

«*Gravissimum Educationis*» and the Jesuit Theologians of Loyola Province, Spain

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Abstract: On October 28th, 1965, the *Gravissimum Educationis* was presented by Pope Paul VI and passed by the assembly of bishops. This declaration states: «In Catholic universities where there is no faculty of sacred theology, there should be established an institute or chair of sacred theology in which there should be lectures suited to lay students». On September 17th, 1967, the Faculty of Theology of Loyola, in the town of Oña (Burgos Province, Spain), was officially closed down. On the basis of the declaration on education passed at the Second Vatican Council, this Ecclesiastic Faculty of the Province of Loyola was moved to the Universidad de Deusto, in Bilbao (Basque Country, Spain). In the first part of this paper I present a careful study of the conflictive process of that move based on primary sources. In the second part I analyse the conditions that enabled the Jesuit theologians of the Province of Loyola living in Oña to carry out a rapid and effective reading of the *Gravissimum Educationis*.

Keywords: *Gravissimum Educationis*; Faculty of Theology of Loyola; Second Vatican Council; *Nouvelle Théologie*.

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1. Introduction

This paper analyses the immediate reception of the process of discussion and approval of the *Gravissimum Educationis* declaration by the Jesuit theologians from the Province of Loyola-Western Castile Province until 1962. Furthermore, it opens a particular line of study on how the Second Vatican Council was received in Spain. By reception, I mean not only the ability for interpreting a text, but also the response in the form of an action taken by a group of individuals at a point in history on account of certain ideas. The present article looks into the case of relocating the Faculty of Theology from the Province of Loyola, in the small town of Oña¹, Burgos, to the

¹ In 1880 the Society of Jesus funded in the historical monastery located in Oña, the north of Spain, a School of Philosophy and Theology. In the late 19th Century and early 20th, following Manuel Revuelta González: «The biggest community of Spanish Jesuits lived in the ancient benedict

Universidad de Deusto, in Bilbao, a large city in the Basque Country of northern Spain. I begin with the hypothesis that final approval for the move, announced by Father General Arrupe to the Provincial of Loyola on June 11, 1966, was greatly helped by the Oña theologians' fast interpretation and application of the changes that were being championed from the Vatican Council chambers in matters of higher education.

The theoretical tool used to develop this hypothesis differs from national or regional historiographical frameworks as the exclusive reference in the processes of receiving constitutions, decrees or statements from the Second Vatican Council, and especially from the *Gravissimum Educationis* declaration. Instead, what I consider here is the integration of the concept of «educational space» (VV.AA., 2016) as a transversal plane of reception based on the set of relations, interactions, channels of intellectual contamination and perceptions articulated in the Society of Jesus in the second half of the 20th century and that do not exclusively address the order regionally or nationally. As Joëlle Droux and Rita Hofstetter have addressed: «opening up to wider spaces produces valuable gains of knowledge and insightful perspectives in the field of education» (2014, p. 4). Therefore, the Society of Jesus is better analysed in this paper as a transnational educational space in which the theologians from the Province of Loyola participated and staked out the coordinates of the process of reception of the Second Vatican Council. Moreover, this education space holds a high degree of epistemological autonomy, without disregarding regional or national notions but running through them and resituating them in a more suitable plane of analysis.

The questions forming the framework of the article are: What was the evolution of the line of argument of the Loyola Province theologians for the purpose of forcing the move to Bilbao instead of to Madrid from 1961 to 1966? What was the importance the Second Vatican Council and the different «Schema» that ended up conforming the *Gravissimum Educationis* declaration on the line of argument being developed by the theologians from the Province of Loyola? What was the condition of possibility from a *longue durée* perspective (Guldi and Armitage, 2014) that enabled the theologians of Oña to make a fast and effective reading of *Gravissimum Educationis* and step back from the difficulties the Spanish Catholic institution had to the Second Vatican Council?

2. Opposition to the relocation from Oña to Madrid in the context of Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council had a significant impact on the entire institutional structure of the Catholic Church in Spain. However, the studies carried out in that regard all highlight the difficulties the leadership of the Spanish Church had in assimilating the core postulates discussed and passed in the different constitutions, decrees and declarations from the Council. In the words of Juan María Laboa,

monastery in Oña far away from the worldly noise» (Revuelta, 1991, p. 1162). In 1956 the Faculty of Theology in Oña moved to the facilities located in Loyola (Gipuzkoa, Spain), meanwhile the Faculty of Theology remained in Oña (Lera, 1981).

«just as the Second Vatican Council was for most of the Catholic countries a point of destination, for Spain it was a point of departure» (Laboa, 1988, p. 379) The ultraconservatism that characterized the participation of the Spanish bishops, a position Cardinal Tarancón called «outdated» (Descalzo, 1982, p. 108), has often led to the conclusion that the Spanish Church overall was a major hindrance holding back the lines of ecclesiastic and theological debate being opened, especially in Central Europe and America.

For the Catholic Church as a whole, the 1950s ended with Pope John XXIII's announcement in 1959 of a new ecumenical council. The lines shaping the council were structured in the months following the surprising announcement. The Pope expressed his wish to open the windows of the Church to be able to look out, and for the faithful to be able to look in. Michael Attridge has said that:

With regard to both content and method, Vatican II was turning point for Catholic theological education. From the standpoint of content, Catholic theologians readily divide the twentieth century into two periods, before and after Vatican II. The Council had such a powerful impact on Catholic theology that is content post-Vatican II was substantially different from before. From the standpoint of method, Vatican II marked the end of Neo-Thomism and the transition to much greater plurality, found in a variety of approaches (Attridge, 2017, p. 30).

The visit of the Secretary General of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, Father Paolo Dezza, to the Faculty of Theology in Oña in March 1961 (AHL-a, 21-24) marked the start of the process of relocating the Jesuit training centre in the north of Burgos. The new project for the Universidad Pontificia de Comillas determined that Madrid, as the capital city of Spain, was the proper place for theologians to carry out their work. From Dezza's point of view, Oña was not a suitable place for the Faculty of Theology (Lopetegui, 1981, p. 110).

After Dezza's visit in 1961, the plan to move the Faculty from Oña to Madrid was soon complete. The plan, which reflected with intention of the hierarchy of the Society of Jesus and the hierarchy of the Spanish Church, entailed creating a complex of Higher Education Ecclesiastic Faculties by merging the existing ones in Comillas, Oña, Loyola and Alcalá. Their report mentioned that this plan was «a sign of the times, which overwhelmingly tended toward coming together and joining forces on the national and supranational level in the political, economic, social and cultural order» (AGD-a, p. 7). As stated, the purpose was to organise a University of Ecclesiastical Studies that would become «a broader, more effective channel for developing their ministry of teaching» (*Ibid.*).

The advanced state of the Madrid relocation project presented in 1962 was as yet unknown to the teaching faculty at Oña. At the Faculty Council held on June 24, 1962, the prefect of studies asked the rector «to propose to the Provincial Father the convenience of reporting at least to the Council on the state of affairs on the merging of the Faculties» (AHL-a, *op cit.*, pp. 35-36). It is worth mentioning that scarcely a few days after this Faculty Council, a significant restructuring took place inside the Society of Jesus regarding the Spanish provinces, one that would lead to a major

change in the channels of communication open to the teachers in Oña. The new Province of Loyola was to include not only Navarra, Guipúzcoa, Álava and Vizcaya, but also Oña, despite the fact that Oña was geographically in Burgos, a region that belonged to the Jesuit province of Castile (ARSIa).

By the end of 1962, in Rome, the preparatory commission of *Studii et Seminari* of Vatican II presided by Cardinal Pizzardo, had finished six documents (ADCOVII-a, pp. 69-186). The third document, titled *De studiis academicis ab Universitatibus tum Catholicis tum Ecclesiasticis provehendis*, proved to be of great interest in the relocation process being considered for the Faculty of Theology in Oña. It stated: «Ideo in omni Catholica Universitate adsit Facultas Theologica [In Catholic University there should be established a Faculty of Theology]» (Ibíd., p. 123-126). At practically the same time, in October and November 1962, the Second Vatican Council took two major steps that foreshadowed the direction the assembly of bishops in Rome were inclined to take. The discussion that arose from the two outlines *De Fontibus Revelationis* (later, *Dei Verbum*) and *De Ecclesia* (later *Lumen Gentium*) clearly showed that the progressive positions had won out over the conservatives in the first few sessions of the Council.

In September 1963, the College of Higher Studies of Deusto was recognised as a University of the Church set up by the Holy See (BOE, p. 12486). To the Jesuits of Oña, this was an element to be taken into account in their rejection of the project of relocating to Madrid and their search for an alternative that considered relocating to Bilbao, where the Universidad de Deusto was situated. It suffices to mention that the work being carried out in Rome from the Commission of *Seminariis, de studiis et de educatione catholica* –a Council commission that continued its works after August 1962 for the preparatory of *Studii et Seminari*– insisted on the presence of Theological Studies at Catholic Universities: «Ideo in omni Universitare catholica studium sacrae Theologiae adsit, sive ut Facultas sive ut peculiare Institutum» [Let all Catholic Universities provide sacred studies of Theology, whether as a Faculty or a specific Institute] (ASSCOVII-a, pp. 953-961). In addition, on another plane of analysis were the significant strides being made in the Vatican II Council chambers. On December 4, 1963, the Council passed the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the *Inter mirifica* decree as yet another demonstration of the changes the Catholic institution was willing to face in its process of *aggiornamento*. This was the new setting in 1963 when the theologians of Oña tried to open a channel of dialogue with the Provincial of Loyola. In turn, this coincided with the delay in the project of relocating the Universidad de Comillas to Madrid. All this played into the hand of the theologians of the Province of Loyola for backing the option of relocating to the Universidad de Deusto as an alternative to Madrid.

On April 27, 1964, Paul VI gave the go-ahead to Schema 5, submitted by the commission *Seminariis, de studiis et de educatione catholica*. The title of this new, leaner outline was *Schema Propositionum de Scholis Catholicis*. It consisted of three parts: I. *Principia*, II. *De Scholis Catholicis in genere*, and III. *De Catholicis studiourum Universitatibus*. Stated in the third part was: «In omnibus Universitatibus catholicis habeatur Facultas S Theologiae, quae totius Universitatis veluti centrum sit, aut saltem S. Theologiae Institutum vel Cathedra, in qua lectionis laicis quoque studentibus aptatae trandantur» [Every Catholic University shall have a Faculty

of Theology, which shall be like the core of everything, or at least an Institute of Theology or Seat, at which to offer classes adapted to lay students] (ASSCOVII-a, op. cit., pp. 185-189).

The meeting held in Portugalete on May 10, 1964 was attended by Fathers Acebedo, Ibiricu, Arana, Echarri, Goenaga, Sheifler, Larrea, Elespe, Álvaerz, San María, Jiménez, Iturrioz, Sans and Uriarte. Everyone had read the report written by Father Sans before the meeting began. This document takes a line of argument that considered the need for a Faculty of Theology at the Universidad de Deusto in accordance with the Schema presented by the Vatican II commissions regarding the role of the Faculties of Theology. Thus, barely 13 days after Pope Paul VI approved the *Schema Constitutionis de Scholis Catholicis*, Sans's report gave a quick interpretation of what had been discussed in Rome:

In the *Schema Constitutionis de Scholis Catholicis*, drafted for the Second Vatican Council, section II on Catholic Universities prescribes the study of Sacred Sciences to be «totius Universitatis veluti anima», and Appendix II no. 3 urges the realization of this prescription.

The Schema merely states the natural requirements of an in fact Catholic University. It urges Catholic Theology to be the backbone of the other sciences. It also urges Theology to come into contact with the other branches of knowledge if it wishes not to be left at the wayside of life (AGD-b, op- cit., pp. 3-4).

Father Sans's document for the meeting in Portugalete clearly shows the detailed knowledge this group of Jesuits had of the debates underway in the commission *Seminariis, de studiis et de educatione catholica*. They were also aware of the commitment of quickly putting their postulated principles into practice. In the minutes of the meeting in Portugalete they note that «The existence of a faculty of theology will not be a product of the *Schema de scholis*; this organism must be a faculty because we may do so (P. Elespe). But the minutes also note that the Schema takes aim at the faculties, content with other lesser organisms when faculties are not possible to have (Iturrioz)» (AGD-d, p. 2). The vote taken at the end of the meeting shows that for the immediate legal incorporation of the faculty of Oña into the Universidad de Deusto, the decision «is unanimous in favour of the convenience» (*Ibid.*, p. 5).

Furthermore, there is every suggestion that the Jesuit theologians of Loyola were aware of the complicated situation before them once they agreed to work toward incorporating the Faculty of Theology of Oña into the Universidad de Deusto. Indeed, despite the fact that the Vatican II commissions were perceived as major support for tilting the scale for moving to Bilbao and not to Madrid, one of the most troublesome issues was political in nature. The rejection of the option of moving to Madrid, which was of particular interest to the hierarchy of the Spanish Church closest to the Franco government and the push for Bilbao and the Basque Country meant giving priority to a politically complex region that was largely opposed to the regime. It suffices to say that by the 1960s, the regime of the Franco dictatorship was able to identify major political sectors of opposition, with the Basque Country a top-ranking core of opposition in which the clergy was playing a large role. The letter sent by 339 Basque priests to the bishops of Vitoria, San Sebastián, Bilbao

and Pamplona in May 1960 had put the dictatorship on alert (Black 2009, p. 57). In it, the Basque priests denounced the lack of freedom and the violation of the rights of the Basque people by the Spanish State. Indeed, at the end of the minutes of the meeting in Portugalete, the Jesuit attendees shared the opinion that regarding their new plan to relocate to Bilbao, «one may expect an initial violent reaction (...), more than one will want to give a political interpretation to the incorporation (into Deusto)» (*Ibid.* p. 7).

On July 20, the «Anteproyecto para dotar a la Universidad de la Iglesia de Deusto de Facultades Eclesiásticas de Filosofía y Teología» [Draft Bill to endow the Church University of Deusto with Ecclesiastic Faculties of Philosophy and Theology] was sent to Padre Dezza. Coinciding with his visit to Madrid on July 24, 1964, Dezza met with Father Díaz de Acebo, Rector of the Universidad de Deusto, Father Ellacuría and Father Scheifler at the Jesuit's Casa Profesa in Madrid. The conversation took place from 3:300 pm to 5:10 pm (AGD-e, p. 8). At the interview, Dezza pointed out that the project to relocate to Madrid was proposed back in 1961 and had been approved in March, 1964 by all the provincials at a meeting in Madrid. Consequently, Dezza found their presentation of the plant to relocate to Deusto «improper and rather ignoble» (*Ibid.*, p. 1). In addition to his outright rejection of the alternative plan, another noteworthy fact was that an argument broke out at the meeting between Father Dezza and Father Scheifler on account of the Schema being discussed at the Vatican II meetings, which at the time of the conflict was key to discerning the future of the Faculty of Theology of the Province of Loyola:

Father Dezza replied that not all Catholic universities had ecclesiastic faculties: for instance, the Jesuit universities in the USA, nor does the Council want one, although it does not exclude that they can have them (...) Father Scheifler argued that the will of the Council displayed in the «Schema» is much more positive than a mere «does not exclude»; speaking of a faculty of theology as an ideal, as appears in the words «etsi non omnibus obligari potest ut habeant facultatem theologicam...». Father Dezza remarks that those words are not in the text but in the clarifications. Agreed; but clarifications to the text, which are supposed to show its true meaning. In the case of Deusto, it would only involve relocating an already existing faculty (*Ibid.*, p. 7).

From the perspective of the theologians of the Province of Loyola, the meeting with Dezza was a failure. It was clear they were unable to convince him of the option to relocate to Bilbao. Similarly, news from Rome regarding the evolution of the schemas on the upcoming statement of *Gravissimum Educationis* was less than encouraging. Pope Paul VI's approval of Schema 5 in April 1964 clashed with the argument voiced nearly unanimously in the Council chambers that this Schema was overly centred on Catholic schools and that a broader view of Christian education was needed. Nevertheless, the subject was too general to be handled superficially. And furthermore, by 1964 the Council had dragged on long enough and there was little time left for drafting a brief guideline for educational matters.

As a result, the Commission made another reworking of the document, which became Schema 6, titled *Declaratio de Educatione Christiana* (ASSCOVII-a, pp. 215-

218), which was distributed to the Council fathers at the commencement of the 104th General Congregation on October 19, 1964. This document was presented by Father Daem and approved in November 1964 in Council chambers. The main setback to the theologians from the Province of Loyola was that the reference to integrating the Faculties of Theology into the Catholic universities was omitted in Schema 6. The new orientation of the text dealt with the university question in two short points: *De Facultatibus et Universitatibus Catholicis* and *De scientiarum sacrarum Facultatibus* (sch 6, pp. 9-10) In fact, some of the comments made by Council priests on this schema mention that the text is unduly reduced. Consequently, the theologians from Oña set all their hopes on the outside chance that the text would once again be reworked in the few remaining months before the Council came to an end to prevent their final and imminent relocation to Madrid.

3. Superior General Pedro Arrupe's Decision

This context of discussion on educational matters in Council chambers from early 1964 until the drafting and approval of Schema 6 sheds light on the decision taken in 1964 by the Superior General of the Jesuits, Jean-Baptiste Janssens. The General then informed the Provincial of Loyola of his decision regarding not relocating from Oña to Deusto and his preference for Madrid. News of the Father General's decision was told to Father Scheifler during the meeting with Dezza in July 1964. Dezza told Scheifler: «The matter (of the move to Madrid) had been processed at a meeting of all the provincials of Spain, the last one held in March 1964, and after their approval of moving the Loyola and Oña faculties to Madrid, it received the approval of the Father General» (AGD-e, p. 1).

The death of Superior General Janssens on October 5, 1964 put a temporary hold on matters involving the internal decisions of the Society of Jesus. This clearly affected the preparations for the relocation of Oña. As of October, the Jesuit hierarchy's energies were focused on preparing a new General Congregation, the XXXI, to choose the new Superior General. In the context of the Catholic Church at this point, few had any doubt this appointment would prove crucial in the history of the order. By this time, the Second Vatican Council had already published the most important constitutions and there was every indication that the session arranged for autumn of 1965 would be the last and would mark the end of the historic event. Therefore, the new Superior General to emerge from the XXXI Congregation would be then one to lead the Society of Jesus in the post-Council years.

The appointment of Pedro Arrupe as Father General was most likely received as excellent news by the group of theologians from the Province of Loyola. The few hopes they held of relocating to Deusto instead of to Madrid were shored up by Pedro Arrupe's election, a well-known Jesuit, who had done much of pastoral work in Japan but had a strong biographical link with the conflict arising from the relocation of the Faculty of Theology of Oña. On one hand, Arrupe had been born in Bilbao and knew the Universidad de Deusto and its historical relation with both the city of Bilbao since 1886, but also with the entire Jesuit province of Loyola. On the other hand, Oña itself had a marked presence in Arrupe's spiritual biography. In 1931, just a few months before the Jesuit community was sent into exile to Belgium in 1932 as

a result of the banning of the Society of Jesus by the II Spanish Republic, Arrupe had commenced his studies in Philosophy at the Colegio Máximo of Oña. As he himself recounted on more than one occasion, it was at one of the faculty meetings where he heard the voice tell him, «you will be the first» (Lamet, 2014, p. 104).

This biographical link helps interpret the two decisions Arrupe took toward resolving the Oña conflict. On October 18, 1965, in an exercise in Salomon-like diplomacy, he maintained the Madrid relocation project while also declaring a halt to the process of dismantling Oña. Moreover, he made a formal request to the Holy Congregation for the legal incorporation of the Faculty of Oña into the Universidad de Deusto. In his letter, the Father General made no reference to the declaration on education from the Second Vatican Council. That point at least is clear, since they were still 10 days away from the Council's hasty and rather discouraged approval, due to its «tortured history» (O'Malley, 2008, p. 269), of the final text of the *Gravissimum Educationis* declaration. It is worth repeating Arrupe's own words in his letter addressed to the priests in the province of Loyola:

When I took on the position of General, I found the decision had long since been made for the relocation and creation of a Centre for Higher Ecclesiastic Studies in Madrid (...). After much thought, prayer and discussion with the Assistant Generals, it seemed to me that the best solution to the present moment was:

- 1) Assure a Faculty of Theology integrated in the Universidad de Deusto
- 2) Keep the plan to move Comillas to Madrid as had been approved so many times, i.e., with the collaboration of the Teaching Staff and Library of Oña (...).
- 3) Once the Centre in Madrid is established, if possible, there would be no problem opening another Faculty of Theology at Deusto (AGD-f, p. 2).

This letter represented significant support for the theologians of Oña and the Jesuits in the province of Loyola. The Superior General was in favour of «assuring a Faculty of Theology integrated in the Universidad de Deusto». The same ambiguity Arrupe expressed in his letter regarding the Madrid plan gave a degree of latitude to work up a new plan that would have enough backing. Even so, there was still one last twist to the deadlocked conflict that had ensued from the relocation of the Faculty of Theology of the Province of Loyola. Ten days after Arrupe sent this letter to the Jesuits of Oña, the Second Vatican Council passed the final version of the *Gravissimum Educationis* declaration. This version gave up the line in Schema 6. In 10b/1 it states: «In Universitatibus Catholicis in quibus Facultas S. Theologiae extet, Institutum habeatur vel Cathedra S. Theologiae, in qua lectiones laicis quoque alumnis accomodatae tradantur [In Catholic universities where there is no faculty of sacred theology there should be established an institute or chair of sacred theology in which there should be lectures suited to lay students]» (The Holy See Web, 2016). From that point on, the path was clear for the theologians of the Province of Loyola. They wasted no time drafting a new plan, which they submitted to Arrupe in June 1966. In it, titled «Report on the Faculty of Theology at the Universidad de Deusto»,

the first two items at the start of the document showed how quickly the Jesuits in Oña received and used the declaration on educational matters passed by Vatican II:

1. The Universidad de Deusto, founded canonically as a University of the Church and accredited by the Spanish State in 1963, had an overpowering need to complete its areas of study with a Faculty of Theology.

2. The fundamental reason moving it is the Declaration on Christian education from the Second Vatican Council, in which chapter 10-12 insists on cooperation and coordination among the many different Faculties of the Church and establishes the need for every University of the Church to have an organ empowered to provide a solid training in theology, and implicitly expressing the wish for Universities of the Church to complete their educational offerings with a Faculty of Theology (AGD-g, p. 1).

That same month of June, on the 11th, Arrupe replied to the plan drafted by the Jesuits in Oña in a letter addressed to the Provincial of Loyola: «With this letter I hereby authorise the theologians of Oña to move to the Universidad de Deusto to carry on with the ordinary courses in Theology» (AGD-h, p. 1). Hardly three months later, on September 8, 1966, the second period began of the XXXI General Congregation presided by Arrupe, which concluded on November 17th of that same year. In the resulting text, decree 28 titled «The ministry of education», point 24a states: «Among faculties that integrate higher education schools, let there be room first and foremost for theology and for philosophy, inasmuch, depending on the variety of places, contributes to the greater service of God». On September 17, 1967, the theologians of Oña left their place in Burgos and moved to the Universidad de Deusto, where they remain an integral part today. Likewise, as a result of Arrupe's Salomonic decision, most of the books in the library were taken to the Universidad de Comillas in Madrid. On October 28, 1967, Father Scheifler gave the inaugural lecture for the 1967/68 academic year at the Faculty of Theology of the Province of Loyola on the premises of the Universidad de Deusto with the following words:

The incorporation of the Faculty of Theology of Oña into the Church Universidad de Deusto fully responds to the Council's aspiration on Catholic universities. However, a faculty of Theology at the Universidad de Deusto was still a highly unusual occurrence in Spain (Scheifler, 1967, p. 579).

4. The Jesuit theologians of Loyola and the effective interpretation of Vatican II

The conflict I have analysed and which took place between 1961 and 1967 put to the test not only the negotiating skills of the parties involved, but also the possibility for the various sides in the dispute to make a quick and precise reading of the context of change that was sweeping the Catholic Church in the 1960s. In this scenario, it is of great interest to analyse the arguments brandished in each project presented. The argumentation featured in the plan from the theologians from Oña is the one that

shows a precise reading of the margin of possibility offered by the changing context not only in the Catholic Church in the course of the Second Vatican Council, but also in the Society of Jesus in the wake of the XXXI general congregation. Following the paper recently published by Joe Stafford, the declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* «must be understood in terms of Vatican II constitutions and the overall influence of the new theology and the meaning of the new style of discourse» (Stafford, 2017, p. 43)

Accordingly, the first report for relocation to Deusto presented by the theologians from Oña for the meeting in Portugalete in early 1964 is key. The language of the document is clearly influenced by the line of discourse in the Second Vatican Council, which had not yet come to an end:

The University of Deusto, set in one of the areas in Spain undergoing the greatest industrial progress, is in need of a vigorous theological philosophy to Christianize the most typical sign of our times. This theological philosophy is needed even more today, since Spain is now embarked on a broad plan for development, and thus, of increased standards of living. Meanwhile, theology today needs to be fertilized by the so-called «earthly realities». (...)

This contact between the ecclesiastical sciences of theology and philosophy and the technical world -which no Church university in Spain currently has- requires genuine cooperation, as stated above, at the university level with civil faculties, their particular schools and institutes, sound boxes of the theoretical world. (...)

The geographic location of the Universidad de Deusto places its ecclesiastical faculties of Theology and Philosophy as liaisons and gatekeepers of the influx of European religion in our nation, due to its proximity to the French border (AGD-i, p. 7).

A historical perspective must be taken in analysing the discourse of the theologians from Oña in arguing for the move to Bilbao. As of the 1950s, a significant portion of the teachers and students had begun working on a modern line of theological development. Professors Scheifler and Sans are two good representatives of the modern theology then being taught in Oña. The main manifestation of this opening up, innovative in the context of the Spanish Catholic Church in the mid twentieth century, is the journal *ÁBSIDE. Revista de Cruz y Pensamiento*, published and edited by the students of theology in Oña. The periodical enjoyed the support of many of the younger teaching staff, who in the late 1950s had gradually been joining the Faculty of Theology.

To understand the powerful presence of *Nouvelle Théologie* in the Colegio Máximo of Oña in the 1950s as a central element in the conditions of possibility for the theologians from the Province of Castile to receive Vatican II, one must first disregard any national or regional frameworks as first references of the reception of new theological ideas from Central Europe by the academic community in Oña. This therefore entails taking a first look at the educational space of the Society of Jesus. The space is transnational, with its own devices for contamination, transfer and reception of ideas. In this approach, more precise analysis can be made of the

context that led to a quick and effective reception of *Gravissimum Educationis* by the theologians from the Province of Loyola.

Given that the Province of Loyola was an enclave inside the Province of Castile in the 1930s, it is particularly worthwhile to analyse the exile to Belgium of every teaching centre run by the Society of Jesus of the Province of Castile in 1932. In fact, Belgium became the country with the greatest number of Spanish Jesuits. The scholars in Philosophy and Theology from Oña went to Marneffe (Liege), and were joined by the students from the provinces of Andalucía and Toledo, and the theologians of León. The novices and junior members of León and Castile settled in the town of Marquain, near Tournai. Similarly, the novices and juniors from Toledo and Andalucía settled in Tronchiennes/Drongen (Aldea, 2001, pp. 1288-1289). This time in Belgium gave the entire generation of Spanish Jesuits a chance to distance themselves from the political, social and economic upheavals that led to the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). At the same time, it put them in touch with the reality of the Church in Central Europe in the 1930s and the pastoral and theological undertakings of the Belgian Jesuits.

Special mention should be given here to the question of a progressive social ministry developed in Spain in the late 1940s and early 1950s by a new generation of Jesuits recently returned from exile in Belgium. The main results were the start of a movement called the Labour Brotherhood of Catholic Action, *Hermandad de Obreros de Acción Católica* (HOAC), and the creation of the Christian Labour Youth, *Juventud Obrera Cristiana* (JOC) (Puigserver, 2017, p. 84). Both groups were testimony of the influence of the time the Spanish Jesuits had spent in Belgium from 1932 to 1938. To delve deeper into the mission of the working class, academic spaces were opened that centred the debate on the socioeconomic hardships of the workers. An example of this was the biennial Studies on Sociology for Jesuits organized in Bilbao by the Universidad Comercial de Deusto (the predecessor to Deusto's Business School) in 1952 and 1953. Analysed from a historical perspective, this course held at Deusto put Bilbao front and centre as a reference point in Spain for the cutting-edge experimentation in ministering to working classes that had started in France and Central Europe in the 1940s. Meanwhile, on the left bank of the estuary in Bilbao, perhaps the most heavily industrialised region in all of Spain at the time, a large number of Jesuit students began to take part in SUT (University Work Service) that the Jesuit priest José María Llanos had initiated in 1950 inside the Spanish University Union SEU (Medrano, 1956, p. 1). Particularly relevant was the fieldwork pioneered by José A. Mateo in Bilbao, which as part of the SUT was aimed exclusively at priests and seminarians in 1955 (Armentia, 1956, p. 5). A key event in the development of this social ministry was the decision by the XXX General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 1957 that it was time to foment «even more and decisively the mission of the working class» (Society of Jesus, 1957).

The pastoral transformations underway in the working class world did not go unnoticed by the community of theologians from the Province of Loyola. At the Faculty of Theology, there was a new generation of professors and students working out the pastoral changes in theological terms. As mentioned above, what the exiled Jesuits learned in the years spend in Central Europe proved to be of great importance for the Spanish Jesuits who had teaching duties in the 1950s. Similarly,

the younger students from Oña showed clear interest in this subject, which, largely due to the works of theologians such as Marie-Dominique Chenu, became part of the new theological developments in *Nouvelle Théologie* (Arnal, 1986; Mettepenningen, 2010). Here, the journal *ÁBSIDE*, which was first published in 1956 from the Faculty of Theology at Oña, is the main historical source for studying the predominant position held by *Nouvelle Théologie* and pastoral work for the working class as one of the theological topics under discussion by Jesuits in the north of Spain in the 1950s. Moreover, as I have pointed out in a paper recently published along with Carl A. Lemke Duque «the pioneering impulses of theological renewal by the Jesuits in Spain must be understood not only in the light of the significant advance set by the *Nouvelle Théologie* but as well in close reaction to theological debates in the United States» (Igelmo & Lemke, 2018, p. 128). This all constitutes the intellectual context that made a quick and effective reading of *Gravissimum Educationis* possible.

5. Conclusions

The relocation of the Faculty of Theology of the Province of Loyola to the Universidad de Deusto opened a conflict on different levels in the Society of Jesus. In 1961, the decision was taken to leave the small town in Burgos and transfer teachers and students, library holdings, laboratories and archives to an urban setting. At first, the Jesuit hierarchy advocated integrating the Faculty in the new Higher Education project the Jesuits were planning on starting in Madrid by creating the Comillas university campus. However, when the teachers from Oña learned of this plan, they quickly reacted with the intention of incorporating the Faculty of Theology into the main Catholic university in the north of Spain: the Universidad de Deusto. In the end, Father Arrupe made the Salomon-like decision in 1966 that would move some of the library and archives to the Universidad de Comillas in Madrid and the teaching staff to the Universidad de Deusto, where studies in theology would be taught from then on. An analysis of the correspondence and reports written up by the people who took part in the conflict makes clear not only the internal tensions in the Society of Jesus, but also the rapid interpretation made by the theologians from the Province of Loyola of the Council declaration *Gravissimum Educationis*.

The celerity with which those in Oña followed the evolution of the many different Schema the preceded the declaration on education from the Second Vatican Council is a meaningful fact. The tendency to consider that Spain's reception of Vatican II was hampered by a lack of preparation in the Spanish Church as a whole, as per what we have expounded here, is does not reflect the complex reality faced by the different sectors of the Spanish Church in the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, by examining how the theologians of the Province of Loyola took part in the educational space of the Society of Jesus, a space that crosses national and regional liens of analysis, we find historiographical elements of great importance to the study of the process of reception of the *Gravissimum Educationis* declaration in the context of Spain. Therefore, when considering the conditions of possibility for the rapid reception of *Gravissimum Educationis* by the theologians of the Province of Loyola, it is important to bear in mind the fact that prior to the start of the Second Vatican Council, the theologians of Oña already knew the theological concepts of *Nouvelle Théologie*.

This integration was carried out on a foundation of the exile in Belgium and contact with the political, social and cultural reality of the Church in Central Europe and experimentation with the new pastoral work aimed at the working class.

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