

Influence of the Ignatian spirituality in the Congregation

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1. Introduction: What do we call “Ignatian Spirituality” (EI) and which principal elements form it?

The spirituality of Saint Ignatius is the path or way that God showed him throughout his life; his particular manner of seeing the relationship with God, life, persons and society...

Saint Ignatius had to keep himself in a constant situation of listening, in such a way that “he was taken or led where he did not know”¹, he felt that God treated him in the same way as a school teacher treats a child, teaching him”², and he did not only learn; but he also knew how to transmit what he had learnt, in such a way that his experience has enlightened, and continues to enlighten today many persons who seek the profound sense of their life.

Father Kolvenbach used to say:

«Ignatian spirituality does not consist in adding up to everything that we already do other “more spiritual” activities. Ignatian spirituality intends to help to live life in an integrated form. To integrate is to mark a clear horizon in the personal life Project: a horizon which gives extra quality and sense to what is being done, that helps to live reconciled with one-self, with others and with creation³

Saint Ignatius bequeathed to the Society of Jesus and to the Church a spirituality which has a markedly apostolic sense. Action is lived as a place of contemplation and of union with God; it is not a consequence of prayer.

¹ This is an expression of Father J. Nadal SJ, in the Dialogues “*pro Societatis*”, Ch. II, [17], (MI, FN II 252)

² [Au 37]

³ F. H. Kolvenbach, SJ, *Rasgos fundamentales de la espiritualidad ignaciana*. Talk to the persons linked to Ignatian spirituality in the Church of Saint Antonio de Barra (Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, October 4, 1992)

An analysis of the fundamental characteristics of this spirituality, which is contained in the Spiritual Exercises, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and the collection of Letters of Saint Ignatius, shows the following elements:

Prayer which seeks like Christ, intimacy with God centered on the desire to do his will, of pleasing and serving him, An intimacy which is guaranteed by the works and is expressed through the “Magis”, living for “the Greater Glory of God” [Co 125, 508].

Discernment as a permanent attitude of interior freedom; through some spiritual criteria, which are the foundation of our options; is discovered what God asks of each one in his/her daily reality. Discernment, properly speaking, offers a sure method to integrate the interior motions, the intellectual reflection and the observation of reality, in the constant search for the will of God

The *ecclesial dimension* - Saint Ignatius is, in the expression of Hugo Rahner, a “man of the Church”. The following of Christ, poor and humble is carried out in the service to his real Church, with the sense of universal mission and total availability which become concrete in obedience to the Superiors.

The expression “*To the Greater Glory of God*”⁴ represents the synthesis of the Ignatian charism. As we will see later, we can find it in the fundamental texts which accompanied and were forged in the beginnings of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. This expression refers to the free and obedient conforming to the divine will at every moment, in every place and concrete situation. Besides, it is a criterion of discernment in every apostolic election, contributing dynamism and depth.

The origin of the Ignatian Spirituality in the life of Saint Claudine

Our Saint has a concrete life in a family, a surrounding, a city and some historical facts which, no doubt, will form or model her personality and will leave a profound mark. In this section, we are going to try to get close to this reality from the point of view of the theme which we are considering and with this we can have an intuition of the influence of the Ignatian spirituality in her childhood and young age.

⁴ We find it in number [179] of the Spiritual Exercises even though it is implicit in them from Fundamental Principle “only desiring and choosing that by which more likely we achieve the purpose for which we were created” [23], and 170 times in the Constitutions alone or together with other expressions such as “glory and praise”, “glory and service”, etc. and frequently, with the Ignatian Magis”

1.1 Education in the Family and in the Abbey of St. Peter

We have some information which gets us close to the Ignatian influence which could have existed in the family environment of the Saint. It is clear that the family transmitted to Claudine as well as to her brothers and sisters, a solid formation in Christian life, in prayer, generosity and service to others. Even when she was only a child she learnt from her mother to visit the poor, to be concerned about them and to help them as far as possible⁵. The letters of her brothers Louis and François⁶ show a deep and profound faith and are an evident proof of the spiritual environment in which they lived. François in his letter even defines a spiritual state which is very close to the Fundamental Principle [Ex. 23]⁷, I feel that religion is a good support which enables me to face death with indifference⁸ and resolution⁹.

Marie Antoinette Guyot de Pravieux, mother of Claudine, who lived close to the of the Trinity College¹⁰, she frequented it seeking spiritual direction and in her private Library she had books on Ignatian spirituality¹¹ such as *Retraite Spirituelle à l'usage des communautés religieuses*, of F-Bourdaloue¹², and *Neuvaines en l'honneur des saints de la Compagnie de Jésus*¹³.

⁵ M. B. Vigneau, RJM, *Santa Claudina Thévenet, El amor a cualquier precio*, (Saint Claudine Thévenet, Love at any Price), Lyon 2013

⁶ Document II in *Positio* (study and documentation of the introduction of the Cause and of the Virtues, Mary of St. Ignatius (Claudine Thévenet), Foundress of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary (+ 1837), Rome 1981. 16 and 17.

⁷ [Ex. 23]

⁸ From Latin “indifference”, is normally used for the state of mind of not feeling either inclination or rejection for something, thus being able to take the person to apathy. Its use in the letter does not have this sense, but an Ignatian sense, as radical openness to the will of God.

⁹ Document II in *Positio*

¹⁰ The “College de la Trinité” of Lyon was founded in 1527, and its direction was entrusted by the *The Consulat* to the Society of Jesus in 1561. The Jesuits reformed the discipline and the studies, giving great satisfaction to the people of Lyon, Cf. *Collège de la Trinité (Lyon) 1202-1763, Répertoire numérique provenant de l'inventaire analytique de Jean Prosper Ganthier* 1864, Ehône, le Département Archives, on line

http://viewer1.cg69.mnesys.fr/accounts/mnesys_eg69/datas/medias/IR_pour_internet/1°/°20D.pdf, consulta April 25, 2017.

¹¹ Document IV in *Positio* (study and documentation) on the introduction of the Cause and of the Virtues, Mary of Saint Ignatius (Claudine Thévenet), Foundress of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary (+ 1837), Rome, 1981, 84

¹² Louis Bourdaloue, *Retraite Spirituelle à l'usage des communautés religieuses*, Libraires Associés, Paris 1751. This book of 449 pages, contains some Spiritual Exercises of eight days. In each one of the days one can find three meditations with three points each one and a “consideration” also with three points. The meditations follow the book of the Exercises of St. Ignatius and the considerations are teachings on some religious theme (Sacraments, prayer, conversations, readings, etc.).

¹³ *Neuvaines en l'honneur des saints de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Périsse Frères, Lyon 1820, This book of 476 pages and published in 1792 contains the lives of Saint Ignatius, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Francis Borgia, Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Saint Stanislaus, among others

This closeness of it can make us think, but not prove, that her children went to the College of the Trinity.

Before Marie Antoinette was born in 1734, there was in Lyon a type of mission of evangelization carried out by the Jesuits. Some local families committed themselves actively in that mission, and a numerous group of ladies from the bourgeoisie of Lyon had been formed in the catechism¹⁴. Because of the environment of that time and the historical influence that the Jesuits had especially in the city of Lyon through the College of the Trinity, it would not be running a great risk to affirm that the Ignatian influence had been present in the family for more than two generations. The Family Guyot de Praveus occupied a brilliant position in the society of Lyon and their business was prosperous. Marie Marchand, mother of Marie Antoinette, could have participated in those missions though there is no evidence of this.

When Claudine went to the Abbey of Saint Peter, in 1783, to receive a formal formation, she finds a flourishing community and centered on religious life. She was there from the age of nine years up to 15 years of age, practically living the rhythm of the novices. .

A century before, the Abby had undergone an important internal reformation, directed by the Abbess, of whom Father San Auban, a Jesuit priest from the College of the Trinity gives witness saying:

“At her death Madame Antoinette d’Albert left a very united and fervent community in which the number of nuns was over forty. The prudence of the Superiors had maintained it separated from the Jansenist influence, and a solid spiritual accompaniment gave them a serious teaching on the new manifestations of Christian piety”¹⁵.

The proximity of the Abbey to the College of the Jesuits (only 300 m), the special struggle that the Jesuits maintained against the Jansenist influence, and their Charism of “accompanying souls”, explains that they were the ones who especially were in charge of

¹⁴ J. McManners, *Church and society in Eighteenth Century, France*, Vol. 2 The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion, Oxford 1998, 88

¹⁵ Witness of Father Saint Auban, Jesuit from the College of the Trinity, Cf. D. Buennner, OSB *Madame de Barez, abbess de Pradines*, Emmanuel Vitte Editeur, Paris-Lyon 1981, 17

the spiritual accompaniment of the religious community until the time they were expelled from France¹⁶.

Though we have few evident information, but which is reasonable, we can have an intuition that Claudine, from a very young age, lived the influence of a spirituality, the Ignatian one, which would have marked her later life.

Influence of the Society of Jesus in Lyon

The educated elite of Lyon had known during a very long time the manuals of Piety and meditation written by the Jesuits of previous times, and the influence of the Society, in Lyon had a long history¹⁷.

1.1.1 The College of the Trinity

At the death of Louis XIII in 1643, the Jesuits had in Lyon three institutions: the College of the Trinity; the Maison Saint Joseph and the Petit-College.

The influence of the College of the Trinity was such in the city that at the end of the XVI century “The Consulate as reaction against the Protestant Reformation will confer to the Society of Jesus the control of all teaching in Lyon”¹⁸. In fact, that College became one of the symbols of Lyon. The information which indicates that importance, at a given moment when the city only has 100.000 inhabitants, the College has 1,200 pupils and 300 theologians; in the months of June and July, the students prepared for the city, exhibitions of their works and the actions of evangelization increased in a considerable way; their library counted over 60,000 volumes.

The number of Jesuits of the Province of Lyon at the end of the XVII century was 688, 100 of them were in the city and their number increased. In fact, Lyon was considered the “Capital” of the Society of Jesus in France.

Given that this College, from its creation was considered as municipal and the city had this present in mind, as the bastion of culture, it continued its work in spite of the

¹⁶ The College increased and needed to annex neighboring houses. In this sense there are documents related with the Abbey of Saint Peter.

¹⁷ J. Farnham, RJM *Excerpt from A Study of Pious Association For Master's Thesis* – 1983, [pp.77-86]

¹⁸ G. Brasart, “*Le College de la Trinité et la Reforme en Lyon au XVIe siecle* » in Positions of theses defended at the Ecole of Chartes, Nogentle Rotron, Daupeley, Gouverneur, 1944 p. 9 ff, quoted in B. Marion *Le College de la Trinité; Histoire d'une Bibliotheque et de son Cabinet de Curiosités*, Diplôme national e Master Sous la direction de Dominique Varry, Université Lumière, Lyon June 2, 2014, 21 (n. 47)

expulsion of the Jesuits in 1762. It has even been suggested that the admiration for the work of the Jesuits could have hastened the expulsion of the Jesuits.

2,2.2. Institution of the Liturgical Feast of the Sacred Heart and naming Saint Aloysius Gonzaga as the Patron of youth.

In 1765, Pope Clement XIII approved the Liturgical Feast of the Sacred Heart and in 1726, Saint Aloysius Gonzaga is named the Patron of youth. These two events take place just a few years before Claudine was born in 1774. On the one side, they will mark the spirituality lived at that moment; on the other hand, both are directly related with the Society of Jesus-

Saint Claudio La Colombière, Jesuit, confessor of Saint Margaret Mary de Alacoque¹⁹, was the first one to diffuse the message. In a few years of religious life and intense pastoral ministry, he showed himself as an "exemplary son" of the Society of Jesus, the Society to which, according to the witness of Saint Margaret Mary herself, Christ entrusted the charge of extending the cult or worship of His Divine Heart²⁰. This happened on the Feast of the Visitation on July 2, 1688.

Father Kolvenbach, in the conference which he gave in Paray-Le-Monial on the occasion of the 300 anniversary of this date, July 2, 1988²¹, affirms that there exists a con-naturalness between the spirituality of the Sacred Heart and Ignatian spirituality. He refers to the following text of Father Arrupe

«I am persuaded that few proofs of the spiritual renewal of the Society could be as clear as vigorous and general devotion to the Heart of Jesus. Our apostolate would find in it a new vigor and it would not take long to see the effects, in our personal life as well as in our apostolic activities»²².

¹⁹ On the feast of Saint John Evangelist of 1673, Sister Margaret Mary, who was 25 years old, was in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. At that moment she had the particular privilege of the first visible manifestation of Jesus which will be repeated during two years more, every First Friday of the month. After passing through hard trials because of the incredulity and lack of understanding of the messages that she received, with the spiritual direction of the Jesuit F. Claudio Colombière, these revelations were considered true. More than ten years after the first one, the cult or worship to the Sacred Heart was instituted.

²⁰ John Paul II, *Letter to Father General Peter Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus*, October 5, 1986

²¹ F. H. Kolvenbach. SJ, *Misión agradable (Munus suavisimum)*, Paray-le-Monial, July 2, 1988

²² Father Arrupe, *Arraigados y cimentados en la caridad*, February 6, 1981. This was the last one of the long conferences before suffering the ictus which left him invalid in August 1981. He gave it at the

Certainly, devotion to the Sacred Heart which began at that moment was the source of true enthusiasm and of spiritual rebirth. This new movement had a great repercussion in the Church and in society. Life in all its dimensions was taken back and sanctified in the Heart of Christ²³. The two pious practices which will characterize this message in which the spirit of reparation is highlighted are: the Holy Hour and Communion on First Fridays of every month²⁴.

Because of the proximity of Paray-le Monial, only 30 kilometers from Lyon, the novelty of the message and the charge entrusted to the Society of Jesus, it is easy to think that this left a mark in the work of Claudine. And the figure of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga will also leave a mark, a Jesuit canonized in 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII who declared him the Patron of Youth. The tension lived with his father in order to be faithful to the will of God and his form of rebellion before the superficiality of the life in which he received his education, lead Aloysius to live his passion for his loyalty, coherence, purity and virginity.

The clandestine Church

In 1792, began in Lyon in a clandestine way, the movement of the “missions”, faithful to the Church of Rome. As a reaction emerged the approbation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy²⁵..

The “missions” organized by F. Linsolas in Lyon²⁶ were the more and better known.

conclusion of the Spiritual course of Ignatian spirituality of 5 weeks, held every year in the Curia, in Rome- Cf. Manresa, 53 (1981)99-133

²³ D. Aleixander RSCJ, *Una congregación religiosa femenina de espiritualidad ignaciana*. La Sociedad del Sagrado Corazón, Unidad de aprendizaje: Magdalena Sofia Barat. Una personalidad que marca historia. Complementary Reading2, on line http://chamilo.unife.edu.pe/chamilo18/courses/UA01MAGDALENASOFIABA/document/complementary_readings/UA0_LC03_congregation_Ignatian_spirituality.pdf?cidReq=UA01MAGDALENA_SOFIABA, consultation April 24

²⁴ J. A: Eguren, SJ, “In the V Centenary of the Istitution spirituality.pdf?cidReq=UA01MAGDALENA_SOFIABA, consultation April 24 of the Feast in Honor of the Divine Heart of Jesus”. *Manresa* 38 (1966) 51-60

²⁵ By the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the priests became civil servants of the French State; the solemn vows which they professed were suspended or cancelled. All the priests, Bishops and Archbishops would be elected as was done with the civil officers and they had to make an oath of fidelity to the Nation, the Law of the King. With this Constitution, the French clergy was no longer bound by obedience to the Pope. That caused that from that moment, the clergy was divided into two- On one side, would be those who would accept the change or those making the oath, on the other side those known as the opponents or those who resisted, faithful to the Pope, and who besides, embraced the anti-revolutionary cause.

²⁶ Linsolas was born in Lyon in 1754. He will be a pupil in the College of the Trinity. He was named Vicar General of the Diocese, he had to abandon it in 1792

This episcopal Vicar, in agreement with his Archbishop²⁷, who had immigrated to Germany because of the revolution, and inspiring himself in the reading of *Lettres édifiantes*²⁸, he planned the clandestine Church based principally on the Laity, with strict procedures in order to protect the itinerant priests. For this he organized networks of division or sharing, change of addresses, disguises, use of alias, names of war, and created authentic networks of logistic support between secular supporters or those in favor, helpers and visiting the prisoners.

This form of clandestine Church will last nine years, until 1801. The almost nine-hundred Diocesan Parishes were grouped into “missions”, each one formed of about fifty parishes. A true hierarchy was established: at the head of each mission, the leader of the mission and the missionary opposed or resistant priest who was concerned or in charge for ten Parishes; and the secular leader, responsible for his community which names and trains the catechists.

Linsolas, who coordinated all this clandestine movement, granted great importance to the supervision of women, especially because of their important work in the education of their children.

When Claudine in 1793, visited her brother in prison, “she dressed herself in a servant’s garb and made her way toward the prison where she arrived, not without some difficulty, because it was the first time she had gone out unaccompanied”²⁹. According to the witnesses that are available, it is affirmed “from that time on she thought only of consecrating herself to good works”³⁰. Perhaps not at a first moment, but later, would she have participated in those missions? In fact, the Association of the Sacred Hearts, of which she was President from the beginning, has many organizational characteristics of the “missions” which we have seen earlier.

The Association of the Sacred Heart

²⁷ Yves Alexandre de Marbeuf charged F. Linsolas the clandestine cult. He arrives to Lyon on November 21, 1792 under the pseudonym “Chaumont”. Musée du Diocese of Lyon on line, <http://musseedudiocesedelyon.com>

²⁸ *Lettres édifiantes* is a collection of letters of the French Jesuits who went to China at the beginning of the XVIII century. They were very well accepted among the cultured people due to the detail with which they explained everything. Rites, form of government, the manners, costumes, science, the art, technology. Transmitted by Linsolas, they were part of the origin of the reactivation of the missionary spirit in the Diocese of Lyon in 1815. On line <http://musseedudiocese delyon.com>

²⁹ Document XXVI in *Positio*

³⁰ Document XXVI in *Positio*

This Association founded in the Parish of Saint Bruno in 1816, will be the field in which Claudine will give herself generously to an apostolic work for the good of souls and for the transformation of the society in which she lives. It is the “culture medium” or “breeding ground” of the Congregation which will emerge in 1818.

Let us begin to deepen briefly on some dates and historical data of that moment, which can situate us in the years in which the apostolic activity of the Association was carried on.

In 1790 the Civil Constitution for the Clergy had been approved, and in 1792 the religious Congregations were suppressed in France. The procedure was the confiscation of the monasteries and convents, secularization of the religious and suppression of Orders and Congregations³¹.

In 1795, the Thévenet family transferred and went to live in a house on the Street Masson of the Croix Rousse, which was near the ancient Carthusian monastery of Saint Bruno.

In 1801, the signing of the Concordat in France, was gradually bringing back the normal life to the Church³² and in 1802, when Claudine was 28 years old, and 8 years had gone by since the death of her brothers³³, the cult or worship is once again opened in the Carthusian Monastery of Saint Bruno which will now become the “Parish of Saint Bruno”. There Claudine will actively collaborate to the point that the Parish Priest, Simon Gagneur, will say around 1815... “Mademoiselle Thévenet is the soul of all the good works of the Parish”³⁴. Her dedication will become so important that even her mother will feel her absences from the house.

God is guiding her and she learns to allow herself to be guided. Prayer and action are knitting in her life, in a harmonious way, the unconditional, free and generous response to the will of a God whom she intimately experiences as Love, as Acting Goodness.

³¹ J- Alvarez Gómez, CMF *Historia de la Vida Religiosa III*. From the “Devotio moderna” up to Vatican Council II, Publicaciones Claretianas, Madrid 1990, 499

³² The divorce or division between France and Rome was solved in part with Napoleon with the Concordat with the Holy See in 1801.

³³ From the immediate time after the death of her brothers, details are missing, it seems that she took part in the “missions of Linsola”, collaborating according to her possibilities, in the apostolic works, organized in a clandestine way since the siege had ended, as it was done when the freedom of worship was begun Cf. *Positio* (study and documentation) on the introduction of the Cause and the Virtues; Mary of Saint Ignatius, (Claudine Thévenet), Foundress of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary (+ 1837) Rome, 1981, XXX

³⁴ M. B. Vigneau, RJM, *Santa Claudina Thévenet. Love at any Price*. Lyon, 2013, 70

At the end of 1815³⁵, Father André Coindre goes to the Parish of Saint Bruno as Vicar. He had been ordained in 1812 and was 25 years old at that time. Previously, in 1814, the Society of Jesus had been restored.

Father Coindre and Claudine will begin two apostolic works: the *Providence of Saint Bruno and the Pious Union of the Sacred Heart*. The latter was born officially, on July 31, 1816, feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, after Claudine and her 7 collaborators, made a retreat of three days. The *Providence of Saint Bruno*³⁶ will also have its beginning in 1816, but it will really be constituted in a cell of the Carthusian Monastery of Saint Bruno in 1817.

Ignatian Spirituality in Father Coindre, The “Priests of Faith”

Father Coindre only knew the Society of Jesus indirectly since it was expelled from France in 1762. In spite of all, his idea of religious life, as a secular priest, is marked by Ignatian Spirituality³⁷.

When he was 18 years old he entered the Minor Seminary of l’Argentière³⁸, which was directed by the Fathers of Faith. These priests came from the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded in Belgium in 1794 and inspired in the ideal of Saint Ignatius. They were not Jesuits, but they were profoundly Ignatian. In fact, they hoped to become Jesuits when the Society of Jesus would be restored³⁹, and, sometimes, they were called “concealed Jesuits”. They lived according to the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius but with some special accents, such as the family sense in the community and the strength that they gave to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

³⁵ That same year, in March, Claudine’s father died, *Positio* XXXI

³⁶ “The Providences of Lyon – the Providences, centers of welfare which multiplied in Lyon and in other parts in the first half of the XIX century, had as their purpose to take in poor children to give them a solid Christian formation and to enable them to acquire a skill with which they would be able to earn a livelihood. All the *Providences*, whether for boys or girls had in common a rule prescribing that the inmates should remain there until the age of about twenty years. The most common trade they learnt was that of silk manufacture, the most important industry of Lyon; in this way when they left, they all had the possibility of finding a job without passing through the dangers of apprenticeship.. Some *Providences* were *parochial*, and took only the young boys and girls of poor families of the Parish; others had a general character and admitted boys and girls from the whole city and even the whole Department”. Document III in *Positio* , 20

³⁷ L. Goulet, HSC, “Our debt with the Society of Jesus”, August 28, 1990 [Annual 84], document provided by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

³⁸ The Seminaries as such, for the formation of priests began to be founded at the end of the XVI century (after their approbation in the Council of Trent on July 15, 1563), but they were not installed in all the Dioceses until the XVIII century.

³⁹ T. Clements, “Les pères de la Foi France: 1800-1814 Spirituality, Foundations, Biographical Notes” *Archivium Historicum Societatis Jesu* 57 (1989)233 232

They were characterized by their deepening in the sentiments, thoughts and interior dispositions of the Heart of Jesus, learning from Him who is “meek and humble of heart” (Mt. 11, 29).

This Society, apparently small, was in charge of the Seminary of Argentière between 1805 and 1808, a brief time, but which nevertheless, allowed them to exercise a notable influence in the Church and in the birth of new religious Congregations, both feminine and masculine.

They helped to found at least 12 religious Congregations which today still maintain their apostolic vitality, they attain seventy countries and count with 17,500 members⁴⁰ They also supported Pauline Jaricot in the foundation of the “Propagation of Faith”, and from the Seminary they exercised an important work and formed part of the Seminarians such as Father André Coindre, Founders of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, which was so important in the life of Claudine Thévenet.

The apostolic zeal of these Fathers of the Faith was an element which especially distinguished them and which caused them to have great acceptance among the faithful. Feeling that they were instruments in the hands of God, and trusting in His Providence, they made their own the ideal of Saint Ignatius of being “contemplatives in action”⁴¹.

The annual Spiritual Exercises, prayer according the methodology of the Ignatian contemplation, the particular examination and the liking for spiritual conversation were the Ignatian means from which Father Coindre nourished himself. This Ignatian influence in him is easily recognized in reviewing his legislation on religious life in the communities that he founded.

3.2. *Ignatian Elements in the Rules and the Minutes of the Association*

It is not the object of this article to describe with great detail the functioning of the Association or of the Providence, nevertheless, we are going to get from the Regulations or Rules of it and from the minutes of the first two years, contained in the *Positio*, some aspects which from the beginning show the influence of the Ignatian spirituality.

⁴⁰ T. Clements, “Reflections on Apostolic Spirituality. A study of the Fathers of the Faith, France (1801-1814)” *Milltown Studies* 15 (1985) 57-64

⁴¹ “Simul in actione contemplativus”, an expression coined by Father Jerónimo Nadal to refer to Saint Ignatius, Cf. EN, V, p. 162.

3.2.1. Apostolate.

In the spirituality of Saint Ignatius there is a moment of special importance which he lived near the Cardoner [4u 30] and starting at that time he knew how to look at the depth of reality, grasping the sense of things and this he translates into desires of helping others with his actions. That vision, near the river, where Iñigo full of God turned to the world and all things seemed new to him, had a particular significance, of a call to action to change things, persons, “*to help souls*”⁴².

This element seems to be clear starting from the introduction of the Rules of the Association: «to give themselves to God, to mutually help one another in their prayers, in their good works, in their advice to advance on the path of perfection, and to dedicate themselves to all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy of which they are capable”⁴³. The four works to which the associates dedicate themselves are: education, good example, consolation and alms giving.

The Association does not want among its members persons who are only pious. In Title 6 of the Rules dedicated to admissions, we can see the exigency or demand with which was lived by those who were members of the Association and the union, prayer, action proper of the profile of an apostolic spirituality⁴⁴.

In the Minutes, frequently are discussed or treated themes of apostolic zeal, the zeal for the salvation of souls, like the Session of November 17, 1816 the reflection of which is attributed to Claudine since Father Coindre was not present⁴⁵.

⁴² J. M. Rambla SJ, “Rasgos distintivos de la Espiritualidad Ignaciana desde la perspectiva de la justicia social” in *Seminario sobre Liderazgo Ignaciano y Justicia Social* (Deusto-Loyola, February 12, 2013, on line <http://dkh-deusto.es/comunidad/multimedia/recurso/rasgos-distintivos-de-la-espiritualidad-ignaciana/3e38d5ac-ff83-4b95-a54f-d679bc182750>, consulta 26 abril

⁴³ Document IV *Positio* 54

⁴⁴ “Regulations or Rules of the Association: Title 6 of the Admissions, 3rd. Increase in number is less to be sought after than a sound composition; there must be no useless member. A deep piety unaccompanied by any ability for the different sections of the Society is insufficient. Only very devout persons will be received, but in addition they will have a good spirit, a gentle and balanced character that is not unsociable, and pleasing manners likely to attract toward virtue those persons who will be the object of their zeal. Document IV in *Positio* 63

⁴⁵ “Session, November 17, 1816. Summary of the conference on zeal for the salvation of souls: It has been said that zeal which has as purpose the sanctification of souls, had a value far superior to that limited to the care of the body; that if acts of corporal charity were so highly praised and esteemed, how much more must those be which are prompted by love for souls; if it is a good thing to clothe the body, it is much better still to adorn souls with innocence and holiness; if it is good to feed the hungry, it is far better to nourish souls through instruction. It was said that among the means of practicing it, the first and that of which we think least is prayer which alone

3.2.2 Discernment

Ignatius in the book of the Spiritual Exercises speaks of three occasions of discernment. These are three different spiritual states, each one with its proper method. In a very synthetic way we can say that the discernment of the first occasion is the one that does not allow any doubt. It is a state of spiritual passion that makes any other alternative unimaginable: “the first occasion is when God our Lord moves and attracts the will in such a way, that without doubting and unable to doubt, the devout soul follows what is shown” [Ex. 175]. The discernment of the second occasion is “when clarity and knowledge are taken from experience of consolations or desolations and from experience of discretion of various spirits” [Ex. 176]. The discernment of the third occasion is that of tranquility. There is no passion and no agitation [Ex. 177]. But in any of the three occasions, the confirmation of the decision taken will be necessary. [Ex.183].

It is interesting to discover, even if we have very little information available, the means which Claudine, Father Coindre and her companions used in the decisions of the first steps taken in their journey.

We have chosen some of them:

- *Providence of Saint Bruno* “Father Coindre made known his deposit to Mgr. Gagneur and to Mademoiselle Thévenet. The three of them saw in the incident of the two little girls, like a sign from the hand of God”⁴⁶. Immediately they looked for a lasting and organized solution for urgent situations like this one, especially with young girls whom the Society would form and then provide some work for them. The Association would have wanted that one of its members could have dedicated herself to direct this work, but at that moment it was impossible⁴⁷. We assumed the education of the girls, in this first

can make the works of apostolic men bear fruit; prayer forces God to bestow his graces on sinners... The heroic act of charity of Saint Ignatius has been quoted as an example”, Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 96.

⁴⁶ “One day Father Coindre brought to Lyon two little girls who were without parents or shelter, picked up, quite literally, off the street. Having paid for their food, momentarily, he left them in a little sewing room, kept by the Sisters of St. Joseph, in the “cell” at the east corner of the cloisters, where the community of St. Joseph lived for a while, before going to Château Yon”. Extract from the “Historical account of the Parish Providence of Saint Bruno” (1815-1816). From the original kept in the Archives of the “Carthusian Missionaries, Lyon, Register 1”, Cf. Document III in *Positio* 33

⁴⁷ The *Memorial*, First history of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary (1816-1852), translation, introduction and notes M. María Antonia Bonet, Rome 2013, 23

Providence (second which was opened in Lyon after the Revolution) the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

- We can see a first occasion of discernment in this decision. When the three saw “*God’s hand*”, it means that they could not doubt of his will. In the look of the two more disadvantaged creatures, they found the will of God and they responded with generosity and realism. Nevertheless, before opening the Providence, they sought confirmation in the Assembly of the Association of September 9, 1817, “That Project has been voted upon, and has been approved unanimously”⁴⁸.
- *Rule, n° 10 and 11*⁴⁹ In the functioning of the Association, it is seen the importance of the confirmation in the taking of decisions. The Assemblies take place once a month, but for the important decisions, they wait until the following assembly. In the same way we can see in point 6 when it is spoken about admissions or receptions, a reflection of the meticulousness with which they act in the taking of decisions and the importance of the confirmation⁵⁰.
- *Unity of life*. In the minutes, in the reflections made during the Assemblies, we see how much they deepened on the search for the will of God also manifested in the *submission* through the events of one’s own life and the acceptance of them⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Session of September 9, 1817. “We deliberated on a project which has for its end the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbor- to establish a work room for young girls in the “cell” rented at the expense of the Society. One of the Associates promises to provide work for about 24, which should suffice for the upkeep of the girls employed, once the first expenses have been paid and the first months are over, it seems that it would be sufficient for the maintenance and the expenses of the people employed. Such a project was voted upon, and it was approved unanimously, Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 115.

⁴⁹ “Rule of the Association, Title 4, of the Assemblies, 10th, In important matters, such as changing some articles of the Rule, dismissing an associate, etc., no definitive decision will be taken at that meeting, but they shall wait for the following meeting, unless it is very urgent and nothing will be finally settled without the advice of the Director of the Congregation. 11th when voting takes place, each one shall strive to take into consideration the greater glory of God and the good of the Congregation, sacrificing all self-interest: thus there shall be no intrigues before casting a vote”. Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 61

⁵⁰ “Rule, Title 6, of Admissions or Receptions. 4th Before they are received, all young ladies will be put off for a fortnight, though they will not know it; During this time, information will be obtained about them, and if this is good, the Assistant will inform the Congregation which will proceed by secret ballot to admit them; to be received it is necessary to have unanimity of votes. Thus the Society will be more stable and its members more united, since all will know with certainty that their presence is not objected by anyone”. Cf. Document IV in *Positio* (study and documentation) on the introduction of the Cause and the Virtues, Mary of Saint Ignatius (Claudine Thévenet) Foundress of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, (+ 1837), Rome 1981, 63

⁵¹ “Session of October 27, 1816. Among other reflections, the following have been done: that although we do not always have an opportunity to give God proofs of our resignation, we must,

- *In the Assemblies of July 31 of every year*, during which is recalled what has been done apostolically, there are some decisions taken such as the following of the Session of 1817:

« We preferably, will take care of those who give us greater hope to join to the corporal help, the spiritual one, since this is the principal end of our Association»;

«Considering, that with regard to the poor who are accustomed to receive--- we would exhaust ourselves without ever enabling them to get out of their painful situation»;

« Lastly, considering, regarding the young or old persons who have always lived in vice, unless they offer evidence of sincere repentance free from all motives of self-interest, we must not concern ourselves with them at all.

At the end of these explanations, Claudine expresses: “If I am giving my opinion here it is because I have been asked and I hold on to it only in so far as it is the general opinion”⁵².

In other points of the Memories we find other criteria of great importance for the future of the Association: “I am well aware that we cannot abandon the Works we have undertaken, but it would be desirable not to take on new ones; it seems to me that this would be one more bond which would unite us”⁵³.

In the Constitutions written by Saint Ignatius, we can read in number 3: “It is a very proper end of our Institute to go to different places, those of the Society distributing themselves in the life of Christ, according to where they judge would follow greater service of God and the good of souls”⁵⁴. It seems that this spirit is the foundation of all these decisions which are being taken as the Association is attaining maturity.

This spirit of discernment is the fruit of prayer. In a historical moment in which two extremes could be considered: the false *mysticism* or the strict or severe *willfulness* proper of

nevertheless, be habitually disposed to bear all events courageously. To attain this disposition we must sometimes imagine the state of pain and sorrow into which we can fall, asking ourselves what our feelings would be then, and accepting beforehand the evils which may assail us at any moment” Cf. Document IV, *Positio*, 94-95.

⁵² Document IV in *Positio* 111

⁵³ Document IV in *Positio* 113

⁵⁴ This criterion, like many others, has been kept in the present Constitutions of the Society: “Because the more universal good is the more divine it is”, those persons or places which know how to profit more cause that the good is extended to many others, who follow its authority or are governed by them, these are to be preferred” Co. 622)

Jansenism, more moderate responses emerge such as that of the Jesuit Jean-Pierre de Causade (1675-1751), with the prayer of the heart, going back to the spirit of Saint Francis of Sales and to abandonment to Providence.

Both in the Rules as well as in the Minutes of the Association, we can find that prayer is present as one of the more important practices to live in the presence of God during the day and in order that the apostolic mission that they were carrying out, would bear good fruit: “it is the only one, which alone can make the works of apostolic men bear fruit”⁵⁵. The associates were encouraged to pray, to have a daily time of prayer “1/4 hour daily of meditation”⁵⁶. For this meditation, the method of Saint Ignatius is explained. Let us recall that the practice of the meditation has a prominent place in the Spiritual Exercises.

Claudine had very soon experienced the fruit of prayer and she knew the difficulties of it, such as distractions, aridity or temptations to abandon it, as well as the consolation that is, the increase in faith, hope and charity which personal relationship with God produces. This experience made her encourage and invite, first the associates, and later the religious to persevere. The motto which we all in the Congregation repeat: “*Praised forever Jesus and Mary*” is a reflection of the grateful attitude before life that emerges from the prayerful person.

3.2.3 “To the Greater Glory of God” [Co 52]

Saint Ignatius was capable to unite his prayer and life, his teaching and praxis, his action and contemplation⁵⁷. He feels that God gives himself as grace and enters into communion with his creatures which in turn, receive it gratefully to live their existence centered solely on Him, collaborating in his divine Project. This loving relationship between the Creator and the creature is implicit in the concept of “Glory”. Understood in this way it is not a question of something static, but of something dynamic. It is not the goal but the road or way.

Father Coindre as well as Claudine, get close to and take care of “*the little ones*” and, precisely in order to serve them all and “*for the greater glory of God*”, according to the formula

⁵⁵ Session of November 17, 1816, conference attributed to the Saint since Father Coindre was absent. Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 96

⁵⁶ Document IV in *Positio* 76

⁵⁷ H. U. Von Balthasar, *Verbum caro* 206-208, quoted by N. Martínez Gayol Fernández, *Gloria de Dios en Ignacio de Loyola*, Menssenger Sal Terrae, Bilbao, Santander 2005, 22.

of Saint Ignatius of Loyola that they make their own, they carefully create and establish some structures destined to consolidate God's work on earth⁵⁸.

This term is named seven times in the Regulations and 14 times in the synthesis of the acts or minutes found in the *Positio* and which belong above all, to the first two years of the Association⁵⁹.

The reasons why it appears are:

- a) In the Rule: the preamble of the Rule, uniting the way of perfection with the good of souls; in making concrete the end of the Association (Title 1 Article 1), in speaking of the functions of the government (Title 3), on the participation in the Assemblies and the voting (Title 4, First Section); on relationships among the members of the Association (Title 4, third Section); in the prayer of Saint Ignatius which was recited at the beginning of the Assemblies.
- b) In the acts or Minutes: in the conferences (purity of intention, drawing away from the world, prayer, the three types of union); in recalling the aim of the Association; in the presentation of the project of the *Providencia*; in the Memory of the Apostolic work carried out during the year in the Assemblies of July 31, as an interior practice for the month, do everything "for the greater Glory of God".

3.2.4 The Church

From Title 1 of the Rule, where the aims of the Association are specified, we can find that one of these aims will be "in a special way, to remain firmly attached to the Roman Catholic Church"⁶⁰. The reference to the Church frequently appears in the Rules and the Acts or Minutes and in these, in the instructions as well as in the practices, above all in prayer for priests, missionaries, for the success of missions or of retreats in the Seminaries.

In the history of Saint Ignatius, we see how in all these situations there always appears an Ignatius who is always attentive to the Spirit to follow Him, but that he desires to be in tune or harmony with the practice "in" the Church through the different

⁵⁸ Cf. J. P. Ribaut – G. Dussault, *G. André Coindre, Escritos y documentos*. 1 Rules and Regulations, Brothers of the Sacred Heart, General House, Rome, Italy, 5 quoted in Hnos. A. Lopez – M. Madrid, *Andrés Coindre, Un hombre, una pasión*, Talleres Gráficos GELV, Madrid. 2013.

⁵⁹ Document IV in *Positio* 87

⁶⁰ Document IV in *Positio* 55

authorities that represent it⁶¹. In the Spiritual Exercises also, we will find references to the Hierarchical Church [Ex. 170] and to the Rules of having the same mind of the Church Ex. 352-370⁶². In fact, to have the same mind as the Church will be one of the qualities required for a good election.

This is an important element, above all knowing that in the Church in France, those who had kept faithful to the Pope and had not signed the Constitution of the Clergy, suffered persecution a few years before the constitution of the Association.

3.2.5 Other aspects that we can find which are related to Ignatian Spirituality.

- *Give an account of conscience* “From time to time, for example every two or three months, it would be convenient for each associate to give an account of her conscience to her Director, that is. of the state of her soul regarding her peace of mind or temptations, her desolations or consolations”⁶³. Saint Ignatius explains in an exhaustive way this point in an instruction that we can find in the Rules of the Society of Jesus⁶⁴.

- *Obedience*. In Ignatius obedience is bound to the concept of mission and to the conception of an orderly body and coherent with the mission. He wrote a letter on obedience to the Brothers of the Province of Portugal on March 26, 1553. This letter contains the thought of Ignatius concerning this theme, following Saint Gregory “it is a virtue which alone introduces into the soul the other virtues, and when they are impressed preserves them” (Saint Gregory, L. 35 Morales, c. 10). He invites to see Christ in any Superior and to obey His Divine Majesty in Him with full devotion⁶⁵.

⁶¹ J.M. Rambla SJ, “Del gentil hombre Iñigo a Ignacio de Loyola; una eclesialidad progresiva”, *Manreza*, 8 (2012) 117

⁶² Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, Introduction, text, notes and vocabulary by Cándido de Dalmases SJ, Sal Terrae, Santander 1985, 180; also Cornelia, Jesus, SJ, *Sentir la Iglesia*. Commentary to the Ignatian Rules on the true sense of the Church, Mensajero Sal Terrae, Bilbao, Santander 1988, pp. 105-106

⁶³ Document IV in *Positio* 67-68.

⁶⁴ Rules of the Society of Jesus and the letter on Obedience of our Glorious Father Ignatius, Sevilla 1735, 33-36, on line <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-8042.html.consulta> April 28

⁶⁵ Rules of the Society of Jesus and the letter on Obedience of our Glorious Father Ignatius, Sevilla 1735, 33-36, on line <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-8042.html.consulta> April 28

The sense that is given to obedience in the Association is undeniably Ignatian, “they shall make it their duty to obey in order to please God and imitate Our Lord who willed to obey unjust judges who condemned him to death”⁶⁶.

In the means to advance in the way of perfection of the Rules of the Association, we read: “Towards superiors, obedience and confidence, no intrigue, no grumbling about one’s employments”⁶⁷. Like Saint Ignatius also in the Association pre-eminence is given to the virtue of obedience, “is for us indispensable”⁶⁸ together with humility. Besides, he gives great importance to unity in the Congregation for it “is also, the only one which can ensure that a Society will last, render its bonds indissoluble, maintain peace and union among all its members”⁶⁹, and “that once this link is broken, the structures which seemed to be the more solid are overthrown”⁷⁰.

The Session of September 9, 1817, in the conference on obedience is explained the example of Saint Ignatius⁷¹.

- *Modesty*. Saint Ignatius himself wrote in 1555, the “*Rules of Modesty. What the Brothers of the Society have to observe when they go out in public*”. There are 12 simple Rules regarding gestures of the face, the look, the dress or clothes, the movements of the hands, the way of walking, the way of speaking, etc.⁷². In making a parallelism with the indications that appear in the Association, we discover a clear similarity in several of the points⁷³.

⁶⁶ Document IV in *Positio* 72

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 77

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 113

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 113

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 124

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 114

⁷² Ignatius of Loyola, SJ, *Obras de San Ignacio de Loyola*, Nueva edición, revisada y actualizada por Manuel Ruiz Jurado, SJ, Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, Madrid 2013, Reglas de la Compañía de Jesús 7 (MHSJ, MI Regulæ 518-520), páginas, 625 - 627

⁷³ Session of December 2, 1816. Conference on Modesty, attributed to Saint Claudine, Norms governing exterior modesty were given, among which the following were the principal ones: not to turn one’s head in a flighty manner, not to look at anyone in the face, and never stare; not to have one’s mouth half open, which would look ridiculous, nor to have it closed very tightly, which looks disdainful and affected, not to walk with one’s hands hanging but to hold one’s dress or carry something; not to cross one’s legs when sitting, this would be a breach of good manners as well as against religious decorum; to avoid walking too hurriedly, and not to wear affected clothing, i.e. neither too studied nor too slovenly. Above all these Rules should be practiced when going to Church, so that our appearance and demeanor may be a cause of edification and admiration for those around us, and in that way we shall do good by our very presence” Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 97-98.

- *Humility*. In the Rules of the Association, the ten practices of humility are contained therein⁷⁴. But surely in what concerns our theme, what is more important we find it in the Session of October 6, 1817⁷⁵, Feast of Saint Bruno, since the conference is centered on the Degrees of Humility which Saint Ignatius proposes in the book of the Spiritual Exercises (164-165). In the Rules it is mentioned ten times and in two years of the Minutes of the Association five times the associates had conferences regarding it and relating it to Saint Ignatius, Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, the virtues of the Virgin or the imitation of Christ and six times it was given as a practice for the month.

The motto of the Association were the words of Jesus “Learn of me for I am humble and meek of heart” and starting from it, they are encouraged to live the maxim “Love to be ignored and considered as nothing”, which is found in the book “Imitatio”⁷⁶, a book which Saint Ignatius read in his retreat at Manresa and which influenced him in beginning to write the Spiritual Exercises.

Fraternal Correction, It is found in the Rules as well as in the Minutes of the Association especially in regard to the themes concerning humility or spiritual growth. This is also a practice that is repeated. “Each Associate shall choose another one to watch over her. From time to time she shall ask her privately what fault she has noticed in her; and when she has received an admonition about some fault she shall express her gratitude to the Associate who has told her and will recite a *Pater and Ave*. Your best friend is the one who tells you of your faults⁷⁷. In number 10 of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus we can read: “All will be happy to help correct and to be corrected, discovering to one another with due love and charity, so as to mutually help one another in spirit, principally when it is asked by the Superior to take care of them for the greater divine glory”.

- *The world*, Detachment from the world is one of the characteristics of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Patron of the Association, whom they desire to imitate: “the virtues of Saint

⁷⁴ “1st, In all things humble yourself in heart and mind. 2nd, before all, abase yourself and do it carefully. 3rd. Never love grandeur or riches. 4th. Seek to be despised and rebuffed. 5th. never speak of yourself except in humble terms. 6th. When you are contradicted, rejoice immensely, 7th Never take the highest place, but be in peace in the lowest. 8th. If somebody makes much account of you, humble yourself profoundly. 9th. Let your happiness be found in lowliness, until your death. 10th. when your faults are seen, bless God at that moment. Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 80

⁷⁵ Document IV in *Positio* 116

⁷⁶ The “Imitation of Christ” is a treatise of mysticism written by Thomas Haemerken and which was published in the year 1473. The author entered the Monastery of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustin, in the city of Agnetenberg where he dedicated himself to prayer, meditation, talks and spiritual consultations.

⁷⁷ Document IV in *Positio* 68

Aloysius Gonzaga that we should imitate more particularly, his mortification, his love for God and his detachment from the World” (Session of June 21, 1822). In the same way in the Constitutions of the Society, n.11, invites to take advantage to progress in the spiritual life, to detest totally and not in part, everything which the world loves and embraces, and admit and desire with all possible force what Christ Our Lord has loved and embraced. Like the worldly people who follow the world, love and search diligently honors, fame and esteem

The sense given in the Association is the same:

« Let God alone be the witness of your good works; the deeds apparent to the eyes of the world are often followed by feelings of pride and vain complacency which change them into sin” (Tit.5°, 9°, on charges in the Association);

« The most franc and sincere friendship, but that friendship will be free from those carnal affections which make us love according to the world, according to our own inclination, and not according to God” (Tit. 7°, Sec. 3°, 4°, on mutual relationships in the Association);

« Jesus Christ willed to ennoble the smallest actions, the commonest in themselves: poverty and humility, so despised by the world” (Session of September 19, 1816);

« Some reflections have been made on the advantages of silence, and the necessity of keeping it for persons in the world who, having continued reasons for dissipation, need to recollect themselves from time to time and to speak to God, since they are obliged to speak so often to creatures» (Session of January 14, 1817);

« The pious subject for discussion was flight from the world... People of the world, accustomed to doing everything out of self-interest, have no idea that there are generous souls who act with the sole desire of the glory of God” (Session of March 6, 1817).

- *Mortification*. Even if in an always secondary way, its presence is constant in the Rules and in the Minutes of the Association and always directed or aimed at obtaining perfection. In the Rules of the Association, in the additional documents, we find a complete section dedicated to the means to advance in the way to perfection and with them, sanctify oneself and sanctify others⁷⁸. Light or minor mortifications were asked, of the senses, especially of the taste, the pleasure; order the day well, work well done, etc. Besides, this was one of the themes discussed in the conferences of the Assemblies.

⁷⁸ Document IV in *Positio* 76

« The life of man does not reside, precisely, in the life of the senses, but in the life of the heart and our heart can only be happy when it is free and when it gets rid of the slavery of its inclinations. It is necessary; principally to mortify the will and it is this type of mortification which pleases God more”. (Session of January 14, 1817).

In number 12n of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus we can read:

« To arrive better to this degree of perfection so precious in spiritual life, your greater and more intense office should be to seek in Our Lord your greater abnegation and continuous mortification in all possible things”

Let us also recall the Rules for achieving self-control with regard to eating, in the book of the Exercises. [210-217].

- *The Day of Saint Ignatius*, The Association was founded on the feast of the Saint of 1816 and each year on July 31, the Associates will meet in a General Assembly, the content of which will consist in a conference stressing the virtues of Saint Ignatius as a model to imitate; the voting for the charges of responsibility were carried out and a report of the events of the year was given. Before, they were invited to make a three day retreat⁷⁹.

Leaving the documents of the Association compared with the Constitutions written by Saint Ignatius, the Rules on Modesty, or the Letter on Obedience, we can also find other interesting aspects on the Associates. For example, that one of the important sources of contact with the Ignatian Spirituality was the familiarity of several of them with Confraternities and Congregations which were present in Lyon at that moment. Many of them had Jesuit inspiration and bore the seal of its spiritual doctrine applied to the Laity⁸⁰.

Lastly, let us make a brief mention about the importance of the Library. As part of its apostolic work the Association was very interested in having a good Library, to which they would allocate economic resources, time and dedication. The books could be beneficial for the associates as well as for the persons they helped. Interest was also

⁷⁹ It is to be desired that around the time of the Feast of Saint Ignatius Loyola, a brief annual retreat of three days should be made in order to renew the spirit of fervor which ought to characterize this Association... During this retreat a review of the year should be made, time should be devoted more especially to meditation, silence and reading of pious books. Title 7 Annual Practices. Cf. “Preamble of the Rules of the Association” in *Positio* 68

⁸⁰ J. Farnham RJM, “*United in their Search for God, Devotional Life for Laywomen in Restoration France. A Pious Association in Lyon, 1816-1825*”. Originally written in Partial fulfillment of Requirements for the M. A. in Church History, Catholic University of America by Janice Farnham RJM, Edited and Enlarged, July 2005, 77, 86

directed to eliminate the influence of “*bad*” books⁸¹. We can find four possible influences: the family, the education in the Abbey, the history of Saint Ignatius with the influence of the books of Saints in his conversion⁸² and the importance that the Library of the College of the Trinity had in the city of Lyon, of which we have already spoken above. The Library as an apostolic resource, will be maintained alive during all the years that the Association will last as it is shown in the minutes:

«The collection made at the reunion was assigned to buy more books for the lending library”⁸³

«Various decisions. 1. A Library will be organized by the Society and established in the Parish of Saint Nizier; Mlle. Revel will be entrusted with the distribution of the pious books of which it will be composed and the same person will be given a catalogue so that she will know which works to choose, and can show this list to the associates in order that each one may make a gift of a particular book as she sees fit”⁸⁴..

4. The birth of the religious Congregation, the Ignatian Spirituality in the first Rules and Constitutions

The Foundation of our Congregation was not an isolated fact in time. We are going to situate this event in the reality which was being lived in France so that afterward we can deepen in the specific Regulations or Rules which animated the life of those first communities.

4.1. Birth of new teaching religious Congregations in the first quarter of the XIX century, especially in France.

We need to go back to the Lateran Council in order to understand the reappearance of the Religious Congregations after the French Revolution and remember history a bit.

The IV Lateran Council (1215) had prohibited the foundation of new Religious Orders, in such a way that anyone who wanted to enter in religion would have to do it in one of the four approved Orders, but the Bishops were free to found in their Dioceses.

⁸¹ “This function is a most useful one in this century, when all houses are filled with novels and all kinds of bad books. The evil influence of such bad books will be counteracted by lending good books in a methodical way”.

⁸² Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Autobiography*, C. I.

⁸³ Session of October 27, 1816, Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 95

⁸⁴ Session of October 19, 1823 , Cf. Document IV in *Positio* 161

new Congregations. Later and due fundamentally to the deviations which were taking place, the Council of Trent, 1545-1563, gave concrete norms for the reform of Religious Orders.

The expression Religious Congregation, since the XVI century, is reserved to qualify the Associations in which simple vows are made, in counter position to Religious Orders in which solemn vows are made

In 1633, Saint Louise de Marillac founded together with Saint Vincent de Paul, the Sisters of Charity. They are not a Religious Congregation, because at that time they would have been obliged to remain in the cloister, when their objective was to serve the most humble. At the same time, another woman, Mary Ward, was struggling in Rome for the incorporation of women in the apostolate, and, concretely of the consecrated woman. She was hoping, expecting to get the Pontifical approbation for her Institute, in which simple vows were made and apostolic work was carried out with feminine youth everything the same to what the Society of Jesus was doing for the masculine youth, but without depending on the Society⁸⁵. These were some of the first steps of the incorporation of women to the apostolate outside the walls of a convent.

On August 18, 1792, the French National Assembly declared the effective suppression of all the Congregations. But Religious Life did not end, since when it could restore itself again, after the arrival of Napoleon and the signing of the Concordat with the Holy See in 1802, it experienced an extraordinary resurgence. The panorama of the Church would change notably with the profound changes which the Founders and Foundresses brought with their respective charisma. The case of France was the most spectacular: Between 1800 and 1880 400 Congregations were founded, with an average of five per year. In 1815 there were 30,000 religious in France, in 1861, the number rose to 105,000, and to 135,000 in 1878⁸⁶. The majority of them were dedicated to education and welfare.

⁸⁵ "The future feminine Religious Congregations already had the road of the apostolate fully open. The feminine apostolate is founded, in great part, on the sufferings of this woman. This is how Doctor Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, recognized it in 1921: "I feel the duty of gratitude to remind all the Catholics of England and even of the whole United Kingdom, as well as all feminine Religious Institutes of the whole world that the existence of the Congregations which today work in the field of education and in works of charity towards neighbor, only became possible because of the supernatural foresight, the heroic constancy and the sufferings of Mary Ward. She supported the battle until the moment of an apparent defeat, and to which, nevertheless, followed the triumph. After your own Founder, Foundress, to no one do these Congregations owe a greater gratitude than to Mary Ward", Cf. J. Alvarez CMF, *Historia de la Vida Religiosa* III. From the "Devotio moderna" up to Vatican Council II, Publicaciones Claretianas, Madrid 1990, 456

⁸⁶ J. Alvarez Gómez CMF, *op. Cit.* 537

The new Religious Congregations were founded to promote in the Church a concrete manner of following Jesus. Each one, therefore, had its own spirituality (Benedictine, Mercedarian, Trinitarian, Franciscan, Dominican Ignatian, Vicentian...) and in many cases, the Constitutions of the ancient Orders or Congregations were adopted by the new Congregations⁸⁷.

4.2. *First Rules*

The Congregation has its origin on the night from the 5th to the 6th of October 1818. Before, on the day of Saint Ignatius of the same year, Father Coindre addressed himself to a small group that formed part of the Association: “*You must form yourselves into a community without hesitation or delay*” and straightaway he traced the outlines taken from the Rule of saint Augustine and the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius, that he planned to combine at a later date into a single code of religious observance adapted to their own needs⁸⁸.

As we have mentioned before, in order that a Congregation could be approved it had to be linked to an approved ancient Rule. The Rule of Saint Augustine⁸⁹ had some such broad bases, that it was adopted by a large number of Congregations. This Rule is based on the aim or end of taking care of one’s own sanctification in the monasteries, but the new Congregations, besides this end, proposed others of apostolic character. In order to express this dimension in their own documents, it was necessary that besides the Rule chosen which contained the life of the monasteries, everything that has to do with apostolic mission had to be legislated. The time of the *Constitutions* opened⁹⁰.

⁸⁷ J. Alvarez Gómez CMF, *op. Cit.*, 536: “The History of these foundations is almost always the same. To understand its disconcerting variety in the face of identical tasks or missions is necessary to keep in mind the isolation in which the different Provinces lived. A pious girl spontaneously consecrates herself or because of the advice of a priest to the education of young people or to the care of the sick; her example soon attracts some of her companions. The richest lady of the place gives them moral and material help, the Parish priest impels or prevents them from following their path. A Jesuit or from any other Order spiritual director appears behind all this. The foundation is strengthened; a house is bought; the Bishop intervenes: to receive approbation it is necessary to, present a Rule, a common habit, a Superior responsible, a name, a Patron, a Novitiate. All this is born and grows slowly. And finally it is in the disposition to ask for the approbation of the Holy See and of the Government. A new Congregation has been born.

⁸⁸ Document XXVII in *Positio* 545

⁸⁹ it is composed of 12 points: 1. Love of God and of Neighbor; 2. Humility; 3. Prayer and Office; 4. Meals; 5. Attention to the sick; 6. Clothes and external demeanor; 7. Fraternal correction; Care of common things; 9. Of cleaning; 10. Of pardon of offenses; 11. Of obedience; 12. Of the frequent reading of the Rule

⁹⁰ C. Mazpn, *The rules of the Religious: their obligation and their hierarchical nature*, Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, Rome, 1940, 122

Saint Ignatius began the preparation of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus in 1547, he perfected them throughout all his life and in the First General Congregation after his death (1556), in 1558, they were approved by the Church. In the Constitutions are reflected in a practical way the principles of the Spiritual Exercises. The novelty that the Society of Jesus presupposed in the Church is clear. They are not a monastic Order neither a Mendicant one, in fact Saint Ignatius rejected all those elements that those Orders had, which could be a difficulty for the apostolate, such as the choral Office, the night vigils and the exterior mortifications, among others. The Constitutions of the Society insist more on interior mortification and on personal prayer. This new spirituality was centered on interiority⁹¹.

The most important characteristic of the Society of Jesus will be the apostolic activity, towards which is directed all its organization. Its end, as we have said before, to endeavor in everything and always, *the greater glory of God*-

The presence of the Ignatian spirituality in the Association is undeniable, and it becomes more evident when, the first group met in community, it began with the preparation of the first Rules. During the time of preparation, they were experiencing and transforming a first text until they arrived to the first Rules which would be approved by the Church and they are the ones with which, on February 25, 1823, the first Religious of the Congregation made their vows

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart have a copy of those First Rules (the primitive version disappeared). These were the ones which Father Coindre, adapting them to a masculine Congregation, gave to the new Congregation founded by him, on September 30, 1821.

On these first Rules, Father José María Murall, points out in a comparative study:

«The Rules are completely permeated or impregnated of those of the Society of Jesus. There are references to the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, to the common Rules, to the Epitome (summary) which summarizes all the Legislation, to the Exercises and to the Letter on Obedience”⁹².

⁹¹ J. Alvarez Gómez CMF, *Historia de la Vida Religiosa III*. From the “Devotio moderna” up to Vatican Council II, Publicaciones Claretianas, Madrid 1990, 165-167

⁹² General Archives of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, Rome, in A. Royo Millán, RJM, *La influencia ignaciana en la Congregación de Jesús María*, Rome 1983, 22-23

These Rules were composed by fifteen points which regulated very concrete and daily aspects of daily life⁹³. We are going to put together some texts of these Rules and will classify them according to the Ignatian elements which we have considered before.

a) Apostolic Sense

- *Modesty* [4]. As a continual sermon for the neighbor and a means for recollection and of union with God.
- *Mortification and Penance* [6]. Of all the penances and mortifications that the (*Sisters*) may practice none is more meritorious and pleasing to God than the arduous duties connected with the education of youth--- they shall patiently bear the ignorance, the rudeness, and indocility of the children, the complaints and the ingratitude of the parents, and the scorn, rebuffs and opposition of the public.
- *Withdrawal from the World* [7]. (They) shall allow their pupils to follow only these social customs which are good and praiseworthy.
- *Zeal* [8]. Behold this Heart that has loved men so much and has received nothing but ingratitude in return... the memory of all this shall support them in their solicitude to form and instruct young people well.
- *Politeness, Cleanliness, and the Spirit of Prayer* [10]. (Dedicated) to education (they) must make themselves worthy of public confidence, and their pupils must find in them models to be imitated in everything. The New Year greetings are to be looked upon as a duty in families and boarding schools. These tokens of affection on the part of the children accustom their young hearts to sentiments of respect, of gratitude and of love which they owe their parents and (teachers).
- *Of the Love of Study and Work* [11]. (*The Sisters destined*) for teaching shall neglect no means to keep up and perfect every day their little knowledge of writing, reading, arithmetic, grammar.
- *Indifference towards employments* [12]. The indifference to localities and employments that characterizes holy persons so well should be in the heart of (all the Sisters).
- *Of Furniture* 13]. The cells of the (*Sisters*) will not have a carpet or rug; the class rooms yes; besides, it is convenient that they are well lighted in order that the girls can read and write comfortably without having to get up from their place.

b) To please and serve God, to the greater glory of God

⁹³ Document VIII in *Positio* 200-215-

- *Chastity*. In the Rules, the model of chastity and the example is Saint Aloysius Gonzaga. They invite to keep it perfectly “trying to imitate in it the angelical purity with the purity of body and mind”.
- *Indifference towards employments* [12]. They shall not attach their hearts to a place, an employment or to certain persons; this could disturb their peace of mind if these ties had to be severed. Those (called) to the vow of stability must be more attentive than the others on this point, since (they) must be as it were the chosen (sisters) of the Congregation, ever (ready) to leave everything and go at the first signal where God’s will and His greater glory are calling them.

c) *Discernment*.

- *Obedience* [1]. Besides asking for total obedience, it opens the possibility so that the person, “after having asked God for light” can make a humble representation to the Superior.
- *Poverty* [2]. «To feel the effects of it... they shall have nothing of their own».
- *Zeal* [8]. Their zeal should always be enlightened, prudent and subject to the Rule, and to the will of the (Superiors).
- *Prudence* [9]. Speak of God to those who show interest in this and who are capable of profiting from it; keep silence when they make fun of it or lend no attention to it.

d) Ecclesial dimension

- *Humility* [5]. Humility and Religion shall always incline them to have a singular respect for the (*religious*) of other Orders as well as for all communities consecrated in the service of God and the neighbor. (*They*) shall never allow themselves to criticize their Rule or their persons.
- *Politeness, Cleanliness and Spirit of Prayer* [10]. It regulates the attention one must have with the priests, Bishops or the Chaplain.

The first group of Religious formed part of the “Association of the Sacred Hearts”. We already have seen the importance that the apostolate had for them. In these first Rules and concerning the study that we are doing concerning the influence of the Ignatian spirituality, the apostolic dimension is introduced in at least 8 of the 15 of them, besides, making a very clear reference to the mission that they are carrying out: the education of youth.

4.3. *The Constitutions*

In the small rented house of Pierres Plantés, where the Congregation began, between 1818 and 1820 two works were carried out: the organization of the *Religious Congregation of the Sacred Hearts* and the development of the *Providence of the Sacred Heart*. At that moment, the Association as well as the Providence of Saint Bruno continued to function in a parallel way, directed by Claudine but in the daily work in the charge of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. On January 2, 1825, in the Session number 82 of the Association, it was unanimously determined that this Providence will transfer all its rights on this work to the Parish Priest of Saint Bruno⁹⁴

In 1820, the house of Pierres Plantées, in the Croix Rousse, has become very small (now there were 40 persons) and it will be necessary to look for another property. The circumstances in which they could see the will of God and the desire to level down the paths of the Virgin, led them to the hill of Fourvière, to a property in front of the Shrine of the Virgin⁹⁵. The community and the girls moved to the *Angelique-*

Between the 2 and 12 of November of 1820 they moved to the new house which in a short time was enlarged in order to be able to lodge the Associates, the Providence and a Boarding School for well-to-do families. It opened in 1821. But still the “Ladies of the Sacred Hearts” had not received permission to have a Chapel or to wear a religious habit⁹⁶, but nevertheless, they lived the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius as they had been combined, at the beginning, by the good Father Coindre for the new Congregation⁹⁷. It is at that moment when they changed their names: Our Mother Foundress chose as the name in religion: M. Mary of Saint Ignatius. .

The change of the lay name for another religious name is done in the Church since the VI century. It is a symbol of a “New Baptism”. In the biblical sense, the name is closely bound with existence; it is a sign of the identity of the person. It implies her personality and responsibility. Claudine chose as Patron Saint Ignatius. Among the other

⁹⁴ Session of January 2, 1825, Cf- document IV in *Positio* 168

⁹⁵ *The Memorial*, First History of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary (1816-1852), translation, introduction and notes of M. M^a Antonia Bonet, Rome 2023, 26-27; Document XXVII In *Positio*, History of the Congregation, pp. 550, Document VII, in *Positio* 186-200

⁹⁶ Document XXVII in *Positio* 557- the Church in Lyon at that time was deprived from its Pastor, because of the forced expatriation of Monsignor Fesch, relative of Napoleon I. This eminent Prelate withdrew to Rome and had left the administration of his vast Diocese to his General Vicars. No doubt that it was this situation of uncertainty and of waiting the reason why Sr. Baron, the Vicar General, neglected the repeated petitions of the Foundress.

⁹⁷ Document XXVII in *Positio* 558

Associates, there are, fundamentally, names of Apostles or of Jesuit Saints (Saint Francis Borgia, Saint Stanislaus, Saint Gonzaga, Saint Xavier, etc)⁹⁸.

The Diocesan approbation did not arrive in spite of the petitions, fundamentally due to the fact that the Bishop, M. Fesh, had been expatriated or in exile and was in Rome.

The canonical approbation of the Congregation was obtained on February 4, 1823 in the Diocese of Le Puy, where they would have founded a mission on October 6, 1822⁹⁹. Its name has become the “Ladies of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary”.

In the act or Minutes of that approbation we can read:

«Having adopted the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius, with the modifications made necessary by the different employments of women, and of clerics, they inspire the Superiors of the Diocese with the greatest confidence”¹⁰⁰

On July 13, 1823, the Congregation was approved in the Diocese of Lyon. The first Statutes were presented, written according to the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius¹⁰¹. The Statutes of the Congregation were lost, but just as it happened with the First Rules, we can think that they were very similar to those of the clerical Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Monistrol founded also by Father Coindre. The Brothers keep a copy of the project of the Statutes in their Archives in Rome. They consist of 50 articles, in the last one of which is mentioned “the total conformity with the Summary of the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius in everything which is not contrary of the present Statutes”¹⁰².

The drawing up of the Constitutions will consist of four phases:

⁹⁸ We can remember Note 10

⁹⁹ Document XV in *Positio* 263.

¹⁰⁰ Document X in *Positio* 246

¹⁰¹ Document XIV in *Positio* 259

¹⁰² “Article 50 – The means of sanctification of which the Society serves itself are love and the practice of everything linked to spiritual life, such as meditation, the examination of conscience, assistance to Holy Mass, spiritual direction, the meetings, public correction of faults, pious readings, frequent confession and communion, spiritual conferences, the annual retreatants above all the study of the imitation of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ in his hidden and public life, the total conformity with the Summary of the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius in everything which is not contrary of the present Statutes”. Cf. *Project of the Statutes of the clerical Congregation established in Monistrol-l'Evêque under the name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

- a) The first one, from 1821 up until 1826, the date of the death of Father Coindre. In this phase the two worked together in the different articles of the future Constitutions.
- b) The second one, from 1826 until 1835, our Foundress continues drawing up and perfecting the Rules at the same time that she experiences them in the new Congregation.
- c) During this period of time she will have to live many important events. We are going to highlight one because it speaks to us about the criteria of discernment that she lived in relation to the apostolic mission. It is a question of going to the first house outside Lyon, Belleville, founded in 1821. We can imagine how the Congregation taking the first steps, is led to a place which is barely 100 kilometers away from Lyon. There they opened and enlarged a day school, a boarding school and a free school which functioned in the same style as Fourvière. Before the arrival of another Congregation, and the opening of another school, a series of painful difficulties began. These were the “cause of suffering for the Servant of God who, out of love for peace and for charity, did not doubt in sacrificing a vital part of her new Congregation, and she left the field free for the Parish priest and for the new comers”¹⁰³. In 1829 she closed the day school and the boarding school and in 1832, the Providence. But in all these arrangements she obliges herself and obliges her successors, to maintain “in perpetuity in their establishment for the instruction of youth in Belleville, a free class for poor girls of the said Belleville”¹⁰⁴.

From the Ignatian point of view, it is interesting to confirm or affirm the clear situation of “indifference” [Ex. 23] and freedom which exists in this situation; Indifference which, no doubt, will accompany her in her decisions.

The third one was from February 1836 date in which Father Pousset is named Chaplain of the house, until the death of Claudine in February 1837¹⁰⁵.

«The Servant of God had worked at the Rules from 1821 until her death, bringing her experience and prudence to bear on them for

¹⁰³ Document IX in *Positio* 217

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 217

¹⁰⁵ The Foundress asked Monsignor de Pins to name a new Chaplain, who at the same time, would be capable to help her to give the last touch to the writing of the Rules, to which for many years she had dedicated a careful work and which she wished to present to Rome for approbation... Father Francis Xavier Pousset, a priest from the Diocese of Bourges was namws.. Document XXVII in *Positio* 621

fifteen years, putting into practice the Ignatian spirit and the advice of Father Coindre”¹⁰⁶ ..

«She would have liked very much to be able to put the last finishing touches to the Rules, of which our Father Founder had drafted the first plan before her death. It had not been possible for her to fulfil this desire¹⁰⁷.

d) The fourth one, after the death of Claudine

In this part of the work we must stop on the profile of Father Pousset. There is a fact in his biography that will have some influence in the last draft or writing of the first Constitutions of our Congregation. On June 12, 1832 he entered the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus which had just been opened in Fribourg, (Switzerland). But because of some reasons that we do not know he did not persevere there.

«Having left the Society Father Pousset requested Monsignor de Pins for admission into his Diocese of Lyon. As this request arrived simultaneously with the request for a Chaplain on the part of the Servant of God, the Apostolic Administrator, with a single appointment, satisfied the desire of both one and the other. This appointment bears the date of the 13th February 1836. It seems that Father Pousset’s lack of success in the Society of Jesus left him with a certain aversion for anything Ignatian. This united with his authoritarian character, set him in opposition with the Servant of God almost as soon as he entered the house in Fourvière¹⁰⁸.

The witness on the acting of Father Pousset in the work with the then M. Mary of Saint Ignatius, is heartbreaking:

«She could not leave him the right to direct everything, to transform everything as he wished and to set himself up as absolute Superior. This resulted in differences of opinions and of methods and bitter reproaches that Mother Saint Ignatius had to put up with every day and which cast a shadow especially over her last years... she no longer had any respite”¹⁰⁹.

But the facts were very sad and affect our study.

On October 6, 1836, anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation at Pierres-Plantées, Father Pousset erased the traditional formula of “Constitutions of Saint Ignatius”

¹⁰⁶ Document XIX in *Positio* 374

¹⁰⁷ Document XXIII in *Positio* 478

¹⁰⁸ Document XVIII in *Positio* 364

¹⁰⁹ Document XXVII in *Positio* 620

in three of the Minutes of profession and wrote above: “our Statutes”¹¹⁰. In fact, in number 1 of our first Constitutions appears only the reference to the Rule of Saint Augustine.

We know and we cannot doubt that “in the month of October 1836, her headaches became much more severe and continuous”¹¹¹, her Sister Elisabeth, in several letters, speaks about the serious sickness of the Servant of God during that year¹¹².

In a bit over six months of his presence in the Congregation, it seemed that Father Pousset wanted to eliminate every reference to Ignatian influence in it. We can understand and feel the suffering of our Mother Foundress, M. Mary of Saint Ignatius, the name that she chose because as we have already been able to show extensively, the life and the spirituality of the Saint were an inspiration in her way of proceeding and acting.

Finally, on February 3, 1837, Claudine died at 63 years of age, with the suffering of not having been able to see the Constitutions finished. We know what Father Pousset told her on her death bed: “*You are an obstacle to the progress of your Congregation*”¹¹³. Was he referring to the fact that our Saintly Foundress, prevented him from changing at his whim the principal articles of those first Constitutions?.

Her last words speak to us of her greatness: “How Good God is!”

When Cardinal Caraffa, who had intended to change essential elements in the organization of the Society of Jesus, such as not to have “choral prayer” so that the apostolate would not be conditioned to it, (Paul IV) was named Pope, Saint Ignatius went to the Chapel to pray and he returned serene and in peace. As Cardinal Van Thuân used to teach repeatedly, the Works of God are not God¹¹⁴; who lives life with the only desire of pleasing God as also our Saintly Foundress did, will be able to find interiorly, peace and consolation, from which she can continue praising the greatness of God in the midst of pain and suffering.

After the death of Claudine, up to the time of the presentation of the Constitutions for their approbation in October 1837, Father Pousset and M. Saint André, Superior

¹¹⁰ Document XIX in *Positio* 376

¹¹¹ Document XXVII in *Positio* 621

¹¹² Document XXVII in *Positio* 315

¹¹³ Document XXVII in *Positio* 623

¹¹⁴ Cf. François Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuân, *La puerta de la esperanza*. Ciudad Nueva, Madrid 2000.

General of the Congregation, worked together. She already had collaborated with M. Foundress during the time that she worked on the Rules.

Mother Saint André worked actively continuing the work of the Foundress, especially to obtain the Pontifical approbation of the Constitutions¹¹⁵. Besides, before the foundation in India, she wanted to organize all the Registers which existed up until that moment, some of them, unfortunately, have disappeared.

On December 21, 1847, Pius IX granted the Congregation the Pontifical Approbation without demanding the habitual Laudatory Brief, because of the rapid and notable expansion of the work in India. Later, in 1848, the rupture of Mother Saint André with Father Pousset will take place¹¹⁶.

In Document XIX of the *Positio*¹¹⁷, there is a comparative study of the first Constitutions and Rules with the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius. It is a very complete study with 90 concrete references. We can find the relation with all the elements that we have explained before.

There is no doubt at all that even if the reference to the Constitutions of Saint Ignatius was eliminated, these are present in those first texts.

Before Vatican Council II asked for the renewal of the Constitutions, in 1855 there were some modifications made to adapt them to the needs of the new foundations, especially in India¹¹⁸.

The reference to Saint Ignatius will again be recovered in the General Chapter of 1977; on September 10, in the Opening Allocution, the Superior General will say:

“We are also told a word; it is that of the Church which asks us, in the last Council¹¹⁹, to work in the renewal and adaptation of our

¹¹⁵ Document XVI in *Positio*

¹¹⁶ Document XVIII in *Positio* 365,

¹¹⁷ Document XIX in *Positio* 377-420

¹¹⁸ *The Memorial*, First History of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary (1816-1852), translation and notes of M^a Antonia Bonet, Rome 2013, 61 and 63

¹¹⁹ It refers to the Document of the Vatican Council II, *Perfectae Caritatis*, on the adequate renewal of religious life and the practical criteria for renewal. Number 3 says: “The manner of living, praying and working should be suitably adapted to the physical and psychological conditions of today’s religious and also to the extent required by the nature of each community, to the needs of the apostolate, the requirements of a given culture, the social and economic circumstances. The way in which communities are governed should also be re-examined in the light of these same standards

Congregation. God has chosen us. He wants us to be the “first ones” in the history of the Congregation, to live such a transcendental event such as that of the present Chapter: the revision and writing of our Constitutions [...].

The Constitutions written by our Mother Foundress are of an extraordinary foresight and broadmindedness. An attentive study of our Constitutions allows us to affirm that the spirit and character of our Congregation, its traditions, the life-style, the spirituality, the form of consecration, are the expression itself of the charism received from the Spirit of God, and that its form of Government involves structures that not only protect the life of the Congregation, but also favor even more the fully carrying out of its mission”¹²⁰.

In this Chapter, the Congregation abandoned the elements of the Rule of Saint Augustine, but maintained the relation of our Constitutions, with the Ignatian spirituality. In number 9, we find this reference: “(the spirituality) has always been influenced by the doctrine of Saint Ignatius”.

In the present Constitutions of Chapter 2007, number 9 reads the same text.

And in the historical summary which introduces them, we can read:

«These Constitutions, in continuation with the first ones conceived by our Mother Foundress, Claudine Thévenet, continue being the sure inspiration for life, the foundation of which, she with such great zeal established, is now extended in such a way that today, in many parts of the world, raises the thanksgiving that sprang from her heart in her last words: ”How Good God is!”.

5. Conclusion

Ignatian Spirituality is a great gift that the Church received five centuries ago and in which innumerable persons and institutions, daily, receive the inspiration to convert their life into a continuous encounter with God Our Lord and with his will: “The glory of God consists in that man lives, and the life of man consists in the vision of God”¹²¹. I. de Causette, will say something of the Exercises that we can extend to all the spirituality.

«The Spiritual Exercises are one of the more venerable books that have come from the hands of men because if the Imitation of

For this reason: Constitutions, directories, custom books. Books of prayers and ceremonies, and similar compilations are to be suitably revised and brought into harmony with the documents of this Sacred Synod. This task will require the suppression of outmoded regulations”.

¹²⁰ M. Thérèse Poulin RJM, *Opening Allocution*, General Chapter of 1977, Rome, September 10, 1977.

¹²¹ Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, *Treatise against heresies*, Book 4, 20, 5-7

Christ has wiped more tears, the Spiritual Exercises have produced more conversions and more saints”¹²².

We have tried to show in this study the influence of the Spirituality of Saint Ignatius, his life, the Constitutions and Rules that he established; we have shown how conscious of this were Claudine as well as Father Coindre.

We can think that the election of this name, Mary of Saint Ignatius, transmits to us not only the style of religious life that she wanted to follow, but also a message, for our present and our future.

In the Bicentenary which we are celebrating, today like then, we remember with gratitude, we understand our present and we look to the future with hope.

I would like to finish this study with a part of this history directly related with one of the times of Ignatian election; it is the foundation of Agra¹²³.

On July 24, 1841, Monsignor Rossat, Vicar General of Gap, proposed to Mother Saint André, in the name of Monsignor Borghi, Bishop of Agra, to accept a mission in Eastern India. History tells us that with the reading of the letter of the Bishop of Agra, seeing that *the end*, the *reasons* and the *intentions* of the Congregation were the same as those that the Bishop proposed, they did not doubt. In fact, Mother Saint André gave herself time for the confirmation: she convoked the General Chapter (according to the Memorial) or Council (according to the Positio) and she ordered that a Novena be said to know the will of God. She presented the proposal and convoked the new meeting for nine days later. It was unanimously approved.

From the Ignatian point of view, we are before a first occasion of election: “without doubting or being able to doubt” [Ex 175). That certainty maintained with force our religious on their first trip to India, which was full of poverty, shortage and setbacks. In the letters of Mother Saint Teresa, the great difficulties of that trip were manifest. But that mission was worthwhile; it was the will of God for the Congregation that very soon it extended in those lands in an extraordinary way.

¹²² I. De Causette, *Mélanges oratoires I* Paris 1876, 455 quoted in Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Complete Works. edition, manual /transcription, introductions

¹²³ *The Memorial, First History of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary* (1816.1853), translation, introduction and Notes of M. Maria Antonia Bonet, Rome 2013, 59-73

Saint Ignatius, from the beginning of the Society of Jesus, ordered his missionaries to write letters saying what they did, how were those places and the people where they were. We have even seen before how much good those letters could do.

In the book which was edited on the occasion of the 150 anniversary of the foundation with the letters of Mother Saint Teresa, we can find with great detail, all the events and lived experiences of those first steps in India. The letters served to consolidate the mission, to communicate the progress made and the difficulties, to ask questions, to manifest themselves on situations, to give information for the taking of decisions and to edify by their witness, the members of the Congregation.

“The more universal good is the more divine it is”, wrote Saint Ignatius. Part VII of his Constitutions, was dedicated to this. According to this, the first missionary journey of the Society of Jesus was undertaken by Saint Francis Xavier to India. Our first missionary journey was also there. Mother Teresa, together with the other companions, left us a witness of passionate love and of generous surrender which has borne and continues to bear fruit.