



STUDIES

THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

The Seminar is composed of a number of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

It concerns itself with topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially United States Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces through its publication, *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation that religious institutes recapture the original inspiration of their founders and adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material that it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, and laity, to both men and women. Hence, the journal, while meant especially for American Jesuits, is not exclusively for them. Others who may find it helpful are cordially welcome to make use of it.

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OUR LADY OF CHINA

Marian Devotion and the Jesuits

Jeremy Clarke, S.J.

STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

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the first word . . .

When does a Jesuit reach a point in life when he can no longer deny that he has become an old fuddy-duddy? The question holds both epistemological and metaphysical implications. What are the criteria for knowledge, and what is the essence of fuddy-duddy-ness? Several years ago an older colleague suggested what seemed at the time a few helpful points of reference for a shifting horizon of being. He argued that once cops and baseball players begin to look like kids, you know you've arrived. At the time, his thesis seemed objectively verifiable through the test of experience.

Now that I have firmly established my own F. D. credentials, I find his analysis less convincing. Even in our most grandfatherly moments, I can't imagine many Jesuits addressing a state trooper as "Sonny," especially after he's just stopped us for doing seventy in a fifty-five-mile zone with an expired license. Baseball players have no age anymore, thanks to a creative use of chemicals. In the old days several seasons of outfield sun would weather their faces to the color and texture of a catcher's mitt, and the ever-present mandatory wad of chewing tobacco would create heads hung with jowls that sweep away the morning dew. Those heroes on our baseball cards did in fact look like old-timers to us ten-year-olds. To a sixty-year-old, they must have looked like kids, and thus my friend's thesis. Q.E.D. Nowadays, teenagers arrive in the majors muscled like veteran weight-lifters, and graybeards wring one more season out of their knuckle-ball or designated-hitter slot, giving a new meaning to the term "baseball immortal."

But if the old F. D. criteria haven't stood the proverbial test of time, what others can be invoked? Here's one that came to me late one evening in midsummer, as I lay sleepless in my Spartan cell while returning alumni danced away the hours in a plastic tent pitched under my window. No, I wasn't particularly grumpy about the situation, since the music was slated to end at 11:30, certainly a reasonable hour for ending dances any place in the real world. So with relative tranquility, I had no choice but to listen to the music provided by a rented deejay and his two-million-amp sound system. The thought struck me that all the music sounded the same: a heavy beat on the drums, a lot of twanging of guitars, and singers shrieking repetitious monosyllables with something approximating a southern accent. (I'm told this is

the influence of country music, which similarly all sounds the same to my urbanized ear.) My thesis: When all pop music sounds alike, you've crossed the F. D. divide.

Yes, of course I realize that musical taste is culturally conditioned. Here's a good example. During my one brief experience of retreat giving in Nigeria, I suggested that instead of playing those clunky 1970s guitar hymns during meals, the retreatants might find classical music more relaxing. Intercultural gaffe #873. My hostess told me politely but forcefully that they can't stand Western classical music. Fair enough. Forcing me to listen to African, Indian, Chinese, or Arabic classical music would probably be an effective tool of what we now call "enhanced interrogation." After ten minutes, I'd tell them anything they want to know, even where the minister hides the keys to the "extra" house car or how much I really spent on my credit card last month.

Tossing from one side to the other during the alumni reunion concert, I appreciated for the first time that the temporal dimension is every bit as important as the spatial in intercultural dynamics. Yes, I knew that popular music appeals to "our" generation while those a few years younger or a few years older find it an abomination, but I didn't really appreciate the fact in all its brutal truth until that night. Dopey me. For the past twenty years or more, producers of those endless fund raisers on public television have been pioneering a whole new science of "age appropriate" music. The theory is simple: the audience that has the means to contribute can be presumed to have reached their F. D. years. (Their children are paying off the mortgage, and their grandchildren are still paying off college loans. No money there.) Recycling songs from their old collection of forty-five r.p.m. records gives them a sense that the PBS affiliate is "their" station, and they have an obligation to support it.

Still there is something strange seeing performers well into their seventies strutting their stuff in sequins. The pop music of the fifties and sixties seems more suited to a museum than contemporary television, but it lives on every time PBS needs a few dollars. So do its vintage-age performers, with the aid of cosmetic surgery and properly constructed costumes. Several months ago there was a news story about the Rolling Stones having to cancel a concert because one of its members fell out of a tree and was injured. Do the arithmetic. The band was big in the 1960s. How did this old geezer get into a tree in the first place? Men his age would normally need a derrick. The musicians go on, and so do their fans, many of whom still pay exorbitant prices for tickets to see these old guys do the routines they have been doing for over forty years. What we call the "golden oldies" the younger generation refers to as "geriatric rock."

Of course, it's all in the ear of the beholder. For a while I had the illusion that some popular music was exempt from the aging process: Gershwin, Cole

suspected that I've been such a Woody Allen fan over the years simply because he uses these old standards as background music for his sound tracks. (We are both Brooklyn boys of the same age.) It came as a shock when I realized that not everybody held these old standards in awe. Several years ago, during a tour of duty in a scholasticate, I sat alone in the community's sole television room. After channel surfing for a few minutes, I settled on a PBS concert—possibly a fund-raiser—of vintage American songs performed in what appeared to be a cocktail-lounge setting. (Cole Porter and champagne always belong in the same sentence.) One of my pre-ordained brethren thumped his way to a chair the back of the room, and since he voiced no preference for a different channel, I let the program continue. After a few minutes, he got up and left with the parting shot: "How can you listen to this stuff?" So much for the universal appeal of the timeless classics.

Music may be one of the more obvious examples of the way we define cultural norms on the basis of our own experience and find the norms of people from other places or age brackets difficult to appreciate. Religion, of course, fits into this pattern. We Jesuits of the Vatican II generation remember the style of the old days, with nostalgia, perhaps, but just as much with embarrassment and perhaps even with a twinge of anger. We've made a literary genre of reminiscences of litanies, birettas, fiddle-back vestments, and soupy hymns from the *St. Gregory Hymnal*. The theme boils down to a line from "Amazing Grace": "I was lost, but now I'm found." Our younger companions have been patient with us, but if the truth be told, they find the topic exceedingly tedious by this time. One can imagine a day when we Vatican II commandoes have retired to the province infirmaries. In all probability we will find equally mixed emotions about our scented candles, paisley vestments, and the tattered copy of *The Velveteen Rabbit* sharing the ambo with the *Lectionary*. Our religious practice today seems perfectly natural and balanced, but wait until the next generation of memoirs begins to appear in, say, forty years.

Geography has also played a part in our cultural expression of Catholicism. Few would question that the American church has been transformed over the past several decades by the rapid growth of the Latino population. My decidedly unscientific recollections indicate that being an American Catholic is a very different experience today than it was forty years ago. Not too long ago, we were a beachhead community, seeking a place in the American dream. We—the Irish, Italian, German, and Polish churches—took care of our own with our schools and labor unions. When the wave of Hispanics came ashore, we met them with denial and perhaps even hostility, then with condescension, and finally with acceptance. We've come a long way from allowing a Spanish-language Mass in the church basement once a month. And just who has profited more by this meeting of Catholic cultures? Isn't it fair to say the infusion of new

set of new documents and directives? The Latino presence has sensitized us to the needs of recent immigrants struggling in the cities and farms, to harsh legal restrictions, to the struggle for justice in other parts of our hemisphere. We've become more aware of the needs of God's people, not only in Latin America but throughout the world. Being a Catholic today means keeping the door open to the outside world that exists beyond the church vestibule or the parish boundaries. Not too long ago, concern for social justice issues for "minorities" would be suspect in some quarters; now it is at the core of our religious identity as Catholics. It's a remarkable development.

How generations and cultures interact and enrich one another over time holds the key to our Catholic understanding of Christianity. In this issue Jeremy Clarke has provided a laboratory case history of one such development. Most of us would have no trouble explaining the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Catholic tradition. Yet it is clear that her role has evolved over the centuries and in different cultures. Jeremy takes us to China to show how the image of Mary developed through the meeting of European influences in a missionary church and the cultural sensibilities of Chinese artists. He spells out the inevitable tensions between a host society and the images brought to it from the outside. The story is fascinating in itself, but as we reflect on it, we can see the ways our own religious beliefs and practices have changed according to time and place. We Catholics have become more catholic, and that's all to the good.

A few second words . . .

The Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality, like every other social organization, participates in the relentless march of generations. The fall issue of *STUDIES* traditionally includes a mention of transitions, and this issue is no exception.

On behalf of the Seminar, and with a bit of presumption on my part, on behalf of the entire U. S. Assistancy, I want to express our gratitude for the four members who have ended their three-year membership in the Seminar. Jim Bretzke will take up a new assignment as professor at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. There he will join his fellow retired Seminar member, Tom Massaro, now a veteran of the faculty there. As rector of the Jesuit Community at Seattle University, Pat Howell will have enough to occupy his time and energies without the activities of the Seminar. After a year at Boston College, Mark Massa will return to Fordham as director of the American Catholic Studies program. Thanks for your conversation and companionship. We'll miss your presence at our meetings.

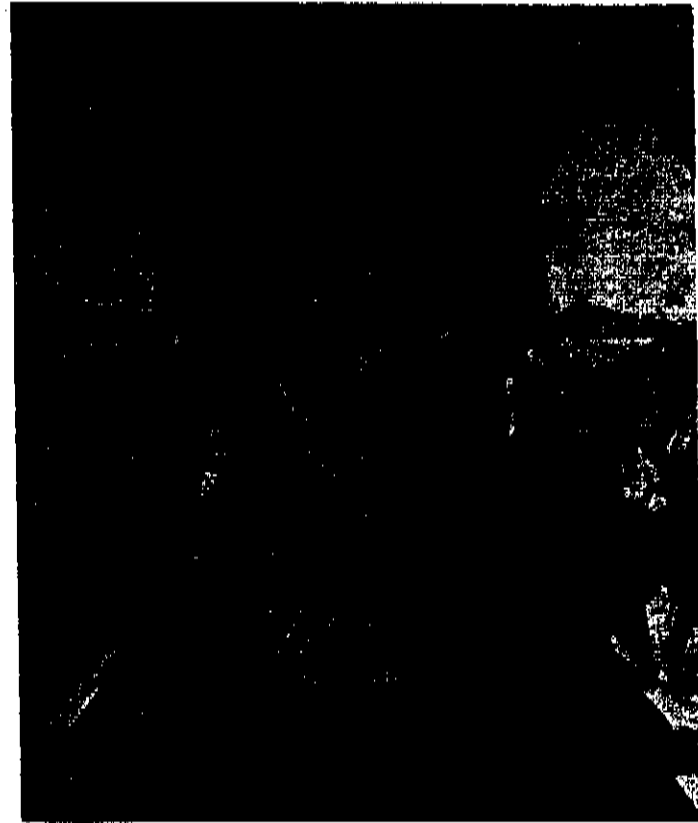
Some of our old hands will be with us for a few more months, but with a change of portfolio. Tom Scirghi has moved his theological library from Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley to Fordham. Bentley Andersen remains on

the faculty of St. Louis University, but will take a year as a visiting professor at Fordham.

Now for the new generation: Mark Bosco, of the Missouri Province, holds a joint position in English and Theology at Loyola University Chicago, where he directs the Catholic Studies Program. He specializes in theological aesthetics and the Catholic literary tradition. His written works include *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* (2005) and a volume of essays he edited entitled *Finding God in All Things: Celebrating Bernard Lonergan, John Courtney Murray and Karl Rahner* (2007). Terry Dempsey, also of the Missouri Province, is the May O'Rourke Jay Professor of Art History and Religion at St. Louis University. He also serves as director of the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, where he has curated thirty-five exhibits over the last twenty years. Frank McAloon, of the Maryland Province, teaches spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley and the Graduate Theological Union. With a special interest in the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, he works in the areas of religious aesthetics, hermeneutics, and Ignatian spirituality. His most recent book is *40-Day Journey with Gerard Manley Hopkins* (2009). It's a remarkable roster. Many thanks to each of them for their generosity in accepting the invitation to join us for the next three years.

Richard A. Blake, S.J.

Editor



This is a cropped version of the ordination card for Charles D. Simons, S.J., ordained on June 10, 1933, at St. Ignatius Church, Zikawei, Shanghai. The caption read Our Lady of China, in English and Chinese characters. (From the archives of the California Province of the Society of Jesus; gratefully used with permission.)

Jeremy Clarke, S.J., a member of the Australian Province, is presently a post-doctoral fellow at Boston College and visiting fellow in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University, Canberra. Long a student of the history of Jesuits in China, he completed his doctoral studies at the Australian National University. He is currently preparing a historical guidebook to the Catholic Church in Shanghai, focusing on the role of the Tushanwan Orphanage in developing modern Chinese art. He is also involved in projects relating to the four-hundredth anniversary of the death of Matteo Ricci, which falls in 2010.

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Our Lady of China

Marian Devotion and the Jesuits

Marian devotion rests at the heart of Chinese Catholicism and developed from an adaptation of Western practice to local cultures. By sponsoring Marian sodalities and pilgrimages, Jesuits contributed significantly to the Chinese church. Jesuit artists helped shape representations of Mary prevalent in China today.

I. Introduction

A well-educated Shanghainese friend of mine—a graduate from Harvard's Business School, no less—once asked me whether or not it was true that “Christians believe in Jesus, whereas Catholics believe in Mary.” Leaving aside the false dichotomy between Christianity and Catholicism—one that has been made often in China since the beginning of the nineteenth century, resulting in both traditions being recognized as distinct legal religions in the People's Republic of China—my friend does in fact have a point. Or at least, when one surveys the daily life and faith practices of the Catholic church in China, it is easy to see why she thinks this is the case.¹

Throughout the country almost every church will have a Marian statue or shrine on its property, oftentimes built in the form of an elaborate grotto. There are, or have been, pilgrimages to churches or shrines dedicated to all manner of Marian devotions including, among

¹Full-color reproductions of images mentioned in this essay can be accessed at www2.bc.edu/~frclarke

others, Our Lady Help of Christians, Our Lady of Liesz (from the small town of Aisne, north of Paris), and Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Recitations of the rosary occur both before and after Mass, during the Stations of the Cross, in open fields, and in private homes. Church calendars often bear a Marian image on their front page, and church devotional shops sell everything from prayer cards bearing the image of Our Lady of Medjugorje to rosary beads made out of cloisonné. Various Marian images are found on convent walls, in church porches, and in people's bedrooms. My friend, therefore, was partly right: in China Mary is indeed central to Catholic belief.

In this paper I explore how such a situation evolved. In the process of showing how Marian devotion came to be a key feature of the Chinese Catholic church, I also outline the Jesuit involvement in the process. Thus, at one level the essay is about the development of a particular aspect of Chinese Catholic piety, and because of the Society of Jesus' sustained engagement with China, I hope that this of itself will be of interest to a general reader. More importantly, however, given the way that this strong Marian identity not only enabled Chinese Catholics to define themselves within Chinese society at large but also created one means by which they survived periods of external pressure and control, the history of a piety becomes, metonymously, the story of a community.

The early Catholics not only sought to portray themselves as belonging within Chinese society but also as being separate from other elements of the society. That is, they endeavored to create a legitimate space for themselves within the Chinese body politic and yet distinguish themselves from, for instance, Buddhist and Daoist communities. The utilization of Marian devotions was one tactic employed by the early Chinese converts and Catholic missionaries in their pursuit of this goal. In the early sections of the essay, I explore the way in which this took place. In the latter parts I discuss the implications of the identity that had been formed by these devotions.

II. Historical Background

The Society's engagement with China, ever since the arrival of Michele Ruggieri and Francesco Pasio in Zhaoqing in southern China in the late-sixteenth century, has already been studied ex-

tensively.² Articles, books, and conferences have analyzed subjects as distinct as the Jesuits' controversial use of Chinese terms for Christian concepts to their position as cross-cultural conduits of everything from "Jesuit bark" (quinine) to Confucianism. This trend will presumably continue, especially given that the year 2010 marks the four-hundredth anniversary of the death of Matteo Ricci in Beijing. Thus I will not repeat that story here, except by way of providing background. Rather, I explore the sometimes neglected development of the Chinese Catholic identity in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and the Jesuits' role in that development.

It would be historically inaccurate, as well as an act of hubris, to suggest that the role of the Jesuits in the modern period was as significant or pervasive as it was in the period prior to our Suppression (1772). This is especially so, given the role of not only other foreign congregations, such as the Vincentians (Lazarists), the Paris Foreign Mission Society (La Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris), and the Helpers of the Holy Souls (Les Auxiliatrices des Ames du Purgatoire), among others, but also given the lived experiences of the Chinese Catholic communities themselves.³ Nevertheless, neither can the Jesuit contribution to the development of a Chinese Marian spirituality be ignored altogether. The following example suffices to illustrate this.

² See, for instance, Liam Brockey's prize-winning book *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Nicholas Standaert, ed., *A Handbook of Christianity in China, 635-1800* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001); Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1999); and David Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (Nettelal: Steyler Verlag, 1994).

³ The crucial role of the Chinese Catholics themselves is a point well made by David Mungello in his article "The Return of the Jesuits to China in 1841 and the Chinese Christian backlash," *The Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* 27 (2005): 9-46. Peter Ward Fay's article "The French Catholic Mission in China during the Opium War" (*Modern Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 [1970]: 115-28) also recounts the understandably essential role of the Chinese Christians.

This paper seeks to chart a course between overstatement and historical amnesia by recording the role of the Jesuits in assisting in the development of the Chinese Catholic identity, especially as regards Marian devotion.

One of the most significant public acts of worship for the Chinese Catholic church is the Marian pilgrimage to Sheshan, on the outskirts of Shanghai. A French Jesuit, Father Desjacques, initiated this pilgrimage in 1868. Two years later, in 1870, there was a widespread Christian persecution in China. The then superior of the mission of Jiangnan (the area south of the Yangtze River, the Chang Jiang), an Italian Jesuit Father, Angelo della Corte by name, promised to build a large church dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians if Mary protected her people in their time of need. The dangers were averted, the church was built, and the tradition of making a pilgrimage to Sheshan, especially on May 24 (the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians), was begun.

Not only did [sodalities] increase the popularity of a particular devotion, but they also provided an organizational structure within church communities, which were often chronically short of priests or brothers to serve them.

The Chinese Catholics believe that at numerous times throughout their history they have been saved by just such a beneficent intervention by Mary. Not only is this a

sense of having been saved from immediate danger (be this marauding Taiping or Boxer troops, militant atheists, or rampant Red Guards) but also a sense of being brought into the salvific presence of Jesus through the intercession of Mary. They consider that the aversion of calamity, or at least being given the graces to endure whatever wave of hardship breaks upon them, is a foretaste of their eternal salvation.

Through times of war and periods of persecution, this pilgrimage has continued, even until today. On rare occasions, however, formal pilgrimages have been banned and actively prevented, as happened during the Cultural Revolution.⁴ The success of the Sheshan pilgrimage, and the central place it played in the life of the Chinese Catholics, was recognized in 1924 at the conclusion of a plenary council that took place in Shanghai. The Chinese Catholic Church was entrusted to Mary's protection, and the council fathers formally recognized the devotion to Our Heavenly Queen of China (also known as Our Lady of China).⁵ A Chinese Jesuit brother working in Shanghai at the famous art work-

⁴ A recent example of this was during the lead-up to the 2008 Olympics, when visitors reported official harassment. See, for instance, AsiaNews, 05/28/2008, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=12371&size=A>

⁵ Pius XI gave official recognition to this devotion in 1928.

shop at the Jesuit-run orphanage at Tushanwan (also known as Tou-se-wo) painted the image for this new devotion. A French Jesuit wrote the prayer of dedication, in Latin and Chinese.

This paper seeks to chart a course between overstatement and historical amnesia by recording the role of the Jesuits in assisting in the development of the Chinese Catholic identity, especially as regards Marian devotion. Although the Church in China continues to face challenges from within and without, a greater understanding of how it came to possess the unique characteristics that it does will, I hope, go some way to assist in the alleviation of such difficulties. At the very least, Jesuits and those who are enlivened by Ignatian spirituality may be emboldened to take up Benedict XVI's call during Pentecost 2007 to join with the Chinese Catholic church and, on the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, stand in prayerful solidarity with them.⁶

The Pre-Suppression Period

Two factors came together to promote Marian devotions in China during the pre-Suppression period. There was the rich vein of Marian spirituality that permeated the work of the early Society, and then there was the already well-developed tradition of Marian piety and cross-cultural exchange that had taken place in China since the late-thirteenth century, especially in the field of visual culture. Both of these factors have been discussed elsewhere, so it is enough to summarize the essential elements.⁷

As is well known, Mary has held a central place in Ignatian spirituality from the earliest days of the Society. Among other things, this is revealed by famous incidents in Ignatius's own life journey—from his all-night vigil before Our Lady of Montserrat to his desire to defend the good name of Mary when a fellow traveller, a Moor, refers to her disparagingly along the road (*Autobiography*, 13, 15). The *Spiritual Exercises* encourage the frequent use of Marian intercessory prayers, and numer-

⁶ See Benedict XVI's "Letter to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China" (May 27, 2007), no. 19 (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china_en.html).

⁷ See for instance, Nicholas Standaert, *An Illustrated Life of Christ Presented to the Chinese Emperor: The History of Jincheng Shuxiang* (Sankt Augustin: Institute Monumenta Serica, 2007).



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