An Ignatian approach to virtue education

Author: Paul J. Shelton

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by Paul J. Shelton, S.J.

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Thesis Director: Mary Jo Iozzio
Second Reader: Joseph O'Keefe, S.J.
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Preface

The New York Times featured a provocative article in the April 27, 2014 Sunday Review entitled "Friends Can be Dangerous." The author of the article, Laurence Steinberg a professor of psychology from Temple University, details how he and his team of researchers have discovered how the presence of peers increases the amount of risks teenagers' take. Other studies from the same research group found similar results. College students were more likely to choose an immediate reward as opposed to delaying gratification when being watched by peers. And even mice were more likely to binge drink when surrounded by the mice with whom they were raised.

I could not help but think how appropriate this research was the day before I defended my STL thesis "An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education." My thesis suggests that many of the behaviors emerging adults engage in are detrimental to their moral development. I put forth an approach to religious education in hopes of addressing some of the risky behavior the research has shown emerging adults engage in. One of my solutions followed Aristotle in claiming friends can be virtuous. In light of Steinberg's research, my view of virtue education among friends either challenges cultural patterns or is a little misguided.

In general, "An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education" is written for secondary school educators who are interested in teaching virtue ethics from an Ignatian perspective. The thesis has three parts. The first start explores what Ignatian spirituality could offer religious education in terms of addressing behavior. In the field of Ignatian spirituality, I focus mainly on the *Spiritual Exercises*, the four-week retreat that St. Ignatius created in the 16th century to help people discover how they might best serve God. In my own analysis and reading of Ignatius, I notice that Ignatius firmly believed that people can actually encounter God through prayer and the series of prescribed exercises of his retreat. Through imaginative contemplation, a retreatant

might walk with Jesus on the road to Emmaus or eat fish with him on a beach in Galilee. Ignatius firmly believed that God speaks to people in their prayer. These imaginative prayers are not so imaginative, but rather conversations with God. In my thesis I suggest that Ignatian prayer, coming face to face with the divine, has an existential ethic. Knowing who God is, dialoguing with God about the type of person I am, carries a great potential to analyze behaviors. A retreatant thinks, "If God loves me and God acts this way, then maybe I should consider acting in a way more consistent with God's way."

Of course claiming one can speak to God is dangerous. Ignatius must have known this danger too well with the Inquisition often breathing down his neck. So in any Ignatian approach discernment becomes paramount. Put simply, religious discernment is the process by which one understands which prayers leads a person to good and which ones leads a person away from the good. Discernment is especially important for religious educators who employ prayer in their classrooms. When approached by a student concerning the content of the student's prayer, a teacher needs to have at least some facility in recognizing both what in prayer is leading a student deeper into God's love for her and what might be distracting, discouraging, or defeating in a student's prayer.

Utilizing prayer in the classroom and helping a student understand the prayer can present an opportunity for conversion of behaviors. The *Spiritual Exercises* hope to lead a person to choose God, both in the major decisions of one's life and also in quotidian choices. Praying in the Ignatian style is an instrument in a high school moral theology class to examine along a horizon of grace a student's behaviors.

I want my thesis to be practical. I hope a secondary education teacher might pick it up and be inspired to try some of my suggestions. With that in mind I devoted the second part of the

thesis to explaining virtue ethics and some terminology in the Christian virtue tradition. The hope of the second part is to demonstrate how the questions of virtue ethics (who am I? Whom ought I be? How can I be the person I ought?) might be employed in the classroom. Virtues ethics is teleological it looks at the end for which we are created. It hopes to support the claim of theologian James Keenan that "the fundamental task of the moral life is to develop a vision and strive to attain it."[1]

Virtue is important for framing a larger narrative. With that in mind I spend some space in my thesis discussing what is virtuous. In discussing excellence I wonder: What is excellence? How does excellence relate to past cultures and institutions? How do past articulations of excellence inform our present understanding of the excellence that defines virtue? In discussing habits I ponder: How are habits formed? Are habits merely formed as a result of our environment? Or, do they reflect our formation as well as our intending and our choosing? Our habits reveal both individually and collectively the type of people we are. They point to our values. Discussion of our habits is conducive to reflection on a larger narrative. Likewise, I discuss moral exemplars, those paradigms of virtue, because they also reflect what our institutions value. These general questions begin to turn students inwards to the particulars of their own lives.

Prudence becomes so vital for this thesis, any really any discussion of virtue, becomes it directs individuals in regards to the particularities of virtue. For instance, we might have a general sense of the virtue of hospitality through dialogue and past exemplars, but prudence helps us discover and evaluate how virtue might look in our own particularities. In the classroom friends, classmates, and teachers can help unmask negative prejudices people might carry that

[11] Daniel Harrington and James Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between the New Testament and Moral Theology* (Lanham, Md: Sheed & Ward, 2010), 4.

affect their ability to find prudent forms of virtue. The classroom is a public square to carry out dialogue about both the general nature of virtue and also the particularities of virtue that affect people's lives. Ideally, this second part of this thesis is showing how the classroom might be a place for prudent reflection.

After discussing prudence, I spend some time offering a definition of the virtue of hospitality. I do this so that a teacher might have an example of content should she wish to try for herself what I propose in chapter 3. I also go to great lengths to show the New Testament's understanding of hospitality through the actions of the paradigm of virtue in the New Testament, Jesus. Further, I list three traits that help form an understanding of hospitality: openness, attentiveness, and commitment. Hospitality is essential to teaching virtue. If students are to participate in virtuous discussion in the classroom, then they need to be receptive to the ideas of other students, attentive to both the discussion and to the person talking, and committed to the process of virtue education. The teacher uses her own prudence to discern how best to establish a hospitable classroom.

The third and final section of this thesis, offers a small contribution to the field of practical theology by offering a way to engage in transformative education. This chapter is particularly bold given some of the serious methodological limitations I encounter, mainly, the lack of other practitioners and its genesis in my own experience teaching at an all-boys Catholic high school. I wondered why offer specific steps at all. But ultimately, I deemed having a model to critique might be the best way to start a conversation about what exactly is occurring in classes dedicated to moral formation in high school theology classrooms. What I offer pushes forward notions that are often deemed unrealistic or impossible in contemporary theological education—creating classrooms full of friends, assigning particular behaviors, which I call

VirtueLabs, and utilizing class time to pray with the specific hope of sparking an opportunity for conversion. This five-step method also lays out explicitly the importance of prudence in an educating for virtue.

I finish the thesis by noting its many limitations, chief among them its methodological limitations, and by also comparing it to Thomas Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis* and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. My hope for this work is that someone will pick it up off a shelf in a library one day and say that is an interesting idea. It is a living document to be amended, challenged, practiced, and critiqued. I believe both Ignatian spirituality and virtue ethics have the potential to stem the tide of the slow death of virtue by consumerist societies like American capitalism. This death is real. In the words of Alasdair C. MacIntyre: "We should therefore expect that if in a particular society the pursuit of external goods were to become dominant, the concept of the virtues might suffer first attrition and then perhaps something near total effacement."[2] Virtue education in the Ignatian tradition turns the focus back to teleology, to the inner goods necessary for attaining humanity's highest ends.

[2] Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 183.

Introduction

Religious education in the American Catholic Church has undergone a significant shift in the twentieth century. It shifted away from primarily emphasizing a method reliant upon memorization through didactic questions and answers as evidenced by the *Baltimore Catechism* to one embracing variations of the Munich Method developed by Dr. A. Weber in 1898. Weber's three-step method of presentation, exposition, and application developed into practical theology, which has at its methodological core a dialogue between personal experience and the Christian tradition. This shift in focus of the method of religious education from didactic catechisms to practical theology became so omnipresent that Thomas Groome has described practical theology as "the new praxis paradigm" in 1987.[3]

At the same time that this shift in method for religious education was occurring, a solipsistic morality of "It is all about me" emerged out of the shadows of American consumerism. Many emerging adults, young people between the ages of 18-25, took their behavioral cues from the cultural of American capitalism instead of following the mores set forth by religious educators. Wondering whether there is a method to address the gap between the behaviors being taught by religious educators and the behaviors being practiced by emerging adults is the principal exploration of this thesis. *I suggest an Ignatian approach to virtue education as a method in practical theology to address the moral crisis of behaviors facing contemporary emerging adults*. This thesis and this method is designed for secondary education teachers so as to give a structure for classroom reflection on the practices of emerging adults through the lens of virtue. It also offer three small, yet hopefully helpful, ways of finessing two

[3] Thomas Groome, "Theology on Our Feet: A Revisionist Pedagogy for Healing the Gap Between Academia and Ecclesia," in *Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology*, ed. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 66.

common methods of practical theology with 3 unique emphases. The methods of practical theology which I rely upon are Shared Christian Praxis and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. The three emphases are: an insistence upon reflecting on virtue in the presence of friends, explicitly teaching and demonstrating prudence, and practicing forms of the Christian virtues.

The thesis has three parts. The first part describes an Ignatian approach. Here, I explore how St. Ignatius of Loyola's famous four-week spiritual retreat, *The Spiritual Exercises*, provides: a graced encounter with God, reflection on the nature of one's discipleship, and an opportunity for conversion to its retreatants. In particular, I show how the *Spiritual Exercises* are conducive in helping direct someone to individual and social transformation in Christ. The second part examines how virtue ethics calls a person to consider amending his/her life in light of that transformation. Insofar as this method relies on virtue for its content, it will be important to explore what virtue is and how it functions for an individual. I will pay particular attention to the virtue of prudence as the director of the other virtues, engaging a particular virtue in a particular moment as right reason about what needs to be done. Prudence understands the context of a given situation and calls on other virtues to supply content for an action. Thus as prudence is only understood through an examination of another virtue, I will also present the example of the virtue of hospitality in order that prudence might be better understood. The virtue of hospitality is important for this work as it is the virtue to which I return to demonstrate the method in the third and final part of the thesis. In this last section, I will present my development of a five-step Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education, note its limitations, and then observe some of the similarities and differences it has to Shared Christian Praxis and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm.

Before proceeding, it will be important to present some background information concerning the nature of the moral crisis facing emerging adults today. Two questions provide an ingress into our current cultural context: In what behaviors do emerging adults participate? How are their behaviors problematic and inconsistent with the religious mores of the Catholic Church?

Background

Scholars and commentators in religion have turned to sociology in droves in the last decade in hopes of understanding the significance of practices in the formation of faith. One of the most influential voices engaged in this research has been the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) conducted by Christian Smith with Melinda Denton from 2002-2005. The results of this study, detailed in the book *Soul Searching,* conclude that most teenagers believe not so much in the tenets of traditional faith but rather in what Smith has dubbed "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism."[4] In short, Smith and his collaborators postulated that Moralistic Therapeutic Deism could be summarized by five guiding beliefs:

1. A god exists who created and orders the world and watches over life.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God is not involved in my life except when I need God to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.[5]

Interesting about Smith's study is that he refuses to place the blame for the development of these beliefs solely at the feet of young people. Adults have played a significant part in the moral

[4] Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[5] Ibid., 162-3.

development of emerging adults. Smith emphasizes this point in his subsequent follow-up study of the same young adults he surveyed as they entered emerging adulthood (ages 18-23):

> The families, schools, religious communities, sports teams, and other voluntary organizations of civil society are failing to provide many young people with the kind of moral education and training needed for them to realize, that for example, that moral individualism and relativism make no sense, that they cannot be reasonably defended or sustained, that some alternative view must be necessary if we are to be at all reasonable when it comes to moral concerns. Colleges and universities appear to be playing a part in this failure as well.[6]

Smith argues that there has been a significant breakdown in the transmission of faith because the adults that populate the organizations, institutions, and families charged with such transmission struggle with their own faith. Kendra Dean, in her own analysis of the faith of teenagers, comes to a similar conclusion noticing "adolescents' tendency to mirror the religious lives of their parents."[7] If there is a crisis of faith, then it is present among all generations of Americans existing throughout our religious and civic institutions.

The faith passed down to American teenagers and emerging adults has largely been Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. If people believe in this faith, then what actions do they practice? Smith sums up the moral beliefs of this generation in one phrase, "Just don't be an asshole, that's all."[8] Smith's pithy summation of the morality of emerging adults is his way to talk about the extreme solipsism among many emerging adults concerning both their attitudes about what is right and their actions. As long as another person's behavior does not hurt someone else, then, so Smith suggests, it is acceptable, or at least not wrong. For instance, adopting a Moralistic Therapeutic Deist mindset might lead to a student cheating on an examination. He finds his

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[6] Christian Smith, *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 61.
[7] Kendra Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 24.
[8] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 163-4.

cheating acceptable because he thinks that his actions did not hurt anyone. This hypothetical cheater imagines that he is the only possible person who could be hurt from his actions because he does not learn the material on the exam. He does not consider how the material may be needed in the future to avoid some harm nor does he consider the wider context of justice owed to his classmates or to his teacher. When thinking in this manner, an emerging adult lacks the moral framework to navigate a morally complex world.

Emerging adults' inability to navigate complexity should come as little surprise. Our institutions and families have failed to pass on a sufficient moral framework. Ross Douthat, in his examination of some of the intellectual misgivings of American Christians, traces the origin of the triumph of sentimentality to a shifting of the *locus* of God from a balance between the exterior (neighbors, organized religions, the family) and the interior (inside of the individual) to a *locus* of God exclusively within.[9] "The God Within," as Douthat labels it, is inspired by spiritual writers like Elizabeth Gilbert, Paulo Coehlo, and Eckhart Tolle and has four principal tenets.[10] First, organized religion only offers partial glimpses of God because God must be accessed through feeling rather than reason. Second, God resides within our own souls. Third, hell is only the hell that we create on Earth; there is no way our actions might ultimately exclude us from God's love. Fourth, happiness is always accessible to us since it resides within us.[11] While there is certainly value to a greater self-awareness, Douthat notes how the belief in the *locus* of God as solely within someone has troublesome consequences. For one, this turn within kills religious

[9] Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (New York: Free Press, 2012).
[10] Ibid., 216-7.
[11] Douthat's point here is furthered by the whole field of positive psychology which attempts to quantify and measure happiness. For an example of such research see, Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).

practice. Thus, a person might find meaning in the Roman Catholic Mass, but the dogma that undergirds the Mass and sustains the practice of attending Mass, the belief in the Eucharist as the body and blood of Christ, becomes ancillary to personal experience.[12] Second, Douthat understands that this focus on a personal divinity quickly leads to solipsism.[13] Morality, the ability to examine and evaluate which actions lead to communal and personal fulfillment, yields to a personal religion to sentimentality. This sentimentalism allows a person to claim that any action is acceptable as long as it is good for the actor: "Just don't be an asshole, that's all." Analyzing some practices will demonstrate just how deeply the maxim "Just don't be an asshole, that's all" resides in many emerging adults.

One disconcerting practice that has arisen among emerging adults has been a pervasive experimentation with sex during the years before adulthood. A quick glance at the statistics concerning emerging adults and sexual practice is illuminative. One such statistic from Christian Smith's study reveals that "Among 18-23 year olds, 71 percent have had oral sex and 73 percent have had sexual intercourse."[14] Smith does not present these statistics to force his own morality upon the reader. Rather, his interviews with emerging adults about their sexual experiences (and there is great variance among them) reveal that "sexual freedom is accompanied by real, hurt, grief, anger, and regrets."[15] One young woman interviewed captured the zeitgeist concerning sex in saying, "I think obviously sex is no longer sacred, and people are just giving it away like animals, so sex has just lost its value and sacredness."[16] This response highlights that this young woman views sex differently than the religious teachings portrayed by the major religions.

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[12] Douthat, *Bad Religion*, 228.
[13] Ibid., 230.
[14] Smith, *Lost in Transition,* 148-9.
[15] Ibid., 148.
[16] Ibid., 180.

Attitudes such as this young woman's tend to reflect attitudes more closely aligned to viewing sex through the lens of escapism or utility as opposed to adopting a Catholic mentality, which upholds sexual intercourse as a sacred act. The movie *Don John* explored just this dynamic as the protagonist, a twenty-something bachelor in New Jersey, portrayed by Joseph Gordon Levitt, describes his daily viewing of pornography not as an addiction, but as an escape.[17] The 'hurt, grief, anger, and regrets' emerging adults carry from their sexual experiences may actually prevent them from investing in a relationship with God. Jae, a 21 year-old former Catholic of Christian Smith's third study of young Catholics, seemed to hint at a latent shame when describing his hesitancy to attend Mass: "If I went back to church I would have to change so much about myself. I just do not want to get into that now. I feel like there is a lot of effort in following a religion, and with all that is going on in my life right now, I just do not want to get into that…It's just easier to not follow a religion."[18] Jae's actions make him assume that God would demand he change himself. While the thoughts of Jae concerning God's moral demands for him might be correct, it is just easier for Jae to continue the practices giving him pause than to put effort into examining the nature of his choice concerning these practices.

In addition to separating a sexual act from its moral value, emerging adults experiment with alcohol pervasively. The NSYR data on alcohol consumption, like the data on sex, is revealing. Without rehearsing the entirety of the survey's data, one statistic is particularly telling: of the 78% of college aged emerging adults who reported drinking, 60% of those surveyed reported binge drinking in the previous two weeks.[19] It should be noted that practicing faith does affect behaviors around alcohol as Smith discovered that a practicing Catholic is less likely to

[17] *Don John*, directed by Joseph Gordon Levitt (Voltage Pictures, 2013), DVD (20th Century Fox, 2013).
[18] Smith, *Young Catholic America*, 93.
[19] Smith, *Lost in Transition,* 111.

binge drink than a non-practicing Catholic.[20] Many emerging adults tend to forgo the mean of the virtue of temperance in terms of their practices of alcohol consumption. The deleterious effects of over-consumption do not seem to be part of their calculus of choice in regard to human action. Instead, emerging adults view their time in college as detached from society at large. "College is not so much a time to develop personal and intellectual breadth and depth and to learn how to critically engage the world. It is more typically viewed as a kind of holding pen, a place of limbo students occupy until they receive their diplomas that will usher them into the real world."[21] Emerging adults do not feel a part of the "real world." Therefore, in many of their own minds, their decisions in college, or in the later stages of high school, will not affect the people whom they will become as adults. Or, slightly more positively, it is safer for an emerging adult to blend into the normative youth drinking culture than to open oneself to the heavy emotional work that marks the transition from youth to adulthood. Somewhere along the way, American culture assumed the lessons learned in college were sufficient for transitioning a person from a youth to an adult. Current behaviors concerning sex and alcohol have proven otherwise. This moral abandonment, the failure to instill certain moral attitudes, of people ages 18-23 by older generations has had grave consequences for the transmission of faith.[22]

Finally, the statistics presented by NYSR suggest that a majority of emerging adults "appear quite disposed to materialism and consumerism."[23] Emerging adults differ about how

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[20] Smith, *Young Catholic America*, 210.
[21] Smith, *Lost in Transition*, 120.
[22] Dean, *Almost Christian*, 24.
[23] Smith, *Lost in Transition*, 70-71. Admittedly the statistics here are a little more confusing than in other parts of the survey. For instance, "65% of people reported that shopping or buying gives them pleasure." There is no data about a person's motivation for shopping. A person might enjoy shopping to please someone else. Moreover, a person might be indoctrinated by advertising to want to buy more than they actually desire to purchase. The point here is to show how exposed Americans, specifically, emerging adults are to consumerism. This differs markedly from

much consumerist consumption is enough. The data from NYSR does suggest that emerging adults refuse to render a judgment on other people's consumption. Morally this refusal is "the avoidance of making any evaluative judgments of anyone's consumption habits."[24] As one respondent to the survey captured in her reflection on consumption, "'People should get things if it works for them, if that's what they want.'"[25] When it comes to consumption, emerging adults allow other persons to consume as much as they want. Patterns of consumption extend also to individual religious practices. For many, religious practices have become a consumer good. Many people treat religious observance as a consumer would, relegating the practice of it as merely a therapeutic device, or a "spiritual comfort food."[26] As long as this or that liturgical observance makes someone happy, it should be sought. If it does not, it could be avoided. For instance, a person stops attending Mass because the theme of suffering makes him uncomfortable. Sacred devotion and worship, like everything else, is one way out of many to help a person feel good about oneself.

These three statistical examples of the type of behaviors many emerging adults engage in might paint an overly harsh portrait of the millennial generation. For all of the negative behavior noted above, today's emerging adults certainly have their virtues. For instance, emerging adults are much more accepting and tolerant of a wide spectrum of sexual orientations. In my own

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Christians in other parts of the world. For instance, a Spanish theologian, Victor Codina, S.J., living in Cochabamba, Bolivia, wrote on how the simplicity of the people in the barrios engenders affection for God. So much so, some campesinos will use the informal diminutive term "Diosito" for God. A situation unimaginable for people in the First World who "muchas veces presentan una imagen de un Dios Todopoderoso y Omnipotente más cercana a los señores feudales y reyes de la tierra, a los terratenientes y grandes empresarios y financieros, a los ricos y poderosos del Primer mundo." Codina's observations highlight how the situation that we are exposed to affects how we imagine God. Victor Codina, *Diosito Nos Acompaña Siempre y Otros Escritos al Filo del Camino* (Cochabamba, Bolivia: Kipus, 2013), 18.

[24] Smith, *Lost in Transition,* 74.

[25] Ibid., 75

[26] Douthat, *Bad Religion*, 230.

experience as a teacher in Milwaukee, Wisconsin I was surprised about easily and quickly many of my students accepted their gay peers' "coming-out" stories. This response differed markedly from the gossip and quiet condemnation that existed in my own high school experience just ten years ago. Today's youth also have a much greater global consciousness and awareness of societal injustices. Their digital upbringing has opened channels of communication in new, exciting ways that has fostered solidarity between them and the problems of the world. In Smith's study on young Catholics, one of the participants, Steve, wavered with his religious commitments but still maintained a strong interest in acting ethically saying: "And at least in terms of social justice, following Christian teachings, like putting others before yourself, I still think that is pretty important to me."[27] While the precise origin of Steve's concern for doing good is unknown, the culture has shaped him to care about being good. Acceptance and a global consciousness are just two examples of some of positive and life giving trends of the millennial generation.[28] The data on this generation and their behaviors offers mixed results.

The data about the type of behaviors emerging adults engage is mixed. My focus on the negative behaviors seeks to highlight many emerging adults' struggle to successfully navigate a few serious issues. I have relied upon Christian Smith's data because it presents a critical observation for the religious educator. A morality that is shaped in absence of cultural and institutional mentors lacks sufficient sophistication to engage many of the complexities of our world. We adults pass on such a moral framework because we often engage in the same rather meaningless practices. The adult world, specifically religious education, in isolating emerging

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[27] Smith, *Young Catholic America*, 96.

[28] One could easily add to a list other positive traits of the millennial generation such academic competence, optimism, service orientation, and civic engagement, and friendliness. There is much research on this topic. For one example see Karen T. Pardue and Patricia Morgan, "Millennials Considered: A New Generation, New Approaches, and Implications for Nursing Education," *Nursing Education Perspective* 29.2 (March/April 2008): 74-79.

adults to confront these issues on their own, has left a void in which Moralistic Therapeutic Deism has taken shape. In *Young Catholic America*, Christian Smith concludes that "once they leave high school previously Catholic schooled emerging adults appear no more religious than their peers."[29] While this observation about the effectiveness of Catholic schooling needs to be tempered with factors (such as the family backgrounds of students, previous educational experience of students, context of the school beyond the classroom, ethnic differences, and gender differences), the data does suggest something is amiss with how moral education is occurring in Catholic schools, and to a larger extent, in American society. Emerging adults are in many instances abandoned to confront moral issues in the absence of cultural and societal mentors.

This abandonment of the youth seems accidental, a result of the growing superficiality of the Internet Age. Adolfo Nicolás, General Superior of the Society of Jesus, intimates this concern when addressing the challenge of Jesuit Higher Education:

> When one is overwhelmed with such a dizzying pluralism of choices and values and beliefs and visions of life, then one can so easily slip into the lazy superficiality of relativism or mere tolerance of others and their views, rather than engaging in the hard work of forming communities of dialogue in the search of truth and understanding. It is easier to do as one is told than to study, to pray, to risk, or to discern a choice.[30]

It seems that Christian societies have preferred of late not to engage in the difficult work of moral formation. The abandonment of religious commitments has had disastrous effects for the spiritual lives of Christians, especially those on the margins, as Pope Francis notes in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*: "The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is

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[29] Smith, *Young Catholic America*, 243.

[30] Adolfo Nicolás, Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today" (paper presented at the Networking Jesuit Higher Education: Shaping the Future for a Humane, Just, Sustainable Globe, Mexico City, April 23, 2010), 2, http://www.sjweb.info/documents/ansj/100423_Mexico%20City_Higher%20Education%20Today_ENG.pdf.

by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no longer room for the poor."[31] Francis's words remind Christians that the cost of investing too much in oneself leads to the neglect of those who most need attention. Adults have invested too much in themselves and not enough in forming the generations behind them. This is a moral crisis. The moral crisis facing religious educators is whether religious education can lead people outside of themselves and into a greater commitment to love of God and neighbor. Can religious education interrupt and re-orientate people in this digital age? How can our institutions, civic organizations, sports teams, volunteer societies, families, and mentors transmit the faith in a vibrant way to emerging adults? This Ignatian approach to virtue education offers a method to begin to address these questions. It is an approach developed with the formative experiences of the *Spiritual Exercises* and my own attempts mentoring young men at an all-boys Jesuit high school through teaching virtue ethics. To understand my approach to religious education, I begin by detailing the contours of "An Ignatian Approach" in chapter 1.

[31] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (24 November 2013), §2, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

Chapter 1: An Ignatian Approach

As a Jesuit, I find that the *Spiritual Exercises* influence much of what I do. In fact, this influence seems to be normative for Jesuits as "the common life of the Society of Jesus is closely connected to the experience of the Exercises."[32] It should be of little surprise then that my attempt to put forth a method of religious education that challenges emerging adults to embrace virtuous behavior is influenced by the *Spiritual Exercises*. In what follows, it will be important to explore the essential inner dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises* as it greatly influences the model I am proposing for religious education. These dynamics are: a graced encounter with God, reflection on one's experience, and an opportunity for conversion. Before discussing these inner dynamics, it will be important to understand some of the key terminology, history, and the purpose of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

What are the Spiritual Exercises?

The *Spiritual Exercises* are a collection of meditative resources designed to help a person prepare and dispose her soul in hopes of ridding her soul of any disordered affections in order that she might seek and find God's will for her.[33] The text of the *Exercises* is not a book to be read by the person undergoing the *Exercises*. Rather, another person, a director, who has undergone the *Exercises* herself, should give the *Exercises* to the retreatant. The retreat is divided

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[32] Philip Endean, "The Spiritual Exercises," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, edited by Thomas Worcester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 52.

[33] Saint Ignatius, *Ignatius of Loyola: the Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, edited by George E., Ganss (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), No. 1. Hereafter, I will refer to Ignatius's retreat as the *Exercises* in the text and this edition as *Spiritual Exercises* in the footnotes. I also will use the term "retreatant" to refer to a person who undergoes some form or adaptation of the retreat. Lastly, I will use feminine pronouns to refer to the retreatant here in chapter 1 to maintain a consistent voice. Obviously, the *Exercises* can be given to men just as easily as to women.

into four weeks and each "Week" or movement stresses a different grace. Thus, the grace of the First Week for the retreatant is to come to know God's love for her despite her past sins, while Weeks 2 through 4 ask for the grace to allow the retreatant come to an interior knowledge of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By following the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the *Exercises* hope the grace of God will shape the retreatant into an *alter Christus* upon completing the retreat.

The *Exercises* can be given to a person in multiple forms because it is readily adaptable to the needs of the individual retreatant. The adaptations of the *Exercises* that Ignatius envisioned are listed in Nos. 1-22 of the *Exercises*, referred also as annotations. The key to any successful adaptation is the creation of a structure or context able to help a person encounter God's grace directly. Accordingly, the director of a retreatant should "not to lean or incline in either direction, but rather, while standing like the pointer of a scale in equilibrium, to allow the Creator to deal directly with the creature and the creature with the Creator and Lord."[34] Ignatius insists on this point of unmediated contact between God and the retreatant because at the heart of his own conversion was God's grace. "It was a religious transformation that proved decisive for the mature Iñigo…a sense of gratitude of having been created and redeemed moved Iñigo at his conversion in 1521. After that religious conversion, intellectual, moral, and affective, and social transformations followed."[35] An encounter with God completely reshaped all aspects of the life of Ignatius. Ignatius, in his wisdom, realized that everybody could benefit from such an encounter. He designed the retreat in such a way that admitted there are many ways a person

[34] *Spiritual Exercises*, No. 15.
[35] Carlos Coupeau, "Five Personae of Ignatius of Loyola," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, edited by Thomas Worcester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 33.

encounters God. Therefore, he encouraged great flexibility in order that the *Exercises* might be a space where God could deal directly with a human being.

The most common adaptations of the *Exercises* are the 18th and 19th annotations of the retreat. The 18th annotation focuses on giving the retreat in such a way that the retreatant receives the grace of the First Week, i.e., coming to know oneself as a loved sinner. Ignatius strongly encouraged giving the 18th annotation vigorously as witnessed in a commissioned letter to Filippo Leerno on February 3, 1544, written by Juan de Polanco. In the letter, Ignatius exhorts that: "We should endeavor to make use of them with both men and women...This [reminder from Ignatius] refers to giving the *Exercises* of the First Week and leaving persons with some method of prayer suitable to their capacity."[36] Ignatius's words point to his belief that everyone should experience the grace of First Week. The 18th annotation is a retreat for everybody. The 19th annotation is an adaptation to lead a person through the entirety of the *Exercises*. It is an adaptation because it allows the *Exercises* to be given slowly over the course of six months or a year as opposed to the uninterrupted 30-day silent retreat that the *Exercises* is structured upon. The 19th annotation of the retreat should be given more sparingly as seen from Ignatius words in the same letter to Filippo Leerno. "In giving the full *Exercises*, there is no need to be so expansive; in fact, these should be given only to particularly apt subjects, such as men suited to the Society and persons of particular importance, since for these persons they would be particularly valuable and time well spent."[37] The full *Exercises*, whether the 30-day silent retreat or the 19th annotation, are designed to direct people toward a decision about a state of life or how to shape the larger society in a Christian manner. The 18th annotation is offered more frequently

[36] *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions,* eds. Martin E. Palmer, John W. Padberg, and John L. McCarthy (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 468.
[37] Ibid., 469.

than the 19th annotation because it is more universal: everybody needs to know God's love for them despite their sinfulness while not everyone is at a stage of life where they will choose a particular vocation or how they may be called to shape Christian society.

Ignatius's letter to Leerno points to the principal tension in interpreting the essential aim of the *Exercises*. There are two principal interpretations of the purpose or essential aim of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The first interpretation is "the conquest of self and the regulation of one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment."[38] This is the most common interpretation of the *Exercises*. The *Exercises* aid a person in freeing herself from the things which are hindering her from better serving God. The second interpretation, and the one preferred in this thesis, is that the *Exercises* are "meant to be a school of prayer or an instrument in bringing one into union with God."[39] In this interpretation of the *Exercises*, the aim is simply union with God. This aim might mean someone makes a major life decision, an Election in Ignatian terms, or not.

It is the ready adaptability of the *Exercises* that make it a fecund resource for a high school classroom: some of the dynamics of the retreat can be adapted to the high school classroom to assist young people in evaluating the nature of their discipleship. The *Exercises* can assist emerging adults in reflecting upon their behaviors through the lens of a graced encounter with God. This reflection can lead to discerning how God might be calling them to act in the future. The result of this discernment can be conversion, changing one's behaviors to align more with the person Christ wants her to be.

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[38] *Spiritual Exercises*, No. 21.
[39] John J. English, S.J., *Spiritual Freedom: From an Experience of the Ignatian Exercises to the Art of Spiritual Guidance* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1995), 18.

A Graced Encounter

The program of prayer, of spiritual exercise, suggested by Ignatius in the *Exercises* is a way wherein a human may come to desire in accord with Jesus' desire. Coming to know the desire of Jesus is discovered in a few ways. One way a retreatant aligns her desires is by asking God for help in the matter at hand. Ignatius asks the retreatant at the beginning of every prayer to align her prayer to the desires of God. This preparatory prayer is "to ask God our Lord for the grace that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be ordered purely to the praise and service of the divine majesty."[40] Prayer begins not with the individual asking what she wants from prayer but rather her asking that her interior life be aligned with Jesus' desires. Ignatius instructs also that a retreatant asks for "an interior knowledge of Our Lord"[41] before contemplating the Scriptures.

A second way of encountering God and coming to desire as Jesus desires is found in the contemplation of scenes from the Gospel. An Ignatian contemplation typically has three points: "you begin by focusing on what the scene looks like; then you consider what the characters are saying; finally you ponder what the characters might be doing."[42] The goal of these contemplations is for the retreatant to enter the scene. For example, a retreatant might be a disciple walking next to Jesus as he performs a miracle. She first creates the details of the scene in her imaginative prayer. During her walk with Jesus, the retreatant freely lets her imagination ponder what it is to be near Jesus. What does he look like? What is the weather like that day? Who are all the characters in the scene? The retreatant then begins to ponder the dialogue of the scene: How does Jesus talk to me? To the other characters? Finally, the retreatant considers the

[40] *Spiritual Exercises*, No. 22.
[41] Ibid., No. 104.
[42] Endean, "The Spiritual Exercises," 54.

action of the scene: How does Jesus interact with the people around him? How am I responding to Jesus? The imaginative contemplation of the Scriptural scene allows the retreatant to create a short film of a Gospel scene in her head in which she is one of the main characters.

Imaginative prayer might seem like an act of fancy. It is not. Ignatian contemplation admits the possibility that God can indeed speak to humans through a graced use of one's imagination. The intimate knowledge of Jesus comes to its zenith at the final movement of Ignatian prayer: the colloquy. Ignatian prayer asks that a dialogue with God about the contemplation marks the conclusion of a contemplative prayer period. Sometimes this dialogue will be focused on gratitude as seen through this instruction found in the First Week: "Conclude with a colloquy extolling God our Lord, pouring out my thoughts to God and giving thanks to God up to this moment God has granted me life."[43] Other times it will be to bring the desires of one's heart to God for feedback as seen in this colloquy following a meditation on the Nativity of the Lord in the Second Week: "I will beg favors according to what I perceive in my heart, that I may better follow and imitate God our Lord, who in this way has recently become a human being."[44] The movements of the heart, the desires of the retreatant, are the material the retreatant brings before God for conversation and feedback.

Ignatian prayer allows the retreatant to know herself and her desires amidst a horizon of grace. In the First Week, the retreatant comes to know the particular ways in which she has failed to strive to love God and neighbor. She is contemplating how she has said 'no' to God's ongoing 'yes.' The retreatant feels compunction and sorrow for her sinful behaviors. Jesus, consequently, teaches her how to see anew with graced eyes: one is learning to see as Jesus sees, to love as Jesus loves. The lengthy Ignatian prayer periods intend the cultivation of a spiritual virtue, of

[43] *Spiritual Exercises,* No. 61.
[44] Ibid., No. 109.

sorts, as they draw the retreatant to imitate Jesus. Philip Endean stresses this mystical encounter along the horizon of grace by noticing how Karl Rahner connects such encounters to our self understanding: "The existence of grace has implications for our own understanding...What Christianity has regularly proclaimed about the divine presence in Jesus must also in some way apply to any graced creature."[45] In being able to sort through her desires with Jesus in prayer, the retreatant comes to a humble understanding that her desires can be holy if they reflect Jesus's desires. She has the potential through her actions to love and serve God through an incarnation of her own divine calling.[46] The *Exercises* establish the groundwork for an encounter with God in which an individual, moved by grace, can then choose the way in which her discipleship will look. "Ignatius confines himself to formal principles, setting out the framework in which Christian discipleship can take on an infinite variety of forms."[47] Meeting Jesus in prayer invites the retreatant to embrace a new self-hermeneutic of a creature who exists along the horizon of grace. The significant challenge presented by this encounter with God along the horizon of grace is discerning the good movements of the soul from the bad movements of the soul.

Reflecting on One's Experience: Discernment

Discernment, broadly considered, refers to the process whereby one comes to make a good decision regarding this or that choice. Religious discernment dates all the way back to our Christian ancestors, like St. Antony of Egypt (251-356 CE), who believed in spiritual combat, a

[45] Phillip Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality* (Oxford, UK, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 38.
[46] Ibid., 242-43.
[47] Ibid., 243.

tug between evil and good spirits.[48] If God's grace could move a soul, then so too could an evil spirit.[49] Religious discernment aims at recognizing the difference between the good and evil spirits in order that the one discerning might choose the good.

In the *Exercises*, discernment aids the director in helping the retreatant understand the type of experience she is having in prayer. The director should expect that "the retreatant should experience movements of both attraction towards God and repulsion away from God - or, to use the technical terms *consolation* and *desolation*."[50] Because competing spirits will move the retreatant, Ignatius inserts two sets of Rules for Discernment at the conclusion of the *Exercises*.[51] These rules are trying to make sense of interior movements in prayer so that the retreatant might choose the good motions. For instance, Ignatius writes in No. 318: "During a time of desolation one should never make a change. Instead, one should remain firm and constant in the resolutions and in the decision which one had on the day before the desolation, or the decision in which one was during a previous time of consolation." During the course of the First Week, for example, a retreatant during a time of previous consolation might have decided to spend 30 minutes a day in prayer following the retreat. This amendment is an action consonant with her Christian discipleship in that she feels praying more will help her better know Jesus. A few days after this resolution is made, she feels far from God and self-loathing begins to creep into her. She does not think herself capable of devoting that much time to prayer. She suddenly wants to undo her resolution because she wishes not to fail. The director's job in listening to this woman is to help

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[48] Elisabeth Koenig, "Discernment," *Spirituality & Health Magazine* (May-June 2003), http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA203131321&v=2.1&u=mlin_m_bostcoll&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=8e53e327ceacde7cc629536dc66420c1.

[49] John Carroll Futrell, S.J., "Ignatian Discernment," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 2.2 (April 1970): 73.

[50] Endean, "The Spiritual Exercises," 61.

[51] See Nos. 313-327 for the rules of discernment governing a retreatant in the First Week and Nos. 328-36 in the *Spiritual Exercises* for the rules of discernment governing the Second Week.

her name the desolation, brainstorm some practical solutions out of the desolation (No. 319), and counsel her to remain with her previous resolution. The Rules of Discernment are a great resource for helping people recognize movements in their lives and help them get in touch with God's desires for them.

Discernment also requires a tremendous amount of indifference on the parts of both the director and the retreatant. The goal of discernment is to choose what one believes to be God's will, not to choose the most "practical" or "sensible" path. This discernment might sound easy enough but our human prejudices naturally influence our thought processes. Ignatius understood this influence as he wrote asking a retreatant "not to seek health rather than sickness, wealth rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, a long life rather than a short life and so on in all other matters."[52] Ignatian choosing, whatever the cost, is to "praise, reverence, and serve God."[53] No person represents the stark indifference Ignatius calls for more than that of someone who predated the Ignatian Exercises, Sir Thomas More. Thomas More refused to bend to Henry VIII's ecclesial revolution by not signing the Act of Succession and the Oath of Supremacy in 1535. More knew that the consequences of his actions would lead to his sudden removal from his beloved daughters and, ultimately, his death. Yet, More persisted in his decision to follow God's will in the matter, famously declaring in a letter to his daughter Margaret in 1535: "Nothing can come but what God wills. And I am very sure that whatever that be, however bad it may seem, it shall indeed be the best."[54] Now, it is unclear whether God wanted Thomas More to be a martyr. What is clear is that Thomas More believed that the will of God was that he not bow to the will

[52] *Spiritual Exercises*, No. 23.
[53] Ibid.
[54]The Crossroads Initiative, "Letter of St. Thomas More to his daughter Margaret," Library (no date), http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_article/950/Letter_of_St_Thomas_More_to_His_Daughter_Margaret.html.

of Henry. More's belief enabled him to be indifferent to the suffering that would follow. Likewise, if Thomas More had a spiritual director, then the director also would have been required to be indifferent, "in order to carry out faithfully the task entrusted to him."[55] For both the retreatant and the director, both should be indifferent to outcomes so that "God might deal with the creature directly." Discernment is a process of knowing the good spirit from the evil spirit and choosing the good spirit, regardless of the outcome. "When we properly go through a process of discernment we achieve certitude that God wants us to make a particular decision, even when that decision is, in fact, to accomplish the opposite of what God actually wants to happen in the world."[56] Discernment is the ability to be indifferent enough to notice how the spirit of God is moving an individual to choose, and making a free, graced decision.

Understanding discernment matters greatly for a high school teacher committed to an Ignatian approach to education. The teacher serves as a sort of director, albeit in a different capacity than in a retreat setting. In the classroom the teacher directs a room of people instead of the one-on-one direction that is ideal for a retreat. Moreover, in spiritual direction, a person chooses this relationship, while high school students do not necessarily choose to be in a particular class. So, a teacher must be sensitive to these possible limitations and gaging the relative freedom of each student to enter into the dynamics of the *Exercises*, given the exigencies of peer pressure and mandatory attendance.

If the teacher can create an environment suitable for Ignatian prayer in a classroom, then the teacher has to be comfortable in assisting a student in discerning what horizon her prayer is

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[55] Gil Gonzalez Davila, "The Directory of Father Gil Gonzalez Davila," in *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, trans. and ed. by Martin E. Palmer, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 255.
[56] Edward Collins Vacek, "Discernment within a Mutual Love Relationship with God: A New Theological Foundation," *Theological Studies* 74 (2013): 609.

moving along—a horizon of God's grace or a horizon of an evil spirit. Ignatius' Rules for Discernment aid a teacher in this task. Moreover, a teacher must remain indifferent to how a student chooses to live out her discipleship. A teacher trusts that a student's consoling experiences of prayer are guiding her choices. In designing lessons and activities, the teacher will have to provide options for a student on the specific form of an assignment. Such assignments could include an open-ended prompt such as: "Be completely generous for the next week." A student, after learning about some of the basics of the virtue of generosity, would have to discern how God might be calling her to be generous. For instance, she might decide to be generous each night by doing the dishes after her family's dinner. Following this particular exercise of generosity, she would be encouraged by the teacher in class to ponder: Why did I exercise my generosity in this way? What moved me to be generous? The process of discussing and discerning her choice illuminates the ways in which she responded to God's grace. Even while the teacher remains indifferent to her choice. The teacher's role is to aid a student in her discernment of what God asks.

Opportunity for Conversion

Hardly a program of self-help, the *Exercises* presuppose a person who is open to self-examination and conversion. The retreatant asks for her desires to match the desires of Jesus; she uses her imagination to contemplate the Gospel; she dialogues with God about the nature of her discipleship; she tests and discerns her experiences with a spiritual director; she tries to embrace a posture of indifference so she might choose that which she believes to be the will of God. It is this composite of a person that then shapes the subsequent approach to theological reflection for someone who experienced the *Exercises*. "Jesuit theology is not marked primarily by a body of

doctrine or by a specifically intellectual structure, such as Thomism provides for the Dominicans. What one finds is a 'way of proceeding', a 'way of moving forward', a theological 'knack', a 'style', expressive of a particular experience and understanding of God."[57] Christophe Theobald's observation about the nature of theological reflection for a disciple of Ignatius points to a methodical framework. A person, if properly disposed, encounters God, discerns the nature of that encounter and then moves forward changed by that encounter. It is a way of doing theological reflection that is responsive to God's grace. In this way the retreatant is a person consistently undergoing a process of conversion.

There is a scriptural basis for this process of conversion. It is modeled after a Jesus who in Matthew 15: 22-28 responds to the faith of the Canaanite woman, the woman who convinces Jesus to heal her daughter though they do not belong in the Jewish community. Jesus himself must discern the nature of his encounter and choose the appropriate action going forward. Again, in John 2:5, Jesus responds to the contingencies of a situation. Jesus must discern how to respond to his mother's demands to the servers at Cana to "Do whatever he tells you." Jesus becomes the person he is meant to be by discerning his mother's command. The process of conversion drawn out from the *Exercises* resembles how Jesus encountered and discerned the appropriate ways to respond to invitations of grace.

Theological reflection inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises* emphasizes the process by which God's grace shapes us into the people we are supposed to be. It is a "process of transformation and conversion, not a theory which has to be applied...[it is] a way of doing things."[58] Theological reflection in an Ignatian style emphasizes that we have opportunities to

[57] Christophe Theobald, "An Ignatian Way of Doing Theology," *The Way* 43/4 (October 2004): 147.
[58] Ibid.,148.

become ever more like Christ, becoming ever more ourselves. It is a process as opposed to a sudden conversion in the manner of Saul on the way to Damascus, albeit God's grace enacting a Pauline style conversion is always possible. The style of prayer proffered in the *Exercises* is ongoing, and always inviting people to examine the nature of their discipleship.

The *Exercises* call forth a conversion, a change in the way in which someone engages the world. It is the beginning of a process by which a person is transformed by participating in God's free offers of grace. A person chooses, elects, a way to serve God. As Joseph Tetlow notes in his guide for directing retreatants during the moment of choosing in the retreat, the Election, "You can anticipate that each person will move toward some kind of choices, even if vague: a reform of religious practice, or of their prayer life...As a general rule, conscientious exercitants feel invited to continue to make what Iñigo called 'progress' and what we tend to call growth. They usually let you know that in some way or other."[59] The encounter with God during the retreat requires that someone examine her lifestyle and discern the most appropriate way to amend it. This discerning and reforming is not limited to the time of the retreat. In the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, the document that describes how those who have chosen to be Jesuits should live, Ignatius prescribes each Jesuit to do an examination of consciousness twice daily.[60] At the center of a person's examination of consciousness are some of the key questions from the First Week of the *Exercises*: "What have I done for Christ, What am I doing for Christ, What will I do for Christ?"[61] The *Exercises* encourage evaluation and reflection upon one's experience,

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[59] Joseph Tetlow, *Choosing Christ in the World: Directing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola According to Annotations Eighteen and Nineteen, A Handbook* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1989), 47.
[60] St. Ignatius, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms*, ed. John Padberg (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), Nos. 342, 344.
[61] Saint Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, No. 53.

searching for where God has been in one's life, in order that she might choose Christ in her future actions.

The search for where God has been in one's life encourages her to ponder her future self. "The Ignatian approach to theology is essentially practical, and as such remains dependent on the experiences by which true life is formed...Feedback is required for our faith."[62] Our experiences shape us as persons and as a society. These renewing experiences are theological in that people experience the fullness of life through this feedback cycle. There is fluidity as the events of our lives flow into our self-understanding and our understanding of God's presence in our lives. Our knowledge of both ourselves and of God grows over time as our experiences give us a sense of who we are and who we might be as individuals and as a society. Who we will become is then dependent upon our discerning what invitations have come to us from God through our experiences. Or, to be more explicit, God always invites us to the fullness of divine life. The question is how we respond to those invitations. "In the redemption, God wills one and the same grace, that brings forth Christ, and gives us the possibility of turning freely toward God."[63]

Theological reflection in the Ignatian tradition offers opportunities for becoming ever-more Christ-like. In the high school environment, the language of process can be freeing for students and teachers alike. A teacher, by repeatedly emphasizing the ways we grow through dialogue with Christ in compelling ways and choosing actions befitting of that dialogue, can liberate a high school student who feels trapped by cliques of high school cultures. The language of 'becoming the person we should be' also offers opportunities for conversion for students in need of amending destructive behaviors. As much as the teacher offers opportunities for conversion through theological reflection, the teacher can design opportunities to encounter God

[62] Theobald, "An Ignatian Way of Doing Theology," 153.
[63] Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, 214.

in class through prayer. By adapting some of the meditations of the *Exercises*, a teacher can serve as a retreat director. For example, in assigning journaling about the content of prayer, the student and teacher can discern how God is working in the life of the student. A teacher can also create a safe environment in which students feel free to talk about the movements of their prayer.

These recommendations for transforming a high school classroom into a space capable of enacting the essential dynamics of the *Exercises* detailed in this chapter—an encounter with God along a horizon of grace, discernment, and opportunity for conversion—are admittedly challenging. Schools do not design theology classrooms to resemble a retreat environment. Students often do not select their courses nor do they choose to reveal their interior life to their theology teacher. In order to be successful in this Ignatian approach to virtue education, the classroom becomes a place in which prayer, reflection, and creative assignments stimulate growth in the spiritual life. The classroom is a community committed to discerning how God is calling each member of the community to live out their discipleship.

What follows this Ignatian approach to religious education is moral formation through teaching Christian virtue. The principal questions of virtue ethics - Who are we? Who ought we to become? By what means will we become the people we ought to be? – are similar to the Ignatian approach of this chapter in assisting students in reflection upon the nature of their behaviors. Here in chapter 1, the dialogue with God presented material for discernment by a student. In chapter 2, pondering the goal of life and how best one might achieve that goal guides virtue ethics. In chapter 1, the teacher "directs" students in discerning how the invitations of her prayer might be lived. In chapter 2, the teacher models prudence for students, the virtue that directs the other virtues. The next chapter explores the important terminology in virtue education, the principal content of this Ignatian approach to virtue education.

Chapter 2: Virtue Education

The method I am proposing employs both Ignatian spirituality and virtue ethics to assist emerging adults in reflecting upon their behaviors. Chapter 1 discussed the nature of Ignatian prayer and discernment and how these practices might contribute to moral reflection in the classroom. This chapter focuses on virtue education in the hope of offering a method of teaching virtue. I must explicate key terminology necessary for instructing secondary education students in virtue. The chapter begins with an overview of virtue ethics. Here, I provide a definition of virtue and explore its key aspects: habits, excellence, mean, and friendship. Next, I discuss how one can notice, understand, and name virtue. To do this, I explore prudence as the key to a life of virtue. Because prudence cannot exist in the moral agent in isolation from other virtues (and vice versa), I connect prudence with the virtue of hospitality as one example among many. I choose hospitality because I find that it is a particular example conducive to formation in Ignatian education, as hospitality supports forming a classroom environment suitable to virtue training. I finish the chapter by providing an example of how prudence assists high school educators in modeling virtue to students.

Why Virtue Ethics?

Virtue ethics presupposes that human beings have an ultimate purpose or end to which their actions lead. It is a system assuming that as individuals and a society we are on a journey which concludes in reaching our ultimate good. Virtue ethics is concerned with striving to attain what Aristotle named *eudaimonia* (happiness).[64] Christian virtue ethics has relied upon Thomas

[64] Happiness as the highest good is the subject of book I of the *Nicomachaen Ethics.*

Aquinas to name humanity's happiness as the "Perfect Good,"[65] union with God. Virtue ethics ennobles people to imagine the Perfect Good not as an unattainable end but, as an end which all people are called to attain. Virtue ethics does not obsess over categorical rules that govern particular actions. For example, a mother has two children, a 12-year old boy and an 8-year old girl. She knows that her vocation as a mother is to love these children and care for them. Yet, she does not give them equal care. She gives more care to the girl because the girl has autism, a condition which requires more of the mother's time and attention. In a Kantian deontological determination of how the mother is to divide her time and attention between these children, the mother has a duty to care for her children equally. Her choice to attend to her daughter more than to her son would come under great scrutiny under such an ethical framework with suspicions of injustice.[66] Alternatively, virtue ethics presumes the mother capable of both reflecting upon what she strives to attain—appropriate care of her children—and how to achieve this end with each of her children over time. Moreover, she loves ideally with such consistency that she begins to embody fidelity, which informs her maternal care for both children. Soon enough, with practice, the virtue of fidelity becomes reflexive so that she does not even need to think about how she will care for each child, fidelity has become habitual for her. Nevertheless, how she exercises fidelity may very well differ from other mothers as their contexts may demand different content. Virtue ethics concerns itself with individual persons, each in their own contexts, with those contexts' features presenting particular needs upon which to act.

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[65] Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae* Ia IIae q. 5, a. 1 in *Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*, vol. 4, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1981), http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/index.htm.

[66] This is a simple example to teach virtue ethics. There are plenty of deontological ethical systems that do not require absolute adherence that would arrive upon the same conclusion as virtue ethics in my example, albeit in a different manner.

Virtue invites its aspirants as individuals, and, where the mechanisms of a common purpose hold, a society, a moral community to ponder the grand questions that govern human existence: "Who are we?" "Who ought we to become?" and "How are we going to get there?" Responding to the question of what is the best way for individuals, a society, and a moral community to live involves more than a simple intellectual exercise. Virtue ethics focuses on our becoming the people we wish to be. Against an Ignatian horizon, it trusts that an encounter with the good and the beautiful mediated by God's grace will energize us for the moral life. "Beauty quickens. It adrenalizes. It makes the heart beat faster. It makes life more vivid, animated, living, worth living."[67] Virtue ethics encourages the process of living life with a desired end. For the Christian, this end is to become good, holy, faithful people.

Holistic thinking of this sort might seem beyond the limits of an emerging adult. After all, "to think of a human life as a narrative unity is to think in a way alien to the dominant individualist and bureaucratic modes of modern culture."[68] Emerging adults show the capability to appropriate a narrative unity by participating in one of the principal claims of virtue ethics—striving.[69] Unfortunately, many emerging adults strive to acquire experiences and possessions or are taught to want certain experiences and possessions by advertising, rather than pursue a good life. Somewhat unintentionally, they seem to have ceded autonomy, their ability to pursue and discern the good, in order to acquire meaning through those experiences culture marks as

[67] Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 24-25.
[68] Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 211.
[69] Daniel J Harrington and James F. Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between the New Testament and Moral Theology* (Lanham: Sheed & Ward, 2010), 4.

significant.[70] By the time students arrive on college campuses many have been conditioned to "uncritically accept that college ought to be a drinking experience, rooted in the pursuit of sexual and other pleasures, while putting the questions of life's purpose and meaning on hold for four years."[71] Their pursuit of pleasure proves that they have the capability to construct a narrative unity, albeit a somewhat misplaced narrative. The origin of the problem of a misplaced narrative is complex. One, individuals need a heightened awareness into the ways in which media conditions them to want certain things and experiences. We, as individuals, need to examine the negative ways our cultures habituate our actions and responses. Two, the people behind our institutions are complicit, often unknowingly, in not challenging emerging adults to embrace the freedom to become the people they are called to be. During the course of one's education a students should have to grapple with the questions of human existence such as: what is the good of life? How may I achieve it? A commitment to virtue ethics at the secondary education level supports the claim that "the fundamental task of the moral life is to develop a vision and strive to attain it."[72] Virtue ethics can be a method for an institution to use to assist emerging adults reclaim their autonomy as self-determination, and, ultimately, their ability to strive for that which they desire rather than what the market suggests.

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[70] Walker Percy wrote an interesting essay exploring the cessation of autonomy. He pinpoints this cessation on two factors: 1) giving too much authority to experts at the expense of one's own process of discovery and 2) the ubiquity of various media has convinced people that they only experience something when they capture the preformulated thing or image. Percy uses the Grand Canyon as his example. People come to the canyon hoping to see the vistas featured on postcards and not to experience the canyon *qua* canyon. For his complete argument see: "The Loss of the Creature," *The Message in the Bottle: How Queer Man is, How Queer Language is, and What One Has to Do with the Other* (New York: Open Road Media, 2011), 29-35.

[71] Richard G. Malloy, S.J., "Liberating Students—From Paris Hilton, Howard Stern, and Jim Bean," in *A Jesuit Education Reader*, ed. George W. Traub, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), 303.

[72] Harrington and Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics*, 4.

Defining Virtue

The operative definition of virtue I use when teaching is *a habituated disposition of excellence found in the mean.* This definition certainly has an Aristotelian influence. Aristotle defines moral virtue as "a *hexis* [habit] concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle and in the way in which a man of practical wisdom would determine it."[73] Aquinas defines virtue as "a good quality of the mind, by which we live rightly, of which we make no bad use, which God works in us without us."[74] I employ parts of both Aristotle's and Aquinas's definitions but also provide my own definition in hopes of a more accessible definition for today's students. I utilize this definition because it highlights some of the essential terms of virtue: habits, excellence, and mean. I also emphasize the importance of the role of friendship in inspiring people to live virtuous lives.

Understanding Virtue's Features

Habit

On first glance, the idea of a habit seems rather straightforward. It is a practice carried out repeatedly that becomes second nature. The repeated exercise that leads to habituation is what Aristotle suggests in his discussion of the relationship between virtues and habits in Book II of the *Nicomachaen Ethics*. "But the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyreplayers by playing the lyre; so too we

[73] Aristotle, *Nichomachaen Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), 1106b36-1107a2.
[74] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 58, a.3.

become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts."[75] Habits are acquired over the period of one's life through activities. But habits are not merely activities, like knotting one's shoelaces. Within Hellenistic thought, a habit is "a durable characteristic of the agent inkling to certain kinds of actions and emotional reactions, not the actions and reactions themselves."[76] In this way habits are more like a second nature than a simple practice.[77] Imagine a young man once backing up his family's new van into a steel garbage can, resulting in a sizable dent. When his father steps outside to investigate noise, his first inquiry is "Are you okay?" This spontaneous question, or habituated response, to the situation demonstrated that the father practiced a habit of care. One could also easily imagine the father reacting negatively to the same situation and yelling at his son for damaging the family vehicle. In the second image the habit of care is lacking or is superseded by a reaction that chastises rather than cares, and which would not be beneficial to the family. Virtue language surrounding habits attempts to highlight the acts of second nature that reveal the character, or the lack of it, in members of a community.

Thomas adds complexity to the understanding of habits as virtues by introducing the concept that some habits are not acquired through repetition but are infused by God into a person's nature. Thomas argues that if a person's goal is the beatific vision—union with the

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[75] Aristotle, *Nichomachaen Ethics*, 1320d28-30.
[76] Bonnie Kent, "Habits and Virtues," in *Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays*, ed. Brian Davies (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2006), 224.
[77] MacIntrye agrees with this point defining practice as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and the goods involved, are systematically extended…Bricklaying is not a practice; but architecture is. Planting turnips is not a practice; farming is." *After Virtue*, 175. Both Aristotle's and MacIntyre's ideas of practice are constructive. Further, these activities build and sustain communities of goodness.

Perfect Good—then insofar as that end is beyond human capacity, Thomas views the theological virtues as those habits infused by God and the results of grace.[78] Thomas, in articulating the concept of infused habits, shows that there are two goals or happinesses in life: one earthly, the other heavenly. An earthly goal, the object of natural happiness can be comprehended by reason. For instance, a father can comprehend through reason what the just and loving response will be towards a son who has damaged the family vehicle. But the object of the theological virtues—faith, hope, and love—belonging to supernatural happiness, "God Himself, the last end of all, surpassing the knowledge of our reason."[79] God's gift of grace allows us to access the supernatural, however incomplete that access might be on account of our own finitude. The objects of this world, finite matters, are readily accessible to humans through the exercise of our reason.

Thomas's insistence upon the infused virtues of faith, hope, and love highlights the part of my definition that addresses the importance of disposition. Our habits are related to our internal states. Our actions themselves come from both reason and the will. Actions are not only the results of reasoned deliberation but also acts of the will.[80] Of course for Thomas, any good action begins with God moving our will. "God moves man's will, as the Universal Mover, to the universal object of the will, which is good."[81] Following God's first stirrings in our will to desire the good, our will consents to conscience's judgment that the movement can be fulfilled. From there the will intends to follow reason's prudential judgment of the right, and finally chooses the

[78] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 51, a. 4.
[79] Ibid., *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 2.
[80] Ibid., *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 50, a. 5.
[81] Ibid., *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6.

most suitable means to attain the good pursued.[82] A simple listing of what the will does in the course of a human act shows how we humans are responsible for our actions. Our habits are not merely formed as a result of our environment, for they reflect our formation as well as our intending and our choosing. We can intend and choose, on the basis of our fundamental freedom, both good and evil. Virtues are the fruit of a prudent discernment of the good, the result of intending rightly ordered ends, and choosing rightly ordered means, over a sustained period of time. My definition of virtue highlights habituated dispositions because it leads us to reflection on what choices we have made throughout our lives. Once we begin to reflect upon our choices we may ask ourselves 'Why?' Reflective thinking about our choices leads to the next part of my definition of virtue—excellence.

Excellence, exemplars, and the mean

There is a ubiquitous use of the term excellence in contemporary culture. Shoes are excellent. One finds excellent deals in stores. Teachers and parents are often expected to regard students' work as nothing short of excellent, whether or not it is. This tendency to overuse excellence devalues its quality. For something to be recognized as excellent it has to be an example of the highest quality. Excellence recognizes something as ideal. For instance, the Greeks treasured the ideal man as someone who "knows what he wants and how to get it; his conception of *arête* [virtue] was largely that of ability to achieve success."[83] The moral exemplars of excellence reflect a particular culture's self-understanding. Our culture does not

[82] I will discuss prudence more in a later section. For now, I simply wish to lay out the basics of human action. For more on the metaphysical structure of human action see Mary Jo Iozzio, *Self-determination and the Moral Act: A Study of the Contributions of Odon Lottin, OSB* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 61-68.
[83] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Western Philosophy*, Vol. VII, pt. II (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 171.

have to appropriate a Greek understanding of virtue, for instance, trying to imitate the courage Achilles faced in war, it must however offer its sense of courage with its own set of examples.

Particular virtues are shaped by their particular cultures. Alasdair MacIntyre notes that the virtue of courage in a heroic society only makes sense within the context of the harms and dangers facing that society.[84] Virtues are tied to the society which forms and defines them, representing how a society conceives what is good. Yet, each society does not start as a *tabula rasa* creating its own conception of the good as it goes. Rather every society inherits virtues and understandings of the good from its predecessor cultures.[85] Our understanding today of what is truly excellent, that incredibly fine target at which we aim, is both inherited from our past and determined by our own expressions in the present community.

Excellence does not exist in a vacuum. MacIntyre demonstrates the shifting nature of virtue in noticing how the understanding of virtue changed when Western culture moved from the kinship groups of heroic societies to the citizen state of Athens. Virtues in the citizen state portray a public role in society.[86] For instance, an analysis of the role of excellence helps us understand the Aristotelian mean of courage. Aristotle writes, "It is the same with, for example, bravery: too little bravery is being cowardly and afraid of everything whereas too much bravery is being rash and afraid of nothing."[87] A person cannot proffer an understanding of bravery that lies between cowardliness and rashness without the context and the consent of the larger culture. Without a social context, it is impossible to state the mean of the virtues. It is in the public square that an understanding of courage as the mean between the extremes of cowardliness and rashness is achieved.

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[84] MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 118.
[85] Ibid., 119.
[86] Ibid., 121.
[87] Aristotle, *Nicomachaen Ethics*, 1107a1.

The challenge of arriving at common virtues today may very well be the lack of a shared context such as exists in Athenian society. The lack of a public square is disastrous for understanding what is truly excellent. Without a common space, as well as the narratives passed down from preceding cultures, it is nearly impossible to articulate what a virtue is. Virtues exist for the attainment of both an individual and common good. Virtues have a *telos*: they point to the development of the individual as much as they point to the *polis* and aim in particular, toward the development of laws to instruct the people in virtuous living.[88] Practicing virtue built the *polis* and was synchronized with the desires of the people within the community. Today's fragmentation of the public square and the increased alienation many experience from their communities have made it difficult, if not impossible, to name and cultivate publically recognizable virtues.

I am suggesting that a remedy to this absence can be a re-conception of the classroom as a public space. The classroom is a place where a teacher is able to remind students of how past societies understood virtue. It is a place to encourage students to reflect upon why earlier cultures found certain practices excellent. It is a public square to examine the actions of cultures past and to judge these actions on a scale from defect to excess. Rehearsing this history turns the class's attention to the present. How does our society work toward the common good and who are our moral exemplars, those whose excellence inspire and motivate us? An understanding of virtue can arise from this communal discernment about what is the common good today. The public square remains a vital place to shape a society's understanding of virtue. It is important that we imagine the classroom as such a place. However, the public square is not the only place

[88] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 139.

influencing people's understanding and practice of virtue. Friendship is also a place to influence and live a virtuous life.

Friendship

"Perhaps the most frightening discovery about the moral life is that we're capable of many things. There is no assurance we'll make ourselves what we ought."[89] The prospect of becoming whom we ought to be can be terrifying. This prospect is just one reason why friends are so important in our quest for the virtuous life. A friend enables a person to grow morally. True friendships form because each person recognizes virtue in the other person; friends are attracted to the virtues of one another.[90] Two people in such a "perfect" friendship, a friendship in which they see each other *qua* good, promote goodness as the goal of their friendship because they realize caring for that other person means caring for the friend's and their own integral human development. Therefore, two people in such a friendship are able to speak honestly to one another about the ways each is going toward the good, or not. Such frank communication requires trust, time, and familiarity.[91] It challenges us, and, in the process of such a challenge, it gives us energy for the moral life.[92] This kind of friendship assures us that our good endeavors are meaningful and increases the likelihood of participation in the good. If our friends are pursuing goodness, we are likely to pursue the good along with them as well.[93] Being good is

[89] Paul Wadell, "Charity as Friendship" (Phd diss., University of Notre Dame, 1985), 125.
[90] Aristotle, *Nicomachaen Ethics,* 1156b6-24. Aristotle distinguishes this category of perfect friendship from the lesser categories of friendship: instrumental friendship and friendships of pleasure.
[91] Aristotle, *Nicomachaen Ethics,* 1156b25-32.
[92] Paul Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 59.
[93] Ibid, 61.

difficult in the absence of the inspiration to goodness that comes with friendship.[94] For, unfortunately or fortunately, virtue cannot attain its highest aims unattended.[95] Thus, our relationships then are one of the primary *loci* of our moral growth. Our experiences in friendships dedicated to pursuing the good are a constitutive feature of our being in the world.[96] Moreover, friendships are one of the epistemological *loci* of self and God. We know the goodness of God through the good actions of our friends. We also deepen our own sense of goodness by reflecting upon how we may strive for goodness with our friends.

Friendship's importance to the moral life cannot be overstated. In a high school, both the teacher and the administration must contemplate how friendship can grow amongst students. The teacher should be sensitive to whom the students call their friends. How might a teacher support the growth and development of friendships through group assignments? How could a teacher engage students in critical reflections about the nature of their friendships? It should be noted that the teacher, while helping students reflect and challenging them, would not be their friend. There are many ways a teacher might go about answering these questions. One way might include a presentation on Aristotle's three categories of friendships, which asks students to evaluate their friendships. Another way might require the administration of a school to create hospitable classrooms, places where friendships are nurtured and developed. Such a commitment is difficult, and probably unrealistic, given the complexities of registration policies. Yet such a policy should be pursued, as friendship is one of the teachers of virtue. In a class that teaches virtue, it should be expected that a student have access to his or her friends.

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Stephen W. Smith, "Friendship and Tyranny in the Writings of Sir Thomas More," *Moreana* Vol. 50 (December 2013): 17-8.
[96] See Philip Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, 246.

The features of virtue—habit, excellence, exemplars, and friendship—demonstrate that living virtuously is not an easy task. Moreover it is difficult to understand how the virtues look for each one of us.[97] Thankfully, there is one virtue that directs all the other virtues and helps us understand the right reason about what needs to be done—prudence.

Prudence

What is prudence?

At some point in any action, a person has to decide what needs to be done. Prudence is the virtue that ascertains what needs to be done. It takes into account where the moral agent needs to be in her development. Jean Porter defines prudence as the virtue "which takes account of the specifics of an individual's own character and circumstances, determines what, concretely, it means for this individual to act in accordance with reason; prudence does this in and through determining the mean of the virtues relative to the individual and to the demands of equality and the common good."[98] For Aquinas, it is "any virtue that causes good in reason's act of consideration."[99] Another way to understand prudence is through the classic Aristotelian categories of matter and form. Each habit (virtue) has its own matter; the form is derived from

[97] Discussion about what is a virtue is especially difficult given the context of oppressions that compromise many people's ability to attain virtue. A person who has to choose between paying the rent or feeding their children finds some virtues attainable. In this way, a teacher should carry a sensitivity in his presentation of the material as a student might come from a context of oppression that makes the discussion of virtue burdensome as the virtues seem unattainable. For more see Lisa Tessman, *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[98] Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 162.
[99] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 61, a. 3.

prudence.[100] Prudence helps determine what virtue will actually look like for an individual here and now. Recognizing the particular form of virtue comes through exercising a prudential judgment on potential action.

Like the moral virtues,[101] prudence needs to be acquired through careful practice. Prudent deliberation requires reason to reflect upon experience and to dialogue with others about a situation. It requires the humility to listen to others and to face one's own limits and prejudices. "Truth in matters of moral choice, it appears, is not reached intuitively. Moral knowledge requires familiarity with the details of the situations that prompt questions of moral choice. It depends upon cumulative and shared experiences of people conversing with each other rather than solitary introspection."[102] Remember attaining the moral virtues requires friends and a *polis*—even in a classroom. Prudent deliberation helps the community determine the excellence at which the mean of virtue lies. In this way, prudence reflects the communal effort to regulate how an individual will go about living "since it belongs to the ruling of prudence to decide in what manner and by what means [moral agents] shall obtain the mean of reason in [their] deeds."[103]

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[100] James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Theologiae (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 101.
[101] The importance of prudence cannot be understated because "without prudence, the moral virtues are merely habits or inclinations." Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 101.
[102] Daniel Mark Nelson, *The Priority of Prudence: Virtue and Natural Law in Thomas Aquinas and the Implications for Modern Ethics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 123.
[103] Aquinas, *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 47, a. 7.

Where is prudence located?

Prudence is a "cognitive virtue."[104] It is in the intellect and provides the rational appetite with the objects necessary for both the intention and the choice of means. Located in the intellect, prudence reasons with memory, understanding, shrewd judgment, foresight, and circumspection to grasp the nuances and contingencies of any situation in which a moral judgment is to be made.[105] Prudent memory helps a person to recall experiences of past judgments for the purpose of making a current judgment. Prudent understanding comprehends what is at stake in the potential action, not judging in haste but finding the best way forward for an individual. Prudent foresight anticipates the consequences of the intended action, avoiding unnecessary risks in the pursuit of the good. These are the integral parts of prudence helping people reason/judge rightly about what needs to be done.

The various activities of the virtue of prudence will become second nature so long as it is practiced over time. A prudent person through years of practice understands the nuances of a situation and proceeds to find a virtuous course of action by habit. If prudence is not part of someone's second nature, then practicing understanding or foresight intentionally can assist in its habituation. In the classroom, a teacher will often need to assist students in evaluating past actions through the lens of prudence due to their relatively young age and lack of experience. In reflecting on past action, a student learns how to appropriate prudence for himself in hopes of acting prudentially in the future.

[104] Aquinas, *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 48, a. 1. Also, question 49 in its entirety describes each part of prudence.
[105] Aquinas, *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 48, a. 1.

How prudence works in the whole human act

The first task of prudence is one of "discovery."[106] Prudence discovers the moral agent's context. Prudence hopes to make "an account of what we need to consider in order to judge an act right or wrong."[107] Prudence conducts a thorough investigation into the contingent details about "who, what, where, by what aids, how, and when."[108] After uncovering these details, prudence judges what it has found.[109] Its judgment depends upon our history and the current state of our character. We do not approach a judgment neutrally but as individuals with histories and memories. A prudential judgment remembers past actions and how those actions shaped our character either positively or negatively. So, "whether something appears good depends not only on the thing itself but also on the disposition of the character of the one perceiving it."[110] The fact that prudential judgments reveal our character emphasizes the importance of a communal process in making these judgments. Other people have the ability to assist us in seeing how our characters might be flawed, or habituated, to negative action based upon past mistaken judgments. All that remains left for prudence is to move the will to action. "But the practical reason, which is directed to action, goes further, and its third act is 'to command,' which act consists in applying to action the things counseled and judged. And since this act approaches nearer to the end of the practical reason, it follows that it is the chief act of the practical reason, and consequently of prudence."[111] While practical reason might command, it might be more conducive to label this commanding as directing. Thus prudent reason directs the will to act. The separation of powers allows the will to maintain its freedom to reject or accept the deliberations

[106] Aquinas, *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 48, a. 8.
[107] Nelson, *Priority of Prudence*, 105.
[108] Ibid., 106.
[109] Aquinas, *ST*, IIa-IIae, q. 47, a. 8.
[110] Nelson, *Priority of Prudence*, 109.
[111] Aquinas, *ST*, IIa-IIae, q. 47, a. 8.

of prudence. To understand how the will maintains its freedom, one only has to think about the countless examples of human action that seem contrary to reason. Often a person knows exactly what is the right course of action for her in a given situation, yet she chooses contrary to the clear reasons in front of her.[112] Ideally, the will and reason cooperate to arrive at the best way to act in a given situation, albeit the possibility to act otherwise remains. Nevertheless, cooperation between the will and reason signals achievement in virtue and prudent striving to do what is right and good.

Why Prudence?

Daniel Mark Nelson notes the importance of the virtue of prudence. He reminds us of what we stated earlier, that we develop habits through doing.[113] Moreover, authentic prudence presupposes the good will of the actor.[114] We cannot talk about prudential judgments if malice, or banality, infects the will. It is important to examine the state of our character when talking about virtue. As mentioned in the previous chapter on theological reflection in an Ignatian manner, an examination on conscience can enable a person to understand the ways in which she is moving closer to becoming the person God wishes her to be. An examination of conscience shines light on whether we have positively responded to the invitations of the Holy Spirit. So too,

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[112] The cooperation, or lack of it, between will and reason has been fiercely debated by the scholarly community in the last twenty years following James Keenan's provocative work *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae*. Keenan, and the many who subscribe to his interpretation of Thomas, maintains Aquinas's faculty psychology that distinguishes the acts of volition from intellection. Very generally, he claims that the will is autonomous from the intellect leaving it indifferent to the judgment of reason until it wills to will. For more on the debate within the scholarly community see Edward L. Krasevac, "Goodness and Rightness Ten Years Later: a Look Back at James Keenan and His Critics," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly,* 77(4), (Fall, 2003): 535-548.
[113] Nelson, *Priority of Prudence*, 165.
[114] Ibid., 166.

communal reflections in a *polis* and prudent deliberation assist us in coming to greater self-knowledge about the people we are becoming. Often older people model the virtue of prudence to the young. "We ought to attend even to the *undemonstrated* claims and opinions of those who are older, and thus presumably more experienced and prudent than we are, because their long life has given them an understanding of moral principals."[115]Age, and the guidance of elders, is essential to growth in the moral life in that older people have presumably more experience, more practice, and are thereby likely to be more prudent than the young.

In the classroom, a teacher might ask a student to prudently reflect upon his or her own experiences. Of course, a young man or woman might not be self-aware enough to recognize how his or her actions are or are not hitting the fine target of excellence that is the mean of virtue. The teacher demonstrates prudence by assisting the student in reflecting upon whether or not his or her actions express the mean of virtue. The dialogue between teacher and student about the nature of virtue and how it looks in the student's life teaches the student how to judge his or her actions. Prudence is learned and passed down to subsequent generations through these exercises of deliberation.

Prudence directs the virtues. It understands what needs to be done here and now. In order to assist anyone who might want to utilize prudence in a classroom, it is now important to examine other virtues and here I consider another Christian virtue, hospitality. An examination of hospitality demonstrates past examples of virtuous action. The examination of how the virtue looked in the past aids a teacher in inviting the class to imagine the virtue today. The virtue of hospitality is also an important precondition for creating a public square in the classroom where students feel safe and free to express their opinions and reflections on the virtues.

[115] Ibid.,167 (emphasis original).

Hospitality

Bruce Malina defines the virtue of hospitality as "the process by means of which an outsider's status is changed from stranger to guest."[116] Over time, the host and the guest experience a change in relationship. What particular attributes mark this change from stranger to guest that characterizes the virtue of hospitality? There are three essential components of hospitality: openness, attentiveness, and commitment. These three components, these traits, describe the behaviors necessary for a host to be understood as hospitable. Before explicating these traits, it is important to understand the mandate to be hospitable that comes from the Christian moral exemplar: Jesus. For, after all, "hospitality is the virtue that God practices."[117] Scriptural examples of Jesus' hospitality invite Christians to ponder how hospitality might look today.

The footwashing in the Gospel of John (Jn 13:1-20) mandates that Christians practice hospitality. In the scene, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples and concludes his service to them by beseeching them to follow his example: "For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13: 15). Jesus' words and actions remind his disciples, both those present at the footwashing and subsequent generations of Christians, that care for others should be a normative Christian behavior. This message of care becomes more clear when one examines where Chapter 13 lies in the Gospel of John. The author of the Gospel of John places the story of the footwashing in the context of both the Last Supper and the beginning of the Book of Glory (13:1-20:31). A long Farewell Discourse from Jesus to his followers (13:1-17:26) communicates

[116] Bruce J. Malina, "The received view and what it cannot do: III John and hospitality," in *Semeia 35: Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament and its Social World* (Decatur: Scholars Press, 1986): 181.
[117] James Keenan, *Virtues for Ordinary Christians* (Franklin, WI: Sheed & Ward, 1999), 107.

what it means to be a disciple. The Farewell Discourse emphasizes how "acts of love are pointed as the mark of discipleship and the signs of the disciples' relationship with Jesus."[118] Christians are called to be hospitable because Jesus opened himself to the needs of others, attended to those same people, and committed his life to such service. Washing feet, i.e., caring for another person, is a way to receive the stranger, and in turn, receive Jesus.

The incident of washing feet, of attending to the needs of the guest, has become normative for discipleship. Christians must welcome strangers like Jesus has done for us. If Christians are called by Jesus to embrace this behavior, it will be vital to fully understand how one is to become hospitable. The traits Jesus demonstrated—openness, attentiveness, and commitment—further elucidate the virtue of hospitality. It is also important to keep the modeling behaviors of Jesus, our moral exemplar, in sight.

Openness

To live with the openness Jesus embodied requires three attitudes: humble reception, gratitude, and kinship. The open person embodies a humble receptivity. Humble receptivity "recognizes that all is gift from the creative and salvific love of God…accepts them [our gifts] as given freely by a loving God…humility accepts our limitations and sinfulness and our need for God's forgiving love."[119] The first step in habituating hospitality accepts that God has gifted the world and welcomed each person with love. Humble receptivity is found in the grace of the First Week of the *Exercises*, which is being able to accept oneself as a loved sinner. Hospitality begins with the recognition that God welcomes us to divine life through the Paschal Mystery. The

[118] Gail R. O' Day, "John," in *The New Interpreters' Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, general editor Walter J. Harrelson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 1935.
[119] Gerald M. Fagin, *Putting on the Heart of Christ: How the Spiritual Exercises Invite Us to a Virtuous Life* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2010), 131-2.

humble receiver sees how God has gifted the world, particularly how God has gifted her. This reception presents new realities, opportunities, and people that will enrich life and open new ways and possibilities of being.[120] Humble receptivity allows others to give us gifts and to enter into our lives in unexpected ways.

Jesus demonstrates an attitude of humble receptivity. In John 12:1-1, Jesus gladly receives Mary's anointing of his feet with oil. In receiving this tender expression, Jesus embraces her love for him. The biblical commentator Francis Moloney picks up on the significance of Jesus's passivity in this encounter, suggesting that the fragrance that fills the house is not the scent of the perfume but rather the hospitable love of Mary.[121] Jesus affirms the importance of hospitality in letting Mary treat him as a guest.

It is difficult to remain open to another person. Therefore, gratitude is an important posture for remaining open. Jesus highlights the importance of gratitude for hospitality in the story of the healing of ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19. Out of the ten healed lepers only one returns to give Jesus thanks. While Jesus physically healed all the lepers, only the grateful leper was made well as evidenced by Jesus' comments to the grateful leper upon his return: "Your faith has made you well" (Lk 17:19). The leper's gratitude has saved him. Now healed, the memory of the goodness of God can be a springboard for welcoming others. Gratitude was also important for the early Christians. Christine Pohl notes how the early Church's hospitality stemmed from its noticing God's generosity. "Christians offered hospitality in grateful response to God's generosity."[122] Early Christians understood how God had graciously loved them, which, in turn,

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[120] Ibid., 120.
[121] Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina Series, Vol. 4, edited by Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998): 349.
[122] Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 33.

allowed them to extend love to others. A grateful heart moves a person outside of herself and opens her to the needs of others.

Openness requires a humble reception of God's gracious love and a posture of gratitude for those free gifts of divine love. Once, a person has internalized humble receptivity and gratitude she will begin to be open to the possibility that the other is not so other after all. She adopts an attitude of kinship. Kinship recognizes that all human persons share a common lineage. Kinship views everyone as the *Imago Dei*, "created in the likeness of God" (Gen 5:1). A contemporary example of kinship is Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles. Homeboy Industries welcomes Los Angeles's gang members to a new community and offers employment by asking gang members to renounce their gang membership. It is a family for ex-gang members. The Homeboy family replaces the family unit of the gang. Homies become kin with each other and with the staff.[123] Homeboy Industries is open to a group forgotten by society. Fr. Greg Boyle, S.J., the founder of Homeboy Industries, recognizes that the hospitable actions of the organization are only possible because of a kinship, which "recognizes that there exists no daylight between [them and] us. Kinship—not serving the other, but being one with the other. Jesus was not a 'man for others;' he was one of them."[124] Homeboy Industries powerfully demonstrates the necessity of kinship for an attitude of openness. A person cannot receive another person if they do not believe the other has the same fundamental dignity and value that everyone carries.

The hospitable person, therefore, demonstrates openness by paying particular attention to those in the community who are alienated or marginalized. She understands not only who are the

[123] "Homies" is the term for the ex-gang members who come to Homeboy Industries.
[124] Gregory Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 208.

strangers in a community but why those people are strangers. They have few, if any, kin. Pohl's definition of the stranger points to the detachment felt by those on the margins. "Strangers, in the strict sense are those who are disconnected from basic relationships that give persons a secure place in the world. The most vulnerable strangers are detached from family, community, church, work, and polity."[125] Hospitality opens families, organizations, and institutions to those who most need connection. Jesus demonstrates kinship in his welcome of the tax collector Zaccheus (Luke 19: 1-10). Zaccheus lacks friends and connections in society because he works for the oppressive imperial government. Zaccheus, scorned by the Jewish community, yearns to connect with Jesus. So much so, he climbs a tree to catch a glimpse of him when Jesus passes one day. Jesus recognizes Zaccheus' desire for connection with him and empowers Zaccheus to be hospitable, inviting himself into the home of Zaccheus. By enabling Zaccheus to serve him, Jesus inverts society's perception of Zaccheus. Before Jesus's actions, "Zaccheus was regarded as a 'sinner' by those accompanying Jesus because of his occupation."[126] After Jesus goes to Zaccheus home, Zaccheus and Jesus are kin.

Recognizing God's gifts of love, gratitude for those gifts, and adopting an attitude of kinship compose the openness present in the virtue of hospitality. Being open to the stranger as a gift of God allows the host to welcome someone disconnected from society. Once the stranger is identified, the host needs to attend to this new guest.

[125] Pohl, *Making Room*, 13.
[126] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina Series, Vol. 3., edited by Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 287.

Attentiveness

Attentiveness grants dignity and respect to the guest by listening to her, keeping the host attuned to the needs of the guest. The attentive host is present to her guest. In the monastic tradition, guests are warmly welcomed as soon as they arrive. The most prominent example of Christian attentiveness is exemplified by the Benedictine monastic tradition. St. Benedict famously wrote in his monastic rule, "Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ."[127] The guest is the most important person in the monastery. Monks defer to them and guests are given assistants to attend their needs.[128] The monks prioritize the stranger in their midst, which, in turn, transforms the stranger into a guest. Attentiveness emphasizes the quality of presence.

In the Gospels, there are numerous stories of attentiveness. Two such stories suffice here. One involves Jesus visiting the home of the sisters Martha and Mary to share a meal with them (Lk 10: 38-42). In the story, Mary sits with Jesus while Martha busily prepares the feast. Jesus corrects Martha for failing to be present. He praises Mary for sitting with him. Such praise might seem as if Jesus is recommending the sedentary life over the active life. He is not. As James Keenan notes, Jesus admonishes Martha because "both [Martha and Mary] invited Jesus, both should be hospitable, but only one lets him feel like he is a guest."[129] It is certainly important to attend to the physical needs of a guest, like satisfying a guest's hunger. But attending to the physical needs of a guest should not replace the obligation to attend to the spiritual and emotional needs of a guest.

A second scriptural story which demonstrates how granting one's attention to a person can subvert some of the unjust cultural prejudices is found in the story of the woman at the well

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[127] Saint Benedict, *Saint Benedict's Rule*, translated by Patrick Barry, OSB (Mahwah, N.J.: Hidden Springs, 2004), 123-125.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Keenan, *Virtues*, 107.

(Jn 4: 1-42). Jesus engages a Samaritan woman in a dialogue despite the fact that conversation between these two would normally be forbidden on account of both ethnic and gender differences. A long history of Jewish law regarding cultural impurity relegated the Samaritan woman to the status of unclean.[130] Jesus most likely was aware of this designation when the two met at the well. However, instead of rebuking her based upon her cultural designation, Jesus saw her as the child of God that she was and approached her. Through the course of their dialogue, the Samaritan woman comes to believe that Jesus is the Messiah (Jn 4:42). Jesus' attention to her needs is an act of hospitality and which both subverts false cultural divisions and grants her status. The disciples' shock (Jn 4:27) confirms that Jesus' attentive listening has ushered in something new. The disciples' reaction expresses their devaluation of the Samaritan woman. "What do you want with her?" Jesus, in giving her time and an apostolic mission, sees her for who she is—a believer who confesses Jesus is the son of God. Sandra Schneiders observes the silent shock of the men, noticing "it vindicates her discipleship, apostleship, and ministry in the face of cultural patterns which might have challenged its appropriateness or even its legitimacy."[131] The shock of the disciples affirms the groundbreaking attitude of attentiveness displayed by Jesus.

The Benedictine monks, as well as the scriptural stories of attentiveness, exemplify the importance of a host welcoming a stranger to the extent necessary for welcoming a guest. Moreover, attention has the power to recognize status and dignity of the oppressed. An attentive

[130] Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen, "Jesus and Women in the Gospel of John," *Direction* 19 (2) (Fall 1990)*:* 55.
[131] Sandra M. Schneiders, "Women in the Fourth Gospel and the Role of Women in the Contemporary Church," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 12, no. 2 (1982): 40.

host listen to the cues given to her by the needs of the guest. Being open and attentive leads a person to commit to hospitable practices habitually.

Commitment

If openness is the precondition of the virtue of hospitality and attentiveness is the attitude a host has while the guest is present, then the final trait of hospitality is a commitment to its practice. Hospitality is a virtue and as such it should be second nature. Being hospitable should be a constitutive part of a person's identity. A host should be committed to serving others, to welcoming the stranger. One cannot welcome someone half-heartedly; hosting is an occasion for joy. A host should embrace the attitude of the father in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15: 11-32). In the parable, a son squanders away his inheritance in a foreign land. The son, filled with shame, decides to return home to face his father. Upon seeing his son, the father reacts with pure joy:

> Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found! And they began to celebrate (Lk 15: 22-24).

A host should appropriate the attitude of this father toward his profligate son. Every human being at one time or another is lost. It feels incredibly comforting to be welcomed and celebrated just for arriving at a place. A host has to be committed to the transformative power of welcoming in order to be hospitable.

Hospitality is a commitment to welcoming the estranged. Ancient Christianity embraced this commitment to hospitality. Rodney Stark attributes radical Christian hospitality to reviving and transforming Greco-Roman cities and also to the ascension of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire.

> To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with new comers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by ethnic and violent strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires, and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective nursing services…I am going to argue that once Christianity did appear, its superior capacity for meeting these chronic problems soon became evident and played a major role in its triumph.[132]

Christianity communicated the Gospel in its early days because it was committed to embracing everybody. When people moved into cities, Christians welcomed them as family. Christians reached out to the poor and served people, especially the vulnerable. One could not be Christian without being hospitable.

The virtue of hospitality is open to greeting the stranger, attentive to his needs, and a total commitment of lifestyle. These traits of the virtue lead one to serve as Jesus served. Early Christians embodied this commitment through their radical hospitality in the dense, filthy, unstable cities of the Roman Empire. Modern Christians too are called to such hospitality. In the classroom, a teacher can model hospitality through openness to receive students as they are, through paying attention to the educational and emotional needs of each learner, and committing to hospitality on a daily basis. In practicing hospitality in the classroom, a teacher models the virtue that supports the content he also provides.

Prudence and Hospitality: So What?

The ways in which people practice hospitality will depend upon the various contexts in which people find themselves. For example, a young family and an elderly man very well might discern different ways to be hospitable given the same situation. Their responses differ because

[132] Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 161-2.

their ability to be hospitable, as well as the particular gifts each person has, differs. Prudence assists an individual in figuring out what needs to happen for a person to be hospitable.

Virtue is a good candidate for incorporation into a pedagogical model aimed at assisting students in reflecting upon the type and nature of their behaviors. As mentioned earlier in this chapter virtue ethics asks teleological questions: Who ought we be? What actions might help us become the people we desire to be? These questions find their answers through dialogues in a public square and through the energizing challenges of friendship. The public square and friendship shape our understanding of what is excellent while revealing whether our own habits live up to the standards of society and our friends. The classroom is a place where friendship and dialogue occurs.

A good teacher is an exemplary person. She not only is a master in a particular field of study. She also is an exemplary communicator. She astutely ascertains her students' academic abilities, understanding how each student learns. She crafts her lessons to the needs of her students, hoping to engender confidence and enthusiasm. Moreover, she consistently evaluates her own progress in helping students learn, committing herself daily to the educational task in front of her. In short, the teacher is a hospitable, prudent person. She creates an environment conducive to learning after discovering the right reasons about how to proceed. Prudence shapes hospitality in her classroom. Prudence also assists students in discovering how they might be hospitable themselves. Virtue based reflection, utilizing prudence, allows people to evaluate and amend their behavior.

This chapter has shown that, similar to the style of theological reflection inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises,* virtue ethics is conducive to constructing a pedagogical method aimed at empowering students to examine their actions. This chapter has provided any hopeful teacher of

virtue with the metaphysical groundwork for a moral theology classroom. It provides definitions and examples of virtue, prudence, and hospitality that a teacher can utilize. The task remaining for this thesis is to articulate An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education in detail. The next chapter does just that.

Chapter 3: An Ignatian Pedagogy of Virtue

In chapter 1, I presented how the prayer activities and discernment recommended by the *Spiritual Exercises* lead to opportunity for conversion. Reflecting upon the nature of one's experiences against a horizon of grace provides an opportunity to consider the type of person one is called to become. Theological reflection in an Ignatian mode encourages a process of change in becoming more like Christ. In chapter 2, I laid out definitions and examples of essential language for an aspiring teacher of virtue. I also emphasized the importance of prudence as the director of virtues. I then described the virtue of hospitality because its traits of openness, attentiveness, and commitment are particularly conducive for creating the public square that is necessary for teaching virtue. Reflecting on behaviors from the perspective of virtue ethics encourages people to examine their actions in light of their goals. This manner of reflection explicitly raises vital questions: What virtues are consistent with my goals? How do friends help me be good? How can prudence teach me to evaluate and appropriate the virtues for my own situation? I finished chapter 2 previewing some of the work of chapter 3 by suggesting that the classroom serves as a model of hospitality and prudence.

In chapter 3, I bring together these first two chapters by drawing upon a variety of sources. The first source originates in my personal experiences as a theology teacher in an all-boys Jesuit high school. While I began to develop the idea for a method of religious education during my three-year employment as a theology teacher, my idea for a method gained momentum as I read about virtue during my subsequent time as a student of theology. So the second source of my method is the philosophical tradition of education in virtue. As I mentioned in chapter 2, Aristotle and Aquinas have been influential in my understanding of how a comprehensive virtue education might look. In addition to Hellenistic ideas of virtue and my own teaching experience, I also draw heavily on the spirituality of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which

I discussed in chapter 1. From these three sources I began to formulate a method only to discover that my method also resembles two methods of religious education in the field of practical theology. As I composed this approach to religious education, I realized how similar, albeit slightly different, my proposed method of religious education in virtue was to both Thomas Groome's Shared Christian Praxis and to the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. The composite of all these sources formed this thesis.

What follows in here is a contribution to religious education and practical theology. The suggested "Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education" aims to contribute a further pedagogical approach to the field of practical theology. This chapter is written for secondary education teachers who might wish to attempt incorporating this understanding of religious education in virtue for the classroom. The steps are meant to be read as a handbook, and, therefore, are directive. Of course, I am also keenly aware that this "handbook" is a living document that needs to be tested, researched, practiced, and amended by educators and scholars. The hope is to suggest a slightly new approach that will inspire people to consider teaching virtue, re-evaluate their current program of moral formation, or research other programs of moral formation. It is with a deep humility that I attempt to synthesize Ignatian spirituality, my own teaching experience, virtue ethics, Shared Christian Praxis, and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm.

Five steps compose an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education: setting the context of virtue education, presenting the content of virtue, practicing virtuous actions, ongoing reflection on virtue, and prudentially evaluating actions. These five steps form a two-week unit on the virtue of hospitality. The unit is designed for moral formation class at the secondary education level. The unit is flexible and to be based upon the practitioner's discretion. I choose hospitality as a model so that future practitioners of this method might refer back to chapter 2 to see how I

propose to use the virtue of hospitality. This model can be easily adapted to other virtues as long as a teacher supplies his or her own content about the nature of the virtue to be practiced. After presenting this Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education, I reflect upon my experience in light of its limitations and also how it compares with the two models of practical theology to which this model owes so much: Shared Christian Praxis and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm.

Step 1: Setting the Context (Before the unit begins)

This step of setting the context is of vital importance to ensure that the conditions in which virtue education can flourish are present within the classroom. Without the successful completion of this step, the remaining four steps suffer greatly. To set the context, then, the necessary conditions of virtue (a public square and friendship, Ignatian spirituality, prayer in the classroom) must be examined in order that an Ignatian education in virtue might thrive.

Chapter 2 of this thesis showed the necessity of a public square for dialogue about the nature of virtue. In the high school setting, this means that the classroom must be a safe space. Students should feel free to share their ideas and feelings without fear of ridicule. Moreover, the classroom itself should be open for different types of dialogue or, more precisely, introverts should have the quiet time to think before participating and extroverts should have the conversational space to process their thought. A teacher crafts a lesson on virtue with the learning styles of the students in mind, allowing thinking time for introverts and a space to process for extroverts. One tool to encourage dialogue is an online resource, such as a blog or a virtual classroom. A virtual public square provides space for extroverts to process and the time for introverts to think. It is also equally important that certain rules for communal dialogue be established regardless of the media in which the dialogue occurs. For instance, when I taught high school juniors, I had my students practice how to engage a blogger in debate. The

assignment required each student to visit a blog, to compliment the author by restating his thesis, and conclude by asking a polite question which challenged the thesis or sought a further clarification concerning a specific point. Whatever assignment a teacher might craft, it is important to have both a public space for dialogue and a community committed to respect for dialogue about the virtues to be fruitful.

Based on my experience in the theology classroom of an all-boys Jesuit high school, I believe that the teacher employing this method should also be open to a variety of responses from the students during any dialogue. While the teacher is trying to instruct about a specific virtue, she wisely remembers two things. One, virtues have a multiplicity of forms due to a variety of contexts. Two, "Spiritual touch is dark: it is not a reality we can 'see.'"[133] The interior life of a student, particularly the ways in which God is forming virtue in a person, is often unseen. For these two reasons, a charitable interpretation a student's input is favored. Ignatius believed that this attitude is essential for anyone directing a retreat: "Every good Christian ought to be more eager to put a good interpretation on a neighbor's statement than to condemn it. Further, if one cannot interpret it favorably, one should ask how the other means."[134] In demonstrating this charitable attribute, the teacher exhibits that proper dialogue is respectful dialogue. Proper dialogue and conversation are important. It would be beneficial to devote some class time at the beginning of the year to instruct, model, and teach students the art of dialogue, modeling receptive listening skills and active, respectful strategies for disagreeing with another.

Through the shared practice of tutored dialogue, the teacher emerges as a model of civil discourse and, in creating a receptive environment, models the virtue of hospitality. Of course, teachers likely possess many personal virtues. An educator in virtue, must, consequently, avoid

[133] Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, 39.
[134] *Spiritual Exercises*, No. 22.

preaching what is not practiced. Naturally, it is impossible for anybody to be a perfect exemplar of every virtue. Yet, at a minimum, those who aim to teach virtuous practice display how prudence has helped them acquire a few of the moral virtues. For instance, a teacher could share how prudence helped her discover a just response to a situation of injustice. For it is through modeling and instilling prudence, the virtue ordering actions, that students will come to learn better how they might also grow in prudence and the moral virtues.

Chapter 2 also highlighted the importance of friendship. When possible, a student should have another friend enrolled in a class on virtue . Many of the projects and activities challenge a student to live virtuously. Following Aristotle, friends teach and challenge each other to be good. If the course has as one of its objectives striving to be good, it is difficult to achieve this objective in the absence of friends. That is, friends are needed as supports and sounding boards in the mutual pursuit of the good. This requirement is challenging for a school for a couple of reasons. One, it limits enrollment in a course on virtue to juniors and seniors who have had an opportunity to develop authentic friendships. It also requires the school to have a pre-enrollment process that ensures students will be placed in the same section as their friends.

Lastly, this method assumes a certain religious literacy on the part of the students. The context of the class is religious education. By the time a student has enrolled in a course of virtue, she has an operative image of who God is for her. The teacher of the virtue course can probe the depth of a student's relationship with God by providing time and space at the beginning of the course for students to pray and reflect. One helpful tool for diagnosing a student's sense of the transcendent presence of God is Michael Hansen's book *The First*

Exercises.[135] In processing an experience of prayer with a student, a teacher can discern how God is moving in an individual. If a student is being overwhelmed by the vastness of God's love for her, or is struggling to accept how radical God's love is for her, then the teacher can utilize more Aristotelian language with student. These diagnostic prayer exercises allow a teacher to adjust expectations for each student. The teacher, the director of this annotation of the *Exercises*, adapts the course to the needs of the student. This pedagogical approach is a spiritual adaption of deferential differentiation.[136]

These preconditions are essential for an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education. Without them, the trust and freedom necessary to seriously engage the material is limited. The goal of this first step is to set the context for the exercise of the virtue of hospitality in the classroom. Students should feel safe to share their thoughts, have the time to think, be challenged to goodness by their friends, and have a sense of God's love for them. These are high standards for any high school classroom. Certain humility tempers expectations here. In a case where preconditions are lacking, a teacher might still be able to introduce some concepts and assign practices outside the classroom. But he or she would be wise to accept that some of the depth of sharing for exploring the common good will be lacking. In cases where the context lacks these qualities, a teacher must adapt expectations. The teacher will need to discover ways students can

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[135] Michael Hansen has designed 25-minute prayers based upon the meditations of the First Week of the *Exercises*. These meditations seek the grace of the First Week, to know oneself as a loved sinner. A teacher can utilize his work as a guided meditation for the class. I have included one example in the Appendix. For more variety and context see Michael Hansen, *The First Spiritual Exercises: Four Guided Retreats*, (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 2013).

[136] There are many examples of deferential differentiation, or differentiated instruction. The basic idea behind deferential differentiation is that the student's learning needs shape the form of instruction. Applied to the spiritual life, a person's encounter along the horizon of grace determines the extent in which she can engage the material. For more of deferential differentiation, see Lannie Kanevsky, "Deferential Differentiation: What Types of Differentiation Do Students Want?" *Gifted Child Quarterly* 55 (2011): 279-299.

be productive in discussions or modes of prayer that might be short of virtue education but productive nonetheless. The teacher, as director, would also be wise to recall that God often works in ways unseen. Even though a student's spiritual progress may appear to be stagnant, it may very well be the case that the student is undergoing what is for the teacher and perhaps the student an undetectable conversion.

Step 2: Presenting the Content of the Virtue (Day 1-2)

The second step of this Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education is to commence the formal unit on virtue through an initial classroom presentation on the content of the virtue. For instance, when I taught the virtue of hospitality, I first presented its definition: hospitality is the process by means of which an outsider's status is changed from stranger to guest. Then I elicited discussion about what this means. Who is an outsider? What does it mean to be a guest? Once the class identified 'outsiders,' we considered: what is the best way to be attentive to a guest? How does welcoming a stranger require a commitment? I also encouraged students to imagine the extremes associated with hospitality. When is someone being too hospitable? When is someone not being hospitable enough? How is the mean of hospitality its excellence? The process of trying to arrive at the definition is already challenging students to appropriate a definition of hospitality for themselves.

After presenting the definition of the virtue for the unit, the teacher employing this method furthers the presentation of the content by offering a few historical examples. Returning to examples from Jesus' life and the monastic tradition are helpful. A class can examine the story of Zaccheus wondering who are the people on the margins of their cultures. Are there students in the school who are shunned because of cliques? Also, the class can explore the monastic

tradition of having the superior of the community dine with guests. How might students imagine such presence to outsiders in their own lives? Exploring historical examples aids in raising questions: How did the virtue of hospitality arise as a virtue in various historical cultures? Who were the moral exemplars of this virtue in past cultures? How does Jesus demonstrate hospitality? How have Christians been hospitable throughout the centuries? In tracing the history of the virtue, the educator's goal is twofold. First, the educator posits the historical consciousness concerning the virtue. Preceding cultures have passed down certain practices and expectations of behavior to us. Second, the teacher discusses the virtue under consideration in the public square of the class. The contemporary public square permits discussion among the students of whether historical instantiations of the virtue are appropriate in the present context. This communal discussion is both the discovery and the judgment phase of the virtue of prudence. That is, by the end of this initial presentation, the class either arrives at an understanding of the virtue or the teacher realizes that this virtue is still beyond the grasp of the students. At the conclusion of presenting the initial content of the virtue students wonder, ideally, what the virtue looks like in their own lives.

Step 3: Practicing Virtuous Actions (Assign following Day 1-2)

Upon the completion of the initial presentation of virtue's content, the third step is to assigns students homework for the week: their task is "to live," i.e., to engage or to practice the virtue. I refer to these assignments as VirtueLabs. By design, VirtueLabs are demanding in that they ask students to hit the incredibly small target of excellence that represents the mean of virtue. VirtueLabs also draw their inspiration from historical examples of the virtue. In designing a VirtueLab, a teacher imagines how a heroic example of virtue of the past might look in

contemporary culture. For instance, when I taught the unit on hospitality, I assigned a VirtueLab requiring students to imitate St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, the Jesuit brother who served as a porter in Majorca for much of his apostolic life. Alphonsus saw his role as porter not merely as answering the door but as an opportunity to encounter Christ. As he famously recalled in his memoirs his greeting to every guest was "I'm coming Lord!"[137] Using St. Alphonsus as an example, I assigned a VirtueLab to students to view every interruption to their day, every request made of them, and every person who walked into their life as an encounter with Christ. The students' assignment was to exercise hospitality in this manner throughout the week. By the nature of this particular assignment, I hoped to challenge a student to ask at what times it is appropriate to be hospitable: is it appropriate to be hospitable in the midst of one's daily obligations of homework and housework? During times of personal rest and recreation? In pushing them to incorporate the virtue in their lives with an attentiveness to context and discerning appropriate circumstances, the virtue of prudence was also reinforced. That is, as prudence discovers the context it discerns what virtue is needed and to what extent it is to be engaged.

Whatever VirtueLab a teacher constructs, the assignment is: 1) achievable but challenging and 2) presented in a way conducive for reflection. VirtueLabs highlight one of the central elements of virtue education: we learn to be good by doing good. This latter element is particularly important in light of contemporary research concerning the behaviors of emerging adults. Educators interested in presenting virtue in the classroom must be careful in assuming that the content of the material naturally leads to practice outside of the classroom. Sometimes, it does. However, as the introduction shows, the cultural forces surrounding this generation have

[137] Joseph Tylenda, *Jesuit Saints & Martyrs: Short Biographies of the Saints, Blessed, Venerables, and Servants of God of the Society of Jesus* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1998), 361.

made it particularly difficult for many people to practice certain virtues. Christian Smith's research has confirmed that, left to their own devices, many emerging adults practice a morality of "Just don't be an asshole." VirtueLabs create an opportunity for students to actualize what is latent within each of them: the capacity to do and become good. Sometimes people struggle to be good because of cultural forces. Other times, people want to be good but are too distracted. VirtueLabs, as the only homework a teacher assigns during the unit, give students the time and space to try on various virtues. They are also a formal way an institution can highlight the particular importance of living a specific morality, in this case an Ignatian inspired virtue ethics.

Step 4: Ongoing Reflection (Days 3-8)

During the week, as students work through the various assigned virtues, the teacher presents classroom content aimed at stimulating ongoing reflection about the nature of the virtue, the fourth step of this Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education. To demonstrate how this step can look in a classroom, once again let us return to my experience in teaching hospitality. During this unit, I often invited a student not enrolled in my class to share the story of his family's arrival to the United States of America from Mexico. His reflection would highlight both his parents' journey and also how his family had been received since arriving in their new homeland. After his sharing, his classmates would have an opportunity to ask him questions or share their reflections about what they had heard. The power of peer sharing was, frequently, tremendous. Often students had formed opinions about certain issues, like immigration, outside of an actual experience of meeting an immigrant. The story of their classmate forced them to confront a prejudice on the terms of friendship. When a peer stood before them sharing the ways in which American culture had succeeded or failed to be hospitable, the experienced often begged the

question about whether their current understanding of hospitality was truly hospitable. Students had to ask themselves whether they had contributed positively to the process of transforming their peer's status as an outsider to a guest in this country.

There are myriad ways a class might reflect upon a virtue throughout the course of a unit. The important aspect is to vary the type of content so that students of various learning styles are addressed. Speakers, YouTube clips, historical examples and articles are all excellent ways to present the content of the virtue. The various forms presented in the classroom expand a student's imagination about how the virtue might be appropriated. Returning to my experience teaching the virtue of hospitality, my class read Greg Boyle's chapter on kinship from *Tattoos on the Heart*. In this chapter, Boyle challenges readers to expand their circle of compassion.[138] My students frequently noticed how small their own circles of compassion were. Noticing limitations often spurred a discussion in which students named possible periphery groups in the high school and ways in which they could help the school community expand their compassion to these groups of students on the margins.

In addition to variety in the amount and type of content, the teacher diagnoses the progress of each student's VirtueLab by asking, what are you learning about the virtue from your project? How does the class material further your understanding about the virtue? What concerns or questions do you have about this virtue as you continue to learn and practice it? The ongoing reflection that occurs during the unit allows students the chance to both individually reflect on their progress and also to evaluate a virtue in the public square of the classroom. Students are also able to evaluate how their understanding of a virtue changes as their experiences deepen and increase. Students are invited to prudentially reflect also about how to correctly practice and live

[138] Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart*, 210ff.

a specific Christian virtue. They also reflect on the nature of their discipleship amidst some of their friends, who support and challenge them to grow.

The ongoing reflection step also includes space to pray and the time to reflect upon a virtue with God. In this step, class can occur in the chapel for a guided reflection. During this guided reflection a teacher might ask students to pray with, for example, the following questions: How does my attempt to live the virtue affect my own Christian discipleship? What virtuous actions does God want me to practice with my friends, family, school community, etc.? How is my understanding of God changing through these practices? The guided reflection gives space for students to let God respond and challenge them. It is an opportunity to reflect upon the nature of discipleship. Spiritual reflection is essential. Just as friends and the content of the virtue challenge students to moral growth, so too does dialoguing with God about one's practice, or lack thereof, of a particular virtue stimulate opportunity for changing behaviors. If God does infuse virtue through free offers of grace, it is important to devote some classroom time for prayer. Giving space for prayer designs the opportunity for God to touch students. It should be noted that the fruits of anyone's prayer might not be manifest until the unit is over. The teacher must trust that God is working on students in this time, even though the teacher may never see any tangible results of such prayer.

Step 5: Prudent Evaluations (Days 9-10)

The final step of this approach is to evaluate one's progress in the virtuous life through the lens of prudence. This step requires a student to spend some time reflecting upon the graces and the challenges of trying to live a VirtueLab. Each student should complete a reflection so that the teacher might be able to engage in dialogue with individuals as well as the class about

why a student chose to act in certain ways. For instance, a student once penned the following concerning his St. Alphonsus VirtueLab: "I eagerly helped my friend when he needed lunch money but I refused to help my sister with her homework. I wondered why I was generous to my friend but not my sister." As the student shared the result of his spontaneous action, his sharing permitted me, his teacher, to offer to unpack his understanding of the virtue of hospitality. I asked him: Who are strangers to you? Did you consider any rewards for helping your friend as opposed to your sister? What future action would you take if presented with the same situation? How can you notice and name your prejudices in the future so that you might act differently? I finally asked: Given all this self-awareness, what do you understand the virtue of hospitality to look like? Based upon his responses, it was clear he learned about the virtue of hospitality in his VirtueLab. His willingness to reflect with me on his actions was an aide in his moral growth. He was able to ask himself, albeit in a different form, the principal questions of both virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality. Who do I want to be? Who is God calling me to be? How might I become that person? If he was to habituate the virtue of hospitality through future actions, he needed to understand how to prudently evaluate his past actions.

It is important as well to provide students with a forum, a public square, to share their experiences with the class and dialogue about the nature of virtuous action. For instance, I once assigned students to perform an act of protest as part of a unit on the virtue of solidarity. One group of students decided to protest Kentucky Fried Chicken's treatment of animals by staging a protest in the parking lot of a suburban KFC. When they presented their social action to the class it bordered on the absurd—they covered themselves in chicken feathers and marched around a parking lot with protest signs yelling at cars as they pulled up to the drive-thru window. When finished with their hour-long protest, they entered the restaurant to enjoy a bucket of fried

chicken. Their story revealed their failure to recognize the conflicting acts of protest and their subsequent endorsement of the product. My role as a teacher was to help the group and the class reflect on their choices. By opening up their protest action to discussion, the class was able to assist them in understanding how their actions might have conveyed an unintended meaning.

Discernment should also feature in this step. A student's reflection often unveils a desire. A few questions a teacher can consider posing to students are: Based upon what you learned in this project, what kind of person so you think God wants you to be? How did you encounter God through these experiences? These questions invite a student to view experiences through the lens of a horizon of grace in hopes that such reflection leads to a conversion by either changing one's behavior or by a deeper appreciation of the way in which an individual is cooperating with God's free offers of grace. Whatever VirtueLab a teacher designs, it will provide data about which a discerner can dialogue with God.

This last step of an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education creates chances for a student to describe the form of the virtue based upon his personal experience. The goal of this step is for a student to begin to develop a virtuous memory. In the terms of virtue ethics, it implies the immanent nature of virtue. Habitual practices become second nature. A student increases knowledge concerning the origin and the nature of her decisions. This habituated memory increases the possibility of an individual using prudence in future moral actions. This final step of an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education teaches the discovery function of prudence. In knowing the details of past action, the moral agent builds memory of how virtue might look like for future actions. It allows the moral agent to judge and direct the will in the future.

Limitations of an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education

The purpose of suggesting a model of virtue education is to inspire high school theology teachers to embrace the model or to utilize it as a lens through which to view their own programs of moral formation. The proposed approach draws from a variety of sources: my experiences as a theology teacher at an all-boys high school, the metaphysics of virtue, and Ignatian spirituality. Further elaboration of the approach would require replication and experimentation in a variety of settings. A shortcoming is the lack of a rubric and data to assess the outcomes of the pedagogical processes. I would need to conduct a longitudinal study with the same students over a period of time to gather appropriate data for evaluating the success of the model. Moreover, further studies must take into consideration cultural contexts, such as: family backgrounds of students, previous educational experience of students, context of the school beyond the classroom, ethnic differences, and gender differences (my experience was in an all-boys school). There are also some pedagogical shortcomings in this method. One such shortcoming lies in the difficulty an educator may have in assessing assignments. While content may be assessed via testing, many of the reflection-based assignments may only be assessed pass/fail. Moreover, a teacher employing this method cannot mandate virtuous behavior, only invite a student to appropriate virtue. A student might also fabricate the content of reflective assignments. If the student neglected to participate in the assigned behaviors outside of the classroom, he or she can nonetheless create reflections knowing that failure to turn in a reflection would be deleterious to academic standing. Also, the teacher must exercise caution in evaluating the content of a student's prayer. In my experience, I had to remind myself that God often works in individuals in ways invisible to my own observation. Another pedagogical difficulty comes in trusting the efficacy of prayer. Using class time for prayer is negative space and time; it is immeasurable. A student very well may

choose to ignore the prayer prompts provided during scheduled prayer time. An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education in the secondary education classroom requires the school to understand that moral assessments are difficult to evaluate using traditional grading models. The approach trusts that internal formation occurs outside the purview of the educator. With this in mind, I often decided to assess a student's VirtueLab by having completed the assignment. Other teachers using this method might well decide to rely more heavily on traditional assessments. For instance, a teacher could give a quiz or a test about some of the key definitions and terms of virtue theory. This measure would assist in reinforcing some of the key terms. However, anyone relying on traditional assessments should be careful not communicate virtue as merely another term to be memorized. Virtues must be lived.

Another limitation is the need for consistency of virtue education throughout a person's moral sphere. It is not sufficient for a student to receive training in the moral life only for a semester. A school needs to commit to virtue education throughout the curriculum and the mission of the school. Two examples will highlight just how comprehensive this commitment should be. One example can be found in classrooms that do not teach theology. A science educator might encourage the virtue of discovery as a lens through which her students approach scientific inquiry. A biology teacher's assignments could encourage her students to explore nature. Her students could then report on what they discovered and why they chose to pursue such discovery. This way of "testing" is not an abandonment of teaching the necessary scientific principles. Rather, virtue education complements the normal academic rigor of science education. Even on tests, the science educator can reinforce virtue by adding an extra credit question encouraging students to reflect upon how the material learned for this unit has affected them. For instance: how has the study of the Krebs cycle deepened your appreciation of how

God works in nature? How might this understanding of God's activity in the natural world encourage you to act differently in the future? These questions might seem strange from afar. Yet they point to an implicit understanding of the ways in which God is involved in the life processes of organisms, thereby cultivating an awareness for God's presence in all things.

The second example of the necessity of the comprehensive nature of virtue education can be found in the home. The administration of the school might teach parents an Ignatian approach to virtue education. Administrators could encourage parents to see themselves as moral exemplars and teachers of prudence. Many parents already view themselves in this light. The hope is that any teaching about the necessity of prudence on the part of the school administration will deepen the reflection already occurring in the homes of students. Prudent parents lead their family members to reflect upon the nature of their choices. Commitment to virtue education in both the curriculum and students' homes requires a tremendous commitment by the school community. One can easily imagine parents and some teachers not committing to so comprehensive educative vision.

Compare and Contrast: Shared Christian Praxis and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

As mentioned earlier, an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education aims to be a viable model in the field of practical theology. It is an adaptation of Shared Christian Praxis and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP). Shared Christian Praxis employs dialectic of personal experience and the Christian story and vision. People's experience is the basis for theological reflection. The IPP is a process for teaching by which a teacher tries to understand a student's context and experiences in hopes of leading the student to reflection and evaluation about future actions. The approach of this thesis differs from these models in three primary ways: by

suggesting specific practices, by explicitly teaching prudence, and by insisting friendship as an essential element to reflection. Attention to these differences leads me to believe that an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education can positively contribute to the field of religious education.

Thomas Groome has developed a model of religious education known as Shared Christian Praxis. This model follows a dialectic—from life to faith to life. Groome's model insists that religious education begins with reflection upon one's own life experiences. By life, Groome means "anything and everything we do and what gets done or goes on within the ambit of our lives in the world."[139] Faith begins with our lives. Groome's model roots theological reflection in a student's experiences. Before speaking of the Christian story, a student must first reflect upon the reality as he or she knows it. From there, the Christian story and vision becomes a dialogue partner for a person's experience in Groome's third step: Making Accessible the Christian Story and Vision. Groome's Shared Christian Praxis approach raises a couple of key questions for each student: what does Christianity teach about the topic I have just reflected upon? How has Christianity expressed this idea throughout its history? The final two steps of Groome's model encourage participants to blend their experience with the Christian tradition on the topic of reflection. In asking how Christianity affects one's experience, the converse question also is considered by participants: how does my experience speak to the Christian story and vision? This critical reflection through the lens of faith finishes with the community of reflection making decisions about how the insights gained will affect the future. Groome's method is shared because it is done intentionally and communally. People listen to others' reflections in order that they may gain a deeper insight into their own faith life. Likewise, this communal sharing shapes the Christian story and vision itself.

[139] Thomas Groome, *Will There Be Faith?* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), 275.

An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education certainly shares a similar dynamic with Groome's model. Both accent the need for a public square to share faith experiences. Also, both encourage a critical dialectic of any presented content. Lastly, both insist upon the necessity of experience in doing theological reflection. There are, however, three salient differences. First, an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education insists upon assigning certain practices as a basis for theological reflection. Groome prefers to have people reflect upon their current practice. The model put forth in this thesis intentionally challenges students to embrace particular Christian practices in a way that Groome's model does not. In Shared Christian Praxis people bring their experience to the classroom for reflection. In an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education, the classroom assigns a type of experience to be lived, and subsequently, reflected upon. The second difference lies in explicitly teaching prudence. Groome's approach implicitly assumes participants are already capable of prudently evaluating actions. The model of this thesis specifically teaches what prudence is and emphasizes the priority of prudence for living a life of discipleship. In an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education, the educator must be a moral exemplar of prudence. The teacher is responsible for creating and establishing prudent reflection. In Shared Christian Praxis, the educator moves the conversation along by asking the right focusing question. The educator is more of a participant in Shared Christian Praxis than a model of prudence. The final significant difference between Shared Christian Praxis and an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education lies in the latter's insistence upon the classroom being a community of friends. Shared Christian Praxis is not opposed to a classroom full of friends. In fact, Groome lists eight essential ways an educator must trust the ability of the participants and the movement of the Holy Spirit in the classroom.[140] The difference lies in Groome's assumption

[140] Groome, *Will There Be Faith?* 297.

that an educator can create such an environment. However, this thesis has hoped to show the necessity of assuring that friends do theological reflection together.

There are five basic components to the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation.[141] By context, the IPP stresses that an educator is sensitive to the situation in which learning takes place. What are the factors outside the classroom that shape a student's inscape?[142] Experience refers to the understandings students already have of the subject matter before it is presented in the classroom. Like Shared Christian Praxis, the IPP does not believe students to be a *tabula rasa*, thus, the third step, reflection, challenges students to examine their own presumptions and broaden their own perspectives. The fourth step, action, links classroom activities to activities beyond the classroom. Finally, evaluation examines how the learning that is taking place has shaped a student's life. The IPP also begs questions of reflection to the teacher about how effective the method used was in achieving its goal. The five steps of the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm "strive to develop men and women of competence, conscience, and compassion."[143]

An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education and the IPP find much common ground. Both approaches stress the necessity of reflection, action, and evaluation as steps in their approach. These steps are drawn from the influence of the essential dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises*: an encounter with God along a horizon of grace, discerning the nature of spiritual encounters, and experience. The classroom can be a space where God's spirit touches an individual in such a way

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[141] Sharon J. Koth, "Precis of Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach," *A Jesuit Education Reader*, ed. George W. Traub, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), 280-4.
[142] Here I mean interior landscape: family, social pressures, media, etc. More precisely, inscape is taken from Gerard Manley Hopkins' journal and is "the unified complex of characteristics that give each thing its uniqueness and that differentiate it from other things." Glenn Everett, "Hopkins on 'Inscape' and 'Instress,' The Victorian Web, (1988), http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/hopkins/hopkins1.html
[143] Koth, "Precis of Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach," 280.

that the individual is moved to action. Moreover, the classroom can be a place of prayerful reflection, of discernment. Students can evaluate how God works with, for, and in them through the material presented in the classroom.

These approaches also differ in three ways. First, an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education stresses the necessity of creating the conditions in which virtue can thrive. The second difference concerns the origin of action. The IPP assumes the material presented in the class will naturally lead to action. An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education does not make such an assumption. It insists upon assigning actions as the content of reflection. The final distinction is the necessity of teaching prudence in an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education. In virtue education, reflection and evaluation are impossible for an individual without truly knowing what prudence is and whether or not that individual utilizes prudence in his or her reflections.

An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education builds upon the work of Shared Christian Praxis and the IPP. Like its predecessors, it admits the necessity of theological reflection. It differs in that this approach includes explicitly the practice of virtue. This approach also calls for more direct instruction in and modeling of the virtue of prudence. Lastly, this approach provides opportunities for theological reflection amidst a group of friends.

Directions for Further Reflection

I never imagined creating a model of religious education when I set out to teach virtue five years ago. It was only through conversations with my colleagues about my classroom experiences and my subsequent reading about virtue in my courses that convinced me I might have something to offer religious education by way of a model. Of course, even this statement sounds brash as I continue to deepen my knowledge of the field of religious education. Thomas

Groome's influence has been immense in the field. Countless religious textbooks employ his life to faith to life dialectic. In the sphere of Jesuit secondary education, the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA) has gathered countless years of research and experience to analyze the Ignatian Pedagocial Paradigm. The field of religious education has consistently reviewed and refined the best practices and models of religious education. This attempt at constructing a model, an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education, has been a labor of humility.

In order that this model might be of use to the field of religious education, some further reflection and testing is needed. The most obvious area, and the hope of this thesis, is that some practitioners might find this thesis helpful as they design religion curricula and pedagogical approaches. This thesis is written in such a way that a teacher might read it and adapt it to her own classroom. I also believe having other people practice this model would provide more data about the possibilities of some of the more demanding claims of the thesis. In particular, it needs to be seen whether a school would commit to creating classrooms filled with friends. I wonder whether this is at all practical in the real world. I suspect not but I find the idea worthy enough to suggest it as a possibility. Further, what would be the effects of a school-wide commitment to virtue education throughout the curriculum? Additionally, there needs to be a committed teacher education, training, and professional development program that would accompany an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education. Teachers need ideas, examples, and materials about virtue, VirtueLabs, and the nature of reflective assignments. Another area of need for the implementation of this model on a larger scale is longitudinal data about the effect of the course on students. Testing the effects of a specific approach, like this Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education, over time would go a long way into answering the question of the introduction: is there a method to address the gap between the behaviors being taught by religious educators and

the behaviors being practiced by emerging adults? Testing how the specific initiatives of religious institutions to form emerging adults actually affect behavior seems to be the next step of Christian Smith's work.

At the beginning of this thesis I suggested that an Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education could be a method to address the gap between the behaviors being taught by religious educators and the behaviors being practiced by emerging adults. While I have set forth an approach, defined key terms, and anticipated potential pratfalls, I leave this thesis wondering whether I have been too harsh on the current efforts of religious education and religious educators. After all, as I think of the thousands of emerging adults I have met in the last 10 years as a Catholic seminarian and educator, I walk away humbled and impressed. In many ways, they have evangelized me. They are much more accepting of their peers than my peers were in high school. This acceptance has forced me to rethink my own prejudices. They gladly volunteer for extra-curricular service activities at their schools and parishes causing me to turn inward about the nature of my own generosity. And despite the forecasts of religious doom and gloom suggested by various studies, including Smith's, they still keep an open mind concerning God. I have noticed their virtues. So upon deeper reflection, maybe it should come as little surprise that this Jesuit, who spends much of his apostolic activities around faith-filled virtuous emerging adults, decided to write a method to religious education entitled " An Ignatian Approach to Virtue Education."

Appendix 1: Sample Prayer Exercises[144]

These sample exercises are a resource for teachers that can be utilized as a guided meditation. This particular meditation on the grace of the First Week comes from the first day of a retreat. The teacher reads aloud to students the text provided below giving students the appropriate amount of quiet time to complete the prayers. Michael Hansen, the creator of the exercise, provides notes for the teacher on how to conduct this exercise; those notes follow on the next page under the heading "Spiritual Direction." He also provides a text to pray should the teacher wish to utilize Scripture.

I Remember Being Loved.

Preparation	I take a relaxed position with a straight back, my body poised for prayer. I make a gesture of reverence and humility. I read the prayer text about passionate love.
Opening Prayer	I ask for the grace to direct my whole self to God.
Desire	I desire to feel the love in my life.
Prayer	Using my imagination, I remember an experience of being really loved. I go back in time to re-create this experience as best as I can with the details of place, weather, conversation, actions, and people. I relive the experiences with all my senses—I touch, smell, hear, and feel being loved. I remain in this place for a few minutes. Now, eyes still closed, I come back into the room where I am now. I remember the details of place here. How do I feel? I remain here for a few minutes.

[144] Michael Hansen, *The First Spiritual Exercises: Four Guided Retreats* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 2013), 32-33.

I come back into the room where I am now. How do I feel? Different? Now I move back and forth between both places, spending a minute or so in each.

I note any change of feelings. I do this for five minutes.

Conversation — I end my prayer with a short conversation with God, talking as to a friend, about what I have just experienced.

[Pray] Our Father.

Hansen's notes for the teacher.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION
For this exercise, and in the following exercises this week, I may choose the same experience to return to when I remember, or I may choose a different experience.

This exercise reveals that when I remember how I have been loved I re-experience this feeling. I can bring that feeling back into the present, and the feeling is as real now as it was originally.

SUGGESTED PRAYER TIME: 25 MINUTES
Preparation: 5 minutes. Opening Prayer: 1 minute. Desire: 1 minute.
Prayer: 15 minutes. Conversation: 3 minutes. Listening Book after prayer: 10 minutes.

PRAYER TEXTS
Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.

Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of his house,
it would be utterly scorned. (Song 8:6-7)

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