

handled, or to locate our institutional positions within a larger Catholic context. More generally, we still need to be concerned in all the obvious ways about role expectations of women and men students in the classroom and in academic and professional preparation, as well as in the ways both men and women students envision their future integration of sexuality, marriage, parenthood, and vocation in the world.

Among faculty, the retention rates are lower for women than men, for a number of reasons, including family gender roles which impose greater responsibilities for women in childbearing years. It is increasingly true of lay faculty of either sex that family obligations interfere not only with the publishing track record but also with full participation in university and departmental activities arranged outside of the normal work week, e.g., evening and weekend meetings, retreats, and social events. Although campus daycare has helped to alleviate the situation for some at Boston College, faculty with young children, especially women, may feel torn by competing loyalties and responsibilities and may suffer concrete effects in terms of professional advancement. And when women faculty are few, it is obvious they will also be less well represented in other aspects of the Jesuit educational endeavor, for instance, departmental administration and university committees.

Most of the few women administrators in "top" positions are located in the "women's" professional schools (nursing, education, social work). And, at church-related schools, the glass ceiling over advancement is often perceived to be more shatterproof for women than for lay men. Among support staff, clerical positions are still preponderantly filled by women and still offer relatively low pay and low expectation of "vocational" fulfillment. Most women enter these jobs because they typically have less extensive education, need more flexible or shorter hours to accommodate childcare responsibilities, and need to stop and resume work around childbearing--all problems or needs linked to women's traditional gender roles.

I have also observed that many women secretaries and even administrative staff persistently refer to their Jesuit bosses as "Father" (which need not imply that the Jesuits actively encourage the practice). "Father" is not a specifically academic or even Jesuit designation, and tends to make the administrator's role, however unintentionally, a

beneficiary of the clericalism and especially the paternalism which the term explicitly denotes.

The encompassing context for male-female cooperation in Catholic higher education is the institutional Church, which has quite a mixed record on women's equality and collaboration. In practice, it has certainly not been supportive of any very significant changes in women's actual roles. Recent Vatican and papal teaching is familiar. In his "apostolic exhortation," *On the Family (Familiaris Consortia)*, John Paul II "affirmed "the equal dignity and responsibility of men and women" and asserted that this equality "fully justifies women's access to public function." Yet, he continued, "the true advancement of women requires that clear recognition be given to the value of the maternal and family role, by comparison with all other public roles and all other professions." Further, the pope warned, women should not renounce their true femininity or imitate the male role (1980, no. 23; see also John Paul II, 1988, on all women's innate disposition to mothering). Although critical of overt discrimination against women, the pope is slow to perceive that the romanticization of motherhood and of woman as mother reinforces the stereotypical gender expectations which lie at the root of the problem. As Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, editor of *Commonweal*, said in her John Courtney Murray Forum lecture at Fordham: "I submit that this language of women's place is not so much mistaken as strangely implausible. ..separated as by a chasm from the ordinary experience of an increasing number of women and men" (1989).

Although the Catholic emphasis on women as mothers could certainly be used to encourage more institutional support and more flexible roles for women with young families in Jesuit institutions, I believe that "special treatment" should be an agenda very cautiously pursued. While it is true that women *de facto* bear more responsibility for early child care, part of the agenda of feminism is a more balanced sharing of both domestic and public roles by women and men. Especially among professional couples, the "ordinary experience" of parents is moving toward greater cooperation in the family, and this is a trend which I would not want to see undermined. Particularly in the university setting, an increasing number of male faculty have child care responsibilities because of the more flexible schedule which



teaching can afford. This shift helps to erode role stereotypes of women as essentially "different from" men (as maternal, relational nurturers). The increase in child-caring fathers on campuses undermines the notion that childcare is a "women's issue" and that it is only a peripheral institutional concern because women as mothers should not be fulfilling institutional roles in the first place. Hence, institutions should be encouraged to provide child care and even parental leave benefits which both parents can utilize.

It also is ironic but true that as child care becomes a male concern, it has more ready access to the channels of change. At Boston College, one high-level administrator, holding a position traditionally assumed by a Jesuit, has made significant strides in establishing family-oriented policies, especially the opening of an on-campus daycare center and tax benefits for in-home child care. This administrator is the father of two young children and the husband of a faculty member at another institution.

The issue of ambiguous images of women, reflected in papal teaching which affirms women's social contribution while highlighting motherhood, is brought closer to home in the story of Ignatius of Loyola.² In a recent article in a Jesuit scholarly journal, psychoanalyst William Meissner, S.J., explores the psychodynamics of Ignatius's religious conversion in terms of his relationships to women. Ignatius lost his mother early on (as did John Paul II), and was raised by a peasant foster mother until the age of 7, when he was returned to his family. As a youth, he led a privileged and dashing existence as a knight and soldier, fast in pursuit of ideals of courtly love and chivalry. But as a young man, Ignatius was wounded at the siege of Pamplona. A long convalescence at the Loyola family castle followed, including repeated painful and disabling surgeries on his leg. During the prolonged absence at war of Ignatius's brother Martin, master of the castle, Ignatius's sister-in-law Magdalena undertook to nurse Ignatius back to health. During this time, there came to him a vision of the Blessed Mother and Child, which was central to his conversion experience. Sixty years later, Ignatius is reported to have "confessed to one of his novices that a picture of Our Lady in his prayerbook reminded him so much of [Magdalena's] beauty that he had to cover the picture in order that his intense affection and passion for her might not be aroused" (1991, p.29).



Without reducing the authenticity of Ignatius' religious experience to his psychological and libidinal drives, Meissner suggests that the vulnerable soldier might well have substituted the vision of Mary for the desired Magdalena, and comments that "the Blessed Mother was in a unique way the dominant idealized image of chaste feminine perfection in Inigo's culture." Moreover, when Magdalena had come to the castle as a young bride, she had taken over the care of her little brother-in-law from "the loving and motherly nursemaid, Maria de Garin," leading Meissner to conjecture that "the vision of Our Lady was the embodiment of the idealized mother" (1991, pp. 29-30).

In this imagery, taken from Ignatius' own account of his life, womanhood is defined in terms of three intertwined yet conflicting roles, about which Ignatius experiences no small ambivalence: *mother*--idealized nurturer and comforter; *healer*--caring, compassionate, and pious; and *sexual focus*--both bride and temptress. Magdalena, as the real but romanticized lady of the castle, is to Ignatius both mother and healer, but still sexually dangerous. The danger and the ideal are symbolically reconciled in the Virgin Mary of the conversion experience, whose femininity combines both sublimated sexuality and idealized maternity.

Meissner makes it clear that Ignatius had virtually no choice but to deal with women in the markedly stereotypical images provided by his culture. Our task today is to ask in what way those sixteenth century images have or have not changed in our own culture. Do we, like Ignatius, preserve some ambivalence in our institutions, or do we challenge the ambivalence expressed in current papal writings?

Ignatius' confusion about Magdalena is grounded in gratitude and affection. But perhaps there is, for all that, a certain inability to see her in her own right and to accept her care for him for what it was, rather than as a symbol of what he either lacked, hoped for, or feared from women. His history of basic deprivation of solid, ongoing relationships with important female figures may have inhibited his ability to approach women simply as fellow human persons. Not so subtly, I am asking whether Jesuits are in this regard, as in others, living out of an Ignatian legacy. Has Ignatius' "deprivation" been repeated in the history of Jesuit education, and are we now in the throes of an Ignatian recovery?



How can we further better collaboration in Jesuit higher education? It is vitally important to seek out and even create opportunities for the development of real friendships among Jesuits and women colleagues. The residual separation of spheres in our institutions cannot be overcome unless "grass roots" changes in practical relationships permit top-down policies to be backed concretely by corresponding attitudes and expectations on the part of those to whom they are directed. But the friendships which are the seed and the support of more egalitarian working relationships are often inhibited by persistent male and female subcultures on campus.

A general barrier to Jesuit-lay cooperation is created by the privileged association of Jesuits, who, quite properly in terms of their religious community, withdraw together for prayer, meals, recreation, and many other forms of formal and informal contact. Yet the inevitable segregation from lay faculty is exacerbated for women in the case of a men's religious order. For one thing, in comparison to their lay male colleagues (who also participate in male subcultures), the religious order members have less intimate contact with women (and the women's subculture) in other, complementary spheres of their lives. A lay man, for instance, might have access to the daily intimacy of male-female family life, where today on all sorts of levels the traditional role divisions are being gradually diminished. Jesuits by definition will have limited continuing adult experiences with women who are approachable and trustworthy as confidantes. Hence, Jesuits may find it much easier to relate to men, with whom they more often can rely upon a shared male frame of reference, or whom they can even draw into the Jesuit subculture a bit more naturally.

On many Jesuit campuses, sincere attempts to enhance Jesuit-lay collaboration produce "meetings" of one sort or another, often including a social as well as an academic or mission-oriented component. While valuable in their own way, these events are inadequate to establish any integral and ongoing relationships of a personal nature. They still tend to keep laity, and especially women, at "arms length," especially when they depend on Jesuit initiative and Jesuit planning, and lay or women's subsequent introduction into a process which they do not really "own." Priestly formation may instill wariness about establishing



relationships of genuine mutual confidence with women. Yet certainly today many Jesuits are confident enough of their own Jesuit identity to venture interactions in which non-Jesuits, even women, are met in terms of equality, trust, and even the intimacy of friendship. The clerical-lay divide, impermeable to women, will undoubtedly continue to be a source of tensions in all male-female relations in institutions run by clerical orders, especially when top positions are usually filled by the orders' members. However, I am optimistic about the potential of Jesuits and Jesuit institutions to be agents for change in the institutional Church.

Gloria Steinem titled one of her books *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (1983). This suggests a modestly revolutionary agenda for our clerical co-workers. Why not include more women at various points on the Jesuit "old boy network"? It is not that lay or female faculty envision Jesuit conspiracies behind closed doors, wherein institutional matters are settled outside of established democratic procedures. More simply, we are all aware, as social and political animals, that familiarity breeds confidentiality and offers opportunities for exchange of attitudes, ideas, and advice. Just as matters of the day are hashed over in the family kitchen of the lay spouses, so certain things may be accomplished in the Jesuit residence TV room, cocktail hour, or corridors. Yet distinguishing the latter zones is the fact that the persons one meets are also likely to share in decision-making prerogatives regarding mutual professional concerns.

Informal consultation and sharing of opinions with women will naturally require "hanging around" where women are to be found. Use your campus's faculty dining room (or its functional equivalent) as a subversive institution. Venture onto neutral territory and encounter lay colleagues where they generally congregate, gossip, relax, and amiably argue, even if only in department halls or at the other end of a telephone line. Happily, it is not unheard of at B.C. for Jesuits to take the initiative and invite congenial non-Jesuit friends and spouses to join them for dinner. Note that similar initiatives and reciprocations should not just be a form of penance-like "community outreach," but a genuine attempt to establish ongoing friendships based on common interests. Many of us are already fortunate to enjoy



good relationships with Jesuits, entered via friendships established in graduate school, committee work in the university, and longevity in our academic departments, which, at the very least, is guaranteed to offer opportunities for camaraderie in the mutual display of battle wounds. Far from being merely a critic of women's experience as educators among Jesuits, I am gratefully a beneficiary of community and friendship with many of them. The task ahead on our campuses is to discover and invent ways to make the experience a few of us have been privileged to share more *inclusive*--to find ways to improve upon it, extend it, and allow it to influence larger institutional structures.

The full accommodation of women and their contributions within Jesuit and other Roman Catholic institutions requires swimming against the tide of an ocean of Christian traditions which have been patriarchal if not misogynist. Catholic priests and men's religious orders will often find it more comfortable to preserve the status quo, especially when under immense pressures, both direct and indirect, from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Nonetheless, many such institutions have a track record of support for lay faculty, an ability to appropriate Catholic teaching critically, and an attitude of respectful independence toward Vatican bureaucracy. I am counting on a certain Ignatian feistiness to help his sons--and their sisters--to rise to this new cause.

Notes

This essay is based on a keynote address to the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities Conference on Collaboration in Ministry, New Orleans, April 25, 1991.

1. Robert J. Daly, S.J., who preserved this and other remarks in his own copious notes of the St. Louis conference, is Professor of Theology and Director of the Jesuit Institute at Boston College and editor of the scholarly journal, *Theological Studies*.
2. It is remarkable that when a version of this presentation was delivered to a convention of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in New Orleans, my implicit criticism of



Ignatius, which I had thought rather gently formulated, met with much more resistance from my Jesuit audience than the foregoing criticisms of John Paul II.

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