

# STUDIES

## IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

To Travel to Any Part of the World:  
Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation

by

John W. O'Malley, S. J.

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“Those who travel much seldom achieve holiness.”

*Qui multum peregrinantur raro sanctificantur.*

*The Imitation of Christ*, I, 23. In about 1418.

“It is according to our vocation to travel to any part of the world where there is hope of God’s greater service and the help of souls.”

*Nostrae vocationis est diversa loca peragrare et vitam agere in quavis mundi plaga ubi maius Dei obsequium et animarum auxilium speratur.*

Rule 3, *Summary of the Constitutions*, 1590, excerpted from the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, [304]

“They consider that they are in their most peaceful and pleasant house when they are constantly on the move, when they travel throughout the earth, when they have no place to call their own.”

*Illam reputant esse quietissimam atque amoenissimam habitationem, si perpetuo peregrinari, orbem terrarum circumire, nullibi in suo habitare.*

Jerónimo Nadal, in about 1565, *Dialogus* II, [188], *Commentarii de Instituto Societatis Iesu, Monumenta Patris Nadal*, V, 744.

# To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation

By: John W. O'Malley, S. J.  
Weston School of Theology  
3 Phillips Place  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

## Introduction

Historians agree that St. Ignatius inaugurated a new era in the history of religious orders in the Roman Catholic Church when he founded the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits would be less monastic and more active than even the Dominicans and the Franciscans. They would not be bound by choir or by a distinctive religious garb, and they would set no limits on the place or circumstances of their ministries, so long as these were ordered to the “greater glory of God.”

It is well known that other orders founded at about the same time as the Society had anticipated the Jesuits on some of these issues, although Ignatius seems to have been clearly aware of where the discrepancies between his order and these others lay. In any case, because of the immense success the Society had in recruiting members, it gained the reputation for opening the new era of active orders in the Church.

In this article I hope to adduce some new arguments to show why this reputation is deserved. I will draw upon the writings of Jerónimo Nadal and call attention to some of the strikingly bold statements he made about “mobility” in ministry and evangelization that until now have practically escaped notice and commentary.<sup>1</sup> I intend to do nothing more than point the way to a source of inspiration that we have only begun to tap and that throws light on the Jesuit vocation. But, before we turn to Nadal’s writings, some background will be helpful.

No matter how important Nadal may have been in confirming and promoting an orientation in the Society, Ignatius founded the order, and he founded it with active ministry as its goal. Ignatius not only governed the order in its earliest years and inspired it by his example, but he also actually articulated in his writings the new ideal of a religious order whose piety was unambiguously correlated with ministry. The founders of the Theatines, Barnabites, Somaschi, and Capuchins – the other major groups founded about the same time as the Society – have left us relatively little written documentation in comparison with the quantity and precision of the *Constitutions* and the twelve volumes of Ignatius’ correspondence.

The ideal of a coordination of the salvation and perfection of oneself and of one's neighbor underlies these Ignatian writings and is spelled out in hundreds of ways. Students of Ignatius have had little difficulty, moreover, in correlating the *Constitutions* with the *Spiritual Exercises* and in seeing the former as a specification and institutionalization of certain aspects of the latter. The exhortation in the *Constitutions* "to find God in all things," for instance, corresponds in a generic way with the "Contemplation for Obtaining Divine Love" in the *Exercises*, as has been often pointed out. In other words, besides founding a new religious order, Ignatius was able to articulate his ideals and also his vision as to how those ideals could be translated into action. The Church and the Society owe him an immense debt of gratitude for this accomplishment.

For all that, there is a problem. Although Ignatius put his ideas down on paper, sometimes with considerable help from others, his style of writing is particularly his own. It is generally terse, matter-of-fact, understated rather than overstated, and often his ideas, though clear, are only sparsely developed. If some of those ideas mark such a break with previous traditions of spirituality and religious life as we believe, it is difficult to imagine that the writings of Ignatius alone could have mediated them effectively to his contemporaries. Those writings lack the rhetorical force needed to accomplish that task for a generation schooled to view spirituality in a different way.

The problem would be acute for the Society too, of course. The members of the order who lived in Rome had direct contact with Ignatius, and his ideas and ideals could be impressed upon them in informal conversation and by the force of his personality. But for the members received into the Society in other parts of the world—there were about a thousand Jesuits by the time Ignatius died—the only medium would be the texts of the Formula of the Institute (1540), various sets of rules, the *Exercises* (printed in 1548), and, quite late in his life, the *Constitutions* (printed only in 1558).

### 1. The Role of Nadal

At this point Jerónimo Nadal (1507-1580) enters the picture.<sup>2</sup> Born at Palma de Majorca in 1507, he pursued courses of study at Alcalá and Paris, and was present in the latter city while St. Ignatius was there gathering his first companions. He refused at that time to have anything to do with the group and in 1537 went to Avignon, where he was eventually ordained a priest and eventually promoted to doctor of theology. Sometime after his return to Majorca, he felt an attraction to the new order, and in 1545 he journeyed to Rome to join it. He almost immediately won the special confidence of Ignatius, who soon confided to him the experimental promulgation of the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*.

Nadal traveled throughout the nascent Society explaining the document, commenting on it, and answering questions concerning how it was to be interpreted. In an order without

tradition, he contextualized and interpreted a text that otherwise had no firm hermeneutical principles for rendering it viable. He mediated Ignatius to all those members of the Society who had never met Ignatius and, we must assume, had some unclear ideas about the organization they had joined. His importance in the history of the order is, therefore, extraordinary. The documents he left us— exhortations, commentaries, reflections, instructions, meditations, dialogues, and letters— testify to the meaning of the Jesuit vocation as it was understood by a contemporary and trusted confidant of the founder.

That is, in general, his significance. If we descend to details, that significance emerges as even more telling. First of all, he was known and recognized as an authentic interpreter of Ignatius' mind. The assessment of his relationship to Ignatius made in 1553 by Juan de Polanco, the saint's personal secretary, is often cited: "He knows our father, Master Ignatius, well because he had many dealings with him, and he seems to have understood his spirit and comprehended our Institute as well as anyone I know in the Society."<sup>3</sup> In sending Nadal to propagate the *Constitutions*, Ignatius himself stated that "he altogether knows my mind and enjoys the same authority as myself."<sup>4</sup> The saint could hardly have supported him more absolutely.

Secondly, Nadal went about his assigned task with an energy and enthusiasm that carried him to an astounding number of Jesuit communities spread across Western Europe. A few years ago a complete chronology of his life and travels was finally assembled and published.<sup>5</sup> This chronology establishes with dramatic detail the generalizations about his travels and impact of which we have long been aware.

In the spring of 1552, for instance, Ignatius handed him the task of promulgating the *Constitutions*. To this end Nadal set out almost immediately for Messina and Palermo in Sicily. The next year he returned to Rome to confer with Ignatius and receive further instructions, and then he left for Spain and Portugal. Lisbon, Évora, Coimbra, Córdoba, Alcalá and Salamanca were some of the cities he visited—some of them several times within a year—to carry out his assignment. He was back in Rome by October, 1554. The next year he was off to Germany, but by midsummer returned to Italy where he continued his presentation of the *Constitutions* in Padua, Venice, Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, and other cities. The next year again he arrived in Spain. He returned to Rome on December 2, 1556, six months after the death of Ignatius.

During the remaining fourteen years of his life, he continued to be regarded as an authority on the interpretation of the *Constitutions*, and he held important offices in the Society. In 1560, for example, Laínez sent him as visitor with full powers to the provinces of Spain, France, Germany, and Italy. An assignment like this again gave him direct contact with a huge number of Jesuits and provided him with ample occasion to speak about and interpret for his brethren the Institute of the Society. In brief, Nadal's was a unique career in the Society that consistently placed him in positions to influence directly the way other Jesuits thought about themselves, their vocation, and the order they had joined.

The third reason for Nadal's significance is the style and content of his message of the Society. He was regarded by his contemporaries and by subsequent generations as a faithful interpreter of Ignatius, but he was, after all, an interpreter. This means that there are features in his works that we do not find in Ignatius, even if these features are nothing more than further developments of ideas found in more embryonic state in the saint. Here, as always, style and content are inextricably intertwined.

In general, Nadal's style is fuller, less reserved, more rhetorical than that of Ignatius. This evaluation is especially verified in his exhortations, a literary form that promotes the qualities I have described. Moreover, Nadal has some literary pretensions, as exemplified in the two long "dialogues" or "colloquies" he composed about the Society between 1562 and 1565.<sup>6</sup> These pieces purport to be three-way conversations among a Jesuit, a Lutheran, and a neutral party, fashioned after the structure made famous in the Renaissance by Erasmus and other humanists. His *Scholia in Constitutiones Societatis Jesu* are sober and technical, whereas his spiritual reflections recently published in a volume entitled *Orationis Observationes* are quite personal and even disjointed. In other words, his writings evince a variety of literary forms, many of which favor a freedom of expression and provide occasion for the elaboration of ideas that are lacking in the works of Ignatius himself. These factors, plus the solid grounding in Aquinas and Bonaventure upon which his ideas were based, have won for him the title of "the theologian of Ignatian spirituality."<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Nadal's Teaching

What doctrines does this theologian advance that are distinctive and significant? What is the content of his theology that particularly merits our attention? Scholars have singled out two ideas within his generally traditional teaching on the spiritual life which are rich and suggestive. The first of these is his doctrine of "contemplative in action." The relationship of this now famous idea to the "Contemplation for Obtaining Divine Love" in the *Exercises* and to Ignatius' exhortation "to find God in all things" in the *Constitutions* has been amply demonstrated.

The second doctrine can claim no source in Ignatius' teaching, although Nadal's application of it had Ignatius principally in mind. This is the doctrine concerning "the grace of vocation" or "the grace of the founder." In brief, the call to each religious institute has a specificity to it that is exemplified in the life and spiritual gifts of the founder. The founder thus exerts an exemplary causality upon the order that is considerably more than a proposal of a way of life. Something deeper, almost mystical, is involved. This idea surely strengthened Nadal's hand as he moved about the Society interpreting Ignatius' mind and spirit to the early Jesuits, and it deserves the attention it has received.<sup>8</sup>

My intention is not to dwell on these two doctrines, however, but on the “apostolic mobility” I mentioned earlier. There are a number of features of this doctrine of “apostolic mobility” that make it distinctively Nadal’s, but he always relates it to aspects of the Jesuit vocation clearly found in the *Constitutions*. That is to say, there is a solid Ignatian foundation for the ideas that Nadal expresses so boldly, and he generally presents them while discussing the three kinds of “houses” provided for in the *Constitutions*— houses of probation, colleges, professed houses— and indicates as well a relationship to that peculiarly Jesuit institution, the “fourth vow” of special obedience to the pope.

### 3. Some Pertinent Texts

The best way to enter into Nadal’s thinking on this matter is to consider in translation some of the more important texts. A summary of his teaching occurs, for instance, in one of his exhortations to the Spanish Jesuits, 1554: “It must be noted that in the Society there are different kinds of houses or dwellings. These are: the house of probation, the college, the professed house, and the journey— and by this last the whole world becomes our house.”<sup>9</sup>

This statement is for the sixteenth century so unconventional in its formulation of mobility for ministry that one can only wonder why students of Ignatian spirituality have not called more attention to it. Nadal has added a fourth type of “house” to the three found in the *Constitutions*, and he then equates that house with “the world.” This formulation cannot be dismissed as a momentary lapse into hyperbole, for Nadal returns to the idea on a number of occasions with even greater insistence and elaboration.

Any ambiguity that might be attached to the Latin “habitatio” is dismissed when in various Spanish texts he equates the term with “casa.” In an exhortation at Alcalá in 1561 he states, for instance, after the usual listing of houses of probation, colleges, and professed houses: “There are missions, which are for the whole word, which is our house. Wherever there is need or greater utility for our ministries, there is our house.”<sup>10</sup>

In the Spanish text the word “misiones” appears as the equivalent for the Latin “peregrinationes.” Both words are difficult to translate into English with all the nuance they should convey. “Journey” is the rendering for which as a rule I reluctantly settle, but that rendering must be understood as bearing with it the idea of pilgrimage, with its hardships, deprivations, and spiritual goals, and the idea of mission or being commissioned, with ministry as its purpose. Thus “journey,” “pilgrimage,” and “mission” become, in practice, synonyms.

Moreover, an element has appeared in this statement that was missing in the first: the need for our ministries. It is that element that prompts Nadal to link the idea to the fourth vow, as

he almost invariably does. He develops these relationships in his “Annotations to the General Examen,” 1557:

The principal and most characteristic dwelling for the Jesuits is not in the professed houses, but in the journeyings, ... I declare that the characteristic and most perfect house of the Society is the journeys of the professed, by which they diligently seek to gain for Christ the sheep that are perishing. And this is indeed the distinctive mark of our vocation: That we accept from God and the orthodox Church the care of those for whom nobody is caring, even if there actually is somebody who ought to be caring for them. And if there is nobody else, surely the supreme Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff, [has them in his care]. To him, therefore, we are given in service, that through us he might care for those for whom their ordinaries or priests are of no avail, or especially those who altogether lack an ordinary. To this end looks our vow that is made to the Supreme Pontiff, which specifically concerns ‘missions.’ This is a work that is at the same time of the greatest difficulty, labor, and danger, as well as the greatest utility and necessity. It is hence that the Society seems somehow to imitate the condition of the Church of the Apostles, in our humility in Christ.<sup>11</sup>

Nadal does not use the terms “Apostles” and “apostolic” in a casual sense simply to indicate ministries, but with the understanding that in his day the Society was recovering an aspect of the primitive Church that was especially its own, as I will attempt to show. For the moment, however, let us consider other texts in which these powerful ideas are expressed. For instance, in another exhortation at Alcalá, 1561, he says:

There are the houses of the professed, where the ministries of the Society for the help of souls are exercised. Is there more? Yes, the best: the ‘missions’ on which the pope or superior sends us, so that for the Society the whole world will become its house; and thus it will be with the divine grace.<sup>12</sup>

There is a sober statement of the same idea in his commentary on the *Constitutions* (VII.1 [603]):

“When they are dispersed to any part of Christ’s vineyard.” This dispersion of the professed and coadjutors will indeed take place in the founding of the professed houses, and also of colleges and houses of probation, in important cities as well as in large and populated towns. But we must always look to and strive for that great goal of the Society, which is not only that Ours live in our houses and from them come to the aid of the city or town or even the nearby countryside, but that the professed and coadjutors be engaged in journeys that are undertaken by a commission either from the supreme pontiff or from our superiors. They do this

so that help might be brought to souls wherever they are found— wherever and whenever there is need for spiritual aid, whether we are sent to idolaters, to Mohammedans, to heretics, or to Christians who are perishing or in danger because of a lack of ministers or because of their neglect.<sup>13</sup>

The idea returns in this second dialogue (1562-1565):

These are the places: houses of probation, where the novices are trained and tested; the colleges, where the humanities are studied; the professed house, where the professed along with the spiritual and temporal coadjutors live and from which they engage in all the ministries of the professed Society and direct all their energies to the salvation and perfection of souls. But the final place is the most glorious and ample, for these men are not called that they might help souls only from their houses; their special intent and goal is to seek out everywhere in the world those whom they might gain for Christ. Therefore, they ought always to be engaged in journeyings and missions, to whatever place either the supreme pontiff or their general might send them for the sake of ministry.

Perhaps Nadal's most eloquent and effective statement of this ideal occurs, emphatically, at the conclusion of that same dialogue:

That is altogether the most ample place and reaches as far as the globe itself. For wherever they can be sent in ministry to bring aid to souls, that is the most glorious and longed-for 'house' for these theologians. For they know the goal set before them: to procure the salvation and perfection of all men. They understand that they are to that end bound by that fourth vow to the supreme pontiff: that they might go on these universal missions for the good of souls by his command, which by divine decree extends throughout the whole Church. They realize that they cannot build or acquire enough houses to be able from nearby to run out to the combat. Since that is the case, they consider that they are in their most peaceful and pleasant house when they are constantly on the move, when they travel throughout the earth, when they have no place to call their own, when they are always in need, always in want— only let them strive in some small way to imitate Christ Jesus, who had nowhere on which to lay his head and spent all his years of preaching in journey.<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. A Brief Commentary

These texts can stand on their own as inspiring statements of the zeal for ministry that should animate the members of the Society. Implied in them is the supposition that the security

and spiritual comfort that fixed dwellings provide, important though these features were in Nadal's mind, must be subordinated to a call to ministry that in its urgency will carry Jesuits to any place or any situation, no matter what the danger or hardship, where human beings of whatever religion or condition are in spiritual need. Although these statements find a firm foundation in the orientation Ignatius gave to the Society, they surpass in the boldness of their articulation anything Ignatius said in this regard of which we have record

There are other elements explicitly or implicitly contained in them, however, that require further elaboration. First of all, they place the fourth vow of special obedience to the pope firmly in the context of "mission for ministry." Other documents from the early Society do the same, as I pointed out in an earlier number of these *Studies*, but none do this with greater zest than these statements from Nadal.<sup>16</sup> The pope is viewed as "universal pastor" of the "universal Church," who has as his pastoral ministry the care of all souls, especially those who have no one else to care for them. In his second dialogue, Nadal actually designates the pope as "the bishop of the universal Church."<sup>17</sup> It is this aspect of the "Petrine ministry" that Jesuits want to share by means of their special vow. That vow is not a generic expression of "loyalty to the pope," as is sometimes stated or implied, but an expression of dedication to a worldwide and unconditioned ministry. To interpret the vow in the former sense eventually leads to rendering the restriction "circa missiones" superfluous by in effect eviscerating it of any restrictive meaning.<sup>18</sup>

The fourth vow thus emerges as a contrast to the monastic vow of stability. Whatever order St. Ignatius founded, it was not a monastic one. His adamant refusal to obligate Jesuits to office in choir seems to have been for him a strong negative symbol of what he had in mind. The fourth vow is a positive expression of the same ideal: a commitment to ministry and an indication of the "universal vineyard" in which that ministry was to be exercised. The *Constitutions* provide, in [603], for situations in which Jesuits would themselves discover where a greater need for their ministry might arise. But Jesuits were to have enough abnegation of their own wills and judgment to subordinate them to the larger vision of the needs of the Church that their general or the pope might have.

In this fact, it seems to me, we find the intrinsic correlation among the three purposes of the fourth vow mentioned in the bull *Exposcit debitum*: "our greater devotion in obedience to the Apostolic See, greater abnegation of our own wills, and surer direction of the Holy Spirit." Although these three purposes may not be quite synonymous, they represent three component parts of a single process that leads to the most effective choice of ministries. When St. Ignatius spoke of the fourth vow as "nuestro principio y principal fundamento,"<sup>19</sup> he could hardly have been referring to some general esteem for the papacy, which he surely had, but to something that was more obviously operative at the center of the Jesuit vocation. He was referring, it would seem, to that commitment to ministry that appears on practically every page of the twelve volumes of his correspondence. Our "first principle and foundation" is not loyalty to the papacy, but a commitment to ministry any place in the world where there is hope of God's greater

service; a mission from the pope, the “universal pastor,” is the most dramatic and peremptory expression of that commitment. Nadal’s commentary on the houses of the Society and their relationship to the vow confirm this interpretation of *Exposcit debitum* as well as of the Ignatian texts.

Secondly, the documents from Nadal provide a wider context in which to understand his doctrine of “contemplative in action.” There is here a specification of “action” as restless journey and seeking. The “contemplative” that is the Jesuit must learn to sustain his union with God not only in the distractions that might trouble him even in the regulated discipline of a religious house, but also in those situations that almost by definition are synonymous with distraction and dissipation of spirit—in travel and journey.

Nadal never meant to deny, of course, that many Jesuits would spend all their lives in the regular houses of the Society, or that community would be the place for rest and spiritual reflection even for those “on mission.”<sup>20</sup> He speaks in fact at great length of the discipline of our houses and assumes that they will be the regular base for ministry. Nonetheless, in travels and journeys, paradoxically, the Jesuits according to him find “their most peaceful house.”

St. Ignatius was fondly attached to *The Imitation of Christ*, which was in circulation for almost a century before he was born. It is the only book besides the Gospel that he specifically recommended for persons making the Spiritual Exercises.<sup>21</sup> His style of piety, however, especially as interpreted by Nadal, marks a distinctive break with the more privatized and retiring spirituality characteristic of that great work. The *Imitation* used the word “to travel” (*peregrinari*) in a pejorative sense, as incompatible with a deep interior life. “Those who travel much seldom achieve holiness” (I.23). Nadal rejoices in the word, and finds in it an expression of what is most germane to the Jesuit vocation.

The word “peregrinari” has, of course, deep roots in the tradition of the Society. Ignatius in his *Autobiography* consistently refers to himself as “the pilgrim.” The word aptly expresses the course his life took from the time of his conversion until he was finally established as general of the Society in Rome, as the article by John Olin several years ago reminded us.<sup>22</sup>

The story of the first Jesuits is filled with accounts of their many journeys. We now possess an excellent study of this aspect of their lives in the article by Mario Scaduto, “La strada e i primi Gesuiti.”<sup>23</sup> Scaduto confirms that for these men the words “journey,” “pilgrimage,” and “mission” meant practically the same thing;<sup>24</sup> this fact throws considerable light on the meaning of the fourth vow, which specifically “concerns missions.” Nadal collaborated with Polanco in formulating the *Regulae peregrinantium*, published by Lainez when he was general.<sup>25</sup> In this context the pilgrimage that Ignatius prescribed for the novices in the Constitutions emerges as more than just one “test” among many that might have been chosen; it symbolizes a central feature of the Jesuit life.

Thirdly, the apostolic journeys by Jesuits are especially directed to the benefit of those who have no others to help them. The emphasis that Nadal gives this group is consistent in him and characteristic. True, Ignatius stated in a Declaration ([622a]) in Part VII of the *Constitutions* that “that part of the vineyard ought to be chosen that has greater need,” but Nadal subtly modifies this norm and then endows it with a prominence that is lacking in Ignatius. Nadal’s boldest formulation occurs in the personal reflections he wrote for himself in Rome shortly after the death of Ignatius: “The Society has the care of those souls for whom either there is nobody to care or, if somebody ought to care, for whom the care is negligent. This is the reason for the founding of the Society. This is its strength. This is its dignity in the Church.”<sup>26</sup>

Finally, Nadal had an especially sharp and historically defined sense of the “apostolic” character of Jesuit ministry. Terms like “apostle,” “apostolic,” and “apostolate” are used so frequently and broadly today, usually as synonyms for “minister” or “ministry,” that they are almost banal. We only with difficulty recover the freshness of their connotation for Nadal. For him they relate directly to his understanding of the “primitive Church” and to his vision of how the Society images that Church in the dynamism of its ministries and zeal for evangelization.

The attempt to imitate the “vita apostolic” has a long history in Christianity, but took on new significance from about the twelfth century onwards as different individuals and groups began to break with the monastic ideal of Christian perfection exemplified in great systems like Cluny. Ideas about what the “life of the Apostles” was like varied considerably, due in large measure to the unsophisticated historical sense that the Middle Ages possessed. The “Spiritual Franciscans” in the fourteenth century, for instance, said that apostolic life consisted essentially in absolute poverty. Giles of Viterbo, general of the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine from 1507 until 1518, envisioned the Apostles as living like hermits, since that was supposedly the ancient pattern of life followed by the members of his own order.<sup>27</sup>

By the middle of the sixteenth century a somewhat more objective picture of the early Church had been acquired. Moreover, the discovery of the New World, the urgency of the Turkish threat to Europe, and the defection into Protestantism of much of northern Europe awakened a new awareness of the need for evangelization. All these factors seem to have had an impact on Nadal, so that he in effect defines “apostle” as one sent on mission. When he sees the Society as “apostolic,” he has that specific understanding of apostolicity in mind.

There are several passages in which he discusses the “apostolic” nature of the Society. Like so many of his contemporaries, he seems to have had a sense that the primitive Church was in some way being reborn in his own day.<sup>28</sup> In any case, he succinctly conveys the essence of his thinking on the matter in a reflection composed, again, in Rome within a year after the death of Ignatius:

Our vocation is similar to the vocation and training of the Apostles: first, we come to know the Society, and then we follow; we are instructed; we receive our commission to be sent; we are sent; we exercise our ministry; we are prepared to die for Christ in fulfilling those ministries.<sup>29</sup>

A Pauline paradigm often seems to underlie Nadal's thinking about the "apostolic" character of the Society. For Nadal, Paul was the Apostle par excellence, and his journeyings seem to have been the pattern Nadal had in mind when he spoke about them in the Society. He wrote his most direct and suggestive statement in this regard in Rome at about the same time as the one quoted above about the apostolic nature of the Society: "Peter signifies firmness and direction in our Society, and Paul signifies for us its ministry; and both of them, as the princes of the Church, profit us."<sup>30</sup>

There is more to what "Paul signifies for us," however, than simply a ministry on the move. Surely suggested in Nadal's writings is the intense zeal of Paul that knew no limits in the suffering and hardships it was willing to undergo 'to gain souls for Christ.' Just as important, furthermore, is the mode of ministry that Nadal sees as preeminently proper to the Society. The ministry of the Society is, first and foremost, a "ministry of the word."

Nadal has left us a long exhortation from late in his life on the ministries of the Society in which he develops with considerable detail his ideas on the forms that ministry might take.<sup>31</sup> He did not conceive the ministry of the word as restricted to sermons in church, but extended it to spiritual conversation, writing, teaching school, teaching catechism, lecturing on both sacred and profane subjects, directing persons in the Spiritual Exercises, and comforting prisoners and the dying. He even extends this ministry to the sacrament of penance, in which the confessor "softens the heart of the sinner and moves it by the word of God."<sup>32</sup> Thus he would subsume this aspect of sacramental or liturgical ministry under a more inclusive heading and indicate that more is involved in it for the Jesuit than a ritual routine.

In the Christian tradition Paul is the Apostle who by his doctrine and example most conspicuously exemplifies the ideal of total dedication to the ministry of the word. Although the starting point for Nadal's reflections on this form of Jesuit ministry is almost invariably the prominent statement on it is the bull *Exposcit Debitum* of Pope Julius III, he places that statement in a context that is notably "apostolic," and imbues it with Pauline overtones. Enthusiasm in the sixteenth century for a recovery of "the authentic Paul" was not restricted to Protestantism, as we are sometimes led to believe. That enthusiasm was also operative, though with a different focus and appreciation, in Roman Catholicism, as Nadal's writings show.

## Conclusion

This brief excursus into the works of Jeronimo Nadal validates with new evidence the conventional judgment of historians that the Society opened a new era of religious orders. I

propose that further studies of this “theologian of Ignatian spirituality” will uncover other aspects of his teaching about the Jesuit vocation that will be as enlightening and challenging as I believe are the ones I have discussed and presented in these pages. Nadal’s importance for the Society can hardly be exaggerated, but he is not insignificant in an even broader context.

Nadal, in his teaching on the “houses” of the Society, effected a distinctive break with the monastic tradition that had dominated thinking about religious life for at least a millennium. Insertion in the world rather than withdrawal from it is his ideal. “The world is our house.” He repeats that startling axiom with insistence.

Moreover, Nadal’s emphasis on ministry of the word indicates a distancing from the model of ministry and priesthood located almost exclusively in sacrament and liturgy that characterized the monastic tradition, though in this he simply represents a culmination of a development that began several centuries earlier. I know of no other writings in the history of Christian spirituality that so effectively highlight the ministerial dimensions of that spirituality and liken it so effectively to the “apostolic” nature of early Christianity.

There is considerable discussion today in the Church and in the Society about the meaning of priesthood. My own perception is that these discussions are often, probably unwittingly, operative on a model of priesthood reminiscent of the monastic tradition, that is, primarily sacramental and liturgical. After all, it might be argued, the difference between ordained and non-ordained is most obviously seen in that the former can celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy, whereas the latter may not.

This is not the place to enter into this complex issue. But I think it is worth knowing that in the early Society priestly ministry was conceived more dynamically and much more broadly—with a leadership role that had as its precondition mobility to move into new and critical areas and an ability to articulate for all conceivable categories of persons what Christianity is all about. The ideal of service to those in need, wherever they are found and whoever they may be, emerges as the criterion of ministry for these new “apostles.” This is that ministry on the move, that ministry of the word, that ministry to all peoples that Nadal saw as the heart of the Jesuit vocation.

One final question remains: Why is it that the texts I have adduced have remained practically unnoticed, as far as I can tell, for four hundred years? Several responses suggest themselves. The first is that many of the documents from which I drew many of these texts were not critically edited until the past twenty years. That is an excuse that is also somewhat of an indictment; our interest in our history is not as fervent and searching as it might be.

But I think there is another reason. Historians cannot find in historical documents what they have been trained to exclude from consideration. The history of the historiography of Christian spirituality has yet to be written. It seems clear, nonetheless, that that historiography

has generally been controlled by questions restricted to “spiritual” subjects—prayer, silence, mortification, ascetical practices, spiritual direction, and the like. Effective though Nadal’s correlation of spirituality with ministry may have been in the early Society, a more monastic tradition reasserted itself. This meant that a “monastic” tradition has often been operative in the search through even Jesuit sources, so that answers to only “monastic” questions emerge.

Joseph de Guibert’s book on the history of Jesuit spirituality, for all its merits, is an example of this approach.<sup>33</sup> In the pages he devotes to Nadal, one searches in vain for any suggestion of the ideas to which I call attention here. It is a book on Jesuit spirituality that never mentions the names of Matteo Ricci or Roberto de Nobili. Nor does it mention the Reductions in Paraguay. De Guibert died over forty years ago, and we have made much progress since then, due in part to his labors. But we still must be on our guard to prevent scholarship from falling into the fallacy that would treat the spirituality of the Society of Jesus independent of its commitment to ministry.

Scholarship, like all human endeavors, will of course always have its limitations and blind spots. In an organization like the Society, however, there is another factor that can sometimes act as a supplement and corrective to it. That factor is the understanding we derive from our own experience of the Society—the ideals we receive from older Jesuits when we enter the order, the words and deeds of our companions through the years, and our knowledge of how the Society de facto operates and the basis on which it makes decisions. This “living tradition” has its own problems and limitations, but it is a considerable help in pointing the way to what our spiritual heritage means.

A unique feature of the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation, 1974-1975, was that it tried to capture and formulate something of that living tradition in its document *Jesuits Today*, as the very title indicates. After I had read Nadal and practically finished this article, I thought I recalled some lines from *Jesuits Today* that sounded similar to his ideas. When I picked up the document, this is what I found [14]:

A Jesuit, therefore, is essentially a man on a mission: a mission that he receives immediately from the Holy Father or from his own religious superiors, but ultimately from Christ himself, the one sent by the Father. It is by being sent that the Jesuit becomes a companion of Jesus.

Since the above essay was first written, the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Congregation has met and taken up the same theme in its one major document, entitled “Companions of Jesus Sent into Today’s World” (*Socii Iesu in Mundum Hodiernum Missi*). Both these Congregations faithfully, though unwittingly, echo Nadal’s teaching on what it means to be a Jesuit. The tradition has remained vital through the centuries.

## Footnotes

### ABBREVIATIONS Used in the Footnotes

AHSJ	<i>Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu</i>
Cons	<i>The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus</i>
ConsMHSJ	<i>Constitutiones Societatis Iesu</i> , the 4 volumes in the series of the Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu
EppIgn	<i>S. Ignatii Epistolae et Instructiones</i> , 12 volumes MHSJ
MonNad	<i>Epistolae et Monumenta P. Hieronymi Nadal</i> , 6 volumes in MHSJ, of which volume V is his <i>Commentarii de Instituto S.J.</i>

1. The fullest commentary on these texts of which I am aware is in Bertrand de Margerie, "El cuarto voto de la Compania de Jesus, segun Nadal," Manresa, 42 (1970), 359-376. My own conclusions from these texts regarding the object of the fourth vow differ from his, and his focus in the article is not the same as mine here.
2. The most thorough study of Nadal is by Miguel Nicolau, Jeronimo Nadal, S.I. (1507-1580): Sus obras y doctrinas espirituales (Madrid, 1949). Nicolau summarized and updated his conclusions, with full bibliography, in his article on Nadal (1981) in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualite*, XI, 3-15. Easily accessible in English are the pertinent pages of Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, ed. George E. Ganss, trans. William J. Young (Chicago, 1964). The limitations of de Guibert's approach, to which Nicolau's is similar, will be pointed out later in this study.
3. *EppIgn*, V, 109 (7 June 1553): "Tiene mucho conocimiento de N.P. Mtro. Ignacio, porque le ha tratado mucho, y parece tiene entendido su spiritu, y penetrando, quanto otro que yo sepa en la Compania, el instituto della."
4. *MonNad*, I, 144 (10 April 1553): "...qui mentem nostram omnino noverit, et nostra auctoritate fungitur,..."
5. Manuel Ruiz Jurado, "Cronologia de la vida del P. Jeronimo Nadal S.I. (1507-1580)," *AHSJ*, 48 (1979), 248-276
6. *MonNad*, V, 526-774
7. Nicolau, "Nadal," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualite*, XI, col. 13.
8. On these two teachings, see the work by Nicolau and de Guibert cited above. The most thorough treatment in English is by Joseph F. Conwell, *Contemplation in Action: A Study of Ignatian Prayer* (Spokane, 1957).
9. *MonNad*, V, 54: "Notandum diversa esse in Societate mansionum seu habitationum genera. Est enim domus probationis, collegium, domus professorum, peregrinatio; et hac ultima totus mundus nostra fit habitatio."
10. *Ibid.*, 469-470: "Ay misiones, que es por todo el mundo, y es nuestra casa. Donde ay necesidad o mas utilidad de nuestros ministerios, ai es nuestra casa."
11. *Ibid.*, 195-196: "In domibus professis non est ultima vel etiam potissima habitatio Societatis, sed in peregrinationibus,....Ultimam acperfectissimam Societatis habitationem dicimus peregrinationem professorum; qua peregrinatione eas oves quae pereunt disquirantur solícite Christo luciferi. Et haec est quidem selecta vocationis nostrae proprietas, ut eorum curam a Deo acceperimus et ab orthodoxa Ecclesia, quos nullus curat, tametsi aliquis sit omnino qui curare deberet. Quod si alius nullus, certe summus Christi Vicarius, Romanus Pontifex. Huic igitur in obsequium dati sumus, ut per nos illorum gerat curam quibus vel ordinarii praelati vel sacerdotes non prosunt, vel omnino qui nullum habent praelatum. Huc spectat votum quod fit Summo Pontifici, quod proprie ad misiones attinet. Hoc est opus simul et summae

difficultatis, summi laboris et periculi, simul summae utilitatis ac necessitates; hinc tota Societas imitationem quandam habere videtur status apostolici, in nostra humilitate in Christo.”

12. Ibid., 364-365: “Ay cassas [sic] de professos, donde se exercitan los ministerios de la Compania para el ayuda de las almas. ¿Queda mas? Si, lo mejor, las misiones a do embia el Papa o el superior; que a la Compania todo el mundo le a de ser casa, y assi sera con la gracia divina.”
13. *Scholia in Constitutiones S. I.*, ed. Manuel Ruiz Jurado (Granada, 1976), p. 175: “DUM DIVIDUNTUR PER CHRISTI VINEAM. Haec distributio professorum, et coadiutorum fiet quidem ad domos professorum fundandads, vel etiam collegia vel probationum domos in primariis civitatibus, vel etiam magnis et frequentibus oppidis, tamen ad finem illum magnum Societatis semper spectandum, et contendendum erit, qui non tantum est, ut nostri in domibus habitent, et inde civitatem vel oppidum, vel etiam finitimos pagos iuvent, sed ut peregrinationibus professi, et coadiutores exerceanur, quae ex missione, vel Summi Pontificis vel Superiorum nostrorum suscipiuntur, ut subsidium animabus feratur ubiubi, quacumque occasione, quacumque causa auxilio spiritus opus erit, sive ad ido [lo] latras mittamur, sive ad Mahometanos, vel haereticos, sive ad Christianos, qui penuria pastorum, vel negligentia pereant, vel periclitentur.”
14. *MonNad*, V. 673: “Loca autem sic sunt: domus probationum, ubi novitii instituuntur ac probantur. Collegia, ubi de studiis literarum praecipue agitur. Domus professa, ubi professi et coadiutores spirituals cum suis temporalibus habitent, unde exercean omnia Societatis professae ministeria et omnem suam operam conferant ad salutem animarum et perfectionem. Reliquus est locus ille praeclarissimus atque amplissimus; non enim sunt hi homines vocati, ut tantum ex domibus animas iuvent, sed est praecipua eorum animi intentio ac finis, ut ubique terrarum quaerant quos Christo lucrifaciant; itaque perpetuo esse debent in peregrinationibus et missionibus, quocumque illos miserit vel Summus Pontifex vel eorum Praepositus in ministerium.”
15. Ibid., 773-774: “Ille est locus longe amplissimus et tam late patens quam orbis universus; quocumque enim in ministerium ad opem animabus ferendam mitti possunt, haec est horum theologorum habitatio praestantissima adque optatissima; sciunt enim esse sibi finem praestitutum, ut salutem omnium animarum procurent et perfectionem. Intelligunt propterea se vot illo quarto Pontifici Maximo esse obstrictos, ut universals misiones in animarum subsidium obeant ex illius imperio, quod est divinitus in universam Ecclesiam constitutum. Vident se tot domus vel aedificare vel obtinere non posse, ut ex propinquo excurrere ad pugnam possint. Haec quum ita sint, illam reputant esse quietissimam atque amoenissimam habitationem, si perpetuo peregrinare, orbem terrarum circumire, nullibi in suo habitare, semper esse egenos, semper mendicos, modo minima aliqua ex parte enitantur Christum Iesum imitari, qui non habebat ubi caput reclinaret, et totum tempus suae praedicationis in peregrinationibus exegit.” See also the important statements, pp. 442-444, and IV, 178-180
16. See my “The Fourth Vow in Its Ignatian Context: A Historical Study,” *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits*, XV, no. 1 (Januray, 1983). In that number of *Studies*, I comment upon several articles by J.M. Garcia de Madariaga relating to the fourth vow. Father Madariaga has meanwhile published a new article on this subject that has a section dealing specifically with Nadal, “La extension objectiva del 4. Voto en las Bulas del tiempo de San Ignacio,” *Manresa*, 55 (1983), 15-40, esp. 34-36. He does not cite or utilize the texts to which I call attention here. In the light of them, especially, I am afraid that I still remain unconvinced by Father Madariaga’s line of argumentation.

John Sheets, too, in “The Fourth Vow of the Jesuits,” *Review for Religious*, 42 (1983), 518-529, has taken issue with the position which was proposed in *Studies* for January, 1983. His criticisms are not convincing, in my opinion, nor is the alternative clear that he advances. (He rather inaccurately represents my position on some crucial point, I might add, especially pp. 520-522.) Father Sheets’ concern to assign to the vow as much spiritual relevance as possible is appropriate, but I have to disagree with him on what he seems to propose as the content of that relevance. In his article, moreover, Father sheets relies heavily on assertion, and he takes terms out of their historical context; while holding my methodology “suspect” (p.

- 522), he never clarifies or justifies his own. In any case, I believe that this present number of *Studies on Nadal*, which was already at the publishers several months before Father Sheets's article appeared, confirms and further articulates the interpretation of the vow that I originally argued.
17. *MonNad*, V, 755; "Universalis enim Ecclesiae sum summus Pontifex sit divina institutione Episcopus..."
  18. This is the direction in which de Margerie's line on arguments (see fn. 7 above) seems to lead, "El cuarto voto," esp. 369-373.
  19. *ConsMHSJ*, I, 162.
  20. See, e.g., *MonNad*, V, 470.
  21. See *Spiritual exercises*, [100].
  22. "The Idea of Pilgrimage in the Experience of Ignatius Loyola," *Church History*, 48 (1979), 387-397.
  23. *AHSJ*, 40 (1971), 323-390.
  24. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
  25. *Ibid.*
  26. Nadal, *Orationis Observationes*, ed. Miguel Nicolau in *MHSJ*, (Rome, 1964), p. 126 [316]: "Societas curam habet earum animarum de quibus vel nullus est qui curet vel, si quis debat curare, is negligenter curat. Haec est ratio institutionis Societatis, haec virtus, haec dignitas in Ecclesia." See also *MonNad*, IV, 696.
  27. See my *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 143-146.
  28. See, e.g., the variant reading, *MonNad*, V, 264.
  29. *Orationis Observationes*, p. 138 [379]: "Vocationi et institutioni Apostolorum, nostra vocatio similis; cognoscimus primum Societatem; deinde sequimur; 3°, docemur; 4°, accipimus facultatem ut mittamur; 5°, mittamur; 6°, sumus in ministerio; 7°, pro Christo mori parati in obeundis ministeriis." See also *MonNad*, V, 126.
  30. *Oratione Observationes*, p. 151 [41]: "Petrus firmitatem et directionem, Paulus nobis ministerium in Societate nostra significat, et adiuvat uterque ut ecclesiae Princeps."
  31. *MonNad*, V, 820-865. See also pp. 125-126, 341-343, 665-666, 786-788.
  32. *Ibid.*, V, 787: "Tertium, audire confessionem et emollire cor peccatoris atque movere per verbum Dei." See also p. 343.
  33. See my "De Guibert and Jesuit Authenticity," *Woodstock letters*, 95 (1966), 103-110, now reprinted in my *Rome and the Renaissance* (London, 1981), XIV. On a related issue, see Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Angels Black and White: Loyola's Spiritual Discernment in Historical Perspective," *Theological Studies*, 44 (1983), 241-257.