



**RECOVERING THE MYSTICAL IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION:
AN APPRAISAL OF LOUIS LALLEMANT’S
“SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE”**

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Abstract

This study analyses the tenets of Louis Lallemant's teaching that lead to perfection, a seventeenth-century term for holiness. Lallemant states that it is through perfection that we are united with God through the Holy Spirit. Lallemant's teachings are balanced in that he unites both the ascetical and mystical aspects of the spiritual life. In his time, mysticism was frowned upon, both in France in general and in the Society of Jesus in particular. Yet, this did not deter Lallemant from sharing the rich tradition of the contemplative life. His *Spiritual Doctrine* is, in fact, a way to holiness, a way to learn to be docile to the guidance of the Holy Spirit that leads one to union with God. In addition, Lallemant teaches that purity of heart, as the action most within humanity's reach, essentially makes one open to the Holy Spirit. The way to achieve this purity is to guard over one's heart so that all impurities can be eradicated. In our contemporary society, mysticism is looked upon with indifference at best and with suspicion at worst. However, within each person there is the indwelling of the divine spirit, and spiritual direction is the safe place where a directee can share and nurture this desire for divine transcendence. Lallemant's *Spiritual Direction* is a timeless application for spiritual direction as it reminds spiritual directors that their most important task is to help their directees be aware of God's indwelling spirit within them and that both director and directee are to be guided by his Holy Spirit. This study will show that Lallemant's *Spiritual Doctrine* is to be read as a journey towards the mystical. It aims to demonstrate that, in light of Lallemant's doctrine, the most fundamental element of spiritual direction is receiving God's grace, that is, the mystical dimension.

Keywords: Louis Lallemant, mysticism, Holy Spirit, purity of heart, spiritual direction.

Dedicated to

The loving memory of Clare Camilleri, gone too soon, who guided me in my interior journey.

Clare accepted and lived the incomprehensibility of God.

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Introduction

The Purpose of Spiritual Direction

Spiritual awareness teaches us that the soul has only one natural sense [...] shattered in consequence of Adam's disobedience. But it is restored to unity by the Holy Spirit. In those who are detached from the lusts of life, the spirit, because it is thus freed, acquires its full vigour, and can experience in an ineffable manner the divine fullness. It then imparts its joy to the body itself. [...] "In him," says the psalmist, "my flesh has blossomed again."¹

Spiritual direction has increased so much in its popularity over the last decades that, as Lavinia Byrne ruefully comments, "It is tempting to see it as a late twentieth century phenomenon."² However, spiritual direction has always been part of the Christian tradition. Echoing Louis Lallemand's teaching, John Eudes Bamberger OSCO states that "the goal of the spiritual life is the most intimate union with God imaginable and spiritual accompaniment has precisely the purpose of assisting another to attain this end."³ It is widely understood that spiritual direction is important if one wants to progress in the spiritual life.

Most significantly, the foundations of spiritual direction can be traced to the Bible.⁴ Two examples will suffice to illustrate this point. In the book of Ecclesiasticus, it is advised to visit often "a godly man whom you know to be a keeper of the commandments, whose soul is in accord with our soul and who will sorrow with you if you fail" (Sir 37:12). In the New Testament, the account of the disciples of Emmaus (Lk 24: 13-35) is fittingly quoted as the

¹ Diadochus of Photike, *Gnostic Chapters*, 25 (Sources Chretiennes), 96-7 quoted in Olivier Clement, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd edition (Hyde Park, NY.: New City Press, 1993), 266.

² Lavinia Byrne, introduction to *Traditions of Spiritual Guidance* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990), vii.

³ John Eudes Bamberger OCSO, "Spiritual Accompaniment: Observing Love and Its Transformations," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 37, n. 4 (2002): 423.

⁴ See Manuel Belda, "Brief Historical Overview of Spiritual Direction Up to the 19th Century," *Issra* (2011): 1.

paradigm for spiritual direction as the way Jesus “welcomes the two disciples, listens attentively to them, accompanies them and instruct the patients [...] are attitudes that should be found in any spiritual director.”⁵ In both examples, there is an interaction between the director and the directee. Bamberger affirms that “we are made for mutuality [...] in order to become fully the self we are created to be, we must cultivate our capacity for sharing all we are at every level of our person.”⁶ Sharing spiritual experiences with a spiritual director confirms and empowers the directee.

In the fourth century, spiritual direction meant also spiritual fatherhood to the desert fathers in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. According to Kenneth Leech, disciples would seek out holy men and women in order to “help shape their inner life through prayer, concern and pastoral care.”⁷ The disciple would often live in the same cell as his spiritual father in order to learn from his way of life and not just from his words.⁸ Echoing this, in the Celtic tradition there was the idea of a soul-friend, translated from the Irish word *anmchara*. The soul-friend was a layman or woman “who was essentially a counsellor or guide.”⁹ St. Brigit exhorted all to have a soul-friend, for “anyone without a soul-friend is a body without a head.”¹⁰ Aelred of Rievaulx too, in the twelfth century, spoke of spiritual direction in terms of spiritual friendship. He said:

But what happiness, what security, what joy to have someone to whom you dare to speak on terms of equality as to another self; one to whom you can unblushingly

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ Bamberger, “Spiritual Accompaniment,” 425.

⁷ Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend, Spiritual Direction in the Modern World* (London: DLT, 1994), 37.

⁸ Ibid., 38.

⁹ Leech, *Soul Friend*, 46.

¹⁰ Ibid., 45.

make known what progress you have made in the spiritual life; one to whom you can trust all the secrets of your heart and before whom you can place all your plans.¹¹

Trust between the director and the directee is emphasized. The director listens in a non-judgmental and caring way, and with an effort to understand his directee. These attitudes have become known as a “surplus of warmth.”¹²

Sixteenth-century Spain was the golden age of spiritual renewal and with it, spiritual direction. St. Ignatius of Loyola was still a layman when he was giving his *Spiritual Exercises*, the objective of which is ordering one’s desires.¹³ The *Spiritual Exercises*, to this day, are still very popular with lay and religious people alike. In this tradition, but closer to our time, Margaret Guenther compares spiritual direction to hospitality and competence to an orderly house. To her, “hospitality is at the core of spiritual direction.”¹⁴ As host, the spiritual director must have his spiritual house in order. The director invites the directee into his space, “a space that offers safety and shelter to a weary traveller.”¹⁵

Through spiritual direction, a person can sharpen his spiritual awareness of God’s indwelling spirit within him. Through this openness to God’s spirit, the directee can “experience in an ineffable manner the divine fullness.”¹⁶ This union with God is what mysticism is all about. This study will seek to show that, through spiritual direction, one can and, indeed, is called to be open to being guided by the Holy Spirit into experiencing the

¹¹ Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*, quoted in Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (London: Longman, Darton and Todd, 1993), 11.

¹² Edward S. Bordin, *Psychological Counselling*, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), quoted in William Barry and William Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982), 133.

¹³ Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #21.

¹⁴ Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening*, 13.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Diadochus of Photike quoted in *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, 266.

fullness of God. It is the Holy Spirit who is the Interior Master. The aim of spiritual direction is to simply help the directee trust the whisperings of the Holy Spirit amid the cacophony of the world.

Aim of this Study

This study presents an argument that aims to go a step further than today's voluntaristic perspective in spiritual guides or self-help manuals (whereby the human person constitutes the centre of his life), and this is the idea of recovering the mystical dimension within spiritual direction as particularly understood in Jesuit spirituality. In the context (quite like ours today) of seventeenth-century France, that stressed active pastoral work in the area of spirituality and was quite sceptical of the mystical, a small group of reformists within the Jesuit Society of which Louis Lallement SJ (1578-1635) was a prominent figure, worked hard to bring back a much-needed balance between the ascetical and the mystical, the active and the contemplative.

Lallement's *Spiritual Doctrine* comprises seven principles by which one progresses from the ascetical to the mystical to attain spiritual perfection, that is, union with God. In its balanced doctrine, Lallement's *Spiritual Doctrine* can contribute much in spiritual direction today as it can help both directees and directors grow in their spiritual life by pointing the way to being guided by the Holy Spirit and discovering God's will. The topic is, therefore, important and relevant as it poses a challenge for one who wishes to grow in the spiritual life, not to be so self-reliant but to be open to the Divine.

Methodology

Ignatian and other correlating literature will be reviewed in a bibliographical-intertextual approach. Lallemand's *Spiritual Doctrine* will be examined within the framework of St Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* to show that Lallemand was indeed faithful to Ignatius' teachings although he was accused of being otherwise. Also, the historical context of the times the *Spiritual Doctrine* was written in, will be explored to demonstrate the overall distrust towards mysticism both in the Jesuit Society and in France.

Synopsis

In the first chapter, a close look at Lallemand's life and work within the spiritual milieu of seventeenth-century France in general, and the Jesuit Society in particular, will be taken. According to Philip Sheldrake, after Ignatius' death in 1556, there was "a growing reserve towards mystic-minded Jesuits."¹⁷ This anti-mystical trend increased to such an extent that under the generalate of Everard Mercurian (1573-1580), Jesuits were forbidden to read the Rhineland and Flemish mystics.¹⁸ Lallemand's mystical strand must also be understood in light of the heresy of Quietism together with Jansenism which dominated the spirituality of seventeenth-century France, and the fact that it was "the anti-mystical approach of Bossuet"¹⁹ that finally won the day must not be underestimated.

Given this anti-mystical climate of the seventeenth century, according to Jordan Aumann, Lallemand, "was outside the Jesuit school of his time."²⁰ Yet, he was faithful both to

¹⁷ Philip Sheldrake, *A Brief History of Spirituality* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 127.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 138.

²⁰ Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1985), 209.

Ignatius' teachings and to his Superior General Claudio Acquaviva (1581-1615), who worked to reform the rather worldly Jesuits. Lallemand lived at a time when the Jesuit Society was flourishing both in number and worldly popularity. The French province had been expelled for eight years between 1595-1603 in 1615. After its restoration, it doubled its numbers in nine years, 322 Jesuits in 1606 and 623 in 1615.²¹ With this success came the problem of the way of life of many Jesuits, who became worldly, ambitious and proud. Acquaviva tried to remedy this situation by exhorting the Jesuits to live by the tenets in paragraph two of part ten of the Constitutions (§813).²²

According to Tibor Bartok, Lallemand's *Spiritual Doctrine*, though popular at the time of publishing, could easily have faded in oblivion were it not for Henri Bremond who, in 1920, wrote that Lallemand was the founder of a Jesuit mystical school.²³ But this was strongly contested by other Jesuits. Due to this controversy, Lallemand's *Spiritual Doctrine* became acknowledged as "one of the most important syntheses of Jesuit spirituality."²⁴

In the second and third chapters, Lallemand's *Spiritual Doctrine* will be analysed by outlining his seven principles whereby one progresses from the ascetical to the mystical. For Lallemand, union with God could be achieved through purity of heart, and the practice that promotes it is the guard over one's heart. This guard over one's heart leads to one living under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and open to the divine will, hence moving from doing to

²¹ Cf. Tibor Bartok, S.J. "Louis Lallemand and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*: Myths and Facts", ed. Robert A. Maryks (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 122.

²² Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Jesuit Primary Sources Series 1, trans. George E. Ganss (St Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 332.

²³ Tibor Bartok, "Louis Lallemand and Jesuit Spirituality," *The Way* 56, no.1 (2017): 32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

being. The *Spiritual Doctrine* will also be examined within the framework of St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* as well as Constitutions 813.

In the fourth chapter, the tenets that Lallemand espouses will be used as a model for spiritual growth in spiritual direction today. One tends to rely on one's capabilities and may be resistant to God's will and hence, to "being wielded dexterously by His divine hand."²⁵ By using Lallemand's *Spiritual Doctrine* as a guide, the director can help the directee advance in spiritual perfection. Spiritual directors can help their directees by inviting them to appreciate the gifts one receives from God, the mystical part, that part of the spiritual life that one has no control over. Often, one comes across directors as well as directees who are not really open to God's ways, especially if they are contrary to their preconceived ideas or plans. There is a resistance to trust God, a reluctance to be guided by His Spirit. Lallemand's *Spiritual Doctrine* addresses these situations which are ever-present in the one guiding and the one being guided.

Merits and Limits of the Study

The merit of this work is that it makes Louis Lallemand known today. His tenets of the spiritual life are grounded and inspirational, especially for the Western modern man who is increasingly losing his connection with the Divine.

Not much literature has been written about Louis Lallemand. Papers have been written about him, so journals were indeed very useful. *The Spiritual Doctrine* is the only work that reflects Lallemand's thoughts, so an exploration of the development of his teachings could not be made.

²⁵ Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions*, 332.

Chapter 1

Louis Lallemant's *Spiritual Doctrine*: Origins

1.1 Introduction

In order to understand Louis Lallemant and his contribution to Ignatian spirituality, one must understand the religious context he lived in, both in France and in the Society of Jesus. Therefore, in this chapter an overview will be given of the religious context of seventeenth-century France in general and of the Society of Jesus in particular. The reasons why the Society of Jesus was so suspicious of any mystical leanings in their Order shall also be explored. Finally, with reference to the contribution that Lallemant made to the Society through his *Spiritual Doctrine*, it will be argued that the treatise presents itself as a balanced view of spirituality, combining both ascetical and mystical elements, at a time of highly intense and influential reactions in French mysticism.

1.2 The Mystical Invasion in Seventeenth-Century France

Philip Sheldrake explains that seventeenth-century France was at the centre of great spiritual movements that continue to influence us to this day.¹ It was indeed replete with founders of spirituality both for the clergy and lay, with an emergence of a spirituality of service.² Sheldrake describes these outstanding figures and their contribution to spirituality, Barbe Acarie, Benedict Canfield, Pierre de Berulle, Jean-Jacques Olier, John Eudes, Francis de Sales, Jeanne de Chantal, Vincent de Paul, and Louise de Marillac, among others, each with

¹ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality: A Brief History* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 137.

² *Ibid.*, 139.

their particular charism.³ Sheldrake also states that one cannot speak of a “single French school,”⁴ usually associated with Pierre de Berulle, so varied and distinctive were the spiritual trends of that century. Nevertheless, Jill Riatt explains that these spiritual leaders had two common concerns. They understood that “the increasingly literate populace”⁵ wished for spiritual practices to be able to live their spirituality as lay people. They also worked hard to reform the clergy.

In the seventeenth century, France, especially Paris, received the translated works of Catherine of Genoa, and those of Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross.⁶ Mysticism was indeed very popular at the beginning of the century, especially due to a “remarkable woman and gifted mystic,”⁷ Barbe Acarie who gathered in her salon highly intelligent and spiritual leaders, among whom the above-mentioned Pierre de Berulle and Benedict Canfield. Berulle founded the French Oratory, in the line of Philip Neri in Italy, with the aim of improving the formation of clergy.⁸ Berulle’s spirituality was severe. He taught that man’s response to Jesus’ incarnation was total abasement, “even obliteration of self before God’s majesty.”⁹ On the other hand, his noted disciple, Jean-Jacques Olier, encouraged “personal experience of Jesus Christ and gave attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in uniting us to Christ.”¹⁰ Olier was also

³ Ibid., 138-9.

⁴ Ibid., 137.

⁶ Ibid., 134.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Sheldrake, *Spirituality*, 137.

⁹ Ibid., 138.

¹⁰ Ibid.

the founder of the Society of St Sulpice, with the aim of improving the spirituality of priests.¹¹ Both John Eudes and John Baptist de la Salle were founders whose Orders still exist to this day, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and the De La Salle Brothers consecutively.¹² Two other outstanding founders who emphasised serving Christ in the poor were Francis of Sales and Vincent de Paul, whose influence continued into the nineteenth century with the creation of the Salesians and the Society of St Vincent de Paul.¹³

The spiritual milieu of seventeenth-century France was certainly rich with very many holy people, but it was also not without controversy for it was the scene of two heretical doctrines, Jansenism and Quietism, which represented two contrasting outlooks on the spiritual life.¹⁴ On the one hand, Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638), a Louvain professor and eventually bishop of Ypres, believed in predestination and had an austere view of humanity. He criticised an optimistic view of man and disagreed with frequent communion. He was also against mystical experience. His teachings were condemned posthumously. On the other hand, Quietism too was condemned as heretical but its expositions were contrary to Jansenism. It encouraged a passivity in prayer, an objectless mysticism. In France, it was associated with Madame Guyon (1648-1717), who was aided by Bishop Fenelon. Guyon's teachings were condemned for doctrinal error. Bernard McGinn states that both Madame Guyon and Fenelon "have come down in history as exponents of the error that perfected souls

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 139.

¹⁴ Ibid.

could surpass ordinary hopes and fears for salvation and reach a state of quiet and total surrender to God in which everything, even final salvation, is left up to the divine will.”¹⁵

Sheldrake points out that although both Jansenism and Quietism were condemned as heretical, “it seems fair to say that in some ways a moderate form of Jansenist moralism and penitential asceticism continued to influence much Roman Catholic spirituality into the twentieth century.¹⁶ This anti-mystical approach, explains Sheldrake, was “symbolised” by the victory of Bishop Bossuet who was sympathetic towards a moderate form of Jansenism, over the mystical Bishop Fenelon.¹⁷ Bossuet and his followers worked “behind the scenes in Rome”¹⁸ for a papal condemnation of Fenelon and Guyon’s errors. This condemnation was issued on March 12, 1699 by Pope Innocent XII.¹⁹ The seventeenth century may have started with a mystical approach to spirituality, but at the end of the century, mysticism gave way to asceticism.²⁰

1.3 Louis Lallemand’s Life

This was the backdrop that shaped Louis Lallemand’s life and work. Tibor Bartok gives us perhaps the most comprehensive biography of Lallemand.²¹ Lallemand entered the Society

¹⁵ Bernard McGinn, “Two Female Apostolic Mystics: Catherine of Siena and Madame Jeanne Guyon,” in *How the West was Won: Essays on Literary Imagination, the Canon and the Christian Middle Ages* for Burcht Pranger, eds. Willeien Otten, Arjo J. Vanderjagt, and Hent De Vries (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 322-323.

¹⁶ Sheldrake, *Spirituality*, 141.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ McGinn, “Two Female Apostolic Mystics,” 324.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Riatt, “European Reformations of Christian Spirituality (1450-1700),” 134.

²¹ Bartok, “Louis Lallemand and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*,” 115.

of Jesus on December 1, 1605. He had an illustrious teaching career. After completing his Jesuit formation, he taught philosophy at La Fleche and moral theology at Bourges. In 1619, he was sent to Rouen where, besides teaching, he became involved in spiritual formation when he was appointed master of novices. He left Rouen in 1626 for the prestigious Clermont College in Paris. He was professor of Scholastic Theology for two years before returning to Rouen in 1628 as a tertian instructor. He spent three years there, but suffered from exhaustion. He was therefore sent to Bourges where he worked for four more years, from 1631-1635 as a prefect of studies before succumbing to ill-health. He died as rector of the college in Bourges on April 5, 1635. Lallemand was a respected professor who was entrusted with passing on the Ignatian tradition both to novices as well as to formed Jesuits who were in their tertianship, that is a final year of formation, three years after their ordination.

Lallemand, in life as in death, was at the centre of many controversies because of an intolerance towards mysticism in the Jesuit Society. It is ironic given that Ignatius of Loyola, their founder, was a great mystic.²² Jesuit spirituality had become dominated by an ascetical view of spirituality owing to Alfonso Rodriguez (1538-1616). John Patrick Donnelly comments that “Rodriguez's famous work *Practice of Perfection and Christian Virtues* was compulsory reading for Jesuits. It was also popular in other Orders. Though Rodriguez lived in the golden age of Spanish mysticism, his massive book hardly addresses mystical spirituality.”²³ Donnelly adds that “its simple style and prudent suggestions made it very popular.”²⁴ Rodriguez

²² See, for instance, St Ignatius' *Autobiography*, ed. J.F.X. Connor, S.J. (Religious Classics) where he describes, albeit hesitantly, his many mystical experiences. The two most transforming experiences were at the Cardoner River and at La Storta.

²³ John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. trans. and ed., *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period (1540-1640)* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 159.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

avoided any controversial subjects but was scathing against those Jesuits who had mystical leanings and wanted to spend more time at prayer and less in pastoral work. Rodriguez writes:

Our blessed Father Ignatius saw the Church of God well provided with Religious Orders that attend to their own spiritual progress keeping up choir and divine service; but at the same time, he saw her straitened and afflicted with heresies, sins, and great losses. Thereupon, inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost, he established this religious order, to be, as he said, like so many light horse, ever ready to rush to the rescue against the sudden onslaughts of the enemy, and to defend and aid our brethren.²⁵

Sheldrake comments that there was such “a growing reserve towards mystic-minded Jesuits” after Ignatius’ death in 1556 that, under the generalate of Mercurian (1573-1580), Jesuits were forbidden to read the Rhineland and Flemish mystics.²⁶ This could be due to the Inquisition, who, according to Jordan Aumann, “doggedly pursued the *alumbrados*.”²⁷ Unfortunately, the uneducated classes, Aumann explains, were greatly attracted and influenced by “pseudo-mysticism, with all its immorality and false visions, stigmata and ecstasies.”²⁸ The *alumbrados* taught that those who had reached perfection were exempt from leading virtuous lives and could lead immoral lives without committing a sin.²⁹ Small wonder that the Society of Jesus was wary of any teachings resembling that of the *alumbrados* or Calvinistic doctrine which claimed “individual guidance of the Holy Spirit.”³⁰ Ignatius

²⁵ Ibid., 160.

²⁶ Sheldrake, *Spirituality*, 127.

²⁷ Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, 172.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 203.

³⁰ Ibid.

himself had been investigated twice by the Inquisition but was twice cleared of any misleading doctrine.³¹

Bartok adds that the Edict of Seville against the *alumbrados* had been proclaimed in France in 1623, which added to the already existing anti-mystical climate within the Society of Jesus when Lallemand became a Jesuit.³² Lallemand, as was Ignatius before him, was investigated twice but was also exonerated on both occasions. The first denouncement came when he was novice master in 1625 in Rouen. Bartok relates the rather macabre story. Lallemand was accused of exhuming the corpse of a novice at night, and trying to bring the dead man to life during a celebration of Mass at the suggestion of an illiterate but devout man.³³ Michel de Certeau comments that it was not uncommon for pious people to be influenced by illiterate but supposedly enlightened people, whom he refers to as “the enlightened illiterate.”³⁴ De Certeau gives us the example of the Jesuit Jean-Joseph Surin who met such an enlightened illiterate while travelling by coach. Surin writes in a letter that this young man was:

totally unlettered but in all other respects filled with all manner of graces and such lofty inner gifts as I have never seen the like. He had never been instructed by anyone but God in the spiritual life, and yet he spoke to me about it with such sublimity and solidity that all I have read or heard is nothing compared to what he told me.³⁵

³¹ Ignatius spent 42 days imprisoned in Alcalá and 22 days in Salamanca. See *Autobiography*, 42-46.

³² Bartok, “Louis Lallemand and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*,” 118.

³³ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume One: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), 206.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 207.

This letter was published all over France and beyond. One should not be amazed at such gullibility since, as Bartok explains, “the boundaries between true and false mysticisms are not always obvious within a culture of secrecy.”³⁶ Lallemand was investigated by the Provincial and cleared of his alleged bizarre action. It came to light that his accuser acted out of malice and jealousy and such an incident had not occurred after all. Lallemand was indeed friendly with such an enlightened illiterate and his accuser thought he would exaggerate Lallemand’s ties to cause mischief. Lallemand was forbidden to see the man “until there was time to determine by what spirit that man was being led.”³⁷ Nevertheless, so groundless was the accusation that Lallemand was then appointed to lecture for two years at the prestigious Clermont College in Paris.

In Paris he was very friendly with some of his Jesuit students, namely Claude Bernier and his disciple Francois Chauveau, who, together with some other Jesuits, wished to reform the Jesuit Society which, in their opinion, had become too worldly. Lallemand had much sympathy with their cause. In Paris, Chauveau spoke very highly of Lallemand and Bernier. He states, “I have never seen two saints agree and fraternise as they do.”³⁸ Chauveau describes how Lallemand and Bernier would have many discussions together, with the student Bernier instructing the theology professor (Lallemand).³⁹ This is indeed reminiscent of the incident of Surin and the enlightened illiterate in the coach.

De Certeau explains how this group of reformists came about and how they failed in their endeavour to reform the Jesuit Society. They were active in the years 1625-1635. It was

³⁶ Bartok, “Louis Lallemand and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*,” 118.

³⁷ De Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, 269.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 269.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

barely seventy years since Ignatius of Loyola died in 1556, yet these young Jesuits were claiming that the Society had lost the spirit of its founder as it was too concerned with apostolic activity and its standing in society. These concerns had been expressed and partly rectified by the previous General Claudio Acquaviva (1543-1615) back in 1606.⁴⁰ The young reformists wished to have a Society more dedicated to prayer and less institutionalised. They also had an extraordinary devotion to St. Joseph, patron of mystics. In 1627, de Certeau states that the Superior General Mutio Vitelleschi wrote to the French provinces alerting the provincials of “this new and foreign spirit of devotion, that particular spirit distant from the common conduct of the Society.”⁴¹ This doctrine was also “new” and “mystical,” pejorative words indeed, adds de Certeau.⁴² What alarmed Vitelleschi was that these young French reformers had much support from older Jesuits, one being none other than Lallemand himself. Lallemand’s connections with these reformers were unknown to Rome since he was appointed to be a tertian instructor in Rouen. It was in Rouen that Lallemand was once again investigated. He was accused of being too mystical and for encouraging his students to extraordinary devotion. He was again cleared though. His young confreres, on the other hand, had to answer to the General for their mystical leanings and they were ordered to “obey, keep quiet, or leave.”⁴³

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Tibor Bartok, “General Acquaviva and the Challenges of the Jesuit Society,” *Ignaziana* 31 (2021), 25-49.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

1.4 Lallemand's Work: The *Spiritual Doctrine*

Henri Bremond's claim that Lallemand founded a mystical school through his *Spiritual Doctrine* was strongly contested by Bremond's former confreres who argued that Lallemand was faithful to St Ignatius both in his vocation and writing. Bartok too disagrees that Lallemand's *Spiritual Doctrine* "represents a secret resistance to the mainstream of the Society."⁴⁴ Bartok gives a more realistic explanation for the creation of *The Spiritual Doctrine*. It is a reinterpretation, albeit mystical, of Claudio Acquaviva's (1581-1615) policies for the spiritual renewal of the Society during his generalate. Lallemand shared both Acquaviva's and his successor Vitelleschi's concerns about the spiritual life of the Jesuits.

During Acquaviva's generalate, the Jesuit Society increased at a spectacular rate. It doubled its membership in nine years, from 322 Jesuits in 1606 to 623 in 1615. This expansion unfortunately led to a spiritual decline among the members for many reasons. Bartok notes that there were many young Jesuit candidates who lacked the rigorous formation designed by Ignatius as the Society could not manage such an influx. Added to this, young Jesuits were soon overcome by worldly ambitions and many external activities, which included their mission in education, but which gave them little time to dedicate to their spiritual life. In a letter, titled "On the renewal of the Spirit", written to the Society in 1583, General Acquaviva laments this situation and accuses his confreres of showing such lukewarmness in their spiritual lives. Acquaviva writes:

The prayer life of some Jesuits is tasteless and bears no fruit. They are unable to recollect themselves, to introspect, to examine their thoughts and deeds. On the other hand, they are willing to be distracted in outer activities, but their motivation is not genuine zeal for the salvation of the neighbour. They find it

⁴⁴ Bartok, "Louis Lallemand and Jesuit Spirituality," *The Way* 56, no. 1 (January 2017): 36.

difficult to obey. They seek comfort, honour, privilege and find their solace in created things, so that their lifestyle barely resembles that of a religious.⁴⁵

Acquaviva tried to rectify this situation through his renewal policy based on Constitutions 813, tenth paragraph. This speaks of the primacy of spiritual means over the natural means. This is what St. Ignatius wrote:

For the preservation and development not only of the body or exterior of the Society but also of its spirit, and for the attainment of the objective it seeks, which is to aid souls to reach their ultimate and supernatural end, the means which unite the human instrument with God and so dispose it that it may be wielded dexterously by His divine hand are more effective than those which equip it in relation to men. Such ensure, for example, goodness and virtue, and especially charity, and a pure intention of the divine service, and familiarity with God our Lord in spiritual exercises of devotion, and sincere zeal for souls for the sake of glory to Him who created and redeemed them and not for any other benefit. Thus, it appears that care should be taken in general that all the members of the Society may devote themselves to the solid and perfect virtues and to spiritual pursuits, and attach greater importance to them than to learning and other natural and human gifts. For they are the interior gifts which make those exterior means effective toward the end which is sought.⁴⁶

Another letter of Acquaviva, titled “On some means that bring about the Society’s conservation” written to the general superiors of the Society in 1587 to exhort them to nurture spiritual perfection in the confreres, illustrates this point:

The Institute of the Society is rooted in this key point in our Constitutions, on which we need to be firm and convinced: its way of governance, its occupations, and its ministries need to be rooted and grounded in a spiritual perfection of a kind that is neither common nor superficial. Rather we need to insist on true abnegation, on a stripping of self-love, and a fervent zeal for the solid and perfect virtues, as our Blessed Father Ignatius sets out in the second paragraph of part 10 of the Constitutions [813]. Indeed, if this foundation has not been well laid within the men of the Society, we will encounter grave obstacles in a number of matters.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Claudio Acquaviva, “On the renewal of the Spirit” in *The Letters to the General Superiors of the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Jesus*, (Ghent: Poelman-de-Pape, 1847), 119-120, quoted in Bartok, “General Acquaviva and the Challenges of the Jesuit Society,” 28.

⁴⁶ Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, trans. George G. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 332.

⁴⁷ Claudio Acquaviva, “On some means that bring about the Society’s conservation” in *The Letters to the Superior Generals*, 186-7, quoted in Bartok, “Louis Lallemant and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*,” 123.

This spiritual renewal started by Acquaviva would continue under Vitelleschi between 1616 and 1645. Lallemand shared his superiors' concerns about the spiritual apathy of many of his Jesuit confreres. His *Spiritual Doctrine* can be seen as a response to this concern as it places emphasis on the teaching that our true happiness lies in totally trusting ourselves to God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Union with God should be our only objective which indeed helps rather than hinders our service to our neighbour. *The Spiritual Doctrine* is based on Constitutions 813 and includes many references to the *Spiritual Exercises* too, as shall be illustrated henceforth. Lallemand gives much importance to purity of heart as it is through it that the Holy Spirit pours out his gifts. Lallemand outlines seven principles, namely: (i) the consideration of the end; (ii) the idea of perfection; (iii) purity of heart; (iv) the guidance of the Holy Spirit and docility thereto; (v) recollection and the interior life; (vi) union with our Lord; and (vii) the order and degrees of the spiritual life. These progress from the ascetical to the mystical, until one reaches perfection, that is holiness and union with God.

1.5 Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, we have seen that the religious context of seventeenth-century France was indeed a very complex one, with many conflicting teachings branching off to form other doctrines, some of which developed into heresies. The Society of Jesus, too, had to contend with its own problems. The Generals were concerned about the lack of interiority in their own members. It was not easy for the relatively new Order to find the balance between activity and prayer. The young confreres who advocated for reform, only a few decades after the founding of the Society, were not tolerated, probably due to the heresy of the *alumbrados*. In all this we see the wisdom of Louis Lallemand who was courageous to

communicate his teaching on the spiritual life through his *Spiritual Doctrine*, yet cautious enough not to alarm his superiors.

Lallemant's teachings are certainly balanced and harmonious, combining both ascetical and mystical elements. He encourages his reader to purify his heart and thus attain perfection through constant watch over the heart. The reader must do his utmost to attain perfection. He is indeed expected to work on his interior life, to be responsible for his own interiority, but also be open to receive the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2

Attaining a Pure Heart

2.1 Introduction

In the seventeenth century, most currents within the Church explained progress in the spiritual life as being divided into two parts which were all too often contraposed to each other. First, ascetical theology dealt with disciplined practices, and this applied to the majority. Second, mystical theology was reserved for the few and this led to union with God.¹ Fortunately, Lallemand takes a more balanced view of the spiritual life. He believes that union with God is not reserved for the few but to all who willingly abandon themselves to God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.² God will shower his graces on faithful and loving souls. More than simply asceticism (i.e., discipline) and mysticism (i.e., union), to Lallemand:

The two elements of the spiritual life are the purgation of the heart and the direction of the Holy Spirit. By these two ways one arrives at perfection according to the degree of purity one has acquired, and in proportion to the fidelity one has had in co-operating with the movements of the Holy Spirit and following his conduct.³

Spiritual perfection is therefore attained through purity of heart and by one's abandonment to the direction of the Holy Spirit, albeit by progressing from the ascetical to the mystical, similar to the mansions in Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*. Lallemand states that after having acquired purity of heart, we ought to be "so possessed and governed by the Holy

¹ See, for instance, Giovanni Battista Scaramelli (1687-1752) whose works *Direttorio ascetico* (1752) and *Direttorio mistico* (1754) became classics and described the process of the spiritual life in two stages, ascetical for the majority and mystical for the select few.

² Louis Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, ed. Frederick William Faber (London: Burns & Oates, 1870), 41.

³ *Ibid.*, 131.

Spirit that He alone shall direct all our powers and all our senses.”⁴ We shall acquire full union with Christ “as we shall no longer live in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ.”⁵

Bernard of Clairvaux takes a similar stance for he advocates that progress in contemplation can only be arrived at by serious preparation. He states:

Perhaps you desire the repose of contemplation, and in this you do well. But it would be a reversing of the proper order to ask for the reward before having earned it. I would have you cleanse your conscience from every defilement of anger and murmuring and envy and dispute; I would wish you to adorn yourself with the flowers of good works and seek the sweet perfumes of virtues ... that your conscience may everywhere be fragrant with the perfumes of piety, of peace, of gentleness, of justice, of obedience, of cheerfulness, of humility (*Cant*, xlvi, 5, 7).⁶

Thus, just as Bernard of Clairvaux advises his listeners to seek penance and exercise the virtues, so does Lallemand advise his listeners to start with the disciplined practices by which one’s heart is purified. He also advocates the reception of the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues. Lallemand also states that one needs to be humble to know oneself and one’s faults and thus recognise the need for repentance and God’s mercy. He also promotes holy indifference which makes one realise that “God alone can make us happy.”⁷ To attain purity of heart, then, one must guard over it and root out all that separates one from God, be it venial sins, evil habits or disorderly affections. Therefore, penance, the sacraments, the virtues, watchfulness and self-knowledge all contribute to attain purity of heart. Lallemand gives very sound advice on each.

⁴ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 132.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism The Teaching of St. Augustine and Saint Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life* (London: Routledge, 2000), 98.

⁷ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 37.

2.2 The Sacraments as a Means of Perfection

Lallemant points to two sacraments in particular which help in acquiring perfection.

These are the Eucharist and Confession. He remarks that:

Nothing conduces more to the progress of souls than confession and daily communion, provided we have made at the beginning three or four good confessions to lay the foundation of a good conscience ... for the more you frequent these sacraments, the more grace you receive for participating in their effects.⁸

We must not forget that frequent communion was not encouraged until the papacy of Pope Pius X.⁹

Lallemant assures us that if we find ourselves spiritually weak and lacking resolve, Holy Communion will help invigorate us. The profoundest grace that Holy Communion effects in us is that it brings us to “a close union with God,”¹⁰ a theme which resonates with the Church Fathers and many other holy men and women. Hadewijch, for instance, vividly describes this union in terms of the reception of the Holy Eucharist as one person is wholly enveloped by the other:

So that each knows the other through and through
 In the anguish or the repose or the madness of Love,
 And eats his flesh and drinks his blood;
 The heart of each devours the other's heart,
 One soul assaults the other and invades it completely,
 As he who is Love itself showed us
 When he gave us himself to eat,
 Disconcerting all the thoughts of man.¹¹

⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁹ Pope Pius X, *Decree of Frequent and Daily Reception of Holy Communion*, December 20, *Sacra Tridentina* 1905.

¹⁰ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 49.

¹¹ Hadewijch, *Poems in Couplets*, 16, in *Hadewijch: The Complete Works*, trans. Mother Cumbria Hart OSB, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 358, quoted in Mark A. McIntosh, *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 79.

To Hadewijch, union with God is an intimacy with him, of knowing God as is humanly possible, “so that each knows the other through and through.” Maybe such intimacy is “disconcerting” to some, but to Hadewijch, love consumes her all, “the heart of each devours the other’s heart ... when he gave us himself to eat.”¹²

Thomas Aquinas too, albeit in a more prosaic style, points to this union and grace which gives us boundless joy, “The Eucharist prefigures that enjoyment of God which will be ours in Heaven. It keeps us on the way to Heaven. It really contains Christ who is full of grace.”¹³

Lallemant continues to explain that, through Holy Communion, union with Jesus Christ is “the most perfect that [it] can possibly be.....by it we are united immediately to the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and by means of his body and blood to his soul and his divinity.”¹⁴ Therefore to Lallemant we become whom we receive for “his body becomes blended with our body, his blood with our blood, his soul is joined to our soul; whence there results in us an accidental change which makes us like unto our Lord.”¹⁵ This assertion echoes Cyril of Jerusalem, who had said that by receiving the body and blood of Christ, we become whom we receive:

Therefore, with fullest assurance let us partake as of the Body and Blood of Christ; for in the figure of Bread is given to thee his body, and in the figure of wine his blood; that thou by partaking of the body and blood of Christ might be made the same body and the same blood with him.¹⁶

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Thomas Aquinas, STh 3a, Questio 73, art. 3.

¹⁴ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 271.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Catechesis*, 4:3 as quoted in F.L Cross ed., *St. Cyril of Jerusalem’s Lectures on the Christian Sacraments* (London: SPCK, 1966), 27.

To Lallemand and Cyril, union means becoming like Jesus who gives us his body and his blood. Becoming like him is deeper than identification or imitation. It is indeed a union and a transformation in Jesus.

Lallemand considers the sacrament of confession as a means for “the soul (to be) greatly enlightened to know its own interior, it is filled with humble and loving contrition and enjoys peace and repose of conscience.”¹⁷ Lallemand is judicious regarding penance, “the mean we ought to observe in penances is neither, on the one hand, to do so much as to injure health, nor, on the other, so little, as to allow the rebellion of nature to be felt too strongly.”¹⁸ Could it be that Lallemand had in mind his spiritual father’s own bitter experience of penance? St Ignatius of Loyola was in great anguish and distress when he started his life as a convert in the ten months he spent in Manresa, making penance for his past life. Ignatius had to learn to trust God and not lean on his own devices, even in making penance. It was when he was at the end of his tether that he finally abandoned himself to God. From that moment on, he felt great peace and became more moderate in his practices.¹⁹

2.3 Vigilance

Knowing one’s interior state and guarding over it is a pertinent theme in Lallemand’s *Spiritual Doctrine*. It is indeed the road to acquiring purity of heart, and thus perfection. To Lallemand, purity of heart “consists in having nothing therein which is, in however small a degree, opposed to God and the operation of his grace.”²⁰

¹⁷ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 51.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ignatius Loyola, *Autobiography*, ed. J.F.X. O’Connor (Religious Classics), 22-25.

²⁰ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 96.

Lallemant comments, "Perfection requires great watchfulness. To watch over our interior and note its faults is the first study in perfection. Our principal study ought to be to watch over our interior, in order to ascertain its state and correct its disorders."²¹ Not only do we improve in our spiritual life, but God too will bless such a soul and "give it little by little the knowledge of itself."²² Self-knowledge is a prerequisite for vigilance for how can one correct one's faults or be aware of them, if one has no knowledge of self? Dietrich von Hildebrand succinctly comments:

So long as a man is ignorant of his defects and of their real nature, all his endeavour (be it ever so laudable) to overcome those effects will end in failure. Our transformation - the total uprooting of our vices, the levelling of hills and filling up of valleys - requires a thorough knowledge of our defects.²³

It is not only Lallemant who advocates vigilance. This is a common thread woven throughout Christian teaching, from biblical times to the present. In the Book of Proverbs, we read, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Prov. 4:23).

The desert fathers too advised their followers to be vigilant, to watch over their heart and wage war against its disorders. In fact, Tibor Bartok comments that Lallemant's watchfulness resembles that of the desert fathers, the *nepsis*.²⁴ One cannot not mention Evagrius of Pontus and his thesis on the *logismoi* found in his *Praktikos*. Bernard McGinn explains:

Relying on the traditions of introspection of the desert fathers, as well as his own probing mind, the Pontic master fashioned tools of permanent value for later

²¹ Ibid., 98-99.

²² Ibid., 99.

²³ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Transformation in Christ: On the Christian Attitude* (San Francisco: Ignatian Press, 2001), 50.

²⁴ Bartok, "Louis Lallemant and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*," 128.

Christian spirituality, especially in his teaching on the eight principal *logismoi*, the direct ancestors of the well-known “seven deadly sins.”²⁵

Evagrius tells his disciples to examine these thoughts, to become familiar with them so as to discern the root of these temptations which thwart contemplation and stop their spiritual progress. Most importantly, he advises his followers to pray about them:

If there is any monk who wishes to take the measure of some of the fiercer demons so as to gain experience in his monastic art, let him keep watch over his thoughts. Let him observe their intensity, their periods of decline, and follow them as they rise and fall. Let him note well the complexity of his thoughts, their periodicity, the demons which cause them, with the order of their succession and the nature of their associations. Then let him ask from Christ the explanation of these data he has observed.²⁶

Bartok comments that Lallemand combines the teaching of the desert fathers and that of St. Ignatius of Loyola regarding discernment of spirits, by using the “main rule of the desert tradition: whatever troubles you, comes from the devil.”²⁷ Lallemand says in his *Spiritual Doctrine*, “Everything that destroys the peace and tranquillity of the interior proceeds from the devil.”²⁸ St. Ignatius differentiates between the good and evil spirits by also using the imagery of peace. He says, “The good angel touches the soul gently, lightly and sweetly, like a drop of water going into a sponge. The evil spirit touches it sharply, with noise and disturbance, like a drop of water falling onto a stone.”²⁹

²⁵ Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 149.

²⁶ Evagrius Pontus, *Praktikos* 50.

²⁷ Bartok, “Louis Lallemand and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*,” 129.

²⁸ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 205.

²⁹ Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, trans. George E. Ganss, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1992), #335. Ignatius gives a whole set of rules for discernment for the first and second week. #313-336.

Lallemant devotes a whole chapter to the obstacles the devil puts in our way to prevent our spiritual progress.³⁰ He gives us the following advice in order to combat the evil spirit:

Let us examine ourselves carefully, and observe on what object our thoughts are most fixed, what most engages our heart, what passions most disturb our interior peace. And when we have discovered what it is, let us immediately root it out as a manifest device of the enemy, who wishes to destroy us.³¹

Closer to our time, Pope Francis too speaks of vigilance and watchfulness over our heart, just as Lallemant did, centuries ago. The similarity in thought of Lallemant and Pope Francis is striking.³² One could easily say that Pope Francis took a leaf out of Lallemant's book. Pope Francis explains that in order for us to remain on the right path we need an "attitude of vigilance [...] because the Evil One can ruin everything, making us go back to the beginning, indeed, in an even worse condition."³³ He quotes Jesus who, too, describes the good disciple as being always vigilant:

Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home for the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes (Lk 12:35-37).

Pope Francis exhorts us "to keep watch, to safeguard our heart and to understand what is happening inside it." He echoes Lallemant, who tells us to safeguard all our thoughts and understand what is happening inside, "We ought to be on our guard, [...] and it is of the utmost importance that we should watch attentively over our thoughts, and test them

³⁰ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 202-208.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 203

³² In an interview with Fr. Antonio Spadaro, S.J. Pope Francis claims that he is "rather close to the mystical movement, that of Louis Lallemant and Jean-Joseph Surin." See Pope Francis, "A Big Heart: Open to God," *Interview with Antonio Spadaro*, Rome 19 August 2013.

³³ Pope Francis, *General Audience*, Rome 14 December 2022.

thoroughly at their commencement, in their progress, and in their conclusion.”³⁴ The Pope warns us that without this vigilance, all can be lost. He gives the example of the parable of the unclean spirit which again possesses the man, this time with the help of more demons, “seven other devils more evil than himself” (Mt 12:45). The house, is “swept and put in order” (Mt 12:44). However, the Pope asks, “Where is the owner? Has he become too careless, is he away or simply not vigilant that he is again possessed, and worse than before?”³⁵ Pope Francis ends his teaching on a stern note. We must not be like the owner in the parable who had become too sure of himself. Pope Francis tells us that the moment we trust too much in ourselves instead of in God’s grace, it is then that the Evil one enters our hearts for “in our presumption, we can open a door to the evil one.”³⁶

Lallemant is equally stern with those who are negligent of watching over their interior:

Nothing is so dangerous as to neglect the care of our interior and to take no pains to know what is passing therein. This negligence and this ignorance give occasion to a multitude of venial sins, which dispose us insensibly to some mortal sin or great temptations, whence ensue fatal falls.³⁷

Pope Francis exhorts us to remain vigilant, for without vigilance we will lose the many graces the Lord has given us and be easily deceived by the devil. He concludes by saying that “vigilance is a sign of wisdom, it is above all a sign of humility and humility is the high road of Christian life.”³⁸ Therefore he combines vigilance with the practice of virtues which, according to Lallemant, too, leads to perfection. It is to the practice of virtues we now turn.

³⁴ Lallemant’s *Spiritual Doctrine*, 205.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 223.

³⁸ Pope Francis, *General Audience*, Rome 14 December, 2022.

2.4 The Virtues

To Lallemand, the merit of practising virtues is not in being a virtuous person, but in imitating our Lord, for just as our Lord reflected God's glory in his humanity, so must we reflect our Lord in our conduct. Lallemand observes that "the acts of virtue produced by this motive of imitating our Lord and resembling him are far more noble and more pleasing to God than such as are formed by the motives proper to the virtues themselves."³⁹ Lallemand singles out faith as the most important virtue we can have, followed by humility and love of the cross. He is greatly influenced by Thomas Aquinas in his views about faith. Faith, comments Lallemand, "comprises in an eminent degree all virtues, and is the first spring of their action."⁴⁰ Aquinas, observes Brian Davies, too "thinks of faith as presiding over all virtues [...] we have the theological virtues of hope and charity only because we have faith."⁴¹ Lallemand says that "faith must not be based upon natural reasons nor our own human inventions."⁴² Faith is a gift from God, a statement affirmed also by Aquinas who wrote, "the things of faith surpass people's understanding and so become part of their knowledge only because God reveals them."⁴³ Lallemand laments that unfortunately some people "guide themselves only by human reason and natural prudence, scarcely using faith, except so far as not to go against it."⁴⁴ Such people can hardly progress in their spiritual life. He scorns the virtues of the pagan Romans, as there was much "vanity and corruption mixed with their purest and most solid

³⁹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 275.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴¹ Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 230.

⁴² Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 52.

⁴³ Thomas Aquinas, *STh 2a2ae*, *Questio 6*, art.1.

⁴⁴ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 53.

virtues.”⁴⁵ Therefore, Lallemand exhorts us, his readers, to increase our faith as it is through it that God makes himself “perfectly master of a soul.”⁴⁶

Lallemand asserts that it is by being humble that we are truly great for then we are close to God. If we seek greatness from the world, we are fools. In his treatment of humility, there is a subtle criticism of those of his fellow confreres who “love the esteem and applause of the world.”⁴⁷ Lallemand reminds them that natural talents and endowments are to be used for God’s glory and not for their own interest. Humility is not degrading, continues Lallemand, as we become true followers of Christ who said, “Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart” (Matt 11:29). Lallemand is very astute in commenting that sometimes acts of humility are done in a spirit of vanity. Therefore, we must pray for the gift of humility.

2.5 The Love of the Cross

We try and live the virtues of faith and humility in order to imitate our Lord, Jesus Christ. In a similar way, we must look upon our crosses, since it is through his death and resurrection that Jesus Christ brought our salvation. To Lallemand, “no great fruits can be expected from ministry, if it be not accompanied by contradictions, calumnies, injuries and sufferings.”⁴⁸

In this, Lallemand echoes his spiritual father, St. Ignatius, who had a mystical experience of the cross at a small wayside chapel at La Storta when he and his companions were on their way to Rome to humbly ask the Pope how they could best serve the Church. “The eternal Father placed Ignatius with his cross-bearing Son, saying, ‘I want you, my Son, to take this

⁴⁵ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 69-70.

man as your servant.’ And the cross-bearing Christ said to Ignatius, ‘I want you to serve us’.”⁴⁹ Harvey D. Egan comments that the La Storta experience was the source of Ignatius’ mysticism of the cross so much so that the *Spiritual Exercises* are intimately tied with the cross.⁵⁰ As early as the first week of the Exercises, the exercitants do a meditation in front of Christ crucified and ask themselves three questions, “What have I done for Christ, what am I doing for Christ? What ought I do for Christ? And as I see him in this condition hanging upon the cross, I shall meditate on the thoughts that come to my mind.”⁵¹ The contemplations of the second week, which focus on the person of Christ and his ministry, all focus on choosing Christ, poor and humble. The third week of the *Spiritual Exercises* is entirely devoted to the passion. Egan points out that the mediaeval prayer, Soul of Christ, which permeates the first week of the Exercises, is “an excellent summary of Ignatius’ mysticism of the cross.”⁵² Lallemand truly embodies Ignatius’ own love for the cross. However, Lallemand cautions beginners “not to ask sufferings of God,”⁵³ for other ascetical practices come first such as purging our consciences, and attaining purity of heart in order to have sufficient virtue to carry our cross. God will send us our cross when he will think fit. Lallemand and Ignatius are in agreement that by accepting our cross we are uniting our suffering with that of Christ. Egan quotes a letter written by Ignatius that says, “the enlightened soul ... when it suffers contradictions ... desires nothing but Christ and Him crucified, so that if it is crucified in this life, it will rise in the next.”⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ignatius Loyola, *Autobiography*, 59.

⁵⁰ Harvey D. Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1987), 133.

⁵¹ Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #53.

⁵² Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic*, 133.

⁵³ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 60.

⁵⁴ Ignatius Loyola, *Letters*, 331, quoted in Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic*, 134-5.

Lallemant comments that we must look at our crosses “in the heart of Jesus Christ who has chosen them for us, and presents them to us as the material of those crowns which he is preparing for us.”⁵⁵

2.6 Indifference to the Exterior Life

The underlying concept of Lallemant's comments about being indifferent to the exterior life is that “God alone can make us happy. There is a void in our heart which all creatures united would be unable to fill. God alone can fill it for he is our beginning and our end.”⁵⁶ This statement reiterates the opening phrase of the principle and foundation found at the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises*, “Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls.”⁵⁷ Lallemant warns us about being too attached to people who can only cause us pain and distance us from God. He states, “The hindrances to perfection are the various attachments we have to creatures. For our perfection consists in our union with God, which also constitutes our beatitude.”⁵⁸ He reprimands those who are too concerned with flattery, a reprimand plainly aimed at his worldly fellow confreres. He says that it is a “monstrous illusion” to prefer the esteem of men to God’s inspirations.⁵⁹ He comments:

We are insensible to the inspirations of God, because they are spiritual. We make no account of them, we prefer before them our natural talents, occupations of distinction, the esteem of men, our own little conveniences and satisfactions.

⁵⁵ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 60.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁷ Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #23.

⁵⁸ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 291.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

Monstrous illusion! of which nevertheless, many are undeceived only at the hour of death.⁶⁰

Lallemant's sternness is probably due to his zeal and love of our Lord and to his brotherly concern for his worldly confreres. He rebukes his confreres who "prize certain distinguished employments"⁶¹ and yet claim to be indifferent. He terms their indifference, hypocrisy. Lallemant does not only have the spiritual good of his confreres at heart, but also of lay people who will be inspired by the example of the Fathers:

For as we can induce seculars to despise riches only by shewing them how they may acquire other goods more solid and more lasting, in like manner we shall never despise the satisfaction we may promise ourselves from exterior employments, until we are similarly convinced that we shall find more solid good in the self-recollection of the interior life.⁶²

To Lallemant, nothing can compare with the riches that awaits those who have an intimate relationship with the Lord. Therefore, he regards "exterior employments" inferior to such "solid good" that comes from an interior life. By being detached from worldly occupations, the confreres will be setting an example to lay people by deed rather than by word. Lay people too will be inspired to work for riches in heaven rather than those on earth.

2.7 Conclusion

Lallemant has given us a most useful approach to help us advance in our spiritual lives through ascetic practices. He makes much use of the teachings of the desert and patristic fathers. He is faithful to St. Ignatius' spirituality, so much so that many of the teachings in the *Spiritual Doctrine* can be traced to the *Spiritual Exercises*.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 111.

⁶² Ibid., 112

This chapter focussed on the ascetical practices which are necessary to prepare oneself for union with God, that is on the sacraments, vigilance, the virtues, the love of the cross. In the following chapter, the *Spiritual Doctrine* will be analysed in view of union with God, that is, the mystical aspect which is so often overlooked in our spiritual accompaniment.

Chapter 3

A Contemplative Heart

3.1 Introduction

As was pointed out in the first chapter, any mystical leanings in Jesuit circles in the seventeenth century were frowned upon. However, this did not stop Lallemand from dedicating his seventh principle to the prayer of union. He strongly encouraged his students to be people of prayer, to have a deeply spiritual life, nurtured by purity of heart and an openness to the Holy Spirit.

Four of his seven principles contain aspects relating to the mystical life, so important did he consider it to attain holiness and, therefore, perfection. This is illustrated when Lallemand addresses the indwelling of God in the soul, “O blessed interior life, which causes God alone to live in hearts, and which causes hearts to live but for God alone.”¹ Lallemand’s address draws the attention of the reader to the realisation of the importance of the mystical life. It is only through this openness to the agency of God that the reader will find true happiness for “the heart is a void, which can be filled only by God.”² Lallemand asserts that such a person would indeed be happy as his heart will “find in the kingdom of God its joy, its peace, true pleasures [...]which the world can neither give nor take away.”³ It is only God who can give and wishes to give such joy for “the delight of God is to converse with hearts, there is the place of His rest; and so likewise God alone is the centre of hearts, and they ought to

¹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 42.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

find their rest only in God.”⁴ Lallemand exhorts his reader to appreciate the magnitude of God’s gift to him, a gift which should elicit in him (the reader) an openness to receive it. Lallemand vehemently encourages him to strip himself of all that thwarts him from having the disposition to receive God’s indwelling presence, therefore from “affections, designs, desires, hopes, pretensions in order to put himself in that perfect nudity of spirit which disposes him to being fully possessed by God.”⁵ In this chapter, I shall discuss Lallemand’s teachings on the mystical life and on the gifts of the Holy Spirit through whose guidance we become open to receiving God’s gift of himself.

3.2 Cultivation of the Interior Life

It is through prayer that we can slowly grow in intimacy with our Lord and learn to imitate him. To stress the importance of taking care of one’s interiority, Lallemand quotes St. Bernard’s advice to Pope Eugenius, “Do not give thyself up to thy neighbour, so as to be no longer thine own; possess thyself always; fill thyself with grace as a reservoir. Be not like a canal through which the water passes without staying therein.”⁶

3.2.1 Prayer

According to Lallemand, the mystical life perfects us. He claims that those religious who give all their time to the apostolate without care to their interior life are leading a “perilous life,”⁷ for not only is their service imperfect but they will never reach perfection, no matter

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 213.

how zealous and charitable are their ministries. Here again, Lallemand seems to be criticising his confreres who gave precious little time to prayer. He lists the classical three stages of progress in the spiritual life – the purgative, illuminative, and unitive – which such religious will never attain since they have no time for prayer. St. Bonaventure describes them succinctly:

Purgation leads to peace, illumination to truth, perfection to charity. When these are perfectly acquired, the soul is edified [...] If you wish to be purged, turn to the sting of conscience; if you wish to be illuminated, turn to the ray of understanding; if you wish to be perfected, turn to the little flame of wisdom.⁸

In commenting about the three stages of prayer, Lallemand is clearly concerned with the motives and interior dispositions of the religious. He is not impressed by heroic actions or ministries, but rather by the attitude or motivation by which the ministry is done. He wisely comments that the purgative stage helps the religious act virtuously purely from selfless motives and not from “self-love that will make them follow their own inclinations and do their own will.”⁹ Unfortunately, those religious who will never reach the perfection of this first stage due to lack of prayer and devotion “will fall continually into their ordinary faults and imperfections, and will be in great danger of getting lost.”¹⁰ They will never feel the sting of conscience that St. Bonaventure talks about. Through the illuminative stage, the religious discerns the will of God “in the manner as in the substance of the action.”¹¹ Lallemand explains that it is not only the action but also the attitude by which it is done that ought to be

⁸ Laura A. Smit, “He is all delight: A Pedagogy of Beauty in Bonaventure’s *De Triplici Via*”, *Cithara* 57, no. 1(2017): 27.

⁹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 213.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 214.

pleasing to God. Indeed, a person reaching this stage would have acquired a deep understanding of God's will. Lallemand states:

In order to do the will of God well, it is not sufficient to know that it is God's will; for example, that I should forthwith sweep my room; I must also know with what thought he would have me occupy myself while performing this exterior act of humility which my rule prescribes, for God desires to regulate the interior of my actions as well as the exterior.¹²

This awareness of God's presence within oneself, even while performing mundane daily tasks, is an Ignatian concept of seeking God in everything. It is what St. Ignatius describes in his autobiography as he is slowly becoming aware of the presence of God, both within him and through the events of his life.¹³

The unitive stage "consists in the interior union of the soul with God,"¹⁴ this union being our arrival point. Lallemand berates those religious who spend all their energy in the apostolate and none in taking care of their interior life. He exclaims:

But, alas, we are so little enlightened, or so bewitched with all the brilliancy of exterior employments, that we understand not the excellence, nor the necessity, nor the merit of that life which is hidden from the eyes of men and known to God alone.¹⁵

This is wisdom indeed to acquire merit in God's eyes, especially when, to the world, we are not achieving much. The Lord himself tells us, "The Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Mt 6:5-6).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ignatius of Loyola, *Autobiography*, 26.

¹⁴ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 215.

¹⁵ Ibid., 223.

Lallemant's admonishment is relevant to us today as it was four centuries ago. Pope Francis encourages us to spend time in prayer. This is what he said during a recent Angelus address:

Let us imagine that the Lord came on earth today. Unfortunately, he would see many wars, much poverty [...] and at the same time, tremendous technical achievements, modern means, and people who are always rushing, who never stop. But would he find someone who dedicates time and affection to him, someone who would put him in first place?¹⁶

Lallemant exhorts us to imitate our Lord, Jesus Christ, who had spent much of his time in prayer to his father. Lallemant comments:

One of the first characteristics [...] which we ought to copy in ourselves is his [Jesus'] hidden life, his life of retirement and recollection, and, above all, his interior life. It consisted in the application of his heart to God, his aims, his knowledge, his love, his zeal, and his desires, which were infinite in their scope; so that we may say that all he did and suffered externally is nothing in comparison with what took place in his interior.¹⁷

To stress the importance of prayer and union with God, Lallemant quotes St. Ignatius himself, pointing out that "St. Ignatius in his constitutions would have us regard this familiar converse with God as the chief instrument of our own salvation and that of our neighbour, for which our vocation obliges us to labour."¹⁸ Therefore, there can be no doubt that Lallemant impressed upon his hearers the importance of being people of prayer and of having an intimate relationship with God.

¹⁶ Pope Francis, *Angelus*, Rome 16 October 2022.

¹⁷ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 289.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

3.2.2 Imitation of Our Lord

Lallemant is insistent that “our perfection depends on the interior life.”¹⁹ It is through an interior life that we can imitate our Lord and become familiar with him. Lallemant states that “the saints attained perfection by the way of the interior life conversing familiarly with God.”²⁰ In the Old Testament, Moses had a familiarity with God. “So, the Lord spoke to Moses, face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Ex 33:11). In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius encourages the retreatants to pray to God as “one friend speaks to another... now begging a favour, now accusing oneself of some misdeed, now telling one’s concerns and asking counsel about them.”²¹ Lallemant follows in Ignatius’ footsteps by encouraging familiarity with God and by imitating our Lord “who gave thirty years to the contemplative life.”²² St. Ignatius devotes the second week of his *Spiritual Exercises* to the life of Jesus from the Incarnation up to his glorious entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He has the retreatant contemplate Jesus’ life, birth, infancy, as well as his hidden and public life in order to know Jesus well.²³ Like Ignatius, Lallemant adds that not only will our interior life lead to a familiarity with Christ, “but God works with us and makes himself known unto us; so that having a more perfect knowledge of his perfection and virtues, and being wholly imbued therewith, we proceed to practise them with regard to our neighbour.”²⁴ Therefore, Lallemant is intent on combining service with interiority, stating that we cannot become Christ-like without prayer.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 290.

²¹ Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #54.

²² Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 247.

²³ Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #102-134, 158-164.

²⁴ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 290.

Since “Jesus is the gate and the way to go to God,” Lallemand lists Jesus’ virtues and the ways we can imitate him.²⁵ He combines virtues with episodes in Jesus’ life. Lallemand lists purity, poverty, humility, obedience as virtues that we need to have if we truly want to be followers of Jesus. Rather than asking us to use our imagination, as Ignatius does in his *Spiritual Exercises* when reflecting, in the second week, to be “present with Christ in a given mystery,” Lallemand emphasises the Lord’s virtues in the episodes of his life.²⁶ Therefore, Lallemand tells us to “consider therein the virtues he exercised: his humility in supporting the abjection of such a state (incarnation), his patience in suffering persecutions and exile, his poverty, his contempt of the world.”²⁷ Lallemand points out also that it is through an interior life that we exercise these virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit without whose guidance we cannot attain perfection.

3.3 The Guidance of the Holy Spirit

The role of the Holy Spirit holds a fundamental place in Lallemand’s *Spiritual Doctrine*. He says that “the two elements of the spiritual life are the cleansing of the heart and the direction of the Holy Spirit.”²⁸ He combines these two elements together as they are interdependent on each other. The purer one’s heart is, the more one is able to let oneself be confidently guided by the Holy Spirit. Lallemand explains, “By these two ways we arrive at perfection according to the degree of purity we have attained and in proportion to the fidelity

²⁵ Ibid., 261.

²⁶ John J. English S.J. *Spiritual Freedom* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1995), 131.

²⁷ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 248.

²⁸ Ibid., 131.

with which we have cooperated with the movements of the Holy Spirit and followed his guidance.”²⁹

According to André Brouillette, there is “an interplay of human and divine cooperation at the core of Lallemand’s thought.”³⁰ We need to be responsible for our own purity of heart through ascetic practices, as we have seen in the previous chapter. The purer our heart is, the more available it is to receive the Holy Spirit. Lallemand exhorts his readers to be docile to the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that through him, we will live in Christ and align our will to his.

He comments:

The goal to which we should aspire, after we have exercised purity of heart for a long while, is to be so possessed and governed by the Holy Spirit that it is he alone who guides all our powers and all our senses, and who rules all our interior and exterior movements, and that we abandon ourselves entirely by a spiritual renunciation of our wills. Thus, we shall no longer live in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ (Gal 2:20) by a faithful correspondence with the operations of his divine Spirit.³¹

This is indeed the goal for all Christians, to be totally guided by the Holy Spirit and dispose ourselves to do God’s will. This is also the aim of St. Ignatius who at the end of the *Spiritual Exercises* ends with a beautiful prayer titled, “A Contemplation to Attain Love of God.”³² In this prayer, God is seen as the giver who gifts us with his very self. Our response can only be that of love and of offering ourselves to his service. Therefore, both Lallemand and St. Ignatius see the goal of our spiritual life as living no longer in ourselves, but “in Christ” as St. Paul says in his letter to the Galatians (Gal 2:20).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Andre Brouillette S.J., “Embracing the Spirit: The Ignatian Pneumatology of Louis Lallemand,” *Perspectiva Teologica, Bela Horizonte* 53, no. 2 (2021): 408.

³¹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*,

³² Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #234.

Lallemant, therefore, “conforms the believer to Christ,”³³ thus following in the manner of St. Ignatius. Apart from the rules of discernment, St. Ignatius is very cautious in his mention of the Holy Spirit in his *Spiritual Exercises*. Most probably, he was wary of the Inquisition and did not want his *Spiritual Exercises* to be prohibited.³⁴ Brouillette comments that Lallemant’s “heightened attention to the Spirit should not be read independently from the strong Christological emphasis of the *Spiritual Exercises*.”³⁵ In fact, Lallemant states that just as Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was guided by him throughout his earthly life, so we ought to be guided by the Holy Spirit if we truly want to follow Jesus. He explains:

Our Lord having been conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, willed to be guided in all his actions, [...] by that of the Holy Spirit, in order to teach us that, as this divine spirit is the principle of our spiritual regeneration in baptism, he must also be the principle of our conduct [...] and that we must depend absolutely on his direction, since the members must be animated with the same spirit as the head.³⁶

In fact, Lallemant explains that the objective of the Holy Spirit's action in us is to generate Jesus Christ mystically in the soul, as he was physically generated in the womb of Mary, “This mystical generation of Jesus Christ in souls must imitate that which the Holy Spirit wrought in Mary.”³⁷

Lallemant indeed highlights instances of Christ’s life to show us how we can model ourselves on Christ through the Holy Spirit. He says that Jesus’ parables “belong to the gift of

³³ Brouillette, “Embracing the Spirit”, 397.

³⁴ Ignatius was writing at the time of the Spanish Inquisition. Any reference to the Holy Spirit could be seen as *alumbradismo*. See Brouillette, “Embracing the Spirit,” 399.

³⁵ Brouillette, “Embracing the Spirit”, 403.

³⁶ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 245.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 282.

understanding” and his discourse at the last supper “belongs to the gift of wisdom.”³⁸ Jesus’ mission was inaugurated by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him (Mt 3:16-17) and beyond that point, “the Holy Spirit governed the whole order and economy of the actions of Jesus Christ in general, and each action in particular.”³⁹ Lallemand also encourages his reader to have a great reverence to the gospels since the Holy Spirit has spoken through Jesus “in the most perfect and clearest manner. We ought then to have a most peculiar esteem and affection for the words of our Lord as related in the Gospel.”⁴⁰ In Brouillette’s words, “the life and works of Christ offer a spirit-filled model to our humanity.”⁴¹ Lallemand explains that the more we “attach ourselves to Jesus, the more we advance in perfection.”⁴² A person who truly loves the Lord will be totally transformed by him, so much so that Jesus “will reveal himself without the exterior clothing itself with the perfections of the interior, or rather, the interior grace diffusing itself over the body.”⁴³

In his *Spiritual Doctrine*, Lallemand “details the multifaceted agency of the Holy Spirit in a way that Ignatius does not.”⁴⁴ Besides guiding us in doing God’s will,” the Holy Spirit exercises the office of comforter to faithful souls.”⁴⁵ Lallemand mentions the three things the Holy Spirit comforts us in: the assurance of our salvation, the temptations of the devil, and

³⁸ Ibid., 146.

³⁹ Ibid., 244.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 262.

⁴¹ Brouillette, “Embracing the Spirit,” 414.

⁴² Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 261.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Brouillette, “Embracing the Spirit,” 404.

⁴⁵ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 139.

our distress on earth while we live absent from God.⁴⁶ If we are guided by the Holy Spirit, we “shall rejoice in the liberty of the children of God.”⁴⁷ Therefore, the Holy Spirit makes us free and not slaves to the whims of the world. The Holy Spirit is the bestower of his gifts and fruits. Lallemand has been criticised for relying heavily on Thomas Aquinas when he explains in detail each gift, its corresponding beatitude and the fruits.⁴⁸ Here a few examples to illustrate the similarity of thought between the two writers. Lallemand states that the theological virtues:

hold first rank, because they have direct reference to God, and unite us immediately to him. The gifts of the Holy Spirit come next because they are, as it were, their fulfilment and serve to make them operate in a more excellent manner.⁴⁹

Aquinas says:

Man’s primary union comes about through faith, hope and charity. Hence these virtues are presupposed by the gifts, as a sort of root from which the gifts spring. Hence all the gifts pertain to these three virtues as derivations from them.⁵⁰

Lallemand points out that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are “habits or permanent qualities which God communicates to the soul ... to fortify the natural powers and to render them responsive to the movements of His Divine Spirit.”⁵¹

Similarly, Aquinas comments, “The gifts are *habitus* that perfect man so that he will follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit readily.”⁵²

Lallemand describes the gifts as follows:

⁴⁶ Ibid., 139-140.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 245.

⁴⁸ Bartok, “Louis Lallemand and his *Doctrine Spirituelle*,” 128.

⁴⁹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 141.

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, STh 1, Questio 68, art. 4.

⁵¹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 142.

⁵² Aquinas, STh 1, questio 68, art. 4.

The gift of understanding is given us that we may penetrate more intimately into the truths of faith; the gift of wisdom, that we may perceive their causes and their fitnesses; the gift of knowledge, that we may judge correctly of human things; the gift of counsel, to direct the actions of a lively faith; the gifts of piety, fortitude, and fear, to bring the appetite into harmony with the reason illuminated with so many lights; piety, to soften our harshness towards others; fortitude, to strengthen us against our own weaknesses and cowardice; fear, to repress our pride and the irregularities of concupiscence.⁵³

Aquinas explains:

In view of apprehension (which pertains to discovery), speculative reason is perfected by understanding, and practical reason by counsel. In view of right judgement, speculative reason is perfected by wisdom, and practical reason by knowledge. The appetitive faculty, on the other hand, in regard to matters pertaining to other person, is perfect by piety; in regard to those which involve the self alone, it is protected against the dread of dangers by fortitude against the inordinate longing for pleasurable things by fear.⁵⁴

In order to safeguard himself against any accusations of Calvinism when speaking about the Holy Spirit, Lallemand lists four objections and four replies.⁵⁵ He seems to be imitating Aquinas in this as well. Lallemand treats each gift in detail as he does each fruit. It is interesting to note that he connects a saint with each particular gift. He does so, according to Brouillette, for the benefit “of interiorisation and empowerment.”⁵⁶

What is original in Lallemand’s pneumatology, according to Cardinal John Colombo, is that contemplation is “an act of those supernatural habits which are called gifts of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁷ Colombo points out that “here we are at one of the most characteristic points of the *Spiritual Doctrine*: the relationship between the gifts and mysticism. It is openly taught that

⁵³ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 142.

⁵⁴ Aquinas, STh 1, questio 68, art. 4.

⁵⁵ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 128.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 307.

gifts cultivated with fidelity and fervour lead the soul to infused contemplation.”⁵⁸ Therefore, when the gifts have reached the fullness in a pure soul, such a soul will receive the gift of infused contemplation. Lallemand compares those souls who have yet to experience abundantly the gifts of the Holy Spirit to sailors who “advance by dint of oars against the wind and tide.”⁵⁹ They have not received the gift of contemplation because they are still entangled in venial sins. However, once they have obtained purity of heart and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they will feel themselves speeding “with full sail, with the wind at their stern” towards perfection and, consequently, contemplation.⁶⁰

3.4 Contemplation

As has been pointed out, Lallemand’s seventh and final principle of his *Spiritual Doctrine* is dedicated to the order and degrees of the spiritual life. Cardinal Colombo explains that “at the time of Lallemand the classification of mystical states introduced by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, so simple and so appropriate, had not yet imposed itself on all theologians, and various opinions circulated on the way to order the contemplative experiences.”⁶¹ In fact, Lallemand gives many examples from “mystical theologians” as to how to describe the degrees of contemplation.⁶² He is vague as to who these mystical theologians are and only mentions Richard of St. Victor by name. Could it be he is erring on the side of caution so as not to be accused of being too mystical? Lallemand gives a very brief and distinct

⁵⁸ John Colombo, Cardinal, *Introduction to the Spiritual Doctrine by Louis Lallemand* (Milan: Ancora, 1984), 31.

⁵⁹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 145.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Colombo, *Introduction to the Spiritual Doctrine*, 32.

⁶² See Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 312-321.

description of his own degrees of contemplation. He divides contemplation into ordinary and extraordinary. He states:

Ordinary contemplation is a supernatural habit, by which God raises the powers of the soul to sublime knowledge and illuminations, lofty sentiments and spiritual tastes, when he no longer finds in the soul such sins, passions, affections, cares, as prevent the communications he would make to it. [...] There is another higher kind of contemplation, which consists in raptures, ecstasies, visions and other extraordinary effects. The former leads to this.⁶³

In the above description lies Lallemand's central thought: the purer we are, the more we can receive God's gift of himself to us, that is union with him.

Lallemand's students comment, "Father Louis Lallemand speaks of prayer in general, and of three sorts of prayer in particular, which belong to the three degrees of the spiritual life, and he enlarges most on that of the perfect."⁶⁴ This shows that interiority and contemplation were close to his heart and he wished to impart that love to his students. In his advice, he again insists that prayer helps us in aligning our will to that of God's. He says, "In prayer our only object ought to be, to perfect the will, and not merely to become more enlightened."⁶⁵ Doing God's will is the fruit of a holy life.

Lallemand describes contemplation as "true wisdom," as some saints had done before him.⁶⁶ In one of his sermons on the *Canticles*, Bernard of Clairvaux preaches, "Contemplation of the intellect is a sweet and familiar contemplation of things heavenly, intellectual and divine, in which are drunk with pleasure deep draughts of the hidden and sacred meanings of

⁶³ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 298-299.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 295.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.

truths and wisdom.”⁶⁷ Teresa of Avila, also commenting on the *Song of Songs*, compares the fruits of contemplation to a nursing infant. Just as an infant receives nourishing milk, so does a soul receive wisdom without seeing its source, since God is the agent:

An infant doesn't understand how it grows nor does it know how it gets its milk [...]. Likewise, here, the soul is completely ignorant. It knows neither how nor from where that great blessing came to it. It knows that the blessing is the greatest that can be tested in life. It is instructed in great truths without seeing the Master who teaches it.⁶⁸

As we have already seen, Lallemand was concerned with activism among his confreres and he relentlessly addresses the issue. He asserts that “contemplation, far from hindering zeal for souls, on the contrary, augments it.”⁶⁹ The reason being that someone would have experienced the joys of contemplation, would want to save souls so that they will enjoy heavenly bliss too. Contemplation also increases virtue such as love and penance.⁷⁰ Jan van Ruusbroec describes it beautifully as he compares our life to a spiritual tabernacle which increases virtue:

And therefore, if we want to experience and feel that God has taken possession of our inmost being, and we of him in return, [...] for love into God must be so heavy that it passes through a createdness, and neither seeks nor finds rest anywhere but in God alone. Then our bare understanding is penetrated by simple truth, as the air by the sun. And all our inmost being is penetrated by the love of God, as iron by fire. And thus, we find the realm of God within us. And out of this realm we are moved to justice and to all virtues. For love cannot be idle, but the Spirit of God moves heart and senses and all the faculties of the soul and drives us out into every exercise of virtue, and makes us a spiritual tabernacle [...]. And thus we become a worthy

⁶⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on the Canticle*, xxxv.2, quoted in Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism*, 104.

⁶⁸ Teresa of Avila, “Conceptions of Love of God”, in *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, trans. E. Allison Peers (London : Sheed and Ward, 1946), 384-5.

⁶⁹ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 304.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 303.

offering to God with all our works. And this is how we become virtuous and fixed in every exercise of virtue.⁷¹

The saints, who had experienced contemplation, all describe it, as Lallemand does, as a “foretaste of paradise” where the soul experiences “extraordinary delight.”⁷² Guigo the Carthusian describes contemplation as “when the mind is in some sort lifted up to God and held above itself, so that it tastes the joys of everlasting sweetness.”⁷³ Teresa of Avila describes the joy of contemplation as intoxication by delight. She says, “While the prayer of quiet lasts, the soul is so intoxicated with delight and joy that there no longer seems anything left to long for.”⁷⁴ St. Augustine too says the joy is so extraordinary that it is indescribable. He comments:

The soul in contemplation will arrive at that most high and secret reward for sake of which it has so laboured; and in which are such joys, such a full enjoyment of the highest and truest good such a breath of serenity and eternity, as are indescribable.⁷⁵

Lallemand asserts that “contemplation proceeds from love, and tends to love [...]. Love is its principle, its exercise and its term.”⁷⁶ It could be no other way since we contemplate God who is love. Lallemand describes contemplation and prayer of union as being the best suited “to the perfect who are in the unitive life.”⁷⁷ After such an eulogy on contemplation, many will

⁷¹ Jan van Ruusbroec as quoted in Rob Faesen, “Mystical Theology and its relevance for Today’s Theology: Some Historical Observations,” *Religions* 13, n. 6 (2022): 8.

⁷² Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 322.

⁷³ Guigo the Carthusian, *Ladder of Monks*, as quoted in “Mystical Theology and its relevance for Today’s Theology,” 5.

⁷⁴ Teresa of Avila, *Way of Perfection*, (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2009), 128-9.

⁷⁵ Augustine of Hippo, “De Quantitate. Animae 76”, quoted in Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism*, 35.

⁷⁶ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 307.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 297.

strive to achieve perfection. Lallemand gives a word of warning to both directors and directees. He tells directors that two extremes must be avoided, either by giving credence too easily to those who would imitate the saints and think they are enjoying “extraordinary favours”⁷⁸ or by not believing those who truly are contemplatives. St. Ignatius gives us the answer to be able to differentiate between the two. He tells us that if there is an increase in faith, hope and love, then the person is truly in union with the Lord.⁷⁹

Such union with the Lord happens “after a long cultivation of purity of heart,”⁸⁰ claims Lallemand. It is God himself who bestows this gift of his presence within souls. Lallemand says, “In vain do we labour to have this sense of the presence of God unless he himself bestows it upon us.”⁸¹ We receive this grace from God, which, once again Lallemand insists, “is the fruit of great purity of heart, and leads the soul to close union with God.”⁸² In this, Lallemand echoes the inimitable mystic, St. John of the Cross, who explains that in contemplation, “the soul conducts itself only as the receiver and as one in whom something is being done; God is the giver and the one who works in it, by according spiritual goods in contemplation.”⁸³ Therefore, Lallemand encourages his readers to cultivate purity of heart, to do away with venial sin, to quote St. John of the Cross once again, to “wipe away, O spiritual soul the dust, hairs and stains,”⁸⁴ in order to receive the gift of contemplation.

⁷⁸ Ibid.,94.

⁷⁹ Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #316.

⁸⁰ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 300.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love* in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh,, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodrigues, O.C.D. (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1991), 685-6.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 688.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how Lallemand stresses the importance of interiority and contemplation, especially if we are occupied with our apostolate, whatever it may be. He asserts that prayer aids rather than hinders ministry, as we will be guided by the Holy Spirit if we are people of prayer. Our ministry will be pure and not self-seeking and will be in imitation of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who spent many years in contemplation before he preached the Good News. We are to be led by the Holy Spirit if we wish to grow in perfection and must endeavour to become docile to his guidance. Jesus Christ left us his Spirit to console and guide us. Lallemand's pneumatology encourages us to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in order to attain perfection. It is the Spirit's gifts that will speed us on the road to purity of heart, thus enabling us to be receptive of God's manifestation in our soul.

Chapter 4

The *Spiritual Doctrine* as a Model for Spiritual Direction

4.1 Introduction

Though spiritual direction is the safe place where one can share one's experience of the transcendence or the desire for it, spiritual directors need to remember that spiritual direction is not an interaction between two people, but between three, as there is the presence of the Holy Spirit who is the true director. The Holy Spirit is the Interior Master, the teacher of the interior life, who shows the way, and not the spiritual director. In his book, *Grace Can Do More*, Andre Louf relates a personal memory of the day he was appointed abbot, to emphasise this point. During the ceremony, the Bishop of Lille read out a short excerpt, part of which said, "A director, if he is full of the Spirit of God, never goes before grace in anything. He only follows it patiently, step by step [...]"¹ The Bishop then turned to Louf and affectionately but very wisely told him, "Of course, you would do very well, but grace can do more."² Lallemand too gives us similar advice through his *Spiritual Doctrine* that grace can indeed do more, that is, when one is open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, both in the one directing and the one being directed. In this chapter, Lallemand's teaching on the docility to the Holy Spirit will be applied to spiritual direction. The hindrances to acquiring interiority will also be explored for it is interiority that leads people to being guided by the Holy Spirit in

¹ Andre Louf, *Grace Can Do More*, trans. Susan Van Winkle (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2002), ix.

² Ibid.

union with God. Lastly, the seemingly dichotomy between action and contemplation will be analysed.

4.2 Acquiring Interiority

Spiritual directors, therefore, too need to heed Lallemand's teaching of docility to the Holy Spirit. Lallemand advises:

The person best fitted to guide others, and to give counsel in what concerns the things of God, are those who, possessed of a pure conscience and a soul free from passion and detached from every interest, [...] are closely united to God by prayer, and yield a humble submission to the movements of the Holy Spirit.³

Andre Louf says that the director must "have received the inner sensitivity to let him recognise the action of God in another person. It very often happens that God is urging the one directed in a direction different from the director's direction."⁴ St. Ignatius also advises the spiritual director to allow God to inspire and guide the person. He writes, "Accordingly, the one giving the Exercises ought to allow the Creator to deal immediately with the creature and the creature with its Creator and Lord."⁵ Gregory the Great too gives spiritual directors some very good advice, for spiritual direction is a delicate ministry. "What rashness it is for the unprepared to give pastoral guidance, since the government of souls is the art of arts."⁶

St. John of the Cross has harsh words for those directors who are not sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or have no experience themselves in contemplation especially at the advanced states. He writes:

³ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 174.

⁴ Louf, *Grace Can Do More*, 25.

⁵ Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, #15.

⁶ Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis* 1.1 quoted in gLeech, *Soul Friend*, 45.

It is of great importance for the soul that desires to profit, and not fall back, to consider in whose hands it is placing itself: for as is the master, so will be the disciple [...]. A guide might even do the soul great harm if, not himself understanding the way of the spirit he should cause the soul, as often happens, to lose the unction of these delicate ointments, wherewith the Holy Spirit gradually prepares it for himself.⁷

Lallemant too is stern with spiritual directors who do not understand the advanced stages of contemplation. He advises spiritual directors to discern wisely between false and true contemplation in their directees. He writes:

Two extremes must be avoided in the direction of spiritual persons. One is, the giving too easy credence to souls who, from reading the marvellous operations of grace in the Saints, at feeling the least sensible sweetness, imagine they are already being favoured with the like. Dangerous vanity! The other is the keeping minds down too low, and never allowing them to rise to the height of perfection to which God calls them. There are directors who will not listen to any mention of contemplation, or heavenly visitations, or extraordinary favours. Illusion most prejudicial to the advancement of souls!⁸

Spiritual directors indeed need to be united to God in prayer for, as Louf states, “It is in prayer that the director can recognise the Spirit of God dwelling within him, which will make him sensitive to the same spirit in his directees.”⁹

One of the purposes of spiritual direction is to help people achieve union with God. This may be possible for people who live in a monastery where the atmosphere is conducive to silence and contemplation, but is it possible for the layman and laywoman, living in an ever-rushed world? Lallemant answers with a resounding yes, for union with God is possible for all those who are guided by the Holy Spirit. Lallemant terms it as “the second conversion – by which we devote ourselves entirely to perfection.”¹⁰ Lallemant

⁷ John of the Cross, “Living Flame of Love,” in *Collected Works*, 684.

⁸ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 94.

⁹ Louf, *Grace Can Do More*, 23.

¹⁰ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 83.

exhorts us to “seek God by prayer,”¹¹ especially since “we shall pass the rest of our days in the employments of the exterior life.”¹² For union with God can only be received through prayer. Pope Francis tells us that “the Spirit is given to us by the Father and leads us back to the Father.”¹³

4.2.1 The Mystic Within Us

Saint Bernard asserts that we would not seek God unless we have found him in some manner, for it is God “who has communicated himself to us first, in some hidden but real way.”¹⁴ Through spiritual direction, the director helps the directee to become more aware of these gentle whisperings of God. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it is not easy to be aware of God’s presence. Richard Rohr defines a mystic “who has moved from mere belief systems or belonging systems to actual inner experience.”¹⁵ This is the second conversion that Lallemant talks about, union with the Lord. Spiritual direction thus helps the directee to be open to this experience. Joseph Tetlow S.J. states that spiritual directors need to assess, during the initial meetings, whether those seeking direction have accepted the truth that they are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in them.”¹⁶ Tetlow calls this “a basic spiritual experience and the person will display a

¹¹ Ibid., 85.

¹² Ibid., 83.

¹³ Pope Francis, *Homily during the Mass on the Solemnity of Pentecost*, Rome 15 May 2016.

¹⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God*, trans. Robert Walton (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1973), 40 quoted in Bamberger, “Spiritual Accompaniment,” 417.

¹⁵ Richard Rohr, *The Naked Now* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2009), 29-30.

¹⁶ Joseph Tetlow S.J. *Handing on the Fire Making Spiritual Direction Ignatian* (Boston College: Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies, 2021), 55.

certain serenity of spirit.”¹⁷ By virtue of our baptism, we have received the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis frequently reminds us of this fact and tells us that celebrating our baptismal day is even more important than celebrating our birthday “because it is the date of our rebirth as children of God, [...] of our adherence to Jesus.”¹⁸ Thomas Keating asserts that every Christian, by virtue of baptism, “has the vocation to oneness with the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹ It is not enough to be baptised though. We need to continue nurturing our souls. According to Bamberger, “Achieving the full stature of maturity in Christ is an ongoing movement, a growth in the spirit of Jesus.”²⁰ This maturity is not a straightforward path, hence the advice of the spiritual masters to have a spiritual director. Bamberger says this maturity means leaving the familiar behind as we are led by the Spirit.²¹ It is this letting go of the familiar that one may find difficult. Lallemand explains that the risk needs to be taken in order to be fulfilled. He knows human nature very well. He comments, “We bargain with ourselves to let go of that which we are unwilling to strip ourselves in order to put ourselves in that perfect nudity of spirit which disposes us to being fully possessed by God.”²² This letting go, this second conversion, this contemplative dimension in one’s life, explains Rohr, “is never instant nor can it be achieved by one’s intellect or trying harder.”²³ Union with God “is given

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Pope Francis, *Angelus*, Rome 10 January 2016.

¹⁹ Keating, *Heart of the World*, 12.

²⁰ Bamberger, “Spiritual Accompaniment,” 415.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 48.

²³ Rohr, *The Naked Now*, 63.

and not taken, waited for and not demanded, having much more to do with long-term willingness than mere wilfulness.²⁴ Lallemand laments that union with God is never arrived at “as we fight against God for whole years, and resist the movement of his grace.”²⁵ It is the fear of letting go that “makes us continue in our misery instead of giving ourselves fully to God, who desires to possess us, only to set us free from our miseries.”²⁶ Therefore, since we cling to our imperfect ways, we prevent God from truly dwelling within us, thus never fully experiencing the freedom of being totally his.

4.2.2 Open to Grace

Keating says that the best way to be open to grace is to be present to God in loving silence, the way St. John of the Cross prescribes. This is how St. John of the Cross explains this particular prayer for those who wish to advance in contemplation:

They should proceed only with a loving attention to God, without asking specific acts. They should conduct themselves passively, without efforts, of their own but with the simple, loving awareness, as when opening one’s eyes with loving attention. Since God then as the giver communes with individuals through a simple, loving knowledge, they also, as the receivers, commune with God through a simple and loving knowledge or attention.²⁷

In this way, Keating states, “we become better instruments to bring about our gradual transformation into Christ.”²⁸ It is in this silence, Keating concludes “that the infused virtues

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 49.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ St. John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, Stanza III, 33-34, in *Collected Works*, 686.

²⁸ Keating, *Heart of the World*, 51.

and gifts of the Spirit are greatly strengthened and developed.”²⁹ However, he observes that interior silence does not come easy to Western modern man. He comments:

In the West, the analytical approach to knowledge has been pushed to its utmost limits. It has produced wonderful advances in science. But when it comes to prayer and interior silence, Western man is somewhat embarrassed and ill at ease.³⁰

Ronald Rolheiser has a similar view about modern man. He points out the difference between a contemplative and non-contemplative mind:

In opposition to the contemplative whose sense of mystery allows his or her unlimited questioning and possibilities for answers, the non-contemplative questions and examines only in so far as the known empirical possibilities allow [...]. For the non-contemplative mind, there is only one set of rules for reality, one metaphysics. In such a perspective, there is less reason to contemplate simply because we believe that we already essentially know what there is to know. If there is a God, we already know all about him.³¹

It benefits a spiritual director to be aware of such attitudes as sometimes they can be unconscious ones, hardwired into modern man. Western culture encourages self-sufficiency and independence. These attitudes can all lead to resistance on the part of the directee. Lallemand complains about his contemporaries’ resistance to the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

We do great wrong to God in two ways. First, in that we confess, with truth, that we have need of the Holy Spirit and of his assistance, and yet take from him the direction of our soul, and wish to manage his graces our own way, without depending on his holy guidance both in the use of them and in the conduct of our interior life. This is to usurp the rights of the Holy Spirit, and to arrogate to ourselves his office for to him alone it belongs to guide souls. Secondly, in that our inmost soul being destined for God only, we fill it with creatures to his prejudice; and instead of dilating and enlarging it indefinitely by the presence of God, we straiten it exceedingly by occupying it with a few wretched nonentities. This is what prevents our attaining to perfection.³²

²⁹ Ibid., 52.

³⁰ Ibid., 50.

³¹ Ronald Rolheiser, *The Shattered Lantern* (U.K.: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1994), 48.

³² Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 138-9.

Lallemant's contemporaries too, like modern Western man, seem to rely on self-sufficiency. Why is it that a directee resists the Holy Spirit when he knows full well that his happiness lies in being guided by him? Thomas Merton calls this resistance "the false self."³³ We put on masks and fool ourselves thinking it "is a free and creative way of living."³⁴ Merton lists all that feeds this false self – power, experiences, honour, knowledge.³⁵ Lallemant laments that "mankind is full of endless deceit. We disguise ourselves habitually from ourselves and from others."³⁶ Unfortunately, it is only at the end of our life that we realise that we are nothing but "hollow (and) our own mistake."³⁷ Chilling words indeed. Lallemant warns the reader not to waste his life by occupying it "with a few wretched nonentities."³⁸ He writes:

Creatures desire to take the place of our last end, and we ourselves more than all, we desire to be our own last end. [...] Creatures call to us on all sides, and promise to satisfy us. All their promises, however, are but lies; and yet we are ever ready to let ourselves be cheated. [...] We seize upon every manner of thing, without being able to satisfy ourselves with any. [...] Let us seek God; He only can satisfy all our desire. [...] Everything creatures give us serves only to increase our emptiness. Now we do not feel it. [...] At the hour of death, we shall know how miserably we have let ourselves be deceived and deluded by creatures. We shall be astounded that for things so low and vile we should have been willing to lose that which is so great and precious.³⁹

Perfection, or holiness, lies in being our true selves, the self we were created to be, united with God and living in him. Contemplation "is the greater and more precious gift"⁴⁰

³³ Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (U.K.: Burns & Oates, 1962), 33.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁶ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 49.

³⁷ Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, 34.

³⁸ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 224.

³⁹ Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 38-9.

⁴⁰ Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, 34.

where we allow God to reveal himself to us, where we find our true selves as children of God. Pope Francis describes humanity as orphans if we do not allow God to dwell within us.

He says:

The gift of the Holy Spirit frees us from the condition of being orphans into which we had fallen. In our own day also we see various signs of our being orphans: in the interior loneliness which we feel even when we are surrounded by people, a loneliness which can become an existential sadness: in the attempt to be free of God, even if accompanied by a desire for his presence.⁴¹

Resisting God, even while desiring his presence, is a timeless problem. Gerald May points out that “the human mind is an endless source of inventiveness when it comes to avoiding the implications of spiritual experience.”⁴² This resistance is “an unconscious force that works *against* the graced growth of the directee.”⁴³ That the directee may be resisting the very graces that he is seeking seems to be odd. However, resistance is very common, asserts May, “when God draws close and the directee finds a way to flee.”⁴⁴ This is caused by fear on the part of the directee. May continues to explain, “The directee may fear the implications of this experience, that he may have to die to self.”⁴⁵ It is the fear that Lallemand spoke about earlier, a fear of letting go, of choosing to be miserable rather than risk being happy. It is “a fear of fully living,”⁴⁶ concludes May.

⁴¹ Pope Francis *Homily during the Mass on the Solemnity of Pentecost*, Rome 15 May 2016.

⁴² Gerald G. May, *Care of Mind Care of Spirit* (New York: Harper One, 1982), 125.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

4.3 Contemplation and Action

William Barry and William Connolly's often quoted definition of spiritual accompaniment is full of wisdom:

We define Christian spiritual direction as help given by one Christian to another which enables that a person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God and to live out the consequences of the relationship.⁴⁷

Spiritual directors help their directees to live a Christian life, with Christ's values. There is no dichotomy between prayer and action. Lallemand describes St. Ignatius as one "who excelled equally in the active life and in the contemplative."⁴⁸ In true Ignatian fashion, Lallemand asserts that contemplation assists our activity. He says, "Without a solid devotion and a close familiarity with God, we cannot carry on our functions nor discharge them properly."⁴⁹ Action has its basis in contemplation. This is what it means to be a contemplative in action, that is, a contemplative attitude permeates all that one does, or rather, is. The director helps the directee to seek to love as God loves and to act as God acts. David Coghlan S.J. explains that the concept of the cycle of praying and doing is attributed to Jerome Nadal, a close associate of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Nadal "spoke of the necessity of returning often to prayer and of realising a circular movement passing from prayer to action and from action back to prayer."⁵⁰ It was also Nadal who coined the term "a contemplative in action" to describe St. Ignatius. Nadal writes:

[...] and this besides, that in all things, actions and conversation he (St. Ignatius) contemplated the presence of God and experienced the reality of spiritual things,

⁴⁷ William Barry and William Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (San Francisco: Harper, 1986), 8.

⁴⁸ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 64.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁵⁰ David Coghlan, "Seeking God in all Things: Ignatian Spirituality as Action Research", *The Way* 43, no. 1 (2004): 100.

so that he was a contemplative likewise in action (a thing which he used to express by saying: God must be found in everything).⁵¹

The Catholic Tradition had long since found it difficult to reconcile prayer and activity.

Commenting on the story of Martha and Mary, St. Augustine, for instance, says:

Martha's part is holy and great: yet Mary hath chosen the better part, in that while her sister was solicitous and working and caring for many things, she was at leisure and sat still and listened. Mary's part will not be taken from her, Martha's will – for the ministering to the saints will pass away; to whom will food be given where none hungers?⁵²

Teresa of Avila rebutted this separation between action and contemplation. With her characteristic wise humour, she writes to her sisters:

Believe me, both Martha and Mary must entertain our Lord and keep him as their guest, nor must they be so inhospitable as to offer him no food. How can Mary do this while she sits at his feet, if her sister does not help her? His food is that in every possible way we should draw souls to him so that they may be saved and may praise him for ever.⁵³

Therefore, great spiritual masters, such as Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Avila, saw contemplation and action as “one divine grace.”⁵⁴ In Lallemand's teaching, there is no separation between the two either. His advice describes a contemplative in action:

We must observe that our life ought to be a mixture of action and contemplation in such wise that the former may be animated, directed, and ordered by the latter; that among the exterior works of the active life, we may always enjoy the interior repose of the contemplative; and that our employment may not hinder our union with God, but rather serve to bind us more closely and more lovingly to him; making us embrace them in him by contemplation, and in our neighbour by action.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² St. Augustine, *Sermon clxxix*, quoted in Emma Shackle, *Christian Mysticism*, ed. Edward Yarnold S.J. (Dublin and Cork: The Mercier Press, 1978), 16.

⁵³ Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, ed. and trans. E. Allison Peers (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1946), 165-6.

⁵⁴ Peter Hans Kolvenbach, “On the Effectiveness of the Spiritual Exercises” in *The Road From La Storta*, ed. Carl F. Starkloff (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Resources, 2000), 196-7 quoted in Koghlan, “Seeing God in All Things”, 100.

⁵⁵ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 166-7.

Spiritual direction helps in achieving this oneness between prayer and action. There is no place for the false self here as the directee lives out the gospel values in his life.

4.4 Conclusion

Spiritual direction is the safe place for directees to tell their story, how God is acting in their lives. As we have seen, an experience of God is not as unusual or as uncommon, even in those who may not consider themselves religious or spiritual. On the other hand, our modern culture does not encourage interiority and directees tend to resist, misinterpret, or even miss out entirely the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual directors are there to listen, encourage and accompany, but it is the Holy Spirit who is the Interior Master, as Lallemand often reminds us throughout his *Spiritual Doctrine*. Lallemand, together with other spiritual masters, strongly advise spiritual directors to be on a spiritual journey themselves, otherwise they can do great harm to their directees. The true Christian, then, is one whose life flows seamlessly between prayer and action.

Conclusion

The Contemporary Mystic

It has been claimed that, through his *Spiritual Doctrine*, Lallemand opened mysticism to everyone at a time when it was believed that mysticism was only for a select few.¹ Yet, Thomas Keating states that an experience of God is quite common in people, even in those who are not church-goers.² Many people, explains Keating, enjoy moments of interior silence and peace. They simply do not know how to articulate that experience. They may also be unable to explain the source of that peace.³

Karl Rahner famously said, “The devout Christian of the future will either be a mystic, or he will cease to be anything at all.”⁴ Rahner explains that since God is totally self-giving to all, we all “have an immediate, pre-conceptual experience of God through the experience of our limitless breadth of our consciousness.”⁵ Whether we acknowledge or negate this experience of God is a different matter, yet this presence of God within us cannot be denied. Rahner states, “In every human being [...] there is something like an anonymous, unthematic, perhaps repressed, basic experience of being oriented to God [...] which can be repressed but not destroyed, which is ‘mystical’.”⁶ This orientation towards God has been echoed in Lallemand’s opening sentence of his *Spiritual Doctrine* “that we have a void in our heart that

¹ Colombo, *Introduction to the Spiritual Doctrine*, 34.

² Thomas Keating, *The Heart of the World* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ Harvey D. Egan, “Karl Rahner and His Mystical Theology” in *A Companion to Jesuit Mysticism*, 317.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁶ *Ibid.*

only God can fill.”⁷ Lallemand asserts that “everything tends to love and proceeds from love.”⁸ Rahner agrees with Lallemand that it is love of God and neighbour that will unite us to God, the ‘perfection’ that Lallemand speaks about. Rahner continues, “If we live moderately, selflessly, honestly, courageously and in silent service to others,”⁹ we will experience God. Spiritual direction helps us see God working in our everyday experiences.¹⁰

The Way Forward

Why is it that as baptised Christians we tend to shy away from being receptive to a felt presence of God? Quite a number of decades have passed since Rahner’s statement concerning the future Christian. Have we come any closer to experiencing God’s indwelling spirit within us? Spiritual direction, as we have seen, is the safe place to share such experiences and desires. However, a wider conceptual framework which enables all Christians to have and articulate their experiences of transcendence is needed. Thomas Keating suggests that the Church itself be that conceptual framework where “the Christian religion must be presented as a process of spiritual growth, an interior evolution toward eternal values which are to be experienced to an extraordinary degree here and now.”¹¹ Keating points out that “many Christians are unaware of the fact that their own tradition is rich in spirituality and mystical wisdom.”¹² Christians need not leave their church in search of transcendence. They

⁷ Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

⁹ Egan, “Karl Rahner and His Mystical Theology,” 313.

¹⁰ The examen of consciousness is the daily prayer that is encouraged by St. Ignatius as a daily practice in order to become aware of God’s presence in one’s daily life.

¹¹ Thomas Keating, *The Heart of the World*, (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, 61.

need to be made aware that God is within them and that their own tradition can help them sharpen that awareness.

Lallemant is a person who was aware of this rich tradition and sought to pass it on through his *Spiritual Doctrine*. His doctrine is an antidote to all the ills of modern culture, to idolatry of money, success, image, busyness, to mention but a few. The tension between the spiritual and the secular, grace and nature, surrender and control will always be with us. This dissertation attempted to show that Louis Lallemant's teaching is an invitation to all Christians who truly wish to live in union with God. This union is possible even in our rushed modern world. By using Lallemant's teachings, spiritual directors can truly help directees experience union with God by being guided by the Holy Spirit and become the mystical Christians that Rahner speaks about. Lallemant's *Spiritual Doctrine* poses a challenge to all Christians, especially those wishing to grow in their spiritual life. It challenges one to question how open one is to being docile to the Holy Spirit. The *Spiritual Doctrine* is certainly a challenge for the intrepid Christian who is willing to let go and be enveloped by the Spirit.

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