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## Cura Personalis: the Incarnational Heart of Jesuit Education

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## ***Cura Personalis:* The Incarnational Heart of Jesuit Education**

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### **Abstract**

*Cura personalis* is one of the distinctive characteristics of Jesuit education, but the precise meaning of this phrase can sometimes be difficult to discern. Often translated as “care or education of the whole person,” the expansiveness of its formulations can lead to an overlooking of what should be central: the care of a person in their full personhood *and* a reminder of the person’s ultimate end. To understand *cura personalis* in a way that retains its distinctive character, I propose a return to Ignatius of Loyola himself, focusing especially on the importance of the Incarnation. I maintain that the Incarnation is indispensable for understanding *cura personalis* and that it indicates certain practical applications.

One of the hallmarks of Jesuit education is *cura personalis*. Often translated as “care or education of the whole person,” the precise meaning of this phrase can sometimes be difficult to discern. “What does this mean?” asks one Jesuit institution. They answer:

It means that the university is committed not just to your academic achievement, but also your mental and physical health, your spiritual growth, and your development as a citizen of the world. All of our faculty, staff, coaches and other representatives you meet will consider you as a *whole person*, which we believe fosters a healthy and vibrant university community.<sup>1</sup>

Another university reminds their students that “[y]ou’re more than a mind. You’re an individual with unique talents, dreams, and passions” and explains that the “long-held Jesuit tradition of *cura personalis* means a profound care and responsibility for one another, attentive to each person’s circumstances and concerns and gifts.”<sup>2</sup> Another university understands the education of the whole person to be “a simultaneous process of information, formation, and transformation.”<sup>3</sup> Yet another maintains that “[t]his Latin term means ‘care for the individual person’ and describes respect for the dignity of each person as a child of God. It leads to the teacher involving the student in the process of learning and expressing personal

care for each individual” which “translates to learning through contact, not just concepts: first-hand experience, service-learning, outreach.”<sup>4</sup> *Cura personalis*, of course, is not limited to Jesuit universities. As one high school reminds us, this care is “common to all Jesuit educational institutions.” It is, indeed, an essential feature of the Jesuit approach not only to education but to their ministry itself.<sup>5</sup>

While I do not wish to suggest that the holistic developments of the person as just described are mistaken, one might reasonably ask how such views are distinctively Jesuit.<sup>6</sup> The concern, for example, “to foster your moral, emotional and spiritual growth” and “take our responsibility for your well-being and safety very seriously” is surely not unique to Jesuit institutions, let alone Catholic ones.<sup>7</sup> At times, even, *cura personalis* seems to be reduced, in practice, to a concern with resource accessibility.<sup>8</sup> Despite the pervasiveness of *cura personalis*, then, its meaning can be nebulous. Too often, it seems, the various formulations of this characteristic run the risk of diminishing what should be distinctive.<sup>9</sup> Holistic care for the person is surely not limited to Jesuit practices (a similar yet non-religious formulation, for instance, can be found in the “Model Code of Ethics” of the *National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification*) and so the question remains: how is *cura personalis* distinctive? To understand *cura personalis* in a way that retains its distinctive character, I propose a return to

Ignatius of Loyola himself, focusing especially on the importance of the Incarnation. I maintain that the Incarnation is indispensable for understanding what *cura personalis* ultimately calls us to and that it indicates certain practical applications, especially concerning in-person instruction. This return to the Incarnation is not foreign to Jesuit education. In the 1993 document from the Society of Jesus, “Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach,” the authors state that realizing the expansive goal of Jesuit education

requires a full and deeper formation of the human person, an educational process of formation that calls for excellence—a striving to excel, to achieve one’s potential—that encompasses the intellectual, the academic, and more. It calls for a human excellence modelled on Christ of the Gospels, *an excellence that reflects the mystery and reality of the Incarnation*, an excellence that reveres the dignity of all people as well as the holiness of all creation.<sup>10</sup>

In the present study, consequently, I propose a *cura personalis* that reflects the mystery and reality of the Incarnation. First, I will consider the meaning of a *cura personalis* informed by the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius.<sup>11</sup> Second, I will investigate the meaning of the Incarnation, focusing on certain aspects of special relevance to Jesuit educational practices. Third, I will consider how Jesuit education and *cura personalis* have the distinctive character of being “incarnational.” In this last section, I will offer some practical and eschatological reflections on *cura personalis* as “incarnational education.”

### ***Cura Personalis***

Some attempt has been made to distill the essential elements of *cura personalis* as embodied in Jesuit institutions. For instance, Barton Geger, S.J. has identified three features:

The first is holistic education that attends to the spiritual and moral dimensions of a person in addition to his or her intellectual development. Second, *cura personalis* denotes an education that is respectful of the unique needs and

identity of each student. Finally, it can signify the duty of administrators and Jesuit superiors to show solicitude for individuals working in their institutions, in contradistinction to *cura apostolica*, which signifies their duty to show solicitude for the good of the institutions as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

Despite this delineation, Geger admits that “[i]f we seek a precise meaning to *cura personalis*, no single definition can be claimed definitive.”<sup>13</sup> The first explicit formulation of *cura personalis* is credited to Wladimir Ledóchowski, the twenty-sixth Jesuit Superior General.<sup>14</sup> In 1934 he issued a “New Instruction” to Jesuits in the United States concerning the characteristics of Jesuit education. Ledóchowski issued this letter “in the hope that it will initiate a new era, as it were, of fruitful activity in the field of Jesuit education in the United States, and, among other things, supply that central direction for which many of Ours have been asking so earnestly.”<sup>15</sup> Though these instructions were given to guide the formation of members of the Society of Jesus, one can discern in this document some general characteristics of Jesuit education. In this document, he reminded us that the end of Jesuit education is “to bring students to closer knowledge and love of God.”<sup>16</sup> To this end, he identified four elements of Jesuit education: a grounding in religious instruction, training in scholastic philosophy, a method of teaching that concerns not only erudition but the whole person, and *cura personalis*. While having different foci, these elements are intended to be taken in tandem with one another. *Cura personalis* is thus situated within a religious and academic context but insists that instructors be solicitous about the whole person. Formulations of *cura personalis*, though, often seem to conflate these last two elements, such that *cura personalis* is identical with care of the whole person.

Ledóchowski’s reminder that instructors be solicitous of the whole person is consonant with Ignatius’ own insistence that care of the person must consider the personal experience and character of the individual. But, to guard against a mistaken subjectivity, Ignatius also insisted that “[m]an is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.”<sup>17</sup> This quotation serves, in part, as the “First Principle and Foundation” of his *Spiritual Exercises*.

For Ignatius, “the end” for which “we are created” is not determined by the individual, even though it will be pursued in personal, individual ways. So, one can pursue this end as a single person or as a married person, in a profession, from within a home, or in one of the many and various manifestations of human life which are far too numerous to list here. But the *end* which unites all of these endeavors is, ultimately, transcendent. In determining which actions we should take, Ignatius insists, “[o]ur one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.”<sup>18</sup> This awareness of our end is central to Ignatian spirituality which is, itself, the heart of the Jesuit tradition. It is Ignatius’ insight into our end which, I propose, should inform our understanding of *cura personalis*. The end of the person is ultimately divine: we are created, as human, for union with God.<sup>19</sup>

Though, as we have seen, Geger maintained that there is no one single definition of *cura personalis*, he nonetheless offered guidance for determining what can and cannot be attributed to *cura personalis*: “We must ask whether the application in question runs counter to other Jesuit themes, to Catholic Christian convictions in general, or to common sense.”<sup>20</sup> The mystery of the Incarnation is one of the most important convictions of Catholic Christianity and is central to Jesuit spirituality. Consequently, I maintain, it can and must inform our understanding of *cura personalis* if this care is to remain distinctive.

### The Incarnation

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that “Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith” and that the Incarnation is “the mystery of the wonderful union of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Word.”<sup>21</sup> In his 2016 exhortation, *Amoris laetitia*, Pope Francis, the first Jesuit pope, emphasized the importance and uniqueness of the Incarnation: “The incarnation of the Word in a human family, in Nazareth, by its very newness changed the history of the world.”<sup>22</sup> As he continued, it is in the Incarnation that Christ “assumes human love, purifies it and brings it to fulfilment.”<sup>23</sup> A contemporary concordance of Ignatian spirituality also affirms the importance of this teaching and relates it to the *Spiritual Exercises*:

The Incarnation—belief that God in the person of Jesus “became flesh and pitched his tent among us”—is the central tenet of Christianity. That puts the Incarnation at the heart of Ignatian spirituality as well. Ignatius wanted people to understand the redemptive love that God has for each of us through the person of Jesus. The goal of the *Spiritual Exercises* is to help us encounter the living, breathing Jesus; become his friend; and live in his company. Ignatius believed that God is found in the real and the material as well as the spiritual—indeed, we find God in all things. As we deepen our friendship with God, we become contemplatives in action, who embody Christ and make the Word flesh in our daily toil all for the greater glory of God (*ad majorem Dei gloriam*).<sup>24</sup>

In considering the Incarnation in the present study, I will follow Ignatius’ counsel to rely on “positive and scholastic learning” because the scholastics (among whom he mentions Thomas Aquinas), are suited to “define or explain for our times the things necessary for eternal salvation; and to combat and explain better all errors and all fallacies.”<sup>25</sup> The nature of the Incarnation itself is inexhaustible, so for present purposes I will focus on two aspects of this mystery which offer special guidance for *cura personalis*: namely, the “fittingness” and “necessity” of the Incarnation.

*The Fittingness of the Incarnation.* For Thomas Aquinas (and, of course, Ignatius) the end of human life is union with God. It is in this union that one reaches the state of beatitude. While Thomas grants that there might have been other methods for God to offer this union to humankind, he argues that “the Incarnation of God was the most efficacious assistance to man in his striving for beatitude.”<sup>26</sup> Because of the efficacy of the Incarnation, Thomas maintains, it is fitting that God became man. Thomas focuses on two central reasons for the *fittingness* of the Incarnation: first, on account of human learning; second, on account of the nature of God. Let us consider each in turn.

First, while there is a sense in which all creatures are called to union with God, there is a unique

character to human beatitude. Namely, that human beings are called to union with God in a way that includes our rationality. God, therefore, became man in order to instruct human beings to their end. As Thomas explains, humans, “to achieve perfect certitude about the truth of faith, had to be instructed by God Himself made man, that man might in the human fashion grasp the divine instruction.”<sup>27</sup> Given the nature of human beings and human learning, then, Thomas concludes that the Incarnation was fitting.

Second, and closely connected to this point, is Thomas’ understanding of the nature of God. As he explains elsewhere,

To each thing, that is befitting which belongs to it by reason of its very nature; thus, to reason befits man, since this belongs to him because he is of a rational nature. But the very nature of God is goodness... Hence, what belongs to the essence of goodness befits God. But it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others... Hence it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature, and this is brought about chiefly by “His so joining created nature to Himself that one Person is made up of these three—the Word, a soul and flesh,” as Augustine says (*De Trin.* xiii). Hence it is manifest that it was fitting that God should become incarnate.<sup>28</sup>

Because God is goodness, and goodness is communicative (that is, it does not remain isolated but instead extends outwards), God wished to communicate in the highest way possible to creatures. Therefore, God becoming man allows God, in goodness, to communicate with His creatures. One thus sees Thomas drawing a connection between the essential goodness of God and the human mode of learning: God, in goodness, speaks to humans as humans.

*The Necessity of the Incarnation.* Never forgetting that God is free (that is, God did not *need* to do anything, let alone assume human nature), Thomas took care to address the supposed “necessity” of the Incarnation. He began by

identifying two different ways that the means towards an end may be necessary: “First, when the end cannot be without it; as food is necessary for the preservation of human life. Secondly, when the end is attained better and more appropriately, as a horse is necessary for a journey.”<sup>29</sup> According to the first way, Thomas maintained that the Incarnation is not necessary because God could have achieved human salvation through other means. Yet, according to the second way, the Incarnation was necessary inasmuch as “there was not a more fitting way of healing our misery.”<sup>30</sup> Thomas’ reasoning for this kind of “necessity” depends on the nature of human beings. Given that we are rational, physical, embodied beings, the restoration of our nature is most fittingly and most efficaciously brought about by a being who is, Himself, incarnate. So, while God *might* have chosen another means of salvation, the most effective way of restoring human nature was through human nature. In other words, through the Incarnation.

Thus, there is a way in which the *fittingness* and *necessity* of the Incarnation go hand-in-hand. It is *fitting*, inasmuch as God wishes to save humankind, that God became man. It was also *necessary* insofar as God-made-man allowed human beings to come to knowledge of God and thereby to attain beatitude. The Incarnation, thus conceived, allows insight into the nature and end of the person. The human being is called, in his or her full humanity, to union with God. The Incarnation is the means by which God offers a bridge over the chasm between God and creatures such that we, as humans, can regain Divine union.

As we have already seen above, greater knowledge and love of God is the heart of Ignatian spirituality and, consequently, must figure in Jesuit education. Now that we have considered, briefly, the meaning of the Incarnation, I would like to suggest two ways that this could inform our understanding of *cura personalis* both practically and eschatologically.

### **Incarnational Education**

Recall, first, that the Incarnation was fitting, among other reasons, because of the nature of human learning. Thomas insists that humans are, essentially, composites of body and soul and that

this composition informs the way we learn.<sup>31</sup> This is not, of course, to suggest that intellection is a corporeal act. But Thomas maintains that humans are *not* constituted only by their intellect and even suggests that sensible knowledge is “in a way the material cause” of intellectual knowledge.<sup>32</sup> For Thomas, in other words, we are not just minds. We rely on our experiences as corporeal, sensible, beings to come to intellectual knowledge. Taking this view of human beings into account, I suggest that in-person, embodied education is a practical implication of the incarnational *cura personalis*. It is in embodied teaching that we, as professors, can communicate the Truth of our discipline to our students in a way appropriate to human nature.

There are, it seems, at least two clear advantages of embodied teaching: first, in-person instruction allows us to communicate with students in an inclusive and holistic manner. In other words, we are able, as whole persons, to instruct not only through our words but our actions as well. Being physically in the presence of our students allows us to communicate as whole beings. Second, in-person instruction allows us to come to know our students better. By “better,” I mean that in-person interactions allow us to come to know our students as whole persons. *Cura personalis* as an attempt to treat students not only as minds but as physical, social, spiritual, whole persons is surely strengthened, for instance, when informed by the non-verbal communication that takes place within classrooms. We are, by nature, embodied beings and our embodiment influences how we learn. The incarnational *cura personalis* strives for educating and caring for the whole person. Embodiment, I suggest, is a critical component to this care.

Despite the importance of embodied instruction, one might at this point object—especially in light of the recent pandemic—that such instruction, while preferable, is not always possible. I do not mean to say that in-person instruction is “necessary” in the sense of “the end cannot be without it” (the most recent academic year has surely taught us that it is possible to educate remotely), nor do I deny the physical well-being of our students as an important element of *cura personalis*. There are circumstances, indeed, in which the well-being of the whole person requires the suspension of embodied instruction (such as

during pandemics, to say nothing of natural disasters or war). As such times, however, it is paramount that we consider how we can still communicate with students as whole persons, the best that we are able, despite these disruptions.

In my practice of *cura personalis* during the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, I prioritized individual online meetings. I was struck by how often one of my students, coming ostensibly for help on coursework, shared the challenges that he or she was facing: physical, mental, spiritual, or social. These various difficulties, of course, at times manifested in my class (students missing assignments, skipping class, not participating, and so forth), but if I had focused only on their *academic* performance it would have been impossible to grasp the root of these problems. Meeting with students frequently in this way—in one semester alone, more than 120 times—was time-consuming but critical for knowing them as whole persons despite the physical distance of the pandemic.

Nonetheless, while sometimes practically impossible, in-person instruction is “necessary” insofar as embodied education allows the end—holistic education of the whole person—to be attained “better and more appropriately.” So, while the shift to remote instruction in the face of a novel and contagious virus was prudentially the right decision, deliberations concerning the resumption of in-person instruction must keep the embodied nature of students at the front. The holistic encounter of persons is the foundation of Jesuit education, and so this embodied modality should remain our ideal.<sup>33</sup>

Second, consideration of the Incarnation entails an eschatological element to *cura personalis*. Catholic Christianity maintains that there are “four last things” for every human being: death, judgment, heaven, or hell.<sup>34</sup> Simply put, we hold that, after death, each person is accountable for their actions and choices. If judged good, then one achieves eternal joy through union with God in heaven. If judged evil, then one is condemned to eternal separation from God in hell.

Ignatius himself identified two ways in which these two final alternatives might be experienced, in a way, in this life: “spiritual consolation” and

“spiritual desolation.” As he explains, consolation is “every increase of hope, faith and charity, and all interior joy which calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one’s soul, quieting it and giving it peace in its Creator and Lord.”<sup>35</sup> Consolation, thus understood, allows us to draw closer to heaven and experience it, in a way, in this life. Desolation, conversely, allows us to experience the alternative. As he continues:

I call desolation all the contrary of [consolation], such as darkness of soul, disturbance in it, movement to things low and earthly, the unquiet of different agitations and temptations, moving to want of confidence, without hope, without love, when one finds oneself all lazy, tepid, sad, and as if separated from his Creator and Lord. Because, as consolation is contrary to desolation, in the same way the thoughts which come from consolation are contrary to the thoughts which come from desolation.<sup>36</sup>

These foretastes of final realities allow us, in this life, to prepare for them. Though perhaps, at times, far from the minds of our students, death and final judgement is an unavoidable feature of the human condition. Ignatius himself kept these realities very much in mind and, indeed, depended on them throughout his *Spiritual Exercises*. In his “rules for election” (that is, rules for making good life decisions), for instance, he exhorts us “to consider, as if I were at the point of death, the form and measure which I would then want to have kept in the way of the present election” and even to consider “how I shall find myself on the Day of Judgment, to think how I would then want to have deliberated about the present matter, and to take now the rule which I would then wish to have kept, in order that I may then find myself in entire pleasure and joy.”<sup>37</sup>

The person, for Ignatius, does not exist only *here* and *now*. The person is both called *to* and also created *for* something greater: “Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.”<sup>38</sup> One achieves this end, in Ignatius’ view, in the ultimate and eternal union with God in heaven. The Incarnation, Christ’s restoration of human nature by becoming human, recalls us to this ultimate end. The

Incarnation is not merely the act by which God made man to meet us in our natural state, but also that act which called us to union with God. A *cura personalis* that embraces what the Incarnation teaches us about our own nature, then, must also remind us of the ultimate end to which we are called. Using again Thomas’ distinction of the “necessity” of the Incarnation, the second kind of necessity is echoed in Ignatius’ invocation to choose, in our actions, “what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.”<sup>39</sup> This notion of the end of human beings is notably absent from the formulations of *cura personalis* referenced at the beginning of this study. Yet the care of the whole person, for Ignatius, *must* account for the ultimate realities that every person will experience, either good or evil.

In advocating incarnational education, I acknowledge that Jesuit education can and has enhanced the formation of those who do not profess Catholicism, Christianity, or even theism of any sort.<sup>40</sup> The care of the whole person is surely not reserved only for members of a particular ecclesial institution. Ignatian discernment is a journey towards an end and our *cura personalis* must be manifested at all stages and to all travelers. But *cura personalis*, to be authentically Jesuit, cannot content itself *only* with the material or present well-being of the person. It must, eventually, invite the individual to transcendence. For Ignatius, the transcendent element of the person reaches its culmination in divine union. The Incarnation was brought about for the good of human beings in their full humanity and offers assistance to all. This solicitude for all cannot come at the price of ignoring that to which, Ignatius maintains, we are ultimately called: greater knowledge and love of God and, ultimately, eternal union.<sup>41</sup>

The incarnational education I am now suggesting allows us, furthermore, to satisfy the essential elements of *cura personalis* as outlined, above, by Barton Geger. In his delineation, first, we are called to offer a holistic education that encompasses the spiritual and moral dimensions of a person. The Incarnation, by its very nature, concerns our spiritual and moral well-being. Second, incarnational education respects the unique needs and identity of the student inasmuch as it takes their full, embodied, personhood into

account. Third and finally, incarnational educational practices extend outside the classroom insofar as it focuses attention on the personal needs and ends of all those with whom we come into contact.

## Conclusion

*Cura personalis* is one of the distinctive characteristics of Jesuit education, but sometimes the expansiveness of its formulations can lead to an overlooking of what should be central: the care of a person in their full personhood *and* a reminder of the person's ultimate end. As beautifully expressed in "Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach,"

The worldview of Ignatius is centered on the person of Christ. The reality of the Incarnation affects Jesuit education at its core. For the ultimate purpose, the very reason for the existence of schools, is to

form men and women for others in imitation of Christ Jesus—the Son of God, the Man for Others par excellence. Thus Jesuit education, faithful to the Incarnational principle, is humanistic.<sup>42</sup>

The Jesuit care for the person must be holistic and transcendent. This solicitude to help one attain "the ultimate end for which they were created" is not limited to educational practices but, rather, lies at the heart of the Society of Jesus.<sup>43</sup> In attempting to clarify the meaning of *cura personalis*, I have suggested a return to Ignatius himself and the central importance of the Incarnation. Greater awareness of the Incarnation within our educational practices allows us to flesh-out the care for the "whole person" in concrete and distinctive ways. Ignatius intended the care of the person to be personal *and* directed. *Cura personalis*, then, must also be personal and directed. In other words, it must be Incarnational.<sup>44</sup> HJE

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "*Cura Personalis*," Georgetown College, accessed January 19, 2022, emphasis in original, <https://college.georgetown.edu/discover/cura-personalis/>

<sup>2</sup> "The Whole Person," Georgetown University, accessed January 19, 2022, <https://www.georgetown.edu/who-we-are/the-whole-person/>

<sup>3</sup> "Our Mission," Loyola Marymount University, accessed January 19, 2022, <https://mission.lmu.edu/mission/>

<sup>4</sup> Core Documents: "*Cura Personalis*," St. Louis University, accessed January 19, 2022, <https://sites.google.com/slu.edu/university-core-pilot/cura-personalis#h.tw4xmx9jbbob>

<sup>5</sup> See also "Characteristics of Jesuit Education," *Ignatian Pedagogy: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Jesuit Education From St. Ignatius to Today*, ed. José Mesa (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2017), 306, para. 49: *Cura personalis* "is not limited to the relationship between teacher and student; it affects the curriculum and the entire life of the institution."

<sup>6</sup> I note that "distinctive" need not mean "unique." By "distinctive" I mean characteristics that are pervasive in Jesuit education practices but that can, perhaps, be found elsewhere. As stated in the 1986 document "Characteristics of Jesuit Education," 295: "the inspiration, values, attitudes, and style which have traditionally characterized Jesuit education, which must be characteristic of any truly Jesuit school today wherever it is to be found, and which will remain essential[.]"

<sup>7</sup> "Caring for Students: *Cura Personalis*," Fordham University, accessed January 19, 2022, [https://www.fordham.edu/info/23846/caring\\_for\\_students/](https://www.fordham.edu/info/23846/caring_for_students/)

<sup>8</sup> "Center for Cura Personalis," Gonzaga University, accessed January 19, 2022, [www.gonzaga.edu/student-life/health-well-being/center-for-cura-personalis](http://www.gonzaga.edu/student-life/health-well-being/center-for-cura-personalis). Gonzaga University, for instance, affirms a dedication "to the mission of 'cura personalis' as described by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ" and states that "With mind, body, and spirit in mind, they work and collaborate to support students holistically," but their emphasis is "connecting each individual with resources that will help them be successful in their time at Gonzaga University."

<sup>9</sup> Julia Bninski and Jennifer R. Wozniak Boyle. "*Cura Personalis* as Institutional Practice," *Jesuit Higher Education* 9, no. 1 (2020): 122. Bninski & Boyle have encapsulated a common employment of *cura personalis*: "If you work on a Jesuit campus, you've heard of *cura personalis*. If we're honest, sometimes we repeat this term thoughtlessly, reducing it to a buzzword. More often, we invoke it sincerely to guide our decisions. As faculty members in Jesuit higher education, we believe that we have a responsibility toward students that goes beyond classroom transactions, a responsibility that includes caring, empathetic mentoring, and relationship-building."

<sup>10</sup> "Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach 1993," in *Ignatian Pedagogy: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Jesuit Education From St. Ignatius to Today*, ed. José Mesa (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2017), 371, para. 14. Emphasis added.

<sup>11</sup> All quotations from the *Spiritual Exercises* are taken from *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola: translated from the autograph by Father Elder Mullan, S.J.*, trans. Elder Mullan, S.J. (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1914). Henceforth referred to as *Spiritual Exercises*.

<sup>12</sup> Barton T. Geger, S.J., “*Cura Personalis*: Some Ignatian Inspirations,” *Jesuit Higher Education* 3, no. 2 (2014): 6.

<sup>13</sup> Geger, “*Cura Personalis*: Some Ignatian Inspirations,” 16.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the history of this term, see Gabriel Codina, S.J., “‘Our Way of Proceeding’ in Education: The Ratio Studiorum,” in *Ignatian Pedagogy: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Jesuit Education From St. Ignatius to Today*, 126-127.

<sup>15</sup> Wladimir Ledóchowski, “Letter on Studies,” *The Woodstock Letters* 65, no. 1 (1935): 1-4, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Wladimir Ledóchowski, “Instructio pro Assistentia Americae de Ordinandis Universitatibus, Collegiis ac Scholis Altis et de Praeparandis Eorundem Magistris (“Instructions for the United States Assistency on the Governance of Universities, Colleges and High Schools, and on the Formation of their Teachers”),” *The Woodstock Letters* 65, no. 1 (1935): 5-16.

<sup>17</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, First Principle and Foundation, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, First Principle and Foundation, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “*Cura Personalis*,” *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* 38, no. 1 (2007): 9-17, 15: “It remains to be said and repeated with Ignatius to all those involved in ‘*cura personalis*’, that the reason why the one who gives and the one who receives engage themselves in this conversation is to seek for the Creator to communicate himself to the person who wishes to be faithful to him, embracing him in his love and praise, disposing him to enter upon the way where he can serve Him more in the future.”

<sup>20</sup> Geger, “*Cura Personalis*: Some Ignatian Inspirations,” 16-17.

<sup>21</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), 463, 483.

<sup>22</sup> Francis, “Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*” address, Rome, Italy, March 19, 2016), sec. 65, [https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost-exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20160319\\_amoris-laetitia\\_en.pdf](https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost-exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, sec. 67.

<sup>24</sup> Jim Manney, *Ignatian Spirituality A to Z* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2017), 127.

<sup>25</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, The 11<sup>th</sup> Rule, 159.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, trans. Charles J. O’Neil, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (New York: Hanover House, 1955-57), chap. 54, para. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, chap. 54, para. 4. Ignatius echoes this view of the Incarnation in his *Spiritual Exercises* second week, first contemplation: “Lord, who for me has become man, that I may more love and follow Him.”

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1911-1925), III, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 1, a. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 1, a. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 75, a. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 84, a. 6. Brian Davies notes the importance of the Incarnation for human knowing in his *Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae: A Guide and Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); 296 ff.

<sup>33</sup> I would mention at this point that another important principle of Jesuit education which should animate these attempts to practice *cura personalis* in adverse circumstances is, of course, *magis*. To explore how this striving to do and be *better* or *greater* can inform our *cura personalis* in greater detail, however, must await another study.

<sup>34</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), 1020-1060.

<sup>35</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, 88.

<sup>36</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, 88.

<sup>37</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, 50.

<sup>38</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, First Principle and Foundation, 12.

<sup>39</sup> Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, First Principle and Foundation, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Mesa, S.J. ed., “Characteristics of Jesuit Education,” 295, para. 14.

<sup>41</sup> Mesa S.J., ed. “Characteristics of Jesuit Education,” 312, para 71: “Pastoral care is a dimension of ‘*cura personalis*’ that enables the seeds of religious faith and religious commitment to grow in each individual by enabling each one to recognize and respond to the message of divine love: seeing God at work in his or her life, in the lives of others, and in all of creation; then responding to this discovery through a commitment to service within the community. A Jesuit school makes adequate pastoral care available to all members of the educational community in order to awaken and strengthen this personal faith commitment.”

<sup>42</sup> Mesa, S.J., ed. “Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach 1993”, 412, para. 140.

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<sup>43</sup> *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms*, ed. John W. Padberg, S.J. (Rome: Curia of the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, 1995), 131, para 307.

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