

# INTRODUCTION

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## *Helping souls and the intellectual apostolate*

The first 2006 issue of the *Review of Ignatian Spirituality*, entitled “Faith that does justice, justice that seeks God”, dealt with the social apostolate and its spirituality. We thought it useful to do the same with another important area of the Society’s ministries, namely the intellectual apostolate. We invited fellow Jesuits involved in diverse areas of this apostolate to reflect from their own apostolic perspective and share their views on the deep link between Spirituality and the Intellectual Apostolate in the Ignatian tradition. To motivate the exploration of the theme, we invited them to consider questions like:

- What aspects of Ignatian spirituality are highlighted in your Jesuit intellectual way of life?
- How would you describe the typical periods of spiritual light and the typical periods of spiritual darkness often associated with this apostolate?
- How can your research (in its specific area: astronomy, bio-ethics, biology, etc.) be a channel of God’s grace in your life, and in the life of others?
- How does the commitment for faith and justice shape the way Jesuits should envision the spiritual dimension of their intellectual output?

The background to these questions can be appreciated better in the light of the major trends of Jesuit documents regarding the learned ministry in general and the

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intellectual apostolate in particular. Consider, for instance, the following four extracts that span a period of about thirty years:

**Pedro Arrupe, S.J.**

***“The intellectual Apostolate in the Society’s Mission Today”, Dec.26, 1976:***

*[There is] the need for a fresh approach to the intellectual apostolate today. [We need to] discover a new style of apostolic intellectual involvement [...]. All Jesuits involved in intellectual work are invited, as are the rest of the Society, to a conversion of their mode or style of life [...]. A witness of poverty, appropriate to the existing circumstances, is not only possible, but necessary, in the intellectual apostolate.*

**GC 34, Dec. 16**

***“The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries”, Sept. 1995:***

*Since its foundation, the Society has held intellectual labour in high esteem, as a significant contribution to the discovery of the creative work of God and to the recognition of the legitimate autonomy of human inquiry. This tradition of the Society is particularly relevant today within the context of urgent issues confronting us in our mission. [...The] characteristics challenges of the intellectual apostolate [i.e. professional formation and competence, legitimate and responsible autonomy and freedom in teaching and research, active companionship with others form part of the way of life of intellectual apostolate] require that each of us acquire the ability to live the creative tension between profound insertion into all the details of our work and an open and critical attitude towards other points of view and other cultural or confessional positions. However, acceptance of such tension must not lessen our witness of personal commitment to the service of the Church in its journey towards the Kingdom of God.*

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**Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.**

***“The five apostolic preferences of the Society of Jesus”, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003:***

*The third apostolic preference is the intellectual apostolate. The 34<sup>th</sup> GC in decree 16 reaffirmed the special importance of the intellectual dimension of our apostolic action, of the ‘intellectual quality of each of our apostolic works’ (GC 34, 394). Throughout its history, the Society has remained faithful to a fundamental intuition of Master Ignatius: his awareness of the great impact of learning and teaching. On the one hand, learning conquers ignorance, confusion, and prejudice with respect to the Creator and Saviour of the world; on the other hand, it brings the gift of Christ, with His good news and values, to a world in search of truth and love.*

**Pope Benedict XVI**

***“Address to the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Jesus”, Vatican Basilica, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 2006:***

*This ecclesial characteristic [i.e. to serve the Church in the most beneficial way possible], so specific to the Society of Jesus, lives on in you and in your apostolic activities, dear Jesuits, so that you may faithfully meet the urgent needs of the Church today. Among these, it is important in my opinion to point out your cultural commitment in the areas of theology and philosophy in which the Society of Jesus has traditionally been present, as well as the dialogue with modern culture, which, if it boasts on the one hand of the marvellous progress in the scientific field, remains heavily marked by positivist and materialist scientism. Naturally, the effort to promote a culture inspired by Gospel values in cordial collaboration with the other ecclesial realities demands an intense spiritual and cultural training.*

Building on such insights and recommendations, the contributors to this issue explore the spirituality of the intellectual apostolate from various angles. Some contributions tend to be more narrative in style, merging personal experiences with insights on the subject. Others tend to be more

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theoretical. The first one is by *Fr. General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach*, who discusses devotion and knowledge, *pietas* and *eruditio*. This double-concept was already important at the University of Paris when Ignatius and his companions studied there. Nevertheless, they gave an original interpretation to *pietas* in line with what Ignatius had already discovered in his own existence: devotion is not only a purely interior attitude but also a deeply apostolic one. Kolvenbach shows how theology in the Society thus becomes itself an apostolic enterprise. *Bernard Sesbouë* examines some great theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and uncovers the specificity of an Ignatian way of doing theology: apostolic and missionary, traditional and open, but always spiritual. *João Batista Libanio* develops the simultaneous movements towards the divine (faith) and towards incarnation in history (justice), movements that are both present in the Spiritual Exercises. These movements justify the need for continual discernment regarding faithfulness toward the *sensus fidelium* and towards the *magisterium*. In the following paper, “Philosophy, experience and the spiritual life”, *Louis Caruana* reflects on the distinction between a representational kind of philosophy and a sapiential one. From this difference, he draws some conclusions regarding the spirituality of the intellectual life as he contrasts a Thomistic view and an Ignatian view. The former shows a certain caution as regards interacting with the world whilst the latter favours heuristic courage as regards such interaction. *David Coghlan*, in the following contribution, seeks to articulate the spirituality of academic life by using insights drawn from his work in organisational development and from the Jesuit way of proceeding. The final two papers are by natural scientists: *Ignacimuthu Savarimuthu*, a biologist, and *José Funes*, an astronomer. Ignacimuthu holds that the experimental and reductionist biological methods are enriched and enlivened by the intuitive approach of spirituality. Thus, the Ignatian ‘Contemplation to attain love’ becomes a bridge between the Spiritual Exercises and the world. Funes reflects on his spiritual experience in relation to two challenges that astronomy faces today: the challenge concerning intelligent design and the one involving science and global justice. He reflects on his various roles: as witness, as a member of an apostolic body, as a collaborator with others, and as a bridge between the scientific world and the Church. Finally, *Kevin T. FitzGerald* reflects on the wide and complex challenges in the fields of bioethics today. The insights of Ignatian discernment to this often confused and highly contentious arena help to bring true hope.

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