strengthened and reinforced through the help of supportive audiences. Family members, friends and neighbours, church communities, or anyone else who is considered of importance to them, will be called upon to bear witness to the emergence of this new narrative containing a new description or identity of themselves. Of course, two essential components of this ‘audience’ in the journey of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ will be the giver of the *exercises* and the companion exercitants walking along this spiritual journey together. A third ‘supportive audience’ will be the same exercitants communicating or ‘speaking back’ to themselves through a written record chronicling the creation and strengthening of their preferred life narrative which will contain their many reflections, insights and learnings for and progress towards this new story. In these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ this written record is known as the ‘co-book’.

3.2.2.1. Strengthening the alternative story through the art of spiritual conversation

In the previous section, we emphasised the healing aspect of the role of givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ and the importance of actively implementing this role. It is expected that all givers of Exercises and spiritual companions would possess a certain degree of proficiency in the ministry of spiritual conversation to help exercitants reflect on their prayer experiences, discern the movements in their hearts and identify the graces God is giving to them. It is intended that in the journey of these *exercises* emphasis will also be given, in the course of spiritual conversation, to this aspect of supporting survivors of forced displacement in the re-authoring of their new, alternative story, and to the ‘strengthening’ of this new narrative as it develops. The goal is to gradually approximate that narrative more and more to the story line we believe God has for each person: to have a life abundant in joy, hope and love, a fulfilling and productive life in which to share God’s love and one’s talents with others. In these ‘re-authoring’ spiritual conversations, givers of these *exercises* should

keep in mind the use, when appropriate, of the ‘landscape of action’ and of ‘identity’ questions referred to in Part I.

Good spiritual conversation, then, will be of the essence in this process of accompaniment and narrative strengthening. What makes for ‘good’ spiritual conversation and what qualities should givers of the *exercises* cultivate to carry out this important ministry? We summarise below some of the main learnings from our earlier exploration on this topic in chapter 3, pointing out as usual those aspects which are most relevant to the circumstances of survivors of forced displacement for givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ to keep in mind.

- 1) *It’s about relationship*: more than the content of the conversation, what really makes a conversation ‘spiritual’ is the relationship between two people, and in particular, the way each person holds the other in loving reverence, awe, respect and humility as they converse.
- 2) *Inquire with discretion, subtlety, gentleness*: in regard to survivors of forced displacement, not only will the questions asked to determine their needs, desires and hopes be important in and of themselves, but ‘how’ these questions are asked will help shape their responses.
- 3) *It is a ‘building’ process*: the quality of the ongoing spiritual conversation will affect the relationship between givers of the Exercises and their exercitants as well as the extent of the service they can provide to them as spiritual companions.
- 4) *Hold every person in great affection*: for Ignatius, concentrating one’s heart and soul in loving the person one wanted to help was of essence: to do this it was necessary to learn as much as possible about that person’s present and past life (to anticipate his/her needs and disposition),
- 5) *but to do so with utmost care*, respecting the rhythm of the exercitant and waiting until the time is ‘right’ to address certain issues. This should certainly be a ‘cardinal rule’ when dealing with survivors of forced displacement, who might need to wait until the time is ‘right’ to share some of the more painful experiences of their displacement journeys. And this applies also to the process of re-authoring their life narratives: it might be a very slow process that requires a great deal of time and patience, but it should never be rushed.

- 6) “*Go in the other person’s door...*”: the conversation should always start with what the exercitant wants to talk about, based on his/her interests and circumstances in life:
- 7) *The greater glory of God*: for Ignatius, every aspect of this ministry had this goal, trying to find always the most appropriate manner of dealing with a person that could contribute to it.

In terms of qualities required in the ministry of spiritual conversation, givers of the Exercises (as well as other spiritual companions) should:

- 8) *Be humble*: develop interior composure and maturity that project internal peace and humility and help put exercitants at ease, giving them a sense of safety, security and welcome; again very important aspects for survivors of forced displacement who often feel unwelcomed and even rejected in their resettlement homes.
- 9) *Uphold the presupposition* and always assume good in the other’s statement and viewpoint (cf. [SpEx 22]), even when there might be some doubt regarding the accuracy of some the stories or interpretations recounted by survivors of forced displacement.
- 10) *Wait* and listen long and willingly, cultivating silence in order to understand the meanings, leanings and desires of those who speak.
- 11) *Only then, speak*, and do so with order, kindness and love, especially *when urging spiritual progress*.

While these qualities and characteristics of a ‘good’ spiritual conversation apply to a dialogue between two people, they can also be used as guidelines in group conversations and sharing. We will look at some of the dynamics and a possible structure for these conversations in the next section. Moreover, the practice of spiritual conversation should not only be limited to a time of retreat, when reflecting together—with one’s spiritual guide or giver of the *exercises* or one’s group/community of faith—on the fruits of one’s prayer, reflection and discernment. It is hoped that through its constant practice, and as the receivers of the *exercises* immerse themselves more deeply into this ‘ministry of spiritual conversation’, they will carry it on afterwards in their daily relationships. Keeping in mind this goal adds meaning and depth to the spiritual conversations that take place during the journey of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.

3.2.2.2. ‘Circles of Healing in Trust’: strengthening one another’s narrative

There is strength in numbers, and communities can be great sources of support, encouragement, companionship, guidance and solace. While this journey of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ can be undertaken by a single individual, it is hoped that in most cases a group of survivors of forced displacement will come together and engage in them as a faith community. Besides the benefits just mentioned, one additional aspiration would be that members of a group would become key elements of that ‘audience’ that will bear witness to the emergence of each person’s re-authored narrative, affirming it and strengthening it, and that this will happen naturally, with the help and guidance of their spiritual accompanier or giver of the *exercises*. These groups are, in a way, simply an extension of the process of spiritual conversation mentioned in the previous section, and thus the same rules or guidelines apply. People come together and converse about the graces they have experienced in their prayer and daily life; they listen attentively and respectfully to one another (and to God’s Spirit through their words), and affirm with humility, reverence, awe and respect each other’s experiences of God.

However, in this particular journey, and as these re-framed narratives take shape, their presence, stance, gestures and words are also intended to promote healing—to be agents of healing. The name suggested for these groups, ‘Circles of Healing in Trust’, strives to encapsulate this purpose and intention as well as the underpinning value that is required for this contribution to the healing process to occur, namely trust. Trust in the slow and transforming work of God in each person; trust in one’s capacity to embrace this grace and allow it to bring such transformation about; trust in the principles and practices that guide the group gatherings and create a space that is safe and welcoming, and trust in the care, goodwill and reverence of one another. And finally trust in the process and dynamics of these *exercises* as an instrument of healing.

In his poem ‘*Hagia Sophia*’, Thomas Merton writes: “There is in all things [...] a hidden wholeness. There is in all things an inexhaustible sweetness and purity, a silence that is a foundation of action and joy. It rises up in gentleness and flows out to me from the unseen roots of all created being”. He speaks of this wholeness not in the sense of perfection, but as one which embraces brokenness as an integral part of life and leads to growth and learning. One of the main purposes of these ‘circles of healing in trust’ is to create safe spaces to allow people’s souls, their true selves, their ‘inner teachers’ to show up and offer them their

guidance. By their presence, others invite, expand and help discern this inner teacher’s voice in each person, helping to ‘hear’ subtle and hidden clues in what is being said, nourishing each other’s courage to venture into unfamiliar areas of their lives where the Spirit might be calling them to.⁸²

These “circles of healing in trust” also seek to help each person listen to one’s own soul and discern one’s own truth, as people sit in silence, being totally present to one another. The relationships in these groups are intended not to be forceful but patient, not confrontational but compassionate, not invasive but protective, not filled with expectations or demands but with awe and respect for each person’s life story, with its twists and turns, joys and suffering. They allow prayer companions to explore questions such as “What seed was planted in each person when he or she ‘arrived’ on earth with his or her identity intact”, and how can one “recall and reclaim those birthright gifts and potentials” and “where are we called to give our gifts”? They invite people to explore in freedom the real issues in each of their lives, such as issues of fear and faith, despair and hope, hate and love.⁸³

In these “circles of healing in trust” people speak their own truth and listen receptively to the truth of others;⁸⁴ they ask each other honest and open questions whose sole purpose is to help the speaker hear more deeply what he/she is saying rather than to satisfy one’s own curiosity; they help people discern the movements of their hearts and the ‘spirits’ behind them instead of giving counsel or discussing each other’s experience of God and of the spirits; they listen without trying to fix or save or ‘set straight’, but offering instead to others “the healing and empowering gifts of silence and laughter”, acknowledging and honouring people’s truths. People speak from what is in their heart to the receptive heart of the communal space. By learning how to listen more deeply to others, people are able to listen more deeply to

⁸² Cf. PARKER J. PALMER, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2004, p. 25.

⁸³ Cf. PALMER, *A Hidden Wholeness*, pp. 59, 64, 81, 91.

⁸⁴ Some of the key attitudes and practices for this kind of respectful and attentive listening stance include: stop talking and listen without interrupting; allow the person who is speaking to complete their thoughts; listen to one’s own inner voice; listen with an open mind and with curiosity and appreciation of what is being said; listen for new ideas instead of judging and assessing; listen for understanding: one does not have to agree with or even believe what is being said in order to listen to understand another person; listen and ask for clarification; listen with empathy and compassion, with patience and presence, and listen ‘in relationship’, letting speakers know they are being heard through body language and gestures. Cf. KAY LINDAHL, *The Sacred Art of Listening: Forty Reflections for Cultivating a Spiritual Practice*, Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths 2002, and KAY LINDAHL, *Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening: A Guide to Enrich Your Relationships and Kindle Your Spiritual Life*, Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths 2003.

themselves, and by paying close attention to the words others speak, they can ask questions that invite them to probe “what they may already know but have not yet fully named”. In these ‘circles of healing in trust’ the only feedback that counts is that which comes from within the speaker, revealed by God’s Spirit, and the only understanding that counts is the speaker’s own.⁸⁵

In terms of practical matters regarding these gatherings such as an appropriate space, time and frequency of meetings, ideally people would gather in places where they feel comfortable and ‘at home’ to discuss matters of faith and life (such as their church or parish centre or the home of one of the members). Gatherings should not last more than two hours, have no more than eight participants to allow sufficient time for all to share, and be facilitated by one of their spiritual companions or givers of the *exercises*. In terms of the frequency of these meetings, as with the accompaniment sessions of individual spiritual conversation, ideally they would take place once a week. But of course, this will depend on the circumstances of each individual exercitant and also of the group, especially since this journey of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ might go for several months or longer. It is hoped, however, that as time goes by and the benefits of coming together are apparent, group gatherings will become a priority in the exercitants’ lives.

3.2.2.3. A written record of one’s preferred narrative: the co-book

As noted earlier, a third ‘supportive audience’ to strengthen survivors of forced displacement’s alternative stories will be the same survivors ‘speaking back’ to themselves through a written chronicle of the creation and strengthening of that preferred life narrative. Such writing takes place as a continuum in the journey of these spiritual *exercises* and the many reflections, insights and learnings towards the consummation of this new story are recorded in the exercitant’s ‘co-book’.

‘Co-book’ is the term or phrase chosen to refer to the spiritual diary or journal that exercitants will use to keep a written record of their spiritual journey in making the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, as they endeavour to re-write their life narratives. In essence, the term seeks to emphasise that the process of developing this new life narrative is a *co*-authoring endeavour between the exercitant and God. As it is well known, the prefix ‘co’ (related also

⁸⁵ Cf. PALMER, *A Hidden Wholeness*, pp. 116-118, 133.

to the prefix ‘com’) comes from old English and means *together, with, mutually, in common*. The ‘co’ in the co-book seeks also to highlight other values, intentions or desired goals that are hoped will be part of this writing endeavour or ‘recording adventure’ of the exercitants’ life story, encapsulated in such words or phrases as: companionship, collaboration, communication, completeness, core/Coeur, compass, contact, collating, contrasting, commitment, and Christ-Oriented and Christ-Ordered life. And also colour! Exercitants will be invited to illustrate their ‘co-books’ as they wish, with drawings or paintings, clippings, or anything else that helps them express elements of their life story in a way that is meaningful for them.

Givers of the *exercises* would need to emphasise to their exercitants that rewriting their life narrative will present its challenges. There will be times when they will be asked to remember difficult experiences of suffering and hardship in their lives; at other times, they might discover things about themselves or others that might be difficult to accept, or they might feel called to undertake certain initiatives or activities that will not be easy to do, all of this of course within the context of achieving healing in their lives. At those times it will be essential that they continue to lean on God and trust that Jesus is there, walking side by side with them, or holding them, or carrying them into the light and helping to lighten whatever burdens they may carry. Hopefully, there will also be some moments (many of them!) when rewriting their life story will fill them with joy, with energy, with consolation, with excitement, as they discover new possibilities and opportunities, new purpose and meaning.

3.2.3. Guidelines for introducing the ‘receiver’ to the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

At the beginning of their spiritual journey undertaking the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, survivors of forced displacement as exercitants will be presented with a written introduction to these *exercises* by their givers. This short ‘exercitant manual’ or set of guidelines will consist of several ‘sections’ and include basic information regarding the content, dynamics and format of the *exercises*, presented in simple terms and offered as various handouts at the beginning of the process.⁸⁶ These sections include:

- Getting started: the context

⁸⁶ This short ‘exercitant manual’ or set of guidelines has been included as an introduction to the document that contains the complete ‘set’ of Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.

- What can I expect from these *spiritual exercises*?
- Understanding the ‘interior movements’ within you
- Introducing the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’
- Praying the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

Of course, it will not be enough to simply handout the information; givers of the *exercises* will need to explain it carefully and patiently, assuming that for many of these exercitants this will be the first time they come in contact with Ignatian *exercises*. In fact, many of them might not have had much experience with any type of spiritual exercises before. Most of the information givers of the *exercises* will need to transmit has already been included in this ‘exercitant manual’, so in this section we briefly point out only some additional elements that givers might consider as they introduce and present the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ to their exercitants. Needless to say, these ‘additional directives’ assume that this role will be performed by experienced givers of Ignatian exercises who in addition have had some supplementary formation to minister to survivors of forced displacement (cf. Section 3.2.4), and therefore they are concise and presuppose a great deal of previous ‘Ignatian’ knowledge.

3.2.3.1. Getting started: the context

This section will seek to introduce exercitants to Ignatius’ story, his process of development of the Spiritual Exercises and the importance of having a spiritual guide or companion when embarking on the journey of the Exercises. The giver of the *exercises* might want to flesh out a bit more Ignatius’ story, giving a few more details about his conversion experiences and how God acted in him. Because it is important for the exercitants to relate to Ignatius’ story, to sense that the spiritual *exercises* he is offering can speak to their own experience, one important aspect of his story to highlight is his ‘history of displacement’, starting from the time after his conversion until his ‘resettlement’ in Rome, and how that displacement was affected—as in the case of many survivors of forced displacement—by the conflicts and wars of his era, both in Europe and in the Holy Land.

It will be important also that exercitants quickly feel comfortable with any new language introduced in this section, so it will help to explain in greater detail terms such as ‘spiritual exercises’, ‘Ignatian’, ‘serving God’, and to welcome questions regarding other unfamiliar terms. It might also be beneficial to detail further the role of the spiritual companion,

particularly if he/she is to be different from the giver of the *exercises*. If this has not happened at an earlier ‘interview’, and in the context of understanding the purpose and dynamic of the *exercises*, it will be beneficial in this first session to ask participants to reflect and share, as much as they are comfortable, what they expect or would like to receive from this spiritual journey they are about to embark on (a topic that will be taken up again in the next session). If the session takes place with a group rather than with one individual, it will be very important for the giver to present, to the extent that is appropriate, some of the guidelines of group sharing that will be foundational in the ‘circles of healing in trust’.

3.2.3.2. Getting started: what can I expect from these *spiritual exercises*?

This section will introduce exercitants to the topics of prayer and of what the *exercises* will require of them in regards to attitudes such as openness, perseverance, discipline, etc. It also points out some of the benefits and objectives of the *exercises*. It is very much an introduction, so givers will need to expand on these topics, always remembering to keep things ‘simple’ and avoid using ‘technical jargon’, which is not as easy as it sounds! But as stressed before, this is of great importance because, if not adapted to the circumstances of hearers, language can be excluding and isolating.

As always, the giver will need to remember the ‘audience’—survivors of forced displacement—and how their past and present experiences and circumstances will ‘colour’ or affect *what* they hear and *how* they hear it. The aspects to consider, as it has been shown throughout the thesis, are numerous and multi-faceted including, for example, issues of trust (of the givers, of the process of the *exercises* and of themselves, and the need to try to establish this trust from the outset of the ‘program’); language (for most receivers English will be a second, third or fourth language); apprehension about committing to a long term program (and thus the importance of stressing the freedom of engaging with the *exercises* at one’s own rhythm and within one’s time constraints); expectations, particularly in terms of the articulated purpose of ‘healing’ of these *exercises*, and how this healing might be interpreted by each survivor of forced displacement.

In speaking about prayer, it will be important to describe ‘what prayer is about’ and to introduce different types prayer, ideally more through examples than using abstract concepts. The text of the ‘exercitant manual’ already provides some everyday examples of praying and

of engaging in spiritual activities, but it will be useful to delve on this topic for a while and ask participants to offer their own examples. This helps emphasise the significance of one’s personal experience as the ‘content’ one brings to prayer. Some of the ‘requirements’ of the *exercises* listed in the text—what they ask from exercitants—will also need further explanation. However, givers should be attentive not to ‘give a lecture’ but rather to simply offer clarifying information and further assure receivers that some of these ‘requirements’ will become clearer as they engage in the *exercises*. As in the previous section, givers should encourage questions and give plenty of time to respond to them and assure exercitants that all questions are valid and welcomed.

3.2.3.3. Understanding the ‘interior movements’ within you

This section will introduce exercitants to the topics of one’s interior movements, consolations and desolations, discerning good and bad spirits, and the *Rules for Discernment*. The given presentation of these topics in the text to receivers is purposely brief leaving it to givers to expand on these subjects as they consider appropriate and necessary at this early stage. Experienced givers of Ignatian *exercises* will have their own, particular and effective ways of approaching these topics. As noted earlier, it is important, however, to keep in mind that many survivors of forced displacement who have resettled in Australia come from cultures which hold specific ideas about the ‘spirit world’, about matters of ‘good and evil’ and the influence of ‘spirits’ on their ordinary lives. It will be important to engage in conversation with them to get an idea of their beliefs and traditions (including real-life examples) and to do so in a way that shows respect for those beliefs and affirms their validity—because they are valid for them.

In some cases, it might actually be a conversation easier to have than with people from Westernised countries, where ‘matters’ of the spirit world are more distant or not part of their everyday lives. In the text, receivers of the *exercises* are told that their spiritual guide/accompanier will present the ‘Rules of Discernment of Spirits’ to them in some detail as the need arises and when the time is appropriate, which of course will depend on each individual. At some early stage in the process, receivers should also be introduced to the Examen as a way of ‘reading’ or discerning their interior movements. Different types of Examen have been included in the sequence of the *exercises* listed in Part II.

3.2.3.4. Introducing the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

As the heading suggests, this section will introduce the actual *exercises* to receivers. Specifically, it describes the rationale and purpose behind them as a spiritual journey of healing for survivors of forced displacement. It is a very important section because it acknowledges for the first time (at least in written form), the specific nature of these particular *spiritual exercises*. It reveals also to exercitants that they will be invited to pray about some of their past forced displacement experiences, and for some people this might be confronting. So, while it is important not to minimise this aspect of the *exercises*, the topic should be introduced with care while also being attentive to the exercitants’ reactions. It might be important to remind them that they will never be asked to do anything they are not comfortable in doing. Having said this, it is hoped that the way in which this journey is being presented—as ‘stories in movement towards healing’—will be appealing to exercitants, as it would be the opportunity to re-write or re-frame their life narratives in a way that gives greater meaning to their past struggles, helping them to see God’s presence and action through them.

Exercitants might be a bit confused or have numerous questions regarding the meaning of this ‘re-writing of our life narratives’, and to pre-empt some of these, a section on the exercitant’s ‘co-book’ or journaling tool has been included in the text. It describes what a journal is, what it contains, its purpose, its dynamics, its benefits. The origin of the word ‘co-book’ is also explained as well as its intention, first of all, of reminding exercitants that this ‘re-writing’ of their life narratives occurs always in the *company* of God, being guided by God’s Spirit, who is the source of their deepest desires and heart movements. When introducing this section, it might be helpful to bring along a couple of diaries or journals to show as ‘samples’, to give a better idea of what these ‘co-books’ might look like, especially for people who might not have previous experience in journaling. The text provided to the exercitants highlights St Ignatius’ experiences of journaling and the indisputable effect this writing endeavour had on his future life and work. It will be important to note this aspect in order to emphasise to receivers the importance of keeping their ‘co-book’ up-to-date. For some, initially this might be seen more as a chore that needs to be completed and sometimes avoided. Yet, writing down one’s reflections, insights, consolations and desolations in one’s ‘co-book’ should never be regarded as something ‘extra’, but rather as a constitutive and essential part of one’s daily prayer.

3.2.3.5. Praying the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

This last section will introduce exercitants to the format of the *exercises* and the structure and process to be followed as they pray the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. It includes the various ‘prayer steps’ such as: advance preparation, getting ready, praying the *exercise*, and closing the prayer period. It provides also a ‘summary’ of the ‘prayer method’ for all the *exercises* and introduces exercitants to the ‘generic’ content and some of the ‘features’ of the prayer sheets for each *exercise*. When this section is introduced to the exercitants, a copy of one of the early prayers should be distributed among participants (whether individuals or groups) to explain these ‘features’ as well as the icons that describe pictorially each step of the prayer. These features include the sections on ‘getting ready’, ‘praying the exercise’, ‘closing the prayer period’ and ‘your prayer sheets’. Enough time should be given to explain each carefully and answer any questions that may arise. Givers should not forget to collect the prayer sheets at the end of the session!

We have included at the end of this section a sample of one the prayer ‘sheets’. Each prayer sheet is made up of four pages, but they will be ‘fitted’ into one double-sided sheet. The example presented below corresponds to one of the *exercises* developed specifically for survivors of forced displacement and is entitled ‘Jesus, the displaced wanderer’. Examples of each of the other four types of *exercises*—initiation/deepening; developing spiritual skills; markers/rest stops, and ‘narrative’ *exercises*—will be included in Appendix II.

Finally, three *exercises* are offered in this final section of the ‘manual’ to introduce exercitants to the three main topics of *narrative*, *displacement* and *healing*, as well as to highlight the importance of using one’s imagination in these *exercises*. They have the added purpose of getting receivers to start writing, especially about themselves since, as explained to the exercitants here, the way one writes stories, and what one chooses to include in them, reveals a great deal about oneself and about what is of importance, concern, or significance at a particular moment in one’s life. A series of questions is provided at the end of these *exercises* to help exercitants reflect on this first experience of prayer, and their responses will constitute the material they bring to discussion with their spiritual companions the next time they meet, as they officially begin the journey of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.



Jesus: the *displaced* *wanderer*



*He came to what was his own, and his own people
did not accept him.
(John 1:11)*



I begin, with a gesture, a prayer, an action



In God's presence, in silence, aware of God's beholding me and smiling.
God's loving presence dwells in me.



As I am, as I feel now...



I ask from the Lord what I desire: *loving God, fill me with your love and your grace, that I may have an interior knowledge of your son, that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely.*



Asking the Spirit for clarity and enlightenment



I pray for 30-40 minutes



Prayer Texts

1. Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him”. Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son”. (Matthew 2:13-15)
2. Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head”. (Matthew 8:18-2)
3. He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house”. (Mark 6:1-4)



Jesus-in-displacement

Have you ever thought of Jesus as a displaced person? We could actually argue that from his birth, and even before, Jesus’ life reflected the day-to-day existence of many forcibly displaced people—asylum seekers, refugees and the internally displaced—both in their homelands and in their host and resettlement countries. Think for example of his status as a stranger and migrant in his own occupied country of Israel (occupied by the Roman Empire); his ancestors, which included foreigners such as Tamar and Rahab and Ruth; his birth in Bethlehem, far from home and family; his family’s escape to Egypt, fleeing persecution and death when he was just a new-born baby; the lack of welcome in his own country of Nazareth, where he was considered a stranger; and finally his own self-identifying with those who were strangers, marginalised and unwanted.



Prayer points

1. The angel of the Lord warned Joseph to take Mary and her new-born son Jesus to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill him. After slowly reading prayer text 1 above, use Ignatian imaginative contemplation to pray with it. Enter into the scene and become part of it, as if it were occurring in the here and now with you as a participant in the event: see the various persons there, listen to what they are saying and consider what they are doing... Who are you in the scene? A fellow traveller; an innkeeper on the road to Egypt; someone else? If you can, enter into conversation with Joseph and/or Mary; ask them how they feel and listen attentively to their concerns, their fears, their trust in God... Does the conversation bring back memories of your own displacement experience? If you can, share with Mary or Joseph, or with the Lord, or with God, any part of your own journey you would like to share at this time. What feelings arise in you?
2. *The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head...* once Jesus started his public ministry, he never had a home of his own; he always depended on the hospitality and welcome of those who received him and his disciples. Some did receive him and welcomed him, like his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus or Zacchaeus the tax collector; while others rejected him, even in his own hometown. Jesus was human as much as he was God, so those instances of rejection must have been hurtful to him. At the same time, he would have rejoiced in the welcome he received by friends and strangers. Prayerfully, think back of moments in your own life when you were welcomed, even by those whom you did not expect? Prayerfully, reflect also on some moments when you were met with rejection? What feelings arise in you in both cases? Share them with the Lord and listen to him as he shares his own stories and responds to your own.



Time for reflection: ‘savouring and relishing’: what touched me in each of these *exercises*?



Conversation with God or Jesus, as with a friend: in each of these exercises, Lord, *I have experienced...*



Review of prayer

I write or express in drawing or some other way what happened to me, in me, for me...



I end, with a gesture, a prayer, an action.



3.2.4. Competencies of givers

Throughout this thesis we have tried to explore the most relevant issues we believe should be taken into account for developing a suitable program of Ignatian *spiritual exercises* aimed at meeting some of the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement. An intended corollary of this exploration has been to address these issues in such a way as to offer givers of these *exercises* the knowledge, background and appropriate skills to better minister to survivors of forced displacement. In other words, the aim has been to provide experienced givers of Ignatian exercises with supplementary formation for this ministry as well as to equip them with specific abilities and tools to be givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. Though not an all-inclusive list, some of these formation elements have sought to provide:

- Greater knowledge and understanding of factors behind forced displacement, both its major causes and consequences.
- Growing awareness of what it means to be a survivor of forced displacement and how such displacement experiences might have affected—and continue to affect—the spiritual needs of forcibly displaced people.
- Knowledge of some of the main issues and factors that continue to influence the everyday life of survivors of forced displacement, including some of the major socio-psychological issues they face.
- Realisation of ‘external’ factors linked to the resettlement of survivors of forced displacement and the possible barriers these might pose to them in their efforts to become members of their secular and faith-based communities (e.g. discrimination, xenophobia, racism, secularism, etc.).
- Acquaintance with what ecclesial documents and Catholic Social Teaching teach concerning forced displacement.
- Understanding the mission of the Society of Jesus and its ministry to forcibly displaced persons through its Social Apostolate, including the place of the *Spiritual Exercises* within that mission and ministry.
- For the givers of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, seeing this endeavour as an articulation of their own mission and vocation, and also as part of the mission of the

Society of Jesus and its spiritual and social apostolates, and of the mission of the universal Church.

- Familiarity with the main characteristics of a spirituality and a theology of forced displacement and what each can teach us in terms of providing practical support to nurture the spiritual lives of survivors.
- Realisation of the importance of a proper and purposeful ‘inculturated’ application of the *Spiritual Exercises* in order to meet the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement, including the main factors and elements involved in such adaptation/application based on the history and previous practices of the Exercises.
- Understanding the dynamics and process of 18th *Annotation* Exercises as the basis for the design of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.
- Developing a certain ability to assess and determine the potential *subiecto* in survivors of forced displacement as receivers of the *exercises* and ways of cultivating and nurturing that *subiecto*.
- Understanding the importance of becoming ‘agents of healing’ and of actively entering into a healing relationship with those making these *exercises*.
- Growing awareness and self-knowledge concerning one’s own biases, traumas, expectations and capacities as potential givers of these *exercises*.
- Awareness of the importance of language used to adapt and present the Exercises.
- In giving the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, to have the characteristics and needs of forcibly displaced people always in mind, even if the *exercises* being offered seem to be generic.
- Understanding the importance of familiarising oneself with some of the most relevant aspects of the history, culture and traditions of specific groups of survivors of forced displacement to whom the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ are offered.

Though it is not expected that givers of these *exercises* will necessarily be experts in all these areas from the start, it is hoped that, in their commitment of service to survivors of forced displacement—specially to provide spiritual care to them—they will seek to develop a certain degree of proficiency in most of them, in time.

Conclusion

Only knowledge gained through experience, the fruit of living and suffering, fills the heart with the wisdom of love, instead of crushing it with the disappointment of boredom and final oblivion. It is not the results of our own speculation, but the golden harvest of what we have lived through and suffered through, that has the power to enrich the heart and nourish the spirit.⁸⁷

It is only through our human experiences that we can come to know—even if always partially—the transcendental yet ever-present, the mysterious yet somewhat familiar God who, we believe, desires to reveal Godself to us. Reflection, and specifically theological reflection of our human experience, assists us to *catch* this revelation; spirituality helps us live out this gained knowledge. Reflective prayer provides the link between this theological reflection and spirituality.

Without individual and communal prayer and reflection we stay at the theoretical level. We miss out on interiorising what we have learned, and the healing, the freedom, the joy and many other benefits that can come from this interiorising. We miss out on the nourishment to our spirit and to our heart which the “golden harvest of what we have lived through and suffered through” (as expressed by Karl Rahner in the words above) can provide. Survivors of forced displacement have lived through a lot and suffered much more, and they should be able to benefit from the ‘golden harvest’ of their suffering. As we have repeatedly asserted throughout this document, they need to be given the opportunity and relevant resources to pray reflectively those experiences, to meditate and contemplate the presence of God in them, to have access to enlightenment, healing and insight through them. This is what this thesis has intended to do: to provide such opportunity.

In this chapter we have attempted to bring together the learnings and insights from this and previous chapters to design and create the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, intended to provide survivors of forced displacement with relevant and meaningful prayer resources, not only as a means for nurturing their spiritual lives, but also as part of their journey of faith towards healing. Part I chartered the development of these *spiritual exercises*, outlining the three-fold criteria on which their content, structure and dynamics are

⁸⁷ Cf. RAHNER, *Encounters with silence*, p. 30.

based, namely, that they (1) respond to the needs, circumstances and experiences of forcibly displaced people; (2) meet survivors of forced displacement where they are, as individuals, in their journey of faith and, (3) be Ignatian Exercises. In order to fulfil these criteria, we saw that three additional ‘pillars’ or foundations were used to support the structure of the *exercises*: (1) their objective—to *promote and nurture spiritual healing* in the lives of survivors of forced displacement; (2) a lens or perspective from which to develop the *exercises*—which in our case could not be other than the *lens of displacement*, and (3) a *tool* or strategy chosen to act as a connecting thread throughout the journey of the *exercises*; namely, a guided reflection on the life story of survivors of forced displacement to help them rewrite their stories through the lens of faith, and in a way that gives greater meaning to the struggles and difficulties they have experienced in the past—particularly during their forced displacement journey—discovering God’s presence in and action through them. Moreover, in following this process, the desired outcome is that this alternative, preferred and more positive life narrative—a ‘healed’ narrative—will help forcibly displaced people of faith live more purposeful and meaningful lives: lives of service to their communities and the wider Church and society.

The choice of this tool or strategy was based on the learnings and insights provided by the fields of narrative theology (introduced in chapter 4) and of narrative therapy—a psycho-therapeutic tool whose relevant components to our thesis were introduced in this chapter. These included: (1) *externalising conversations* (to assist people confront the problems and issues they face by helping them identify talents, skills, abilities and knowledge that might have become hidden or veiled by those problems); (2) *historicising and mapping the influence of the problem* (looking at factors that have contributed to the original construction of their issues and problems); (3) *developing and strengthening alternative stories* (through supportive audiences), and (4) *looking to future possibilities that this new story might open up*. Besides highlighting a person’s internal strengths, qualities and resources, narrative therapy contributes to this re-authoring process of preferred narratives by focusing on a person’s so-called ‘intentional states’: (1) the intentions and purposes, (2) values and beliefs, (3) hopes and dreams, (4) principles for living and (5) commitments that shape people’s lives and actions. The purpose is to trace the history of a person’s qualities and strengths, explore how they came to be meaningful to him/her, place them into ‘story-lines’ and link them to the person’s values, hopes and commitments. The more clearly people can articulate their

principles of living and what they are ready and willing to commit to, the more likely it is they will know what future steps they can take in order to act in accordance with these commitments. Because of their potential contribution towards the task of re-authoring alternative narratives (an essential requirement for the healing endeavour or goal of these *exercises*), these ‘intentional states’ were chosen to help structure the sequence of our *exercises*, dividing them into five ‘blocks’ or sections, which also helped determine the particular themes chosen for each block.

The perspective of displacement (the *lens*) used in the design of the *exercises*, relied heavily on the learnings and insights obtained particularly from chapter 1 on a theology and spirituality of displacement, which helped us view displacement, among other things, as the narrative of God’s ‘movement’ from divinity to humanity and as an image of humanity’s ‘existential exodus’ on its way back to God. As it had been suggested earlier, displacement also challenges the Church’s understanding of its ‘catholicity’ or universality, as it seeks ways to incorporate the experience of people-in-movement into the lives of existing communities of faith, and to discern their specific contribution to the Church’s identity and essence. These various aspects were taken up as themes for some of our *exercises*. In addition, in terms of this *lens* of displacement and in order to obtain a better idea of the reality and identity of survivors of forced displacement (again with a view to help them re-author their life narratives into a more positive and meaningful story), this Part I addressed two questions: (1) Who are forcibly displaced people? and (2) What does it mean to have lived as a forcibly displaced person? While the *exercises* seek to use as point of departure the present reality of survivors of forced displacement, it is necessary also to have a good idea of how that reality came to be and particularly how it was (and continues to be) affected by their forced displacement experience.

Still within this second pillar or lens of displacement, this chapter took up again the theme, introduced in chapter 2, of the societal dimension of the *Spiritual Exercises*, with a view to incorporate this most relevant theme into the content and dynamic of our own Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. We saw that this social dimension of the *Spiritual Exercises* is present in each one of its constitutive parts, making them a ‘true school of formation for agents of social change’. Since the decision to actively participate in the transformation of sinful and unjust structures is a matter of a person’s choice, of an *election*, the Exercises’

function in this decision is two-fold: to help people walk along a pathway to freedom and to help them make a good election, keeping in mind that the consequences of people’s decisions affect not only themselves, but others, near and far. Finally, we saw that this call to become agents of social change is addressed to all, including forcibly displaced people, the ‘crucified peoples’ of today’s world, who have continuously suffered (and continue to suffer) themselves under these unjust structures.

Returning to the first pillar or objective of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, namely their healing component, this Part I also explored the possible contribution that the content and dynamics of the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* (and very briefly, of other weeks) might provide towards the healing process in the lives of survivors of forced displacement. It also pointed out some relevant aspects in the ‘ministry of healing’ of spiritual accompaniers and givers of the Exercises, particularly as embodied in their three ‘ministries’ of listening, affirming and freeing. We saw that part of the healing aspect of the First Week of the *Exercises* resides in the ‘capacity’ or openness of survivors of forced displacement to accept God’s unconditional love and acceptance of them—despite their limitations and whatever they might have done or might have happened to them throughout their displacement experience; that God loves the whole person, and that these limitations constitute only a part of who the person is.

Other healing aspects of the Exercises of the First Week we considered included: Ignatius’ image of God as the ‘Divine Majesty’ (and how it might help exercitants become aware of and heal the distorted images of God they might hold); the healing power of the sacrament of reconciliation within the dynamic of the Exercises; the potential of the *Examination of Conscience* to help reveal unconscious motivations, fears, and apprehensions that influence survivors of forced displacement’s responses, in particular to issues dealing with past hurts and suffering; and the *Rules of Discernment of Spirits* in the First Week which, through helping identify further disordered attachments and tendencies, as well as their sources and causes, could be an invaluable tool in the healing of obstacles to a deeper relationship with God.

We explored briefly also the potential healing aspect of contemplating scriptural healing stories in the Second Week and the Passion of Jesus in the Third Week. As exercitants listen

to Christ’s words, watch his actions and witness the emotional responses of the hearers and recipients of his healing power in the healing stories, similar emotions can be evoked in them: it is the power of the Christ story meeting their own stories and responding to their own specific needs of healing. Healing too can be experienced in contemplating the different scenes of Jesus’ Passion, in seeing how Jesus responds to the pain and suffering being inflicted on him with impunity: his refusal to resort to judgment, resentment, and seeking revenge against his tormentors, but instead forgiving them and praying for them; and also through the way in which Jesus gives meaning to this suffering as part of his mission of love from the Trinity towards humanity. Finally, the *Contemplation to Attain Love*, as a prayer of surrendering oneself to God, but also of surrendering to the Lord all that binds us, that takes away our freedom, and of our disordered affections and attachments, can bring healing through the radical acknowledgment that there are certain things in life over which many people (including survivors of forced displacement) have no control or power, including the capacity to overcome hurts, resentments, feelings of revenge and violence, and of unworthiness and low self-esteem. Only God’s grace can heal all of these, and healing comes when we can acknowledge that God’s grace can and should be ‘enough for me’.

Parts II and III dealt with the content and with the structure and format, respectively, of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. In terms of content, while these *exercises* have been designed with forcibly displaced people in mind, seeking to foster and nurture their healing processes, not all of them deal with forced displacement issues. The life of a survivor is more than his or her experiences of forced displacement, and their spiritual experiences go beyond these as well. Thus, five different types of *exercises* make up the content of our Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’: (1) *exercises* specific to survivors of forced displacement; (2) *exercises* that provide initiation into and deepening of one’s experience of God (common to all ‘light’ *exercises*); (3) *exercises* that help develop prayer and other spiritual skills as well as the disposition and capacities of the potential *subiecto*; (4) *exercises* designed as markers or ‘rest stops’ to take stock of one’s spiritual journey, and (5) *exercises* that act as constitutive elements or blocks to help ‘build’ the new, more positive, life-giving narrative of each exercitant we have mentioned before.

As expected, the *exercises* specific to survivors of forced displacement, dealing with issues raised in the previous four chapters, are given priority. The other *exercises* help exercitants

derive the greatest possible benefit from these by developing these relevant capacities and skills and by helping them in the process of re-authoring their life narratives. The criteria, themes and possible prayer resources for each of these *exercises* (again, based on data compiled from the previous chapters) was presented in table form for each type of *exercise*. Following the structure and format presented in Part III, a set of two hundred *exercises* were developed and ‘sequenced’ in such a way as to fulfil the proposed objectives set for the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’.

In terms of this format and structure, we explored first the ‘character’ of our *exercises* as ‘light’ or *Annotation 18 exercises* and the various principles and characteristics they share as such. These included, among others: an intention to help exercitants overcome spiritual passivity; an invitation to place themselves before God’s presence and bring their life story to God; a common objective of bringing forth gratitude through greater awareness and reflection; a communal aspect to reinforce the personal experience of the *exercises*, and respecting each exercitant’s rhythm or tempo. The progression of the *exercises* was designed following a chronology; though, rather than starting with the exercitants’ past, they begin with the present reality of survivors of forced displacement, inviting them to acknowledge that reality as it really is and not as they would like it to be. Using that reality as point of departure, the *exercises* then invite exercitants to re-live their past, both the events and consequences of their forced displacement experiences and also those previous to that experience, where they might identify qualities, capacities and resources that will help them re-author their present narratives into alternative and more positive ones. As mentioned earlier, the sequence of the *exercises*, divided into five ‘blocks’ or sections, followed the hierarchy of ‘intentional states’ that help shape people’s actions and how they live their lives. At the end of each block, exercitants are invited to express their progress towards healing through particular *exercises* that invite them to articulate ‘my story so far’. Finally, though these are ‘light’ *exercises*, they incorporate themes from all four Weeks of Ignatius’ own.

Part III finished with a section dedicated to the ‘givers of the *exercises*’. The main purpose of this section was to summarise and highlight some of their specific functions in regards to the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’, including: (1) assessing and contributing to the development of the potential *subiecto* of their exercitants; (2) acting as ‘supportive audiences’ to strengthen the exercitants’ new stories and descriptions of themselves; (3) engaging them

with proficiency in the art of spiritual conversation; (4) acting as facilitators of communal prayer reflections, and (5) exercising specific competencies, knowledge and skills required to offer these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. While it is not expected that givers of these *exercises* will initially be ‘experts’ in all the areas mentioned, it is hoped that in time they will develop a certain degree of proficiency in them. Finally, we offered certain guidelines for givers of these *exercises* to follow in presenting them to their exercitants. These guidelines were based on a short ‘exercitant manual’ that has been developed to give to exercitants at the beginning of the journey of the *exercises* in handout format. This ‘manual’ introduces the context of the *exercises*, describes to exercitants what they can expect from them, and explains what Ignatius’ meant regarding ‘interior movements’ in one’s spiritual journey. They introduce the format of the *exercises* and the different stages involved in ‘praying’ them, such as advanced preparation, getting ready for the prayer period, the actual prayer exercise, and closing their prayer period, all with the intention of facilitating the exercitants’ communication with God and fostering their capacity to ‘listen’ to God’s communicating with them.

Ignatius, in fact, presumed that God wanted to communicate continually with each human being, trying to draw each one into friendship and cooperation. Ignatius’ Exercises—and these Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden—are offered then as a means to pay attention to this self-communicating God and to try to align one’s life in accord with what God desires for each person. They are offered as a way to *find* God and develop deeper intimacy with God. In finding God, survivors of forced displacement, receivers of these *exercises*, will hopefully discover God’s unfolding dream for them and how they are called to live out that dream through lives that are abundant in joy, purpose and meaning, service and love.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. Research question and answer

For many forcibly displaced people, it is their faith—and their hope in a better future for themselves and their loved ones—that has kept them going through their long journey of displacement, especially in moments of greatest trial and tribulation. We have ‘heard’ their testimonies throughout this thesis: *If there is no longer hope where you are, then you have to do all that you can to get to a place where you can at least cultivate that hope. No matter at what price... I do not curse God. I cannot forsake Him... I have lost faith in human beings, my only prayer is that I do not let myself lose faith in You... God is in control of my future, and my family is in his hands... I hope in God. I believe God is my Father and will not abandon me... Detention almost killed my soul. Prayer and humanity saved me...* It is a faith and hope that those who accompany and serve forcibly displaced people also give witness to, often in awe and wonder: *The richness of human spirit that we discover among refugees is always a surprise; while there may be no rational grounds for believing that what a refugee longs for will actually come about, we find in them great hope.* And it is a faith and hope they bring to their places of resettlement—their new homes—and which they wish to share with those who have welcomed them: *God of heaven and earth, we pray that this nation to which you have sent us be favourable to us, that this land may be a source of blessing for us, and that we, in turn, might be a source of blessing for it too...*

As survivors of forced displacement settle into their new homes, they hope to put their pain and suffering behind. They know it will not be easy to start a new life, but they trust that the God who never abandoned them during the displacement journey, as horrific as it might have been, will continue to bless them and accompany them as they resume their journey of life,

now in peace. Yet, often the process is much more difficult than they had imagined. Though they might no longer experience violence and persecution, they face many new challenges: a way of life very different from anything they had known before, often enshrined in values in conflict with their own; lack of opportunities for study and employment; lack of institutional support to help them navigate through the maze of bureaucracy to access services; lack of welcome, and in some cases discrimination and even instances of xenophobia. The ‘internal’ challenges are no less daunting: post-traumatic issues linked to their forced displacement experiences; issues of identity and self-worth as they struggle to find ‘their place’ in their new homes and discern ways to contribute, *to be a blessing*, to others; feeling torn by their love for those left behind, who might still be in danger, and who often depend on their financial support; looking for ways to cope with the lack of welcome and rejection they often experience from receiving communities; finding ways to sustain that faith and hope that kept them going for so long but now seem to dwindle; and their need for healing. Yes, especially this need for healing so they can be free again to live more joyful, purposeful and abundant lives.

For many survivors of forced displacement, it will take years to overcome the effects of the violence, dislocation and trauma they experienced during their forced displacement journey. For some, it will take a lifetime. Psychological counselling and therapies can contribute to this healing process. And for survivors of forced displacement whose faith has been a constant, an anchor in their lives, nurturing their spiritual lives can also contribute greatly to set them back ‘on track’. But it has to be ‘relevant’ spiritual support that addresses the issues and circumstances forcibly displaced people have had to live through and continue to deal with. As Antoinette, my ex-refugee friend from Rwanda quoted in the Introduction put it, “something that can help me reflect on and heal what I went through as a refugee, now that I am in Australia, beginning a new life”.

The question this thesis has sought to answer then is: How to nurture the spiritual lives of survivors of forced displacement, now in their countries of resettlement, in ways that help them sustain their faith and hope, that lead to healing and freedom, that help them become the persons God has created them to be and live abundant lives in service to God and to the world? Our answer: by offering a program of Ignatian exercises and spiritual resources that meet their current needs and circumstances. As stated at the beginning of this document, this thesis has addressed specifically the *needs* and *circumstances* of survivors of forced displacement who spouse the Christian faith tradition and have resettled in Australia. And, in

both spiritual and practical terms, it has addressed them from a Catholic theological perspective and within the context of the mission and apostolates of the Society of Jesus.

2. Summary of the Thesis

In seeking to determine the factors and elements to be considered in designing the aforementioned *program of Ignatian exercises and spiritual resources*, two major questions were posed in each of the first four chapters of the thesis, which the findings of the research aimed to respond to. In the first chapter these questions were: (1) How and what can a theology and spirituality of displacement contribute to the lives of survivors of forced displacement? and (2) What can the forcibly displaced in turn contribute to the life of the Church, its understanding of God, its spirituality and its mission? Chapter 2 asked the questions: (1) What can we learn from the Society of Jesus' Social Apostolate's history, characteristics and way of proceeding in general and from its specific focus and approach in its service to the forcibly displaced, particularly through its Jesuit Refugee Service? and (2) What principles and criteria should guide our response—both practical and spiritual—to the plight of forcibly displaced people, as distinctly expressed through ecclesial documents and Catholic social teaching?

Chapter 3 endeavoured to answer the questions: (1) How can the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius be adapted so as to take into consideration the particular circumstances of survivors of forced displacement, based on the practice and learnings from similar applications in the past? and (2) What needs to be done to ensure that they still are 'Ignatian exercises'? Chapter 4 asked the questions: (1) What is the essence and characteristics of the Ignatian *subiectio* and how can these be assessed and nurtured in survivors of forced displacements as 'subjects' of Ignatian exercises? and (2) How may specific spiritual, psychological, anthropological and sociological factors linked to survivors of forced displacement (including those which derive from the particular Australian context) influence their capacity to engage in Ignatian exercises? An encompassing question that underpinned all the others and sought to fulfil the practical goal of the thesis was addressed by chapter 5: What can we learn through this overall investigation in terms of the specific needs of survivors of forced displacement which should be taken into account in developing *spiritual exercises* for them?

In **chapter 1** we saw that theologising contextually through the lens of displacement calls upon us to revisit all branches of theology and their areas of study, as well as the questions they pose, with an openness to the possibility that through this new 'displacement'

perspective God, and God's desires for us, might be revealed in ways we had not hitherto considered or even imagined. While the perspective might be new, certainly forced displacement is not. We saw that it has been and continues to be an essential and defining element in the reality of both the universal Church and each of its members. Each of us experiences an 'existential exodus' as human beings on our way back to God, and as such, displacement becomes the common 'sacred space' where we encounter the 'Other/other'. Further, displacement also affects the Church's nature and composition, challenging its own understanding of 'catholicity' or universality as people of God. And in terms of the forcibly displaced and migrants in general, it challenges the Church to seek ways to incorporate the experience of people-in-movement into the lives of its existing communities of faith: beyond assimilation, integration or even multicultural 'tolerance', the desired goal is that seemingly competitive identities be sensitised to the other, so that a truly *in-communion* Church can begin to develop. A theology of displacement, therefore, is concerned with the construction of an imagined Church that is not only *for* displaced peoples but also *with* and *of* the displaced, where their specific contribution to the Church's identity, essence and mission is welcomed, nurtured, fostered and valued.

In the second part of **chapter 1**, we saw how the action of the Holy Spirit has been able to transform the horrific effects and tragic consequences of forced displacement into graced 'instruments' for survivors to help them appropriate the mystery of Christ in their lives—to help them become more *like* him. The key in this process of transformation has been the *grace of hope*, which we saw was also the essential element of their spirituality—a spirituality of hope in displacement. We strived to articulate how the forcibly displaced have lived out—in and through the Spirit—this hope as a 'habit of the heart' which has given many of them the capacity to do and endure what they have had to in their journeys back to God: learning to hope against all hope; finding and being bearers of life and blessings in the midst of realities bearing only death and damnation; believing that God never abandoned them despite all evidence to the contrary, and offering hospitality, solidarity and companionship when they seemingly had nothing to offer.

The Spirit of God gives, or is in the process of giving, to various ecclesial communities, the gifts to read and understand reality so as to elaborate theological and pastoral frameworks which might be fruitful in particular situations and at particular times. Thus, in their process of transformation the Spirit has taught the forcibly displaced many lessons which we argued could help us face the crises of hopelessness and despair so prevalent in the world today—

their contribution to the Church and to the world. Lessons about putting all of one's trust in the Lord Jesus; about learning to listen to the pain and suffering of others to offer hospitality and healing; about growing in hope through humility and vulnerability; about giving thanks, over and over, in acknowledgment of and commitment to the presence of God in all aspects of one's life, including suffering and hardship; about experiencing more deeply through this suffering the love of God for us manifested in Jesus on the cross, who loved his own to the end; about our being pilgrim people, always on the move, often alone, as a condition to enter into companionship; about God's promise that everything in our lives, even our suffering, will make sense and be worth the cost; about learning to wait in hope for others, and about always praying, no matter what, never neglecting our relationship with the Lord. Finally, we saw how, in sharing the call to proclaim the gospel, forcibly displaced people can do this more effectively than most, because their stories of suffering and survival give them the credibility before people who are hurting and suffering, and also the assurance that such suffering will not have the last word.

All these lessons and contributions, however, are in danger of being lost, lest we offer ways for the forcibly displaced to sustain their faith and hope, and give them opportunities to share what they have learned with their communities near and far. This requires an integrated approach where not only the spiritual but also the material needs of survivors of forced displacement are addressed. As we showed in **chapter 2**, this is what the Society of Jesus has strived to do since its beginnings, through its various ministries and specially through its Social Apostolate and, in regards to forcibly displaced peoples, particularly through its Jesuit Refugee Service in collaboration with others. It has been a ministry of peace-making and reconciliation, characterised by accompaniment, service and strategic advocacy for the rights of the forcibly displaced, seeking to embody and fulfil the Society's mission of promoting a faith that does justice, of achieving a justice that sustains faith, grounded on its preferential option for the poor. A mission that seeks to respond to the current challenges faced by the poor, the marginalised and the forcibly displaced as identified particularly by the Society's last six General Congregations. As we saw, the challenges are vast and complex—political, religious, environmental, among others—and the Society does not claim to have all the answers. It has recognised in fact its shortcomings and failures but has also expressed its renewed confidence in the mission the Lord has entrusted to it, guided by God's spirit, its Social Apostolate's characteristics and principles, and inspired by the wisdom and riches of its Ignatian spirituality and *Spiritual Exercises*. Through various examples, we saw how these have been applied in recent years to specific social justice issues to ensure that exercitants

make them (and givers offer them) with a particular consciousness—a social justice consciousness. From these examples we derived several criteria for our own application of the *Exercises* for survivors of forced displacement.

Distilling further the ‘integrated approach’ mentioned above, chapter 2 sought to explore in detail what an appropriate response to the plight and challenges of forcibly displaced people might require. We saw that such response is the responsibility of the human community both as a matter of human rights and as a matter of faith in action—inherent to the mission Christians have been entrusted—and as articulated by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the promotion of the common good. Such a response demands also a paradigm shift, from policies of exclusion aimed at keeping the forcibly displaced at bay, to policies based on the universal rights of human persons, including their cultural and religious rights, which underscore their value and dignity. We argued that such response is best ‘incarnated’ and manifested through the values of hospitality and solidarity, companionship and welcome, not only towards, but also by, forcibly displaced people, in a spirit of mutuality and reciprocity. For as mentioned earlier (and expressed as a constant theme throughout the thesis), the forcibly displaced have much to offer us.

The learnings and insights from chapter 2 rendered several considerations and criteria for the design of our spiritual resources for survivors of forced displacement, both in terms of the issues these resources should address and how they can help foster survivors’ contributions to their communities, as part of their process of healing and of finding greater meaning in their lives. Thus, for example, these resources should seek to help survivors of forced displacement: move beyond their ‘status’ or ‘tag’ as victims when forms of discrimination still persist in their countries of resettlement; express their own ‘cultural brand’ of Catholicism/Christianity as they contribute towards inculturating the gospel; challenge the Church to go beyond its concern for self-perpetuation and do all it can to proclaim justice within its service of faith; find creative ways to be agents of peace and reconciliation in their receiving communities, and contribute to build bridges of understanding and dialogue in developing true intercultural communities.

In addition, these spiritual resources applied from Ignatius’ *Exercises*, should also help survivors of forced displacement to: assimilate Christ’s ways of poverty, compassion and solidarity, particularly in their engagement with those in need; see the world as the place where God’s reign can become a reality and do what they can to walk towards that reality;

discern their personal talents and find ways to use them for service that fosters friendship and collaboration in community; overcome the fear and trauma that paralyses them; recognise their own role and responsibility in the structural sin of the world, even from their condition and situations of disadvantage; develop their social justice consciousness; become more attuned to God's continuing loving presence in creation and discern ways to safeguard the integrity of creation; encourage articulation of the specific contribution of forcibly displaced women, and respond to the call to be a consoling and joyful presence in the world.

As we saw in **chapter 3**, St Ignatius believed that his *Spiritual Exercises* could touch the life of every individual, no matter his or her situation, condition or past experiences. What was essential was to offer them the 'right' exercises: those that would lead to the greatest spiritual benefit for each person. In other words, what was needed was to find the appropriate adaptation or application that would ensure the greatest spiritual fruits in their lives. In answering the two questions posited for this chapter, we showed (both through theoretical considerations—including classical textual interpretation—and practical examples), how this has been done in the history of Ignatius' *Exercises* essentially from their beginnings, always attempting (and succeeding for the most part), to hold the tension between being faithful to Ignatius' text (maintaining its Ignatian nature and characteristics) and applying it to meet the needs, circumstances and experiences of each exercitant. These circumstances have been influenced not only by the exercitants' personal make-up, but also by the various spiritual and secular movements and concerns of the last four and half centuries. Today, adapting the *Exercises* for survivors of forced displacement must take into account, among others, the issues of globalisation, secularism, inculturation and interculturalism, fundamentalism, a spirituality of 'living in the now', a societal or social justice dimension, and care for our planet. We saw that the issue of inculturation (including the appropriate use of 'language' for presenting the *Exercises*, both in terms of content and process) was of particular relevance, as most survivors of forced displacement come from different cultures to those they encounter in Australia and other adoptive countries. This, of course, does not mean 'dumbing down' the *Exercises*; on the contrary, it is hoped that the spiritual language and understanding of givers of the *Exercises* will be enriched by forcibly displaced people's descriptions, concepts and imagery resulting from their experience of the *Exercises*.

Finally, we saw also that the early adaptations and applications of the *Exercises* were motivated (as they are still today), by a deep desire to do whatever was necessary to *help souls*, which paved the way for developing very distinctive and personalised ways of helping

others, and which ranged from ‘basic’ spiritual conversation (of essence for getting to know one’s exercitants) to offering the full *Exercises*. In other words, and of particular relevance in the case of the forcibly displaced, we saw that when putting the *Exercises* into praxis, as important as considering what the text of the *Exercises* says or what its method requires at a particular stage of the process is also ‘who’ is the one (the soul) that givers must help and ‘how’ and ‘for what’ specific purpose at a particular moment in their lives.

We saw that in practical terms, this meant that any application of the *Exercises* for survivors of forced displacement (in any of its various forms) that seeks to maintain their Ignatian essence and authenticity, must both include the following elements and consider them from the perspective of forced displacement: deepening one’s relationship with God (how might it have been affected, for example, by trauma and violence); external and interior silence to dispose the soul to hear God’s word; the exercitant’s personal prayer submitted to constant discernment through the Examen and review of prayer; *Exercises* transmitted through face-to-face conversation by a giver who authenticates exercitants’ experience of God, attends to the movements of their hearts, and provides adequate material adapted to each person’s needs; points of meditation focused primarily on the word of God and especially on the gospels; following in some manner the ‘itinerary’ suggested by Ignatius (content will depend on the form of *Exercises* used); an ecclesial component that invites exercitants to participate actively in the Church; the link between the *Exercises* and ordinary life, as part of a journey that begins before them and continues afterwards; some type of *election* or making decisions in terms of life reform; taking into account the disposition, attitudes and capacities of each ‘subject’ (their *subiecto*), and use of Ignatius’ rules of discernment of spirits, in practical and appropriate ways. As expected, some of these characteristics are more relevant for some *exercises* than for others, but in broad terms, we have strived to incorporate these elements in our “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”.

The central theme of **chapter 4** was ‘the forcibly displaced person as subject’ of the Exercises, and its key objective was to answer the question “Who is this ‘person’ and what factors should be addressed which might hinder or contribute to his or her experience of the Exercises? We recognised that despite sharing the common trait of being ‘survivors of forced displacement’, each survivor is still an individual with his or her own personal experiences, psychological make-up and circumstances as well as traditions, culture, language, etc., and as with any other exercitant, givers of the Exercises need to take into account these personal aspects as they apply the Exercises to meet the individual’s personal needs. However, the

forcibly displaced do share certain common characteristics linked to their displacement journey. We noted that awareness of these factors is of essence for givers of the Exercises and other spiritual accompaniers to enhance their capacity to support survivors of forced displacement throughout their spiritual journeys.

Thus, **chapter 4** addressed four ‘sets’ of factors identified as potential influences on the experience of survivors of forced displacement making the Exercises: (1) theological and spiritual, looking specifically at the topic of the *subiecto* in the Spiritual Exercises; (2) psychological (including issues of trauma and violence, abandonment and rejection, survival guilt, feeling of worthlessness and anger) and their possible adverse effects on that *subiecto*; (3) anthropological factors, in particular those that might help survivors of forced displacement make sense of their displacement experience and move forward and beyond the negative effects of this experience into the future, including: sharing of stories, having access to mourning and closure, finding ways to sustain their faith and hope, forcibly displaced women’s resilience and courage, and finding ways to promote forgiveness, reconciliation and healing, and (4) sociological factors linked to the context and reality of the receiving communities’ attitudes towards survivors of forced displacement and to religion and spirituality in Australia, as the country of resettlement where our *exercises* for the displaced will originally be offered. Clearly, all of these issues could also affect exercitants with non-displacement background, but they were chosen as they do seem to affect most survivors of forced displacement in one degree or another. It was noted also that givers of *exercises* should be aware that certain forcibly displaced people—depending on the circumstances of their displacement journey—might continue to deal with some of these issues long after resettlement, and even throughout their whole lives.

Three of the salient themes from this exploration that had a particular influence on the design of the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’” included: a greater understanding of the Ignatian *subiecto*; the process of story-sharing and the psychological and anthropological healing dimensions. Assessing the presence of *subiecto* is a prerequisite to discern first whether to offer the Exercises to an individual and second, what type of *exercises* to offer him or her. It was noted that in terms of ‘having *subiecto*’, instead of finding specific ways to assess or measure a fix set of qualities or capacities, it was more important to find ways to develop their potential. This was quite significant in setting one of the important criteria for the design of our *exercises*, namely, that they (or at least a number of them) aim to develop further this potential in survivors of forced displacement, in terms of the identified attitudes,

dispositions and capacities required for making the *exercises*, particularly within the cognitive, affective and relational areas.

The importance of not only sharing stories as a therapeutic and healing process but also of finding ways to reformulate and reframe these stories was identified. It was found that through the process of ‘re-authoring’ their stories in more constructive and life-giving ways—without negating the harsh and painful realities they had lived through—survivors could give meaning to that suffering and find release from its adverse lingering effects. Of noteworthy significance was also recognising the attention needed to the healing of past memories within the process of remembrance-guilt-repentance-forgiveness-reconciliation, to contribute to the positive reframing of one’s life narrative. We will talk more about these narrative and healing processes in relation to chapter 5 below.

Finally, a most important learning came with the acknowledgement that despite the limitations that adverse psychological factors might pose to survivors of forced displacement, it should not be assumed that all forcibly displaced people have developed psychological pathologies as a consequence of what they have had to live through. Although most, if not all, would have experienced some degree of trauma associated with their dislocation, many would have dealt with it in appropriate ways and eventually overcome its harmful effects. That is not to say that some of their more deeply violent and traumatic experiences might not have resulted in mental health issues that will require counselling or other professional intervention. Yet, we noted that it is essential to recognise the danger of formulating the forced displacement narrative exclusively in terms of a psychology of loss or simply through a paradigm of pathology and deficit. To do so might result in negating the resilience and courage of survivors of forced displacement and in dismissing or even denying the gifts they have to offer.

Chapter 5 sought to bring together the insights and learnings from the previous chapters in order to establish the design criteria, content, structure and format of the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”. These criteria sought to (1) respond to the needs, circumstances and experiences of forcibly displaced people, (2) meet them where they are, as individuals, in their journey of faith, and (3) offer them Ignatian *exercises*. We noted that it is generally accepted that the full Spiritual Exercises (20th *Annotation*) of St Ignatius are intended only for a limited number of people and that, in time, some survivors of forced displacement might be ready and disposed for the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life (19th *Annotation*). However,

because of their ‘needs, circumstances and experiences’, what will be most conducive and of “greatest benefit” for most of them are *exercises* based on Ignatius’ 18th *Annotation*. They seek to help exercitants enter into and deepen their relationship with God, provide catechetical instruction through simplicity of content and opportunities for communal interaction, and offer exercitants, at their own rhythm or pace, what they can “well bear or profit from without fatigue” and “as much as they are willing to dispose themselves to receive, for their greater help and progress” so as to “get some instruction and reach a certain level of peace of soul” (cf. [*SpEx* 18]). Our study showed that this description fits the needs and desires of most survivors of forced displacement.

Of course, what distinguishes the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’” from other ‘light’ or ‘first’ exercises is this ‘audience’ and their own specific requirements to reach that ‘certain level of peace of soul’. We have argued and shown throughout this thesis that the most pressing spiritual need for survivors of forced displacement is healing: spiritual healing that in turn will contribute to their physical and mental well-being. Thus, while these *spiritual exercises* and resources seek to help survivors of forced displacement develop a more intimate relationship with God and provide them with some tools to make good decisions, their main additional objective is to promote and nurture spiritual healing in their lives. To this effect, we explored in some detail in this chapter the possible contribution of the content and dynamics of the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* (and briefly of other Weeks) towards this healing process, and of the healing ministry of spiritual accompaniers and givers of these *exercises*. We argued, likewise, that for survivors of forced displacement, one of most relevant ways to achieve healing is through ‘re-writing’ or ‘re-authoring’ their life stories through the lens of faith, in a way that gives greater meaning to the struggles and adversities they have faced in the past—especially during their displacement journey—discovering God’s presence and action in and through them. To develop this alternative and more positive life narrative, we chose to use some of the elements of a psycho-therapeutic tool known as narrative therapy, which highlights a person’s internal strengths, qualities and resources and also contributes to this re-authoring process by focusing on the person’s ‘intentional’ states—their intentions and purposes, values and beliefs, hopes and dreams, principles for living and commitments that shape that person’s life and actions.

As expected, the ‘lens’ or perspective from which these *exercises* have been developed is the lens of displacement, which in our case relied heavily on the learnings and insights obtained particularly from our exploration in chapter 1 on a theology and spirituality of displacement.

In addition, this chapter explored some of the more characteristic elements of the forced displacement ‘experience’, seeking to understand what it means to have lived as a forcibly displaced person—again, with the intention of helping survivors re-write their life story into a more positive and meaningful narrative. While it was acknowledged both that each person’s journey and how they respond to the factors, causes and consequences of forced displacement is unique, it was also recognised that there are certain commonalities among these. And that, while these *exercises* sought to use as point of departure the present reality of survivors of forced displacement, in their resettlement circumstances, it was also necessary to understand how that reality came to be and particularly how it was (and continues to be) affected by their having survived their forced displacement journey. Exploring the causes and factors of forced displacement also revealed the sinful structures behind the violent and tragic disruption and suffering caused to the lives of millions of people in our world today, and highlighted the importance of including the societal dimension mentioned earlier in the development of our *exercises*.

The remainder of **chapter 5** addressed the content and the structure and format of the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”. In terms of content, and following the integrated approach spoused throughout the thesis, the *exercises* have been designed to deal both with specific issues linked to displacement and other aspects of survivors’ lives. In fact, the life of a survivor is more than his or her experiences of forced displacement, and of course their spiritual experiences go beyond these as well. These other types of *exercises*, covering most of Ignatius’ themes, are intended to help exercitants derive the greatest possible benefit from displacement-related content by developing relevant capacities and skills that can contribute to the re-authoring of their life narratives. Thus, in addition to forced displacement-based *exercises*, four other types were designed; together they constitute the content for a ‘set’ or program of close to two hundred *spiritual exercises* and resources, sequenced in such a way as to achieve the objectives mentioned above.

In terms of format and structure, as mentioned earlier, they are 18th *Annotation*-type exercises sharing the principles and characteristics outlined before, particularly in terms of their catechetical component and of simplicity of content and presentation. As also alluded to earlier, the structure of the *exercises*, divided into five sections or blocks, followed the hierarchy of ‘intentional states’ that help shape how people act and the way they live their lives. **Chapter 5** concluded with a section addressed to the givers of these *exercises*, outlining their functions and competencies as well as guidelines to present and give the

exercises to their potential exercitants. Although it is not expected that givers will necessarily be experts in all the areas mentioned, it is hoped that in their commitment to provide spiritual care to survivors of forced displacement, they will seek to develop a certain degree of proficiency in most of them in time. It is also hope that they may consider this endeavour as an articulation of their own mission and vocation, and also as part of the mission of the Society of Jesus and its social and spiritual apostolates, and of the mission of the universal church.

3. The *Spiritual Exercises* and survivors of forced displacement

The *Spiritual Exercises*, understood as a ‘tool’ for personal conversion, help people deepen their union with God and free themselves—through discernment and growing *indifference*—from those disordered affections that get in the way of making an election for God and for the service of God’s people. In raising the social justice consciousness of exercitants, they can also be considered as an ‘instrument’ for social transformation and action. In other words, the challenging journey through the *Spiritual Exercises* should culminate in harmonising one’s truest and deepest desires with those of God for each of us, concretely expressed in our love and service of God and the world as disciples of Jesus. They constitute a process of movement: from where we find ourselves to where we would like to be in our relationship with the Lord. In the context of survivors of forced displacement, as we have seen, the desired movement must also include a healing process of both past and present life-draining experiences to be eventually replaced by conditions that promote a more purposeful and meaningful existence. As mentioned earlier, this is what the *exercises* offered here have intended to do, incorporating specific elements of the *Spiritual Exercises* towards this goal, which have also informed the content and process of our *exercises*, as the pastoral application of our research.

We have already alluded to the potential direct healing action of the *Exercises*, through its content and dynamics, for survivors of forced displacement. By opening ‘spaces’ for God-human encounters, they offer the possibility for survivors to experience God’s unconditional love and mercy, to know and feel themselves loved and accepted, to experience themselves forgiven and reconciled. As we have shown, all these experiences are essential to the healing process of survivors of forced displacement who often have felt rejected or abandoned by loved ones and strangers alike, felt guilty and remorseful for the things they had to do during their displacement journey to survive, and felt isolated from their communities as a result of those actions. We have strived to design *exercises* and resources

that favour and promote these healing experiences in the journey of the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”.

Likewise, we have seen that one of the outcomes of the *Spiritual Exercises* is that they help us be in touch with concrete reality, integrating all aspects of our lives as seen through the eyes of faith. This process, again, is essential for survivors of forced displacement who have lived ‘outside of reality’, having had to put their lives on hold for long periods of time (of course, their trauma and suffering have been very real!) The harsh reality experienced in their resettlement communities can often also be quite different from what they had expected and the temptation might be to avoid engaging with it to forestall additional pain. Yet, sadly, this gets in the way of growth, maturity and fulfilment. Being in touch with reality, on the other hand, requires accepting that things are as they are, while making choices and decisions to take steps in transforming those aspects of reality that are not life-giving. And of course, this is another well-known benefit of making the Spiritual Exercises: helping us to be discerning in our decisions and options, so as to discover the truest needs and the best way to respond to them. As mentioned before, this has to do also with freeing ourselves from whatever disordered affections blind us to this pursuit, and in the case of survivors of forced displacement, these might include their perception of themselves as victims or their feelings of worthlessness.

Moreover, part of being in touch with reality, in the context of the *Exercises*, has to do with reflecting on one’s personal contribution to the sinful structures of the world and the suffering it causes others. It is hoped that such reflection, in the light of the teachings and actions of Jesus and of the deep interior knowledge of him experienced by survivors of forced displacement throughout the Exercises, should lead them to action (societal dimension): learning from Jesus to *be* as he was and to *live* as he did. The concrete reality which informs our spiritual life calls us to ‘help souls’ in response to the ever-challenging question “what am I doing for Christ?” [SpEx 53]. We have seen, moreover, that it must not be individualistic service, but service done in friendship and collaboration, in community, sharing from what we have been given in solidarity with others. For survivors of forced displacement, the gift of being in touch with reality afforded through the Exercises means also discovering the gifts they hold; gifts they often ‘ignore’ because they do not recognise them as such. In other cases, (linked, as we have seen, to consequences of psychological trauma), it is often fear that paralyses them and prevents them from offering their services to others: fears of being rejected, misunderstood, of not being ‘good enough’. So the way this

journey of the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’” has been conceived also seeks to address and dispel these fears by highlighting the internal strengths, qualities and resources that have served survivors of forced displacement so well in the past.

We have mentioned previously how Jesus’ way of dealing with suffering can be a source of great consolation for survivors of forced displacement and help give meaning to their own suffering, contributing also to their process of ‘learning’ to forgive others and themselves, of dealing with issues of guilt, of healing of past hurtful memories and of achieving reconciliation with God, themselves and others. In contemplating and praying over Jesus’ sacrifice in love for each of us—for each survivor of forced displacement—in the *Exercises*, exercitants feel compelled to respond to the call to serve. In experiencing and recognising themselves as people of the resurrection, sent to “the ends of the earth to proclaim the good news of salvation”, survivors of forced displacement can acknowledge that they too have been called to mission, to be men and women for others with joy and consolation, finding and seeking God’s presence in this mission they have been entrusted. Though the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’” are ‘light’ exercises, based on Ignatius’ *Annotation* 18, we have tried to include all of these themes in the journey of faith they offer survivors of forced displacement.

4. Contributions of the thesis

In conjunction with the objectives set for each of its chapters, we can identify the following contributions of this thesis to the lives of forcibly displaced people, to the ever expanding and complex field of forced displacement, to the ministry of the *Spiritual Exercises*, to the mission of the Society of Jesus, and to the mission of the Australian and universal Church:

- a) ***To the lives of forcibly displaced people:*** in the absence of relevant and appropriate resources for the spiritual support of forcibly displaced people, the overall objective of the thesis has been to find ways to nurture the spiritual lives of survivors of forced displacement, now in their countries of resettlement, in order to sustain their faith and hope, and to provide a pathway to healing and freedom that will help them live abundant lives in the service of God and the world. In order to fulfil this objective, the thesis sought to identify the main factors and elements required to provide this desired spiritual nourishment, and once identified, to use them as criteria to develop a spiritual program or resources for survivors of forced displacement. The final outcome resulted in the

“Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”, a set or program (a ‘faith journey’) of spiritual exercises rooted in the Ignatian tradition (chapter 5).

- b) ***To the field of forced displacement:*** despite the diversity of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices that sustain forcibly displaced people throughout their displacement journey and process of resettlement into their new societies and communities, contemporary considerations among researchers and policy makers within the field of forced displacement have tended to neglect the role of religion and spirituality as a source of intellectual and emotional support, strength, encouragement and resilience for them, and as an instrument for identity and community building, leaving this most important aspect of their lived experience relatively unexplored. Thus, studies on the pastoral, religious and spiritual expressions and needs of forcibly displaced persons in general, and in Australia in particular, have been lacking. This thesis has sought to address part of this deficiency by identifying theological and spiritual, psychological, anthropological and sociological factors that might influence the ability of survivors of forced displacement to engage in a particular program of spiritual development and growth, designed specifically for survivors of forced displacement who spouse the Christian faith tradition and who have resettled in Australia (chapter 4). As suggested in the future considerations below, their effect on the holistic well-being of this population will need to be assessed.
- c) ***To the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises:*** the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius have been adapted and applied to meet the needs and circumstances of countless ‘audiences’, groups and individuals, since the time of their inception by Fr Ignatius. The “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”, designed specifically for survivors of forced displacement, are then part of a long tradition that seeks to offer exercitants what they can “well bear or profit from without fatigue” and “as much as they are willing to dispose themselves to receive”, for their greater help and progress and the greatest benefit of their souls. The thesis itself, though it does not intend to be a ‘manual’, nevertheless provides a great deal of background information, reflection and analysis on some of the major issues and factors affecting the lives of the forcibly displaced. As such, it constitutes an important resource for future givers of these *exercises* in particular, and spiritual accompaniers in general, who would like to provide spiritual care and support to survivors of forced displacement (chapter 3).

- d) ***To the mission of the Society of Jesus:*** the ministry to forcibly displaced peoples has been one of the universal priorities of the Society of Jesus for over thirty years, as an integral part of its mission to promote a faith that does justice. This ministry has been carried through many of the Society's institutions, but particularly through its Social Apostolate and its Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). It has been a mission characterised by accompaniment, service and advocacy for the rights and needs of the forcibly displaced. The Society and the Jesuit Refugee Service continue to search for ways to meet the ever expanding needs and challenges faced by our displaced brothers and sisters in various areas of their lives. It is hoped this thesis will contribute to the pastoral and spiritual ministry of the Society to survivors of forced displacement, both as a practical resource and in terms of its theological reflection in seeking to build a bridge between theology and the work of Jesuit Refugee Service (chapter 2).
- e) ***To the Australian and universal Church:*** we have seen how forcibly displaced people bring to the forefront the cry of the poor, challenging the more sedentary and comfortable forms of Church in social locations of affluence and influence. They reveal what might be considered the paradoxical truth that the marginalised, the poor and rejected are not merely passive recipients of charitable gifts. They are bearers of the gospel—of the message of good news—that can only be encountered by moving into places of vulnerability and risk, but also of wonder, where we find ourselves overcome by the unexpected graces they offer to us. They invite us to meet them in these places, to allow them to share their wisdom and experiences and incorporate them into their existing communities of faith. This thesis has tried to show that in disregarding these experiences we might miss a constitutive element of what it means to be a true global, universal, 'catholic' Church. To address this 'danger', the thesis has sought to give expression to a number of the lessons and part of the wisdom forcibly displaced people are able to offer to the Australian and universal Church. (chapter 1).

5. Future considerations

Five main areas following from this thesis are suggested for future consideration and research:

- a) The insights gathered from our exploration on a contextual theology and spirituality of displacement—in particular within the context of the Australian experience we have sought to address in this paper—will need to be further validated by forcibly displaced

people themselves. As we have expressed, theologising in context is the attempt to ground one's theology in historical reality so that such articulation be as relevant as possible to the questions and issues—political, economic, socio-cultural, religious—that pertain us and our communities. Thus, it must be the forcibly displaced themselves, as the integral element of this particular community of the displaced, who 'do the theologising', guided and aided by those who have acquired the necessary tools and experience to do so. Though they have begun to do so, the forcibly displaced need to be given more opportunities to speak, to write and to share with others their insights and experiences. Greater opportunities also need to be provided for them to gather and come together with other dialoguing partners to embark on this theological reflection. As we have seen, within the Australian context, issues of particular concern that need further exploration include the contribution of survivors of forced displacement to the faith and spiritual life of the Australian Church in the context of a fundamentally secular society, and their possible role, as people of faith, in addressing existing antagonistic and discriminatory policies and practices against new arrivals to this country.

- b) In order to assess their relevance, value and effectiveness, the "Spiritual Exercises to 'lighten the burden'" should ideally be offered to a 'control' group of survivors of forced displacement here in Australia, willing to offer feedback on the experience of engaging in this spiritual program. Ideally too, an appropriate research questionnaire will need to be developed and participants interviewed at different stages of the spiritual journey to assess and validate the content, structure and dynamics of these spiritual *exercises* and resources. Based on the findings, the *exercises* could be 're-fined' and adapted further to meet the needs of their intended audience. As mentioned earlier, it is expected that additional *exercises* might need to be developed and included, that a re-ordering of the sequence might prove beneficial and that a different format might be more conducive for some exercitants. These modifications are perfectly acceptable, and in fact to be expected and encouraged, to ensure that exercitants derive the greatest possible benefit from the experience.
- c) It will also be of the essence to receive feedback from givers of these *exercises* as well as from others who act as their spiritual accompaniers and directors, not only on the content, structure and dynamics of the *exercises*, but also on their experiences as a whole in providing spiritual support to survivors of forced displacement. Of particular interest will be to determine those areas of formation and training they identify to help them

carry out this special ministry to the forcibly displaced. Ideally, rather than relying solely on individual responses, this feedback should be gathered as part of a consultation that brings together those involved in this ministry, so they can share and learn from their views and experiences in true synergetic fashion.

- d) It would be hoped also that the feedback obtained from both givers and receivers of these *exercises* could contribute towards the academic endeavour of those who study, write about and strive to maintain the identity of the *Exercises*, while at the same time seeking to gain a better understanding of the riches they hold in terms of their applicability to countless situations and new ‘audiences’ in the world today. What could the experience of offering the Spiritual Exercises to the particular audience of survivors of forced displacement, for example, reveal in terms of concepts and connotations that might require ‘reframing’ to provide an ‘inculturated’ interpretation and presentation of the Exercises to address their needs and experiences? What possibilities could this open for the spiritual language and understanding of givers of the Exercises to be enriched by ex-refugees’ descriptions, concepts and imagery resulting from their experience of the Exercises, and what challenges would this raise in terms of how to incorporate them into the Ignatian ‘glossary’? Could this result, to some degree, in a change in worldview and a process of discernment to assess the operative ‘stories’ and ‘myths’ used to present the Exercises? Could this give rise to new criteria for the purpose of understanding the truths and experiences of faith and realities of exercitants from diverse traditions and backgrounds? These are some of the questions that it is hoped Ignatian academics would explore in conjunction with survivors of forced displacement, allowing their voices to be heard and their experience to enrich our common spiritual enterprise helping, at the same time, to further reveal the reaches that lie within the Exercises.
- e) The spiritual *exercises* and resources offered here, as the practical application of the insights and learnings gathered from this thesis, constitute only *one* contribution towards addressing the spiritual needs of survivors of forced displacement. Moreover, they address specifically the needs of survivors who spouse the Christian faith tradition and who have resettled in Australia. Further research, analysis and reflection will be needed to develop additional spiritual resources for this audience but, as importantly, for survivors of forced displacement from other faith traditions who in fact constitute the ‘bulk’ of forcibly displaced people in the world today.

We conclude recalling the words both from the survivor of forced displacement and Karl Rahner we quoted at the beginning and end (*introduction* to chapter 1 and *conclusion* to chapter 5) of this thesis. In expressing both his current reality and his longings for acceptance, for healing and for meaning, this ‘prototypical’ survivor addressed us all and invited us to enter into the mystery of his complex life: *Where do I find myself, you ask? ... Where is my church... How do I feel... What do I need... What do I want... What can I give you, you finally ask? What good are these things I offer you, you don’t ask. Who is this, my God, you ask?* His reflection, in answering his own questions, helped anchor our exploration into the mystery of the God, the Jesus and the Church which the lives and reality of survivors of forced displacement can reveal to us. As Karl Rahner put it: “It is not the results of our own speculation, but the golden harvest of what we have lived through and suffered through, that has the power to enrich the heart and nourish the spirit.” It is only through our human experiences that we can come to know—even if always partially—the transcendental yet ever-present, the mysterious yet somewhat familiar God who, we believe, desires to reveal Godself to us.

As Rahner also added, “Only knowledge gained through experience, the fruit of living and suffering, fills the heart with the wisdom of love instead of crushing it [...]. Bringing together this knowledge and experience can result in great healing, freedom and joy, and the nourishment to our spirit and to our heart which the *golden harvest of what we have lived and suffered through can provide*. Survivors of forced displacement have lived through a lot and suffered much more, and they should be able to benefit from the ‘golden harvest’ of their suffering. As we have repeatedly asserted throughout this document, they need to be given the opportunity and relevant resources to pray reflectively those experiences, to meditate and contemplate the presence of God in them, to have access to enlightenment, healing and insight through them. One such opportunity is what this thesis has intended to provide.

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Appendix I

Charting the Spiritual Exercises

This Appendix offers, in table form, a more detailed presentation of the learnings obtained from the first four chapters of the thesis—learnings which highlight the spiritual needs and challenges of survivors of forced displacement. The information presented here constitutes the ‘raw data’ used for developing the *spiritual exercises* and resources found in chapter 5. The data includes: (1) major themes recognised; (2) identified spiritual/ psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed based on those themes; (3) possible Ignatian *exercises* and resources for survivors of forced displacement to address these needs; and (4) relevant resources from Ignatian, scriptural and ecclesial sources to help develop these *exercises*. This table format has facilitated: cross-referencing between chapters, bringing up connecting threads and themes, and identifying pivotal issues to be addressed.

Chapter 1 – Part I/Section 1: *In search of a theology of displacement and migration*

Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc., scriptural texts, Church documents or Church documents</i>
Reading the ‘signs of the times’; factors producing forced displacement	Forcibly displaced embody the joys and hopes, grief, anguish of our times	Help forcibly displaced people (fdp) understand that their suffering is historically linked	<i>Ecclesial: GS</i>
Displacement as a fifth mark of the Church	We need the forcibly displaced to become the church we are meant to be	“I am an essential part of the Church”	<i>Rules for Thinking and Feeling with the Church</i>
Stifling the voices of the displaced	To feel their voices are heard	“This is what my voice sounds like”	
Derogatory language and labels	To be known as a ‘label’ or a ‘number’ is dehumanising	“My name is...”	<i>Scripture: ‘God knows me by name, as I am’ (Ps 139)</i>
Need to humanise receiving communities	To feel/to be welcomed	What a forcibly displaced person might want to say to members of	<i>Ecclesial: Hospitality to the stranger</i>

		receiving communities	
Forcibly displaced as the ‘crucified people’ of our day	Identify specific crosses fdp have carried in their displacement experience and beyond	Place these crosses at the foot of Jesus’ cross	[SpEx 43]
Forcibly displaced as the ‘crucified people’ of our day	Share how it feels to be ‘crucified’	Standing ‘crucified’ next to Jesus at the Cross	<i>Scripture</i> : Jesus’ Passion narratives Third Week of <i>SpEx</i>
Documenting/recording of experiences and stories	The need to tell one’s story	‘Walking’ the story in the company of Jesus	<i>Scripture</i> : Walk to Emmaus
Exploitation of women	Specific elements involved in a “woman’s story”	Strength and resilience a woman possesses	<i>Scripture</i> : ‘Wisdom sisters’ from the Older Testament;
Different stages of displacement	Issues and needs change along the way	“Where I am now in my journey”	<i>Scripture</i> : Israel’s pilgrimage in the desert; the walk to Emmaus
Biases and prejudices against ‘the other’	“Why do you look at me with suspicion”?	“What do you fear in me?”	<i>Ecclesial</i> : Hospitality to the stranger
Recognising otherness and affinities	I have the same needs and desires you do	“I’m not so different from you”	<i>Ecclesial</i> : ‘No longer a Stranger’
Celebrating inclusive liturgies	Know that their way of worship and rituals are appreciated	“This is how I pray and what it means to me and why ‘we’ do it this way”	<i>Ecclesial</i> : ‘No longer a Stranger’
Living in-between two worlds	The lingering expectation that new arrivals need to adapt	“I am happy to be part of my new community, but I cannot stop being myself”	<i>Ecclesial</i> : ‘No longer a Stranger’
Recognising asymmetries	To feel that they belong they cannot be seen as second hand citizens	“I need to be treated as an equal”	<i>CST</i> : solidarity; equality;
Mandatory detention	To have been treated as criminals	“I have not committed any crime, other than doing what I had to in order to survive”	<i>CST</i> : dignity of the individual; <i>common good</i>
Mandatory detention	Experiences of trauma, compounded by resentment and hatred towards perpetrators	Forgiving of captors and guards	<i>CST</i> : dignity of the individual; <i>common good</i>

Chapter 1 – Part I/Section 2: Theologising through the ‘lens’ of displacement

Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc.</i>, scriptural texts, Church documents
Theologising contextually	Reflect on the values that guide us in life and the goals we set	These are <i>my</i> values; these are God’s values	
Images of God	What is my operative image of God?	Describing ‘my’ God; Why do I see/experience God this way? What does it say about me?	<i>SpEx: Principle and Foundation</i>
God created us in love	God desires to be at the centre of my life, and we want that too!	What do I mean when I say that I am loved by God?	<i>Scripture: We love because God first loved us (1 Jn 4:19)</i>
Image of God as a fellow companion in displacement	Greater identification with God, as Father and Creator	God never tires to walk along with me.	<i>SpEx Principle and Foundation; contemplation on the Nativity</i>
God as Trinity	Exploring what it means to be ‘persons-in-social relations’	What is my image of the Trinity?	<i>SpEx: Contemplation on the Incarnation</i>
Jesus was a ‘margin-dweller’	Feeling always in the margins	Moving back from the margins to the centre in Jesus	<i>Scripture: Jesus welcomes all Second Week SpEx</i>
Image of Jesus as fellow companion in displacement	Greater identification with Jesus, as Lord and brother	Jesus’ choice to live as a displaced person allowed him to encounter the truly marginalised	<i>Scriptures; Second Week SpEx</i>
The Kingdom of God	Have I been invited to help the Kingdom draw nearer?	My image of the Kingdom; my work for the Kingdom	<i>SpEx Call of Temporal King, Scriptures</i>
Called to evangelise	My responsibilities as a witness of Christ	Do I live as a true disciple of the Lord?	<i>Scriptures: ‘Proclaim the good news to the end of the world’</i>
Giving the Spirit of God a ‘thunderous’ and united voice	The forcibly displaced’s role as a specific united community of faith	Uniting our voices as one	<i>Scripture: That they may all be one (Jn 17:21)</i>

Belonging	Being and feeling at home	Your home is my home; my home is yours too	<i>Ecclesial: Hospitality to the Stranger</i>
Changing public perception of the displaced	Finding meaning in contributing to society	“Let me share my treasures with you”	<i>Ecclesial: Erga Migrante Caritas Christi</i>
How to best minister to the forcibly displaced	Ongoing pastoral care, both by ‘professionals’ and others	“Listen; do not judge; support us”	<i>Ecclesial: Erga Migrante Caritas Christi</i>
Building a civilisation of love	Fight and bring down stereotypes	Who do you say that I am? Why? Is that right?	<i>Ecclesial: John Paul II’s civilisation of love</i>
The saving power of God	Saved and saviours	“This is what my saving power can offer you”	
Eschatological fulfilment	How do we help achieve it?	“We can act as ‘measuring rods’”	<i>Ecclesial: Spe Salvi</i>
Catholic Social teaching	What does it say about us?	How do we help you fulfil it?	<i>Ecclesial: CST principles</i>
Worship and praise	Relevant liturgical practices	“My own voice of praise”	
Catholicity of the church	Are we part of this universal church?	What does a church with and for the displaced look like for me?	<i>SpEx: Rules for thinking and feeling with the Church</i>
We are called to share our gifts	How do I share my gifts with you? Am I ready? Do I know how?	“This is what I think I can offer you”	<i>Scripture: Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12</i>

Chapter 1 – Part II: A Spirituality of displacement and migration

Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc., scriptural texts, Church documents</i>
Despair: an universal spiritual malaise	Falling once again into despair, especially after resettlement	Jesus as ‘healer’ gives us hope	<i>Scripture: God’s people are people of hope</i>
Understanding the dynamics of hope	Maintaining a genuine Christian hope	The <i>who, what, why</i> and <i>how</i> of our hope as Christians	

The Church in Crisis	Seeing the Church as irrelevant and out of touch?	What the forcibly displaced can contribute to overcome this crisis	<i>Ecclesial</i> : what the Church brings to the world, LG, GS
Spiritual Theology	Growing in the Christian life as process	Appropriating Jesus' way of life into our lives	
The Memory of the Church	Their stories are part of this combined memory	Their gift to read/understand reality in a new way	<i>Narrative theology</i> ; <i>scripture</i> : the journey of the people of God
Hoping against all hope	Losing hope when dreams don't come true	Remembering this ability to 'hope against all hope'	<i>Scripture</i> : God's people are people of hope
God is always present	Addressing a growing sense of abandonment	God always finds new ways to come and meet them	<i>Scripture</i> : Nothing can separate us from God (Rom 8:31-39)
Human existence is characterised by polarities/tensions	"Why can't I feel happy all the time?"	Exploring the polarities in our lives as 'natural' and acceptable	
Collective/communal approach to hope	"When I lose hope, how does that affect others around me?"	Jesus: 'my hope is in you'	<i>Scripture</i> : God's people are people of hope
Collective/communal approach to hope	Our shared responsibility for the future of the world	"How am I called to live out that responsibility?"	<i>Scripture</i> : God's people are people called to share that hope with others
In the process of becoming the persons God has created us to be	We continue to grow and become 'ourselves' in time	Trust in the slow work of God in our lives	<i>Scriptures</i> : What we will be has not yet been revealed (1 John 3:2)
The continuous imprint of God's presence	"Where did God go at particular periods of my life? Now?"	Helping recognise those imprints along the way	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>Review of life</i>
Hope: a theological virtue	"What gifts is God giving me at this time which I don't recognise?"	A way of being/believing, trusting and loving	<i>Ecclesial</i> : CCC
Eschatological hope	The goal of our Christian living	Plenitude, moving into Christ, together as community	<i>Scriptures</i> : the journey back to God
<i>Spe Salvi</i> : a critique of the concept of God	What we can offer the world and what we cannot offer	Hope of justice for the sufferer: Only God can create justice	<i>Ecclesial</i> : <i>Spe Salvi</i>
<i>Spe Salvi</i> : greater and lesser hopes	Can I lose some of my hope?	Our great hope can only be God	<i>Ecclesial</i> : <i>Spe Salvi</i>
Hope in the Scriptures	"Am I encouraged in my hope by the Scriptures?"	Looking at different verses and passages on hope to reflect on them	<i>Scriptures on hope</i>

Liberating Hope	Does hoping really change the world?	Liberating action of Christ at the heart of historical transformation	<i>Scripture</i> : God's people are people of hope
Hope is active, not passive	Keep actively exercising hope	Resistance, endurance, courage, will, audacity to risk/engage in folly	<i>Scripture</i> : hope and Rom 5
Mutuality in sharing together the message of the Gospel	Our acts of charity for the least of our brothers and sisters	Exercising acts of mercy for others	<i>Scripture</i> : Matthew 25, others
Hospitality	Create hospitable places for another	Living lives of hospitality	<i>Ecclesial</i> : Papal encyclical and messages
Solidarity	With whom am I call to be in solidarity?	"How do I practice solidarity?"	<i>Ecclesial</i> : Papal encyclical and messages
More than victims	Move beyond the victim 'label'	"Recognising and naming our strengths"	<i>CST</i> : participation, equality, dignity
Common identity as people of God	'Fitting in' and sharing what is common	"We are different, and that is a good thing"	<i>Scripture</i> : Genesis; different gifts in the Spirit (1 Cor)
Our hope is in the Lord Jesus	Don't take your eyes off the Lord	Sharing in Jesus' displaced life	<i>Scripture</i> : NT's hope
Listening	We need to be listened to, we want to listen also to you	Listening as healing	<i>SpEx</i> : Ignatian spiritual conversation
Humility and vulnerability	"We are tired of being vulnerable"	Humility and vulnerability as gifts that open us up to the other	<i>Scripture</i> : Jesus' humility and vulnerability as our model (Phil 2)
Gratitude	Never forget the blessings the Lord has showered on you	A litany of gratitude	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week; <i>scripture</i> : in everything give thanks (Phil 4:6)
Suffering	When will suffering stop?	Moving from <i>my</i> suffering to <i>our</i> suffering and the suffering of others	<i>SpEx</i> : Third Week; <i>scripture</i> : Jesus' redeeming death
Solitude	"What do I still feel so alone?"	Transforming loneliness into solitude	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>Principle & Foundation</i>
Optimism vs hope	"Am I successful in the eyes of others?"	It is not about expecting success but about finding meaning	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>Three Ways of being humble</i>
Advent Time	Still waiting	Waiting makes sense when we wait for the sake of others	<i>Scripture</i> : We wait on the Lord
Prayer	"Am I praying in the right way?"	Opening my heart to God	<i>SpEx</i> : different types of prayer

Chapter 2 – Part I/Section 1: Overview of the Society of Jesus' Social Apostolate, its characteristics and spirituality

Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc.</i>, scriptural texts, Church documents
Peacemaking and reconciliation	Recovering a sense of peace	The peace of God suffuses and permeates everything	<i>Formula of Institute</i>
A faith that does/promotes justice: <i>option for the poor and the poorer</i> is an option forcibly displaced people also need to take up	Reconciliation with God demands reconciliation of people with one another	Who are the poor around me, the poorer around me, who I am called to serve?	<i>GC documents</i> , cf. GC 32 ,d.4, n. 2
The experience of Latin America (internally displaced peoples): a struggle for liberation, marked by solidarity (socio-political conversion of heart)	Having been victims of oppression, how do they move past this, especially if this oppression continues?	From victims to survivors	<i>SpEx</i> : exercises of the First Week
Inculturation of the gospel	How do the forcibly displaced express their own 'cultural brand' of Catholicism	"This is how I express my faith": articulating particular characteristics of each person's faith	GC 34
Building bridges of understanding and dialogue	Contribute to 'building' God's reign	My role as a bridge builder based on my experiences of 'destruction'	GC 35
Creating 'discerning communities' and homes for the Reign of God	Need to feel that my home and my community do contribute to nearing the Reign	Building up community bonds: seeing Christ in the other	GC 36
The "miserable and blessed poor"	What can the forcibly displaced contribute to other people's lives?	Authenticity, freedom from attachment and greed, liberty to give	<i>Characteristics of Jesuit Apostolate</i> : Miserable in the reality of injustice,

		and receive great happiness	suffering and abuse; blessed because through our involvement with them, feeling powerless, leads to authenticity and freedom
The pairing unbelief-injustice: unbelief is linked w the deadening of conscience, of hearing the poor	My faith tells me that God's justice will prevail	How do I contribute, through my faith, to bring justice to our broken world?	GC 32, d. 4, n. 27: <i>promoting justice should be the concern of our whole life and apostolic endeavours</i>
The Church can fail to proclaim this justice and be concerned mainly with its perpetuation	Do I find solace in a church that demands and labours for my rights as displaced?	Making my Church membership count: I call the Church to carry out the mission it's been given by God	<i>Ecclesial: International Forum on Migration and Peace (Feb 2017)</i>
As we learn with the help of the <i>SpEx</i> to eliminate disordered attachments, we also learn to assimilate Christ's ways of poverty, simplicity, humility, compassion, solidarity	How do I achieve this desired conversion?	What do I need to work specifically at this time in my life? What disordered attachments bind me?	<i>SpEx</i>
Transforming all the elements of the world into God's reign	Do I see the world as the place where God's reign will be a reality?	How do I contribute to the reign of God?	<i>SpEx; scriptures: The kingdom of God is at hand</i>
Seeking to achieve the greater Glory of God in all contexts and eras	What is God's greater glory?	My mission is God's greater glory: bring about God's reign	<i>SpEx</i>
Discernment is seeking freedom in daily living/work and in major decisions	How can I achieve freedom? How do I get to be free?	What does it mean to be free?	<i>SpEx; Scriptures (the truth will set you free)</i>
<i>SpEx</i> help us to be in touch with concrete reality of the world	What is my reality today?	How does my reality relate to the reality of others?	<i>SpEx</i>
Service done in friendship and collaboration in community	How do we labour together in community? What prevents us?	Working towards building a community of labourers	<i>Scripture: harvest is plentiful (Mt 9)</i> <i>SpEx: What am I doing for Christ?</i>
<i>SpEx</i> help us to be discerning in our decisions and options	What can I contribute which benefits the most?	I cannot do it all? So where do I put my energy and talents to work?	<i>Co 622, for the greatest and more universal benefit/influence</i>

Prevent fear from paralysing us and preventing us from labouring for God's reign	Am I afraid to live out my faith? To live out from my faith?	Accept that the world will despise us despite the good we do	<i>Scriptures</i>
Being a consoling presence in the world	How can I console you?	What does it mean to be a consoler?	[<i>SpEx</i> 224]
<i>SpEx</i> help us obtain a vision and knowledge of history of sin	What is my role in the structural sin of the world?	I'm not only a victim, but also a perpetrator; sin has power over us all	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week exercises
Finding God in creation	Becoming more attuned to God's continuous loving presence	Use of senses The Incarnation of Christ has made creation holy	<i>SpEx</i> : First Method of Prayer; <i>Contemplatio</i> <i>Ecclesial</i> : <i>Laudato si'</i>
Safeguarding the integrity of the earth—our <i>common home</i> (ecological conversion of heart)	Is there something particular to them which they can contribute to the care of the environment? "A different way of imagining, understanding and narrating our history of salvation"?	At one with creation, where God is to be found; Showing reverence, respect and gratitude for the goods of creation; An ecological Examen	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>Contemplatio</i> ; elements of Ignatian Spirituality w/ capacity to promote ecological conversion: GC 35, D. 3, <i>Challenges to our mission today</i> <i>Ecclesial</i> : <i>Laudato si'</i>
Being back in nature	Many survivors of f.d. come from countries/cultures w/ deep connection to nature/land	A walk on the beach; a day of prayer in the bush	<i>Ecclesial</i> : <i>Laudato si'</i>
<i>Spiritual Exercises</i> for women	Be encouraged, affirmed, valued	Examples of women protagonists in Christ's life (Elizabeth, Anna, Mary)	[<i>SpEx</i> 263, 268, 299]; <i>scripture</i> : Woman who searches coin (Lk 15)
<i>Spiritual Exercises</i> for women	Encourage women's narrative 'style', e.g. greater use of language of love with Christ/God	Recognising a God who is in love with God's people; Antoinette's 'angels' along the way	GC 34, D. 14 Jesuits and the situation of women in the church and society
<i>Spiritual Exercises</i> for women	Upholding and affirming the value of maternity; the beauty of life-giving	Help Mary give birth in contemplating the Nativity	[<i>SpEx</i> 264]
<i>Spiritual Exercises</i> for women	Contemplating God in the history and struggles of peoples	Invite them to consider their own struggles, marginalisation and	<i>Ignatian</i> : GC 34, D. 14

		thwarted opportunities	

Chapter 2 – Part I/Section 2: Ignatian Spirituality and the spirituality of the social apostolate

Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc.</i>, scriptural texts, Church documents
Respect of forcibly displaced people's rights: recognising the rights of fdp is recognising that they belong	How can I practice my faith in the way that I best know and love God?	Respecting the rights of each individual person, including other forcibly displaced people	<i>Catholic Social Teaching</i>
The search for the common good: best served when all peoples are able to make their own contribution	How can I contribute to the God's kingdom	Imagining what the 'universal' common good looks like	<i>Catholic Social Teaching</i> prioritises solidarity and justice for forcibly displaced people
Hospitality transforms into 'family' the one who is welcomed	Can you accept me as I am? Can you trust me? Could you accept being my guest?	Hospitality as the practice of God's welcome; Christ, as God's welcome, reaches out to us	<i>Scriptures, Catholic Social Teaching, Ecclesial documents</i>
Solidarity: without friendship, without lovingness, without tenderness, there is no genuine deed of solidarity, G. Gutierrez	Can we have a faith encounter? Are you open to try and understand my needs?	Friendship, lovingness, tenderness	<i>Scriptures, Catholic Social Teaching JP II: Solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good</i>
Who is my neighbour?	Can you accept me and 'embrace' me as your 'neighbour'?	What does it mean to love our neighbour?	<i>Scriptures: Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)</i>
Accompaniment of forcibly displaced people: presence as sign	Can we share mutual companionship?	What it means to be a companion: sharing bread together	<i>JRS guidelines</i>
Advocacy: for the rights and dignity of the forcibly displaced	Who will speak on my behalf?	Learning to be advocates for one another	<i>Scripture: the Holy Spirit as advocate (Jn 14-16); SpEx: Mary/</i>

			Jesus as our advocates before God
True accompaniment leads to true hospitality, where hosts and visitors exchange places	As we walk together, we share stories, bread, joys and fears and difficulties	What gifts I give, what gifts I receive; accompaniment and hospitality can go hand in hand	<i>JRS Charter 15</i>
Sharing of stories of our life narratives (narrative as the way we organise our sense of the past and understand our future potentiality)	How do we connect our own narratives with that of the SpEx	Our narratives—that of the SpEx: God, Jesus, creation, salvation, redemption; through drawing?	<i>SpEx: Principle and Foundation; Incarnation; CTAL; Scripture: Incarnation</i>
Justice: legal, rectifying, distributive, restorative	What justice does God want for me? For us? How to reconcile it with gift of mercy	Giving each one's due but tempering it with the gifts of mercy and compassions	<i>Scripture: What I desire is mercy not sacrifice</i>

Chapter 3 – Part I: Historical Considerations in the process of adaptation/application of the *Spiritual Exercises*

Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc., scriptural texts, Church documents</i>
Learning to pray	What is the best prayer for me? At this stage in my life?	The best prayer for me is the one through which I can communicate with God most easily, it varies!	<i>SpEx: Different methods of prayer</i>
In <i>light exercises</i> Ignatius proposes a comprehensive way of Catholic life for those already instructed in sacraments	How do I live out my life in the church?	Exercitants to have a greater involvement/service in the Church as well as a greater understanding of a faith that does justice	<i>Include First Week exercises, Kingdom of Christ, Incarnation, temptations of the Lord, institution of the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion, CTAL</i>
Help convince people that God accepts/loves them as they are	Does God love me?	What is it that I don't love about myself?	<i>Scriptures: on forgiveness, God created you, God loves you</i>
Spiritual conversation	Feeling comfortable about speaking	How do I express my faith, beyond	<i>SpEx: the art of Ignatian spiritual</i>

	of the things of God	doctrinal statements? How God touches what's deepest in me?	conversation
Being aware of my interior movements?	What's happening within me?	A particular form of the <i>Examen</i>	<i>SpEx: Examen</i> ; discernment of spirits
Importance of being a person of faith in secular Australia	I was persecuted because of my faith. Now that I'm able to practice it freely, what does that mean? How am I viewed here?	Being aware of what practicing our faith means: opportunities and challenges	<i>Ecclesial</i> : the Catholic Church in secular Australia

Chapter 3 – Part II: Considerations for application and adaptation of the Ignatian Exercises

Themes	Identified spiritual and psychological needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc.,</i> scriptural texts, Church documents
'Practicing' the <i>Exercises</i> is what makes them 'operative' for new situations	How to prepare survivors of forced displacement to engage the <i>exercises</i> for greatest benefit	Exercises on awareness, increasing capacity for reflecting/determining personal needs	<i>SpEx</i> : preparation weeks; intro to terminology, dynamics, process
Considering survivors of forced displacement as an 'audience' for the <i>SpEx</i>	While fdp share the 'trait' of displacement, exercises still need to be applied to individual's needs	<i>Spiritual exercises</i> that are 'open-ended' to take into account particular needs/characteristics	<i>SpEx: Annotations, additional directives</i>
A person's readiness for the <i>exercises</i> and for 'which' <i>exercises</i>	Are these <i>exercises</i> what I need at this particular stage of my faith life?	<i>Exercises</i> to help reveal people's expectations, abilities, disposition	<i>SpEx</i> : analysis and 'assessment' of a person's <i>subiecto</i>
A person's prior religious history provides best 'interior context' for making <i>SpEx</i>	My religious history both before, during and after displacement	God's prior communication defines meaning of 'disordered affections', seeking/finding God's will, generosity towards the Creator, consolation/desolation, temptation	<i>SpEx: Annotations, First Week exercises</i>

Experience of person's sin in life	How do I experience sin? Selfishness: placing 'I' above the 'we'; disloyalty: going against family, community; failure to fulfil expectations of family, country	For Ignatius: honour, riches, pride, for f.d.p.?	<i>SpEx</i> : Contemporary vision of the world: modify P&F, some 1 st Week exercises, Meditation on <i>Kingdom</i> ,
Seeing reality, God and humanity in a different way through <i>SpEx</i>	What do I need to change in my outlook of look in terms of my spirituality	How do I perceive reality? How do I perceive God? How do I perceive the rest of humanity?	<i>SpEx</i> : Contemporary vision of the world: modify P&F
Learning how to pray	How do I best communicate with God?	Start with program of prayer; then imaginative contemplation, then First Week exercises	<i>Learning about meditation (Sadhana); praying with scripture; then meditative/contemplative prayer</i>
Readiness for 'full Exercises'?	Ability to work with one's interiority, notice/name inner movements to engage in discernment; ability to deal directly with God; envision long-term goals	Different exercises to 'determine' these abilities and nurture them	<i>SpEx</i> : the characteristics of the <i>subiecto</i>
Growing in holiness, 'higher' development not necessarily leads to holiness; 'children-like' faith	I just want to be the best person God wants me to be	Holiness is about singleness of purpose, generosity and integrity	<i>Ecclesial</i> : Pope Francis on 'holiness' <i>SpEx</i> : "Take Lord, receive..."
Inculturation and use of language: the goal of the text of <i>Ex</i> : create a language to speak with God	How can I address the God I meet in the <i>SpEx</i> ? Talk to God? How can I best hear the message of God?	God language: what is it? For me? What is best language for f.d.p?	<i>SpEx</i> : Finding the best way to speak to God as Ignatius did
Inculturating the <i>SpEx</i> calls for awareness of people's different presuppositions/frames of reference	My faith and spirituality are not the mainstream 'Western' version'; how do I fit in?	Spiritual exercises based on experiences that are either shared or available to general recognition	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>Annotation 18</i> —principles of adaptation
How cultural paradigms are expressed in values of Ignatius'	What values does my faith express as a f.d.p. and how do they relate to the	Values prominent in our cultural discourse today: equality; solidarity,	<i>Scripture</i> : gospel values: mercy, compassion, forgiveness, self-

time and ours today: values needed to determine the end goals within which we want to live	values of my new home?	respect of differences	giving, solidarity, hospitality, empathy
<i>SpEx</i> and Ignatian spirituality might contribute to counter negative ideological, socio-cultural factors	Addressing various asymmetries: gender, socio-economic levels; patriarchy, etc.	Finding one's value and sense of dignity in societies that diminish people's worth because of external factors (money, colour, race, etc.)	<i>Ecclesial</i> : CST principles
Those receiving the <i>SpEx</i> will find in them what they desire	Finding what I desire in the real circumstances of my life, in the living language of my previous/new cultural contexts	Levels of desire: what am I looking for in engaging in the <i>Ex</i> ? What am I longing for? What do I yearn for?	<i>SpEx</i> : Desires
Using terminology of <i>SpEx</i>	Finding language to express faith	Terminology: finding echoes of Ignatian Sp in personal experiences	<i>SpEx</i> : preparation weeks
Use of imaginative contemplation	How can I find new ways to pray?	Using the senses	<i>SpEx</i> : imaginative contemplation; praying with senses
Holistic <i>spirituality</i> of <i>Ex</i> : integrating intellectual/affective	Using 'all of me' to communicate with God	<i>Ex</i> that address both the intellect and the affective; flexibility of <i>SpEx</i>	<i>SpEx</i> : Annotation 3
The importance of 'space' in the dynamic of the <i>Exercises</i>	Where can I pray better at different times? Could I 'return' in my imagination to places, my land?	Suggesting different places for prayer; composition of place	<i>SpEx</i> [47]
Preparing for the <i>SpEx</i>	Want to get as much as possible out of my prayer experience	Making a commitment to the process: commitment ceremony?	<i>SpEx</i> : preparation weeks; <i>Annotations</i>
Shift from living for the world to wanting to live/die with Christ	Finding freedom and meaning	Understanding that what gives life/joy is giving of myself	<i>SpEx</i> : the 'Call of the King'
Accommodating the <i>Ex</i> to other audiences: use new language and shared experiences others can understand	Communication relies on symbols and meanings shift subtly with differences in appropriating these symbols	What symbols might be more useful for forcibly displaced peoples? How to present sin/guilty/redemption? Avoid insider/outsider language!	<i>SpEx</i> : 'basic' Ignatian terms: indifference, greater glory; Examen; discernment; desires; call and response, etc.
Widening our perspectives within	Move beyond what 'we know', our	To be confronted with another's	<i>SpEx</i> : Ignatius' worldview in the

context of postmodernity	worldviews and understand how our own affect our realities	understanding of reality; example?	<i>SpEx</i>
Social dimension: Transforming sinful structures around us	How have I been victimised? How have I been a victimiser?	Remembering our social inter-dependence and how what we do affects others	<i>SpEx: First Week exercises</i>
Don't forget the world of the laity!	Spiritual life is still only a part of my life (even is most important!) How to balance it with rest of demands?	Drawing up a timetable of my life and see what times I give to my spiritual development	Life after the <i>SpEx</i> ? <i>SpEx</i> in ordinary life?
Spiritual conversation. Interacting with reverence, respect and humility before the other	Cultivating my personal gifts and generosity through spiritual convers	Exercise of engaging in spiritual conversation with another ex-refugee following given guidelines	<i>Ignatius' art</i> : cf. Nadal, Clancy, Hansen; develop guidelines not only for givers but for users too!
Helping people reach a spiritual subjectivity yet founded on the objectivity of revelation, when so many privatise their faith today	My faith and its expression has to be based on what is real, not on my fantasies or imagination	How to understand and perceive revelation in my life and in our community?	<i>Ecclesial</i> : the realities in the world today, LG;
A right/just understanding of 'freedom': not arbitrariness or permission to do anything, but autonomous capacity to do what is good	What does it mean to be 'free' and what responsibilities and privileges come with this gift?	Exercises on exercising freedom; freedom from (disordered attachments) and for (service)	<i>SpEx: First Week; election</i>
Primacy of personal interiority in contrast to centralised Church	What do I do when I don't agree with what my Church says	Revised/adapted <i>exercises</i> of feeling/thinking with Church	<i>SpEx: Rules of Feeling/Thinking with Church</i>
Characteristics of 'Light' <i>exercises</i> : help enter into dialogue with God; an element of initiation; simplicity of content; communal aspect	Sharing the journey of the <i>Exercises</i> with others; how much to share, how much to keep to oneself	<i>Exercises</i> with catechetical and initiation aspects; opportunities for communal experiences	<i>Ecclesial</i> : rituals, sacraments, healing liturgies;

Chapter 3 – Part III: Preserving the Ignatian authenticity of the Spiritual Exercises

Themes	Identified spiritual needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc., scriptural texts, Church documents</i>
Examples of 19 th Annotation retreats	How to enforce/nurture my spiritual life in ordinary life	Help provide structure for our exercises, especially Lightworks	Tetlow's Choosing Christ in the World
Examples of 19 th Annotation retreats	How to enforce/nurture my spiritual life in special ways?	Weekend retreats during daily life exercises?	<i>Ejercicios en la Vida Ordinaria para comunidades populares</i>
Examples of 19 th (and 18 th) Annotation retreats	How can I grow into Christ?	Particular exercises that can be adapted	<i>Veltri's Orientations I and II</i>
Examples of 19 th Annotation retreats	How can I be a better disciple of Christ?	The use of listeners; possible <i>First Week Ex</i> ; get book and look at introductory chapters	<i>James Wakefield's Sacred Listening</i>
Examples of 19 th Annotation retreats	Bringing my life experiences to prayer, one moment at a time	Take a look at book for possible exercises	<i>Smith and Merz's Moment by Moment</i>
Examples of 19 th Annotation retreats	Nurturing my spiritual life should not be a burden, but enjoyable!	The need to make the <i>Exercises</i> approachable and enjoyable	<i>O'Brien's An Ignatian Adventure</i>
Examples of 19 th Annotation retreats: imaginative prayer; use of films are 'repetition'	"Watching a film becomes the act of contemplative prayer"; our imagination constructs the world in which we live using our experiences, our lived contexts, hopes, pains...	Ignatian themes: Mercy of God, Walking with God, A Passionate Love and A Transforming Life Imaginative prayer; image has become 'reality'	<i>Pungente and Williams' Finding God in the Dark</i>
18 th Annotation Exercises: fruits	What are the benefits of entering into and spending time on Sp Ex?	Fruits to be expected: overcoming oneself, ordering one's life and spiritual formation/catechesis	<i>SpEx: 'Ignatian day' exercises;</i>
<i>Light Ex's</i> adaptability to meet people where they are, and where God is for them	Because of their adaptability they can provide a wonderful platform for this dialogue to discover God in what is	A first goal of <i>Light Ex</i> is to help a person dispose him/herself to enter into this dialogue, to find themselves,	

	deepest in each of us	listen and observe	
<i>Light Ex</i> as process of initiation	Where do I begin in order to nurture my spiritual life?	<i>First Ex</i> initial objective: help <i>subiecto</i> to over his/her passivity, become open to s/t new, start moving forward, start exercising!	<i>SpEx</i> : assessment of <i>subiecto</i> ; First Method of Prayer
<i>Light Ex</i> characterised by simplicity of content and form; certain principles required	What steps can I follow to help me get in touch with God; start my prayer?	(1) Placing myself in God's presence and bringing my story to God; 2) common objective of <i>L Ex</i> is to bring forth gratitude through use of <i>Examen</i> and reflection so I realise how many graces I have received; 3) communal aspect to reinforce personal experience of <i>Ex</i> ; 4) respecting a rhythm/tempo; 5) used for 'permanent formation'	<i>Additional Directives: invite each person to respond/act from where they are; modes/methods of prayer help us discover our true nature as creatures</i>
Examples of 18 th Annotation <i>Ex</i>	How to follow a program of prayer?	Simplicity; done either individually or in groups; role of guide is essential in weekly meetings; helps to prayer in Itineraries 1 and 2	<i>Itinerarios</i>
Examples of 18 th Annotation <i>Ex</i> , p.	Finding the gift of Inner peace; the <i>Examen</i> , 12 ways of prayers, spiritual conversation, journaling, discernment of spirits, different images of God in action	Searching for the gifts of: unconditional love of God, service, forgiveness, healing, freedom and friendship with Jesus	<i>Hansen's The First Spiritual Exercises</i>
Examples of 18 th Annotation <i>Ex</i>	Reviewing my life in the sight of God: searching for freedom, identifying consolation/desolation, desires and attachments	<i>Exercises</i> for the preparation weeks and the First Week	<i>Margaret Silf's Landmarks</i>

Chapter 4 – Part I: The Ignatian Subiecto

Themes	Identified spiritual needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc.</i>, scriptural texts, Church documents
Measuring the <i>subiecto</i> : engage the <i>Exercises</i> with a degree of freedom, diligence and responsibility, <i>Subiecto</i> : being attuned to God	How free am I? Do I take responsibility for my own actions and life? Do I persevere?	What binds me? What holds me back? What prevents me from giving my all to life?	<i>SpEx: Annotations</i> ; prior interview
Assessing a person's <i>subiecto</i> to determine what types of <i>exercises</i> are best suited	What attitudes, disposition and abilities or capacities does the fdp bring to the <i>exercises</i>	Offer each person <i>exercises</i> that they can "well bear or profit from without fatigue"	<i>SpEx: Annotations</i> ; prior interview
The <i>subiecto</i> as a potentiality	Fdp might lack certain capacities, but their displacement experiences might have developed their <i>subiecto</i> in different ways	Developing <i>exercises</i> that contribute to deepen this potential <i>subiecto</i> : greater awareness, freedom from what holds them captive;	
Adapt <i>Ex</i> according to disposition, circumstances, abilities, needs, desires	Disposition: do I really want to get closer to God?	Disposing myself to God: daily prayer? <i>Lord, that I may dispose my life this day to live according to your desires for me...</i>	<i>SpEx: Annotation 18</i>
Being disposed to finding God's will or dream for me	Is finding God's dream for me what guides my life?	Discovering God's will/dream in my deep, holy desires	<i>SpEx: Principle and Foundation</i>
My principle and foundation? Making God the centre of my life?	What is the guiding principle in my life?	Taking stock at what my desires and motivations are and where God 'falls' within them	<i>SpEx: Principle and Foundation</i>
Surrendering myself to God	Am I able to give up my life for God, accept all that comes, believing	What does it mean to surrender?	<i>SpEx: Contemplatio</i>

	that God can be found in all the suffering and challenges as well as joys?		
Capacity for self-surrender	Have I lost my 'self' and thus my capacity for self-surrendering to God?	How to reclaim my sense of identity, self-understanding and self-acceptance?	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week and being love by God
Are forcibly displaced people 'able to decide for God'?	Have I lost my agency to make decisions?	<i>Exercises for</i> making decisions with God's grace	<i>SpEx</i> : the Election
Having <i>subiecto</i> : capacity to accept oneself, make decisions and take responsibility for them	Can I accept me with all my flaws and limitations? Can I make decisions? Be responsible for them?	Looking at one's true self and accepting oneself as one is; How do I make decisions? Do I blame others when things don't go well or accept responsibility for them?	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week exercises
Moving from self-analysis and assessment to self-perception in the First Week	Am I able to engage in self-analysis needed for the <i>Examen</i> ? Do I possess the self-perception to see myself in contemplative scenes?	How well do I know myself? How well can I analyse my motives and motivations and desires?	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week exercises; <i>Examen</i>
Cognitive capacity of the <i>subiecto</i> : Awareness of one's concrete historical reality	The circumstances that have affected fdp's lives as seen through the eyes of others	My life as seen from outside of myself	
Affective aptitude of <i>subiecto</i> : altruism	Am I able to think of others and give myself in service for them?	Reaching out in service to others as opposed to being egocentric	<i>SpEx</i> : Second Week, altruism as a requisite to make an election
Affective aptitude: capacity to engage in fantasy and utopic dreaming	Am I able to put my imagination into practice? See myself in the scenes?	An experience of composition of place: trying it out!	<i>SpEx</i> : Second Week <i>exercises</i>
Affective aptitude: 'investment' capacity	Am I able to establish new relationships, care for and nurture them? What barriers prevent me	Overcoming barriers that prevent fdp from engaging in relationships or projects: too painful, sense of lack	<i>Scripture</i> : growing in sense of belonging by being part of Jesus' followers

	from doing this?	of worth, etc.	
Affective aptitude: ‘positive aptitudes’	Can I deal with silence? Accept the help of others? Overcome sense of guilt? Fall in love again?	Healing exercises to address these issues.	
Relational aptitude: to live in communion within a community	Do I prefer to be isolated from others? Do I find it difficult to relate to others?	Healing capacity to establish life in community, nurture it and enjoy it.	<i>SpEx</i> : Second Week <i>exercises</i> ; <i>scripture</i> : contemplating Jesus and his followers in community
Relational aptitude: to engage in dialogue	Am I able to listen to others? Engage in dialogue, truly?	Prayer as personal encounter with God depends on capacity with encounters with others	<i>SpEx</i> : colloquies; spiritual conversation and spiritual sharing
Relational aptitude: relating to authority figures	How do I deal with authority? Do I perceive the spiritual director as one?	Dealing with authority in a healthy way: obedience as listening respectfully to another who guides	<i>SpEx</i> : relationship with spiritual accompanier or director
The <i>subiecto</i> is not a condition, nor an essence, but a potentiality for service and a gift from God.	Am I open to develop my <i>subiecto</i> ? The subject as it comes to engage in the <i>Exercises</i> is a minimum, a threshold, a potential.	Growing in <i>subiecto</i> ... how?! Freedom, decision making, responsibility, self-analysis, self-perception, see above items!	
Being at home: T.S. Eliot: ‘home is where we start from’; ‘home is where the heart is’, but difficult to find our hearts!	How does it feel to be at home? Where is my home right now?	Describe my ‘home’	<i>SpEx</i> : at home with Jesus (Second Week)

Chapter 4 – Part II: *The Spiritual Exercises and Psychological Factors in the lives of forcibly displaced people*

Themes	Identified spiritual needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible <i>exercises</i>	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc., scriptural texts, Church documents</i>

The negative effects of experiencing trauma, torture and violence: understanding the helplessness, isolation, humiliation and degradation caused by torture	How can I find healing?	Violence perpetrated by humans not God	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week and structural sin
Loss of sense of trust, sense of betrayal	How do I recover my capacity to trust again?	Who do I trust?	<i>Scripture</i> : Trust in the Lord always
Loss of meaning and sense of future of human existence	What more is there for me?	The future is full of hope	<i>SpEx</i> : Rewriting one's <i>Principle and Foundation</i>
Feelings of guilt and shame	How can I keep going with all the hurt I have caused others	Facing my guilt and shame: is it real? Can I forgive myself?	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week exercises
Abandonment, rejection and feelings of not being loved	I cannot trust in love; I cannot accept love; I cannot feel love;	Welcome back dearly beloved!	<i>Scripture</i> : I'm God's beloved son or daughter; <i>SpEx</i> : First Week ex
Feeling that they are not good enough in the eyes of others	The need for acceptance	We accept you as you are, and because of who you are!	<i>Scripture</i> : God accepts me as I am; <i>SpEx</i> : First Week exercises
Past hurts and wounds affect people's perceptions of God	The need of healing and of feeling accepted and loved by God	God: "this is who I really AM"	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week exercises
Overcoming our disordered affections: accept God's acceptance demands courage to allow God to transform us	Feel captive by things I cannot change.	Allow God's grace to transform you and free you.	<i>SpEx</i> : Annotations, First Week exercises
I am a redeemed sinner, unconditionally loved by God and my heart is full of gratitude	God forgives my sins, forgets them and welcomes me back over and over	Accept God's forgiveness and unconditional love with great gratitude!	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week
Purpose for Life	Who am I, really? And what does that mean in terms of how I fit in the world?	Writing my Principle and Foundation	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week, <i>Principle and Foundation</i>
How to believe in others and give others the benefit of the doubt	A matter of trust, but also of empathy, respect and growth;	I acknowledge your intentions as the best possible ones	<i>SpEx</i> First Week, <i>Presupposition</i> ; contribution to healing? Trusting

			again
The truth of who I am; what drives my fears, dislikes, motivations, desires and apprehensions	Healing: getting to know myself better and as a son/daughter of God; finding out why I respond to stimuli the way I do; reveal past hurts and how they affect me today	‘Forcibly displaced Examen’: 1. Acknowledge God’s presence in me... look at other adaptations; contribution to healing? Getting to know oneself better	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week, <i>Examination of Conscience</i> ;
Need for a ‘clean slate’ so they can go on with their lives; forgiveness	I carry on my shoulders, my head, my heart, my back all the wrongs I have committed; I need to be forgiven!	God alone is my saviour and source of all healing; let God unburden me of my weight through God’s forgiveness	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week, <i>The General Confession</i> ;
Live in the present: do what helps	What practical tools can I use to improve my prayer life	Practical exercises to improve prayer; contribution to healing? Helps to draw nearer to God	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week <i>exercises</i> ; <i>Additional Directives</i> ; <i>CTAL</i> —the reality of God in one’s life
Discernment for life: discovering my disordered attachments and what gives me life	What is true and what is false in my life? What binds me and what sets me free?	Unmasking the enemy: several ‘practical’ exercises based on the rules of discernment; Capacchione’s <i>Inner Child</i> ?	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week, <i>Rules for Discernment of Spirits</i> ; contribution to healing? Freedom
Image of God	Healing false images of God	Who is ‘my’ God? Is this God real or fabricated?	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>Principle & Foundation</i> ; <i>scriptures</i> : God is loving/merciful
Survival Guilt	How is it that I survived and others did not?	Guilt is a normal reaction to hurtful circumstances; healing of memories through a different narrative of the events that actually happened; “I couldn’t have changed them”	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week <i>exercises</i>
Types of guilt: feeling of isolation, of being a failure, of being responsible for destruction	How can I overcome these feelings of guilt and feel/be part of my community again?	Reacceptance into community; confessing one’s misdeeds; restoration of things	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week
Sense of worthlessness	I have nothing to contribute to this new country	What gifts do I have? How can I use them, for example, in church?	<i>SpEx</i> : Second Week: following Christ; <i>scripture</i> : Jesus calls you

Anger; need to identify the ‘belief’ behind one’s anger	I feel so angry I could shout and never stop.	Getting in touch and accepting the anger within me;	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week: being a redeemed sinner but not perfect
Developing greater personal awareness	Clarifying my relationships with others and other events	Progoff Intensive Journal exercises	These therapeutic techniques have in common a focus on the
Developing greater personal awareness	Articulate what my body <i>knows</i> and <i>feels</i> interiorly	The <i>Exercises</i> and focusing; some possible exercises	emotional health of persons, helping them to deal holistically with previous
Developing greater personal awareness: accepting who we are; ‘reaching at my own self’	Living in the moment: the present/ conscience/responsibility; being able to express love and emotions	Gestalt exercises: seeing and savouring all experiences, expressing emotions in the path to healing	experiences in their lives, grow in awareness both of their past but especially their present circumstances , & conditions, and be able to achieve greater personal agency/responsibility

Chapter 4 – Part III: *Moving forward and beyond the forced displacement experience*

Themes	Identified spiritual needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc.,</i> scriptural texts, Church documents
Narrative theology	How does my story fit with God’s story for me and for the world	Being a constitutive part of the history of salvation; fdp’s role in it	<i>SpEx</i> : the foundational story is a story of redemption; the Incarnation
The need for fdp to tell their stories and what happens when they are not believed	Why don’t you believe me? Why do you call me a liar?	The truth of my story; the ‘truth’ as I really see it.	<i>SpEx</i> : 2 nd -4 th Weeks: Jesus’ story, including his suffering, validates fdp’s story
Mourning and closure: what things have they lost besides loved ones? Language, culture, ok to mourn after them	I need to close this stage of my life first, before I can move on to the next.	Mourning ceremonies or liturgies to honour memory of loved ones lost or to put closure to tragic events	<i>SpEx</i> : communal experience of doing <i>exercises</i> together; sharing of hurts and helping provide closure to one another
Continuing presence of God despite	Maintain this hope and faith in	God never abandoned me! How do	<i>Scripture</i> : I will never forsake you

all their suffering,	God's presence now in resettlement	you show this in your life?	<i>(Isaiah)</i>
Finding God and Jesus in grimmest of places	I need to find God, but sometimes God 'eludes' me! Why is that?	Where do I find God? Usually in unexpected places!	<i>SpEx</i> : imaginative contemplation exercises
Presence of others sustain my hope, story	Not losing hope!	Who are the people who help sustain my hope today?	<i>Ecclesial: Spe Salvi</i> ; <i>scriptures</i> : God is our hope
Resilience of women despite the atrocities suffered	I'm a survivor, not a victim!	The women around you whose resilience and strength have given you hope and courage	<i>Scripture</i> : Wisdom 'sisters' who are examples of survival
Particular issues relevant to women ex-refugees: stay at home, keep the family together, don't ruffle feathers, keep things private	I'm expected to act in this way (the way of my old country) even if here I'm offered the freedom to do otherwise	Social roles and expectations: how to handle them in a spiritual way?	<i>Scripture</i> : Wisdom 'sisters' who are examples of survival
The need to remember: truthful memory	Why should I remember?	Why, what, how and how long: issues of remembering	<i>Scripture</i> : remember the faithfulness of God;
Remember so as to be healed	Not forget and forgive, but remember and forgive	In forgiving we don't forget; we remember in a different way: overcoming of anger/resentment, footnote	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week <i>exercises</i> ; particularly <i>Colloquy of Mercy</i> and 3 rd and 5 th <i>exercises</i> ; recognising God's mercy and forgiveness to me
Remember so as to learn: to avoid wrongs committed being repeated	Do I have to remember painful events in my life?	Bring to memory what some of my experiences have taught me, in particular experiences of displaced	<i>Scripture</i> : remembering the hardships lived by the people of God and God's faithfulness and presence
Healing of memories: learning to remember differently so as to integrate memories in a constructive way	I don't want to do this remembering alone!	Healing circles where people can tell their stories as many times as possible to reframe them; also Veltri's steps	<i>SpEx</i> : experience of making the <i>exercises</i> as part of a community of faithful
Forgiveness as the removal of the effects of the past on the present,	Experiencing forgiveness: I just want for this burden of guilt to go away	Dealing with guilt in a way that the past does no longer have a hold on me	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week <i>exercises</i>
Forgiveness as the removal of the	Being able to forgive those who	Welcoming the repentant into my	<i>SpEx</i> : having the desire to forgive

effects of the past on the present	repent: opening a doorway through which much healing and release is to be found	life and my narrative	others as God has forgiven me
Repentance and its benefits	To acknowledge that I have harmed others, express contrition and ask for forgiveness	The harm I have caused and its consequences: can I repent?	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week: acknowledging one's contribution to evil in world; <i>ecclesial</i> : reconciliation
Forgiveness not only as the 'absolution of guilt', but focus on reconciliation of brokenness, restoration of community with God, another, creation	How does my act of forgiveness contribute to God's reign, to the collective goodness in the world, to building a harmonious and life-giving community in the historic moment now, of the place where I'm situated	My act of forgiveness has broader consequences that the absolution of guilt	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week: acknowledging one's contribution to evil in world but also to the power of one's forgiveness to re-establish harmony; <i>ecclesial</i> : reconciliation
Reconciliation requires justice and grace	How can I contribute to reconciliation?	Perpetrators recognise themselves as sinners, distance themselves from their deeds, restore some measure of what the original violation took away	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week <i>exercises</i> ; <i>ecclesial</i> and <i>Jesuit</i> : becoming agents of reconciliation
Reconciliation requires people who embody forgiveness and repentance and thus an identity characterised by openness to an 'other'.	Am I open to the 'other'? To embrace the other based solely on his/her humanity, regardless of any construction of their 'justice'?	How do I approach this 'other'? Remembering that we are <i>both</i> separate <i>and</i> connected	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week <i>exercises</i> ; <i>ecclesial</i> and <i>Jesuit</i> : becoming agents of reconciliation
Fostering reconciliation: the influence of family for new arrivals	What do I need to do to give my family a better, safer life	Responsibility for family, but also strength from them	<i>Ecclesial</i> : documents on family and care for the other; CTS;
God is the agent of reconciliation	The process towards healing is a spiritual quest	How do I allow God to lead me in this process of reconciliation?	<i>SpEx</i> : process of reconciliation in Four Weeks of <i>exercises</i>
Healing begins with the victim: even if the wrongdoer refuses to change	I can still find healing despite my perpetrator's refusal to repent	Being an agent of my own healing	<i>SpEx</i> : God brings the victim into a new, transformed state that does not forget/negate the past rather puts it

			into a new setting
Healing requires creating a new narrative of the traumatic event	It is possible to heal post trauma	Creating a new narrative	<i>Scripture</i> : narrative of salvation and healing—creation, Incarnation, etc.
The healing process of reconciliation is never complete	Recognise that total healing is never possible	Healing/reconciliation takes a lifetime; it's good to acknowledge this	<i>SpEx</i> : First Week <i>exercises</i> ; <i>ecclesial</i> and <i>Jesuit</i> : becoming agents of reconciliation
Justice (even if only partial, incomplete and unsatisfactory) as a condition for the fulfilment of reconciliation	What justice do I require for myself? For my loved ones?	Defining the meaning of justice for 'me'!	<i>Scripture</i> : the justice God requires as part of God's mercy; <i>SpEx</i> : the 'justice' I've received for my role in the evil in the world
Action towards justice must include: acknowledgment of wrongdoing by perpetrator or of innocence of victim; overcoming of asymmetries created; regaining agency by displaced person	How can I achieve justice?	How can these three factors be included in my prayer?	<i>Scripture</i> : psalms; stories of acknowledgement of sinful actions, forgiveness by God; reconciliation
Breaking the silence: give voice to the f.d.p. to become again subject of his/her own history	I cannot find my voice or it is stifled: I need to recount what has happened to me	Finding and articulating my voice: listen to a tape of oneself?	<i>SpEx</i> : discovering the voice of one who is beloved by God; who is free to speak up
Moving from being a victim to becoming a survivor	I don't want to feel like a victim anymore; can I find a way to help others through what I've learned?	Characteristics of a survivor vs a victim: the wounds and memories persist but they don't define my way of life; I can help others.	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>CTAL</i> , new life in Christ.
Healing: finding meaning	What is the meaning of my life, at this moment of my life?	How my journey and circumstances have brought me to this particular place in my life	<i>SpEx</i> : <i>Principle and Foundation</i>
Healing: feeling at home	How do I feel that I belong?	What is home for me? How does it feel to be at home?	
Healing: recognising their	My life and presence among you,	God has given me great talents: how	<i>SpEx Reform of Life?</i>

contribution	enriches your lives too	I can best put them to use?	

Chapter 4 – Part IV: *The Australian context*

Themes	Identified spiritual needs of the displaced to be addressed	Possible exercises	Possible sources: <i>Spiritual Exercises, Constitutions, etc.</i>, scriptural texts, Church documents
Context of places, situations where <i>SpEx</i> will be offered	The external factors that affect my spiritual life	How am I perceived as a f.d.p.? How is my faith perceived by others?	<i>SpEx: Composition of place:</i> bringing Jesus into one's context
Do I 'fit in' in my new home country? Racism and xenophobia issues	How am I perceived by others, accepted by others?	Offering a welcome to others: yet, that means even me, even when I don't feel welcomed in my home country	<i>Scripture:</i> Jesus' ministry of hospitality
Secularism and religion	How does secularism affect the growth of my faith?	How comfortable am I expressing my faith outside my small circle?	<i>SpEx: Principle and Foundation</i>
The role of religion and prayer in the f.d. experience	Religion helped me in coping; felt God's presence and God's helpers with me	Recalling God's presence in my displacement experience	<i>Scripture:</i> psalms: turning to God in need;
Losing hope in the country of resettlement	How can I keep up hoping in my new home?	Hope, and keep hoping, for God is near.	<i>Scripture:</i> God is one's hope
The importance of critical-life-stage rituals for funerals, memorial services, for the sick and holding them in their own place of worship	The presence of God in these critical life stage instances	Looking at particular rituals	<i>Ecclesial:</i> sacraments, especially anointing; funeral rites for the departed
Suffering and religious beliefs	How do I view the suffering I've experienced in terms of my faith?	God and my suffering	<i>SpEx:</i> Third Week exercises; <i>scripture:</i> Jesus' passion narratives;

			stories of suffering of God's peoples
While in resettlement, still being involved in issues in countries of origin	How do I deal with the suffering of my people back 'home'?	Reconciling new found home and home left behind, including family and friends	<i>SpEx</i> : connecting Jesus' mission to one's sense of mission; how one is called at each stage of one's life
Contribution to the local church	Importance of expressing their faith	What am I doing for my local church?	<i>Ecclesial</i> : documents welcoming contribution of the 'stranger'
Faith life in new home	Having a local chaplain and 'own' place of worship	Living out one's faith in two communities	<i>Ecclesial</i> : welcoming contribution of the 'stranger'
Need for religious leaders	How to develop and sustain our faith community?	Am I called to be a leader in my faith community?	<i>SpEx</i> : making choices; life after the <i>exercises</i>
Balance between engagement in a mainstream parish and respecting cultural integrity of any ethnic group	Can I be a bridge between the two? What are my talents to do this? What is my 'mission' within the larger church community?	Where and how am I called to serve? Can I be an ambassador of peace based on my experiences? A promoter of God's reign?	<i>Jesuit</i> : being bridges and offering consolation
Contribution to the local church	Prophetic voice about the place of refugees in our society?	The role of prophet: what other roles?	<i>Scripture</i> : gifts each has been given by God
Finding meaning	Healing leads to freedom, leads to openness to embrace my mission	Promoters of God's reign	<i>SpEx</i> : discovering God's dream for each person; mission
How traditional beliefs and practices affect current religious practices	Strong ideological assumptions based on those traditions need to be taken into account when offering spiritual nourishment	'My understanding of the spiritual world': God is found in every part of the world	<i>CTS</i> : cultural rights and religious rights to practice one's faith; <i>SpEx</i> : <i>CTAL</i>
How traditional beliefs and practices affect current religious practices	The role of families and communities in faith development	Communal exercises or exercises to be used with families	

Appendix II

Sample Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’

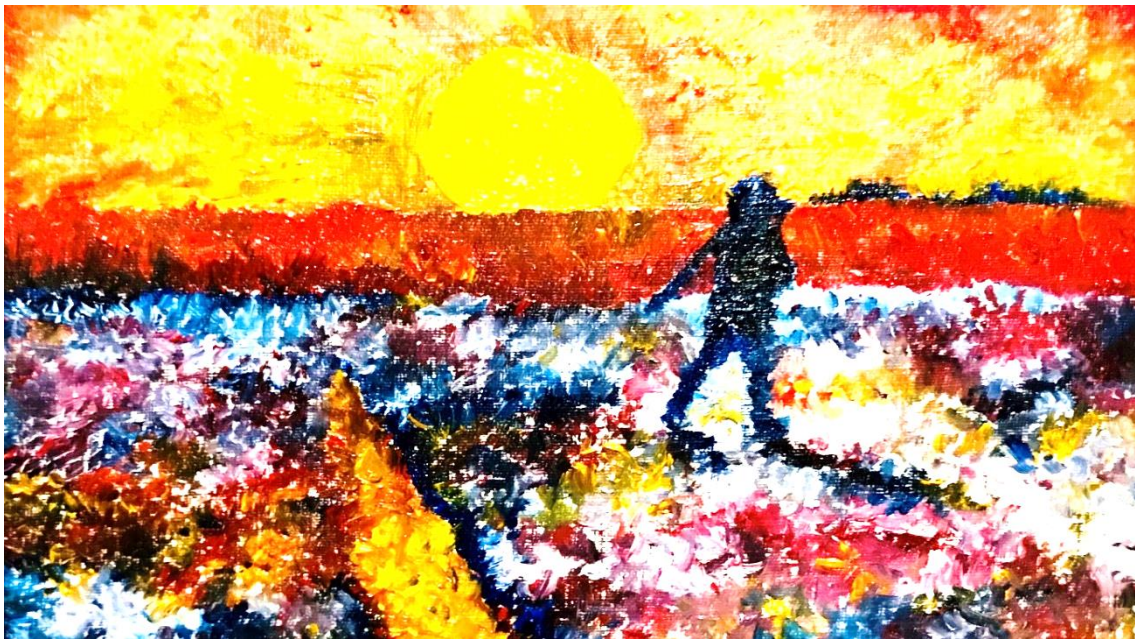
Five types of exercises make up the content of the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’ developed as the practical application of this thesis: (1) *exercises* specific to survivors of forced displacement; (2) *exercises* that provide an initiation into and deepening of one’s experience of God (common to all exercitants); (3) *exercises* that help develop prayer and other ‘spiritual’ skills as well as the disposition and capacities of the potential *subieto*; (4) *exercises* designed as markers or ‘rest stops’ to take stock of one’s spiritual journey, and (5) *exercises* to act as constitutive elements or blocks to help ‘build’ the new, more positive, life-giving narrative of each exercitant. Some *exercises* will fulfil more than one of these functions.

The different types of *exercises* ‘weave’ into each other throughout the process, with the priority being placed on the *exercises* for survivors of forced displacement, while the others provide foundational support to enable exercitants to derive the greatest possible benefit from these. They do so by developing specific capacities and skills and by helping guide the process and dynamics of their spiritual journey—and the re-authoring of their life narratives—as they engage with the Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’. The different types *exercises* are also grouped by themes and this is shown in the prayer sheets, through the use of a common image on the cover of the *exercises* that make up that theme.

We have already presented in Chapter 5 a sample of the first type of *exercises* dealing with issues connected specifically to the forced displacement experience (*Jesus: the displaced wanderer*). In this Appendix, we present sample *exercises* for the other four types: *Loving the ‘other’ in need* (initiation/deepening); *Facing the fears that paralyse us* (develop spiritual skills); *Taking stock of the journey so far (5): healing rivers* (rest stop/marker); *God meets us as we are* (narrative). As shown here, each *exercise* consists of four pages. However, exercitants will receive each *exercise* or prayer resource in a single sheet (containing all four pages), folded in booklet form.



Loving the ‘other’ in need



*This is my commandment, that you love one another
as I have loved you.
(John 15:12)*

								69	



I begin, with a gesture, a prayer, an action



In God's presence, in silence, aware of God's beholding me and smiling. God's loving presence dwells in me.



As I am, as I feel now...



I ask from the Lord what I desire: *loving God, fill me with your love and your grace, that I may be a channel of your love to others.*



Asking the Spirit for clarity and enlightenment



I pray for 30-40 minutes



Prayer Texts

1. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (*Ephesians 3:16-19*)

2. Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me". (*Matthew 25:37-40*)

3. Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words. ([*SpEx 234*])



Channelling God's love

As sons and daughters of a loving God we are called to express that love in our relationships with and service of others: *“Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35).

This love is expressed in words and actions and also our attitudes towards each other, in the small and not so small things. This love of Christ, has its origins in God—not ourselves—and therefore is boundless and surpasses our knowledge. What we are called to do is to allow God's grace to act in us, so we can be channels of that love.



Prayer points

1. St Paul prays that we *“may have the power to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love and be filled with all the fullness of God”*. Repeat this prayer out loud two or three times; then, in silence, allow its effect to take hold of you.
2. *...For it is to such as these [little ones] that the kingdom of God belongs* (Luke 18:16). The 'little ones'—the powerless and defenceless, the marginalised, the forcibly displaced, the forgotten in the eyes of the world—have a special place in God's heart. As followers of Jesus we are called to love and to serve them in a special way. Has there been a time (or times) in your life when you have been one of these 'little ones'? Did anyone come to your assistance as bearer of God's love? Take time to recall this event: what happened, what was said, what was done, how it felt? Allow that experience of God's love to have its effect in you once again.
3. Recall a recent moment when you reached out to someone in need. What motivated you? How did you feel? Were you aware of God's love flowing out through you? Ask God to help you become more aware of his loving presence in you at that time.



Time for reflection: ‘savouring and relishing’: what touched me in each of these exercises?



Conversation with God or Jesus, as with a friend: in each of these exercises, Lord, *I have experienced...*



Review of prayer

I write or express in drawing or some other way what happened to me, in me, for me...



I end, with a gesture, a prayer, an action.





Facing the fears that paralyse us



*He who is not every day conquering some fear
has not learned the secret of life.
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)*



I begin, with a gesture, a prayer, an action



In God's presence, in silence, aware of God's beholding me and smiling. God's loving presence dwells in me.



As I am, as I feel now...



I ask from the Lord what I desire: *loving God, fill me with your love and your grace, that I may grow in awareness of the fears in my life and, with your grace, address and overcome them.*



Asking the Spirit for clarity and enlightenment



I pray for 30-40 minutes



Prayer Texts

1. Carl Rogers was a famous psychologist. One of his clients, an ex-navy captain, had become a taxi driver, and now was suffering a paralysed left arm. In an interview he said to Rogers, "Did I ever tell you about the battle of the Philippines? The first line of ships moved into action, suicide planes making strikes, ships burning. Then I got the order: Go into action. I thought I'd be afraid, but I wasn't. Moving into battle, I was very calm". "You were calm?" "Yes". It was evident he was reliving the scene. "I feel a tremor now. That's funny. God, I'm moving my left arm!" What had happened? The man's fear had been frozen all these years. He had not been in touch with his fear, and that's what caused the paralysis.
(J. Francis Stroud, *Praying Naked*)
2. My fears outweigh my desire, my fears hold me down, my fears refuse to let me grow, to let me fly, to let me be ME! The bird in my heart wants to fly, free and high, but my fears clip its wings and keep it earthbound. Where shall I align myself? With the good or the bad spirits? With the desires or the fears? With the positive or negative energies? In everything I do, I have a choice.
(Margaret Silf, *Inner Compass*)
3. Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear. (Mark Twain)
4. I'm convinced that fear plays a far greater role in our lives than we realise or want to admit. Every year when I go on retreat to pray and rest, I ask myself, "What is my greatest fear at this moment in my life?" It always brings about fruitful dialogue with God. (M. Thibodeaux)



Conquering fear is the beginning of wisdom...

An important part of growing in self-awareness and interior knowledge is to get in touch with our fears—to unmask them, so we can face them and address them. Some fears are natural, normal, but others are created by self-talk. We must grow out of these! You are invited in this *exercise* to go to those ‘dark spots’ in our hearts and our psyches where fears come from. It does take work and courage to get to the bottom of our fears. Often, we discover that the root of our fears is not at all what we would have expected. This spiritual work can be deeply consoling in the end, but it is not easy, so only engage in this exercise if you feel you are ready for it. Otherwise, you can save it for another time!



Prayer points

1. Prayerfully look over your day (or the previous day if you are doing the exercise in the morning) and ask God, “Where did fear play a role in my thoughts, words, actions, attitudes?” Don’t be satisfied until you come up with an answer to that question, even if it takes a while. After you’ve located one fear, look again to see if God is trying to show you one or two other moments when fear played a role. Often, the first answer that comes is not the most important one!
2. Once you have identified that most important fear, focus on it. What are you afraid of? Say out loud to God: “*Lord, I’m afraid of...*” What exactly is so frightful about this? What is the most frightening thing about it? These questions help you get to the deeper fears beneath the superficial ones. For example, “I’m afraid of giving a speech” might lead to “I’m afraid of disappointing people” to “I’m afraid people won’t like me anymore”. So keep ‘digging’ deeper and deeper trying to get to what you are really afraid of. You will know it when it takes your breath away and you have a hard time saying it out loud.
3. Gather up the courage to say it out loud to God. And then say it again and again until it gets a bit easier to say. Speak to the Lord about it and remain open to whatever the Lord might say or do.
4. Ask the Lord a most important question: “Lord, is this fear realistic or irrational? For example, some people discover an unconscious fear of being dismissed from their jobs or losing a dear friend, when their rational self knows that there is practically no chance of this happening. If this is the case, ask God to be able to acknowledge the fear but not let it control your thoughts, words or actions. On the other hand, if the fear is reasonable (your company is laying people off now), ask the Lord, “What would YOU and I do then, Lord? How could we handle it?” If you listen carefully and with peace in your heart, God will often intervene at this moment, consoling you by showing you how even this difficult reality will be manageable. The Lord might even show you how growth and his good will can emerge from such a difficult moment.
5. Some fears ‘accompany’ us for long periods of time. Some are grounded on scary experiences we had as children or traumas we experienced as adults (caused, for example, by forced displacement). If these fears persist and they truly paralyse us—prevent us from living fulfilling lives—it is important to allow others, including professionals, to help us. Acknowledging this is not a sign of weakness or failure but of recognising our limitations and trusting that the Lord

will lead us to those who can assist us. Is this something you need to consider at this time in your life? If so, speak to the Lord about it and ask for his counsel and guidance.



Time for reflection: ‘savouring and relishing’: what touched me in each of these *exercises*?



Conversation with God or Jesus, as with a friend: in each of these exercises, Lord, *I have experienced...*



Review of prayer

I write or express in drawing or some other way what happened to me, in me, for me...



I end, with a gesture, a prayer, an action.





Taking stock of the journey so far (5)

Healing rivers



*Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?"
The blind man said to him,
"My teacher let me see again".
(Mark 10:51)*



I begin, with a gesture, a prayer, an action



In God's presence, in silence, aware of God's beholding me and smiling. God's loving presence dwells in me.



As I am, as I feel now...



I ask from the Lord what I desire: *loving God, fill me with your love and your grace, that I may recognise the 'flow' of your healing action in my life.*



Asking the Spirit for clarity and enlightenment



I pray for 30-40 minutes



Prayer Texts

1. Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean". So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean. Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; he came and stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel; please accept a present from your servant". But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will accept nothing!" He urged him to accept, but he refused. Then Naaman said, "If not, please let two mule-loads of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will no longer offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god except the Lord". He said to him, "Go in peace".
(2 Kings 5:1, 9-10, 14-17, 19)
2. The plot of your life is the central story of your life, the main narrative strand. That strand of narrative is moved along by stepping-stones, or 'landmark events'. The more you remember the landmark events in your life, the clearer the plot and the linkage between the events become.
(Eddie Ensley and Robert Herrmann, Writing to be whole)



Taking time to stop and reflect

In these past few weeks you have been praying on various related themes: remembering hurtful experiences; acknowledging the harm done to others; seeking repentance; offering forgiveness, and working towards reconciliation. The common strand connecting them all has been the topic of healing—healing by ‘reframing’ or giving new meaning to these painful events, experiencing in yourself a ‘forgiven heart’, and growing in your own capacity to forgive and to desire reconciliation—all with the purpose of helping you move forward and beyond any lingering negative influence these hurtful memories might still have on your life. As we have been doing in this journey of the “Spiritual Exercises to ‘lighten the burden’”, it is now again a good time to stop, reflect and ‘take stock’ of what has happened in your journey so far: what you have learned, what you have felt, what you have discovered. In this particular instance, what you are called to reflect on is this healing action of Jesus in your life—how the flow of his ‘healing river’ has cleansed you and revived you.



Prayer points

1. When we are healed, our lives change. That might sound obvious, but the point is that our lives might change in ways we hadn’t expected or imagined. It is not only the physical change—someone born blind in Jesus’ time, for example, would have never worked before, but after getting back his sight, he would have been expected to do so!—but also the emotional and even spiritual changes we experience. As you look back at the past few weeks, can you recognise any particular hurtful memories or wounds that have been healed? Have any changes taken place in you as a result of this? If so, how? Has your perspective about life changed in any way? As you ponder these questions, invite the Lord to enlighten your understanding. Is there anything in particular for which you would like to thank God now?
2. Once you have identified that most important fear, focus on it. What are you afraid of? Healing can also help us change our perspective about ourselves: to see ourselves in a new light. For example, people with long term ailments or who have suffered a great deal of hardship in their life, might have become accustomed to thinking of themselves as ‘victims’. Through the healing process they might now learn to see themselves as ‘survivors’ instead, not by forgetting or negating the past, but rather by putting it into a new setting... Have you experienced this change yourself in the past? Or perhaps you are experiencing it now, as healing takes place in your life through these exercises? If so, speak to the Lord about it, asking his guidance to help you integrate more deeply this new image of yourself in your life.
3. And as before, this is also a good time to continue ‘re-framing’ or ‘re-writing’ your life narrative! To add to it the new insights and learnings of the past few months. When you are ready, take up your **co-book** and write down any aspects or elements that you would like to include in your ‘new’ story. Again, it might help to start by writing something like “*I see my life differently now in that...*” or “*Some of the things that I have learned about myself so far...*” or “*Some of the changes I have experienced...*” and keep going from there!



Time for reflection: ‘savouring and relishing’: what touched me in each of these *exercises*?



Conversation with God or Jesus, as with a friend: in each of these exercises, Lord, *I have experienced...*



Review of prayer

I write or express in drawing or some other way what happened to me, in me, for me...



I end, with a gesture, a prayer, an action.





God meets us as we are



*For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.
(Luke 19:10)*



I begin, with a gesture, a prayer, an action



In God's presence, in silence, aware of God's beholding me and smiling. God's loving presence dwells in me.



As I am, as I feel now...



I ask from the Lord what I desire: *loving God, fill me with your love and your grace, that I may be ready to receive you when you come to meet me.*



Asking the Spirit for clarity and enlightenment



I pray for 30-40 minutes



Prayer Texts

1. [Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner".
(Luke 19:1-7)
2. When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and cure him". The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed" ... When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith".
(Matthew 8:5-8, 10)



No need to wait

People often think they have to ‘get their house in order’ or solve the issues in their lives before they can approach God or try to establish a deeper relationship with God. Thoughts like: “Let me get over my addiction first” or “I’m just too busy at work now, but once I get over this project I’ll have the time that God deserves”, come from the idea that until we are good enough or holy enough to come before God’s presence, God would not want to have anything to do with us. And yet our faith tells us that what God truly desires is for us to allow God to love us and be the centre of our lives, regardless of our imperfections or limitations. There is no need to wait: God is ready to meet us, just as we are.



Prayer points

1. What might be some of the things in your life that feel you would like to ‘fix’ before approaching God/Jesus or letting God/Jesus come closer to you? Imagine yourself before God or Jesus and read your ‘list’ to them. Knowing of their desire for you, imagine then what their response might be.
2. *Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, to come to me.* We often derive our sense of worth from our achievements, the things we own or the praise of others. And yet, there is nothing we can have or achieve to become worthier in God’s eyes. We already are ‘worthy’, or rather, we are already precious in God’s eyes because God created us!
3. *He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.* At the end of the story of Zacchaeus Jesus says: “*For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost*”. Have there been times when you felt ‘lost’ and then experienced the hand of God or Jesus stretching out to ‘bring you back home’ to them?



Time for reflection: ‘savouring and relishing’: what touched me in each of these exercises?



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