

Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education

Volume 36

Article 27

10-1-2010

Book Reviews: Ignatius in the Town Square. George W. Traub, S.J., editor, *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader*, Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008

Edward Kinerk, S.J.

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations>

Recommended Citation

Kinerk, S.J., Edward (2009) "Book Reviews: Ignatius in the Town Square. George W. Traub, S.J., editor, *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader*, Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*: Vol. 36, Article 27.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations/vol36/iss1/27>

Ignatius in the Town Square

An Ignatian Spirituality Reader, Edited by George W. Traub, S.J.

Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008. 290 pp. \$18.95

By Edward Kinerk, S.J.

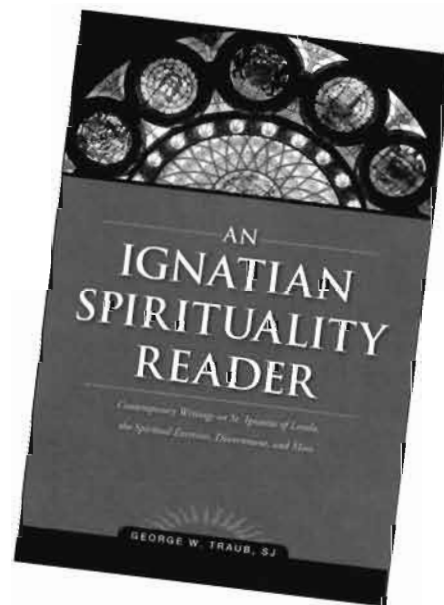
Within a very short period of time Ignatian spirituality, faithful to its roots, jumped the cloistered walls and entered the town square. From the men and women who work in Jesuit institutions to increasing numbers from other religions, the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola has gained extraordinary purchase among those who lead active lives in the world. Not only are the majority of people making the Spiritual Exercises now lay people, but these same active men and women are also guiding others through the Exercises.

The phenomenon should not surprise us. Ignatius was a layman when he underwent the profound experiences which ground his spirituality, and within a few years of his encounter with God at Manresa he began to direct others, mostly laity, first in Spain and later in Paris. For his Exercises he sought out not those who lived in cloister or monastery but rather those who were actively involved in the world around them. His most successful early retreatants were fellow students at the

University of Paris. Furthermore, Ignatius viewed flexibility to be a rule and not an exception. One of the most effective general adaptations of his Exercises was to stretch them out over a six to nine month period of time. This approach, known today as the 19th Annotation Retreat or the Retreat in Daily Life, has offered countless opportunities to those who cannot possibly take a month away and who need to remain active at work and home.

Like any spirituality, Ignatian spirituality will be gleaned more through experience than study. Reading the text, *The Spiritual Exercises*, is a bit like reading a cook book. No matter how great the chef, gastronomic ecstasy may come from savoring the morsels but never from scanning the recipe. The book of the Exercises is intended to help the helper; it provides a list of suggestions and possibilities for the person guiding someone else through the Exercises.

Nonetheless, it is important to name and understand our experience, and much has been written on Ignatian spirituality. Some books and articles are written more for those directing others, a broadening of the book of the Exercises itself. Other books and articles are written to help those who have tasted Ignatian spir-



ity to appreciate it more, and to attract others who might be interested. *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader* will serve all these groups well.

Father George W. Traub, S.J. is presently a professor of theology and Executive Director of Ignatian Programs/Mission and Identity at Xavier University. He has a rich background in Ignatian spirituality and has earlier published a companion volume to this one, *A Jesuit Education Reader* (Loyola Press, 2008). As a director of mission and identity at a Jesuit university, Father Traub has produced in both *Readers* the tools he needs for his work, and these are always the best kind.

Book Review



Canisius College.

His selection of articles is excellent and the layout quite helpful. After an interesting introductory article, which grabs our attention by noting that the U. S. Episcopal Church has added Ignatius to its liturgical calendar, the editor guides the reader through clusters of articles on Ignatius's life, Finding God in All Things, Prayer, the Spiritual Exercises, Discernment, and the Theology to Support the Spirituality. Each section is preceded by a brief introduction giving a short precis of the articles and concludes with an excellent bibliography for further reading. Although every article or section can be read independently, the sequencing of articles will aid those whose time and preferences allow them to read the book from front to back. Finally, Traub supplies an appendix, "Do You Speak Ignatian?: A Glossary of Terms Used in Ignatian and Jesuit Circles." The appendix is a republication of his own work and will be helpful even to those who are already familiar with the topics. In his introduction to the section on Finding God in All Things, Traub cites Howard Gray, S.J., who analyzed Jesuit spirituality and came up

with three progressive themes: attention (to the world around us), reverence (appreciation for what we attend to), and devotion (experience of God). Each article unveils some aspect or aspects of how this progression from attention to reverence to devotion occurs and what markers to look for along the way.

T

he final article stands out from the others in that it is less on Ignatian spirituality than God, Christianity, and Catholic education. "Living Conversations: Higher Education in a Catholic Context" is essentially the talk Father Michael Himes gave to six special gatherings of faculty from the

Western Jesuit universities. He also gave the talk at the Heartland Conference, a meeting of faculty and staff from the eleven Midwestern Jesuit Colleges and Universities. So, it is a reasonable guess that many readers of this publication will have heard Himes's talk. Even so, they should read it again. This is perhaps the best short presentation on God, Christianity, and Catholic education to be found anywhere.

An Ignatian Spirituality Reader is a fine book, very useful for those working in Jesuit Colleges and Universities. It will also serve anyone interested in Ignatian spirituality, indeed anyone seeking to deepen his/her relationship with God in a busy world. Finally, it is a terrific book for Jesuits to deepen their own understanding of trying to find God in all things. ■

Edward E. Kinerk, S.J., former Missouri Province provincial and president of Rockhurst College, is administrator of the Sacred Heart Jesuit Retreat House in Sedalia, Colorado.