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JESUIT COMMUNITY LIFE

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Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Abbreviations

Au	The Autobiography of Saint Ignatius
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos
Chron	Chronicon de Juan A. de Polanco
CL	Community Life
CN	Complementary Norms to the Constitutions
Co	The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.
CP	Coetus Praevius
DEI	Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana
DoW	Directors of Work
Epp	Epistolae et Instrucciones
EppMixt	Epistolae Mixtae
EQ	Emotional Quotient
Ex	The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius
FD	Fontes Documentales
FN	Fontes Narrativi
GC	General Congregation
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
MCons	Monumenta Ignatiana, Constituciones Societatis Iesu
MHSI	Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu
MI	Monumenta Ignatiana
MonFab	Fabri Monumenta

General Introduction

The Society of Jesus has been a universal body right from its beginning. Ignatius generally speaks in terms of the universal body of the Society of Jesus, head and body, with an emphasis on the organic unity of the body. He does not identify a local or territorial community by referring to a particular community. Although a particular candidate may join a particular province or region, he joins the universal body and not just a particular geographical boundary of a province or a region. Provinces, regions and local communities are formed for apostolic efficacy and convenience. They all belong to the universal body of the Society.

Community is a place of belonging. In a community we experience our mutual belonging and bonding. We announce the goals and spirit that unites us. We recognize together that we are responsible for one another. We recognize also that this bonding comes from God; it is a gift from God. It is God who has chosen us and called us together in a covenant of love and mutual caring. We have been called together to be a prophetic sign and witness, to accomplish a particular mission which is our charism and gift. Jesuit community as friends in the Lord is not just another theme. It touches every aspect of our life – our personal history that we are living or desiring to live now; it brings into play also our life as companions of Jesus and the witness given to Christ through what we let be seen and heard of our union among ourselves: union of hearts. Our friendship in the Lord, like an emblem, has dimensions of identity, mission and community.

Vatican Council II invited all the religious congregations to go back to their original foundational charism in order to draw inspiration from it and to renew themselves.¹ This call was not just meant for those years but it is relevant even today. It is an ongoing process to bear more fruits. The religious congregation needs to constantly go back to their origin to drink from their own well. It is the spring of water from the original charism that gives life to the congregations. If the Society is to renew and strengthen its identity, community life and mission, it will need to look at the original inspiration, in order to adapt it to the different conditions, cultures and challenges of the contemporary world. How can it best live and express community life in these conditions? The same Spirit who deigned to begin it is also the one who conserves it, governs it, and carries it forward in the divine service. The Society, like Ignatius, will need to let itself be led, in docility, by this Spirit in order to find its most appropriate forms of life and service. This is how the Society was born; this is how it will continue growing out of the life-giving inspiration of the Spirit. The more the Society of Jesus experiences its communion as fragile, and thus the more complex it becomes to understand and live out friendship in the Lord today, so the Society must try all the more to strengthen its communion with God and in God among all the companions. If it is to do this, it must have constant recourse to its originating charism, and read it in the light of present and future challenges. It will have to seek and find its point of reference in communal memory, and in the bonds of communion traced by the *Constitutions*, if it is to maintain, in full vigor, union of hearts in an apostolic body, dispersed all over the world.

I would like to study the topic of Jesuit community life in order to reaffirm it. In order to reaffirm the value of Jesuit community life we need to go back to our roots and sources, that is, to Ignatius and the early companions as to how they formed the first community as friends in the Lord and gave expression to it in the context of the mission. Once we go back to this inspiring origin of the community, it is easy to deal with the problems faced by us today in relation to community life and reaffirm the Jesuit community life. I have lived in different communities. In my limited experience, I do think that we constantly need to go back to our roots to renew ourselves in terms of our community life by taking inspiration from the first companions. I worked as a formator and will be a formator in near future. I felt the need to read a lot about the

¹This call is in the Decree on *Perfectae Caritatis (the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life)* [2], proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965.

history of the early Society and our origin. Hence by writing this paper I want to know for myself first about the origin and early history of the Society. One can give only what one has. Only if I have this inspiration, spirit and knowledge of the original founding charism, I can renew myself and help others in formation. First I want to read about it and inculcate the spirit of the founding charism in my Jesuit life and then help others in formation to incorporate it. As a Jesuit, I do value the community life. Hence I will look at the sources and origin of the Society from the perspective of community life. This will help me as a formator to form well those in formation to value community life and reaffirm it. In other words, by studying this topic first I want to deepen and nourish my personal Jesuit vocation and then help others to deepen and nourish their vocations.

This work, Jesuit community life, will contain four chapters and general conclusion. In the first chapter, I will go back to the origin of the first community. I will focus here from the time Ignatius went to study in Paris (1528) till the founding of the Society of Jesus in Rome (1540). Here I will mainly highlight historical milestones and how these led to the founding of the Society. I will also study the elements that brought out the union of the first companions and preserved it.

In the second chapter, I will focus on how this union of the first companions gets translated into the *Constitutions* of the Society mainly in the first chapter of Part VIII in the form of Union of hearts. I will focus here on the need of the union of hearts and the four means of Union of hearts: love of God our Lord, Obedience, Mutual communication and certain uniformity.

In the third chapter, I go to the recent documents mainly to the complementary norms on community life which have summarized the decrees on community life of the earlier GCs and some elements of GC 34 and 35. I will also focus on certain aspects of community life highlighted by Fr. Kolvenbach in his letter on community life. In this chapter I will try to stress on the idea of a triptych of identity, community and mission and highlight how community is mission rather than community is for mission.

In the fourth chapter, I want to bring out our limitations of community life. The problems that we face as we live in community life and will group them into spiritual, institutional, social and personal categories while offering certain solutions.

In the general conclusion, I will end my journey by not offering something new that has not been said in all our documents, decrees and letters but will reaffirm the value of Jesuit community life by highlighting certain elements.

For each chapter, I will make use of various books and articles. For the first chapter, I will use Javier Osuna's *Amigos en el Señor*, John O'Malley's *The First Jesuits*, Joseph Conwell's *Impelling Spirit* and W. Bangert's *A History of the Society of Jesus*. These authors will help me to reach the primary sources of the history of the origin of the Society of Jesus like *Fontes Narrativi*, *Fontes Documentales*, *Monumenta Ignatiana: Constituciones, Epistolae et Instrucciones*, *Chronicon*, *Fabri Monumenta*, *Lainii Monumenta*, *recollections of Rodrigues*, etc. Besides these, I will also make use of various articles of many authors like J. García de Castro, J. Padberg, C. García Hirschfeld etc. For the second chapter, besides using the book of J. Osuna, I will also use various commentaries, books and articles on Part VIII of the *Constitutions* like that of A. Aldama, S. Decloux, A. Jaer, J. Calvez, T. Clancy, B. O' Leary, etc. For the third and the fourth chapter I will mainly use the articles written on the GC 35 related to the topic and on various concerns of the community life besides the letter of Fr. Kolvenbach. I will read and reflect on these writings from the perspective of community life in order to drink from the well of the foundational inspiration and its continuation for giving life and nourishment to my Jesuit vocation and later to help others by reaffirming Jesuit community life.

Chapter 1 The Origin of the First Community as Friends in the Lord

1.1 Introduction

Ignatius left Loyola to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem as he had strongly experienced this desire to go to the Holy Land barefoot, with much discipline and fasting during his conversion process [Au 8-9]. The pilgrim continually pondered within himself what he ought to do [Au 50] after he was asked by the Franciscan Provincial to leave Jerusalem [Au 46]. From there on, his whole life would become a pilgrimage to find God, not only in the Holy Land but everywhere. The point of arrival became the point of departure or a point of a new beginning and the entire world became the holy land of God. The life of a pilgrim right from his conversion till the end is directed by God. God treated him just as a schoolmaster treats a child whom he is teaching [Au 27] and guides his pilgrimage throughout.

Under the guidance of God, Ignatius was led through a progressive discovery: at Loyola, he learnt a process of discernment and became attentive to the inner movements; at Manresa, God taught him like a schoolmaster teaches a child to grow in his interior life; at Jerusalem, discovery of his mission in relation to Christ; at Paris, his friendship with others in relation to his

mission; and in Rome, his mission in companionship with others in relation to the Church.² This progressive discovery happens through the process of discernment leading to spiritual freedom, interior knowledge of Christ's ways, intimate union with Him in service, and a realistic love in the midst of this apostolic service. Step by step God leads him to enter into the depth of his heart through the knowledge of the movement of the diversity of spirits and makes him more and more free for His service. Thus the pilgrim turns out to be an apostle with a discerning love in the guiding hands of God

Ignatius, like an apostle, felt as 'being sent' by Jesus during his pilgrimage. In his journey as a pilgrim, he continues to search places where he can best fulfill the service of helping souls. In order to complete the project of Divine service and helping souls he continues to search the will of God. The Lord acted with Ignatius inspiring in him not only his own commitment but also his manner of helping souls. During his pilgrim's journey, Ignatius experienced a call to help others in their spiritual life. In Manresa, he had strong desire to help souls in spiritual matters. Besides his seven hours of prayers, he helped souls by talking about the things of God and encouraged them to receive Sacraments [Au 26]. He began to offer the kind of help that he had experienced from God. Ignatius wanted to share with others what he himself had received from God. He wanted to stay in Jerusalem to visit the holy places out of his personal devotion but also in order to help souls [Au 45].

Filled with passion of helping souls, he realized the need to have companions who can work for the same cause. There he began his search for companions with very effective tool of conversation. He begins this search for companions in Barcelona from 1525. He gathers together Calixto, Juan of Arteaga, Lope of Cáceres and much later in Alcalá Juan of Reinalde known as Juanico [Au 56-70].³ Polanco says something about this first community: He began from Barcelona to have a desire of gathering some persons to his company in order to follow the plan that he had to help souls.⁴ His first attempt of having companions with him failed for various reasons. But his search continued. He learnt from the mistakes never to repeat them again. This search led to the productive results from his stay in Paris. Paris was a new stepping stone to begin a group of friends in the Lord that ended in Rome as the Society of Jesus. In this first

²JOSEPH, J., "Evolution of Discerning Heart in Ignatius as seen in the Autobiography", *Ignis* 42/1 (2012), 5-47, 42.

³GARCÍA de CASTRO, J., "Los primeros de Paris. Amistad, carisma y pauta", *Manresa* 78 (2006) 253-275, 254.

⁴FNI, Roma 1943, 170 [35].

chapter, I will focus on the life of Ignatius from the time of Paris with friends in the Lord till Rome where these companions became the Society of Jesus. I will present as to how Ignatius found his first permanent companions, the events that led to the foundation of the Society of Jesus as friends in the Lord and characteristics of the friends in the Lord as a community.

1.2 The origin of the first community in Paris

Ignatius arrived in Paris on February 2, 1528.⁵ He spent 7 years in Paris till 1535 [Au 84-86]. He initially stayed in Saint Jacques. He enrolled himself in the college of Montaigu to study grammar and humanities. At the age of 37 he again took up the study of Latin. He studied in this college almost one and half year. But the place was too far from the university and was highly inconvenient. Ignatius experienced poverty while studying. A Spanish friar advised him to go to Flanders during the summer vacation and ask the Spanish merchants for the financial help to carry him through the academic term [Au 76]. Ignatius did this for three years, including a trip to London in the third year. Later the merchants themselves sent alms directly to him to Paris so he did not have to leave Paris.

In October 1529, Ignatius shifted to the college of Sainte Barbe in Paris⁶ and began his philosophy. In March 1533, he received his Licentiate and in 1535 completed Master's in Arts. In 1533 he also began his course in theology.⁷ It is here the root of the first community of friends in the Lord emerged which will be the future Society of Jesus.

It all began when Ignatius at Sainte Barbe in 1529 began his master's in Arts under Juan Peña. It is here he met and shared quarters with Peter Faber and Francis Xavier who were much younger than he. Juan Peña placed Ignatius in the same room that of Faber and Xavier and ask Faber to help Ignatius in his studies. Xavier and Faber were 23 years old when they met Ignatius.⁸ Faber had a very pleasant personality and sweet nature. He was very friendly. In his village at Villaret in Savoy, he was a shepherd boy. In spite of his simple family background, Faber had good training in the Latin and Greek classics under his tutor named Pierre Velliard like Claude Jay who later became the companion. At the age of 12, Faber felt a call to holiness

⁵*Epp* I, 74. We know this date from the letter of Ignatius to Ines Pascual written on March 3rd 1528 saying he arrived in the city of Paris on 2nd February 1528 where he is studying until the Lord orders him to do other thing.

⁶SCHURHAMMER, G., *Francisco Javier. Su vida y su tiempo* I, Mensajero, Bilbao 1992, 103.

⁷BANGERT, W., *A History of the Society of Jesus*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 1986, 14.

⁸*Ibid.*, 15.

and made a vow of chastity and decided to become a priest. He began his studies in Paris in 1525. By 1529 he already had BA and licenciante and had shared room with Xavier for three and half years. Both were good friends.⁹

When Faber met Ignatius, he was in deep anguish caused by uncertainty, scruples, temptations and indecision about his vocation. One day he opened his heart to Ignatius and revealed to him afflictions of his soul. Ignatius, from his personal experience, helped Faber to recognize the causes of scruples and structured a plan of prayer, confession and Holy Communion. Spiritual conversation with Ignatius nurtured his soul and peace reigned in his heart. In Ignatius Faber found a great spiritual director to accompany him in his spiritual journey. In 1534, he made spiritual exercise under the direction of Ignatius and was ordained a priest.¹⁰

Francis Xavier was from Navarre. He was handsome and ambitious young man. He had dashing personality.¹¹ Faber himself says in his memorial: “May it please the divine goodness to grant that I may remember with gratitude the corporal and spiritual benefits conferred on me [...] such companions as I met in his room, especially Master Francis Xavier.”¹² He kept distance from Ignatius initially. He resisted at first Ignatius’ initiatives to examine his life and motivations. Xavier was the toughest material to work with. Ignatius, however, with patience and by his kindness made inroads and broke through initial reservations. Xavier, once touched, was inspired by the ideals of Ignatius. Friendship with Xavier developed very slowly. Xavier had finished his Arts studies in 1530 and was teaching in a college Dormans- Beauvais and hence he was the last one among the first seven companions to do the Spiritual exercises in September 1534, that is, after the vows at Montmartre.¹³

⁹ This English edition translates various writings of Faber. FABRO, P., *Memorial*, (*The spiritual writings of Pierre Favre*, Edmond C. Murphy, tr.), The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 1996. 61-65, FABRO, *Mem* [3-7] also in BANGERT, W., *To the other towns: A life of Blessed Peter Faber, first companion of St. Ignatius*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2002.

¹⁰FABRO, *Mem* [8-9]. Paraphrased from the English edition mentioned in footnote 9 above.

¹¹BANGERT, W., *A History of the Society of Jesus*, 15 and also in SCHURHAMMER, G., *Francisco Javier I*.

¹²FABRO, P., *Memorial*, (*The spiritual writings of Pierre Favre*), 64, FABRO, *Mem* [7].

¹³OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), The Way Series 3, London 1974, 48; also reference to Xavier is in RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections of Simao Rodrigues on the Origin and Progress of the Society of Jesus in A Brief and Exact Account*, (Conwell, J. F. tr.), The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 2004, 5-6 [5].

Diego Laínez after finishing his studies in Arts in Alcalá came to Paris to do his theology¹⁴ along with his close friend Alfonso Salmerón in 1533. Both of them were in Alcalá almost 5 years and hence had become good friends. Their friendship is shown in the letter that Salmerón wrote to Laínez from Rome on 25th September 1539 describing their friendship.¹⁵ Laínez was 21 years old and Salmerón was 18 years old when they came to Paris. Ignatius encountered them on the streets of Paris who had just entered Paris. With Ignatius, Laínez entered upon ‘in deep friendship and conversation’.¹⁶ Laínez was very intelligent and fearless Castilian. In Alcalá, Laínez had heard about Ignatius and always wanted to meet him. Laínez had a good grasp of scholastic philosophy and theology. He came from a wealthy family. His great-grandfather had converted from Judaism to Christianity. Salmerón was from a small village near Toledo. He probably came from a simple background. Salmerón was versatile and very articulate in his expression. His great interest in Scripture was admirable. Both of them at once latched onto Ignatius. In the winter of 1534 both of them made Spiritual exercises with Ignatius.¹⁷

Simón Rodrigues was born in Portugal in 1510. Simón Rodrigues tells us that when he arrived in Paris he had not yet met Ignatius, but had heard of his remarkable reputation for holiness, and decided to reveal to him all the thoughts of his soul.¹⁸ He was in Paris from 1527 but met Ignatius much latter. In 1533 Nicolás Bobadilla too came to Paris to pursue further studies. He had already finished his philosophy in Alcalá and theology in Valladolid and then was teaching logic and theology in Valladolid. He came in contact with Ignatius because he had heard reputation of Ignatius as the one giving students temporal assistance. Ignatius advised him to pursue scholastic and positive theology while helping him.¹⁹ These first seven companions in a way became friends in the Lord forming the first community united by friendship with their desire to conversion.

¹⁴RIBADENEIRA, P., *Vida del Padre Maestro Diego Laínez*, in *Historias de la Contrareforma* (Rey, E., ed.), BAC, Madrid 1945.

¹⁵*Epp* I, 153.

¹⁶*FN* IV, 231.

¹⁷RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 9 [8]. Also in O'MALLEY, J. W., *The First Jesuits*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-MA 1993, 30-31.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 8 [7]. And also in *R* 6

¹⁹O'MALLEY, J. W., *The First Jesuits*, 30-31.

1.3 Elements that formed the first community

1.3.1 Sufficient time period and similar context

Ignatius was seven years in Paris. The companions spent many years in their studies in the university. During the whole time of their studies in Paris, they preserved their fellowship, giving each other academic and spiritual help, as well as assistance in temporal matters.²⁰ Ignatius helped financially other companions too from the money he had²¹ collected from Flanders. Ignatius was the spiritual father of all. Though they were all busy in their studies, they made time to have regular confessions, Communion and prayer. They made time to share.

Forming a community of friends needs a particular time period. It does not just happen. Friendship needs time to grow, nurture, to know each other, to converse, to share, to think, to desire and to dream together. Friendship arises through people getting to know each other, gaining to trust in each other and helping each other. Time factor contributed to stability and continuity of relationship. This first group was formed in a similar context. All of them were students. The context was university of Paris. They were trained in a similar theological and religious language and formed in a similar thought pattern about God and the world. It was academic atmosphere where they grew in *koinonia* and solidarity.²² The common university context created ambience for conversation, spiritual life and meetings.

Laínez writes in his letter to Polanco in 1547 about his experience of the fellowship:

We would go with our portion of food to eat at the home on one, and then at the home of another. Together with visiting us frequently and enkindling our fervor, I believe this helped much to keep us together. In this middle time, the Lord specially helped us, as much in our studies, in which we made moderate progress, working them out always to the glory of the Lord and the good of our neighbor, as in having a special love among us, and helping us temporally in what we were able.²³

Polanco affirms in 1548, “Though they lived in various places – now in one’s house, now in another’s, dining together and dealing with one another in charity. From this much love for one another grew, and they helped one another and encouraged one another in material matters,

²⁰*FN I*, 102-104; also FABRO, *Mem* [8].

²¹ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, (Montag, J. F., tr.), The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 2010, 121 [51].

²²GARCÍA de CASTRO, J., “Los primeros de Paris”, 262.

²³LAÍNEZ, D., *Epístola*, 102 [30] and also in ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 146 [30].

in addition to their spiritual and in virtue of learning, because whoever abounded in one thing, another abounded in another”.²⁴

Francis Xavier too although far away in the East remembers his friendship and companionship frequently. He in his various letters remembers his companions especially the first ones from Paris and missed them very much. In one of his letters he mentions, “I wanted to have personal news about all – how many are they and where are they - but especially of all the fathers who came from Paris”.²⁵ He asked Ignatius in another letter that he writes to him a very big letter so that they have to read it for 8 days.²⁶ He wrote letters to Ignatius while kneeling down. He carried in a locket the signature of his friends cut from the letters that he had received from them. He used to dream imagining that he was with his companions. His recreations were very often to remember his companions.²⁷

This was the effect of friendship on the first companions in Paris. The time that they spent together was long enough with a similar context of studies and university background led them to remain permanent friends in the Lord. Each one in his own way cherish and relish these memories of their friendship in later years especially when they were all scattered on mission and were all far away. This spark of fire of friendship and union sustained their spirits.

1.3.2 Conversation

Ignatius having gone through spiritual conversion at Loyola, purification at Manresa and especially illumination at Cardoner had realized the importance of helping souls for the salvation and perfection of their souls. Ignatius experiences God as communicator. God speaks and always wants to be in dialogue with human being.

Ignatius drew upon his insight of God as communicator to draw up a spirituality that is captured in the word *conversar*. Although *conversar* can mean any dealings with another as well as conversation, for Ignatius the word took on a full richness of spiritual connotation. It pointed to three levels of our life: 1) our living with God—our times of formal prayer and all our dealings with God, our practical prayer; 2) our living with the people special in our lives—our common prayer, our sharing of faith, and all our work together; and 3) our living with persons in our

²⁴POLANCO, J. A., *Sumario Hispánico*, in *Fontes Narrativi I*, (Fernández Zapico, D. / De Dalmases, C., eds.), Roma 1943, 184 [55] and also in ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 123 [54].

²⁵Xavier II, 375.

²⁶Xavier I, 89

²⁷OSUNA, J., *Amigos en el Señor*, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander 1998, 381.

ordinary dealings and ministry—our daily incidental conversations and our professional activities, especially sacramental and those in the name of the church.²⁸

God has to be experienced first in one's spiritual life and then this experience of God has to be shared with others by communication through a dialogue. In Manresa itself he got engaged in conversation with many leading them to confession and Holy Communion. He used this method of spiritual conversation wherever he went to help souls. In Paris too, in the university Ignatius got engaged in spiritual conversation with young students. He motivated them to live a good virtuous Christian life by practicing sacraments and leaving bad company. He also aimed at getting more laborers in service of God through this means of spiritual conversation. The process of conversation which would later be a feature of the tiny community of ten was thus initiated; each one gave what he had to the others.

Peter Faber described the beginning of his friendship with Ignatius and how the master in charge of the students, Juan Peña had put him in touch with Ignatius:

Eternally blessed be divine providence who arranged this for my good and for my salvation. For once it was so arranged ... that I was to be the instructor of that holy man, I sought out conversation with him on outward matters, and then indeed on interior things. For since we were living together in the same room, at the same table and out of the same purse, and since it was he who became my teacher in spiritual things, offering a way of ascent into the knowledge of the divine will and of one's own self, we finally became one in desires and in will, with a firm decision to choose this way of life that we now have, whoever we are and whoever we will be at any time in this Society, of which I am not worthy.²⁹

In other words, conversation on material things swiftly gave way to spiritual conversation. They were living together in the same apartment sharing the same table and the same common purse. In the end they were one in their desire and will and firm intention to choose a similar way of life. Despite Faber's desires, four years were to elapse before he was allowed to make the Exercises in their fullness. These four years passed in an exchange of friendship, living and conversing in unity of spirit, not merely among themselves but also with others. And in fact the first companion of the future community was gradually being shaped by the spirit of the Exercises and conversation.³⁰

²⁸FLEMING, D. L., "Three Holy Jesuits", *Review of Ignatian Spirituality*XXXVII (2006)30-40, 33.

²⁹FABRO, P., *Memorial*, (*The spiritual writings of Pierre Favre*), 64, FABRO, *Mem* [8] and also *MonFab* 493 and also in *FNI*, 32-33.

³⁰*Ibid.*, [10].

Ignatius was able to say in the *Autobiography*: 'at this time he used to converse with Master Peter Faber and Master Francis Xavier, whom he later won over to the service of God by means of the Exercises' [Au 82].³¹ Ignatius won Faber through conversation.³² Laínez and Polanco too have confirmed in their writing about the fellowship the early group experienced through their conversation. I have mentioned this earlier in the footnote 21 and 22. Ignatius with this effective method of conversation continued to win friends in the Lord. Simón Rodrigues too became companion by means of conversation as he had heard of Ignatius. He says:

Of him I shall make this one remark so as not to interrupt the narrative, that he was a man divinely impelled, wondrously aroused by God to change his former way of life to one of divine service. I will note besides that he had never before had anything to do with Father Ignatius, but only hearing of his great sanctity he decided to lay open to him all his thoughts and feelings; unaware of what the other three had in mind he decided to go to Jerusalem and to spend his whole life in working for the salvation of his neighbor.³³

1.3.3 Spiritual Exercises

Among all the experiences that united the first companions, a factor that gave a solid foundation to their union was the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius oriented the first six companions in a rigid method, the result of which was to awaken the desire and confirm in them a decision towards the same horizon: Jerusalem. The Exercises managed to put the members of the group in the same place – “in the Lord.” This “place” gave them an identity.³⁴

Faber made the Exercises at the beginning of 1534 in January and was ordained in May 1534. Although Ignatius knew Faber many years by this time, he prepared him well to do the Exercises through spiritual conversation and sacraments and prayer life. Faber had made spiritual progress in these years and had decided to give himself totally to God and follow Ignatius in the way of poverty.³⁵ Faber made the Exercises in the suburb of St. Jacques. After the Exercises, he decided to go to Jerusalem and spend his whole life helping souls. In the same year in May, in the spring of 1534, Ignatius gave the Exercises to Salmerón and Laínez. And a little later in July 1534, he gave the Exercises to Simón Rodrigues and Nicolás Bobadilla. Due to health issues and

³¹OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), 49.

³²FN II, 384-385 [92].

³³RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 8 [7].

³⁴GARCÍA de CASTRO, J., “Ignatius of Loyola and His First Companions”, in *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola* (Maryks, R. A., ed.), Brill, Leiden / Boston 2014, 68.

³⁵FABRO, P., *Memorial*, (*The spiritual writings of Pierre Favre*), 66-67, FABRO, *Mem* [13-14] and in FABRO, P., *Memorial*, (Amadeo, J. H. / Fiorito, M. A., tr.), Mensajero, Bilbao 2014, 101.

many occupations both of them did the Exercises according to annotation 19.³⁶ Only Xavier did the Exercises in September 1534 after the vows at Montmartre. He was the last one among the first companions to do the Exercises.

Ignatius from his experienced in Manresa knew his role as he himself was taught by God like a schoolmaster teaches a child. As a giver of the Exercises to his first companions in Paris he faithfully followed the Fifteenth Annotation: not to move the exercitant to poverty or any sort of vow rather than to their opposites, nor to one state of life rather than another [Ex 15]. Rodrigues explicitly tells us in each case, the others knew nothing about the plans of the rest of the group. 'Not knowing what the others were turning over in their souls, he decided to go to Jerusalem and to spend the rest of his life in the service of others' and of Laínez and Salmerón he states: 'each of them, in ignorance of the other's plan, decided to renounce the attractions of the world, to sail to Jerusalem and to adopt the type of life that the others had chosen'³⁷.

In other words, each one while doing the Exercises had independently, voluntarily and spontaneously decided to dedicate themselves totally to God's service without even knowing about each other's plans. They decided independently to serve God in poverty, humiliation and pilgrimage to Jerusalem to help souls in God's own holy land. They decided to follow a way of Ignatius. Ignatius as a giver of the Exercises did not interfere in a process that was guided by God. Ignatius respects freedom of every individual in taking personal decision before God without advising or influencing in any way. He maintains equilibrium while allowing God to communicate directly to the soul respecting free communication of the Creator to the creatures [Ex 15]. The uniting factor in the Exercises was Jesus and the ideal of apostolic life in imitation of Jesus and his apostles. The Exercises made them the friends of the Lord and resonated in them a response to an invitation contained in the call of the king and the two standards to form a community of friends in the Lord. All of them did the Exercises after a lengthy preparation. They knew each other and shared with each other through conversation and fellowship. They had heard the experiences and ideals of Ignatius. They all grew in spiritual maturity by the spirit of

³⁶GONÇALVES DA CÁMARA, L., *Memorial*, in *Recuerdos Ignacianos*, (Hernández Montes, B., ed.), Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander 1992 [305].

³⁷RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 8-9 [7-8].

the *Spiritual Exercises*. On the one hand they wanted to follow Jesus and his apostles in poverty and on the other hand they desired to stay together as friends in the Lord.³⁸

The friendship experienced with Jesus in the Exercises became a foundation that gave orientation to the friendship in the group. In the Exercises, during the first week at the end of the meditation, Ignatius proposes the first colloquy of mercy:

The colloquy is made speaking personally, as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant to his master; now asking some grace, now blaming oneself for some misdeed, now communicating one's business and wanting advice about it [Ex 54]. Later in the second week, in the meditation of the two standards Jesus speaks to all as servants and as friends [Ex 146]. Again in the fourth week, Ignatius uses the image of friendship to indicate the encounter with the Risen Lord: ... to consider the office of consoling which Christ our Lord brings, and comparing how friends are accustomed to console friends [Ex224]. Ignatius takes friendship as an image for this kind of divine action in humanity. Friendship indeed consists in 'the office of consoling. Finally in the contemplation to attain love the friendship is implied in the prenotes stating that love is expressed in deed than words and love is interchange between two involving mutual communication [Ex 230-231].³⁹ These invitations to friendship with the Lord in the Exercises became a foundation and a stepping stone to build a community of friends in the Lord.

1.4 First commitment of Friends in the Lord at Montmartre

After making the Spiritual Exercises in 1534, the first companions made independent and personal choice to follow the way of Ignatius, that is, to go to the Holy Land and dedicate their life to the service of God by helping souls. At the same time, they also had realized the need of their union and friendship which had contributed to their decision to some extent. The vows at Montmartre did not happen as overnight decision. Naturally the first companions had various conversations, discussions, exchange of point of views about it. Surely there was a deliberation and aspect of community discernment involved before the vows at Montmartre. Simón

³⁸OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), 50-51 and also in GARCÍA HIRSCHFELD, C., "Origen de la comunidad en la Compañía de Jesús: Una experiencia humana y religiosa en un grupo universitario del S. XVI", *Manresa* 63 (1991) 398-400.

³⁹KNAUER, P., "Friendship in the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus", in *The Lord of Friendship*, (Haers, J., Leeuwen, H. V., Rotsaeri, M., Blickman, M., eds.), Way books, Oxford 2011, 58-80, 60-61.

Rodrigues do make a reference to their discussions in his recollections. He states that they used to meet in one of the companion's room and discuss various things.

Some of the outcomes of their discussion before the vows according to Rodrigues are:

It seemed good to study theology for three more years, and not to make a change in their exterior manner of living, but to persevere in the same manner as they had lived up to that time. It also seemed fitting that they should first commend to God for a time an undertaking that was both serious and arduous and involved great difficulties. They needed the breastplate of greater virtue before proceeding further in order to overcome obstacles and resist any other dangers likely to arise.⁴⁰

These decisions show a central place given to God in their discussion and hence it was not just discussion but spiritual communitarian decision where each one guided by interior freedom of the Exercises expressed views to find God's will for them as a group of friends after discovering the will of God for each one individually while doing the exercise. God's plan for every companion as an individual became a common plan for the group as they all were united in Jesus as friends in the Lord.

Rodrigues makes further comments about the determinations of the group during this deliberation before the actual vows.

After long discussion, then, they decided that to give greater solidity to their determination, they would all bind themselves by a vow of poverty, of chastity, of sailing to Jerusalem, and on their return, with God's help, of working with all their might for the salvation of their neighbor, faithful and infidels alike, of preaching the divine word to everyone, and finally, of administering the holy sacraments of confession and Eucharist without any stipend. The Fathers immediately made clear that they were not bound by the vow of poverty while they were studying in Paris, and that they could freely use whatever they needed for the Jerusalem pilgrimage.⁴¹

The text points out to a fact that the group took the process very seriously and the fire created in their souls during the exercises was not put out after the exercises. They were making important decision in life as an individual and as a group and it was not out of impulsion but carefully sought will of God for them. Polanco affirms the whole process of deliberation before the vows at Montmartre:

'What at this time they felt most especially inclined to, was to get to Jerusalem, and then to preach to unbelievers, if they could, or to die among them for their faith in Jesus Christ. And so they all took a vow to go to Jerusalem (if they could get a passage there within one year of their arrival (in

⁴⁰RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 13 [12].

⁴¹Ibid., 13[13].

Venice), and there they intended to commend themselves to God to decide what they should do, not knowing what God wanted of them, whether to return here or remain there; and the majority of them were inclined to the latter alternative. In case they could not get a passage, they voted to go to the Pope, as Vicar of Jesus Christ, so that his Holiness might send them where God would be most served'.⁴²

After the meaningful deliberation in 1534, the first companions prepared themselves by means of fasting, meditations and confession. The first companions decided that they would make their vows there on August 15, 1534 on the feast of the Assumption of our Lady making Mary as their advocate - vows of poverty, chastity and to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They were all familiar with an ancient, solitary church that rose some 600 meters from the summit of Montmartre: Our Lady of Montmartre or the Holy Martyrs so named because of an old tradition that Denis and his companions, Rustico and Eleuterio, had shed their blood there for Christ. Rodrigues describes the event of the vows recollecting every detail⁴³.

No outsider was present, just the Fathers. Father Faber celebrated Mass, and before he gave Communion to his companions, he turned to them and held the sacred host in his hands. They were kneeling on the floor with their minds fixed on God, and each in his own turn pronounced the vows in a clear voice that was audible to all. Then they all received holy communion together. Turning to the altar, Father, in the same way, before consuming the life-giving bread, pronounced his vows so distinctly and clearly that he was heard by everyone.⁴⁴

Since Peter Faber who was the only priest among them, he celebrated the mass. And all the seven companions⁴⁵, that is, Ignatius, Xavier, Faber, Laínez, Salmerón, Rodrigues and Bobadilla made the vows.⁴⁶ Ignatius does not narrate in the Autobiography about the vows and ceremonies at Montmartre. What he does mention in the autobiography is: "Now at this time they had all decided what they had to do, that is to go to Venice and Jerusalem and spend their lives in doing good for souls; and if they failed to get permission to stay in Jerusalem, to return to Rome and present themselves to the Vicar of Christ, for him to employ them in whatever he judged to be more for the glory of God and benefit of souls" [Au 85]. It highlights the decision of a group and not that of an individual.

⁴²ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 123 [56], POLANCO, J. A., *Sumario Hispánico*, [57] also this has reference in Autobiography of Saint Ignatius [85].

⁴³RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 17 [16].

⁴⁴FN III, 24-27. FN I, 20.

⁴⁵RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 17 [16].

⁴⁶FABRO, P., *Memorial, (The spiritual writings of Pierre Favre)*, 66 [14a].

Interestingly the vows were pronounced not after the gospel reading but they were made just before the Holy Communion. The pronouncement of vows immediately preceding communion rather than immediately after the reading of the Gospel, reflects the companions' emphasis on the Eucharist. The vows are addressed to Jesus in a profoundly ecclesial context: The Eucharist held in the hand of a priest who represents Jesus, for they could not in any way separate Jesus from the Church. Kolvenbach on the occasion of 450th anniversary of the vows at Montmartre writes about the charismatic nucleus of the event.⁴⁷ According to him this vows presuppose a concrete state of life, that is, priesthood; a concrete manner of living, that is, to preach in poverty; and one concrete apostolic project or mission, that is, Jerusalem. He highlights the facts that they pronounced their vows in front of the body of Christ signifies that they were not united to begin their own mission but rather to be placed with the Son in the realization of his paschal mystery. The vows of the Montmartre are the fruit of the apostolic communitarian discernment. Although the Society was not born in Montmartre, the vows before the body of Christ also create among the companions *koinonia* – a fellowship of life with the Eucharist as the centre of their lives. In front of the body of Christ, the companions make their apostolic commitment that they don't want to follow other Lord but the Lord who is crucified and risen that the Eucharist announces – the poor and humble lord of the Exercises. Hence they decided to preach in poverty. The ecclesiology of the event lies in their readiness to offer themselves in the hands of Roman Pontiff as the Vicar of Christ in service of the church inspired by the offering of the Eucharist.

In other words, the vow at Montmartre, their promise of poverty, pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and apostolic work was the strongest link that bound them, and changed them into a community centered upon Christ: the community of friends in the Lord.

1.5 Ignatius leaves Paris

In 1535, Ignatius' health deteriorated. He had chronic stomachache and that gave him frequent fever [Au 84]. He had already received the degree of Masters in Arts at the beginning of the year. He had been studying theology for some time. The doctors saw no solution but his

⁴⁷KOLVENBACH, P. H., "En el 450 aniversario de los votos de Montmartre", in *Selección de Escritos*, (Curia del Provincial de España, ed.), Madrid 1992, 33-36.

native air. The companions too insisted that he should go to the native land in order to recuperate.⁴⁸ “In the end, the pilgrim let himself be persuaded by the companions, and also because the Spaniards among them had some business which he could settle. It was agreed that when he felt well he should go and attend to their business, and then proceed to Venice where he would wait for the companions” [Au 85].

In the spring of 1535, having arranged that his companions should meet him in Venice on the completion of their studies, he set out for Spain. He set out on a mule that was bought for him by his companions. Mutual care and concern is expressed in this gesture. The group cared for each other, showed love and understanding towards each other. They shared their resources too. The group had no leader but Ignatius was a natural leader of the group. He was like a spiritual father to all of them. He was the one who had initiated them into establishing a relationship with God. He had given them the Exercises to experience union with Jesus. He had taught them the art of conversation and sharing. They all went to him in their doubts and difficulties. Now before he left for Azpeitia, he designated Peter Faber to take charge of the group. Laínez would refer to this incident in his letter calling Peter Faber as the “elder brother” of all.⁴⁹

In Azpeitia, Ignatius did not stay in Loyola castle in spite of insistence of his brother but chose to stay in the Magdalena hospital. He made an unforgettable impression on people in his native land. He served the sick and poor in the hospital. He begged for himself and for others. The Autobiography gives us splendid account of his activities in his native land. He taught catechesis to children. He preached in poverty. He through his preaching invited his countrymen to moral and spiritual reform. He had spiritual conversations.⁵⁰ After Ignatius left Azpeitia, he went to Javier, Almazán and Toledo [Au 90] to meet families of his companions and to complete business of his companions. He gave Xavier’s letter to his brother; met the father of Laínez in Almazán and visited the family of Salmerón in Toledo. In December 1535 he arrived in Venice.

⁴⁸ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 123 [57]. Polanco here mentions that once he left Paris he soon came to his homeland because he had great desire in the Lord to visit it. GARCÍA HERNÁN, E., *Ignacio de Loyola*, Taurus, Madrid 2013, 229 According to García Hernán, on one hand, Ignatius was in need of abandoning Paris due to pressure of inquisition and on the other hand, the convenience of going to Spain. He agrees with Aroz that Ignatius went back to Azpeitia to preach openly in his land so that they would publicly knew him that he could preach without any type of danger of inquisition and to reestablish his image.

⁴⁹LAÍNEZ, D., *Epístola*, 104 also in ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 146 [31].

⁵⁰ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 125 [57-59], also in FN I, 482-486.

He devoted his attention largely to the continuation of his studies in theology while waiting for his companions to return from Paris in 1536.

1.6 The three forgotten

Three companions who are usually forgotten from the years of Paris are Paschas Bröet, Jean Codure and Claude Jay. Peter Faber managed to win them to join the group of companions. He gave them the Exercises.⁵¹ Padberg gives details of these three and refers to them as the three forgotten founders of the Society of Jesus in his article.⁵²

Paschas Bröet was born in Picardi, France around 1500 (+ 1562 Paris). He was ordained a priest on 12th March, 1524.⁵³ He was from Ambianensis diocese.⁵⁴ At the end of 1532 he began his studies in Paris in the faculty of Arts where philosophy was a major subject. On March 14, 1536 he received licentiate in arts along with Jean Codure and Simon Rodrigues. Around this time, Peter Faber directed him in the Spiritual Exercises. On August 15, 1536, Bröet bound himself by the same vows as the other seven companions, while those still in Paris again renewed their vows.

Jean Codure was born in Seyne in the town in the Alps in 1508.⁵⁵ Sometime between October and December 1534 with already a degree in theology enrolled himself at the university in Paris. In 1536 just before getting a degree in Masters of Arts, he made the Exercises with Peter Faber in order to maintain his moral life. The end result was the same as the other companions. He too made vows along with Bröet on August 15, 1536. Remaining 5 years of his life, he was totally involved with the founding events of the Society. On August 29, 1541, as Ignatius was on the way to celebrate Mass at the church of San Pietro in Montorio, he suddenly stopped at the Ponte Sisto and in some agitation said to his companion, John Baptist Viola, a new recruit, "Jean

⁵¹Ibid., 121 [51].

⁵²PADBERG, J. W., "The Three Forgotten Founders of the Society of Jesus", *Studies in Spirituality of the Jesuits* 29/2 (1997), also mentioned in RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 10-11 [10-11], and also these three are mentioned with details in footnote of FABRO, P., *Memorial, (The spiritual writings of Pierre Favre)*, 68-69.

⁵³GARCÍA de CASTRO, J., "Sacerdocio en ejercicio. Los Primeros Sacerdotes Jesuitas", *Manresa* 74 (2002) 341-359, 344.

⁵⁴FD, Roma 1977, 387.

⁵⁵PADBERG, J. W., "The Three Forgotten...", 3.

Codure has just died."⁵⁶ After only a brief illness, he was the first of the ten companion-founders of the Society of Jesus to pass from the scene.

Claude Jay was born in Savoy in 1504 (+ 1552, Viena). He and Faber coming from the same place attended the school together and were friends. They were under the tutelage of Pierre Veillard, a priest noted for piety and learning. Jay was ordained a priest in Geneva⁵⁷ on March 28, 1528.⁵⁸ Motivated by Faber, he came to the university for his further studies in October 1534. He did the Exercises under the direction of Peter Faber. He too joined the early companions by taking vows in Montmartre on August 15, 1535 while other companions renewed their vows. He received his Master's in Arts in October 1536.⁵⁹

These 3 with the other 6 companions of Ignatius in Paris are recognized later as the First Fathers of the Society of Jesus.⁶⁰ In spite of the absence of Ignatius, the companions kept up their commitment and union. They persevered. They kept up their enthusiasm. They influenced other students to improve their Christian living and helped many youth in the university to go for regular confessions and Eucharist. Peter Faber, the best of all to give the Exercises⁶¹ and in spiritual conversations continued to inspire many more. It was he who brought the latter 3 companions to the group. With these 3 companions the group rose to ten.

1.7 Two Unknown Companions

José García de Castro gives details of these two in his article and calls them the unknown companions.⁶² One was **Diego de Cáceres**⁶³ who finished his studies in Paris in 1534⁶⁴ and did not go to Venice with the group in 1536 but was present in the deliberation of 1539 in Rome and

⁵⁶FN IV, 373.

⁵⁷FD, 387.

⁵⁸GARCÍA de CASTRO, J., "Fundada principalmente para...", *Manresa* 82 (2010) 159-186, 169 and also in BANGERT, W., *Claude Jay and Alfonso Salmerón. Two early Jesuits*, Loyola University Press, Chicago 1985, 148.

⁵⁹PADBERG, J. W., "The Three Forgotten...", 5-6.

⁶⁰FN II, 79.

⁶¹"Speaking about the [Spiritual] Exercises, he said that of those he knew in the Society Fr. Favre took the first place in giving them, Salmerón the second, and then he put Francisco from Villanueva and Jerónimo Domenech. He also said that Estrada gave those of the First Week well." Quoted in GONÇALVES DA CÁMARA, L., *Remembering Inigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 2004, [226].

⁶²GARCÍA de CASTRO, J., "Los primeros de Paris...", 259-261.

⁶³Is this the same Cáceres that Ignatius met in Barcelona? Polanco affirms that these are two different Cáceres with the same name (*Chron* I, 33; *FN* I, 170-171, *FN* II, 544,567. Also in SCHURHAMMER, G., *Francisco Javier. I*, 311. Only Ribadeneira maintains that it is the same Cáceres and not different, *EppMixt* I, 72.

⁶⁴FD, 387.

has signed some decisions of the deliberation.⁶⁵ In the same year he returned to Paris and collaborated in the ministry of the Exercises. He became a priest around 1541/2 and went to serve Francis I and later the king of Navarra. The other one was **Diego de Hoces** from Málaga. He made the Exercises with Ignatius in Venice when Ignatius was waiting for his companions [Au 92]. He was a priest and worked with the other companions in hospitals to hear confessions in Venice. He was one of the twelve who went to Rome to receive the blessing of the Pope to travel to Jerusalem [Au 93]. He died in 1538 before the foundation of the Society of Jesus.⁶⁶

1.8 Paris to Venice

The companions vowed at Montmartre to go to Jerusalem. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem became a uniting force that gave some kind of common mission to the group. The companions wanted to go to Jerusalem as pilgrims for the love of Jesus and to help souls by serving Jesus there. By making commitment at Montmartre, in a way, they were determined to execute the decisions taken while doing the *Spiritual Exercises*.

On 15th November 1536 having completed their studies the nine companions left Paris in order to go to Venice as they had decided and to meet with Ignatius and await a ship there to carry them to the Holy Land. They set out from Paris two months earlier than they had originally planned as the war had already broken between Francis I of France and the emperor Charles V of Spain. This journey was of hardship. The context was a war between Spain and France. On the pilgrimage from Paris the companions wore no distinctive pilgrim costumes to protect them other than their ordinary student garb. They carried enough money and books for the journey as far as Venice. They slept and ate where they could. They walked through the hostile territory.⁶⁷ They walked not as undisciplined wanderers but the pilgrimage was their mission. Exterior journey towards Jerusalem, their presumed destination, was reflecting their interior journey to God in Jesus. They took risk. Their life was vulnerable. “But God was their leader, and they had given themselves completely to him. In him they placed their hope. By his grace and love they with great joy and incredible happiness took on all difficulties, even the struggle for life itself,

⁶⁵“Deliberatio primorum Patrum” (1539), *MCons I*, Roma 1934, [8].

⁶⁶ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 172 [58].

⁶⁷CONWELL, J. F., *Impelling Spirit*, Loyola Press, Chicago 1997, 173.

and so they judged all things to be of less worth than what they freely chose to undergo for God”⁶⁸

Finally after the tiring journey on foot through a path muddied by rain in winter cold with piercing winds patrolled by soldiers, trudged through snow often over their knees, they arrived safely in Venice on January 8, 1537. Here with great delight of soul they found Ignatius awaiting them.

Without wasting time, the companions began to deliberate and share their views about a next course of action. It was a group decision earlier that they would all meet after completing their studies in Venice where Ignatius after returning from the native land would continue his theology. Now they were already all united once again began to discuss once more the plan for future knowing the fact that they would not be able to get a ship for six months,⁶⁹ and it was necessary to think about what they would do during this time. Their common concrete agenda of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was not forgotten but due to a war it was postponed. The conclusions of this group consultation were two. (1) They would give part of this time to serving in the hospitals. (2) Then they would go to Rome to obtain the Pope's blessing for their journey to Jerusalem.⁷⁰ Even at this point they had no intention of founding a congregation. Laínez and Polanco would affirm this.⁷¹ The companions simply decided to dedicate themselves in poverty to the service of God and of others, in preaching and serving in hospitals with a hope of getting a passage to Jerusalem, their dreamland.

1.8.1 Works of mercy

The first companions in Venice began the works of mercy with the special attention to the poor and the sick in that densely populated city. About this we have a testimony of Ignatius who wrote a letter to Verdolay in July 1537 from Venice saying, my nine friends in the Lord arrived from Paris and entered in two hospitals dividing themselves in two groups in order to serve the sick.⁷² Laínez too affirms that after they arrived in Venice, they divided into two groups

⁶⁸RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 37 [37].

⁶⁹OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), 72.

⁷⁰RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 45 [42].

⁷¹LAÍNEZ, *Epístola* [36].

⁷²*Epp* I, 118-123, 122: Letter to Juan de Verdolay, Venice, 24 July 1537. For English edition, *Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Personal Writings*, (Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean, ed.), Penguin, London 1996, 144-147.

to work in the hospital of Saints John and Paul and in the hospitals of the incurables (those with syphilis). Faber Broet, Claude Jay and Hoces being priests heard confessions. They would have discovered the problems created by syphilis and impact which incurable disease continued to have on social reality and consciousness. Rodrigues reports, "How they made the beds, swept the house, cleaned out whatever was soiled and washed the pots of the sick. They were present to everyone day and night with such care, fervor, joy and happiness that all those living in the hospital were greatly astounded."⁷³ Rodrigues also points out, "How each one tried to overcome repugnance caused within them from the stench of the place, the filth, and the horrible sight of the wounds."⁷⁴ In the hospital for incurables a leper, or a person with something resembling leprosy, completely covered with some kind of contagious eczema, calls out to Xavier to scratch his back. Xavier in the middle of scratching is filled with disgust and almost ready to throw up. He begins to fear that he might catch some infectious disease. But because he has a greater desire to overcome his feelings than to worry about the future, he scrapes the diseased matter with his fingers, then puts them in his mouth, licks them, and sucks them. The next day he tells the story to his companion and says, smiling, "I dreamt last night that the leprosy of a sick man had infected my throat and that I had tried in vain to get rid of it by coughing and spitting."⁷⁵

One night in the hospital of Sts. John and Paul, the infirmarian did not want to admit a poor person infected with leprosy into the hospital since there was no empty bed. Rodrigues testifies that one of the companions, moved by compassion, shares his bed with the leper. The next day in the morning, the poor man was nowhere in the hospital and the Father arose completely covered with leprosy. Even so, he was not sad, but the following day he rose from his bed completely healthy; the leprosy had disappeared as though he had never been touched by this noxious disease.⁷⁶

Two great moments happened that contributed to their union during this experience in the hospitals. Firstly, they were dispersed on an apostolic mission unanimously decided by a group and secondly, in order to reaffirm their group identity, they met, shared and encouraged each other during this experience. They experienced first time the union of hearts in the midst of

⁷³RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 45-46 [42.44].

⁷⁴CONWELL, J. F., *Impelling Spirit*, Loyola Press, Chicago 1997, 164-165.

⁷⁵SCHURHAMMER, G., *Francisco Javier*. 402.

⁷⁶RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 47 [45].

dispersion for mission. The experience of the first companions of social realities in Venice while serving the sick and incurables in hospitals has three ends.⁷⁷ Firstly, by staying in hospitals, eating with the poor, sick and suffering patients and serving them is to have friendship and solidarity with the poorest of the poor. This friendship made them the friends of the Eternal King of the Exercises. They experienced the sick and the poor as the representatives of Christ and so vicars of Christ. If the poor are the representatives of Christ in the world and in history, then their suffering also makes the cross of Christ present. Secondly, serving them gave the opportunity to proclaim the gospel in an effective manner in concrete deeds and not just in words. Thirdly, the companions through this ministry for the sick showed their availability and desire to serve the most needy in the world and showed also gratuitous nature of the ministry.

John O'Malley speaks of the characteristics of this ministry in hospitals. They are: "The companions understood their imitation of the ministry of Jesus and his disciples to include the bodily healing – heal the sick (Lk 10:9). Secondly, they felt obliged to contribute to the common good. It reflected a social philosophy present in their thinking after their studies in Paris".⁷⁸

After working in the hospitals, as per their second decision of the first consultation, the companions set off to Rome in order to get Papal blessing to go to Jerusalem [Au 93]. They left for Rome without Ignatius. They traveled in a group of three with one priest and two scholastics in order to facilitate mass and confessions. This time during their journey to Rome they did not carry any money with them as they had done earlier during their journey from Paris to Venice. They begged on the way and stayed in hospitals or inns. They sometimes slept hungry without any food. They taught Christian doctrine in hospitals and also had spiritual conversations with people they came in contact with.

In Rome, with the help of Dr. Ortiz, they met Pope Paul III. Pope received them with joy and gave them blessing to go to Jerusalem in order to visit the holy places and to remain there a time in dedicated service and return when they wished. Pope also gave permission to the

⁷⁷ARRANZ, I., "Hospitales", in *DEI*, Grupo de Espiritualidad Ignaciana (ed.), Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander 2007, 951.

⁷⁸O'MALLEY, J. W., *The First Jesuits*, 166-167.

companions who were not yet priests to be ordained. They also had theological discussion at the Pope's table. Pope also gave them some sixty escudos for the journey.⁷⁹

The two decisions taken by a group of companions during the first deliberation in Venice were put in execution, that is, to serve in hospitals and to go to Rome in order to obtain Pope's blessings to go to Jerusalem.

1.8.2 Ordinations to priesthood

The companions arrived in Venice in May 1537. The situation in Venice that time was not favorable. The rumors were making rounds in the city that the war against Turks was imminent and the passage to Jerusalem would probably be suspended. They resumed their work in the two hospitals. On 24th June 1537, the feast of St. John the Baptist, except Salmerón⁸⁰ since he was still young, the companions who were not yet priests, were ordained to the priesthood, having previously vowed perpetual poverty and chastity before the papal legate in Venice.⁸¹ The companions received minor orders on Sunday, June 10, 1537 and the sub-diaconate on June 15, the feast of Sts. Vitus and Modestus, a solemn festival in Venice. They received the diaconate on June 17 and a week later, they were ordained priests on June 24, 1537 by Bishop Vincenzo Negusanti.⁸² They were filled with great consolation at the ordination and the Bishop too who did not charge them a penny not even a candle said that 'in his whole life he had not celebrated an ordination with this much satisfaction.'⁸³ The apostolic Bishop Girolamo Veralli was also present for the ordination. So the before the ordination ceremony, the companions in the presence of the apostolic legate vowed perpetual poverty. They received the faculties to celebrate mass, administer sacraments, to preach, to teach scripture publicly or privately, to hear the confessions of all those who came to them and to absolve even in those cases reserved to patriarchs, archbishops, bishops and other ordinaries. This document was signed by the papal legate from Venice on July 5, 1537.⁸⁴ These faculties granted to them were truly extraordinary.

⁷⁹ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 154 [39].

⁸⁰FN III, 88.

⁸¹POLANCO, J. A., *Sumario Hispánico*, in *Fontes Narrativi I*, [70] and in RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 61[60].

⁸²FD 530-532.

⁸³LAÍNEZ, *Epístola* [41] also in ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 154 [41].

⁸⁴FD 532-534.

They were priests without any benefice or a parish yet they were given faculties beyond the boundaries of a particular diocese. They were priests with sufficient knowledge and voluntarily poor.⁸⁵ Hence they preached in poverty mainly taking inspiration from the missionary discourse of Jesus to his disciples in Mathew 10. They believed that they had received many blessings freely and now it was their turn to give and serve freely. Hence they refused to accept stipends for their work. With the priesthood, the ideal of imitating Jesus Christ and the Apostles in preaching the gospel through towns and villages was almost a reality, and the group now had the features of a sacerdotal and apostolic community.⁸⁶

The companions chose to be priests not in order to make a career. It was neither for the sake of economic security nor for fulfilling their ambitions. They opted for priesthood not for the sake of social position and prestige. Their decision was to be priests of Jesus Christ and to serve him alone. Later in Rome, the group of priest companions from different countries expressed the desire to become one apostolic body of priests not around a Bishop to the service of a diocese but rather around the Holy Father to the service of the universal church.⁸⁷ The inscription of a papal bull or brief generally adds a title to the names of those to whom a pope addresses his apostolic letter. The one the companions chose for the pope to give them was: Masters of Paris. When the companions were introduced to the pope by Dr. Pedro Ortiz, he introduced them as Masters of Paris. It means they were orthodox and were very much part of the universal church.⁸⁸ Although they were masters of Paris, they kept a balance between virtue and intellect and doctrine and piety. They had realized from the vast and long experience of Ignatius that doctrinal knowledge, and intellectual study was absolutely necessary in greater service of God and in ministry of helping souls and at the same time, the virtuous and exemplary life. They were all learned men but were not seeking their glory. These priests wanted to serve for the greater glory of God and to help souls. They desired to proclaim the Gospel all over the world in service of faith among Christian and non-Christians. They wanted to be ministers of the Word.

By July 1537, it was quite obvious that the sailing to Jerusalem was suspended. The companions once again used their method of deliberation. They gathered together to decide the

⁸⁵GARCÍA de CASTRO, J., "Sacerdocio en ejercicio..."346.

⁸⁶OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), 72.

⁸⁷KOLVENBACH, P. H., "En los 450 años de la Fórmula del Instituto", in *Selección de Escritos*, 34.

⁸⁸CONWELL, J. F., *Impelling Spirit*, 42-43.

future course of plan. They were a bit baffled and also disappointed since they could not sail to Jerusalem. In this deliberation they decided two things, namely, to wait for one more year to see if they could go to Jerusalem and to prepare themselves to celebrate their first mass. Having chosen the places best suited for this purpose, the companions split up in twos by different nationalities.

In that year no ships sailed for the East because the Venetians had broken off with the Turks. So, seeing that their hope of sailing was put off, they dispersed within the Venetian region, with the intention of waiting the year they had decided upon; and if it expired without possibility of travel, they would go to Rome. It fell to the pilgrim to go with Faber and Lainez to Vicenza. There they found a certain house outside the city, which had neither doors nor windows. They stayed in it, sleeping on a little straw that they had brought. Two of them always went out to seek alms in the city twice a day, but they got so little they could hardly maintain themselves. They usually ate a little toasted bread when they had it, and the one who remained at home saw to its toasting. In this way they spent forty days, not engaging in anything other than prayer [Au 94].

They spent these days mainly in prayer, meditation in order to prepare for the first mass. They also lived in poverty begging alms and sharing with one another in small groups. They took a chance whenever they could to preach.

1.9 Vicenza

The companions somewhere in September 1537 gathered together in Vicenza where Ignatius was. Ignatius called them all there since the group had to decide a future course of plan. Hope of sailing to Jerusalem was not there. They all put up in the same house, which was the old hermitage named San Pietro in Vivarola near Vicenza. They gathered here for various consultations. They followed the usual method of prayer, peaceful reflection and exchange of views.⁸⁹

They decided at this time not to postpone the celebration of their first Masses since the hope of going to Jerusalem where they wanted to celebrate their first mass had vanished. In the church of St. Pietro in Vivarola towards the end of September 1537, Laínez, Xavier, Codure and Bobadilla celebrated their first mass. Rodrigues celebrated it at Ferrara. Salmerón was not yet a priest. Ignatius had decided to wait for a year to celebrate his first mass while asking Mary to place him with her Son [Au 96]. During this time, they decided to set off to the various universities of Italy with the intention of working among them and seeing whether they could

⁸⁹OSUNA, J., *Amigos en el Señor*, 107-108.

influence other young students and recruit other companions to join their group. It is during their consultations and deliberation they also decided to name a group. They decided to call their group as Society of Jesus.⁹⁰

After this discussion in Vicenza, the companions dispersed from the winter of 1537 until the following spring, at Siena, Bologna, Ferrara and Padua. In the inspiration of this name of the group, Ignatius, Laínez and Faber went to Rome, Jay and Rodrigues journeyed to Ferrara, Xavier and Bobadilla to Bologna, Bröet and Salmeron to Siena, Diego Hoces to Venice and Codure to Padua. They worked feverishly, exhorting in the churches and squares, encouraging people to go to confession, and looking for new companions. They lived in hospitals and other places that they regarded as suitable.

After Easter 1538, the rest of the companions, seeing their last chance of making the journey that summer practically gone; felt themselves free from the first part of their vow to go to Jerusalem and came to Rome to reunite with the others in order to present themselves to the Pope as they all had decided at Montmartre but also to discuss among them their future proceedings. Ignatius, Laínez and Faber were already in Rome and Ignatius wanted the companions to join them in Rome for yet another important consultation. They lived together near the inner city of Rome and began getting engaged in apostolic activity. In a way they became an apostolic community. They worked together in helping souls with their physical and spiritual ministry while continuing living a poor lifestyle. They followed the gospel values in imitating Jesus and his apostles. They did not have superior still other than having a leader in the group which kept changing every month. They had chosen the name for the group to signify that Jesus was the head of the group.

Their activity in the winter of 1538-39 was particularly intense, for during these months there was a combination of famine and some exceedingly harsh and intolerable weather. At nightfall, weary with their labors of the day, the companions would go out to look for them. The poor were everywhere in the streets and squares, half dead with hunger and cold. They brought

⁹⁰*FN I*, 204. *FN II*, 595-596.

them home.⁹¹ The companions fed them with the alms they had collected for themselves and made them feel comfortable. At the same time, they preached the good news to them.

The year 1538 in Rome was one of intense apostolic activity, of uncertainty with regard to the immediate future, and of persecution.⁹² The companions were known by their ministry and works in the city. Their preaching attracted crowd. But at the same time there were others who began spreading rumors about them in order to persecute them. They were accused as heretics who are on the run from Spain, Paris and Venice. Their reputation was defamed and they faced intense persecution. Towards the end of 1538, they were absolved from all the accusations and their reputation was restored. In one of their informal gathering with the Pope Paul III asked them why they were so keen on going to Jerusalem. Italy was a good and true Jerusalem, if they wished to yield fruit in the church of God. These words were reported back at the house, and according to Bobadilla were what first made them think of founding a religious order, since until then they had always planned to go to Jerusalem.⁹³

Towards the end of 1538 in November, in the realization that the little flame of hope which they had of going to Jerusalem had been extinguished, the companions made first formal offering to the Pope Paul III in fulfillment of the second part of the vow made at Montmartre, placing themselves entirely at his disposal, even if he should desire that they go to the any part of the world. The Pope gladly accepted this generous offer of the companions. Peter Faber interpreted this event as the quasi-foundation of the Society of Jesus.⁹⁴ On 25th December 1538, Ignatius celebrated his first mass at the altar of Our Lord's crib in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.⁹⁵

Slowly the companions realized the invitation to practice the *Spiritual Exercises* in their lives in terms of mission especially the incarnation, the call of the king and the two standards.

⁹¹LAÍNEZ, *Epístola* [48].

⁹²*Epp* I, 137-144, Ignatius wrote about it in a letter to Isabel Roser from Rome on December 19, 1538. At this time in Rome a storm arose against our men, so serious and violent that many were convinced, indeed did not hesitate to assert, that our men should be burned at the stake, others that they should be sent into distant exile, and others that they should be condemned to suffer in the galleys. RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 77[84].

⁹³OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), 90.

⁹⁴*FN* I, 541.

⁹⁵*FN* III, 88, ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 131 [73], and also in RODRIGUES, S., *The Recollections...* (Conwell, J. F. tr.), 64 [65].

These Exercises became the spiritual foundation for their understanding of mission. In the kingdom meditation, the Eternal King, Jesus Christ invited them to conquer the whole world by working with him [Ex 95]. It is a kind of spiritual conquest of the world in Jesus. In the exercise of the two standards, the call of Christ, the Lord of the whole world was experienced by them as being sent into the whole world to all people spreading the sacred doctrine of Jesus [Ex 145]. Hence the mission was experienced by them in the exercises as being sent to the service of Jesus Christ in the whole world and to all people.⁹⁶

This understanding of mission gradually evolved in their spiritual growth. They experienced it through the mystery of the incarnation where the second person of the Trinity is sent to all people in the world in service of their salvation [Jn 3:16; Jn 1:14].⁹⁷ Hence the mission of the first companions evolved beyond Jerusalem. In placing themselves at the disposal of the Pope they were ready to be sent by the Vicar of Christ anywhere in the world in service of faith and in helping souls. They chose to be missionary in their zeal and their mission was not confined to a narrow understanding of mission.

1.10 Deliberations 1539

1539 is the crucial year of the community consultations. The Pope had already accepted their oblation and had the intention to send these companions to the various parts for ministry. In the beginning of 1539, Pope thought of having them all in Rome itself since there was great harvest in Rome and the companions too were thinking of working together in Rome. Later several Bishops were asking Pope for the services of the companions. So the Pope decided to disperse the companions. After the Deliberation, Bröet and Rodrigues were sent to Siena on a mission to reform a monastery there. Laínez and Faber were to go to Parma to see to the spiritual growth of the city.⁹⁸ It is with the imminence of the dispersion for mission by the Pope the question of future survival of the group came into being. They knew that many of the bonds

⁹⁶SIEVERNICH, M., “La Misión y las Misiones en la Primitiva Compañía de Jesús”, in *Ite Inflammate Omnia*, (McCoog, T.M., ed.), IHSI, Roma 2010, 257-259.

⁹⁷SALVAT, I., “Introducción a la séptima parte principal”, in *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Arzubialde, S., Corella, J., García-Lomas, J.M., eds.), Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander 1993, 248-249.

⁹⁸OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), 92-93.

which kept the group united so far would be broken with separation and dispersion anywhere in the world.

The Deliberations started in mid-Lent 1539⁹⁹ and lasted till 24th June 1539. They had earlier many consultations in a group and were used to take decisions in a group. In an atmosphere of intense prayer and meditation with mature reflection the companions followed a method of discernment seeking the will of God. It was not a monopoly of one person's decision but with the interior freedom in an ambience of community dialogue. They came to their decisions unanimously. Polanco describes the method they followed:

“...But being in Rome, and recognizing that the time was drawing near when they had to split up, sent to various places by the pope, and seeing men of such diverse lands joined in the same spirit and called to the same vocation, they began to discuss the form of the life that they ought to lead. Because there were so many different points of view to begin with, they all decided that it would be best to take time for prayer and Masses and careful consideration of this matter, confident that God would inspire them with his holy will, as long as they were doing what they could for their part. Thus, what God gave to each of them to feel during the day, they would bring out to each at night, with all of them gathered together so that whatever they should approve after the votes and discussion, all would follow.”¹⁰⁰

In the first place they discussed a question of union among them in the midst of dispersion for mission. They decided to maintain their union; no matter what distances might separate them. They decided first time to transform their community into the Society with the union of hearts although separated by a distance. After much deliberation and prolonged discussion on the pros and cons of obedience, they decided and adopted a vow of obedience to one of their companions, who would be the superior; thus substantially transforming the nature of the community and making it a religious congregation. On April 15, Peter Faber celebrated Mass and at the communion asked each if it was his will, dependent on the approbation of the Pope, to form a religious order and if it was his intent to join it. Each answered affirmatively and then received Holy Communion from Faber.¹⁰¹ Preserving the same order for discussion and a similar procedure, they made further decisions about the poverty, obedience, probations, colleges, and the name of the Society and other aspects of their vocation that would be contained in the Bull of Foundation.

⁹⁹GARCÍA HERNÁN, E., *Ignacio de Loyola*, 303. According to García Hernán, since the promise of the first ten companions that entered the Society is on April 15, 1539, we conclude that between January and April of 1539, Pope Paul III asked them to deliberate; different from their internal deliberation that took place year before (August 1538).

¹⁰⁰ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 139 [87].

¹⁰¹“Deliberatio primorum Patrum” (1539), *MCons I*, Roma 1934, [1-7] commonly known as “Deliberations of 1539”.

They compiled these conclusions into an outline for a formula or policy-statement entitled *Prima Societatis Iesu Instituti Summa*, and presented them to the Supreme Pontiff through Cardinal Contarini who himself read out to the Pope the five chapters contained in the *Summa*. The Pope was very satisfied and approved them orally on 3rd September 1539 at Tivoli and ordered the drawing up of a Bull according to the normal practice of the Curia. On 27th September 1540, the Bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae* is published, instituting and confirming the Society of Jesus. In 1541, they draw up, approve, and sign the 1541 *Constitutions*, and Ignatius is elected superior, and the companions present in Rome make their solemn profession.¹⁰²

1.11 The importance of the name ‘Society of Jesus’

Before dispersing from Vicenza to the various universities, the group felt the need to name their group. The group was well-knit in their union of hearts and in union with God. The companions were looking for the group identity. So they decided to spend some time in prayer on this and reflect on the name for the group. Polanco writes about the name of Jesus in this way:

The name is the Society (Compañía) of Jesus, and this name was adopted before they arrived in Rome. When they were discussing among themselves what they should call themselves to those who asked what congregation this was (it numbered nine or ten people then), they began to give themselves to prayer and to consider what name would be most appropriate; and since they had no head in the group, nor any chief but Jesus Christ, whom alone they wished to serve, they decided to take the name of Him who was their head, calling themselves the Society of Jesus.¹⁰³

The companions had experienced that it was Jesus who united them all and directed them all and revealed to them his plan for them through this process of consultations. They all knew that only Jesus is the head of the group. It is He who created this group and has been the guiding, impelling and unifying force. The name Jesus emerged from their personal experience of union with Jesus realizing that union among them flowed from this union with Jesus.

The name ‘Society of Jesus’ was adopted first time in Vicenza when the companions had not yet thought of founding a religious congregation. They were just a group of companions who

¹⁰²OSUNA, J., *Friends in the Lord*, (King N., tr.), 87.93-94.

¹⁰³POLANCO, J. A., *Sumario Hispánico*, [86].

were more like priest preachers wanting to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This name was a decision of a group in order to give them corporate identity.

Ignatius received the confirmation when he was placed with the Son by the Father himself in a chapel of La Storta on the way to Rome accompanied by Laínez and Faber. He was asking virgin mother to place him with her Son. One day while he was praying in the chapel, he saw such a change in his soul and saw God the Father placed him with his Son [Au 96]. This vision left Ignatius with an increased desire that his little band be known as the Society of Jesus and with a deeper confidence in God's protection regardless of what Rome might have in store for them.¹⁰⁴ Ignatius did not want to call this group as companions of Ignatius like Dominicans or Franciscans or Agustinians etc. He was convinced and had no doubts about Jesus being the head of the group.

Laínez in 1559, as General of the Society, gave an exhortation in Rome¹⁰⁵, in the course of which, expounding the reason for the Society's name, he referred to what he had heard from Ignatius' own lips about the vision. He gives the following reason for choosing this name based on La storta experience of Ignatius. He states:

The primary reason for this name was our Father [Ignatius], as I shall now tell you. As we were on the way to Rome from Siena our Father received many spiritual consolations, especially from the most holy Eucharist that he received every day from Pierre Favre or me. We said Mass every day, but he did not. He told me that it seemed to him that God the Father had imprinted these words on his heart: "I shall be propitious to you [plural] in Rome." Since our Father did not know what these words might mean, he said: "I don't know what is going to happen to us; perhaps we shall be crucified in Rome." Then on another occasion he said that it seemed to him that he saw Christ with the cross on his shoulder, and next to him the Eternal Father, who said to him: "I want You to take this man for your servant." And so Jesus took him and said: "I want you [singular] to serve us." For this reason, because he had great devotion to this most holy name, he wanted the community to be called the Company of Jesus.¹⁰⁶

Finally, when in Rome during the deliberation, when they formally decided to found the religious order, they unanimously decided to retain the name of Jesus for the new order. Laínez

¹⁰⁴FNI, 313.

¹⁰⁵ITURRIOZ, J., "Compañía de Jesús. Sentido histórico y ascético de este nombre", *Manresa* 27 (1955) 43-53. 48-49. "La narración de Laínez, la más amplia y completa que poseemos, es de una plática tenida por él en Roma en 1559 en una serie de explicaciones del Examen General. Llegando a la explicación del nombre de la Compañía, cuenta como se juntaron todos los primeros Padres, los cuales, tras intensa y fervorosa oración, comenzaron sus deliberaciones. Explica luego Laínez las causas que a Ignacio movieron a proponer este nombre; la primera es la aparición de La Storta."

¹⁰⁶As quoted in CONWELL, J. F., *Impelling Spirit*, 274 and also in ALBURQUERQUE, A., *Diego Laínez, First Biographer*, 158.

later confirms: ‘it was Ignatius who took the initiative, saying that it seemed good to him if the congregation called itself the Society of Jesus, if they were all agreed on that; and everyone gave his consent’.¹⁰⁷ The name company was very commonly used this time in Italy. There were many associations calling themselves company dedicated to the works of charity or some pious works. By calling themselves ‘Society of Jesus’ the group distinguishes their group from the other companies, chiefly by name Jesus. The group is defined by its name. Their gaze was mainly on its head, Jesus. The word society refers to the interior union of the companions in the group. The companionship is with one another but above all with Christ. The union, the communion, the companionship is in Christ and through him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

1.12 Conclusion

Alone and on foot, the exterior pilgrimage that began in Loyola brought Ignatius to Paris to do studies on 2nd February 1528. His exterior pilgrimage did not end as alone and on foot but it ends ten years later in 1538 with the arrival in Rome with the seeds of the foundation of the least Society of Jesus. This Society of Jesus which was formally founded in 1540 was composed of his first companions of Paris strongly united by the same way of proceeding and a common mission as friends in the Lord.

“In the middle of January, there arrived here from Paris nine of my friends in the Lord”. This was the only one time that Ignatius used this simple expression ‘friends in the Lord’. He used it in the letter sent from Venice on 24 July 1537 to his old friend Juan de Verdolay. The letter’s purpose was to tell Verdolay about the first companions with whom, from Paris, Ignatius had jointly founded a little group of companions committed to apostolic goals.

The expression ‘friends in the Lord’ was not just theoretical but rather was based on Ignatius’ practical and personal experience of more than seven years of friendship. This bond of

¹⁰⁷ FN II, 133. ITURRIOZ, J., “Compañía de Jesús...”, 53. “Compañía originariamente significo simplemente *congregación* o *sociedad* y este nombre no lo puso San Ignacio, sino que lo recogió del vulgo, que a aquel grupo de diez hombres llamaba <<compagnia>> como a tantas otras asociaciones. A esta compañía se le puso el nombre de Jesús. Esto fue lo propio de San Ignacio, significando con esta designación la total consagración de los congregados en esa sociedad a Jesús, con comunidad de ideales, de vida, etc., como es común la vida de la cabeza y de los nombres. Así el nombre de la compañía de Jesús significa y expresa toda la vida interior de los hijos de la Compañía. Es resumen pleno, profundísimo, de todo el espíritu de los Ejercicios.”

friendship among companions was marked by their intimate personal experiences of God, conversations, sharing, consultations and deliberations based on discernment and interior freedom in communication. Each of them had done the Spiritual Exercises and had experienced the personal call of Jesus with the experience of the personal love through which Jesus had conquered each one. It was held together by the force of this same love that called them all his friends [Jn 15.15]. From this union with the Lord, they all had decided to commit their lives as the disciples in service of Jesus, their only head and superior. They were all determined to know the Lord interiorly in order to love him more and to follow him more closely based on their profound experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*. 'Friends in the Lord' was truly the authentic expression of something which had become natural among them. They were experiencing the friendship offered to them by Jesus and which had bound them all in a communion based on *koinonia* overcoming their differences.

Besides being the community of friendship and union with the Lord, it was also apostolic group that was pursuing their mission and was constantly searching for the will of God. This community had Eucharist as a centre of their lives. They experienced deep love for the Eucharistic Lord and made him a centre of their lives.

The community of friends lived poverty and followed in their lifestyle poor and humble Christ. They all had finished their studies in one of the best universities in the Christian world. They would have looked forward to any of the best careers in future that would bring them status, power, position and popularity. On the contrary, after doing the *Spiritual Exercises*, each one personally, voluntarily and deliberately chose to live in poverty from the vows of Montmartre. They chose to go against the current of the prevailing values of the world. They chose to go against richness, honor and pride and opted to be poor, humble and to face humiliation in order to serve Jesus, their master and leader. They wanted to dedicate themselves at the service of the Lord in poverty. The very pilgrimage that began from Paris to Venice was in poverty. They made poverty as part of their lifestyle and a way of proceeding thereafter. By serving poor they opted to be friends of the poor who were representatives of Jesus. They preached in poverty without stipend. They begged alms for living. They shared everything in common. The poverty gave shape to their priesthood.

These years of friendship were marked by various peak moments: Vows at Montmartre (1534), Studies and degrees in Paris (up to 1536), Ordinations at Venice and various consultations in Venice and Vicenza (1537) and the vision of Ignatius at La Storta. Their evangelical friendship sprang from a common vocation of serving the Lord with union with Him and led them to discern the will of God through prayer, meditation and deliberations believing that the Spirit of God was guiding them through the voice of each other.

This little seed continued growing and led them to the deliberations of 1539 and flourished by divine grace to the Society of Jesus. In a letter written to his nephew, Beltrán of Loyola, in 1539, Ignatius speaks of the “Company I was hoping for”, and of how at last “it has pleased God our Lord in his infinite and supreme Goodness...to show special providence for us and our affairs, or, to put it better, his own affairs (for in this life we do not pursue our own interests)”¹⁰⁸.

During this deliberation they all agreed that they wanted to be united in one stable body even if the Pope sent them on mission to different parts of the world. They decided that they ought not split apart what God had gathered and united. They were ready for dispersion on the universal mission under the standard of the cross, in poverty and humility, for the salvation of souls and for the greater glory of God. This union in one body called the Society of Jesus became their individual and corporate identity to give inspiration to their apostolic life. During the deliberation of 1539, they discussed poverty and in the five chapters of the formula of the institute they mentioned poverty as a way of proceeding for the individual member of the Society and for the community or group in common. The apostolic document of 1540 recognizes that the first Jesuits although were priests, they were different from the diocesan priests. They were recognized as priests of Christ, voluntarily poor.¹⁰⁹ They were in fact poor with Christ poor in every way, preaching in poverty and weakness after the manner of the apostles, the poor priests of Christ.¹¹⁰

The soldier who had left Loyola as a pilgrim in search of his own vocation became an apostle and found himself involved in giving a formal structure to the Society that he founded

¹⁰⁸*Epp* I, 150 (carta de Ignacio de Loyola a Beltrán de Loyola. Roma 24 de septiembre de 1537).

¹⁰⁹KOLVENBACH, P. H., “En los 450 años de la Fórmula del Instituto”, 36.

¹¹⁰CONWELL, J. F., *Impelling Spirit*, 63.

along with his companions. It was surprising how God continued revealing Ignatius and companions the plan he had for them. The men who were from different countries, with different cultures and languages were united. They were so different and had diverse personalities with their strengths and with their idiosyncrasies. Each one had their own plan and ambition and yet all became friends in the Lord surrendering totally their lives in fulfilling the will of God. God does not look at external appearance but at the heart. God surely found in these companions the hearts ablazed in love of God in Jesus and for each other.

Chapter 2 Means that Help the Union of Hearts

2.1 Introduction

In many religious congregations, although apostolate was important it was not central since the stable and structured lifestyle was emphasized. Physical presence, disciplined timetable and communal prayer were the features of this emphasis. Hence the community living became an end in itself and the founding focus of apostolate or mission was adapted to fit in with the demands of regular community living. Hence a debatable question arises as to which is more important, *community or mission?*

It is self-evident that commitment to mission is intrinsic to the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus in Ignatian tradition. The first companions were quite sure about the purpose of their lives. They wanted to grow in perfection and holiness for the salvation of their own soul and then to labor strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their fellowmen.

The *Constitutions* takes a central place in the legislative body of the Society but it also its own place in the Ignatian spirituality. Very often, it is only seen as a book of norms. Many

misunderstand it as giving rules or code to follow. It is only seen as a legislative juridical document failing to see the spirituality intrinsic to it. It is seen as a help to superior to take action as it gives them norms but is seen useless for the Jesuits in mission. Hence the *Constitutions* were confined to only the letters of law. The Ignatian spirituality was seen only in terms of the Spiritual Exercises. But it is clear now that while the Exercises propose open way to all human persons who want to orient their lives according to God, it is the *Constitutions* that gives identity to the Jesuits stating our way of proceeding to God, original to the Society.¹¹¹

Moreover, the *Constitutions* is a book of discernment written after prayers, mass, reflection on each points as it is known from the Autobiography of Saint Ignatius [Au 100.101] and from the spiritual diary. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit. So it is not just dead letters but letters of the spirit written after hearing the voice of the Spirit. It is continuation of the Spiritual Exercises. It brings out the spirituality of the Society as the spirituality of service.

Hence the spirituality of the *Constitutions* is preservative because it prescribes to the care and development of the Society. It is dynamic because it is based on model of incarnation searching for the greater glory of God. It is orderly because it pursues one common end from the beginning. It is sustainable because it invites the superior to take care of the persons with love. It is apostolic because it is centered on mission of the body.¹¹²

The image of a member of the Society painted by Ignatius in the *Constitutions* is a pilgrim one. The words like mobility, availability, dispersal and freedom for the sake of mission recur frequently. The members are expected always to be on the move, ready to go anywhere in the world at any hour where they may be sent for the sake of mission.¹¹³

Yet in the midst of this mobility, dispersion and pilgrimage in Lord's vineyard for the sake of the kingdom, there is a significant factor that is central to mission. The members were not like individuals doing their own thing but were to be united in dispersion.

The general scheme of the *Constitutions* leads in a natural way to the question of union of hearts. Once the members of the Society are selected and admitted, they are formed spiritually

¹¹¹JAER, A., "Introducción a las Constituciones" in *Formar un cuerpo para la misión*, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander 2011, 23- 32, 23.

¹¹²COUPEAU, C., "Constituciones", in *DEI*, 435-445, 444.

¹¹³O'NEILL, U., "Community for Mission", *The Way Supplement* 61 (1988) 62-75, 63.

and intellectually. After the formation they are incorporated into the body of the Society and are to live religious life in the apostolic body as full-fledged members. Then it leads to the mission. The goal of the Society is apostolic. It is for the greater glory of God and to help souls. This apostolic goal implies dispersion in the world. Hence it leads to the question of union in the midst of dispersion and from there to governance of the whole apostolic body and how it is to be preserved and developed.

2.2 Need for the union of hearts

This union is absolutely necessary for the life and existence of the Society because in this union the Society can manifest and renew continually the constitutive unity of this religious, apostolic body approved by the Church. This union should guarantee the vitality and the apostolic efficacy of this body. Only after recognizing the need for this union, we can identify factors that help to preserve this union.¹¹⁴

Having incorporated into the Society and having accepted the religious life under the banner of the cross, the Jesuits like the apostles are sent on a mission by the Risen Lord to work in his vineyard and to proclaim his kingdom. The mission in the Society leads to a question of union. How are these members who are scattered over the world and even among unbelievers to remain united among themselves and with their head? At this point a basic question arises: how to remain united when the Jesuits are so widely dispersed? The first companions during the deliberation of 1539 feel the need to discuss the question of union in the midst of dispersion as they offered themselves to be sent by the pope so that the pope may send them wherever he thinks to be more useful.

After we had offered and dedicated ourselves and our lives to Christ our Lord and to his true and legitimate vicar on earth, so that he might dispose of us and send us where he might judge we could be most effective – whether to the Indies, the heretics, or among any of the faithful or among non-Christians would it be better for us to be so joined and bound together in one body that no physical dispersal, however great, could separate us? Or perhaps would this be inexpedient?¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴DECLoux, S., “Octava parte principal. De lo que ayuda para unir a los repartidos con su cabeza y entre sí”, in *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Arzubialde, S., Corella, J., García-Lomas, J.M., eds.), Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander 1993,277-288, 279.

¹¹⁵“Deliberatio primorum Patrum” (1539), *MCons I*, Roma 1934, [1-7]. The English translation is from FUTRELL, J. C., *Making an Apostolic Community of Love*, The Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 1970, 189.

They will thus normally be dispersed. Such dispersion across many areas seems to work against union. But this union, however wide the physical distance, is not only to be maintained but also to be deepened. They see it as important to know about each other, to bother about each other, and to be concerned about each other. Moreover, in all this, the first companions want to respond to their experiential conviction of their community having been brought together by God. They want to cooperate with this grace of God.¹¹⁶ In this context they discuss whether to maintain a bond of religious society among themselves, including obedience to one of them. They think of making themselves into one body, caring for and understanding one another for the greater good of souls.¹¹⁷ Thus the goal and scope of this decision is apostolic and mission oriented – for the greater good of souls. This was their communitarian discernment. Their discernment and discussion led to the foundation of the Society of Jesus. The first companions responded firmly: “God brought us together and guided us despite all our differences. We cannot disperse what God has assembled.”¹¹⁸

We decided affirmatively, namely, that since the most kind and loving Lord had deigned to unite us to one another and to bring us together – weak men and from such different places and cultures – we should not sever God’s union and bringing together, but rather everyday we should strengthen and more solidly ground it, forming ourselves into one body. Everyone should have concern for and comprehension of the other for greater apostolic efficacy, since united strength would have more power and courage in confronting whatever challenging goals were to be sought than if this strength were divided into many parts.¹¹⁹

They realized that they would be stronger in service if they formed one body even though dispersed. There was no choosing between the two values. Dispersal was essential in order to reach the goal they had fixed upon and thought about with intense desire. This friendship was given to them as gift by God for an apostolic purpose. This union is not for selfish motives. It is not some kind of club or group to entertain each other. This union is not conceived as coming together of weak and powerless people who might need each other to survive, such as might happen in union of other groups. This union is not seen as a desirable fringe benefit but as an absolute necessity. “The society cannot be preserved, or governed or, consequently, attain the

¹¹⁶KNAUER, P., “Friendship in the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus”, 65.

¹¹⁷CALVEZ, J. Y., “Union. Community for Mission”, in *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, Incorporation of a Spirit*, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand 1993, 311-326, 312.

¹¹⁸JAER, A., *Together for Mission*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 2001, 152.

¹¹⁹“Deliberatio primorum Patrum” (1539), *MCons I*, Roma 1934, [1-7]. FUTRELL, J. C., *Making an Apostolic Community of Love*, 189-190.

aim it seeks for the greater glory of God unless its members are united among themselves and with their head” [Co 655].¹²⁰

The end of the Society is apostolic. This is a situation of every member of the Society who is sent on a mission. Today, more than before, the Jesuits are related to the world. While a Jesuit receives a mission that sends him away, how he is going to choose to remain united with the main body of the Society. Union can be difficult in the Society “because the members are scattered among the faithful and among the unbelievers in diverse regions of the world” [Co 655]. The scattering is also produced by the diversity of ministries, people and social group with whom they deal. The dispersal is not only geographic but also ideological and socio-cultural at times. Some are pastoral or scientific, there are social activists and theologians and mystics; some members progressive or conservatives; some are pioneers or settlers. Even if the members are united in heart, perspectives will differ and there are bound to be tensions because of ministry and mission. Although such differences are unavoidable and imply dispersion, they don’t bring division because the members form union and strive to maintain union not mainly with human effort but with total confidence in God.¹²¹ The union among members of the Society is not just external, juridical and formal but it is a deeper union of hearts.¹²² The subject is the entire apostolic community of the Society. The Ignatian vision of a community is totally different from what is conceived and envisaged by the Benedictines, Dominicans and others. For them the community is essentially local. For a Jesuit, his primary community is the universal Society and the primary mission field is the whole world. This worldwide community is visibly present and concretely experienced in the provinces and in the particular communities but Ignatian universal vision helps to avoid provincialism in the Society.

¹²⁰The edition used is, PADBERG, J. W. (ed.), *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 1996.

¹²¹JAER, A., *Together for Mission*, 172.

¹²²CALVEZ, J. Y., “Union. Community for Mission”, 312.

2.3 Means that help the union of hearts¹²³

The first chapter of part VIII of the Constitutions in fact deals with the question of union of the apostolic body of the Society of Jesus. Although the text of the Constitutions does not use the word community, it is implied in union of hearts. Hence the implicit logic of the first chapter of the part VIII is a basic demand to establish a strong union of members of the Society with the head and among themselves. It shows the way to maintain union of hearts within the body of the dispersed members of the Society. This chapter gives us means to make the union possible and the communion of hearts genuine.

While one cannot long for an impossible uniformity in the Society of Jesus, one cannot also allow an irresponsible fragmentation and unhealthy destructive division to prevail in the Society. The union within the body is must to preserve the body and to achieve the purpose for which the body is founded. The dispersion on the mission is unavoidable but with total confidence in God we strive towards union in the Society.

The first companions, despite being of different nations and nationalities, were united in one body. It was their hope, their expectation and their aspiration, that this spiritual union would transcend particular cultural differences and become the cornerstone of the Society of Jesus.¹²⁴ They said themselves to be friends in the Lord not with a narrow understanding but with the bond of friendship with their apostolic mission.

For Ignatius, consolation means the central inner experience in which one can feel a living relationship to God, the Creator and Lord. A person consoled has come into contact with

¹²³ALDAMA, A.M., "Unión de la Compañía", en *Comentario al nuevo 'Sumario' de las Constituciones*, Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, Roma 1978, 103-116, 104. The term used by Ignatius in the first chapter of the Part 8 of the Constitutions is unión de los ánimos. Aldama explains this term as: El primero trata de la unión de los ánimos, es decir, de la unión interna de las razones en medio de la dispersión geográfica de las personas: unión que debe mantenerse siempre y en cualquier circunstancia: unión social en un cuerpo (la "comunidad") y unión espiritual en Cristo (el espíritu de la "comunidad"). The English translations prefer to use the term hearts instead of los ánimos. I too will be using the term union of hearts throughout and not unión de los ánimos. Heart is a link between body and head. It keeps unity between body and head. It is in the heart that we experience feelings, interior movements and emotions. Heart gives birth to love. The means that help the union of hearts are summarized into 4 aspects. The love of God is experienced in the heart that leads to vertical and horizontal union. The obedience is the dynamic principle of love. This love for obedience too is born in the heart. Mutual communication is a transaction of hearts. One has to put his heart into obedience and communication. Certain uniformity requires adjustment and understanding which is initiated in the heart.

¹²⁴MEDINA, Fco. De B., "La quiebra del universalismo de la unión de los ánimos", in *Ite Inflammate Omnia*, (McCoog, T.M., ed.), IHSI, Roma 2010, 321-341, 341.

God in a lived and felt way, and finds in this experience of God a spiritual orientation, together with growth in faith, hope and love. Ignatius was convinced that the members of the Society of Jesus could help each other have such experiences of consolation. In their relationships with each other, members of the Society of Jesus find their relationship to the Lord. This is the deepest message of Part VIII of the *Constitutions*.¹²⁵ The first chapter of Part VIII shows the way to maintain union of hearts within the body of the dispersed members of the Society of Jesus. This chapter of Part VIII gives us means and aids to make the union possible and the communion of hearts genuine. The word union is used and not community. A remarkable importance is given to union in the constitutions of the Society.

Whenever we speak of union of the Society of Jesus we are concerned with the union of hearts. The means proposed in the first chapter of the Part VIII of the *Constitutions* for preserving union and to promote the formation of the apostolic community of the Society are: the love of God, our Lord [Co 671], obedience [Co 659-665] and the exercise of authority [Co 666-670], mutual intercommunication [Co 673], and a certain uniformity [Co 671.672].¹²⁶

2.3.1 The love of God our Lord

The text of the *Constitutions* about the love of God which descends and extends especially to the whole body of the Society appears in one form or another in correspondence with the experience of Ignatius and the first companions as friends in the Lord. It denotes a very vivid awareness of the communion of the whole body. As the personal love of Jesus Christ was taking possession of the heart of the first companions, the Lord was stimulating in them a community of relationship. From the outset, their vocation was not mere personal call, but was the invitation to form a group of friends in the Lord. Personal friendship with the Lord with the love that descends from him is to be extended to all the members to form communion in the body. This was the personal experience of the first companions.¹²⁷ This type of friendship began in Paris. The early Society was born out of the one such friendship between Ignatius, Faber and Xavier. Laínez and Salmerón came to Paris together and they were friends from their

¹²⁵MEURES, F., "Identidad Corporativa S.J.", *Revista de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* XXIX (1998) 23-36, 23. Also in MEURES, F., "Identidad Corporativa S.J. Promover la unión y la cohesión en la Compañía de Jesús", *Manresa* 76 (2004) 243 -258.

¹²⁶JAER, A., *Together for Mission*, 156.

¹²⁷OSUNA, J., *Amigos en el Señor*, 366.

adolescence. Faber on arriving in Evora, when he was going to Rome where Ignatius had called him to go to Trent, located Simon Rodrigues and Araoz, to whom he had not met for years and spent some days together evoking the common memories. Xavier in India carried signature of Ignatius in the locket that he put around his neck to relish the friendship. This fraternal agape and union among them was possible only because of the common source of the experience of love of God in Jesus and their union and familiarity with Jesus.¹²⁸ The letters that Ignatius wrote very often begins with the invocation with IHS signifying the message was entrusted to Jesus. The letters to the Jesuits carried salutations like dear Fathers or Brothers in Jesus Christ or my very dear Reverend Father in Our Lord. The letters ended very often as yours in our Lord or perpetual and humble servants in Our Lord, etc.

Moreover, Ignatius reminded the Jesuits about the love of God in Jesus as a foundational link for union among themselves. In 1544 in a brief letter to the companions in Colonia who were dispersed, Ignatius asks them to maintain union. Ignatius writes to encourage them to maintain union among themselves. Although they all were separated physically and stayed under different roof, Ignatius asked them with divine help to succeed in order to preserve fraternal spirit among themselves for the greater glory of Jesus with whose love as a binding factor keeps this family bonded and well-knit.¹²⁹ In another letter of the perfection to the priests and scholastics of Coimbra in 1547 he returns to the topic of the union by the love of Jesus.

He writes, “It is this obedience that I recommend very earnestly to you, joined with that virtue which is a compendium of all the others and which Jesus Christ so earnestly recommends when He calls it His special commandment: *This is my commandment, that you love one another* [John 15:12]. And I wish that you preserve this union and lasting love, not only among yourselves, but that you extend it to everyone”¹³⁰

The union of each member with the goodness of God is the foundation, beginning and the source of the union among them. According to Ignatius, the love of God is “the chief bond to cement the union of the members among themselves and with their head” [Co 671]. The text of the Constitutions underlies the fact that love of God in Jesus is the fundamental link in this

¹²⁸Ibid., 368.

¹²⁹Ibid., 365 and also *Epp* I, 295-296.

¹³⁰*Epp* I, 507.

union. This love of God is not the result of purely human effort but is a gift that can be received. “The love of God is the source of union transmitted to us by Christ, so that having received it from him we may exercise it among ourselves” [Co 671.2]. This text of the Constitutions reminds us the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Remain in my love. This is my commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you” [John 15:9.12]. Each one is united with Jesus by the personal love that Jesus shows us. This same love of Jesus springs from each member like a source that runs like sap that tightens mutual union in the body of the Society. The eternal love of the Trinity – the communion of the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – is the source of fraternal agape because infused in us as a gift it makes us capable not only to love God but also to live this image of divine love in our intimate communion with all human beings and in the body of the Society.¹³¹

If both the superior and the subjects are closely united to the Divine majesty, they will very easily be united among themselves through that same love which will descend from the Divine goodness and spread to all other persons. Two movements can be identified of the love of God - vertical and horizontal. The vertical or ascending movement takes us to union with God and then love will descend and spread horizontally to all other persons. If authentic, the love of God cannot stop at internal acts; it will transcend to the exterior in the exercise of virtues and the fulfillment of his will.¹³² The contemplation to attain love specifies that love has to be expressed in deeds and not just in words. This is an invitation to practice the contemplation to attain love in day to day life in the Society [Ex 230-237]. It is a central point of Ignatian mysticism that the human capacity for love comes down from above, from the divine goodness. The centre of the profound and endearing union of the members of the Society and their interior life is Jesus Christ. This friendship is lived, shared and imitated in common.

On the one hand, when both superiors and other members are open to the gift of love from on high, then each one’s conduct is distinguished by, oriented to, a new level of fraternal relations and on the other hand, we are freed from attachment to worldly concerns, temporal things and self-love which is the enemy of the union.¹³³ In this context, charity refers to fraternal charity; goodness implies uprightness and virtues that make one proceed according to the Spirit.

¹³¹OSUNA, J., *Amigos en el Señor*, 362.

¹³²ALDAMA, A.M., *Union*, (Echaniz, I., tr.), Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand 1995, 27.

¹³³DECLoux, S., “Octava parte principal”, 280.

Temporal things are the things from the present and transitory world. The attitude that the members require towards the temporal things is indifference of the principal and Foundation. As Saint Paul says in the letter to the Philippians, “But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ” [Phil 3: 7-8]. The union requires the freedom and indifference to choose God’s love in Jesus and give priority to it. The temporal things are not evil in themselves but that it is in regard to them that self-love frequently induces disorder [Co 671]. Self-love is the enemy of the union. “For everyone ought to reflect that in all spiritual matters, the more one divests oneself of self-love, self-will, and self-interests, the more progress one will make” [Ex 189]. No other source than the divine love can result in such a union. Only divine love in the members of the Society in and through Jesus is capable of producing intense union. Divine love acts as a divine spark. This divine spark is a fire that enkindles other fires. In the absence of this divine spark, self-love rules and destroys the union of hearts. At the heart of the interior life of each member of the Society palpates endearing and profound friendship with Jesus – friendship that is lived in common and shared in imitation of the apostolic group of Jesus reminding the members of the Society the words of Jesus, “Henceforth I don’t call you servants; for the servant does not know what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you” [Jn 15: 15].

2.3.2 Obedience and the exercise of authority

Ignatius, like all founders of religious orders, realizes the great ascetical value of obedience, but he seems to stress even more: the social need of obedience in the Society. Useful as it is for the individuals for their spiritual good, obedience is essential for the preservation of the order as a whole. In the deliberations of the first companions about obedience one of the reasons they give for it is that the Society may be better preserved. The other reasons in favor of obedience during the deliberations were to take care of temporal and spiritual things, obedience is essential; to practice virtue of obedience in order to defeat pride and arrogance of the self-love and to do better the will of God in a precise manner, obedience was needed. The early companions while agreeing and accepting unanimously after the discerning deliberation realized the significance of obedience. They saw that obedience has theological dimension of fulfilling

the will of God and it also has the social dimension to maintain the unity of the body and its temporal order.¹³⁴

The first chapter of part VIII gives obedience as an essential means to preserve union of hearts among members themselves and of members with the head.

Since this union is produced in great part by the bond of obedience, this virtue should always be maintained in its vigor; and those who are sent out from the houses to labor in the Lord's field should as far as possible be persons practiced in this virtue. Those who are more important in the Society should give a good example of obedience to the others, by being closely united to their own superior and by obeying him promptly, humbly, and devoutly. Thus too one who has not given much evidence of this virtue ought at least to go in the company of someone who has, for in general a companion more advanced in obedience will help one who is less so, with the divine favor [Co 659].

Enlightened and illumined by the love of God our Lord, the Jesuits are called to practice obedience and exercise authority. The union of hearts in the Society is not just among the members of the Society but also of these members with their head. This union is produced in great part by the bond of obedience [Co 659]. The union presupposes that the members are schooled and practiced in obedience. Many members are sent on mission to work in Lord's vineyard from the house to the different places. These members as far as possible need to be persons practiced in obedience. In a mission of helping souls in Lord's vineyard, the virtue of obedience keeps the Jesuits united with the Society. The companions help each other in perfecting the virtue of obedience. "One who has not given much evidence of this virtue ought at least to go in the company of one who has. For a companion more advanced in obedience will help one who is less so" [Co 659].¹³⁵ Those veterans who have experienced in practicing the virtue of obedience give an example to others through their union with the superior and those who don't have the experience of this virtue, go in the company of those who have it seeking fraternal help and solidarity.

Just as without a head there is no living body nor the functioning of the organs of the body, without this union between the head with the members and the members among themselves, the Society cannot be preserved. The obedience is the essential condition to bring the union of members to the head because it is the head that gives consistency and direction to the

¹³⁴CONWELL, J. F., "Deliberaciones 1539", en *DEI*, 549-553, 552.

¹³⁵JAER, A., *Together for Mission*, 157.

body. The obedience is the most decisive factor for union in the body. For the apostolic body it is essential to have the union of the body with its head.¹³⁶

The Society is one body [Co 135.511.789], whose head is Christ and the superior is in the name and place of Christ [Co 206.512.820]. From this head descends ... the impulse necessary for the end, which the Society seeks [Co 666]. And so this virtue (of obedience) should always be maintained in its vigor [Co 659].¹³⁷ The members of the Society must obey the superior because he is in the place of Christ. They do not behold the person of the superior but Christ for whose sake they obey. In obeying one must not stop at the man who commands, but one must raise one's mind and heart to God from whom he receives the power to command. One must, therefore, obey in the spirit of faith. It is out of love for Christ, one embraces obedience. The love of Christ must animate obedience if it has to be perfect. Authority received from God in the one who commands and love of God in the one who freely submits to obedience. Obedience given to the superior is in the spirit of faith and love of God. *Obedience is based on the dynamic principle of love.* It is out of love that obedience is accepted and practiced. It is out of love that this sacrifice is realized. In the Society this complete oblation and sacrifice of self to the love of Christ is effected by the generous acceptance of obedience. It is the spirit of love that obedience demands that alone can preserve and move the whole body of the Society. Therefore, the virtue of obedience has to be practiced with great devotion and in humility. Pride can become enemy of this obedience and hence obedience in humility needs to be practiced.

In the Society, obedience moves beyond obligation to friendship. At each level a definite authority and responsibility is given to the superior. It is quite logical that Ignatius pays much attention and underlines principally obedience and relatively the exercise of the authority as factors contributing to union.

To the virtue of obedience also pertains the properly observed subordination of some superiors to others and of subjects to superiors, in such wise that the individuals who dwell in a house or college have recourse to their local superior or rector and are governed by him in all things. Those who are spread throughout the province refer to the provincial or another local superior who is closer, according to the orders they have received; and all the local superiors or rectors should communicate often with the provincial and thus too be directed by him in everything; and the provincials in their turn will deal in the same way with the general. This subordination, when thus

¹³⁶DECLoux, S., "Octava parte principal", 281.

¹³⁷ALDAMA, A.M., *Union*, 5.

observed, will uphold union, which to a very great extent consists therein, with the grace of God our Lord [Co 662].

Such subordination supposes that the superior at every level has received a mandate giving him the requisite authority at his particular level [Co 662]. Obedience in the Society is practiced within a well-ordered and carefully structured body. The union requires that the superior general be the source from which emanates the authority of all the other superiors. This is at the service of a closer union and of the shared apostolate. Superiors should have concern for the subjects 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. A good method of commanding proposed here is with all the love, modesty and charity possible so that the subjects dispose themselves or have greater love than fear towards their superior. The authority is exercised with Christ like compassion and understanding [Co 666-667].

The obedience is an indispensable condition for the life in the Society. Only in the virtue of obedience the body can succeed in intense apostolic activity and shun all that leads to the conflicts of individual interests, tensions and dividing forces. Hence obedience becomes a uniting force. One practices obedience from the perspective of mission and union in the Society.¹³⁸ If the superior commands in the place of Christ it is in virtue of the authority of Christ communicated to, His Vicar on earth and by him to the General and Superiors. Thus the whole structure of obedience rests on a supernatural foundation that gives it an unparalleled stability. This is what gives that perfect assurance to Ignatius that each one must persuade himself that whatever, the Superior orders after examining the matter, is for the greater good in the Lord: To his personal initiative the members must prefer the work of obedience.

Ignatius stresses the same in his correspondence. In his letter to Gandia¹³⁹ dated 29th July 1547, when Ignatius asks them to elect a Superior and explains the need of subordination he points out that this is necessary for the preservation of the entire body of the Society. The same is stressed in the letter of obedience dated 14th January 1548 to Coimbra.¹⁴⁰ It is to be noted that he

¹³⁸OSUNA, J., *Amigos en el Señor*, 352-353.

¹³⁹*Epp* I, 558. "Porque es así que ninguna multitud puede en un cuerpo conservarse sin estar unida, ni puede unirse sin orden, ni puede haber orden si una cabeza no hay, a quien sean por obediencia los otros miembros subordinados".

¹⁴⁰*Epp* I, 688-689. "...tal unión entre muchos no puede mantenerse sin orden, ni la orden sin el vínculo debido de obediencia de los inferiores a los superiores, como nos enseña toda la natura corporal, las jerarquías de los ángeles, las policías bien regidas de los hombres, que con la subordinación se unen..."

gives a natural reason that without obedience no human society can be preserved. Surely Ignatius obedience is based on supernatural and mystical intuitions but also it is built on sound reason and human experience of life. While obedience is required in every human society, it is all the more essential in our Society and order. In the ancient orders the unifying factors of cloister, choir and chapters safeguarded the unity of monastery. But the Society is meant to be dispersed and the members are on the move on mission. In this context, for Ignatius, obedience constitutes even in the purely natural and human order a necessary link and the bond of unity to preserve the Society.

2.3.3 Mutual communication

Mutual communication is the experience that constitutes union of hearts in the body. This experience comes from the two notes on the Contemplation to Attain Love. The first indicates that love is shown in actions, and the second specifies those actions as communication. Love is mutual and love consists in communication. Ignatius maintains that the precise activity that specifies friends is that which shares with another all that which he has or can attain. It is also articulated in Part VIII of the *Constitutions*. What is insisted here is mutual communication and sharing as an interpersonal commitment to express love not just in words but in deeds.¹⁴¹ It is a mysticism of love that is the heart and source of genuine communication between the members of the Society of Jesus. A flow of communication is the indispensable condition for the cohesion of any union.

From the very beginning of the Society, Ignatius insists on mutual communication as an aid to union of the group and of hearts: "Union will also be helped very especially by the exchange of letters between the subjects and the superiors, as well as by their learning about one another frequently, and getting the news and information which come from the various places"[Co 673].

The exchange of letters has been a famous instrument of union in the Society. Ignatius himself wrote many letters either himself or with the help of his secretaries especially through Polanco either to give instructions, recommendations, private information or on some virtues for spiritual growth etc. He wrote letters to the church authorities, noble men and women, family,

¹⁴¹BUCKLEY, M. J., "Mission in Companionship: of Jesuit Community and Communion" *Studies in Spirituality of the Jesuits* 11/4 (1979) 26.

friends and to the Jesuits on various topics. The early companions insisted on having mutual communication among them though dispersed on mission. A need for mutual communication was felt in order to experience closeness of heart though physically far and away from each other, though it was not always easy in practice to write letters when they were actually occupied in mission. Ignatius wrote a letter to Peter Faber on 10th December in 1542. Faber was engaged in important mission in Germany and had found no time for writing letters. Ignatius writes to Faber saying:

I exhort you, then, as I am bound to do for the greater glory of God, our Lord, and I beg of you by his love and reverence to improve your writing and to conceive some esteem for it and a desire to edify your brethren and your neighbor by your letters. Be assured that the time you spend at it – it can be put down to my account – will be well spent in our Lord. It costs me an effort to write a principal letter twice, to give it some appearance of order, to say nothing of many sheets besides. Even this letter I have written twice with my own hand; how much more, then, should each member of the Society do likewise? You indeed have to write to one person only, but I to all. I can say in all truth that the other night we counted the letters that we were sending out to various places and found that the number reached two hundred and fifty. If some of you in the Society are busy, I am convinced that I am not less busy than any of you, and with less health than you.¹⁴²

This letter of Ignatius to Faber points out, not only the failure of Faber on keeping the customs of writing letters, but reprimands him for doing so and dedicate his time for such an important task which is essential in union of hearts. The exchange of letters has been always a famous instrument of union in the Society. Juan Alfonso de Polanco, in his letter to the whole Society for presenting himself to be a secretary, enumerates about 20 reasons by which writing and exchanging letters is useful to maintain union of hearts in the universal Society. Some of them are:¹⁴³ The union of the Society according to its profession is for dispersion. Hence there is a need of some kind of communication that keeps us united and together. The strength is when something is more uniting, is stronger. The mutual love when forgotten becomes cold and brings absence of others but it is preserved and alive by remembering each other through communication and it brings presence of the others. Communication helps to motivate each other and help to imitate good works and virtues of others.¹⁴⁴ The communication strengthens the bond of union among those who are dispersed on mission. It brings back memory of those far away and widely scattered due to apostolic activities and it renews love and hope in the Society. It becomes an occasion to discern and advice as to how the Society can serve better in its mission.

¹⁴²*Epp* I, 238.

¹⁴³*Epp* I, 536-541.

¹⁴⁴. Some of the reasons are translated in English in my own words from OSUNA, J., *Amigos en el Señor*, 378-379.

The provincial must see to it that the news of his province reaches the general and is circulated in the province itself. The local superiors are to write letters. “Noteworthy or edifying” are not mutually exclusive terms but a pair in which the second clarifies and qualifies the first: noteworthy regarding edification [Co 675].¹⁴⁵ The strongest insistence is placed on writing letters. The directives are precise [Co 673-676]. The general residing in Rome will facilitate communication with everyone and visit the members [Co 669]. For the provincials this is stipulated as essential to their office [Co 670]. The provincials residing in their provinces serve as a link between the general and the members.¹⁴⁶ Ignatius also wanted the Society to have a good deal of information about the persons at its disposal so as to proceed with greater clarity and satisfaction of all concerned. The content of this information is twofold: updated records of the personnel, and a brief report on the qualities of each. The reason for having this information is to make it possible to govern the whole body of the Society better. One reason why regular written correspondence was required among Jesuits was to do with information, so that decisions could be taken on the basis of a good knowledge of situations.

But the interior, spiritual values enshrined in such a system of communication were, for Ignatius, still more important. He was convinced that letters strengthen mutual love, and that through them the companions could do such things as encourage each other, spur each other on in virtues and in the apostolate, strengthen each other’s trust in God, build up each other’s sense of humility, and give each other consolation and joy. For Ignatius, communication is at the service of mutual consolation and edification.¹⁴⁷

2.3.4 Certain uniformity

Saint Ignatius desired certain uniformity among all the members of the Society. The *Constitutions* are flexible to avoid imposing the kind of uniformity that militates against Ignatius’ determination to adapt to circumstances, places, and persons. In spite of this flexibility, certain uniformity among the members ought to be retained as far as possible. This uniformity must be both, interior and exterior uniformity. Still another great help can be found in uniformity, both interior uniformity of doctrine, judgments, and wills, as far as this is possible,

¹⁴⁵ALDAMA, A.M., *Unir a los Repartidos*, Centrum Ignatianum, Roma 1975, 83.

¹⁴⁶JAER, A., *Together for Mission*, 159.

¹⁴⁷MEURES, F., “Identidad Corporativa S.J.”, 33.

and exterior uniformity in respect to clothing, ceremonies of the Mass, and other such matters, to the extent that the different qualities of persons, places, and the like, permit [Co 671].

The interior uniformity recommended by the *Constitutions* is threefold: in the domain of doctrine, in the field of practical judgment, in that of the will. In the case of those who have not studied, it is good to have all ordinarily follow one doctrine, that selected in the Society as being the best and most suitable for its members [Co 672]. Ignatius hopes that those who have completed their studies out of a desire for a closer union will accommodate themselves as far as possible to the doctrine that is more common in the Society [Co 672] so that the diversity does not damage the union in the Society.¹⁴⁸

Uniformity in the theoretical realm should be accompanied by that in judgment in regard to things which are to be done. All this tallies with what Polanco wrote to Urbano Fernandes, who was Rector and Novice Master at Coimbra, in a letter written on Ignatius' behalf: "As to opinions to be held, he (our Father) wishes unanimity in the Society, as far as it is possible, even in important speculative questions, and all the more so in practical matters. When one gives signs of being more tenacious in his opinion than is becoming, he usually makes him put aside his own judgment and abide by the opinion of other people"¹⁴⁹ Ignatius presumes certain differences of opinions based on his experience and also due to diverse cultural linguistic backgrounds of the members, diverse personalities and characters of the members. Differences of opinions are possible but what is expected here is flexibility and humility. Stubbornness and obstinacy have no place in holding on to one's own judgment as better than others but to respect and consider other's judgment with more holiness and knowledge.

Uniformity of the will results from the uniformity of doctrine and judgment: the same doctrine and thinking alike paves the way for having the same will. This will be easier regarding the ultimate goals; the difficulty will arise when it comes to the choice of subordinate goals, or the means and so it adds: "as far as this is possible" [Co 671].¹⁵⁰ Mutual union is likewise helped by exterior uniformity in respect to clothing, ceremonies of the Mass, and other such matters [Co 671]. There was no set clerical dress earlier and each one maintained the fashion or clothing

¹⁴⁸DECLoux, S., "Octava parte principal", 283.

¹⁴⁹*Epp* III, 502-503.

¹⁵⁰ALDAMA, A.M., *Union*, 30.

according to his native place and hence a need was felt to have certain uniformity in the Society to choose one form. While flexibility to adapt to the customs of the land of residence in terms of clothing is clear, certain uniformity was expected in the Society. This kind of uniformity helps in building union of the body. Uniformity is not rigid. Three times in the paragraph expresses big flexibility. Ignatius had issued the directive that all the members of the Society should as far as possible use the same uniform ceremonies, by conforming themselves in them, as far as the diversity of regions permit, to the Roman usage as the one which is more universal and embraced in a special way by the Apostolic See [Co 401]. Earlier there were enormous variety of ceremonies of mass all over the places but after Pope Pius V's missal in 1570, it was made obligatory to use it all over. In this context a need was felt to have union in the Society through some uniformity in the celebration of the liturgy.

The *Constitutions* note more than twenty times that, when 'applying them, the particular circumstances [Co 508.581.747], the diversity of persons [Co 301], of places and persons [Co 395.458.462.671.746], of places, times, and persons [Co 64.66.71.136.211.238.343.351.382.455] must be taken into account.¹⁵¹ There ought to be a certain tension between the common norm and the particular exception, between uniformity and diversity. Only the demands of God's greater glory and service should tip the balance.¹⁵²

The Society is known for its diversity of work in various contexts and cultures of the world. The accent of the diversity calls with greater urgency to the dynamic union without which it is impossible to preserve the apostolic community. The communion in diversity is not just a geographical consideration but calls for certain uniformity in this diversity that helps to cement union of hearts.

2.4 Conclusion

The Ignatian union in its deep theological sense is union with God in Jesus vertically and *koinonia* of charity horizontally but with apostolic mission as essential element and determining factor of the union. This fellowship is attained in and through the apostolic service that the Society offers. The Society as a community on dispersion manifests especially the universal

¹⁵¹Ibid, 32.

¹⁵²OSUNA, J., "La vida de comunidad en la primitiva compañía hasta 1540 y en las Constituciones", *Boletín del centro de Espiritualidad* 11 (1971) 29-38, 36.

aspect of this *koinonia* that transcends races, languages, cultures and customs through obedience, mutual communication and certain uniformity for the greater glory of God.

After the deliberations of the first companions, they decided to have union in the midst of dispersion. The Part VIII of the *Constitutions* spells out the means that aid this union of hearts. The grace of companionship is seen as an intrinsic element and a real charism of their lives. The word community is not Ignatian. The charism of the Society that he founded is apostolic. The members of the body dedicate themselves totally to the greater glory of God and in service of neighbors. The members share this common charism. They precisely formed this union in the midst of the dispersion for this charism. They decide to be companions for mission by remaining constantly in the love of God bonded in obedience while constantly in communication with each other and to bring a certain uniformity in the body whose head is Jesus. Hence where these members are in union and in companionship, there is community. Only being united in love of God in Jesus and in loving service to Christ, members can commit their lives to mission for God's greater glory. Common faith in Christ rooted in self-sacrificing love that leads to following him is the primary unifying factor. "Everyone should have concern for and comprehension of the others for greater apostolic efficacy, since united strength would have more power and courage in confronting whatever challenging goals were to be sought than if this strength were divided into many parts".¹⁵³

Ignatius precisely addresses the human, emotional, affective and spiritual need of members of the Society in Part VIII. It is not enough just to have mission but the members as human beings are social beings. The need of human is to live within relationships. Hence caring for each other, understanding each other are significant. In relationships what matters is to be in mutual communication. Physical distance become secondary when human beings communicate mutually. Though far or dispersed, the communication brings closeness and intimacy to inspire others or to inform others or help each other discern etc. In relationship there is need for common vision, mission, values, customs and goals. All this is spelt out in the first chapter of VIII while promoting the end for which the union is formed and to adhere to a certain external and internal uniformity. The companions take responsibility for each other and empower each other while

¹⁵³"Deliberatio primorum Patrum" (1539), *MCons I*, Roma 1934, [3]. Quoted in O'NEILL, U., "Community for mission", 67.

promoting apostolic efficacy. Companions who care for each other and have mutual concern are committed to transform the world. It brings apostolic effectiveness. The spiritual need of the community is to model itself to a deeper foundation called God. Hence Ignatius takes care of the spiritual need of the community by placing Jesus as the head of this body. Jesus and his mission take primacy. Hence the Pope or general or Superior become representatives of Jesus. This union is rooted in the Trinity. It is cemented through the love of God in Jesus. The unity of God is expressed in Trinity, in communion of love of Father, Son and Spirit. Trinity is the community or communion of love overflowing to the world. Hence the members are invited to be rooted in the love of God and then to allow it to flow this love from their hearts like a fountain or a sap flowing on to others' hearts within the body and in the world at large. Having experienced this union in and through God's love the members are to practice obedience to the representatives of Jesus in the world for attaining mission or the end of the body.

Such union cannot exist in a vacuum. The inward reality of this union is the bond of hearts seeking God in all aspects of their lives. Community life provides the context for our ongoing efforts to integrate and consolidate our commitment to God and to his world. Ignatius maintains balance between union and mission. While one cannot deny and reject all community forms and structures one cannot go to the extreme of stressing excessive common observances or physical presence of shared timetable. Union is localized physically in community but community cannot become an end in itself but leads to share common commitment to mission. The form of this union in the community as such will also depend on places, persons, circumstances and needs. The flexibility is needed to attain the end of the body for apostolic efficacy. The interplay of adaptability and uniformity is the hallmark of Ignatian community precisely because the commitment to mission is the criterion by which everything is to be measured. The form of the community will be dictated by the demands of mission and its structures will be in service of the end of the Society.¹⁵⁴ Community therefore is the experience of mutual love of companions expressed and communicated in common living under obedience, in order that the mission of the body will be the better served. All times community or this union must serve apostolic freedom.

¹⁵⁴O'NEILL, U., "Community for Mission", 66.

Chapter 3 Community Life in Recent Documents

3.1 Introduction

Community life is one of the essential elements in our religious life. Since GC 31 the Society has witnessed important changes in our religious life and in our community life. Moreover, the present social, ecclesial, and cultural contexts in which our communities exist have undergone significant changes during this time that have influenced the way we live together in community. All of this has created a desire around the world that, despite the recent documents on community life, the issue is addressed in depth repeatedly.

In the GC 34, there is no decree on the community life. It definitely did not ignore the community life. This general congregation summarized and approved a set of complementary norms which updated the *Constitutions* based on Ignatius' vision of community life enriched by all that the General Congregations have said on the topic since the Thirty-first General Congregation. These complementary norms on the community life form part of the *Constitutions* from numbers 311 to 330.

After the Congregation, as soon as it was feasible, Fr. General Kolvenbach invited all the communities to use the year's "ex-officio" letter to give its verdict on our community life. After reading the letters that he received as a response to his invitation, Fr. Kolvenbach wrote a letter on community life to the entire Society on March 12, 1998. He acknowledges in this letter the seriousness with which the most of the communities reflected on and stresses that what is required for us is to live together as brothers, as friends in the Lord sent on mission like the apostles. The letters received from the communities bring out the light and shadows, positives and negatives joys and sorrows of the community life. It expresses a genuine desire and yearning for improvement with the spirit of magis.

The GC 35 was convened in 2008 to elect the successor of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach as Superior General. It is customary to send hundreds of postulates from throughout the Society to offer the General Congregation an enormous array of themes and issues to take up. After electing Fr. Adolfo Nicolas as the new General of the Society, the GC 35 dedicated itself to discernment on identity and mission, which would serve as a bond for the union of minds and hearts of a universal apostolic body of the Catholic Church, at the service of the mission of Christ in the world of today and of the future.

“Our lives must provoke the questions, “who are you, that you do these things... and that you do them in this way?” Jesuits must manifest – especially in the contemporary world of ceaseless noise and stimulation – a strong sense of the sacred inseparably joined to involvement in the world. Our deep love of God and our passion for his world should set us on fire – a fire that starts other fires!” (GC 35, 27)¹⁵⁵

This question raised by the GC 35 invites serious examination and reflection on our part to see the interconnectedness of identity, community and mission in our Jesuit vocation. “Who are you” in this question refers to our Jesuit identity; “that you do these things” refers to our mission; and “that you do them in this way” refers to our way of proceeding and of being as a community.

¹⁵⁵I am using the English edition: PADBERG, J. W. (ed.), *Jesuit Life & Mission Today*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Saint Louis 2009. It has two types of numbering. One is overall numbering of paragraphs independent of decrees and the other one is each decree has its paragraph numbered. I am using overall number of paragraph independent of decrees.

3.2 Letter of Fr. Kolvenbach on community life and complementary norms

Fr Kolvenbach, in his letter,¹⁵⁶ uses the expression from GC 34 to invite the whole Society to grow together as servants of the Christ's mission in the real community life that we experience. He invites the Society to take inspiration from the first companions who lived as friends in the Lord and shared a common mission of Christ.

Fr. Kolvenbach, in his letter, explains why GC 34 did not have a special decree on the community life. GC 34 had already acknowledged the rich decree given to the Society by GC 32 in the form of decree 11 [GC 34, 250 and notes 10 and 21]. He mentions the complementary norms that are added on the community life and quotes various parts of the other decrees of GC 34 related to the community life.

The decree on chastity calls on each of us to take responsibility for the development of community life. It reminds us in one paragraph that prayer and sharing our spiritual experiences ought to mark our daily life and, in another, that community life must not be self-centered but open to hospitality and solidarity [GC 34, 250-251]. The decree on poverty could hardly have overlooked our sharing of material things in community, which basically shapes our style of life; and it could hardly have ignored greater solidarity and transparency in our sharing with those who need material help [GC 34, 285-286]. And finally, the decree on vocation promotion. It comes back constantly to the issue of the witness the community gives or does not give. "Do our communities remain mysterious to all except Jesuits, or are they open and welcoming to those who seek us?" [GC 34, 292-295].¹⁵⁷

These parts of various decrees stress hospitality and solidarity, partnership and mutual help, exchange and sharing for the fulfilment of Christ's mission. It brings out a link between apostolic community and apostolic chastity. It invites the Society to the renewal of the community life by each member taking charge and responsibility for the community.

¹⁵⁶KOLVENBACH, P. H., "Sobre la Vida Comunitaria", in *Selección de Escritos*, (Curia del Provincial de España, ed.), Madrid 1992, 44-57, "12 martii 1998 – De vita communitaria" in *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu Romae*, XXII (1998) 276-289 and also it is in English sent to the whole Society as 'on community life' (98/5) on 12/03/1998, 1-11.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 1.

3.2.1 Some of the aspects stressed by Fr. Kolvenbach in his letter are as follows:

3.2.1.1 A witness to community and solidarity

"Community life itself is a manifold testimony for our contemporaries, especially since it fosters brotherly love and unity by which all will know that we are disciples of Christ" [CN 316, 2]. We are sent to the communities and we do not choose the members of the community to live with. We are called to form communion with those who otherwise not destined to live together. Humanly speaking such communion seems difficult. Such communion is possible only in Jesus.

A new commandment of love is not just a showpiece to be kept in showcase but needs to be practised in our community life by us who are His companions. Community life is an integral part of the mission and not just gathering of servants of Christ's mission. Community life goes beyond gathering or sharing the same food, roof and resources.

"Our members fulfill their mission in companionship with others, for they belong to a community of friends in the Lord who have desired to be received under the standard of Christ the King" [CN 311.1]. And also - "It is our community-life ideal that we should be not only fellow workers in the apostolate but truly brothers and friends in Christ" [CN 311.2]. What is recommended in this reflection on community in a Jesuit context is therefore the organization of brotherly life shared with companions, not as an idea or an ideal, but as a true sharing among us which requires a common belonging to the Society of Jesus.¹⁵⁸

Fr. Kolvenbach goes one step further by quoting GC 34 he states: "We are not employees or volunteers in an international organization, or more or less paying boarders in our houses. The most recent General Congregation even rejected the phrase fellow workers. As far as this Congregation was concerned, we are friends in the Lord" [GC 34, 545]. Our relationships with one another do not function like those in a family, and even the most satisfying community life will never fully oust the sense of solitude that can be filled up only by intimacy with the Lord. We have responsibility in our hands for the union of the universal apostolic body and of its local communities, for this union must continually be created and renewed with the help of the gift of

¹⁵⁸DECLoux, S., "Los Lazos entre Identidad, Comunidad y Misión en la Compañía de Jesús", *Revista de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* XLI (2010) 68-76, 69.

the Eucharist and sacramental reconciliation in Christ. Nothing really stands in the way of our calling ourselves "brothers" or "companions" or even "friends".

The individuals and the communities do try their best to build community through small gestures and services, through shared prayer, community discernment and recreation. Because of the demands of mission certain communities have to be satisfied with few common activities but there is overall effort and desire to go beyond the mere minimum.

Complementary Norm 315 clearly describes life shared by companions gathered in community to live together, supporting each other in a generous response to their common vocation. If we live as "an apostolic community whose focus of concern is the service that our members are bound, in virtue of their vocation, to give to people" [CN 315], then we will indeed witness to that communion in the Spirit which is humanly far beyond reach but which is truly attainable through "a close sharing of life and goods, with the Eucharist as its centre" [CN 315]. Many communities succeed in giving witness by breaking barriers of regionalism, class, color, caste, age, geographical boundaries and ethnicity and build bridges to fulfil their mission and to attain communion. They live out a call of complementary norms to live out solidarity. "Solidarity among all communities in a province or region, which should also extend beyond their limits, as well as fraternal charity require that communities be open to men of different ages, talent, and work" [CN 329].

We usually don't think of community life giving a witness value to the world around us. We are called to have simple community lifestyle giving witness to those among whom we must live keeping in mind our apostolic poverty [CN 327]. Very often, in this area our communities fail. It is difficult to give witness in this area as there is always a temptation to comfort. It becomes easier to be rooted in our comfort zones and get used to it. Our Solidarity with the poor, however, calls us to get out of the comfort zones to live out poverty in solidarity with Christ poor and with the poor of this world. Since our communities are apostolic, they should be oriented to the service of others, particularly the poor. Communities should periodically examine whether their way of living supports their apostolic mission sufficiently and encourages hospitality. They should also consider whether their style of life testifies to simplicity, justice, and poverty [CN 323]. In general, the personal life of Jesuits is simple and moderate. But we do not really share our material things. And both individuals and communities lack the will to give witness to evangelical poverty by a

lean lifestyle with everything shared in common (NC 176, 2), and to shape a community of solidarity that gives brotherly service to everyone--men and women alike and especially the poor--for the sake of bringing all to Christ.

The real risk along these lines is that those who are familiar with our communities cannot perceive in them the reason for our life in common: Christ and his Good News. The issue here is not just a kind of palpable evangelical compact among the community members. No, all of the arrangements in the house ought to point clearly to the reason for gathering a community in the Lord's name: the chapel (NC 227), the cloister (NC 327, 2), reminders of common prayer (NC 233, 234), signs of a life of evangelical poverty (NC 178, 179) --all of these also help identify a community gathered in the Lord's name.

3.2.1.2 In community or in dispersion, one body for mission

The reality of our mission is very complex. There are Jesuits who work alone in a mission due to the place or circumstances. There are many others who are dispersed on mission while others who stay in communities while fulfilling their mission. The first companions had realized their need to remain in union in a common fraternal bond of love. But they also had realized that the mission to which they are called implies dispersion. Hence they knew that this mission could not be conceived in the confines of a cloister or in a community life conceived of as an end in itself. Hence they formed an apostolic body which is universal making community life as a means to attain mission. It is being-on-mission that animates and governs our community life. We do not introduce in our communities customs that are specific to the monastic or mendicant life nor to the secular life [CN 322].

The dispersion signifies our availability to work in any place and to live on our while attach to some local community or to join any community. Dispersion involves a series of works related to our mission today. As individuals all may not do the same work but we are called to be companions working on the Society's mission as servants in Christ's mission in the universal apostolic body of the Society.

There is always a danger to disown community life under the excuse that the community has a mission to fulfil and the community life is an obstacle in accomplishing the mission so it is considered a waste of time and not considered as part of our spirituality. The other danger is of

the other extreme where some communities could give so much importance to the community living that they land up hurting apostolic work. They find community life as an escape route to ignore mission. Both these are extremes. Hence there is a need of constant community discernment and individual and community responsibility for community life and mission.

It is true that the community does not exist for itself. But that does not mean that the community life was to be neglected. “All our members, even those who must live apart because of the demands of their apostolate or for other justifiable reasons, should take an active part as far as possible in the life of some community” [CN 317]. Today the whole world has become a global village. The modern means of communication has brought us so closer and has reduced distance. Although some members are on dispersion because of their mission, they are expected to take an active part in the life of a community already in existence or of one put together for the purpose. The community exists as one opportunity for the universal body of the Society to attain its end and concretize its mission. Taking into account the mission that is given, each community after a prayerful deliberation should establish a daily order for community living (CN 324.2). A community must not think of itself as a lonely island. It must work in harmonious solidarity with the apostolic network of the Province or Assistancy and, to make the universal body present, adopt the apostolic priorities of the whole Society. Our community is the entire body of the Society itself. The particular local community to which one belongs is for him simply a concrete expression of this worldwide brotherhood [CN 314].

Kolvenbach in this letter has highlighted various points with regard to the community life. He has emphasized on personal responsibility of the individual Jesuit for community while not developing on the role of superior. Although he has highlighted various concerns like individualism and division etc. in his letter, I think he should have been little more vocal about many other concerns of the community life that exist and not just restrict to a few. Later on they did come up in the report of an independent commission on the status of Jesuit community life during the preparatory process of GC 35. He should have also mentioned in the letter some suggestions for formation (Psycho-sexual-spiritual-affective) of scholastics and ongoing formation programmes of Jesuits to better our community life.

3.3 A triptych in GC 35

Identity, community, and mission evoke the deep reality of our lives in the Society, our common calling and commitment.

“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. This companionship shows how people different in background and diverse in talent can live together as true “friends in the Lord.” Jesuit identity is relational; it grows in and through our diversities of culture, nationalities, and languages, enriching and challenging us. This is a process that we enter upon as we join the Society, and we grow in it every day.” [GC 35, 36]

U. Valero¹⁵⁹ describes the word triptych as a set of three elements united to each other, often in such a way that they can be folded one on top of the other. These elements have certain reciprocity and they form certain unity. This unity can be understood fully only if all three parts are present. Individual element cannot be understood independently of the other element. This paragraph from GC 35 brings out interconnectedness of identity, community and mission. Identity and mission are communitarian in the Society, and community is shaped and determined by them. Community, therefore, is one of the contributing factors to the shape and form which, by their very nature, belongs to them. None of them could exist or be understood independently from the others or if they were simply set next to one another. These three dimensions which form our Jesuit life are therefore expected to support and, to a certain extent, sustain each other reciprocally.

3.3.1 Identity and community

Each member of the Society is a companion of Jesus and in doing so becomes a companion of all the other companions of Jesus. There is implicit bond of companionship with Jesus and with other members of the Society. The GC 32, 11 describes the identity of a Jesuit as one who is a sinner and yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was. Jesuit identity has been transmitted to us by those who, since the time of Ignatius of Loyola, have been called to choose and share a certain style of life, a way of being and serving in the Church and in human society. The first companions even before being fully aware of where God would lead them finally, had decided to call themselves as companions of Jesus. The spirit of the Spiritual

¹⁵⁹VALERO, U., “Reflexiones en Torno a una especie de Tríptico”, *Revista de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* XLI (2010) 55-67, 56

Exercises inspired them to be led by the discernment to find the will of God for each of them as an individual and then as a group. The Lord was active in their lives guiding them every moment and had brought them together to decide to form the Society of Jesus as friends in the Lord.

Our identity is defined first of all in reference to Jesus, our Lord. In discovering Him, looking at Him and listening to Him at length, in practicing the Spiritual Exercises, we allow ourselves to be encountered by Him and be impressed and instructed by His life and His choices. Our identity is centred unceasingly in Jesus; and it could not be any other way since we identify ourselves as his companions, accepting from Him what he brings to us every day and offering our daily commitment to Him in return. Like Ignatius, the Lord of the Spiritual Exercises has called to choose his standard with the virtues of poverty, spiritual and actual as opposed to the standard of the Satan with its vice of wealth. The Lord has further invited to humiliation and insults for the sake of following him as opposed to worldly vanity, glory, power and honor. However, while addressing to us His call to follow Him, Jesus has generated in us not only the desire to resemble Him, but has created two further desires – to share by living with others this impetus aroused in us by Him, and work together with Him in his Vineyard. Our spiritual identity as Jesuits is by now inseparable from these two dimensions equally constituent in our lives – community and mission.¹⁶⁰

At the beginning of the Formula of the Institute the Jesuit identity is stated as:

“Whoever in our Society wishes to fight for God under the standard of the Cross, and to serve no-one but the Lord and the Church, his Spouse, under the Supreme Pontiff, Vicar of Christ on earth, should understand that once solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are made, he belongs to the Society....”. A Jesuit is a part of the Society and every Jesuit makes the Society in companionship of Jesus and one another. A Jesuit is essentially part of a community. That is what GC 35 affirms in stating that the Jesuit identity is relational, that is, essentially linked to others, even if the element of community was not explicitly stated.¹⁶¹ Jesuit identity is by its very nature linked to community; therefore, a definition of identity separated from or deprived of the element of community would fall short and be false.

¹⁶⁰DECLoux, S., “Los Lazos...”, 69.

¹⁶¹VALERO, U., “Reflexiones...”, 61.

Jesuit community life is neither monastic life nor cloistered life. It does imply a life of prayer and sharing, staying together as a group that has made vows in the Society. It does include stability. The first community that the Jesuits belong to is not in fact their local community, but the whole Society spread throughout the world and then their Province. The Jesuits first join the universal Society. Yet, the primary belonging to a community encompassing the whole body of the Society, cannot be a living concrete reality if it is not built on the insertion of each individual Jesuit in a local community. It is in this local community there is sharing, prayer, Eucharist, work as well as apostolic commitments. It is here that each individual commitment to the service of Christ takes concrete form.¹⁶²

3.3.2 Identity, mission and community

A Jesuit belongs to the Society and he takes his identity from being part of the Society. The end of the Society is apostolic. The Society does not exist for itself but for the mission. It is very evident from the beginning. The Society is founded for the mission and this gives identity to the Society. This makes it impossible to consider identity and mission as two separate entities: its identity is precisely to exist for mission. Since the very beginning, Ignatius and the first companions discovered through the Spiritual Exercises, common deliberations, prayer and discernment their identity as companions of Jesus in the Society which is apostolic. They realized that they participate in the work of salvation.

Mission is not something which simply happens to a Jesuit nor is it principally an ideal or an obligation that he has to fulfill, but something which is an integral part of him, makes him what he is, defines his life, and this takes place simply by his being part of the Society whose identity is to exist for mission. In other words, a Jesuit is essentially a man with a mission. It does not involve obligation but this is what he essentially is.

Identity and mission of the individual member and of the Society are not two different things. They are intimately related and interconnected. Mission defines the identity and the identity defines the mission. The essentially communitarian character of a Jesuit's mission also stems from this. No matter what activities the Society has entrusted to an individual Jesuit in the carrying out of his mission and no matter how he carries them out -alone or as part of a team, in a

¹⁶²DECLoux, S., "Los Lazos...", 70.

small community or living apart from a community, - his mission is the mission of the whole body of the Society and therefore it is a community mission.¹⁶³ Each Jesuit's mission is shared by all, because each Jesuit is a Jesuit by being part of the Society and that is how he has to live.

The concept and practice of Jesuit apostolic communities, i.e., of Jesuits sharing house, liturgy, food, time and in sharing all this, living a twofold ministry: 1) a ministry ad intra: being together as companions of Jesus, sharing bread with him and together 2) a ministry ad extra: being men for others and with others. The term "missionary identity" encompasses both aspects of this twofold ministry: discovering our individual self as member of a community and realizing that we are sent as in the Lord's vineyard, as brothers, instructed men and priests.¹⁶⁴

We, the Jesuits, find our identity not alone but in companionship: in companionship with the Lord, who calls and in companionship with others who share this call. The identity and mission of the Society of Jesus include the community life. Each member of the Society is in personal relationship with Jesus and responds to his call to become companions of Jesus. Though the Society is the universal body consists of members of different in age, culture, talents and perspectives, it lives unity in its diversity as a gift and as a task.¹⁶⁵ This union can only be explained by the foundational experience of having been chosen to become a companion of Jesus as a response to the invitation each one has received.

3.3.3 Community for mission or community is mission?

Very often, many mistake community having only functional relationship with mission. Many may misunderstand the following number of GC 35 and support their argument if they take this number only as a part independently of the whole content of the GC 35 or take it out of context. It may be misinterpreted as community is more linked to mission and its service rather than with identity. It may give impression that community has only functional relation with the mission.

"In order to live out this mission in our broken world, we need fraternal, joyful communities where we nurture and express with great intensity the only passion that is capable of uniting our

¹⁶³VALERO, U., "Reflexiones...", 62.

¹⁶⁴FRICK, E., "The Jesuit Community A Space For Discovering Our Missionary Identity", *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XLII (2011) 25-34, 25.

¹⁶⁵SOSA, A., "Mission, Identity, and Challenges for the Society of Jesus in the 21st Century", *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XXXIX (2008) 37-58, 46.

differences and of bringing our creativity to life. This passion grows with every new experience of the Lord; and His dreams and love for our world are boundless.” [GC 35, 44]

Here Community appears clearly linked to Mission on a functional level in so far as the former is necessary if the latter is to work well. There is no problem with this assertion: it is evident that if the Mission is to be lived out as it should be, the kind of communities alluded to are necessary. But the question here is: are we talking only about a purely functional relation between community and mission or whether there is a deeper, more intense relationship between them?¹⁶⁶

Some Jesuits may think that the community life is an unnecessary addition or wrong addition to our identity and mission. Some may think that the community life is superimposed on identity and mission or was imposed for convenience. To some, the community life can easily be disregarded or sidelined without any major impact and effect. Today the conviction is shared that community life has to be bound up with the very heart of our mission. We must recognize that most of us are tempted to think that there is inverse relationship between mission and community. We think that there is more mission where there is less community. Gradually this thinking becomes habitual. Then we give many reasons to justify this claim. Many justify giving the example of Ignatius not wanting to have office in common or choir. We are urged not to let community life to exclude apostolic life.

It is true that more community life should not become an obstacle to apostolic life. But that does not mean both are rivals nor there is inverse relationship between them. We need to bring community back to the mission. Community is not accidental for the Jesuit, or for the apostolic life in which he is working. Community life is not a substitute for the Jesuit. It is not there as a practical advantage for the mission, starting from the premise that Community is not mission in itself, and that, in any case, it is useful for carrying it out. On the contrary: the Society insists that as Jesuits we have to be convinced that community life is good news for this world and belongs with full right to the newness that active religious life seeks to communicate.¹⁶⁷

“Mission is not limited to work. Our personal and communal relationship with the Lord, our mutual relationships as friends in the Lord, solidarity with the poor and marginalized, and a

¹⁶⁶VALERO, U., “Reflexiones...”, 56.

¹⁶⁷RUIZ PÉREZ, F. J., “El Camino de retorno de la vida comunitaria a la Misión”, *Revista de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* XLI (2010) 30-40, 30-31.

sustainable lifestyle, are all important aspects of our life as Jesuits. They witness both to what we preach and to what we do as we live out our mission. The privileged place of this collective witness is our life in community, therefore community in the Society is not only for mission, it is mission.” [GC 35, 85]

In referring to important aspects of our life this text seems to contain a certain reference, albeit partial and descriptive, to our identity and to its connection with both mission and community, by expressing more clearly the idea of triptych as an icon, though without seeming to go beyond the merely functional character of the relationship that links these three important elements of our life. The community in the Society of Jesus is the place of synthesis of identity and mission. It is not limited to living together, sharing the same roof. In the community, those who have chosen to follow the personal call of Jesus Christ have become brothers among themselves and with others; they share life with others, and open their doors to hospitality and solidarity.

Within this community companions of Jesus are being formed, in true fraternal solidarity, nourishing mutual love and becoming a witness to the possibility of transcending cultural frontiers in order to create relationships of brotherhood, in the midst of an individualistic environment and a fragmented world.¹⁶⁸ The relationship between community and mission therefore is not just functional but interconnected along with identity. GC 35 stresses this interconnectedness. It has not discovered something new or said something new which has not been said by the previous General Congregations. It has only highlighted what is developed in the previous Congregations.

3.4 Conclusion

On our part we need to understand this dimension of triptych and need acceptance and adaptation of it in action. As long as we fail to assimilate that the three mutually overlap and are inseparable, as the triptych suggests, we will not fully understand the true relationship linking identity, community and mission in the Society. This would mean that identity and mission in the Society are fundamentally communitarian and that community is the obligatory method and channel by which they are presented and developed. We need to go beyond the functional relationship between our mission and community life. Community does improve the living out of

¹⁶⁸SOSA, A., “Mission, Identity, and Challenges...”, 48.

identity and mission and there is a significant link present among them which is integral aspect of our Jesuit vocation.

In this sense, there is no need to regret the fact that CG35 did not produce any document dealing specifically with community life at the present time in the Society. It put it next to those on identity and mission. We may think that by not creating a separate decree on the community life it has deprived us of new aids to improve the way we live in community. But let us not forget that we have enough material, documents, letters and manuals to establish and develop community life. There would not have been anything new that has not been said so far if it had come out with a special decree on the community life. Now what we need on our part is action. We need to take it as an invitation, or even a challenge, to change the usual record, already well worn, of considering community simply as a necessary aid to live out our identity and mission, and instead begin to try and discover their essentially communitarian character in the Society and the deep, fundamentally distinguishing impression they make on community life. It is our individual responsibility to work over it. The identity and mission of the Society are essentially shared, that is, they are to be lived in community. Our identity as companions of Jesus, our sharing of community life and the mission we take up together within the great diversity which characterizes us are interconnected in our lives as Jesuits.

We can make community life as mission by moving from doing to being, from seeing ourselves only as men on mission to seeing ourselves as a community of men on mission. We need to move from being a community of apostles to being an apostolic community. We can't be apostles without community. We, as a community, need to make a room for fraternal communication, shared faith experiences, dialogue for the expression of our desires and needs, for prayer, Eucharist, reflection and recreation. All help one another to discern the will of God by reading the signs of the times. Under the leadership of the local superior, every member in the community is responsible to build the community. Roles will have to be shared and each one bears some responsibility for building the community taking it as an individual and communitarian mission.

We need to make community a credible witness of what we profess and what we want to achieve in our mission in the world. The internal life of the Society—its community, and its ability to draw us as friends in the Lord—is also a sign that we can offer to the world around us,

a witness to God's action within us. In other words, we are friends in the Lord for mission. And our relationship can give others hope. Friendship within the Society is both an experience and a gift. It is first and foremost an invitation from God to become a member of the Society. If it is an invitation from God, it is also a companionship within the Society which draws us to the God who has authored that union. And that companionship, that friendship, is something we discover and cherish and extend and value from the encounters that we have day-by-day with each other in our lives and in our work. How that friendship in community is lived out in reality depends of course on individual member and community.

Specifically, it invites us to see ourselves and our companions not in terms of what they achieve as in who they are. Also it implies we are able to accept, and cash in on the strengths of all the members of the community: the able, the disabled, the healthy, the sick, the functional and non-functional. Our care and concern for one another, will not slow us down, or immobile the apostolate, on the contrary it will generate new energy to enable us to go out with fresh enthusiasm.

We need to see identity, community and mission as a triptych. They are essentially linked. The relationship contributes to the growth in all of these areas. Identity of the Jesuit is lived out in community. Mission is not independent of the community, but flows from the life lived out in the community. The Community unites, strengthens Jesuit identity and mission. The change we are invited to live out, i.e., from understanding and living community as a means to seeing and experiencing it as mission itself, is akin to the change brought about by the expression popularized by Marshall McLuhan, in the world of communication when he said, "the medium is the message."

Chapter 4 The Problems of Community Life

4.1 Introduction

Community life is one of the essential elements of our Jesuit life. Community life as it is lived requires our urgent attention. There are many problems related to the community life today more than before. In his reply to the ex-officio letters of 2009 to all major superiors, in the year following the completion of GC 35, Fr General Adolfo Nicolas had this to say, “the ex officio letters are encouraging: there is a new awareness of community life among us, a new understanding of how community life is constitutive of our Jesuit life. This awareness has been accompanied by a genuine effort to grow in an aspect of our life that used to be simply taken for granted, but which never truly found a central place in our spirituality” [2009/14]. In other words, work on the problem has begun. But still we have a long way to go.

First and foremost, what is expected of us is a change of mindset on the role of community in Jesuit life. It calls for a movement from seeing community only as a means to achieve mission, to viewing it as mission itself. Together with that the problems that beset our community living, need to be addressed. Problems arising from interpersonal tensions, individualism, ethnicity, financial transparency and accountability, agreeing on a minimum structure within the community, insistence on our way of proceeding, etc need to be tackled. Fr.

Adolfo Nicolas too acknowledged the seriousness of the problem of interpersonal relationship among the Jesuits in the universal Society as a big obstacle today while speaking to the Jesuits informally on the basis of the Ex-officio letters that he had received from the universal Society. He also categorized the Jesuits into 3 categories. The first category Jesuits are excellent with the spirit of magis and discernment. The second category Jesuits are good and do things well but there is no spirit of magis in them. The third category Jesuits are the problematic Jesuits who rather than contributing, create problems in the Society. The topic of community life comes up practically in many postulates that are submitted before the General Congregations in recent years. I am sure it will be highlighted in the upcoming General Congregation 36 too. It is a universal problem and keeps coming again and again.

Loyola 2005 was the occasion for all the provincials to meet at Loyola, Spain. From their recommendations to Fr General, he picked up 'five' and communicated them to the whole Society in his letter of 23rd Jan, 2006. The third of these recommendations was to ask the GC to examine the quality of community life, in the Society. This already indicated the importance being attached to this issue. The postulates that came to Rome contained, among many other issues, concerns & reflections on the status of community life and a desire that something be done about it. This further confirmed the universal demand to examine this matter at the GC 35.

The Coetus Praevius, took up this request and in classifying the 350 postulates into eleven themes, dedicated one of them to Community life. The CP however in its suggestions to the Congregation did not place the theme on CL as matter for an eventual decree. They recommended that it be discussed at the congregation and further action be left to Fr General and the ordinary government of the Society.

Following up on the work of the CP, Fr General sent the 11 themes to all the major superiors to be shared with the members of their provinces, so as to get them to pray & reflect on these themes, and thus be a part of the GC. Community life was one of the eleven themes.

An independent commission set up by Fr General prior to the GC, also came up with a report on the status of Jesuit Community life around the world. Their report was made use of in the same theme circulated to the entire Society in two parts a) the strengths and b) the limitations of community. I will highlight in this chapter many issues and problems faced in the community

life based on my personal limited experience and from personal reading and also from the report on the community life prepared by a committee before the General Congregation 35.

4.2 Possible sources of discord and tension in our communities

I have divided problems of community life into four main categories. They are: Spiritual, institutional, social and personal. I have not followed any hard and fast rule to categorize them. One can see that the division of these into 4 is not followed by sticking to any standard norm. There is a possibility that some of the problems highlighted may fall under more than one category or more in one category than the other. The fact remains that they do exist and they are interconnected. For each problem, I try to describe a problem by giving a situation or example when possible, then I put a few causes for it and finally a possible solution is proposed. I try to follow this format as far as possible for each of the problems. Sometimes this format of a problem may not be explicit as it contains the description of a problem and causes. However, these 3 elements of the format are present.

4.2.1 Spiritual

I have placed some problems under this category. This category is placed first as I see that spiritual life is the foundation of our vocation. When we are spiritually healthy, we have overall health. When we are spiritually balanced and matured, we tend to have more integrated personality. Lack of spiritual depth or negligence of one's spiritual life leads to all the other problems that come under the institutional, social and personal categories.

4.2.1.1 Lack of spiritual depth

A shallow spiritual rootedness is observed in the universal Society. Perhaps some will disagree; but I have lived in several Jesuit communities, and with few exceptions I have not really found communal prayer to be a satisfying experience. Perhaps this has something to do with our temperaments and our diversity. We tend to routinize our community practices like, Eucharist and community prayer, and hence lose on spirit behind those practices which truly bind us. A particular Jesuit may dedicate a lot of time for his work, mission, socialization and social networking and may tend to neglect personal and community prayer and Eucharist with flimsy excuses or under the disguise of 'my work is my prayer'. Many don't find this practice of

community meaningful. Some think it is a waste of time etc. A tool of examination of conscience and personal prayer is very often ignored too by some Jesuits.

Isn't it the absence of true human relationships which turns our Eucharistic celebrations into mere rituals to be observed by participants who are not interested? We get into spiritual rut. Life is lived on the natural plane, with little reference to the lofty spiritual ideals we profess. Secular values and motivation are inculcated blindly at the expense of the need to be God & Gospel-centred. All work and fun and no prayer may make a Jesuit dull and shallow and may lead to many more complicated problems in his personal and community life.

While we are not expected to be monastic or cloistered order spending hours in contemplation. We should not forget that we are called to be contemplatives in action. Very often, the contemplative aspect is kept aside and we become and remain only action heroes justifying that our work is our prayer. There is a danger here. Corporate world has borrowed principles and values from our spirituality but unfortunately, we are inculcating and imbibing principles and values of the corporate world and hence destroying our identity. There are several reasons why such community gatherings for prayer and Eucharist are important for our common lives. First, the Jesuit is drawn beyond his own personal piety to experience the community at prayer. We Jesuits are not only prayerful men, we are also a community of prayerful men. Second, the Jesuit is able to experience his brothers as prayerful men in a very conscious way. He is able to view his brothers as more than just colleagues and companions; they, like him, are men of prayer. Third, there exists in such Eucharistic experiences a focus that transcends the self. A communal Eucharist is a shared meal where bonding reaches beyond immediate concerns and worries. The dynamic of the community Eucharist symbolizes a unity that encompasses the wider Society and the praying Church. Most Jesuits are busy men; if our work and personal interests fail to provide a communal setting for the Eucharist, then we are not true to ourselves. How are we to bear witness to the Gospel if we cannot even find time to be a praying community?

4.2.1.2 Mediocrity

Mediocrity has crept into our attitude to life, leading us to choose conveniences, a comfortable and a more secure lifestyle. We tend to look for an easy way out jettisoning in the

bargain simplicity of life, poverty, anything that causes us any inconvenience and reliance on God's providential care. Mediocrity tends to also exist in our attitude towards our work and mission and not just to our lifestyle. Outside people work minimum 8 hours job besides the time of travel and house work and chores. I am not afraid to say that many Jesuits do not work 8 hours a day. Since our meals are secured, we tend to take it easy. Whether we work or not we will get our food and all the other facilities we need.

The main cause of mediocrity is our lukewarm spiritual life. Lack of spiritual depth brings mediocrity. The spirit of Magis is forgotten easily or remains only for lip service and is not executed in action. We are enslaved to modern world and are becoming more and more consumerist. Most of the conflicts revolve around material things. Too many communities fail to see their prophetic responsibility to witness the presence of Christ in their manner of living and in the relation among their members. Fewer communities live among the poor. Laity outside do criticize us about our mediocrity towards work and lifestyle.

We need to reaffirm simplicity of lifestyle. We need to immerse ourselves into the lives of the poor. One has to pull up his socks towards his attitude towards work and commitment to one's mission. Once one brings one's spiritual life on track, mediocrity will disappear and magis will set in. Accountability is very central to our vocation. A shared accountability will include expectations we have of one another to make commitments to certain agreed-upon community activities and work. Ideally, it will include discussions among community members regarding personal habits and life-styles. Accountability of use of my time, life style, work etc.

4.2.1.3 Affective maturity and EQ

The German provincial of the Medical Missionary Sisters, Agnes Lanfermann, was asked a few years ago to speak to the North German province assembly on how she saw the future of their mission as Jesuits. As a psychologist she stressed that the apostolic body of the Society of Jesus would be able to fulfill its mission in the future only if Jesuits *developed a better emotional self-perception*. Only thus could the emotional cohesion of Jesuit communities and emotional

sensitivity (empathy) in Jesuit ministry improve. Many of the Jesuits present rejected this presentation.¹⁶⁹

The Jesuits are very well formed intellectually and develop a very high IQ during the formation and thereafter but very often Jesuits neglect affective maturity and their low EQ remains a concern. Many think that we don't need all this stuff about feelings and emotions. We are intelligent people. We have always relied on our intelligence and on our rationality. Majority of the Jesuits believe that the will and the feelings can be controlled by rational reflections. Many Jesuits place a higher value on intellectual than on emotional reasoning.

Though this problem sounds more psychological and has to do with affectivity, I take liberty to place it under the category of spiritual area because I think our spiritual life brings affective maturity and awakens EQ. Spiritual life is responsible for emotional maturity. Disruptive negative emotions can be tamed if they are recognized, owned, lived with and understood. Thus people become affectively more mature and their relationships thereby mature also. A mutual resonance of trust, respect and love in the community establishes the emotional bond enabling the community to hold together. Personal and community spiritual life can bring emotional and affective cohesion. It helps to integrate IQ and EQ well. Our formation needs to stress not just psychology today but psycho-spirituality which will help ours to form themselves better as well-integrated persons.

4.2.1.4 Reservation to speak about the psychological health of community life

There are two major reasons we avoid publicly discussing the health of our communities. First, it would force us to confront directly how dysfunctional our community life is and how many of us protect this family secret we would rather not acknowledge. We find it too threatening to examine seriously the psychologically impoverished state of many of our communities and to confront directly the depression, the loneliness, and the substance abuse prevalent in so many of them. Moreover, posing this question of community health publicly

¹⁶⁹MEURES, F., "Identidad Corporativa S.J.", 29.

would no doubt allow much conflict to surface as feelings within the community come to the fore. We find difficult how to admit and deal with interpersonal conflicts.¹⁷⁰

We intellectualize or spiritualize the conflicts before us. Secondly we avoid discussing openly community health because we think by focusing on the quality of our community life would require each of us to face directly the frustrations, pains, and disappointments we have experienced in Jesuit life. We generally adapt defensive strategies or live in denial mode to avoid our personal hurt and frustrations. It appears to be too frightening to talk and dialogue about it openly with others.

The solution to this problem is more or less the same as I have proposed in 4.2.1.3. Only deep healthy spiritual life can liberate us from our inhibitions, insecurities and lead us to self-acceptance and acceptance of the others in the community and to speak about the health of the community in total freedom and openness.

4.2.2 Institutional

In this section, I will highlight the problem of individualism, tension between mission and community, the relation between superior and community and utilitarian value. The institutional problems are very much linked to spiritual, social and personal realms. One leads to the other and make it a complex net of disorders in community life.

4.2.2.1 Individualism

Individualism, often named as one of modernity's pervasive sins, has a stronghold on many Jesuits. Individualism as referred by Fr. Kolvenbach is a grave epidemic not only because of its personal and social effects but also because of its secularization or fragmentation of hearts. With such a one-sided stress placed on the sanctity of individual choice and personal space, where is the room for the creation of some kind of meaningful and structured community dimension in the living out of Christian commitment? There is a new stress on personal liberty. Communities are for individuals, as means to serve the person; they are not intrinsically worthwhile, to which the individual is somehow subordinate. The assertion of individuals today for autonomy, independence and freedom is often much more overpowering and leads to

¹⁷⁰SHELTON, C. M., "Toward Healthy Jesuit Community Living", *Studies in Spirituality of the Jesuits* 24/4 (1992), 15-16.

individualism. It brings fragmentation and segregation. The emergence of the individual, as someone to be respected for being unique and different from others in his or her reality, is a late conquest by humanity, engendered slowly in the course of recent centuries. We, Jesuits breathe the same contaminated air as our contemporaries, and we can also succumb to the present individualistic culture. When this happens our own identity is contaminated, then the common mission for which we are sent (even though completely determined by superiors) is prejudiced by parallel personal projects with slight prospects of continuity in the future.¹⁷¹

The word “individualism” has a pejorative connotation and rightly so if it means an attitude of mind which closes off a Jesuit from the communion which leads him to do his own thing without reference to the body and the values of a corporate and universal understanding of mission. One of the major obstacles to our mission we find ourselves in the Society is that we find difficult to collaborate or come to agreements. We find difficult to contribute to our own projects or to support our own common cause. People may live under the same roof in the same community, yet never see one another at work, still less form part of a collaborative team. Specialization can divide. It can bring internal dispersal and alienation within the community. There are some who take advantage of the system to start up their own initiatives and get special concessions and have their own sources of revenue. They tend to be independent of the Society. If we get succumbed to individualism we adapt negative aspects of it in our lives: this total absorption in oneself and one's own work, ideas, and concerns. We refer to this reality as individualism.

Today, we carry out our mission in a cultural environment shot through with an individualism that challenges community life. In its survey of the Society, the last Congregation emphatically noted that this individualism has invaded us and shows itself in a kind of holy *everyone for himself* stance that damages common life and common work. This individualism explains why there is widespread lack of apostolic availability; why individual Jesuits allow themselves to issue public statements or perform political acts in their own names and against the *esprit de corps* of this "body for the Spirit"; and why missionary zeal has slackened as we give priority to individual interests--at times quite justified in themselves--rather than to the demands of the mission of Christ. The Society will not endure if it is made up of Jesuits individually engaged each in his own work.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹MIRANDA, M., “A New Configuration for the Society of Jesus”, *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* XLI (2010) 40-53, 48.

¹⁷²KOLVENBACH, P. H., “Sobre la Vida Comunitaria”, 46 and also community life (98/5) on 12/03/1998, 2.

At GC 34 there were a whole series of postulates from the provinces on the vows of poverty and chastity and there was not a single postulate exclusively concerning obedience. However, in the report on the state of the Society, produced by the Congregation itself, there were clear complaints about an inordinate individualism in many provinces, significantly reducing Jesuit availability and, as a consequence, corporate apostolic effectiveness. The Society, collectively, acknowledged the presence of a dangerous individualism, but did not link individualism to the issue of obedience. The freedom and autonomy of the individual Jesuit has become so important a value for us that we can no longer see, at all, how this value endangers obedience. The modern pressure towards freedom has become so strong in the Society of Jesus that religious obedience has become a taboo.¹⁷³ Resistance to certain norms, guidelines, specific rules and governing structures can lead us to individualism. The greatest threat to religious obedience today is not open disobedience to the superior, but rather individualism, expressed in a refusal to enter processes of discernment in common. Personal interest and preferences should not become escapism from the shared mission of the Society.

The modern world places a much heavier stress on individual freedom than on the subordination of the individual to the group. Our response to these realities will be to transform them from obstacles to aids in community building. Our basic attitude toward personal freedom will be that freedom is fulfilled in the active service of love [GC 32, 214]. The tension can be accepted and even welcomed as a positive contribution to growth and union. Individualism can also be given a more positive meaning, indicating that a person, while having a strong and joyful sense of belonging to the body, and of being engaged in a corporate mission, nevertheless is able to stand on his own feet both psychologically and spiritually. Community helps its members to relativise the pressure and importance of their apostolic tasks. Through his everyday companions, the Jesuit lives with other projects and, for the same reason, with other pressures and priorities. The different missions of our companions in community illustrate locally that the transforming action of God in history is much greater than the particular segment which constitutes our personal contribution to it. Our community reminds us that, fortunately, the gospel is many people's business, not just mine.

¹⁷³MEURES, F., "Identidad Corporativa S.J.", 26.

4.2.2.2 Tension between community life and mission

Our overemphasis on mission makes other important Jesuit structures, such as community living, seem of lesser importance. It is no wonder that the community is understood and accepted in practice, as a platform or a launching pad for mission. Each one's mission takes on such an overriding importance that we get carried away with devoting little time to other important matters. What suffers in the bargain is that there is little time for community recreation, routine, community & personal discernment, quality time spent in the company of community members sharing insights, experiences or just being together. Certain imbalances plague Jesuit thinking and living. The tensions between work and community, prayer and mission, community requirements and personal schedule lead Jesuits to choose improperly between false poles of life. Little or a superficial evaluation of our ministries is done. We adopt touch me not attitude. We do very little critique of our own apostolate or work and avoid being challenged in our mission.

Today we don't have one community one mission model. Communities with a majority of Jesuits engaged in the same apostolic activity have diminished, while communities with a plurality of missions have proliferated. Jesuits doing various different apostolates live together in a community. It is very probable that apostolic life will come to be prayed and lived solely by the one who carries it out, and in this way become autonomous and drawn into the private sphere. The resulting picture would certainly cause surprise: we might turn ourselves into apostles without community.¹⁷⁴ There is danger of Jesuit common life to become instrumentalized and functionalized. There are already so many factors which militate against Jesuits spending much serious time with one another. The scattered nature of apostolic commitments, even within the same institution, can form Jesuits who teach, eat, and recreate at periods so varied among themselves that their dispersal is very similar to that of men on separate missions. We may land up as busy men who have very little time for one another except for occasional recreation before dinner or the friendly pleasantries of human beings who have made very little depth investment in each other's lives. For their own part, Jesuits themselves must take responsibility for treating the community at times as a hotel or a gas station.

¹⁷⁴RUIZ PÉREZ, F. J., "El Camino...", 32.

There are too many instances in which our houses have become religious hotels, rather than an authentic community of brothers. Each Jesuit occupied with his own private religious life and his apostolic commitments, but relating to the other members of his community with friendliness or a courtesy in which the deepest values of their mutual commitment are neither spoken nor shared in prayer with one another.¹⁷⁵

A Jesuit from the community engaged in missions different from our own, are not in the picture about what is happening in our apostolic life. Partly, we believe that, in the end, we all have too much to do to make time to know about things that are not our direct concern. Partly, also, we think that in fact they would not bring anything important to our own apostolic activity. So we have no faith in what dialogue with our companions about the mission carried out might bring. We are afraid of unwanted interference, fundamental misunderstanding and obvious lack of interest. The result is that, day to day, there is a kind of minimum communication about mission. We tend to focus only on our particular work and fail to appreciate work of other members of the community. Globalization stresses more on individual success and achievements. This may come in direct conflict with communitarian sharing and life. As a result, mission of a community is compartmentalized and is not seen as wholistic. We keep quiet about what happens in our apostolic life, and the community becomes strangely silent. This results in compartmentalization of mission. We lose opportunities to start initiatives that would complement each other. We fail in collaboration and networking among us as there is minimum communication about mission and works. At times, rivalry is born and becomes apparent to the very people for whom we work.¹⁷⁶

One of the problems from which we Jesuits suffer in these times of need for members is that we do not discern our mission with the spiritual rigor that we ought to. Immediate need overcomes us, and it is that which dictates our options. Little by little, apostolic life without spiritual evaluation brings us into ambivalence.

Jesuit community has an apostolic focus; consequently, one goal for community members is to shape an apostolic vision of the community. This requires discussion and exchange of ideas, regular meetings, recreation and information. It implies prayer, reflection and community and

¹⁷⁵BUCKLEY, M. J., "Mission in Companionship...", 7.

¹⁷⁶RUIZ PÉREZ, F. J., "El Camino...", 36.

individual discernment. Many do their mission without having a sense of corporate identity of mission. Many do what they do without discernment and reflection. What is needed is to have a process of discernment and to take seriously the call to envision our work as corporate apostolate rather than just an individual's endeavor. It is very important to define the vision and mission of the community as a whole.

4.2.2.3 Relation between Superior-community

Expect the Superior to do all that is necessary to make community life viable, with little willingness to play one's part in the process. On the part of the Superior, he finds in practice the best way to avoid conflict and discontent in the community is to gratify their needs. Provide good food, give them what they ask for, few meetings, turn a blind eye to little faults, in short, be liberal and popular. Some intractable Jesuits cynically and destructively criticize the Jesuit leadership and community members. Superiors find it impossible to move their communities towards a more authentic Jesuit life because of the consequences which their efforts evoke. Many Superiors make compromises to settle for peace at any price. Some superiors invest 75 to 80 % energy only on difficult characters in the community that they hardly get constructive time and energy to do important works.

Some superiors are hesitant in giving their subjects a lot of detailed commands about how things are to be done. If they do, it is immediately labeled as interference. Today the principles of subsidiarity and shared responsibilities are dominant. In a way it is true that it is a need of time but the danger to stretch it too much can have its negative consequences. We need certain norms, guidelines, specific rules and governing structures that lead us according to our way of proceeding. There is at times irreverence for authority and a use of authority that damages its own credibility. Sometimes there is a belittling of structures both necessary and proven. At times there is manipulation of these structures which devalues their potential for service.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. There are proved tensions around the roles of Superior and Director of works. Superior finds it difficult to review matters under the charge of the DoW. The DoW would like the superior to keep off. These tensions flow into the community. When community members bypass the Superior and appeal directly to the Provincial for permissions, it causes the authority of the Superior to be undermined. Sometimes

we find in our community settings that some superiors suppress individual conscience in the interest of a greater unity. They tend to stop people from thinking, from having their own conscience, from voicing their opinion. Such insecure superiors kill initiative and creativity. They want people to think alike and so we have manipulation of intelligence, a brainwashing. Unity here is based on fear – the fear of being yourself or of finding yourself alone if you leave the others, the fear of a tyrannical authority.

We need certain norms, guidelines, specific rules and governing structures that lead us according to our way of proceeding. The superior can maintain the community's emotional cohesion. He can graciously cope with feelings of attraction and rejection, admiration and contempt and affection and aggression. A careful choice of superior is very much needed. Superiors are to be trained well. Superiors are not born but are made and hence they are to be empowered by skills that are necessary. Ongoing formation of every Jesuit will also help in respecting governing structures of the Society.

4.2.2.4 Utilitarian principle

There is a general lack of competence in dealing with some issues that arise in community – health concerns, old age, poor communication, and personal dysfunction. Many senior old Jesuits feel neglected and hurt in communities. They feel they had only utilitarian value. They feel insecure and rejected at times – a kind of use and throw principle. Once they are old and disable, the community wants to dump them in the infirmary and does not want to take responsibility to look after them. On the other hand, there are many senior Jesuits due to lack of spiritual integration do not want to accept their age related incompetency. They want to cling to their authority and work and want position to carry on without realizing that it is time to let go off everything gracefully. The cause could be because we think that one has value as long as he performs and contributes. We evaluate human worth and dignity in terms of one's performance and usefulness.

We need a change of mindset and heart. One has value and dignity as one is. Community members need to feel that their presence counts and makes a real difference in the community's life. If they do not feel this way, it will be easier for them to disassociate themselves emotionally from the group and manifest their disillusionment through noncommittal or passive aggressive

behavior or, worse yet, sheer indifference. We need to also have formation programmes that can help to deal with the generation gap and age difference.

4.2.3 Social

4.2.3.1 Ethnicity

When Jesuits relate to one another on the basis of their ethnic grouping to the exclusion of others who are not part of the same group. When they seek for emotional support from this group, and use it to lobby for their cause, then it disrupts the fabric of the community. We cannot hide the fact that in the universal Society there are elements of division and disruption on the basis of color, caste, culture, language, position and qualification. Practically each province has some elements of either of these above-mentioned factors. We may deny but a bitter truth does exist. The 'I scratch your back, you scratch mine' attitude is very common. This attitude leads to stifling and becomes a barrier between ourselves and others. It only attracts persons as friends who fit into one's mold. It excludes others. When you go into some communities, you can quickly sense these tensions and underground battles. People don't look at each other in the face. They pass each other in the corridors like ships in the night.

A community is only a community when most of its members have consciously decided to break these barriers and come out of their cocoons of friendship to stretch out their hands to their enemies. Diversity can be very rich. It has value in itself. It calls us to break barriers to build bridges. Our basic attitude toward all the differences among us will be that they can enrich our union rather than threaten it. We need to train Jesuits especially in their formation years to cross barriers and build universal Society. It is also good that a few stages of formation are outside one's province or culture in order to broaden one's horizons or lest we become frogs in the well with narrow-mindedness. We also need to promote vocations from everywhere regardless of our prejudices and not just from few select areas. We need to remind ourselves that we join the Universal Society and not just a province in order to go beyond the boundaries of all barriers.

4.2.3.2 Divisive elements

Ignatius envisaged a community as community of men dispersed on mission yet united with union of hearts but irony is that at times in our communities there is division in many areas. Misunderstanding and arguments, on objective matters related to the mission, sometimes get personalized and form the basis of ill feelings, even painful memories that put a strain on interpersonal relations in the community. In big communities there is a possibility of living through the tensions as there are others to relate to. When the same happens in small communities of three or four it puts a strain on the life of the community. If bitterness and gossip and hostilities are not challenged, they act like a plague within a house, dividing those who should be sharing their lives. Jesuits hostilely attacking Jesuits destroy the Society, either in a house or in a province.¹⁷⁷

Persons in the community with serious personal problems, hamper the smooth running of the community. In many cases professional help is required but cannot be carried out without the consent and co-operation of the person concerned. To add to the problem, professional help is seen as a blotch on one's personality, rather than as a help to return to wellness.

There are some Jesuits who have a polarizing or divisive effect on a community. It comes from a very immature personality structure. Differences of opinions and arguments are part of community life but when some use them to exclude others or split and divide or devalue others it becomes a divisive factor in the community. There are two especially vivid and destructive versions of this personality structure: pathological narcissism, and the paranoid personality. Both are driven by fantasies of omnipotence and superiority, and their long-term effect on a community is very destructive. Confirming Ignatius's view that such people should be removed from the community, because they are like 'a pestilence which can affect it seriously' [Co 664].¹⁷⁸

Jesuits should be sent for regular workshops to work on themselves. No one is perfect and we all have our weaknesses. There are many courses that help one to grow in self-awareness and to deal with one's fears and insecurities. Ongoing formation in this area is must to destroy divisive elements among the members.

¹⁷⁷MEURES, F., "Identidad Corporativa S.J.", 25.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 26.

4.2.3.3 Gossip

Speaking during his homily at his Santa Marta residence, Pope Francis criticized people who think gossip is harmless.

“Gossiping is like terrorism because the person who gossips is like a terrorist who throws a bomb and runs away, destroying,” he said. “With their tongue they are destroying and not making peace.” The pontiff went further in his description of the “cunning” gossip, who is “not a suicide bomber” because he takes good care of himself. Francis called on his followers to question whether they sow peace when they speak, telling them to bite their tongues if they feel the urge to spread divisions among people. He also took a critical view of those who have a “serpent’s tongue” and spread gossip within the Catholic Church: “That person is always doing what the serpent did with Adam and Eve, namely destroying peace. And this is an evil; this is a sickness within our church: sowing divisions, sowing hatred, not sowing peace.”

Gossiping is not strange in our communities too. It is very common to do backbiting in the communities. Instead of speaking face to face and have a healthy dialogue, we do get engaged in gossiping and bring division and spread rumors. At times this also leads to defaming others. Criticism, cynicism and negativity are on rife. In community it is so easy to judge and then condemn others. We lock up people in a category: ‘He or she is like this or like that.’ When we do that we refuse them the possibility of growing. When we judge we are pushing people away; we are creating a wall, a barrier. There are moments when we judge others too quickly not knowing or assimilated all the facts or circumstances. We can also be prejudiced about Jesuits without even having known them but having heard stories about them. It is so easy to see the flaws in others.

We need to have a regular feedback session in our communities where we get a chance to have a dialogue. We need to have a session where we have fraternal corrections. It has to be done in total spirit of love and trust. One needs to have interior freedom to give and take fraternal correction to grow and help others grow in brotherhood. The corporate world today has 360-degree feedback where one is evaluated regularly and given one’s appraisal. We can have feedback system where one genuinely comes to know his strengths and areas where one needs to grow in the community. Care-fronting should not be done with a view to defeat, humiliate or even accuse the other. It should be an exercise of charity, to help the other to overcome a crisis, to correct a mistake, to have the right understanding or attitude, and to put him or her on the right track.

4.2.3.4 Excessive Socialization

When community members find their emotional bonds are stronger outside the community, with friends and family, they dilute the bond that exists between Jesuits companions, in the community they are called to live with. Earlier socialization was restricted but now we tend to go to the other extremes. Now at times there is excessive socialization outside the context of the community. We tend to feel more comfortable with people outside the community to deal with. Some Jesuits exist only for parties and celebrations with their friends. Lots of quality time is spent on technology like internet, computers, mobile phones and we fail to give quality time to have healthy sharing in our community. Our communication becomes very superficial. We rely more on modern means of communication to communicate rather than directly have a dialogue with each other and build a personal bond with each other. Very often, the outsiders come to know about our appointments faster than the others in the community or outsiders come to know all that happens in the community. Some run to their rooms to use social network to be in touch with friends and neglect community recreation. Some can spend hours on social network with outsiders but are unable to spend a few minutes with community members. Social network brings the outside world closer though superficially and our own community members become aliens.

We need to have a specific structure in the community depending on the context of each community for regular recreations, outings and meetings etc. Community has to provide an atmosphere to make its members feel at home and have a sense of belonging.

4.2.3.5 Communication gap

We live in the world of fast track communication. We have modern means of communication principally electronic, modes of communication, which have the potential to become a valuable instrument for the Society's unity. They bring the precision and the speed of transmission. Jesuits in the most remote corners of the world can be reached in seconds, and networks can be established that enable direct collaboration between Jesuits from all parts of the earth. Academic resources can quickly be made available to anyone; important events can be made known in all parts of the world at lightning speed. Rapid concerted action has also become a possibility. We can mount immediate e-mail protest campaigns against unjust acts in any country. However, we should not regard these new possibilities for communication with too

much optimism or enthusiasm. In the era of so much of communication, perhaps the communication specific to the Society of Jesus is the loser. The Jesuits may be less informed of their fellow Jesuits all over the world today because they also receive insistent information on so many more other things and people. Jesuitical information used to be privileged in comparison with an absence of information on so many other things and people. This is no longer so. The range of printed and electronic news media has already led to information overload, and to enormous problems regarding the selection of what might be relevant. One becomes a part of too many networking groups or what's app groups or other social networking groups that finally one gets fed up with excessive time consuming communication. These new modes of communication have their limitations. It is difficult to understand each other in our cultural differences. Cross-cultural communication is an extremely wearisome process. It requires very great attentiveness and patience to acquire a feel for another culture's unwritten laws and customs, and for the quite different significance that a word or a gesture or an action can have. Each word may have different connotation in other cultures.¹⁷⁹ No quick e-mail message can quicken this process.

Communication is the life-blood of community. Without it there can be no unity of hearts. Communication has to be clear and transparent.¹⁸⁰ The most useful word for understanding human communication is dialogue. In good communication, concrete replies, and not vague and evasive ones, are important. Authenticity is the first condition for dialogue; the second is listening. For want of these conditions, many conversations do not reach beyond the level of parallel monologues without audience. When the persons in conversations are concerned with what they have to say rather than listening to the other, mutual understanding becomes difficult. In dialogue, one has to be specific. It means to be concrete and to limit oneself to responding to what the other says or wants to say. Mixing up issues and dragging in matters unrelated to the point are illogical, dishonest and unproductive ways of dialoguing.

4.2.4 Personal

Problems under this category may begin first due to problems in the spiritual life or may arise due to problems mentioned under the institutional and social categories. In this category, I

¹⁷⁹MEURES, F., "Identidad Corporativa S.J.", 33.

¹⁸⁰CEBOLLADA, P., "La Comunidad, lugar de comunicación", *Manresa*87 (2015) 223-232, 227-228.

have first described each problem. They are intimately linked with each other. In fact there is a cause and effect kind relationship between them. Hence after describing each problem in short, I will try to identify a common cause that results in addictions. The problems include personal crisis, wounded and hurt, obstacles to personal sharing, loneliness and various addictions. At the end of all I will propose a common solution to them as they are inter-related.

4.2.4.1 Personal crisis

Sometimes, a particular Jesuit goes through a personal crisis. The others in the community notice this from his behavior but fail to approach him and talk about it out of care and concern. On the contrary, there is tendency to make fun or gossip about it with other members of the community in his absence. It is due to lack of sensitivity. The community fails to create ambience for such Jesuits who face crisis to share their concerns and get help from others. Such Jesuits do not feel secure enough in the community to share about their crisis either because they feel neglected or misunderstood or because they fear further gossiping and absence of confidentiality. Consequently, many such Jesuits land up leaving the Society.

4.2.4.2 Wounded and hurt

Unfortunately, Some Jesuits are hurt by the other members of the community and become wounded. They keep these wounds unattended for years and it has its own negative consequences in their personal, community, spiritual and apostolic life. Many Jesuits never feel appreciated in the community. In order to deal with their pain, hurts and inner wounds, they adopt denial as their coping style, manifesting it in destructive ways. Some of the unhealthy ways Jesuits cope with their loneliness and pain are the bottle, workaholism, cynicism, absence from the community, passive-aggressiveness, superficial communication, and excessive television watching.

More broadly, Jesuit community life often creates the vertical Jesuit syndrome. This syndrome is manifested in a life-style that includes investment in apostolic work and the maintenance of individual Jesuit friendships, but no participation in a regularly scheduled shared group dialogue.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹SHELTON, C. M., "Toward Healthy...",8.

4.2.4.3 Obstacles to personal sharing

Someone who is really interested in sharing about his work and mission after a long day work goes to the recreation room with great enthusiasm to speak to his community members and finds some reading newspapers while some other watching football or cricket or movies and while others criticizing cynically the others or the Society.¹⁸² This is usual scenario in our recreation rooms. The Jesuits who really want to share get frustrated in this context as there is no way he can talk to someone in the community.

4.2.4.4 Loneliness

Today we also have a challenge of loneliness to face. Although we have in our community all the means necessary to meet this challenge and to help each other to do the same, we find many get succumbed in loneliness and emptiness resulting into depression and despair. Some are lonely because they are so busy about the work they are doing that they don't have time to listen or to share. Some want to share in the community to deal with their loneliness but others have no time to listen. While others are lonely because there are so many other attractive, possibly seductive, things to draw our attention: magazines, books and newspapers, television, radio, internet, social networking and the movies. Some are lonely because we are made oppressively conscious of so many facts, so many events, and so many things—thanks to our communication media—that our feelings are dulled into insensitivity for the feelings of others.¹⁸³

A certain degree of loneliness is to be expected in community life. Members need to cope with such feelings integrating them in healthy ways. When this does not take place, community members may exist in nearly complete isolation from one another. They may live and even work together, but relate to one another only superficially. Extreme bouts of loneliness among community members often represent their own unwillingness to delve beneath the surface of their lives and share the experiences and concerns that really matter to them. The community then, should strive for an atmosphere of trust where people will feel free to relate something of their personal lives and their perceptions of the community.

¹⁸²Ibid.,12.

¹⁸³HARDON, J. A., "Community Life", in *www.the realpresence.org* as visited on 25/4/2016, 1-8, 5-6.

I think that these 4 above-mentioned problems, under the category of personal, lead to addictions, that is to say, there is a cause and effect relationship between these 4 above-mentioned areas and addictions which I mention below. The causes are of course there is no atmosphere created in the community for personal sharing and for a basic structure of community life where individuals can openly share with total confidence, where individuals are given opportunities to experience reconciliation and forgiveness to overcome hurts and wounds and where individuals can feel at home with a sense of belonging to overcome loneliness. Since many communities fail to create such atmosphere, personal addictions set in.

4.2.4.5 Addictions

Most of the scandals of the religious life down the centuries can be reduced to 3 w's. They are: woman, wine and wealth. There is certain truth in this statement.

a. Workholism: Workholism is a kind of addiction to work. It is to get involved in excessive work not for the sake of work itself but at times becomes as escapism. It is used as a defense mechanism too. Certain Jesuits work very hard – too hard. We have many burnt out cases of the Jesuits whose life is occupied with excessive work. Sadly, there are most likely cases where a Jesuit's incessant work occurs as a means to fill up an emotional vacuum created by a poorly lived community experience. Lacking the affective pull of positive community experiences and unable to face the empty barrenness of community life and the emotional void it creates, the Jesuit falls back on his own resources and works excessively. It is one of defense mechanism that is used to cope with the emotional vacuum and emptiness. At times in this context, the community fails to create an environment where such Jesuits are challenged for excessive workholism out of concern and care for them and provide some boundaries for excessive work so that they might learn to relax and also deal with their emotional escapism.

b. Alcoholism: Very often, we do not want to accept that alcoholism is a problem that exists. We avoid talking about it or help someone who may be seen as alcoholic. We get into denial mode. Some drink alone while there are some who drink excessively and do not know how to conduct themselves in public. There are few in the rehabilitation centres recovering from this disease. Addictions mainly in the form of alcohol does harm to the apostolate and in the community. When normal drinking degenerates into compulsive drinking, when the threshold of control is

crossed, an alcoholic only thinks obsessively about drinks and how he can drink. He withdraws more and more. And the loneliness of an isolation induced by his fear of being discovered, even though he may live in a large community, leads him to compensate by more drinking. Yet the alcoholic Jesuit, the alcoholic anyone, realizes that he is isolating himself, but does not know what to do about it.¹⁸⁴

An alcoholic by himself will not be able to recognize his addiction. He needs help. It is the community that has to identify such addicts and provide professional help rather than denying or feeling embarrassed about it. The community also has to be sensitive to such persons especially during the community celebrations and gathering where alcohol is served.

c. Addiction to excessive eating: There are some who give into work or alcohol to fill vacuum of emptiness of their life, some others find a way out to excessive social networking and socialization while some others who feel that they are either not accepted well in the community or outside take resort to excessive eating. We may find difficult to accept this as a problem but it is truth. There are some Jesuits who are obsessed with excessive eating. The result is a problem of obesity. Such Jesuits try to compensate by means of food. They are not bothered about their health. We joke around saying the Jesuits may die of excessive eating but never by starvation. It is an irony in itself. This addiction is a symptom of many other deep-seated problems of the individual.

We need regular psycho-spiritual training programmes where one becomes aware of such addictions and get help.

d. Addiction to accumulate/get money: Money is the root cause of all evil. Money brings power and worldly values. We do know about the scandals that exist all over the world due to corruption of money. The Society is no exception to this. There is always a temptation to have and accumulate money as future security. Some Jesuits fall a prey to this temptation. They run after the very thing that they have renounced through the vow of poverty. Many Jesuits in important positions get so used to their position, power and high lifestyle that they forget they are religious. Because some earn high salaries due to their high profile positions demand

¹⁸⁴PETER, S., "Alcoholism and Jesuit Life", *Studies in Spirituality of the Jesuits* 13/1 (1981) 15.

comfortable life and want expensive vacations. This does create a class in the community of those who have and those who don't have money. This temptation also arises from one's psychological complexes or needs.

e. Addiction to pornography/sex: We all are aware of the fact that the scandal of sex abuse has rocked the Church all over the world. Child sexual abuse and homosexuality which was under the carpet came to the light and shocked the world. The heavy legal compensations paid to the victims speak itself on this issue. The Society too has suffered from paying such compensations. It has affected financially some of the provinces. We are hesitant to speak of this addiction in public due to social taboos and embarrassment. But we know this problem does exist and we need to do something about it. Today the access to pornographic material is so easy due to availability of internet. Many fall prey to this addiction in order to fill in the vacuum of loneliness and emptiness. Many get obsessed to it. Pornography finally leads to other sexual activities and addictions.

Living the vow of chastity is inextricably tied to the quality of our community life. Jesuits are loving men and loving men do fall in love. Sexual temptations are natural and normal. Having such feelings is part of healthy living. However, very frequently the infidelity to the vow of chastity happens not because of falling in love, but at least in part because of the hurt and anger a Jesuit experiences from the ongoing disappointment, frustration, and isolation he experiences from community life. We need two things to safeguard vow of chastity. First, we must foster a desire and corresponding attempt on a personal level to live the chaste life in a healthy way and to pray for such graces. Second, we must do everything possible on a community level to create environments where each of us feels supported by and bonded with our brothers. Such an environment fosters an atmosphere where we can share joys and hurts and provides the fundamental care each of us needs to be a healthy and whole human being. We need healthy atmosphere in the community. If not, it will lead to many unhealthy habits and addictions. We need to organize ongoing formation and training programmes on affective and sexual maturity. We can't afford to ignore this issue and turn a blind eye.

As I have said earlier, the cause seems to be very evident for the problems posed in this category. The community's failure to create environment for forum of formal and non-formal personal sharing and dialogue is mainly responsible for such problems. Hence the solution seems

to be that a healthy Jesuit living in community requires quality atmosphere for sharing and dialogue. There need to be agreed upon times where brothers gather together to share various spiritual and personal aspects of their lives. Let me restate that I am not speaking about any "perfect" Jesuit community. This will help individual easily to speak about their hurts, frustrations, wounds, failures, temptations, loneliness, crisis besides the positive aspects of their life and work. The community has to put in efforts to create trust and confidentiality among its members. It is a responsibility of every member and not just of the superior to create such environment. Perfect community does not exist but we can always strive towards it with spirit of magis with our mutual sharing and conversations.

4.3 Conclusion

We all live in communities, and are aware of what the strengths and weakness of our communities are. In this chapter, I have focussed only on the problems and negative areas of the community life where we need greater awareness and examination. It does not mean that there are no positive aspects or strengths of the community life. There are many positive things of the community life in the Society and that is why the Society continues to exist with its many members. Many of our problems have neither readymade nor once-for-all answers. Not all problems have solutions, certainly not ready ones. When we focus on the problems it should not discourage us but it helps us to become aware of them and acknowledge them. Acceptance of the problem area teaches us to be humble as members of the least Society of Jesus.

All the same, let me conclude by highlighting the few aspects where progress noted in our common life in the last few decades as described by an independent agency, such as the commission on community life.

First and foremost is the renewal of Ignatian spirituality in the life of Jesuits and in community life as “friends in the Lord” and companions on mission. “Individual direction of the Spiritual Exercises..., spiritual direction through formation and afterwards, studies on the spirituality of the Society.” “Spiritual intimacy between the Superior and subject, as well as between the Superior and community... Intergenerational dialogue has become a source of communal and apostolic renewal. Many feel the significance of the shared processes of decision-making, whether made at the community level or at the level of the Province and its works.”

There emerged the desire to live our charism more simply, frequently in smaller communities, often inserted among the poor. Communities have become more hospitable internally and externally. Because of improved means of communications, Jesuits at a very local level can feel themselves deeply linked to communities on other continents, thus helping to develop a sense of the universal mission of the Society.”

There has emerged a list of characteristic means that aid communities in finding the fruit that nurtures the mission, the person, and the witness of the community... No community has achieved the above transformations without regular and well planned community meetings, whether weekly or monthly... Hence, methods of communal apostolic discernment draw us together not only as companions on mission but also in a life given to Christ at intimate, even mystical levels. The yearly shared planning of priorities for spiritual and fraternal life made of our communities themselves a communal apostolic project.

General Conclusion

The Society of Jesus tried its best to put into execution the invitation of the Vatican Council II to go back to its original foundational charism in order to renew itself. While in the years since GC 31 the Society has experienced renewal at the personal and apostolic levels, we have not given the same degree of attention to the dynamics proper to community life. While writing this paper on Jesuit community life I have gone back to the original inspiration from the perspective of community life. When one reads this paper, one may get the impression that there is nothing new that has been said in this paper which has not arisen before about Jesuit community life in various documents and letters of the Society. Yes, we have enough of documents, letters, reports and discussions on this topic. That is why the GC 35 did not give a separate decree on the community life although the problems of the community life do exist in the universal Society. My focus was not to offer something new on the community life but was to reaffirm the Jesuit community life by going to the foundational experience of our charism.

Hence, in this paper, I highlighted the origin of the first community as friends in the Lord - what elements made the first companions friends in the Lord and how they became friends in the Lord; how their union is translated into the Constitutions of the Society; how the recent documents have responded to the issue of community life. I have also mentioned the

various problems involved in the community life today. It is not to discourage the readers and to leave them on a negative note but to make them aware and invite them to reflect through self-examination in order to reaffirm the importance of community life. At the end while concluding, I want to once again reaffirm here how the community life itself is mission by stressing on a few elements that have already come up in this paper.

The first community of friends became an apostolic body, created precisely so that the dispersion that was expected, arising from the missions which the pope was beginning to entrust to them, should not undo the union and bringing together that God has made, but rather confirm it and establish it more deeply. Together they formed a community for dispersion. The friendship in the Lord underlying this communion was to be perpetuated through tight bonds, in such a way that coming together into one body, the members would continue to care for each other, and have knowledge of each other, for a greater fruit of souls. These links, explicated more fully, would find their way into Part VIII of the Constitutions as means for the union of hearts: the love of God our Lord; obedience; communication; uniformity.

In our lives in community and for such missions, we are ‘friends in the Lord’. This phrase has increasingly stood out in recent years in the self-understanding of the Society, even though, interestingly, it was used only once in the writings of St Ignatius himself. The phrase remained almost forgotten for more than four centuries. Fr. Arrupe brought it to light again to express the character of the men who were at the origins of the Society as a religious community and what ought to be the character of those who followed them. As the 34th General Congregation said in its concluding decree on characteristics of our way of proceeding, “We are not merely fellow workers; we are friends in the Lord. The community to which we belong is the entire body of the Society itself, however dispersed over the face of the earth. Though we come from many nations and cultures and speak many languages, our union is enriched, not threatened by diversity” [545]. We must recognize that the apostolic purpose of the Society, from its beginning, did not allow itself to be taken over by one country or one culture, but showed the universal dimension of the Society.

Communities need to arrive at a definite and minimum structure in the community. If it already exists, it has to be reinforced and seen that it works. Each community should take time out to be by itself. Spend time in sharing: faith experiences, vocation, personal crisis, apostolic

experience, expectations from life, dreams for mission and setbacks experienced in living these dreams. Communities do this so as to get to know one another at a deeper level, to be able to move into the reality of becoming 'Friends in the Lord'. This should be done occasionally through community meetings, gatherings, recollections and live-ins. A fixed time for community meetings, community Eucharist and prayer, outings and picnics, recreations, and shared responsibility for community works have to be settled. When there is more than one apostolate in the community, members can share about what is happening in their respective works.

There is always a third in the relationship of two Jesuits: The Lord. It is a friendship with reference to Jesus Christ. It is He whom we desire to follow, personally and with others, when we ask to be received under the standard of Christ; it is He who gives us to one another. Without Him who unites us we might never have met or known each other; it is He who unites us and disperses us because it is He who has called us and brought us together. Our first duty one to another is not to break what God has made, but to affirm and maintain it, and that implies that the vitality of the bond among us and the correctness of our relationship to each one – a relationship engaging both heart and reason – depend upon our relationship with the Lord, the quality of our personal, interior life. A Jesuit community needs to be a community of prayer. If a Jesuit community does not turn to God and ask for help in sustaining its vision and coping with its shortcomings, if its members do not pray together and lift up each other's needs, if they do not ask the Lord to change their hearts and help them to overcome their weaknesses, then no amount of talking or planning or concerted action will do an, good in bringing about substantial changes in the quality of community and personal life and witness.

Every community of the Society is a faith community that comes together in the Eucharist with others who believe in Christ to celebrate their common faith. More than anything else, our participation at the Eucharist, in the Body and Blood of Christ, makes us one universal body totally dedicated to Christ's mission in today's world. All members need to consider Eucharist as the center of their religious, community and apostolic life [CN 227]. We are there to remember and recall and re-present the saving action of Jesus and to ask for conversion of heart, which means to be reconciled with and in communion with God and with one another. Fr. Kolvenbach in his letter on community life stresses the importance of Eucharist. We discover that the Holy Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the Christian life, moves us from

sacramental union with Christ in his Eucharistic Body to union with Christ in his Mystical Body especially in the least of his brothers and sisters. This two-fold union, stemming from the Eucharist, is the fulfillment of the love of God and neighbor.

Communities can't afford to neglect the elements of communication and conversation. In the Contemplation to attain love it is said: love consists in interchange [Ex. 231]. It is a mysticism of love that is the heart and source of genuine communication between the members of the Society of Jesus. A flow of communication is the indispensable condition for the cohesion of any community. Sometimes we are good at talking but we need to be good at communicating. Communication is not just verbal but also non-verbal. Mutual understanding requires a listening ear and personal sharing. Our communication cannot be just superficial at business level and task oriented. It has to be interior and intimate. There is mutual trust in sharing one's vulnerability and one takes risks in exposing oneself. One feels free to express one's joys, frustrations and sorrow. One can weep with others in the community and know they will think no less of him. One feels safe and secure in their company to be one's real selves. In this context, one does not have to pretend with others what he is not by wearing masks. Friendship within the Society is an experience and a gift. God's conversations with Ignatius transformed him into an apostle and into a man with an amazing capacity for friendship. Ignatius' conversations with his companions and the *Spiritual Exercises* transformed them into an apostolic body within the Church. The first companions used the skill of conversation and the Exercises to transform many other lives. Conversation requires attitude of sympathy, attentive listening, broad-mindedness, openness, respect, pure intention, self-denial and charity. Good conversations do not simply happen. They require people who are willing, interested and able. Communities need to rediscover the skill of conversation to bring intimacy among its members.

Community is the place for forgiveness and reconciliation. In spite of all the trust we may have in each other, there are always words that wound, self-promoting attitudes, situations where susceptibilities clash. That is why living together implies a cross, a constant effort, an acceptance which is daily and mutual forgiveness. To forgive is also to understand the cry behind the behavior. Persons communicate something deeper through their anger. To forgive is also to look into oneself and to see where one should change, where one should also ask for forgiveness and make amends. Forgiveness is a tool that will get you through the healing process so you can

begin to live your life. The letter of Fr. Kolvenbach on community life and GC 35 have emphasized the element of reconciliation. The Process of reconciliation has to begin oneself. One has to reconcile with himself first only then will he be able to reconcile with others.

Our formation needs to be more and more leading to transformation. There is a constant need for reforming our formation. Formation is sometimes misunderstood as meant only for those who are in probations. We need formation and ongoing formation of all Jesuits without exception that leads to transformation. Today by reading the signs of time we need to integrate various elements in our formation programmes. We need formation that forms us to have spiritual, intellectual, emotional, affective, sexual, psychological and apostolic maturity. We need integrated formation that forms integrated personalities. The best beginning of this could be during the novitiate but it cannot end there but has to be continued in one's lifetime.

A community is only truly a body when the majority of its members are making the transition from 'the community for myself' to 'myself for the community'. This is the movement from self-love to genuine love, from self-interest to self-emptying and from self-will to self-denial. A community isn't just a place where people live under the same roof; that is a lodging house or a hotel. Nor is a community a work-team. It is a place where everyone is emerging from the shadows of egocentricity to the light of real love. It is here one gets convinced by the fact that '*I am because we are*'.¹⁸⁵ One learns to have I-thou relationship with others in the community and not I-it relationship with others. In other words, one deals with others as subject and does not treat others as object. This is the result of one's I-Thou relationship with God first.¹⁸⁶ It is recognition of a mutual belonging. It is listening to others, being concerned for them and feeling empathy with them. It is to see their beauty and reveal it to them. It means answering their call and their deepest needs. It is living in each other, taking refuge in each other. To love we must die continually to our own ideas, our own susceptibilities and our own ego.

A dream of the ideal community is the first enemy of the real community. A community that knows its own difficulties, accepts its limitations, does not forget past frustrations, and at the same time is soberly aware of its strengths, recognized individual values and qualities of its

¹⁸⁵ This is a concept of African philosophy to stress communitarian and inter-dependent dimension of African reality.

¹⁸⁶ I-thou, I-it and I-Thou relationship is a concept of a philosopher Martin Buber. He refers to thou as relating with others as subjects, 'it' refers to relating with others as object and Thou with capital 'T' refers to God.

members and prizes in itself every effort and every advance towards greater community of thought, life and work, has the best chance to find itself and progress on the road to union. We are not a business community or an office or a factory. Our coming together is not by chance nor by personal choice. There is a drive behind our lives which we recognize as a call, providence, a vocation. We do not choose each other. We need to learn to accept one another – we need to bloom where we are planted and help each other to blossom. As long as we refuse to accept that we are a mixture of light and darkness, of positive qualities and failings, of love and hate, of altruism and egocentricity, of maturity and immaturity, and that we are all children of the same Father, we will continue to divide the world and communities into enemies and friends.

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