

## AT THE FRONTIERS

**F**OR OUR NEXT ACT. *Sentire cum ecclesia* is getting more complex even as it gets more urgent. A report from Malta's Fr Vincent Magri suggests what is happening even in traditionally Catholic countries. "Maltese society has changed. The presence of the Church in Maltese society has also evolved. Although Church and State have not always been in agreement, yet the hierarchical Church always exercised great moral influence on the faithful and on the governing bodies." Not any more. "Maltese society is fast becoming pluralist, multi-cultured, and multi-religious. It is not as homogenous as it was before." This inclines people to be less positive about the Church and its teaching, "less inclined to adhere to the Church's law, at least not without criticism, and ... less afraid to make up their own minds." A report on Catholic Ireland further along in these pages suggests much the same thing. So what is the "proper attitude within the Church" that Jesuits and their ignatian colleagues expect themselves to have? The next act may be to turn to the source again, and Fr Magri may find help in Fr Kolvenbach's examination of the rules *sentire cum ecclesia* in today's Church. Contact: Fr Vincent Magri S.J. vince@maltajesuitretreats.com

**W**HO DO TAKE VODOO SERIOUSLY are liable to be mocked everywhere. But in Haiti, the mockery has ended. The story is this: During three whole centuries, both Church and government banned voodoo on all the grounds that come vividly to mind. The ban was about as effective as government bans usually are – not at all. And then, about a year ago, the government recognized voodoo as a legally protected religion. So Catholic clerics began dialoguing with voodoo devotees. The Church in Haiti followed that dialog into "a more or less peaceful cohabitation" with voodoo, according to theologian Kawas François, S.J. He thinks, however, that the truce disguises some grave weaknesses in the Church's attention to people's religious needs. He argues: "It seems clear that Church authorities' concern has passed over to social questions, particularly the socio-economic and the political." Just now, this focus may be understandable. But Haiti's voodoo may be just the crudest and

earliest excrement of religious roots deep in people's souls. Unattended to, those deep roots produce tares and dandelion that corrupt the crop of Church social and political teaching. His concern should be voiced in every society: Is it too much to ask what the post-conciliar Church offers to believers who want to call God to their everyday help, to fill their daily needs and dearest desires? The "prayer of the faithful" – intended to be the faithful telling out what they need – has in most places simply glaciated. Who does novenas any more, or promotes family prayer in the home? What are local Churches holding out to grassroots Catholics in place of slitting chickens' throats and flinging gris-gris around? Mockery is no longer a satisfactory response, and not only in Haiti. Contact: P. Kawas François, S.J., Directeur du Centre de Réflexion et de Recherche Interdisciplinaire, kafranc@yahoo.fr

**THE ADVERB PROBABLY MEANS QUIETLY.** Since the new Centro de Espiritualidad Pedro Arrupe (CEPA) in Cuba was launched right in the middle of Havana, it was launched "intimamente." During a little more than two years of quiet work, a group of Jesuits, religious, and laity analyzed the social and ecclesiastical realities in Cuba to identify a mission for the Center. They concluded this last February that the need is for experiences that promote the process of personal growth in all of its dimensions, through ignatian spirituality and methodology which would be freeing and which would move people's lives towards greater humanity, justice, and solidarity. The CEPA will do all the things that centers do: offer Exercises, courses and workshops, and formation for prayer guides and spiritual accompanists. It will also offer formation for those who run the CEPA, reflection session on the relationship between faith and life, and interreligious dialogue. The center will be at Villa San José in Havana, once the Jesuit novitiate. Considering all this talk about freedom, greater humanity, justice, and solidarity, the "intimamente" seems no more than quiet prudence on the part of some courageous spirits. The director is P. Juan de Dios Hernández Ruíz. Contact: Villa San José / Calle G # 410, Esq. 19 / 10400 Vedado, La Habana, Cuba.

**THE WORDS OUR SAVIOR TAUGHT US,** used a million times daily in the Mass, are meant to console. They are meant to do something else, too,

according to a Jesuit center's social policy statement: "Zambia's Poverty Eradication." Here's the reasoning:

"What about this phrase, 'poverty eradication' – is not that a bit idealistic, even quite unrealistic, especially in our context of Zambia, or of wider Africa? Let us make some appropriate distinctions and then conclude why we believe we must keep that phrase of 'poverty eradication' as our solid guide. ■■■*Poverty alleviation* – this is the work of lessening the suffering of the poor, meeting their immediate pressing needs. Welfare, handouts, social security, safety nets, etc. Deal with the widows and the orphans, the elderly and the handicapped. This is basically the assistance of charity. ■■■*Poverty reduction* – this is the task of lowering the numbers of those living below the poverty line, eliminating them from the rolls of the deprived. Provide them with jobs, with health and education service, with opportunities to rise above the poverty line. This is, basically, the commitment of development. ■■■*Poverty eradication* – this is the challenge of restructuring society so that the impoverished disappear, the immense absolute numbers decrease to minimal exceptional cases. This calls for planning, for priorities, for shifts in power, for restructuring society, for "revolution." This is, basically, the transformation of justice.

"Now why would we insist that in our policy debates and decisions we focus on poverty eradication? Let us give a parallel case. Let us compare poverty to sin. For example, the sin of corruption, or adultery, or racism, or sexism. All serious evils, all to be condemned, all to be overcome with God's gracious help. ■■■*Sin alleviation* – corruption or adultery, racism or sexism, continues, but we lessen its impact on people who might suffer its consequences. We comfort the sinned-against but do not confront the sinners. ■■■*Sin reduction* – we try our best to lessen the instances of corruption and adultery, racism, and sexism. We pass restrictive laws, we educate and promote moral development to reduce the numbers of sin. Adultery only three times a month, not three times a week. ■■■*Sin eradication* – we work to change the attitudes of hearts and the structures of society that make sin present, that encourages and facilitates corruption, adultery, racism, and sexism. While recognising the universal and lasting presence of 'original sin,' we promote a conversion that would do away with its influence and its suffering.

"Now we know that it is not possible to completely eradicate sin in

this, our human vale of tears. We have no heaven on earth! Yet this is an ideal that we labour to achieve, that we struggle to establish. Because we have a vision of honesty, of fidelity, of respect for human dignity, we do not rest with only alleviating the suffering of sin or reducing its numerical instances. No, we commit ourselves to eradicating the sin, with a cooperative effort to realise the ideal that we pray for every day:

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!”

Parallels do not prove anything. But this one between poverty eradication and the eradication of sin might come to mind the next time we say the words our Savior taught us. Contact, for those who are unnerved and any who want to argue: P. Peter Henriot, S.J., Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, Lusaka, Zambia. phenriot@zamnet.zm

**P**OSTMODERN LIFE CALLS FOR INFORMED COLLABORATION. So “Laicos Ignacianos” of Chile must be totally postmodern. Here is their mission state-ment: “To seek out and invite men and women who feel themselves drawn to ignatian spirituality or are already somehow connected with it, to collaborate and deepen their lay vocation, to grow in belief in Jesus Christ, and to embrace the call that God gives to each and every one to serve others as valid apostles of and witnesses to Christ.” The means they chose to fulfill this mission begin with a fine, very full web page. It gives current news, lists formation and prayer opportunities, reports ongoing and start-up projects to help others, and makes many documents available. The organizers are creating a network of colleagues, and eventually expect that they will hold meetings and reunions. The committee is headed by Felipe Arteaga, Vice-rector of the Universidad Alberto Hurtado, and the project is being coordinated by Cristián Del Campo and Cristiana Fuenzalida. For a model of postmodern ignatian collaboration, open [www.laicosignacianos.cl](http://www.laicosignacianos.cl)

**O**UT FRONT IN THE OUTBACK, or anyhow a good success in Australia. Fr John Reilly of Campion House in Melbourne has offered the complete Exercises in Daily Life to priests while they continued serving their parishes. Others have ambioned doing it, but the commitment is daunting: The priests, to pray an hour every day and reflect in the evenings; and Fr Reilly, to visit them in their parishes regularly (long trips

– Australia is not little). Fr Reilly reports that none of the five who made the commitment dropped out and as time went on, “more and more, the exercitants reported how their morning prayer and evening review interacted with their ministry and ordinary life.” Fr Reilly hasn’t dropped out, either, because “the fruitfulness I see in this way of proceeding is well worth the extra travel on my part.” So much so that, from Easter to November of 2004, he is extending the program to four dioceses and the Ukrainian Eparchy of the state of Victoria. Not wasted time: “Enquiries are coming already.” Other kinds of enquiries go to Fr Reilly at [jgreilly@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jgreilly@ozemail.com.au)

**P**LENTY ROOM UNDER THIS TENT. Jesuit-lay collaboration, as it functions just now, is a big tent firmly held up by the laity’s vocations and tied off at the skirts by the apostolic needs and opportunities of Jesuit secondary schools, spirituality centers, universities, parishes, and social justice initiatives. There must be tensions to keep all this standing, of course, but the California Province has taken it as a grace. Back in 2002, the province invited all of the collaborators in all its Jesuit-sponsored works to start looking, analyzing, and dialoguing on the state of collaboration in their own ministries. The province helped with materials for six structured sessions of prayer and reflection. The colleagues talked about definitions and about their collaborations’ histories. Then they dealt with some contentious issues and finessed obstacles in order to describe what successful collaboration might look like and how it might change their ministries.

Then the big tent, the province annual retreat in the Fall of 2003. Jesuits invited their lay colleagues to pray with them for the first days. Five hundred collaborators shared the results of their prayer and reflection in “Convocation 2003: The Future of Partnership in Ministry,” held at Loyola-Marymount University in Los Angeles. The group included fifteen lay colleagues from each of the province’s three universities, twelve from each of its six secondary schools, and five from each of more than a dozen parishes and other ministries, plus 250 Jesuits. They listened and prayed together for four days, partly in plenary session (with input for prayer) and partly in ministry groups. And then the Jesuits stayed together for three more days, thinking about what they had heard, praying, and

planning what to do next. Whatever they do next, they will do in collaboration. The convocation's plan and structure rose out of local structures and was designed to strengthen them. No structure can make the heavy questions light: What fits into real collegiality? and How do we make room for our separate vocations? Quite aware of that, each team went back to start again on definitions, histories, contentions – and to do it a bit better in its own ministry. That's how these tents get held up. Contact: Executive assistant Fr Alfred E. Naucke, [anaucke@calprov.org](mailto:anaucke@calprov.org) and the pro-vince webpage: [www.calprov.org](http://www.calprov.org)

**SHEPHERDING THE SHEPHERDS.** The first Latin-American workshop for the formation of Jesuits in the parochial ministry was offered at the Jesuit theologate in Bogotá from 5 to 26 February. There were fifteen participants from eight provinces and two regions of Spanish-speaking Latin America. The coordinator was Fr Roberto Oliveros, who heads the Pastoral Sector of the Conference of Provincials of Latin America (CPAL). The purpose was to achieve a better assimilation of the characteristics of the Jesuit parish as they had been laid out in a document drawn up by the Conference. The method used was that of a seminar, aimed at creative sharing among the participants. The pastors were aided by a qualified team of Jesuits from various apostolic sectors, so as to promote exchange as an apostolic body. A second round of the workshop will be offered for the Jesuits of Brazil. More information, and that document from CPAL, can be supplied by Fr Luis Fernando Klein at [lfklein@cpalsj.org](mailto:lfklein@cpalsj.org)

**A FAMILY REUNION OF SORTS** gathered in southern India at the beginning of 2004. Religious women and men whose congregations were founded by Jesuits met at the retreat house in Chennai, Dhyana Ashram, for a two-day seminar on ignatian spirituality. For historical reasons, the ignatian congregations are many, and some of their history might be instructive at present. Fr Pierre de Medaille (1610 - 1669), for instance, is said to have had a hand in the creation of forty-two congregations. He certainly had a hand in the Congregation of St Joseph of Le Puy, creating a rule of apostolic life outside of cloister for women who, sponsored by the bishop, started a hospital for the poor. When Fr. Medaille's superior described the project in his regular annual report to Fr Francisco

Piccolomini, this father general was astonished at a “project which is not in accord with our institute.” As it happened, the project and the rule endured as the provincial went out of office and Fr Piccolomini went to his Maker. What did not go away is the question of how that Rule, and the many like it, apply ignatian spirituality. That’s the business of getting back to roots. So the participants in Chennai looked into the *Autobiography* and the “Spiritual Diary,” read some letters of Ignatius, and reviewed the dynamics of *Spiritual Exercises*. The participants may need to look at other documents and practices, too, but only they can say what these might be. To keep this initiative going – the seminar in Chennai was well attended and appreciated – Fr Victor Arulappan (a participant in Rome Consultation 2004) reports that the retreat house will schedule another seminar, longer this time and at the national level. Surely there are other family stories to be heard, interesting even if they do not involve the untimely demise of a father general. Contact: Fr Victor Arulappan, S.J., +91-044 2494 2821.

**GROUP PHOTOS** blur individual details to get the whole group into the picture. On the same principle, the full sweep of an ignatian center’s yearly program blurs concrete details a bit but creates a good image of a center. The program for 2004 of the Centro Ignaciano de Espiritualidad de Argentina gathers in three kinds of activity: 1) Spiritual Exercises and Retreats, a total of ten, for university students and young professionals, engaged couples, adults, and religious. 2) The School of Spiritual Exercises for laity, religious, and priests who want to deepen their apostolic work with the dynamic of the Exercises. In 2004, the second year of this two-year course will be offered in three places: Buenos Aires (the first Saturday of the month, three and a half hours, eight times from March to November); Córdoba (five days in March) and Mendoza (three five-day meetings, Fall, Winter, and Spring). The first year of the two-year course will begin again in 2005. 3) Workshops and Seminars in Spirituality, a dozen events.

Who does all these things? The team of the CIEA includes Jesuits Gustavo Antico (Director), Enrique García (Executive Administrator, participant in Rome Consultation 2004), six other Jesuits, two lay women, and the religious Hermanas Esclavas de Cristo Rey, who manage the

retreat house Villa San Ignacio. There it is: one group looks a lot like another, but details are sometimes intriguing. Contact: Br Enrique García Fernando, secretario del CEIA , Administrador del Centro. queto@jesuitas.org.ar

**T**ERRORISM MAKES EVERYONE TENSE but it may be hardest on devout Muslims. They are caught in the middle, liable to be intimidated by Islamophobic propaganda and headlines like this one: “Islamic Bomb Plot Foiled.” How does their faith help them? The Muslim Council of Britain – more or less the equivalent of a Catholic Bishops’ Conference – answered the question in a circular letter to the leaders of the mosques in the United Kingdom. Beginning with a greeting in the name of God, the Council wrote plainly and firmly about Islamic faith. It finds no religious justification for terrorist attacks: “The Words of the Qur’an are clear: ‘He who killed any person, unless it be a person guilty of manslaughter, or of spreading chaos in the land, should be looked upon as though he had slain all mankind, and he who saved one life should be regarded as though he had saved the lives of all mankind.’” (Qur’an, 5:32).

The Council did not stay with doctrinal generalities. “Convey the above message in your Friday sermon and bring awareness to our community [especially to our youth] of our duties and obligations in combating any threat to peace and stability.” The leaders must “observe the utmost vigilance against any mischievous or criminal elements from infiltrating the community and provoking any unlawful activity.” Give the fullest cooperation to the police, particularly when tragedy strikes. Make proactive contacts with the media to clear up misconceptions about Islam and the Muslim community, and open channels with other faith communities to help guard the civil order. None of this is mere politics. It is the teaching of the faith: “Help one another to virtue and God-consciousness and do not help one other to sin and transgression” (Qur’an, 5:2). “Lastly, but most importantly, seek Allah’s help and support and pray for His guidance and protection all the time.” The Council couldn’t say so, but, if one follows Jesus Christ, one might examine one’s conscience about who one’s “neighbor” is (Luke 10).