This essay aims at a fitting adaptation to the changed conditions of our times of that relation between conscience and obedience in a particular kind of Religious, the Jesuit. Originally designed for a Jesuit audience, this essay has been left largely in its original form because its author claims no qualifying experience with the distinctive charisms of obedience in other religious congregations. Yet he invites non-Jesuit readers to discover just where their prayerful discernment of their own distinctive charism points them to concur with, or to dissent from the following three styles of obedience adapted to different situations.

Since the '60s, however, the term "obedience" has become a dirty word for many. This is a symptom of a problem underlying our central aim; namely, the reconciliation of two facts. First, faith shows us Christians that, true to his promise, Christ guides and guards His church, particularly his popes and bishops. Yet a painful church history documents many abuses of church authority, often by these hierarchs. Hence, if this essay on obedience overlooks the historical reality of abuses of authority, it will become too idealistic.

Furthermore, Vatican II called Religious simultaneously to return to the original inspiration of their Founders as well as to make fitting adaptations to the changed conditions of our times. Hence, we begin this essay by examining that "sinner beloved by God," Ignatius of Loyola. On his pilgrimage of obedience he had many face to face encounters with sinful people and institutions both in and beyond the church.
IGNATIUS’ PRACTICE OF OBEEDIENCE

I come from German ancestors who believed in a largely vertical style of obedience and also practiced it. So, when I first met Ignatius’ story in the novitiate, I was shocked. My novice reading of the life and letters of Ignatius revealed a man who from my perspective seemed to disobey almost as frequently as he obeyed. Puzzled, I asked how he came to be known as the “father of obedience.”

As a novice, I could overlook Ignatius’ pre-conversion experiences of law-breaking as the worldly part of his life. Nevertheless, his violent attack — not without provocation — against the parish clergy of Azpeitia in 1515 hardly seemed to me a promising cradle for a future “father of obedience.”¹ Nor did it help that he tried to escape civil prosecution for this crime by claiming speciously that he enjoyed clerical immunity because he had been tonsured years earlier.

It was the post-conversion Ignatius, however, that bothered me more. Looking for the man of obedience in action, I was in for some surprises. For instance, I watched Ignatius in Jerusalem resisting Franciscan superiors so much that they had to threaten him with excommunication unless he left the Holy Land. Furthermore, to verify the site of the Ascension, he readily broke the Franciscans’ rules for pilgrims by twice scampering off on his own and bribing Moslem guards to achieve his goal. By disobeying in this way, did he not endanger the opportunities of future pilgrim groups?

Later in Alcalá, when church officials instructed Ignatius that he could not continue speaking of matters of faith until he had studied four more years, he voided their order by leaving their jurisdiction. Then in Salamanca where he spoke of the things of God, Ignatius was again imprisoned and examined for possible heresy by church judges. In acquitting him, they allowed him to help souls but not to the extent of determining mortal from venial sins. Ignatius later described his way of obeying:

The pilgrim said that he would do everything the sentence ordered,

but that he would not accept it because, without condemning him for anything, they closed his mouth so that he could not help his neighbors insofar as he was able.²

Ignatius' dissent and protest gave me pause. When in Paris, Venice, and Rome, Ignatius repeatedly refused to take the mere sign of the will of the church superiors as an adequate sign of God's will for him. Instead, my reading showed him often refusing to go along with their preferences.³ To secure public commendation of himself and his companions as well as of the Exercises, he repeatedly pushed unwillingly officials in Venice and Rome to go further than they wished by insisting that they produce written, officially notarized documents. For instance, at Rome in 1538, when libelous rumors turned into a hurricane of gossip that threatened to destroy his as yet unfounded Company, Ignatius, going personally to the city governor and to the papal legate, asked for a verdict. Once the gathered evidence cleared Ignatius' band of reformed priests, the legate ordered that this quarrel be suppressed in silence. Ignatius resisted — obstat, says the Latin document — wanting a written definition of the hearing made public.⁴ This pleased neither the legate nor the governor nor those who had previously favored Ignatius. So he betook himself to Frascati for a private talk with the pope himself and thus won a papal decision that a verdict be published in favor of these reformed priests. Nevertheless, backdoor politics at the papal curia stymied the execution of this decision. Ignatius did not accept this turn of events as something God called him to accept. Instead he again went to the pope and eventually secured a published document that favored his Spiritual Exercises and his reformed priests.

Regarding the background to Ignatius' drafting of the Formula of the Institute around 1539, I gradually learned of the nepotism, venality, and sexual immorality of all the popes who were

⁴ Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu 66 (Rome: MHSJ, 1960), Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola, 1:503; hereafter MHSJ and FN, respectively.
Ignatius’s contemporaries, except the briefly reigning “good pope Marcellus.” Ignatius, who had been a soldier, a pilgrim, and recently a Roman citizen, knew about these scandals in the papacy. Yet he believed that, despite these obstacles and especially through the leadership of Peter’s successors, the Holy Spirit guided the Church as Christ wanted. Confronting this bleak fifty year historical record of a general lack of papal upright, and able to surmise what a hostile Cardinal Carafa might do to his Company if elected pope, Ignatius pressed to the utmost his faith in the operative Presence of Christ’s Holy Spirit in the Church. Regarded humanly, the facts said a vow to the popes was foolishness; regarded with faith in Christ and His Spirit, such a vow made ultimate sense. Here was Iñigo’s neuralgic point.

So, at the heart of the Formula of his Institute he actually penned a requirement that all his companions vow to popes of the present and future a special obedience regarding missions, despite the fact that most popes he had known had been morally defective. So great was his faith in the Spirit whom he wanted to obey and trust, no matter though which rusty pipe She might mainly breathe!

Soon, when Ignatius sought papal approval for the Formula of his Institute, Cardinal Guidiccioni knew that the Councils of Lateran IV and Lyons had prohibited any new religious orders. So he raised objections against Ignatius’ request, especially because of the startling novelties it contained. My novice eyes opened wide on finding that in response Ignatius was convinced that for him God’s will lay well beyond conciliar prohibitions of several centuries earlier. He ordered that more than three thousand Masses be offered to win papal approval of his new order. It came more than eight months later in the form of Paul III’s Regimini militantis ecclesiae.

Long after my days as a novice and after Vatican II, I read in detail about Ignatius’ election as General. I became aghast at his tooth and nail opposition. To me, he at first seemed too self-assured, indocile, and disrespectful of the way of proceeding which he and his companions had agreed upon and followed for over six years during their communal deliberations. Although all ten First Fathers submitted their votes, only six could gather in Rome for this election. There in the middle of Lent, 1541, they
prayed in complete silence for three days, then spent three more begging God to confirm their individual votings. They opened the ballots to find that all had voted for Ignatius — except Ignatius who, after excluding himself, had given his vote to whomever the majority elected. Although he had voted to follow the majority view, he now resisted their unanimous vote. He offered them his reasons: he preferred to be ruled, felt unable even to rule himself, and knew his wretched sinfulness.

He called them to three more days of prayer and another election in order to gain more clarity. Reluctantly concurring, the other five founding Fathers with him soon again elected Ignatius unanimously. Again he resisted their communal sign of God’s will and ordered another triduum of further prayer. They signalled that he seemed to be standing in God’s way.

As his next move to gain still further clarity, he decided to put the matter in the hands of his spiritual director, Fr. Theodosio, O.F.M. If, after hearing Ignatius’ general confession, Theodosio “commanded him in the place of Christ our Lord or in His name gave his opinion,” then Ignatius, having made an offering of himself, would not in any way deviate from Theodosio’s directive, once he knew it involved no sin, “even if the pope ordered him to the contrary.” After a three-day confession of his whole life to Theodosio, the latter informed Ignatius that he seemed to be resisting the Holy Spirit. Still not satisfied, Ignatius asked Theodosio to pray further on the matter and thereafter to set down his view in a letter to the companions. At long last, when the letter was finally read in the presence of all of them, Ignatius finally capitulated. He set aside his previous tenaciously held individual discernment in favor of adopting his community’s discernment of God’s will for him.

Here Ignatius certainly experienced tension between his conscience and obedience. He felt conflict between his two processes of discernment as well as between his various values. These latter included God’s greater glory, the good of souls, the greater service of Christ and His Spouse, docility to the Spirit who holds sway in the Church, the Pope’s power to command, the spiritual director’s command or counsel in Christ’s name, the clear un-

5. FN 1:15-22, 208-9; Osuna, Friends, 136-38.
nimity of his much loved companions, and especially Ignatius’ conscience, which by grace convinced him of his own sinfulness and thus let him foresee its disordered effects on the Society if he were elected General.

Ignatius’ willingness to counter even the pope’s directive if Theodosio discerned that the Spirit called him in a different way clearly reveals Ignatius’ hierarchy of values (or causes) and his gradated loyalties to them. In his more intensely loving loyalty to Christ, the Church, and its Spirit, Ignatius passionately willed to avoid harming these “more dearly beloveds,” even if it meant opposing the pope. Few instances more clearly reveal an obedience of loyal opposition to his brethren, to his spiritual father, and even to the pope. For here Ignatius with genuine loyalty preferred the conscience of the truth-seeking individual, the internal forum over the external, and especially the greater good of souls wherein lies God’s greater glory.

Even as a novice, I had already discovered through instructions and further readings one zone where Ignatius resisted church superiors adamantly. When popes and their curias wanted to make bishops or cardinals of his men — LeJay, Borgia, Laynez, Canisius, and others — Ignatius became a Missouri mule. In effect, he set Rome upside down to get what he so tenaciously knew was more for the good of the Church and Society in their help of souls.6

Ignatius’ final surprise for me came with his August 1554 behavior towards Jesuit scholastic, Octaviano Caesari, whose mother, a member of the nobility, wanted her son living at a place near herself. Influenced by Octaviano’s mother, the pope assigned a papal commission to adjudicate the disagreement between this woman and Ignatius on where Octaviano was to live. The papal commission delegated its work exclusively into the hands of the redoubtable Cardinal Carafa. He directed Ignatius to station Octaviano near his mother at Naples. Perhaps sensing a vocation in peril, Ignatius resisted strongly, stating that “in good conscience he could not and should not concur” with

6. For fuller detail on these and other cases of Ignatius’ obedience of loyal opposition, see John Padberg, “Ignatius, the Popes, and Realistic Reverence,” Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits 25/3 (May 1993) 1-38.
the directive of the papal commission.\textsuperscript{7}

In short, even though the list I eventually compiled of Ignatius' obediences became longer, my accompanying list of his disobediences grew to more than two dozen instances. This made me wonder and inquire how he discerned the Spirit as he responded so differently to the different kinds of authority he met during his converted life. Clearly he adapted each of his styles of obeying to different kinds of situations.

THREE STYLES OF OBEDIENCE

My researches into Ignatius' Constitutions during tertianship and later have unveiled a highly nuanced Ignatian doctrine on styles of obedience. These surpassed by far that style of blind obedience which had been canonized for us novices in what tradition had labeled as The Letter on Obedience.\textsuperscript{8} Later I came to see how the intent of both superior and members to build a community of united hearts and minds for the greater aid of souls becomes indispensable in Jesuit obedience. More than this, however, I noticed how resolutely Ignatius demanded in his constitutional legislation that superiors and members alike resist papal assignments of ecclesiastical dignities. And in his letters, Ignatius acknowledged that his good conscience made him resist the papal commission's monitorium in the 1554 case of Octaviano Caesari.

After Vatican II, I discovered that the heart of obedience lies hidden in its etymological roots — ob-audire, meaning "to listen in spite of obstacles." Eventually, my spectrum of the diverse responses of Ignatius after 1521 to persons in authority led me to decipher three levels of obstacles. These obstacles might: (a) be none or minimal, (b) call for further clarification with superiors, or (c) be very high, made so by a good conscience. These different levels of obstacles called Ignatius to three different ways

\textsuperscript{7} For details of the case, see Padberg, "Ignatius, the Popes," 28-30. Having chosen to go to Naples, Caesari soon left the Society.

\textsuperscript{8} On March 26, 1553, Ignatius directed this perhaps too renowned letter to Jesuits in Portugal, to meet the peak of an emergency situation there. See Letters of Ignatius of Loyola, trans. Wm. J. Young, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959) 287-95, and John Futrell, Making an Apostolic Community of Love (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970) esp. Appendix II.
or styles of obeying as found in his deeds and in his teaching. Following Ignatius' lead, I tentatively identified three distinguishable styles of obedience in Ignatius and generalized them as follows:

a) obedience in ordinary situations, found in most cases: Here superior and member experience prudential certainty on the basic goodness of the directive and here a Jesuit promptly and whole-heartedly carries it out. Into such a directive the Jesuit invests his full execution as well as his will and intellect. This accords with the widely published traditional doctrine of Ignatius.

b) obedience of mutual search: found when a member finds it wiser to manifest more fully his conscience and reasons to the superior so that both of them may jointly seek for a clearer discernment of God's will for this member.

c) obedience of loyal opposition, found in rare situations and suited to them: these are situations in which the superior's directive orders nothing manifestly sinful but where one's conscience is convinced that the superior has not fully faced up to the demands of promoting a greater unity and apostolic service in the Church and the Society. Here one does all he can to bring the superiors to so review the entire problematic situation that they revise their directive. This style of obedience perdures until the pope or papal commission or other superior absolutely compels one to obey under pain of sin.

Re-examining Ignatius' post-conversion cases described above, I found that in most of them he obeyed with loyal opposition. It also became clear that obedience of loyal opposition fit extreme cases only.

What situations, then, call for this third style of obedience? Within his firm faith that in Christ and the Church only one Spirit holds sway which governs and rules for the salvation of souls,¹⁰

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9. Curiously, romance languages have no terms to connote effectively what Anglo-Saxons mean by "loyal opposition." Hence, many Latins tend to view instances of it as "disloyalty" or even "insubordination." Cardinal Karol Wojtyla nurtured an obedience of loyal opposition when in The Acting Person (Boston: D. Reidel, 1979) he wrote: "The structure of a human community is correct only if it admits not just the presence of a justified opposition, but also that effectiveness of the opposition which is required by the common good and the right of participation" (p. 343).

10. Spiritual Exercises, no. 365.
Ignatius discerned through his deeds and writings the following ingredients which call for this "third style of obedience."

1. good conscience keeps one from agreeing wholeheartedly with a superior's directive which is not clearly sinful;
2. one sees a serious threat to a basic good of the Church or of the Society;
3. one's apostolic freedom to aid souls seems to be closed arbitrarily.

TWENTIETH CENTURY WITNESSES

We leave Ignatius, a man immersed in the culture and attitudes of his day, to focus on today's radically changed conditions. We aim to adapt fittingly the relation of conscience and obedience in a present-day Jesuit to our conditions at the threshold of the twenty-first century. As a stimulus to your own orientation to these conditions, I invite you to walk with me as I recall my entry into at least some of them.

I remember how hushed our Jesuit refectory became during my days as a scholastic when *Humani generis* was read. I also recall how *Humanae vitae* created a storm of protest during my early priesthood. Between these two memories, however, stands that exhilarating remembrance of reading the 1959 headline, "Pope calls World Council!" During the sixties I also felt new breezes coming into the Church through windows opened by Vatican II.

During my first two decades in the Society (1942-1962), fellow Jesuits occasionally mentioned the Church's disciplinary actions in the cases of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, John Courtney Murray, and Karl Rahner. But not until the euphoria of Vatican II had passed, did this message of "Shut up or get out!" strike closer home. Today the lengthening list of names sounds a sad litany. Jesuit Fathers Drinan, Mc'Neill, Cardenal, Sobrino, and Callaghan, along with theologians like Edward Schillebeeckx, Leonardo Boff, Charles Curran, and others have come under scrutiny and, in some cases, been excluded from the Society or from teaching about certain areas. They responded differently. Surely after coming under official church scrutiny, they all felt tension mounting between their consciences and obedience. Often this tension
reached the point of anguished conflict. So, do we describe their diverse responses more truthfully by calling some of them obedient, others disobedient, or using some other term? Perhaps if we recall a bit of the stories of Teilhard de Chardin, John Courtney Murray, and Karl Rahner, we can sharpen our focus on this sometimes anguished relation between conscience and obedience in these Jesuits and thus come to see it better during crisis times in the lives of dedicated Religious.

Most know that in 1924 censors both in and beyond the Society of Jesus so criticized Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s views on evolution with their tight theological implications that he was required to cease teaching in France. Going into exile for decades, Teilhard carried out further anthropological research in Africa and especially in China. He pointed the essays resulting from this research into forming his masterwork, The Phenomenon of Man. Superiors in and beyond the Society would not allow this book to be published before his death in 1955. When arch-conservative clerics in Rome measured both the novelties and spreading influence of this work, they persuaded the Holy See to issue a monitum on June 30, 1962, forbidding any seminarian to read it or any other Teilhardian writings. To have the best insights of his scholarship judged poisonous to his beloved Church throughout most of his adult life created no small tension between Teilhard’s conscience and his commitment to obey. Yet believing that the Spirit guides the church, he accepted this silencing.

As a theological pioneer in the theory of Church-State relations, John Courtney Murray encountered strong public opposition from those trying to maintain the traditional view: Msgr. Joseph Fenton at the Catholic University of America and Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, head of the Holy Office in Rome. The controversy grew until 1955 when Murray was ordered through the Jesuit curia to abandon any further writing on Church-State matters and to accept strict censorship of any other writing he might do. Murray’s documented biography by Bishop Donald Pelotte clearly reveals the growing strain put upon Murray’s conscience and his desire to obey. 11 Soon in the selection of periti

for Commission-members at Vatican II, Cardinal Tardini excluded those lacking a curial mind-set — for instance, Murray. By the time of the second session, however, Murray accompanied Cardinal Spellman to the Council as his peritus. Nevertheless, in the Spring of 1963, at the urging of Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Vagnozzi, John Courtney Murray, along with Godfrey Dieckmann, Gustave Weigel and Hans Küng, was forbidden to lecture at the Catholic University of America.

At first, Karl Rahner was also “disinvited” from Vatican II, until a group of German bishops strongly objected to this tactic of the Roman curia. During many previous years Cardinal Ottaviani had “affectionately” assigned to Rahner a “special censor” under the condition of Rahner’s not being able to write otherwise. When Ottaviani personally informed him of this privileged arrangement, Rahner replied, “Your Eminence, I renounce privileges.”

About twenty years later, when looking back on this censorship, Rahner said, “In the old days a Catholic theologian did not get as worked up about this sort of thing as one does today.” Again when asked about his own “ecclesiastically independent authority,” he attributed it to “my attempt to argue cogently regarding whatever matter is at hand. . . . Besides, I haven’t completely avoided being a bit courageous in church affairs.” Yet in the wintry season of the eighties he revealed how concerned he was about the closing of the windows opened at Vatican II. He witnessed:

I believe that there are indeed undesirable tendencies abroad, which is natural enough, of a restorative, conservative, or even perhaps reactionary sort, and that they can and should be overcome with time, but by and large the development that began with the Second Vatican Council cannot be reversed.

12. Ibid. 108, n. 28. Chenu, Congar, Danielou, de Lubac, John L. Mckenzie, and both Rahners were also excluded at the start.

The struggles of these three Jesuits and those of others alert us to what Murray would call the neuralgic point in the relation of conscience and obedience in a Jesuit. It becomes the central question we face in this article: How are a Jesuit's Christian conscience and his religious obedience mutually and concretely related? At a harmlessly general level, our response will recommend that a Jesuit's full self-gift to Christ, Church, Pope, and Society calls him responsibly to discern the circumstances in order to discover the style of obedience these call for. More concretely, we turn to look at three fictitious cases of tensed relations between conscience and obedience in a Jesuit. By examining these cases within a presupposed sense of their context and then by offering tentative solutions to them, we can sense some of the ingredients needed in any modestly satisfactory approach to our central question.

THREE CASE STUDIES

1) Rahner’s Principal. Near the close of a research into obedience,14 Karl Rahner proposed the following fictitious example which illustrates our problem:

A higher superior instructs the principal of a boarding school that he must under all circumstances make the boys go to confession once a week. Let us suppose that the subordinate, in this case the principal of the boarding school, clearly realizes what the superior in his idealistic remoteness cannot comprehend, namely that such a demand will eventually prove very harmful to the spiritual life of his charges. Question: have we here merely an inept pedagogical practice, which must be "carried out" because commanded, or have we in fact an innocent but unjustified demand which, since it is actually a serious threat to the genuine spiritual development of these youths, should not be carried out by the subordinate? The very ineptness of the practice offends against moral principles. Must the subject now declare that he cannot square it with his

conscience, and ask to be relieved of his office?  
... Do we avoid talking about such possibilities out of fear of evils produced by the conscientious objector, and so act as if something of this kind practically never occurs? But is not the consequent evil caused to conscience greater than the utility of a frictionless functioning of external government requiring of subjects a literal obedience to commands?

In this case, Rahner’s own concluding questions suggest a helpful direction. If the principal recognizes that the practice of forcing boys to confession offends against moral principles, his conscience must lead him, in loyalty to the greater good, to manifest his conscience to his higher superior (and beyond, if necessary). If that fails to alter the directive, his loyalty must lead him to adopt the obedience style of loyal opposition, as Ignatius did in extreme instances. Ultimately, he may be relieved of his office but that is less costly than corrupting the moral life of his own conscience and that of his students by *just* carrying out orders.\(^{15}\)

2) An *Ordinand’s Assignment* to long-term ministry. As his ordination approaches, a Jesuit scholastic confers with his Formation Director about the long-term ministry assignment which he will enter after ordination. For several years previously they have discussed this question. His homework done, the Director knows several factors. The ordinand desires to teach — and preferably to teach at the undergraduate level. He has achieved an above average but not outstanding academic record. His teachers disagreed in recommending him for higher education. The Province has many pressing needs. The new social ministries as well as the universities are clamoring for young Jesuits.

After a heart to heart talk with the young man, the Director indicates that a better wedding of the ordinand’s talents and Province needs lies in something other than higher education. Very likely he will be missioned into some social ministry. So

15. If the principal only doubts whether the practice offends moral principles, he should seek sound moral advice from a competent source. If the principal is not bothered by the instruction of the higher superior, the Society is in “a bad way” unless other Jesuits in the school offset the principal’s insensitivity by serving as struggling mediators who use manifestation of conscience to the full.
he directs the ordinand to examine various possibilities in that field.

Although the Director's reasons seemed sound, the ordinand, on leaving the conference room, feels uneasy. He recalls no prayerful atmosphere in the present and previous conferences. He wonders whether the Director's expectations of future university teachers are unrealistically high? Or was the Director trying to shield the ordinand from probable failure in doctoral studies? Should the ordinand's conscience allow him to accept the Director's decision? Is it wiser to accept the assignment as a more reasonable interpretation of God's will for him? If so, in what sense?

These questions suggest directions for further searching out a solution. Let us suppose the Formation Director arrived at a misinterpretation. Then, if the ordinand felt no uneasiness about being assigned away from higher education, Providence will lead him (through the direction given in the assignment and through his own genuine loyal deeds in fulfilling it) to his fuller growth and ministerial fruitfulness in the Society.

In the case as given, however, the ordinand sensed that his series of conferences with the Formation Director lacked some needed element. Hence, he needs either to put the case more clearly to the Formation Director or take it to the Provincial (or to his consultors for their advice to him), or to a higher superior, or serially to all three. For, most significantly, interpretation is always a process — often a process long drawn-out until an operable, God-pleasing, and mutually growth-promoting directive is truly found. Nevertheless, if the missing element is not identified, then, since sinful humans' skills of interpretation here fail more than usually, Providence with its power enters in more especially — a power that shows itself most in its compassionate mercy.16

3) Editor at America. In the Church of the '90s, the undesirable tendencies of a restorative sort, described above by Rahner, have led the Vatican to require that theological investigations into questions of sexual morality be treated only in moral theological journals of the highest level. Let us suppose that the Jesuit curia

in Rome, having been asked by the Vatican for full cooperation, has required its American Assistant to write to the editor of America. The letter directs the editor not to publish anything on such matters.

Should the editor employ obedience of loyal opposition? Which goods are at stake — for the People of God, for the renewal of moral theology mandated by Vatican II, for the credibility of a Church which claims that faith and truth-seeking cannot be contradictory since both come from the same Author? Is the directive essentially a disciplinary directive and to be obeyed merely as such — to avoid the appearance of divided teachers? Does the scope of the editor’s Fourth Vow to do “whatever His Holiness [the pope] shall command relating to the progress of souls and the propagation of the Faith” embrace the present directive?

After much prayer and consultation with moral periti, this editor needs to recognize not only the three kinds of authority — charismatic, hierarchical, and pluralistic — which Christ wanted in His People but also the indispensable role of this People’s reception of various authoritative directives in the Church. He also needs to recognize, with Rahner, that hierarchical authority cannot and should not control everything in the Church. The Holy Spirit’s will to promote the greater unity and growth of the whole Church constitutes a far higher and more effective Authority. The editor may get confirmation on the present-day efficacy of public opinion in the Church by examining whether more good for the whole Church was effected by a group of European theologians who “went public” with their Cologne Statement or by a group of European Jesuits who channeled their dissenting message to the papal curia privately. Certainly the editor knows


18. On the limitations of authority, especially of hierarchical authority, Karl Rahner wrote in “A Basic Ignatian Concept”: “There is in the world a plurality of forces which can in no way be hierarchically subject to authority — though such forces cannot contradict authority as far as the latter succeeds in bringing them within the field of direction and command. This latter task . . . can and should be only partially achieved. Hence the subject in religious life has no right simply to take refuge behind obedience, as if he could thus be free from a responsibility which he himself must bear, the responsible direction of his own personal initiative” (p. 157).
that contemporary public opinion in the Church and mass media pressures are factors Ignatius did not have to consider in his discernments. While sensitive to small-souled folk who take scandal upon hearing of any discord in the Church, the editor needs to weigh the advantages offered to many others when they see a healthy diversity of opinion flourishing in the Church. Certainly he needs to weigh this case individually and avoid any a priori solutions of it. He may profit from studying how Ghandi’s case-by-case flexible handling of non-violent protests contrasts with the attitude of some hard-line proponents of non-violent civil disobedience. These latter tend to refuse to bother with the unique circumstances of a new case and thus to examine whether in this instance they might be backing their opponent into a corner, or be refusing to compromise on procedures and details. I leave this case, however, to the editor and his counsel, with my hopes that their privy knowledge of its unique circumstances will lead them to a more prudent determination of it than I might risk.

CONCLUSION

So much of the way we integrate conscience and the legitimate claims of various authorities depends upon the effects that our culture works upon our consciousness. For instance, contrast St. Ignatius and St. Thomas More (1478-1535), two contemporaries, eminent for their devotion to the papal primacy. Having focused on Ignatius, let us hear a word from England’s former Lord Chancellor. His attitude towards the pope and style of obeying differed from Ignatius’ yet remained Catholic to the heroic end. A year before his martyrdom (because of his professed faith in the pope’s primacy in spiritual matters), Sir Thomas More wrote to Master Thomas Cromwell:

... [Since] all Christendom is one corps [body], I cannot perceive how any member thereof may without the common assent of the body depart from the common head. ... [Yet] in the next general council it may well happen that this Pope may be deposed and another substituted in his room [place] with whom the King’s Highness [Henry VIII] may be very well content; for albeit that I have
for mine own part such opinion of the pope’s primacy as I have showed you, yet never thought I the Pope above the general council [of the Church] nor ... advanced greatly the Pope’s authority.¹⁹

A tone of countervailing powers in the church, of courtesy, practicality, and conciliarity, along with a tenacious faith in the pope’s headship characterize More’s style of obedience. He embodied it even to the last full measure of devotion. This contrast of Ignatius and More may offer background for our closing diptych.

In our day, Frs. Pedro Arrupe and Peter-Hans Kolvenbach have shown styles of relating to the pope which contrast in affective attitudes and practices. Somewhat like the elderly Paul VI, John Paul II also felt, shortly after his election, somewhat uneasy about the Society of Jesus because of certain reported deviant tendencies in it.²⁰ Although John Paul II had forestalled any easy access by Fr. Arrupe and refused his request for retirement, the pope veiled his reservations about the Society with a courteous Romanità that may have covered some passive aggression. Fr. Arrupe, placed in this situation and in accord with his Basque sense of expressing a deep and loving reverence for the Holy Father, wished that a picture of himself genuflecting before John Paul II and receiving the pope’s blessing be on display in every Jesuit house. This was his style of showing devotion to the pope.

According to widespread reports, one factor leading to Fr. Kolvenbach’s election as General was his discerning adroitness in dealing amicably yet realistically with the many sharply divided and warring parties in Lebanon. When visiting Jesuits in New Orleans, he reported that currently about once every six weeks he sits alone with Pope John Paul II at the papal dinner table and engages with him in careful and fruitful dialogue. Of course, this dialogue has its moments when both recognize differences of opinion. Here, as I see it, Fr. Kolvenbach both practices his


²⁰. See Document of the 33rd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1984) 77-84, esp. nos. 2 and 7, with 44-45, no. 8.
own keen form of obedience — "listening in spite of obstacles" — and shows a most genuinely loyal attitude towards the successor of Peter. If differences are brought into the open, he does so — no longer with the primitive brusqueness of Paul confronting Peter (Gal 2:11) — but with that discreetly charitable shrewdness of one brother in counsel with another heavily burdened brother.

As one muses prayerfully over these two diversely inculturated attitudes and styles of obedience towards the petrine vicar of Christ — both that of Ignatius and More and that of Frs. Arrupe and Kolvenbach — one may ask where, at least according to our Anglo-Saxon perspective, lies the more realistic reverence.