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“Great Respect for Texts”: A Conversation with Joseph A. Munitiz

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Abstract

Father Joseph A. Munitiz, S.J. is one of the founders of the *Series Graeca* of the *Corpus Christianorum* and its sister series, *Corpus Christianorum in Translation*. Throughout his long career, Munitiz has published extensively on Byzantine literature, and his work had a lasting impact on the development of Byzantine studies. He likes to define himself as an “amateur” of Ignatian studies; however, a substantial part of his work has focused on Ignatius and the Society of Jesus, providing an extraordinary contribution in translating and editing early Jesuit sources. This interview is an outcome of the long-distance conversations Emanuele Colombo had with Father Munitiz in 2020.

Keywords

Joseph A. Munitiz – Byzantine studies – Ignatius of Loyola – early Jesuit sources – translation

Colombo: *Father Munitiz,¹ you are a citizen of the world. Born in Wales, you studied and worked in Spain, the United Kingdom, Rome, and Paris. Can you tell me more about your youth and your family?*

Munitiz: Although my father, Florentino de Munitiz, had Spanish nationality, having been born in Mundaca, a beautiful small Basque fishing village on the north coast of Spain, he came to England in 1885, when only five years old. He was brought by his father, who was linked to a wealthy shipping family from the same village. My grandfather set up a family business linked, I think, with shipping, in Liverpool. My father and my uncle Juan were educated at Saint Francis Xavier's Jesuit school, in Liverpool, and I learned much later, when I was already a Jesuit, that my uncle had also become a Jesuit, though only for a few years. The family name at that time kept the "de," traditional with Spanish names, but I deliberately dropped it in 1953, mainly because of the inconvenience of being classed under "D" instead of "M," but also to avoid any military service in Spain should I return there later. When my brother and I were at school in Spain, both with Spanish passports, we had some difficulty in obtaining exit visas to return to England.

For reasons unknown to me, my father established his business as a ship-chandler in Cardiff rather than Liverpool. Both were important ports at the time (though after World War II both ceased to function as such). He must have done reasonably well as in 1928, when in his late forties, he married my mother, Blanca de Minondo. The family tradition said that they met in Paris where my mother occasionally gave concerts as she had a good singing voice. But the family links with Spain must have continued strong, and the marriage took place in a remote Basque shrine, Urkiola. A disaster took place as they drove away after the wedding: a motorcyclist was killed, his blood staining my mother's wedding-dress, a premonition of tragedies to come. My father's business, located in Bute Street in the heart of Cardiff's "Tiger Bay" area, prospered at first, so much so that he was able to buy a car and inspected property near Roath Park with a view to moving from the more modest Canton area of Cardiff. However, with the start of the Spanish civil war, commerce began to dry up, and the situation worsened in 1939 with World War II. In addition, my mother contracted tuberculosis—perhaps due to a very rainy outing to Koch Castle—and as the worries mounted, my

1 For Joseph A. Munitiz's bibliography, see Braam Roosen and Peter Van Deun, eds., *The Literary Legacy of Byzantium: Editions, Translations, and Studies in Honour of Joseph A. Munitiz, S.J.* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 15–20.

father suffered a sudden heart-attack and died in his bed in March 1940, aged only sixty. I had been born in December 1931.

My mother's family was not without interest. They hailed originally from Navarre and my grandfather had been a wealthy businessman. However, he lost his fortune at the local casino in San Sebastián and the family had to leave their fine house overlooking the river and take refuge in small Basque towns. My mother's youngest brother, José María, found work in the industrial town of Eibar and I came to know him well. My mother's illness meant that she had to be confined in a sanatorium, at some distance from our home, and my memories of her are very indistinct. When she died at forty-three, in February 1943, I felt her death less than that of my father, as she had been separated from me for several months. Fortunately, my father's sister, our aunt Josephine, had come to live with us on my father's death; she adopted me—along with my older brother Arthur, and my younger sister, Marie—so we escaped foster home. We all moved to Liverpool where my aunt had been living.

So much for my origins, Spanish-Basque and Welsh. People tell me that they can spot a slight Welsh accent when I speak, but with my parents' early deaths and my move from Cardiff, I do not feel deeply rooted in any place or culture.

How was your education with the Christian Brothers? Why did you join the Society of Jesus?

My education began in a small nursery school run by the Ursuline sisters, and I have affectionate memories of their kindness. Similarly, the Benedictine fathers from Ampleforth, who were in charge of our local parish where I was serving on the altar, made me realize that our religious affiliation was a happy one, and I remember the excursions we made into the Welsh hills. My secondary education began with the De la Salle Brothers school, St Illtyd's Catholic High School in Cardiff, but continued with a different set of teaching brothers, the Irish Christian Brothers, at St Mary's, Crosby, when we moved from Cardiff to Liverpool. My memories of school are not happy ones, but I was fortunate in a kindly English teacher, Brother Robinson, who later became head of Prior Park School. I think he would have liked me to join them and invited me to visit him, but I was never attracted to their life.

My brother had thought at one point of becoming a Benedictine, and I accompanied him when he was invited to spend part of Holy Week (perhaps in 1944) at Ampleforth, where Mgr. Ronald Knox (1888–1957) was preaching—although I remember nothing of what he said. I distinctly remember the anguish I felt when my brother announced later that he no longer wanted to be a priest.

I felt that the "burden" was to be mine. However, with the inconsequence of youth, I pushed the idea aside and thought no more of it. To my astonishment, the idea returned in force when I found myself back in Spain. Although with my parents we had gone for a holiday in San Sebastian in 1935, it was in 1947 that my aunt decided it would be better for me and my brother to spend a year in a Spanish boarding school, mainly to recuperate our knowledge of Spanish. My mother always spoke to us in that language, but we soon preferred to speak English, and on arriving once more in Spain I had the impression that I was beginning with the language, although remnants must have remained in the subconscious.

At Christmas, we were staying with a relative in Bilbao. He was wealthy, having made his money in the ship-insurance business, and had a chauffeur and car. As we drove home from a party, all in great glee, the thought suddenly struck me that I wanted to offer all of that to God! The feeling was a curiously happy one, and I felt I could let it rest. However, while at the school, situated in Vitoria and run by the Marianist brothers, I would occasionally enter the chapel and on one occasion I felt a definite call "to help Christ carry his cross." The impression this time was very strong and really changed my life.

Near the school lived some relatives of my father, the Cirarda family, who hailed from another fishing village, Bermeo, near Mundaca. One of them was a priest, José María Cirarda (1917–2008), a very intelligent and educated man, who was a professor at the local seminary.² He arranged for me to attend a junior seminary that was attached to the Pontifical University of Comillas in the province of Santander. I spent two years there and was fortunate enough to join a specialized class in classics, where I began to learn Greek. I made some good friends: José Luis Blanco Vega (1930–2005), a born poet who also later became a Jesuit, and Antonio Duato Gómez-Novella, from Valencia, who was to contribute much to the movement for reform in the Spanish church after Vatican II. The seminary and university were run by Jesuits. Contact with them, especially with the saintly Manuel García Nieto (1894–1974), put me in touch with the Jesuit spirit.³ I felt very drawn to them, especially by what I *felt* to be their contact with

2 He would later be appointed bishop, first in Jerez as an auxiliary bishop to cardinal José María Bueno y Monreal (1904–87), archbishop of Seville; then in Santander (with temporary responsibility for Bilbao in very troubled times), Córdoba, and finally as archbishop in Pamplona. He worked closely with the great cardinal Vicente Enrique y Tarancón (1908–94), after Vatican II. He came to Comillas in 1965 to ordain me to the priesthood.

3 Father Nieto was my spiritual father during the two years that I was in the Junior Seminary in Comillas (1948–50); he was famous for his sanctity and for his ugliness. During the famine years in Spain, which followed on World War II, he would provide food for the

Christ, their spirit of sacrifice: "To be a Jesuit is well worth being psychologically unbalanced!" as one of their oddest members once told me. From Comillas, I applied to the English Jesuits to become a member of the Society, as I felt more English than Spanish. After interviews in Comillas and London, I was accepted and in 1950, after a week's visit to Rome for the Holy Year, I joined the novitiate, then located in a splendid (and eccentric) country mansion, Harlaxton Manor, not far from Grantham (about twenty miles north of London).

The actual decision to become a Jesuit was a very gentle affair: I had returned to Crosby in the summer of 1949 (halfway through my time in Comillas) and happened to call in at our parish church of Saint Joseph one afternoon for a brief visit. The thought then came to me: should I become a Jesuit? I had intended to offer my life to Christ as a secular priest, but such a lonely life with all its clerical trappings held no attraction for me, rather the contrary. I had seen enough of the Jesuits to realize that their spirit as a body would give solidity and purpose to my vague calling. So, there and then, I decided to join. My resolution was solid enough to require no further spiritual confirmation; it was to see me through the noviceship, when the long retreat (perhaps supposed to provide new light) passed without incident, though peacefully enough. Since then, I have occasionally wondered whether I was on the right path, but never in any serious way. I have always felt like a round peg fitting into a round hole!

Can you tell me something about your academic path? Why did you pursue Byzantine studies?

During my early years in Spain, I felt, rather surprisingly, a great attraction to study Greek and taught myself, largely with the help of a primitive Spanish-Greek book, the rudiments of the language. I kept this up in the year of studies (the so-called "juniorate") that followed the two-year novitiate, helped this time by Edmund Conyers d'Arcy, S.J. (1885–1967), the brother of Martin Cyril d'Arcy, S.J. (1888–1976). For this year, we had been moved down to another former country house once used as a novitiate, Manresa House, in Roehampton, London.⁴ Two years of philosophy followed in yet another

villagers, visiting them accompanied by us seminarians. He was said to have mystical gifts in prayer. His process of beatification has been begun, centred on his tomb in Salamanca. Unfortunately, when I returned to Comillas for my theology years, my contact with him petered out, perhaps because of his extreme austerity and asceticism. I think I found his sanctity too self-willed.

- 4 An amusing feature of my first vows is that they were taken in a chapel that was not then the novitiate; this made them officially invalid. The error was discovered only several years later

country mansion, Heythrop College, then located next to Church Enstone, in Oxfordshire. I remember trying to read David Hume (1711–76), as a balance to the Scholasticism that was our staple diet. When the time came for university studies, I was instructed to take the Oxford "Greats" course in the humanities, though my preference at the time would have been for Spanish studies.⁵ I was fortunate enough to meet Elizabeth Anscombe (1919–2001), who revealed Wittgenstein to me, and also Iris Murdoch (1919–99), a charming tutor but not very influential in my academic life. My greatest debt was probably to my Greek history tutor, George Cawkwell (1919–2019), who would later become a great friend.

From 1957 to 1961, I found myself in Oxford faced with what seemed a daunting course in advanced Latin and Greek, feeling that my knowledge of Greek was very inadequate. One incident is worth mentioning, as it reveals the context of the times: one of my tutors for the first Honour Moderation examination had died;⁶ he was an Anglican, and only with great hesitation did I attend his funeral. The prohibition against *communicatio in sacris* was very much alive. I have vivid memories of the anguish I felt about the future state of my much-loved Anglican uncle in Liverpool. Fortunately, that mentality has changed and my own conviction at present is that the Roman Catholic Church made a mistake in condemning Anglican orders.

To my relief, while disappointed that I had not qualified for a first-class degree, I was able to finish my studies with an upper second. I was already aware that in my case, hard work would have to make up for only a moderately quick intelligence. But I have also found that many who qualify with first-class degrees fail later in life to produce the results one might have expected. My traditional year of teaching at a secondary level took me to Stonyhurst College, and there I soon discovered that teaching at that level had no attraction for me. For theological studies I requested to go back to Comillas, partly as I had learned that a move was afoot to transfer the Pontifical University to Madrid—a move that did take place, but only after my time there! The provincial agreed, and, in 1962, I found myself once more looking out over the Bay of Biscay to the north, and to the picturesque *Picos de Europa* to the west, a sight so beautiful

and then healed with a legal process called *sanatio in radice*, normally invoked only to heal an illegal marriage process.

5 *Literae humaniores*, nicknamed "Greats," is an undergraduate course focused on classics (ancient Rome, ancient Greece, Latin, ancient Greek, and philosophy) at the University of Oxford and some other universities.

6 Honour Moderations (or Mods) are a set of examinations at the University of Oxford at the end of the first part of some degree courses, such as Greats.

that I used to ration myself to look at it during lent. These years coincided with the celebration of Vatican II in Rome, and the professors in Comillas, mostly traditionalists with little knowledge or sympathy for progressive thought, were of little help.

In my fourth year, when already ordained and wondering what pastoral work would be assigned to me, a letter arrived from the provincial, informing me (to my astonishment) that I had been appointed to the Oriental Institute in Rome for further studies and a permanent place. Thus, my path was set into Byzantine studies. Later, I learned that the person responsible had been Joseph Gill, S.J. (1901–89), then the distinguished rector of the Pontificio Istituto Orientale, who was looking for new members of staff and had heard that I had studied Greek at Oxford. He arranged to meet me in the summer and apologized for going behind my back. I was certainly surprised, as I had never heard of the Oriental Institute and had no interest in Byzantium or the Orthodox.

However, my immediate tasks were with my theology finals, where my boredom with the courses offered at Comillas led to a complete failure, and then a summer course in German in Berlin followed by the Jesuit final year of training, tertianship, which took place in North Wales, the beautifully situated St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre. For my future Byzantine work some knowledge of German was essential, and I was lucky to be able to spend this and another summer acquiring at least a reading knowledge of the language. The year in Wales gave me the chance to improve my theology enough to qualify for a licentiate at Heythrop College in the summer of 1967. Then I moved to Italy and began a course in Italian, probably helped by my facility in Spanish.

Two years (1967–69) were to pass at the Orientale where the Byzantine world began to open up for me. A remarkable group of men formed the teaching staff: outstanding for me was Irenée Hausherr, S.J. (1891–1978) with his knowledge of Byzantine spirituality, but Juan Mateos, S.J. (1917–2003) also understood liturgical texts like few others, and Thomas Mathews, S.J. lectured on iconography. I greatly admired all three, even if the organization of the courses struck me as uninspired. In fact, the spark that was to light up my future work came later. I had become interested in Byzantine spirituality and asked to do my doctoral studies in Paris, with a French Jesuit, Joseph Paramelle (1925–2011), one of the world's experts on Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022). Permission was given, but also the hint that my services would not be needed at the Orientale; my dissatisfaction with the curriculum had been noticed.

The move to Paris was crucial. I have described what happened in the *Tesserae* that I contributed to the *Festschrift* that kind friends published in 2019:

On my arrival in Paris in 1969, I dutifully went to call on Fr Paramelle, who was then working under a French *abbé*, Marcel Richard, at the Greek section of the *Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes* (a branch of the enlightened French CNRS). The three of us discussed a possible theme for a thesis and the abbé Richard reached up and pulled out a volume made up of photographs of a Greek manuscript which he had found on Mount Athos and which he thought interesting. It was the *Θησαυρός* [*Treasury*] attributed to Theognostos. "Why not take that as the subject of your thesis?" he suggested with Fr Paramelle's support. That was the real start of my career. I was to spend seven years before finishing the critical edition that served as my doctoral thesis. It may seem a long period, but I began with minimal knowledge of Byzantium and its history, and fortunately I realized that a working knowledge of modern spoken Greek would be an invaluable asset. Given the network of Jesuit residences in Europe, it was easy to arrange to have a year in Greece, spending time in Athens, Thessaloniki and the Catholic island of Syros. This idyllic setting was where I typed out the text of the *Θησαυρός* while also serving as assistant priest and—one of my treasured memories—performing a baptism in Greek!⁷

At this point I should perhaps explain why my knowledge of the *Spiritual Exercises* has remained mainly on the theoretical level: very early on, I saw that retreat-giving would require an attention and time that I thought needed to be devoted by me to my academic work. This may have been a mistake on my part that led to an unbalanced development and a lack of acquaintance with an essential part of a Jesuit's work. I leave that judgement to others.

To close my answer to the question, Jesuits have been actively involved in Byzantine studies from the seventeenth century, partly for apologetic reasons in dealings with the Orthodox and partly as historians. The Pontificio Istituto Orientale was entrusted to them in 1917, mainly because of links with the so-called "Oriental Churches" in communion with Rome. But already under Louis XIV (1643–1715) the Jesuits were involved in the publication of theological and historical Byzantine texts. My own approach stemmed from the conviction that knowledge of the true history of the church had to be based on critically edited texts. Without reliable sources theologians and historians could not produce reliable work.

7 Joseph A. Munitiz, "Autobiographical *Tesserae*," in *Literary Legacy of Byzantium*, 5–14, here 8.

Can you provide some details on your work for the Corpus Christianorum? How was your time in Leuven? What did you enjoy the most?

The chance choice of Theognostos was a godsend: here was an author, about whom almost nothing was known, who had put together a *Thesaurus*, a little encyclopedia of what was considered useful knowledge for a Byzantine prince. And to guide me, I had the added good fortune of being assigned as thesis director Jean Gouillard (1910–84), a former Assumptionist priest with a rare sensitivity for Byzantine spirituality and a most kindly man. He happened to have done some work on another text by Theognostos, a collection of spiritual aphorisms, which he thought dated from the fourteenth century. A lucky find when I was collating manuscripts of the *Thesaurus* allowed me to date the author to the thirteenth century and to the Empire of Nicaea. Seven very happy years (1969–76) were to pass on my doctoral thesis in Paris, where I made friends for life, including Paul Cousty, a future novelist, and his wife, Inés Elvira. From a professional point of view the link with the *abbé* Marcel Richard (1907–76) was the most important. He had been invited to head the Greek section of the *Corpus Christianorum*, which was about to start work in Leuven (in England known under its English pronunciation “Loo-vain”) and asked me to join him. Unfortunately, death intervened to prevent his move to Belgium, but even before my thesis defence I had taken up residence in the former Jesuit theologate in the center of the very pretty town that was to be my home for seven years (1976–83).⁸

At the faculty, I met as colleagues Pauline Allen, Jacques Noret, and Basilios Markesinis, the director being Albert Van Roey (1915–2000) who became a very good friend. In the background was Maurice Geerard (1919–99) who had masterminded the establishment of this section of the *Corpus*. Our work was the preparation of texts for publication, and Jacques Noret was the dominant figure: as a former Bollandist, he appreciated the meticulous application of Byzantine punctuation—a novelty at the time—and had extraordinary powers of application. I was able to make progress with the publication of my own thesis text, and also began work on a text I had discovered by chance in the old Jesuit library in the Minderbroederstraat, the autobiography of Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197–1272), a contemporary of Theognostos. I also took lessons in Dutch, as my Flemish community was Dutch-speaking, and began to read and speak in that language (eliminating in the process my spoken German).

8 Before he died, Marcel Richard asked me to take care of his edition of the *Questions and Answers* of Anastasius of Sinai; my work on this is mentioned below.

They were busy and happy years, with Brussels, its ballet (Maurice Béjart, 1927–2007), and its art galleries, only a short distance away. At the faculty, I had made friends with Werner Verbeke and his Spanish wife, and their hospitality meant much to me, especially when I moved out to Heverlee, the huge new Jesuit residence, built to house two faculties before the aftermath of Vatican II drastically reduced the Flemish province.

On a personal note, Paul Cousty, my Paris friend, asked me to dog-sit their chow-chow. They are independent dogs with character, and I would take him for long walks in the Heverlee woods. Pleasant memories!

How was your work as the editor of The Heythrop Journal?

At the end of the seven years, financial pressure meant that Jacques Noret or myself would have to leave or work part time. It was obvious to me that the post was more important for him with his wife and family, so I made tentative contacts with *Sources Chrétiennes* in Lyons but saw that their financial situation was no better. When I spoke of this to my provincial, he asked me at once to return to England and live at Heythrop College, which had moved shortly before from its Oxford location to a building in Cavendish Square, close to Oxford Circus in central London. Although there was no teaching post open to me, I could take over from Robert Murray (1926–2018) the editorship of *The Heythrop Journal*, and eventually act as superior to the small community. It would be my first experience as a Jesuit superior, but I was lucky to have an outstanding "brother" Jesuit as minister, Bernard Elliott, S.J. (1929–2012), who was to play a key role in welcoming the Vietnamese refugees to the UK.

For six years (1983–89), I lived in Cavendish Square. My work as editor of the journal was by no means a strain: I would consult regularly with teaching members of the staff about the advisability of publishing any non-commissioned articles, and remember only one special issue, on Karl Rahner (1904–84), that required more attention. However, as editor I did make one important contact: a philosophy professor from Hong Kong, Tsang Lap Chuen, sent an article on the notion of "the sublime," which caught my attention and I published it. Fortunately, it enabled its author to publish his doctoral thesis on the same subject, which came to be acknowledged as a classic.⁹ Tsang was grateful and became a very good friend, eventually inviting me to Hong Kong and paying for

9 Tsang Lap Chuen, *The Sublime: Groundwork Towards a Theory* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998).

my visit to Beijing one Christmas (I think in 2004). This is one of my many journeys, often to consult manuscripts in European libraries, but also in the US for the International Byzantine congresses.

Another lucky chance put me in touch with Julian Chrysostomides (1928–2008), then teaching Byzantine Greek at Royal Holloway. Along with Athanasios Angelou, she was on the point of starting a reading class and had chosen as text the autobiography of Blemmydes (1197–1272), unaware that I had just published a new edition in the *Corpus*. She was delighted when I suggested that we might work together on an English translation of this text. Many happy meetings would take place: we three met with a group of students and were soon joined by Eirene Harvalia Crook. Indeed, one summer we finished off our translation work during a fortnight's stay on the island of Aegina, where Dr. Angelou had a pistachio farm. After completing our translation of Blemmydes we moved, at the suggestion of Christopher Walter (1925–2014), to an edition of *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs*, a key text in the history of iconography and were able eventually to produce a handsome volume.¹⁰

What is the period of your life that gave you more professional satisfaction, and why?

In 1989, to my surprise, the Jesuit provincial, my good friend George Earle, S.J. (1925–2003), asked me to take over the post of master of Campion Hall in Oxford. The Hall is a beautiful building, a fine example of the sensitive cultured intelligence of Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944). Under Martin d'Arcy it had acquired an exceptional collection of art works, both ancient—such as a work by Ambrosius Benson (1495–1550)—and modern—works by Charles Mahoney (1903–68) and Augustus John (1879–1961). The duties of master were in my eyes mainly to care for the students and staff; I felt less attracted or competent with regard to relations with the university at large. Thus, I would have time, in a beautiful setting and with interesting companions, to continue my work as an editor of Byzantine texts.

For many years I had been engaged with the work I had inherited from the *abbé* Richard, his edition of the *Erotapokrisies* (Questions and answers) of Anastasios of Sinai (630–701). He had made the fundamental discovery about the origin of this work—a collection of 103 questions, which had been later

10 Joseph A. Munitiz et al., eds. and trans., *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilos and Related Texts* (Camberley, Surrey: Porphyrogenitus, 1997).

reworked into a shorter collection equipped with florilegia of patristic texts, and then combined with sections of the first collection to appear in the only printed version available in Migne. Much work remained to be done collating the available manuscripts. Oxford also housed some outstanding Byzantine scholars, including Nigel Wilson, who had already helped me with manuscript queries.

A common feature of the three texts I have edited with the *Corpus Christianorum* is their popular appeal: Theognostos, Blemmydes, and Anastasios were not writing speculative works, intended for scholarly theologians, but rather texts that would have an appeal for the ordinary public. They all reveal the interests of lay people. This was true even of an article I had published many years earlier on the ecumenical councils.¹¹ Given more energy, I would have liked to write a history of popular Byzantine theology, that would have taken account of devotion to icons and attendance at church services. Perhaps someone will take up the challenge.

My period as a Jesuit superior would normally have ended after six years, but as 1996 was the centenary of Campion Hall, the provincial decided to extend my tenure to oversee the celebrations that were well under way. We had been fortunate in obtaining the collaboration of Thomas M. McCoog, S.J. as editor of a centenary volume.¹² Also by a happy chance the Penguin Classics volume, *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: the Personal Writings*, that I had helped to edit, was to appear in that year.¹³ Resident in the house was Archbishop John Quinn (1929–2017), recently retired from San Francisco, and we asked him to deliver the Martin D'Arcy Lecture in the summer of 1996: this proved to be the important paper, "The Claims of the Primacy and the Costly Call to Unity," a first draft of his later book, *The Reform of the Papacy*.¹⁴ No room in Campion Hall was large enough to house the audience, so the lecture was read in the garden under ominous grey skies, while I presided with my heart in my mouth. Fortunately, the rain held off.

11 Joseph A. Munitiz, "Synoptic Greek Accounts of the Seventh Council," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 32 (1974): 147–86; I took this to be intended for those training to be priests.

12 Thomas M. McCoog, ed., *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits: Essays in Celebration of the First Centenary of Campion Hall, Oxford (1896–1996)* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1996).

13 Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean, eds. and trans., *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings, Reminiscences, Spiritual Diary, Select Letters Including the Text of the Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996).

14 John R. Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy: The Costly Call to Christian Unity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999).

Another memorable visitor that year was the Scripture scholar Raymond Brown (1928–98), a good friend of Archbishop Quinn, and an engaging personality. Thanks to my good friend, Billy Hewett, S.J. (1932–2019), who was living with us and had the title of “tutor in spirituality,” we also invited René Girard (1923–2015) to lecture in the Examination Schools.

Those nine years in Oxford were very happy ones: perhaps I should have taken them more seriously, but I felt at ease, fully occupied with delightful company and work that fascinated me. I made mistakes, of course, and probably hurt more people than I realized, but I was sorry to leave. I never tried to teach during these years, but did have some graduate students to supervise, and I was lucky enough to be appointed to direct Barbara Crostini, whose work I have subsequently admired.

In September 1998, I handed over to Gerard J. Hughes, S.J., and left for a three-month sabbatical in Granada, Spain, where I could explore the Alhambra at my leisure, as I lived only a few-minute walk away, and the fine library of the theologate. In 1999, I moved to Cambridge and became acquainted with “the other place,” to my great pleasure.

How did your interest in Ignatius of Loyola and the early Society of Jesus start?

Very early during my years of Jesuit studies (philosophy and pedagogy) I had begun to use the Spanish I had acquired during my three years in Spain (1947–50). I had noticed that the *Spiritual Diary* of Ignatius had not been translated into English—though an English translation by William Young, S.J. probably existed even if unknown to me. I set to work on this difficult text and had a version ready by 1957 that I offered to the famous James Brodrick, S.J., (1891–1973), then working on his biography of Ignatius. Initially, he expressed interest (by letter) and it seemed that it would appear as an appendix to his work, but later, to my great disappointment, he decided not to take it. We never met.

Later, the person who most encouraged me was undoubtedly Billy Hewett, S.J., whom I had met as a fellow novice in 1950. Billy was a colorful eccentric, a man of enthusiasms—Basque music, the conversion of Ignatius that he worked into an original text with music, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89), Anthony de Mello, S.J. (1931–87), Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881–1955), Girard, Michael Ivens, S.J. (1933–2005)—and it was his enthusiasm that encouraged me to further work on Ignatius. He had organized Inigo Enterprises to produce his CDs and decided to expand into publishing: he knew of my early translation of the *Spiritual Diary* of Ignatius and offered to publish it in the Inigo

Texts Series.¹⁵ The next project was in collaboration with Michael Ivens, the gifted spiritual director who had been a friend since novitiate days, 1951. He selected seventy letters from the seven thousand published in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* and I set to work on them (asking the help of others for a few in Italian): these letters stood out among the business letters and gave some idea of the person of Ignatius.¹⁶

These publications led to the Penguin Classics volume mentioned earlier.¹⁷ That book owed very much to Philip Endean, S.J. who had a contact with the Penguin Classics editor. The suggestion came from him, and Philip offered to take care of the "autobiography" of Ignatius, which he newly (and rightly) re-entitled *Reminiscences*. We decided to include an existing translation of the *Exercises* made by William Yeomans, S.J., a former pupil of the great Catalan scholar, José Calveras, S.J. (1890–1964), but making a few alterations. My favorite example is the ending for the prayer, "Take, Lord, and receive," which comes in the "Contemplation for attaining love" (*Spiritual Exercises*, 234): here in place of "Give me your love and grace" (*amor y gracia*) I opted for "the grace to love," which reflects better the meaning (clarified in the Latin version).¹⁸ It should be stressed that this volume was very much a collaborative effort, to which many contributed.

Apart from texts immediately connected with Ignatius, I have always felt drawn to topics connected with the history of the Society of Jesus. Thus, when I came across the series of articles written by Sydney Smith (1843–1922) on the suppression of the Jesuits, I decided to collect them into a single volume.¹⁹ Since then, excellent work has been done on this topic, even if as a result the Sydney Smith approach now looks very inadequate. Again, as I felt scandalized by the Society's decision to exclude those of Jewish or Moorish descent, I was bold enough to take on Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) who at the request

15 Joseph A. Munitiz, ed. and trans., *Inigo: Discernment Log-book; The Spiritual Diary of Saint Ignatius Loyola* (London: Inigo Enterprises, 1988).

16 Joseph A. Munitiz, ed. and trans., *Inigo: Letters Personal and Spiritual* (Leominster: Inigo Enterprise, 1995).

17 Munitiz and Endean, eds., *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*.

18 The Spanish original reads "dadme vuestro amor y gracia," but the Latin Vulgate, approved by Ignatius, has "Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones." This shows that the "grace" is that of "love." [Editors' note: see David Coffey, "The Ignatian *Suscipe* Prayer: Its Text and Meaning," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 5, no. 4 (2018): 511–29, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-00504002> (accessed November 24, 2020).]

19 Sydney F. Smith, *The Suppression of the Society of Jesus*, ed. Joseph A. Munitiz (Gracewing: Leominster, 2005).

of Superior General Claudio Acquaviva (in office 1581–1615) had written in defense of that measure.²⁰ A work that I am very glad to have done was the translation of the retreat notes of Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (1907–91).²¹ While studying in Comillas, I had been much impressed by Ignacio Iglesias, S.J. (1925–2009) who edited these retreat notes, and although he did not live to see my translation, I intended it to be a tribute to him. As for Father Arrupe himself, although I did meet him on one occasion and even had a meal with him (and others) in Rome, as it was his custom to invite visitors to the Curia to his table, I had no personal contact.

The two books on Ignatius of which I am most proud are not really by me: the first is the translation I made, in collaboration with Alexander Eaglestone (1929–2007), of Gonçalves da Câmara's (c.1519–75) *Memoriale*.²² Alex had been a Jesuit, but on leaving the Society, he got married (Clare, his wife, became a good friend), moved to Brazil, and worked for the British Institute there for many years. He remained closely devoted to the Society, and when I began work on the *Memoriale* I realized I would need help with the parts written in Portuguese. Alexander was the ideal person to help me, and he set to work with enthusiasm. We were able to publish the book before his early death. For me, this diary kept for a year while Câmara was living with Ignatius, is the most revealing document of the personal life of Ignatius. The second book was only edited by me, but probably would never have appeared without me: *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* was written by Michael Ivens at the request of Billy Hewett. Michael was a perfectionist, who insisted on constant revisions and additions. Eventually, Billy and I persuaded him to let us have a first volume, while the additions on Ignatian terminology could form a second one. I then set about preparing the *Handbook for Retreat Directors* that was published by Billy, along with Gracewing (whose director, Tom Longford proved himself an excellent collaborator), in 1998.²³ After Michael's death, I was able to publish what I could find written by him on "Ignatian words" along with his election notes prior to his going blind.²⁴

20 Joseph A. Munitiz, "Francisco Suárez and the Exclusion of Men of Jewish or Moorish Descent from the Society of Jesus," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 73, no. 146 (2004): 327–40.

21 Pedro Arrupe, *Chosen by God: Pedro Arrupe's Retreat Notes, 1965*, trans. Joseph A. Munitiz (Oxford: Way Books, 2010).

22 Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz, eds. and trans., *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: The "Memoriale" of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara* (Leominster–St. Louis: Gracewing Inigo Enterprises–Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004).

23 Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary; A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Gracewing: Leominster, 1998).

24 Joseph A. Munitiz, ed., *Keeping in Touch: Michael Ivens, Posthumous Papers on Ignatian Topics* (Gracewing: Leominster, 2007).

Although work on these books began while I was still living in Oxford, they were completed after my move to the novitiate in Harborne, Birmingham (1999). My light duties there as "socius" (companion) to the novice master allowed me to frequent the University of Birmingham. Eleven very happy years were to pass. The university had an excellent Byzantine Institute, and thanks to Anthony Bryer (1937–2016), who gave me his whole-hearted support and friendship, I became an emeritus fellow and attended regularly the Greek-text reading sessions. Here, I met Ruth Macrides (1949–2019) and Dimitar Angelov, both distinguished scholars and eventually colleagues and good friends. It was during these years that I was able to finish the critical edition and translation of the *Erotapokriseis* (Questions and answers) of Anastasius of Sinai (630–701).²⁵ I was fortunate to have the advice of Werner Sieswerda, who had been working on a later version of this very popular work, which went through at least three major revisions.

Who is Ignatius of Loyola? What did you learn about him through your work on his writings?

Ignatius really came alive for me when I translated his spiritual diary. Before that, he was a historical figure, capable of extraordinary self-control (as when he underwent surgery on his leg) and able to attract followers in the service of Christ. But when I saw with my own eyes his account of contact with God, his familiarity with the Trinity, and came across the extraordinary statement, "I felt angry with the Blessed Trinity," he became a real person.²⁶

I felt I had discovered a very great man. However, it was the work of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara that provided the background details that showed him in action as superior general. Our common Basque links were a powerful added motive of interest. But it was important for me to realize that like all human beings, Ignatius had his weaknesses. A contemporary described him as a little man with laughing eyes. When somebody needed correction, Ignatius, ever the skilled courtier, would instruct someone else to do the correcting, so as not to lose face. His great critic, Melchor Cano (1509–60), accused him of being conceited, and he may well have given this impression, mainly because

25 Joseph A. Munitiz and Marcel Richard, eds., *Anastasii Sinaitae Quaestiones et Responsiones* (Turnhout–Leuven: Brepols–Leuven University Press, 2006); Munitiz, ed. and trans., *Anastasios of Sinai: Questions and Answers* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

26 Monday, February 18, 1544 (Munitiz and Endean, eds., *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 82).

he could be both straight-forward and devious, both with a twinkle in his eye. He loved a joke, as when one of his companions at table asked why toothpicks were provided when there was so little to eat.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of my work on Ignatius and the Society is that it has always been for me a “hobby.” It has been undertaken as a side-line to what I thought of as my professional work: the publication of critical editions of Byzantine Greek texts. This means that I have never felt anything more than an amateur.

What are your plans for the future?

As I moved into advancing old age, I retired from professional work for which I no longer felt I had the concentration and the energy needed. I had more time for translation work. By chance, the volume of Patrick Goujon (in French) on the interpretation of the letters of Ignatius was strongly recommended, and with some hesitation I gradually put it into English, publishing occasional chapters in *The Way*; I hope it will appear as a book.²⁷

New prospects of work opened up for me recently, when I happened to be in touch with Barton T. Geger, who is now a research scholar at the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College and general editor of *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*. He pointed out that no English translation exists of the early *Constitutions* (1541) that Ignatius began to draw up and discuss. This and allied documents would well repay study, and perhaps a collaborative project could be set under way.

I would like to conclude this interview with a simple remark. If one asks how Byzantine literature and Jesuit studies have intertwined in my work, it is not difficult to see the connection: in both there is a great respect for texts, which have to be as authentic as possible, and a great insistence on accuracy, which often requires great attention to detail.²⁸ Speculation comes second. Thus, as I found in my Oxford days, sheer hard work can produce wonders.

27 Patrick Goujon, *Les conseils de l'Esprit: Lire les lettres d'Ignace de Loyola* (Namur–Paris: Lessius–Editions Jésuites, 2017); English title: *Counsels of the Spirit: Reading the Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola* (Messenger: Dublin, forthcoming). The articles in *The Way*: “A Pedagogy of Consolation,” *The Way* 58, no. 2 (2019): 57–81; “Helping Others,” *The Way* 59, no. 3 (2019): 70–80.

28 In Ignatian studies, the scholar who has most impressed me is Prof. Terry O'Reilly in Cork, and I feel privileged to have had his support. [Editors' note: see Terence O'Reilly, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Contexts, Sources, Reception*, Jesuit Studies, 31 (Leiden: Brill, 2020).]