

EXTRACTS

SOME years ago a Jesuit Father was talking to the present writer about the Exercises of St Ignatius. He said that for a long time the Exercises had seemed to him to be 'straw' and he had failed to find any connection between them and the great Catholic tradition of spirituality and mysticism. It was only, he said, when he came across the work of Fr Przwara that light suddenly shone through the Exercises and he was able to see that they fitted into this tradition. The French Jesuits in their spiritual review *Christus (Cahiers Spirituels*, quarterly obtainable in England from 114 Mount Street, London, W.1 at 18s. per annum) have now methodically set about the task of revealing this tradition in the Exercises. The tenth number, April 1956, contains articles by Père Danielou, 'The Ignatian Retreat and Christian Tradition', Père Gelineau, 'The Liturgical Spirit of the Exercises', Père Giuliani, 'What did St Ignatius intend by the Exercises?', Père Guillet, 'Evangelical Prayer and Retreat', and several others, the titles of which show the design. Père Danielou cites many texts from the Greek Fathers that support the primary intention of St Ignatius to draw the Christian in retreat right away from all his worldly ties and prepare him for the direct working of the Holy Spirit. 'The retreat is set in relation with the unification of the soul', spoken of by the Fathers, on the 'simplicity' required by our Lord in the Gospels. By the process of separating himself from friends and business, from home and the pressing circumstances of the world the Christian attains to the freedom of spirit and the full exercise of his will which is necessary for following the movement of the Holy Spirit. As regards the liturgy Père Gelineau is not content to point to St Ignatius's love of the official prayers of the Church, nor to his directions that the retreatant attend Mass and Vespers every day.

We must go deeper and show that the Exercises, if we are to avoid reducing them arbitrarily to an interpretation investing them with a spirituality too independent of the liturgical life, draw the cream of their substance from the same source as the Church in her worship: the same spirit animates them and, the necessary difference being noted and the analogies respected, it is by a similar expression of the mystery and an analogous procedure that they both reach the same spirit.

The complexity of this statement of purpose shows that the task of linking the Exercises with the liturgy is not simple.