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SEEKING PEACE IN A VIOLENT WORLD

Workshop on Violence and War: Cultural and Economic Interests

Social Justice Secretariat

SEEKING PEACE IN A VIOLENT WORLD
NEW CHALLENGES

Workshop on Violence and War: Cultural and Economic Interests

Santa Severa 4 – 17 September

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PRESENTATION

MUSINGS ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE WORKSHOP

Fernando Franco SJ

It is with a certain amazement and wonder that I attempt to sketch the main objectives and the process of the 'International Workshop on Violence, War and Peace' held at the retreat house of Santa Severa overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Remembering the one whole year of preparation with its moments of ecstasy and despair, its peaks and troughs, I wonder at the resilience and faith of those who laboured hard to bring it to fruition. Not fully detached from the experience of the 15 days spent with a group of wonderful people, I am still amazed at the way God led us through paths that I, at least, had not fully imagined. If there is a regret, it is the lingering sadness of not having trusted God and the group more fully.

Two preoccupations shared with the Regional Coordinators at our annual meeting in Rome as far back as 2003 lie at the source of this Workshop. The first is obviously related to the worldwide emergence of new forms of violence, conflict and peace- initiatives located with a special virulence and intensity in the African continent. Into this concern one had to factor in the increasing obsession with national and international security vis-à-vis the phenomenon of terrorism. From a global point of view, war and terrorism have a considerable impact on the twin goals of achieving a better life for all, and increasing respect for human dignity. More specifically, in the context of Africa, one is overwhelmed by the certitude that, years from now, when the history of Africa is written, future generations may understand the devastating effects of a new and more subtle form of colonialism that sacrificed at the altar of a secure access to natural resources the lives and dignity of entire countries and communities.

The second concern had an inward-looking character. Reflecting on the situation of the social apostolate during the last years, we came to the conclusion that we were short of that creativity and brilliant social analysis that helped the Church at the beginning of the 20th century to grapple with the social problems of the emerging working force. It is true that many false idols and ideologies have been broken, but our response to these new changes seemed to be somewhat blunted by an outdated methodological approach and by conceptions still anchored in prejudice and antagonism. In a complex and interconnected world some of us appear still trapped in the ideological battle between those who are right (we) and those who are wrong (they). How could we integrate critical analysis with the spiritual and human tradition embedded in the Spiritual Exercises? Could the fact of being rooted in our Jesuit way of life not become a new methodological tool in finding our response to the urgent challenges of our time?

These two main preoccupations were the leading lights in our search for a way of dealing as an apostolic body with the issue of war and peace. The path had in a sense to be made as we started walking. A meeting with a small group of Jesuits in Leuven served to test the validity of our concerns and check the feasibility of our dreams. It was around these fiercely disputed sessions that some basic assumptions began to emerge.

A Workshop of this kind had to address mainly the concerns of young Jesuits; it had to respond to the challenges they perceive and the changes they envisage. Right from the start the concern for including the extended 'Ignatian family' was very much present. I had problems with this concept because of its Western bias. In a non-Christian world, our lay collaborators come from different cultural and religious backgrounds and the term has very different resonances. It soon became evident that the Workshop had to include lay partners and acknowledge that they are one of the mainstays of the social apostolate.

With the same force we had to accept that women form a significant group among those who share our apostolic dreams and participate in our work. Their contribution has not been sufficiently understood nor their specific role acknowledged. We were quickly in agreement that some women partners had to be part of the Workshop. This led us to stipulate that at least half of the lay persons participating in the Workshop should be women.

Soon in our reflections we were confronted by the challenge of 'difference.' Increasingly the social reality confronting us all over the world is the challenge of constructing multi-cultural societies capable of finding new rules for living together. The analysis of a global issue like conflict and war, explained by some as a clash of civilisations, could not be dealt with by a group of persons coming from the same country, or region, living their commitment in similar cultural patterns, and having similar intellectual positions. If the challenge of difference had to be tackled head on we had to aim at a group that was truly representative of the cultural diversity existing today in the world and the Society.

Cultural diversity was not our only concern. We have tended in the past to discuss issues and analyse problems with a close and familiar group, with those we felt were already 'initiated' into our own way of thinking, who shared our methodology, and who belonged decidedly to our camp. Ideological divisions, as we know, have played, and still continue to play havoc with our common sense of purpose. Rather than avoiding ideological confrontation, a Workshop on conflict had to create spaces and conditions where ideological conflict could be creatively dealt with.

We were confronted also with another 'traditional' difference that has inflicted much harm to the social sector: the distinction between academics and activists. For years we have moved on parallel, if not colliding paths, and were quite content to live our separate lives and fight our noble battles until the world changed radically one evening in Berlin. We seem to be challenged now by densely complicated issues whose solution requires the ability to put together a set of heterogeneous actors ready to come up with a solution. Wee took a conscious decision of including in the Workshop both academics and activists, convinced that many Jesuit intellectuals are involved in many types of activism, and that activists more and more are involved in reflection and soul-searching.

We were also aware that many intellectuals and practitioners of peace studies (and of development studies) have been insisting that, on some crucial issues related to peace, human rights and development, different theoretical approaches seem to converge rather than diverge. The urgency to solve issues related to access to water, education, sanitation and health has resulted in favouring the adoption of a stakeholder approach to resolve conflicts and find solutions. Global interconnectedness has taught us, we argued, that solutions can only be arrived at by the consensus of many diverse interests, by the creation of broad coalitions or alliances.

Thinking on these lines convinced us of the need to bring together persons of diverse ideological positions and practitioners of different methodologies. As far as possible we tried to gather people with different intellectual positions, who saw reality from different perspectives. As a result, the Workshop brought together academicians, practitioners, and activists. It must be said in all fairness that most of the participants combined academic pursuits with pastoral engagements; theology with a passion for ecological issues; a long experience of battling transnational corporations with a deep spiritual experience. Our assumption therefore was that old compartments and labels were no longer useful.

To sum up. One of the presuppositions of the Workshop and one of the lessons learned is that in the search for a new social methodology we ought to welcome rather than scorn difference; we have to engage this 'difference' head on, and look at it as a ground and a space where relevant and creative methodologies can be developed.

Confronting difference positively and establishing contacts across geographical and cultural boundaries was linked to one of our most seminal concerns at the start of the process: the inability of the Society, as an international apostolic body, to use this universality effectively. Many of our early discussions touched on the artificial boundaries created by the term 'province' in the Society. When we entered the Novitiate we were told that we were joining the universal Society. For many of us that remained a dream, an idea used to enhance the appeal of our vocation. For many, missionary service in another country, a call to serve abroad for a period of time was concrete, tangible proof of the universality of the Society. But even in those cases, the missionaries had to live within the geographical limits of a Province and these were kept fairly closed for a long time.

While lamenting the excessive provincialism let us not be so naïve as to forget the apostolic richness and wisdom it contains. Being wholly rooted in a province (or in a diocese), having strong local ties has been an enormous inspiration for many efforts at inculturation in the past. Jesuits could master a language, enter into the richness of a culture because they knew they were there for life. The historical tradition of inculturation – understood in a broad sense – always implies a permanent commitment to the local for life.

Our own concern with too much provincialism sprang not from a belittling of the local, but from the lack of understanding of the global it entailed. Both the local and global are needed. Our concern was rather with the new ways in which the global affects the local and the local penetrates the global. To put it simple: the Society's governing structures were magnificent in promoting the local, but seem to have become largely incapable of facing the global.

We soon realised that creating a space for Jesuits and lay partners from all over the world to live and reflect together on a global issue like war and peace was touching precisely the core of 'provincialism.' The stress on concrete local experience, as I will point out later, recognises the importance of the local, but the dynamics generated by confronting three case studies from three different continents and fostering close interaction with people from very different cultures leads inevitably to an understanding of the limitations of provincialism.

Let me pick up again the strong desire we felt to search for a pedagogy rooted in our Ignatian tradition, in the foundational experience of the Spiritual Exercises. Much has been said and written on the need to find practical ways to live the interconnectedness of a Faith that does justice. Young Jesuits (and those not so young) feel strongly the need to root their commitment to justice within our specific charism and commitment to Faith. It is not only a question of determining clearly our identity and our specific vantage point in our struggle for justice. More specifically, this desire seems to be founded in the conviction that for a Jesuit the endeavour to develop a social methodology must spring from his own epistemological roots. It is no longer possible to live two separate or parallel lives: one as a spiritual person and another as an academic or activist engaged in the issues of this world.

Our efforts at developing this methodology may have succeeded partially. What the Workshop has taught us is that the choice we made was the right one, even if we failed in carrying it out consistently.

With these Ignatian premises, we decided that the entire Workshop could be seen as an exercise in **communitarian discernment** in which we attempt to discover God's plan for us in this world ridden with conflict and violence, and blessed with many efforts for peace. During the final preparatory session at Leuven we envisaged that in practice our methodology would combine the following elements.

Experience as the starting point. Ignatius's contemplation of the Incarnation and other meditations during the second, third and fourth weeks closely follow this approach. The starting point of the Workshop was the presentation of three case studies depicting situations of violence, conflict and peace efforts in Colombia, Chad and India. The cases were meticulously written before the Workshop and participants had become familiar with them prior to arriving at Santa Severa. The Indian group went to the extent of visiting together the place and the people described in the Indian case!

These three experiences, one after another, acted as symbolic anchors to which other personal experiences were added. Contemplating one experience in Colombia or Africa triggered different personal experiences of violence and peace in Indonesia, Northern Ireland or Rwanda. The mapping of experiences was done carefully, incrementally and delicately. Re-counting and re-living experiences took place in small groups as well as in the plenary. Each case study had an Ignatian repetition, a second day, when the participants were asked to look at it critically and to be aware of the consolations and desolations they felt.

Critical analysis and the cognitive processes. On the second day, blended in with each of the three cases, were presentations made by using the expertise available in the group. The points raised

were at times provocative: a forceful critique of looking at globalisation from a simplistic point of view. They were also illuminating: an insightful presentation by an anthropologist of the complex issues related to identity-formation. They were also passionate: the devastating effects of losing national sovereignty, that is, the inability to decide the national budget by the elected representatives of a country. They were sensitive: the required nuances to understand the need and limits of reconciliation.

Prayerful moments. These were crucial to find each one's stand, to clarify each one's motivation, and to discover God's will. Moments of silent reflection were interspersed in the discussion of the small groups and during the day's agenda for the entire group. They were uneven, depending on the dynamics of each group and recorded in the log-books each participant had received.

Appreciative enquiry as a form of dialogue. Academic discussions, as we are unfortunately aware, often turn into personal battles for intellectual supremacy. Appreciative enquiry, on the contrary, aims at a careful listening, an honest effort to appreciate the good points in the other's position, and to establish an atmosphere of trust among those who want to dialogue. This approach believes that criticism is positive when it is based on mutual appreciation.

A judicious use, not always achieved, of these four approaches enabled the Workshop to engage the intellect, and move the will. On a few occasions participants were asked to make a choice and define their stand. The election is, as we all know, an important point in the Spiritual Exercises.

We are aware that experiences are never 'pure' data. Stories are always embedded in individual or collective perceptions and generally motivated by hidden interests. The combination of the critical cognitive, the dialogical and the prayerful moments provide some ground for each individual and the group to become aware of our inordinate 'passions' and to look only for what God wants of us.

Drawing also from the pedagogy of the Exercises we proposed to the group some **basic rules** reflecting a set of basic values. They were meant to act as the 'Annotations' in the Exercises, that is, as the ground rules which would help us to enter the process of the Workshop and then later become the rules guiding our behaviour. We expected the participants to be ready (i) to learn and discern; (ii) to accept sinfulness and limitations; (iii) to change and to dream; and finally (iv) to collaborate and work in a group. They correspond to the basic Ignatian attitudes of "openness" (*SE*, 5), acceptance of my limitations but learning "how to look at myself with the eyes of God" (*SE*, 59, 60), the *magis*, or the "offering of greater value" (*SE* 98), and the vision of the Society as one apostolic body (*Constitutions* 136; *NC* 311).

Let me turn now to the role that the document prepared by the participants was meant to play in the Workshop. We were aware of the unique character of this group to represent the 'apostolic subject' of the Society of Jesus. We believed that this subject had an opportunity to offer Fr. General and the whole Society the fruits of the deliberations. A document owned by the entire group, the fruit of this process of collective discernment, could well serve as an indication to him of the response that the Society is called to give to this issue of conflict, war and peace.

In terms of determining short-term goals for the Workshop, the document becomes an instrument to make concrete the outcome of the process, and is an expression of a communitarian choice. In short, we felt the need to state the urgency of the situation collectively and humbly propose a set of recommendations. The difficulties experienced in the elaboration of the text, the struggle to find common ground amidst a multiplicity of opinions, the pressure to make clear our choices and stands are some of the aspects that gave the document a unique place in the process of the Workshop. It would be a mistake to look at the document as the only and sole outcome of this process. The validity of our choice lies somewhere in between.

This special issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* is an attempt to share the experience of the Workshop with our Jesuit companions and lay partners all over the world. The issue starts with a summary of the rich and illuminating speech of Fr. General to all the participants. Many felt that his words were filled with clarity and wisdom, and his compassion touched them deeply. His presence among us was one of the highlights of the Workshop.

The document, approved by all the participants, follows. A committee chaired by Fr. David Hollenbach worked hard to present to the plenary the first draft at the end of the first week. Helped by Mauricio Garcia Duran, Jacques Haers and Costanza Pagnini, this committee, called the 'Academic Team,' went through various drafts until the entire group reached a final consensus. We are grateful for their hard, silent and brilliant work.

After the document comes the short address of Julia Dowd thanking Fr. General for his speech and voicing the feelings of all the participants.

The special issue ends with two articles from Rudi Heredia and Peter Bisson. Both are excellent critical commentaries to the Workshop and point out the drawbacks of the process we engaged in. They are compulsory reading for those who would like to know the measure of success in achieving the goals we had set for ourselves.

It would be a gross injustice not to mention the members of the Facilitating Team: Patxi Alvarez, Elias Lopes, and Jimmy Dabhi. Their expertise in preparing, conducting and evaluating the sessions contributed significantly to the success of the Workshop. They were key actors in listening every day to the report of the five Coordinators and in interpreting together the way God wanted us to move. We gratefully acknowledge the hours they spent in two preliminary meetings, one at Leuven, and the other which lasted three days preparing a detailed agenda of the entire programme immediately before the Workshop started at Santa Severa.

The entire logistics of the Workshop was in the hands of Daniele Frigeri, Liliana Carvajal and Winai Bonlue. I wonder if we have succeeded in communicating to them our gratitude and the conviction that without their dedicated and enlightened effort the Workshop would have become a nightmare.

As the subtitle announces, these lines are, first and foremost, musings about what went behind the preparation of the Workshop. In a somewhat Foucauldian sense, they express the archaeology of Workshop's meaning, the patiently built scaffolding of meaning that supported this initiative to search for a new social methodology. Ruminations are never the last word. My wish is that with the contributions from other participants we may be able to publish a more accurate and critical version of the process.

Let me finish with the symbol of the Banquet of the Kingdom used so often by Jesus to describe the experience of God's love for humankind. This was the theme I chose for the closing Eucharist. Standing around the table we all felt that the 'Banquet' symbolises that inclusive love of God who calls all to share His love and the riches and bounty of this world. Together with our brother Muslim from the Philippines, we prayed for peace and for creativity and courage to carry out His message.

Fernando Franco SJ

WAR AND PEACE IN THE CONTEXT OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE A SUMMARY VIEW

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ

I am aware of the difficulties involved in preparing and holding a meeting of this kind. You have come from far away leaving pending work and urgent matters. The topic is complex and may be approached from many different points of view. Combining academic expertise on peace studies and conflict resolution with very diverse and different experiences is not easy. Bringing together academicians, activists, men and women of different cultures, Jesuits and lay partners is a commendable but difficult proposition. The logistics involved in preparing the meeting have been daunting: finding a place with an atmosphere of prayerful reflection and an ambience of relaxation and peace; preparing all the sessions, and taking care of the required infrastructure. I would like to express my gratitude to all the participants as well as to all those who have made this meeting possible. The fact that all of you are here is already an achievement!

I am also aware that you have set for yourselves a very important and ambitious goal. You want to reflect together on the issues of conflict, war and peace. You have tried to engage in a discernment process that is both individual and communitarian. With the help of three cases from Chad, India and Colombia, you have looked at new aspects of the conflicts and peace initiatives dotting the entire face of the earth.

You have also prepared a document for me in which you narrate your experiences during these days, collect the lights and shadows you have encountered, and offer some recommendations in the hope that they can be of help to the entire body of the Society and our apostolic partners in serving the Lord. I would like to assure you that I shall study the document and find the most appropriate way to share it with the whole Society.

In a preamble to my main thrust this morning I shall first outline the recent history of a growing understanding among religious leaders of their role as peacemakers, proceed to trace the link between war and peace through the etymology of words, and finally, turn to the ethics that should govern our minds and conduct in a context where wars are fought in the name of religion

PREAMBLE

Our world grows increasingly interconnected and, different as we are, we need to come together to ensure peace. A beginning was made on 27 October 1986 when John Paul II invited leaders from all the world religions to Assisi to pray for peace in a world becoming more and more violent.

> *"The coming together of so many religious leaders to pray is in itself an invitation today to the world to become aware that there exists another dimension of peace and another way of promoting it which is not a result of negotiations, political compromises or economic bargaining. It is the result of prayer, which, in the diversity of religions, expresses a relationship with a supreme power that surpasses our human capacities alone."* (Address of John Paul II to the representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities gathered in Assisi for the World Day of Prayer, 27 October 1986).

Some twenty years later, at a meeting of religious leaders held 23-25 May 2005 at Tarrytown (New York), the following statement was made:

> *"We agree that the Christian and Muslim traditions are unambiguous on the sanctity of human life and on the protection of all forms of creation including the environment … We therefore believe that the common position held by both of our traditions … asks for the elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth."*

On 11 September 2005, men and women of different religions came together at a meeting organised by the community of *Sant'Egidio* in Lyon (France) to strengthen a humanism of peace. Without peace the world becomes inhuman. The meeting reiterated that religions refuse violence, war and terrorism because the name of God is "Peace." No war can ever be holy. The way of peace is a dialogue that makes the foreigner a friend.

Let me turn from history to semantics. Looking at the words so often used in the discourse of war and peace today we find that semantics has some light to throw on the matter. In the Semitic languages a

noun represents the semantic field to which it belongs. For example, in Arabic the word '*salám*' is related to the concepts of soundness, well-being, safety, security, and peace. In Arabic the term '*jihad*' (fight, battle) comes from the term '*jahada*,' which finds its place in the semantic field of concepts related to the verbs 'endeavour,' 'labour,' and to take pains. In Tunis the same term translates as both 'asceticism' and 'to fight for justice.'

We may also note that in Indo-European languages nouns are used in phrases that reveal how the semantic fields of war and peace are inextricably bound up with each other. Language is a sign of a culture's grasp of reality. For example, 'war' becomes a way of protecting something or somebody. Already the Romans in their writing had coined the well-known phrase: 'there is no other way of ensuring peace than preparing for war.' Since Münich 1938, the term 'appeasement' has come to mean a way of making concessions just to stay out of war and be at peace. If words reflect reality, the semantics of war and peace can prove how closely interwoven are the conditions of war and peace. We use normally expressions like 'to fight for peace,' a 'just war.' The Crusaders used the expression: 'It is God's will.'

THREE ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WAR AND PEACE

In the present context of peace efforts three expressions recur: 'peace-ethics,' 'war-ethics,' and the more general ethics brought to the situation of war. All three of them raise the issue of right moral conduct in critical situations. I take each of these expressions and perspectives in turn.

Peace-ethics

All the religions have given rise to peace-movements, even radical ones. This perspective is what I call an ethic of peace, or an ethics that gives priority to peace over war. A point of reference could be Buddhism: there is a commandment to protect all life in all situations and conditions and not allow others to kill or to be killed. (*Sutta–Nipala*, 394). No sacrifice of animals, no entering a meadow so as to avoid killing the insects, no fishing and no hunting, no cleaning of water so as to avoid killing even the microbes. Prince Gautama was aware how difficult and unrealistic it would be to impose the law of non-violence on the many princes around him, all called to defend the borders of their kingdoms. But still, in the three treatises of the Buddha addressed to war soldiers, he insists that killing is always forbidden, even in the case of defending natural borders: "Heroism in war leads to a special hell." Peace-ethics can always be seen from a negative perspective as denying the aggressive side of human reality, and as indifferent to situations of injustice and misery.

War-ethics

If peace ethics upholds peace at all cost, it must be noted that all religions have also been 'home' to war-tendencies, war-movements, even radical ones. Violence has been considered to be the only efficient way to make human society better, more just and more peaceful. It is from this perspective that we talk of a 'war-ethic.'

An obvious point of reference are 'the people of the book': the Torah, the Gospel, and the Koran. It appears that war was part of the normal situation in the Near East – both ancient and modern Near East: the Lord God fights with his people, and if necessary, against his people. The fact, however, that the three monotheistic religions focus exclusively on one God, excluding even by force all other gods, should not be considered the reason why the three religions of the book bear witness to the cruel reality of violence and war. Non-Semitic religions also sanctify the religious character of war; for instance, in the *Gita*, Krishna advises Arjuna to take up arms for a just cause on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Radical war-ethics may be found today in the 'theology of terror' proclaimed by the movement of Osama bin Laden and groups like the Taliban and the *Hizb al Taharir* (Islamic Liberation Party), founded in Jerusalem in 1953. From this point of view, there is no way to pursue the goal, to impose and promote good and do away and forbid evil other than through terrorism, and armed struggle. The religious motivation of such radical war-ethics lies in a very selective reading of the Koran's discourse on war. The Koran states "fight those in the way of God who fight you, but do not be aggressive. God does not like aggression (2, 190)." Hence, in the Hadith tradition all kinds of limits

were suggested so as to defend non-combatants, and other limits were worked out by Islamic legal scholarship. But the extreme radical position maintains that as long as God's law does not rule everywhere, especially in the land of Islam, and as long as the United States and all their Muslim and non-Muslim allies wage war on God, it is every believer's duty to destroy evil radically, driven by a blind and unbending hatred of the 'West.' This selective, unilateral and partial reading of the 'holy book' can motivate terrorism, but the following quotation clarifies how much more important it is to build bridges than to claim exclusive moral righteousness:

> "*For too long we Muslims have been sticking fingers in our ears and chanting 'Islam means peace' to drown out the negative noise from our holy book. Far better to own up to it. Not erase or revise, just recognise it and thereby join moderate Jews and Christian in confessing the 'sins of Scripture' as an American Bishop says about the Bible. In doing so, Muslims would show a thoughtful side that builds trust with the wider communities of the West*" (Irshad Manji, *Time* July 25, 2005 p. 60).

I have thus far tried to show how war and peace are bound together. I turn finally to the bearing of ethics on war and conflict-ridden situations to ask whether it is possible to move towards a just and loving ethic that takes account of all living persons.

Ethics of peace brought to war.

In the Assisi meeting of January 2002 the representatives of the world religions confessed that no one can kill in the name of God. In the first commandment of a Decalogue for peace, John Paul II, in a letter addressed to all Heads of States, expressed the agreement reached by all religious leaders:

> "*We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion, and, as we condemn every recourse to violence and war in the name of God or of religion, we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of terrorism*." (Letter of John Paul II to all the Heads of State and Government of the world and Decalogue of Assisi for Peace, 24 February 2002).

At the recent meeting with Muslim religious leaders in August 2005 in Cologne (Germany) Benedict XVI condemned every kind of terrorism:

> "*Thanks be to God, we agree on the fact that terrorism of any kind is a perverse and cruel choice which shows contempt for the sacred right to life and undermines the very foundations of all civil coexistence*" (Address of his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, Cologne, Saturday, 20 August 2005).

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the above we may draw some conclusions.

1. Radical war-ethics is to be condemned, even while we recognise that violence is everywhere and in every thing. It is part of our human nature: it will be always present if we defend ourselves, our very being, as different from other beings. The act of creation makes us different, roots us in diversity (Gn. 1), a diversity that reflects God's riches and that should enrich humanity. We, however, use our differences (religions, race) to attack one another and to motivate violence. Religions have to recognise that in their diversity they have motivated conflicts and violence. In this violent context that seems to surround human beings, peace-ethics may seem 'unrealistic,' but it does not exclude the fact that religions can and should be peacemakers.

2. In spite of all the violence in the three monotheistic Holy Books, under God's educational guidance, there is an increasing awareness that a peace-ethics can set the conditions under which war may be possible. From a mentality that allows the taking of a human life for a lost eye, the Books move to the moral progress of an eye only for an eye – retaliation – and finally, to the appeal to give your life to save another human life. Religions can build up trust through dialogue and compassion, solidarity and cross-cultural understanding.

3. This increasing peace awareness fosters reflection on a just war, which can defend humanity against arbitrary or intentional acts of war. It would not be ethical to refuse to use

limited violent means to help people in danger of death. The awareness is also growing that a peace without justice is not peace. This makes us see clearly the roots of violence: cultural marginalisation, economic injustice, and political domination. These unjust situations can generate violence that is easily expressed in religions rhetoric. Religion is a card that can easily be played to foster violence, even if religion as such is not involved.

4. We need to remember that in situations of war the peacemaker is blessed (Mt 5: 5). According to the Christian approach, a person ought always to be ready to take the first step. In his peace-making efforts he should exclude nobody, but include all as 'neighbours.' He should be willing to forgive and to give his own life out of love, following the way of Christ in the midst of violence. Christ never said, 'don't have enemies,' but he said, 'love them.' To bring peace in war conditions is to announce the message of love in a violent world, in the Pascal faith that, in the end, not hate but love will have the last word.

Santa Severa, Rome,
Friday, 16 September 2005

PRESENTATION TO FR. GENERAL PETER HANS KOLVENBACH SJ

Julia Dowd

Fr. General, it is my great honor to stand before you this morning. Thank you for being here with us and thank you for making this workshop possible. Thank you also for the visionary leadership you provide for all of us in the Ignatian Family.

I say Ignatian Family very intentionally because I do believe it is the community to which I belong, the community assembled here today, and the community that is growing around the world in leaps and bounds.

In a way I was born into the Ignatian Family. I am part of the third generation of my family to attend the Jesuit College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts. (My first sentence was "Go, Cross, Go!). My Jesuit education enabled me to make sense of my spiritual longings, my intellectual curiosities, and my concern and confusion with the deep suffering and inequality I noticed in my world.

As a little girl I wanted to be a priest when I grew up. I would take home the missalette from church and practice saying Mass in my room. When I was 12, I wrote a letter to Pope John Paul II graciously volunteering to be the first woman he ordained a priest. Throughout some difficult, angry and sad times, the Ignatian Family and some Jesuits in particular helped me discover a place in the church where my contribution as a lay woman was welcome and needed.

After college I joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in California. Then I joined the staff of a Jesuit parish where I worked for seven years in social ministries. For the past three years I have been working at the University of San Francisco, a Jesuit university very much committed to education for justice.

Throughout my time working with the Jesuits, lay collaboration has been a strategic priority of our Province. This goal has been made manifest in many concrete and life-giving ways for me and many of my colleagues.

I have been given opportunities to experience the Spiritual Exercises, explore the everyday aspects of

Ignatian spirituality, and grow in my vocation to live a faith that does justice.

The Ignatian Family has pushed me, humbled me, lifted me, challenged me and saved me again and again.

And so here we are at Santa Severa. Everyone in this room has an amazing story to share that also links him or her to the Ignatian Family. Over this past two weeks we've shared these stories, exchanged perspectives, engaged in dialogue, taught one another and learned from one another. We've discussed theory, ideology, praxis, culture, economics, development, identity. We've celebrated liturgy, shared prayer, celebrated birthdays, eaten too much, laughed, cried, brainstormed, reflected, journaled, and relaxed together. Lest I sound too utopian (a topic we also discussed) we also prepared a Document written by a world class academic team. That's "Document" with a capital D.

But let me say that I think the document is not the most important of our products created here over the past two weeks.

We came together from multiple sectors, twenty-three countries, south, north, east and west, three generations of us. We are theorists and practitioners, academics and activists, priests and lay people. There are multiple perspectives, multiple experiences, and as someone said last night, "a lot of Chiefs, but not too many Indians."

We began the workshop by recognizing and naming our deepest desires as individuals. As the workshop went on, we also learned how to ask this question as a group. I can identify at least three graces that came from this group discernment.

First: humility. We have ended up with more questions than answers. Perhaps this realization was best felt when one of our panelists, Pudji, made the simple but profound statement, "These questions are too complex. I do not know the answers." But we are reassured by the words of Simone Weil who reminds us that prayer is less about the pursuit of answers, than a training in attention. And we did pay attention. We asked God to let us see. Living a faith that does justice is more about asking the right questions than finding the right answers.

Second, I believe we experienced the grace of a deep desire for justice and peace. It is God who puts this desire in us, and God who gives us the strength to continue. God has placed in each of us a great desire to see and serve.

Third, God gave us the grace of hope. There is a deep sense of something new here – something transformative calling us forth into a new way of being and proceeding. We want to build more networks, continue to train ourselves for the new dimensions of this work, strengthen our institutions, and many more things. There is a deep hopefulness in our shared partnership, in opportunities for peace before us, and our fellowship as the Ignatian Family.

Humility, desire, and hope. I think these are the most valuable products we will take from Santa Severa.

Thank you again for being here, for inspiring us, and for your loving care for all of us.

Santa Severa
Friday, 16 September 2005

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SEEKING PEACE IN A VIOLENT WORLD NEW CHALLENGES

I. WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE HAVE DONE

1. We are a worldwide and diverse group of 45 Jesuits, religious and lay colleagues, men and women, who have met near Rome for two weeks to discern and to reflect on the possible response of the Ignatian Family and its apostolic endeavours to the realities of war, violence, and the challenge towards sustainable peace in our world today. Indeed, we feel that the complex realities of violence and the emerging peace movements require that we focus on our role and commitment with regard to violence and peace, for we are part of a global organisation that has intellectual expertise, is in touch with the grassroots situations where the effects of violence are directly tangible, and has the capacity to organize advocacy and to influence on policy decision making.

2. We want to share with Fr. General, with the larger Society of Jesus and with the Ignatian Family the insights we have gained, the concerns we have, and the conclusions we draw. We want to highlight some of the new challenges we see today with regard to violence, war, conflict transformation, and sustainable peace. We have seen both new challenges and new possibilities in our world. In our globalizing world, the faces of violence and war have changed in complexity, intensity, interrelatedness, and risk. In response to these new forms of violence, new international institutions as well as new peace movements and peace initiatives have arisen which call us to articulate our own commitments. We do not intend to propose 'solutions' to these challenges; we rather propose to enter into a process of shared spiritual discernment that will allow us all to commit ourselves in ever changing situations at the service of those who suffer most the effects of violence and the absence of sustainable peace.

3. The experience of shared discernment in our meeting has been a fruitful and creative enterprise. On our way to discover God's action in us and his desire for our world and His people, we have shared spiritual and Ignatian resources in common prayer and in liturgy, we have listened attentively and appreciatively to one another's experiences, stories, concerns and viewpoints, and we have discovered how creativity emerges in our mutual relationships and amidst our great diversities. In all of those we have felt the consolation of God's presence and grace, which give us the strength to engage concretely in the service of peace, each one of us in his or her specific circumstances. We came to experience how this process of shared discernment – that addresses our whole human being, cognition, affection, will– enriches our understandings and practices of sustainable peace building and, in fact, constitutes a method to reach out towards sustainable peace amidst violent conflicts. We urge that this approach, in which the reflection on violence and peace is decidedly enriched by shared dialogue and prayer, be promoted in the Ignatian Family. Indeed, through this we can draw on the full richness of our corporate expertise, on our grassroots presence and on our international capacity to influence, advocate and act.

4. While experiencing this process of shared discernment, and at the very heart of our consolation, we have felt the need for the regenerative power of forgiveness and reconciliation, that binds us together in a community of peace and for peace. We have touched our personal histories of failure and of sin, as well as those of our institutions, of the Society of Jesus and of the Ignatian Family. We have remembered our omissions when we did not dare to address violence, the support we have sometimes given to violence, our own violence towards others, our cowardice and our lack of sensitivity to hear the cry of those who suffer. In the course of the meeting we have also experienced our limits and our wounds, that may render us deaf to the stories and opinions of others, that may produce defence mechanisms or the fear to enter into creative confrontations and conflicts, that may awaken in us violence against others, that may render us blind to appreciate in the others the face of the God of peace and compassion. Therefore, when we present this

document, we know we need to be humble: we are part and parcel of the histories of violence and peace of this world. It is in this spirit of humility that we make our choice to serve God and humanity in His project of sustainable peace.

II. New Challenges of Conflict and Violence Today

5. War, armed conflict and violence are among the most tragic aspects of the human scene. Today's armed conflicts have some significantly new aspects that call us to new responses.

Identity Conflicts

6. Many of today's wars are driven by conflicts over cultural identity, having nationalist, ethnic and sometimes religious dimensions. The genocide in Rwanda and the violent conflict in the Great Lakes region tragically illustrate how identity-based group conflicts can lead to immense human harm. The former Yugoslavia and Sudan are other examples of the tragedy of such identity conflict. Religion sometimes plays a significant role in these contemporary identity conflicts: fundamentalist forms of religion are factors in the conflicts the Middle East, parts of Africa, Asia, and in the terrorist/counter terrorist conflicts that are so destructive today. The religious dimensions of contemporary conflict have led some analysts to conclude that religion is becoming the primary source of war and conflict in the post Cold War world. Though we believe it is a mistake to see any single factor as the principal cause of all conflict today, the role played by religious communities in contemporary conflicts surely raises a powerful challenge to these communities to become agents of peace and reconciliation wherever war and violence occur.

7. Identity needs to be defined in inclusive rather than confrontational ways, avoiding the exclusion that denies the very humanity of others and by that very fact does violence. Recognition of the other who is different is perhaps the key test of whether one is capable of recognizing the inherent dignity of all human beings. We Christians believe that every human being has been created in God's image and thus has a dignity that demands respect and care. Other religious and secular traditions possess similar insights. In the face of twentieth century conflicts, these insights have led to the rise of a universalist human rights ethics that calls us to move from closed communal boundaries to open frontiers of human solidarity among the diverse communities of our world. We are challenged today to help build peace by further advancing this ethos in collaboration with all who are working for the protection of human dignity in inclusive communities.

8. This calls for deep interreligious conversation, which is a condition of sustainable peace in the midst of religious diversity. Various theological models for such dialogue have been proposed and these need further reflection in light of new experience. In our workshop, we have experienced the need to be open to engagement with other Christian denominations, other religious traditions beyond Christianity (including the religions of indigenous people) and to people who do not confess any religion. Such openness to engagement is itself the beginning of peace. Thus today we can say "dialogue is the new name for peace."

Globalization, Conflict, and Justice

9. Many of today's armed conflicts are fuelled by inequalities of economic and political power. Market-oriented globalization brings very unequal benefits and burdens to peoples: it often benefits one class, ethnic, or religious group within a country or region while it disadvantages others. Conflicts in Chad, Colombia, and parts of India, which our workshop has considered in some depth, have significant roots in inequalities of economic and political power. Some of these struggles, which may, at first, appear to be conflicts of ethnicity or religion are stimulated by the struggle over economic benefits and political participation. Similarly, the economic dependence of developed countries on oil is a central aspect of the recent and current conflicts in Iraq. Further, the policies of powerful developed countries, of international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and of multinational enterprises also play important roles in creating conditions fuelling such conflicts or at times in helping to alleviate them. The desire to retain economic privilege can lead groups who are better-off to violent action to separate themselves from those who have much less. Also, when people

feel so economically or culturally excluded that they have nothing to lose, armed struggle even through terrorism can seem the only path toward the improvement of their lives. War and armed conflict, however, almost always diminish the economic well being of those whose lives it touches.

10. Genuine justice has always been an important precondition for peace, more so in our time. Justice requires that everyone be able to participate in the economic, cultural, and political life of the community in those basic ways needed for her/him to be respected as persons. The opposite of such participation can be called marginalization--exclusion from producing or sharing in the common good of the community. This can take the political form of concentration of power in the hands of a unique party or a ruling elite. People can be marginalized on the grounds of ethnicity, culture, religion, or gender, in the extreme leading to the horrors of genocide or ethnic cleansing. Less dramatic but still deeply unjust forms of exclusion follow from economic policies and structures that cause poverty or lack of education, health care, and employment. Women and girls suffer such exclusion in ways notably greater than do males. Our efforts to build peace are linked with overcoming all these forms of exclusion of the poor and vulnerable, both within nations and globally.

11. This understanding of participation as essential to justice has important implications for how we see good governance, accountability, and the role of civil society on various levels. Bureaucratic corruption in government is another form of violence that takes food from the mouths of the poor and abuses public trust for private gain. Local people's groups such as labor unions and community organizations, as well as national and international NGOs, can work to hold governments accountable to the well being of the peoples, thus helping to serve the cause of peace. Regional and national organizations can also hold international and global institutions accountable in similar ways. For example, networks that focus on environmental issues, human rights, humanitarian law, and the dignity of women can confer legitimacy on governments and multinational enterprises, or they can withdraw it. This is a form of 'soft power' that we can use to work for justice and thus for peace.

THE CHALLENGE OF DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

12. Recent wars have created over thirty million refugees and other displaced people, most of whom are women and children. The international community takes some faltering steps to respond to refugees who have been driven from their homes by persecution, but those driven across borders by war or internally displaced within their own country are often forgotten. Restoring justice requires enabling these people to return to full participation as citizens of their home countries or enabling them to become active citizens in countries of refuge. The destruction of livelihoods that guarantee economic survival has also become a central source of migration, and many countries are increasingly unwilling to receive such immigrants. Indeed resistance to immigration and refusal to acknowledge its very existence are sources of negative attitudes toward those who are different, leading to new forms of conflict. The work of the Jesuit Refugee Service makes these challenges particularly relevant to us.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

13. In many armed conflicts today, the control over natural resources such as oil, coal, and other minerals is a key factor. Conflict over water is also becoming a serious threat to peace. In the coming years, resource and environmental wars and injustice will probably become more important. There is a clear link between environmental degradation, poverty, and injustice. When potential conflicts are accompanied by the development of technologically advanced weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, or biological), the threat of war to the environment is further magnified. Deepened appreciation of the relation between justice and the integrity of creation, the concern for the future generations, the significance of bio-diversity, and the environmentally destructive aspect of contemporary war is a new challenge of the conflicts we see around us today.[1]

[1]Our workshop took place while the catastrophe in New Orleans developed, and while the discussion on the UN Millennium Goals as well as on the Kyoto protocols were high news items.

THE CHALLENGE OF NONVIOLENCE

14. Perhaps the most fundamental challenge we face in addressing the reality of conflict is whether the use of violent force can ever be morally justified. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, among others, have been challenging examples of the power of nonviolent responses to oppression and injustice. The Second Vatican Council placed an innovative stress on nonviolence,[2] and many Catholics have become increasingly convinced that resort to military force is never appropriate as a strategy for socio-political changes. At the same time, they would, albeit reluctantly, agree that humanitarian intervention by military means to protect innocent people from grave violence, such as the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, may be justified. The position that holds that the use of military means can be justified under stringently defined and exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, remains part of the traditions of Catholic ethics and international law. It is certainly clear that followers of Christ have a fundamental commitment to seek justice nonviolently. Thus Christians can never resort to the use of force without grave hesitation. Peace is our primary commitment and nonviolence is the route to a just peace in all but exceptional cases, such as protection of people from genocide, ethnic cleansing, or other grave injustices and violations of their human rights. Understanding how to live out this commitment in diverse circumstances will be one of the central intellectual tasks we face in the future.

15. This commitment to nonviolence adds support to the growing conviction that in today's interdependent and globalizing world, national sovereignty can no longer be considered somehow an absolute value. Both the UN Charter and recent church teaching affirm that international response to serious forms of oppression or grave violations of human rights such as genocide or ethnic cleansing should be multilateral, not unilateral. The religious conviction that we are all part of one human family under God means that the borders of nation states do not determine the boundaries of our moral responsibility. This has important implications not only for military affairs but in the domain of the use of resources, economic interaction, international advocacy and our assessment of the impact of global forces such as the media on local culture.

RECONCILIATION AS A CHALLENGE

16. It is increasingly clear today that, in many settings, the pursuit of lasting peace in the aftermath of conflict can call for innovative forms of reconciliation and even forgiveness. Such reconciliation cannot occur when injustice continues to take place. Therefore injustice must cease if lasting peace is to be established. But it is also true that justice does not mean revenge. Restorative justice rebuilds communities that have been fractured by conflict. Such restorative justice is a form of reconciliation, and it can call for forgiveness of the perpetrator of past injustice and violence, opening new ways to a peace that can last. Thus Pope John Paul II observed that there can be no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness. Such forgiving does not mean forgetting. Indeed true reconciliation cannot occur if past harms are hidden from view by impunity for perpetrators. But forgiveness can come as a gift and a grace when a new future comes into view, a future lived in justice and truth. We are challenged to discover new and effective ways of bringing about such restorative justice and reconciliation as we work to bring about lasting peace in the contexts of our ministries.

SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

17. In light of these new challenges of violence and peacemaking, our workshop participants feel called to a renewed vision of how our spiritualities and theologies help us discern the path forward. We cannot propose definitive solutions here, but rather we invite Jesuits and our co-workers, including those who are adherents of other religious traditions, to join in a process of discernment.

18. Our response to the realities of violence and peace is closely linked with the way we live our relationship to God. Our faith, spirituality, and theology are public, not private, affairs. They open up a picture of our mutual relationships with each other and with God. Thus spirituality and theology have a powerful impact on social life and, specifically on our approach to others through peaceful or violent relationships.

[2]Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 78.

19. In situations of violence, Christians are called to live out Jesus' proclamation of the Reign of God as a reign of peace. This is a call to reject violence, an invitation to forgiveness and reconciliation, and a call to rebuild broken communities. Jesus repeatedly called his disciples to be peacemakers, to love their neighbors (including their enemies), and to follow him in taking up their cross. Christians have often failed to live out this call in ways that build peace. The cross is misinterpreted if it is seen as a call simply to endure injustice or suffering. The cross challenges us to follow Jesus in witnessing to the Reign of God, no matter what the cost. Jesus' crucifixion is also a powerful symbol of God's solidarity and identification with all who suffer and face death, including those who suffer and die because of conflict. Thus, the cross calls us to serve those who suffer from injustice and violence, even when this is costly for us. Our faith in the resurrection enables us to trust that peace is possible even when we face ongoing conflict. This trust can sustain a hope that gives us a passion for the possible, a deep trust that patient and courageous endurance in the struggle for peace will be victorious.

20. Our understanding of the church is also challenged by the reality of violence. The Christian community should be a reflection of God's action for peace and against violence in our world. In our workshop we heard many stories of the church in action as a community of peace and reconciliation. Sadly, we have also heard stories of where the Christian community has failed to act, or acted in ways that led to violent conflict. Such experiences invite us to radical, critical and creative responses that enable the church to become the community of reconciliation that the Spirit calls it to be. The church can only be this kind of peacemaker in genuine dialogue and partnership with people of other faiths and traditions. Deepening a spirituality and theology that lead us to more effective work for peace in collaboration with all people of good will is a central challenge of our time.

III. NEW MOVEMENTS FOR PEACE TODAY

21. During our meeting, we have become more aware of existing peace initiatives and peace movements all over the world, which have emerged as a contribution of a variety of civil society organizations,[3] including a growing number of grass-roots initiatives; national and international NGOs; churches and educational institutions; governmental institutions and multilateral organizations. We have experienced the creative strength of these movements. We perceive that our globalized worldwide context, which has generated new types of war and violence, also provides new **opportunities and initiatives for peace**, nurturing our hope that a peaceful and just world is possible.

GRASS-ROOTS MOVEMENTS

22. New actors and movements courageously and creatively participate in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. We want to highlight the role of grass-roots groups and communities, university students, women, and indigenous people. We witness the growing role that local communities and grass-roots organizations play as peacemakers, articulating in their initiatives elements of dialogue, development, resistance, and reconciliation. Women's movements also are an essential agent for building wider and lasting peace and making possible ways of reconciliation, as in the cases of Zambia, India, and Indonesia. Indigenous and peasants' movements contribute from their local cultures to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, sharing with all of us their traditions and practices, as in the cases of Chiapas in Mexico and tribal groups in India. Some of these new actors need to be strengthened and empowered (through awareness raising, organizing, strategizing, and networking) to play more effective roles in the process, through broader participation in and ownership of all stages of peacebuilding.

NEW NETWORKS

23. Globalization facilitates some of the ongoing wars and violent conflicts; it also offers increased opportunities for networking at the service of peace. The challenge of fragmentation and powerlessness common to conflict situations as well as the international complexity of contemporary conflicts has shown us the importance both of supporting

[3]An example of this growing number of peace initiatives is the recent publication *People Building Peace II – Successful Stories of Civil Society* (P. van Tongeren et al., Eds., 2005, Reinner Publishers), which collect more than 60 different experiences of civil society groups and organizations all over the world.

some of the efforts made by the supranational organizations and of building networks of companionship and solidarity among peacemakers. Civil society groups and organizations can come together, both at local and international levels, to make a real difference in finding solutions and alternatives, particularly for the affected groups we are in contact with.

24. First, international bodies like the UN, European Union, and regional organizations like the Organization of American States and the African Union increasingly play constructive roles in peacemaking. Other global agreements and agencies such as the Kyoto accord and the International Criminal Court confront critical issues for sustainable peace.

25. Second, global and national campaigns, like the international campaign to ban landmines and against the use of children soldiers, the international action network against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the campaign for basic human rights of the Dalit and tribal communities and of women in India, can influence decision makers and global public opinion, even challenging the war-making narratives.

26. Thirdly, there is a growing dynamism of 'world citizens' in solidarity, as we observe in the growth of transnational advocacy groups working on issues such as human rights and international humanitarian law, the advancement of women, and the protection of the environment. We share experiences of networking (such as the Ignatian Solidarity Network in the USA, the African Jesuits AIDS Network and the International Jesuit Network for Development); of solidarity support and aid (such as Entreculturas, Alboan, South Asian Peoples' Initiative); and of advocacy, in Washington (Office of Social and International Ministries of the US Jesuit Conference), in Brussels, and elsewhere (JRS). We are aware of the necessity of such advocacy in solidarity. Advocacy is an important way in which the Society can exercise a faith that does justice; as such, advocacy must be seen as an important element of the work for justice. This advocacy is understood as influencing policy at three levels: with national, governmental and legislative structures, with international and regional structures (such as the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank, etc.), and with corporations (socially responsible investment).

27. Fourthly, there are some experiences emerging in the civil society sphere, such as the World Social Forum, that suggest new dynamisms for the construction of our world. A number of Jesuits and lay colleagues have participated in different moments of the Forum and have found new inspiration for peace and social justice in its work.

RESPONSE TO REFUGEES AND IDPS

28. We also see the many initiatives in favor of the victims of all kinds of violence, e.g. the service to refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). Some of the massive displacements of population require enormous support operations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees plays a leading role, but there are many other organizations involved, including Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) with presence in more than fifty countries, and the experiences represented in our meeting: Africa, Aceh (Indonesia), Europe, Colombia and Venezuela, and the work with migrants and refugees in Ecuador.

HUMAN RIGHTS, NONVIOLENT, AND INTERRELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

29. In tackling violence, some crucial issues have gained importance: resistance against impunity through different actions on human rights and international humanitarian law. The non-violent approaches, as exemplified yesterday by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, inspire today new peace initiatives: peace communities and declarations of 'neutrality' in Colombia, peace zones in the Philippines and Indonesia. There are also several experiences of inter-religious dialogue emerging from our activism for peace, which have tried to build bridges among contending parts, as is the case in Northern Ireland, South Africa, and in Mindanao in the Philippines.

RECONCILIATION PROCESSES

30. We confirm that sustainable peace is not possible without reconciliation. Numerous processes of reconciliation have been initiated, ranging from judicial measures and truth

commissions to more localized experiences of dialogue between conflicting groups, as in South and East Africa, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, Colombia, India and Sri Lanka.

CRITICAL NEEDS

31. These emerging opportunities for peace require us to address two critical points if they are to be sustained. First, it is necessary to develop analyses of the different aspects of conflict that acknowledge their complexity (different contexts call for different responses). Such analysis is required if we are to design more precise and effective strategies for an 'agenda for peace' (i.e. educating, researching, discerning, organizing, politicking, protesting, dialoguing, resisting, praying). We also need to widen our concept of peace. It is not enough to face the expressions of direct violence, seeking the negative peace of absence of war; we must also address the more structural and indirect forms of violence in ways that enable women and men to find paths toward their integral development as human beings. For instance, adequate representation of both women and men, equal treatment of all races, good governance, and development are key issues in building a lasting peace. In addition, cultural, religious, ethnic, and gender differences need space not only for expression but particularly for building multiple and inclusive identities in fruitful and interactive coexistence.

32. Second, we observe that there exists a tension in respecting and supporting the active participation of those who are victims of conflict. The effort to be a voice of the voiceless sectors and countries is certainly important and valid. But there exists a risk of supplanting these sectors. We must not forget that communities and social sectors should be their own agents of peace. Empowerment, organizing, and networking of excluded and voiceless groups are needed to enable them to speak for themselves.

IV. NEW RESPONSES FROM THE JESUITS AND THE JESUIT FAMILY

COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND OUR IGNATIAN ROOTS

33. In our process of discernment during these days, after pondering challenges and opportunities, we have arrived at a personal appropriation of a key conclusion of GC 34: "A specific challenge today is to embody Christ's ministry of healing and reconciliation in a world increasingly divided by economic and social status, race and ethnicity, violence and war, cultural and religious pluralism. These divisions must be a focus of Jesuit priestly ministry because Christ's work of reconciliation breaks down the walls of division among peoples" (GC 34, D. 6, §14). This challenge is even more intense nowadays given the larger number of armed conflicts and their globalized character. We have heard the pain and suffering of many people as a result of these wars and violence, and through these voices we have discerned with humility the call of Christ to join with what God is doing towards reconciliation: "all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5, 18). Like the first companions in the Society, we feel called to work in "reconciling the estranged" (Formula of the Institute – 1550, §1).

34. Our experience in peacebuilding and reconciliation is rooted in our Ignatian spirituality. Recognizing our fragility and sinfulness, we have discovered that we ourselves are forgiven and reconciled by the unconditional love of God. We also feel called by the Lord to work with Him at the service of the others by sharing our deepest experience of a loving God, who commits himself to human beings amidst a world of violence, and who himself chooses the path of sharing an alliance with human beings. We have felt invited by Christ to walk in solidarity with people crucified by violence and war, manifesting to them the unconditional compassion and tenderness of our God, crucified again with today's victims. But we also have discovered that the Risen Christ is present among us, both consoling us and enabling us to become peacemakers and agents of reconciliation. Christ is among His people, leading us to commit ourselves to building contrasting communities in which peace, justice, and harmony are possible.

35. Our mission as Jesuits and as members of the Ignatian Family is that of proclaiming the "*faith that does justice* […], *engages other traditions in dialogue*, [… and] *evangelizes culture*" (GC 34, D. 2, §21). But we cannot be loyal to this mission unless we face the challenges put to us by diverse types of violence, armed conflicts, and wars, which sometimes make it impossible to exercise our mission, and to pursue the agenda we are called to. Today's conflicts block the necessary changes towards justice, complicate the conditions for a fruitful dialogue with other religious traditions, and generate tensions and dilemmas in a deeper process of inculturation. As a consequence, work towards peace becomes an essential element of our mission.

SOME STRATEGIC CHOICES

36. During the process of our shared discernment, we perceived some directions that can orient our participation in conflict transformation towards sustainable peace. We are not seeking to settle all the concrete choices that will have to be made. Rather we want to point to some orientations or options that will help us move forward in a more committed way, more profoundly sharing in God's own strategy at the service of humanity amidst violence, which was shown to us in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Our deepest direction is one of hope, towards universal and holistic peace. We know that in this endeavor we will engage in a process of healing and of reconciliation, as we live in a world that by its violence, painfully contrasts with our visions of peace. In that sense the following are issues of discernment that will face members of the Jesuit Family involved in the service of peace amidst situations of violence. As discernment means 'process,' the following cannot be understood as clear cut positions.

AN OPTION FOR NON-VIOLENT STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

37. Although the idea of non-violence is complex and requires nuanced analysis in every concrete situation, it points to the desire to work for peace in ways that reflect the goal, i.e. justice and peace. We will have to be particularly careful not to become entrapped in logics of violence, of whatever type this violence may be. Structural violence may be particularly critical. Non-violent action should be understood from the point of view of longing for peace amidst situations of violence. It is certainly not a form of passivity in the face of injustice. In fact there may be times when proportional use of physical force may be required precisely to counter injustice or violence (cf. situations of oppression or of the massive violation of human rights, or of genocide). But we are called to a process of learning in the line of what Pope John Paul II wrote in *Centesimus Annus*: "*May people learn how to struggle for justice without violence*." (*CA*, III, 23)

AN OPTION FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM VIOLENCE, WAR, AND INJUSTICE.

38. When struggling in the midst of violent situations towards sustainable peace, we face the question of where we stand and with whom we preferentially enter into alliance: who are our friends? This is the issue posed by our option for those who suffer violence, injustice and war. Those who suffer touch our hearts when we hear their cries and listen to their stories. Together with them and in a careful process of listening and discerning, we believe God will give us the grace to discover novel and creative ways to tackle and approach the violence we face together. We will be careful, in any situations of violence, not to fall prey to the temptations of easy victimization and all too easy demonization or polarization. Therefore, careful and precise analyses will be necessary.

AN OPTION FOR INCLUSIVE AND INTERDEPENDENT IDENTITIES

39. Violence, conflicts and wars often bring about issues of identity. The construction of identities is not an innocent activity in the context of violence, and we are convinced that in all concrete situations there is a need for a process of discernment towards the construction and elaboration of inclusive, interconnecting and interdependent identities, that in their multifaceted interactions promote the endeavor for peace. It will be particularly important not to engage in prejudices and stereotypes, nor to impose negative/inferior identities on others.

AN OPTION FOR WOMEN

40. In the context of contemporary conflicts preferential attention will be paid to those who

most suffer the consequences of violence: women. We need to learn to see more deeply the potential they have for building sustainable peace. Children and elderly people also suffer disproportionately from war, and we should have special concern for their suffering on our ministries.

AN OPTION TO SUPPORT THREATENED CULTURES

41. Increasingly the role of cultures in conflict transformation and sustainable peace is emphasized. We have learned that indigenous and local people have in their traditions developed strategies for sustainable peace and conflict transformation that we tend to oversee. It will be important, therefore, to affirm, to support and even to defend the dignity and right to existence of local cultures, through building alliances that are conducive to mutual learning processes precisely in constructing sustainable peace.

AN OPTION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

42. Many conflicts and much violence today originate in corruption and bad governance, amidst lawlessness or the abuse of law. Corruption in post-conflict situations may undermine previous peace efforts. Therefore, we consider it an essential part of peace advocacy to pay attention to good governance and to the building of more effective national and international institutions, in the line of what John XXIII suggested in *Pacem in Terris*. Our emphasis is on just governance and on just law, on transparency and participation. This also implies that we will enter into alliance with those who build up civil society (nationally and internationally) at the critical service of peace worldwide and as a counterforce to the abuses of law and corrupted governance. Again, this focus requires expertise and a deep spirituality of integrity, that involves the capacity to listen to the voices and the cries of those who suffer abuses, and a careful work of advocacy at an institutional level.

AN OPTION FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

43. We have seen that globalization is an important factor when we try to analyze the realities of violence and peace today, and that it can be a source of new forms of violence and injustice or of heightening existing forms of violence and injustice. We have become aware that there is a need to promote global solidarity and development in solidarity (John Paul II). We feel challenged to further develop the growing global interconnectedness into a web of mutual responsibility and solidarity.

INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP

PRINCIPAL EMPHASES EMERGING FROM THE WORKSHOP

1. Continue to develop an overall vision for Jesuit work in peacebuilding based on this final document of the Workshop. This could be done in local, regional, global, and sectoral groups.

2. Expand the use of the method the Workshop used in its approach to reflection and analysis on peace and social justice issues to other regions and issue-oriented groups linked with the Society of Jesus. Specifically, draw on:

- the success of the method of prayerful group discernment concerning these issues followed by the Workshop, and

- a diverse gathering of Jesuits and laypeople, men and women, practitioners and academics, and diverse identities that was such a strong source of the Workshop's successful efforts to clarify the issues of conflict and peace today.

3. Stimulate and support new initiatives in developing a spirituality and theology for peacebuilding, as well as the contributions of liturgy, the arts, etc. in the peacebuilding area. Invite Jesuit universities, spirituality and retreat centers, and social centers to advance these goals collaboratively.

4. Develop formation programs both for young Jesuits and for laywomen and men to advance their abilities to respond to the issues of conflict and peace as they develop their long-term plans for their life work.

5. Invite Jesuit universities and their staff to develop the in-depth analyses needed to support effective advocacy for peacebuilding today. Find ways to

encourage ongoing links between academics, practitioners, and agents of advocacy in the development of this analysis and to take advantage of the Society's potential in the field of education at all levels (from primary to university) in order to develop an educational model conducive to dialogue, peacebuilding and reconciliation.

6. Finally, we recommend that, where necessary, institutional development of the works of the social apostolate be strengthened. Many of these works around the world need institutional strengthening to become more effective instruments of peace, especially around the following issues: economic sustainability; spiritual formation and sharing; decision making processes; training; and time allocation for networking. Adequate organizational development is also required to promote long-term lay partnership and participation.

BUILDING OUR CAPACITIES.

1. Find ways to link all sectors with JRS for information, analysis, advocacy, and education. As a central Jesuit initiative, JRS can serve as a point of insertion and provide a lens on issues of conflict and peace for many other Jesuit works.

2. Develop new patterns of linkage of the social apostolate with other Jesuit sectors as well as with non-Jesuit organizations, based on the model of synergy and interaction we have experienced in the Workshop.

3. Support emerging networks on these issues in the Assistancies, e.g. Africa, and between Assistancies, and help develop those new initiatives that seem appropriate.

4. Support and strengthen existing issue oriented networks, e.g. IJND, AJAN, etc.

5. Strengthen existing advocacy agencies and develop appropriate new ones, regionally and globally, that will enable Jesuit networks to bring their analysis and insight to bear on policy issues more effectively.

6. Identify as early as possible young Jesuits for social ministry, and provide strong professional training in social analysis, as well as apprenticeship in social action, offering a similar opportunity to our lay partners.

DEVELOP SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES FOR THESE INITIATIVES.

1. Develop an effective internet support system, that fosters both communication among Jesuits and others, including a directory of people working in the area, as well as educational and research resources. This can serve as the base for an e-education initiative.

2. Seek support from knowledgeable Jesuits and laypeople on how to pursue fundraising for these projects effectively, and seek to find new sources of financial support for specific projects.

SANTA SEVERA –ROME
SEPTEMBER 2005

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORKSHOP

Name	Provenance	Name	Provenance
Alber Husin	Philippines	Lazarus Stany SJ	PAT
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"Knowledge is also Between Noses… …and not only between the ears"

Peter Bisson SJ

This memorable sentence became something of a mantra that introduced participants into the process of the 'Advanced and International Seminar on Violence and War: Cultural and Economic Interests,' sponsored by the Social Justice Secretariat and held at Santa Severa, near Rome, September 4-17, 2005. I was blessed to have been among the 45 people there (31 participants and 14 facilitators and organizers), and I have been asked to comment on the process, which I do with much gratitude.

The first point to be made is that process was part of the content. That is, participants' interactions – coming to know and trust each other; communicating experiences, insights and reactions; listening deeply to each other; praying and reflecting alone and together; discerning, deciding and celebrating – were not simply expeditious means to achieving a particular end. In this case the 'end' was that of formulating proposals for Fr. General on how the Society and its works should respond to violence, conflict, war and peace building today. While this was the Seminar's chief goal, there were two others: learning how to discern and decide as a group, and trying to incorporate theology, ethics and spirituality into the social apostolate's typical techniques of analysis, advocacy, accompaniment and activism. According such importance to process is not typical of a seminar and, if I may be frank, this degree of importance is not so typical of the social apostolate, or of the work of many Christian NGO's, either. We tend to emphasize instead the cognitive, or objective analysis, but not exclusively so. At the Seminar, instead, the processes were part of the data and the analysis. The organizers were trying something new, and they were quite consciously experimenting. That they had the insight that process should be crucial for faith-based justice work, and the commitment to actually try it out was, I believe, inspired. I am deeply grateful to the organizers for taking this risk.

Before analyzing and criticizing the process, let me first describe it. It combined elements of group dynamics and apostolic discernment in common. Each working day began and ended with prayer. The two weeks opened with exercises designed for group formation, and to introduce us to each other. Once these preparatory processes were completed, the basic dynamic began. Repeated again and again in various ways, it had three parts: personal study, reflection and prayer; then two rounds of sharing and discussing in small groups, of which there were five, where the first round was for sharing the fruit of personal reflection and prayer, and the second was for noting how one had been affected by the first round; finally, the small groups reported their results to the plenary sessions of all the participants, where those results were processed in various ways. Then the organizers charged with the task of writing the final document would use the results of the plenary sessions to shape the draft text in an ongoing manner. Intellectual content, chiefly in the form of three in-depth case studies, but with some other theological and analytical input too, was processed in this three-step dynamic. The analytical input, through the dynamic, brought out people's experiences and insights, which in turn became part of the data. The process's key contribution to the success of the Seminar was its acknowledgement of subjectivity and of inter-subjectivity. The data of each person's and each group's subjectivity were taken seriously as data for discernment. The ways in which people, the small groups and finally the plenary sessions, responded to the matter at hand and to each other were the data for discerning how God was inviting the Seminar to participate in God's peace-building activity in a world racked by violence, conflict and war.

The process was a great success. How do I know? Because we were transformed; because, I believe, this disparate group of Jesuits, lay women, lay men, Catholics and Muslim, from all over the world, was somehow transformed into a communal, active discerning subject with a strong yet open religious identity, a religious identity that, while deeply Christian in an Ignatian way, was also in some way multi-faith or at least religiously open. And we left wonderfully consoled by the transformation. Yet, this process was experimental, and so, as may be expected, it also faltered and stumbled.

To begin with, the process was not as new as the organizers thought. Techniques of communal discernment have been developed and tested in various parts of the Society, albeit recently, most

notably by John English SJ, and George Schemel SJ, and the retreat houses in Guelph, Canada, and Warnersville, USA. They developed and tested such techniques, both for apostolic discernment and governance, and collaborated together from the early 1980's until the mid 1990's. The Seminar organizers are now aware that such research is available.

I have two main criticisms, and three smaller ones. First of all, there sometimes seemed to be a conflict between an intellectual or content agenda, and a process one. When these agendas clashed, the content side usually won –it is, after all, the more familiar method– but the result was usually disturbance and confusion in the plenary session. When significant numbers of people in the plenary complained or otherwise sought to change the proceedings, it was usually for more process, although it was never for less content. Secondly, while the process element was strong in the small groups and generally worked well there, it was weak in the plenary sessions. The small group techniques were able to acknowledge and use people's subjectivities, but the techniques used in the plenary sessions generally could not do that. For the plenary assembly to work as a discerning body, we would have needed techniques to listen to each other there, and to recognize how we were being transformed. Then it would have been easier to recognize how God was working in us and in the world at the same time. Furthermore, had process elements been stronger in the plenary sessions, then not only could the whole assembly have been more discerning, it could also have handled more content and analysis. Instead of competing, the two agendas could have strengthened each other.

Now I come to my smaller criticisms. For the plenary to have become a more discerning agent, instead of primarily a listening and consultative body, we would have had to get to know each other better sooner. Communal discernment is best done by a community, where people know and trust each other. So the early group formation exercises were extremely helpful, as were the pre-seminar exchanges of brief autobiographical statements, and the fact that we lived and ate together. But we did not tell or hear each other's stories in any detail until late in the workshop, and this was done in response to a need expressed by many. When we did share stories, which we did only in the small groups, there was a lot of energy, which confirmed the importance of the exercise. But there was no way of feeding this energy and transformation into the plenary session, so we did not form community as a plenary assembly as well as we did in the small groups. In order for people meeting each other for the first time to become a discerning community, the sharing and listening must begin as soon as possible, and we need to hear each other as a community. Secondly, while it was good that the facilitators sought to recognize consolation and desolation in the seminar in order to adjust the processes, I do not know if the writers of the document similarly tried to use the spiritual movements in the seminar to shape the text. They probably did so in an implicit manner. Finally, all the participants, including the coordinators of the small groups, could have used some brief instruction in listening skills, facilitation and communal discernment, especially on the differences between discussing, debating, sharing and discerning. Each of these activities has its place, but the trick is to recognize when and where.

I conclude now with the theological importance of what we did in the Seminar. First of all, what exactly did we do? The inclusion of communal apostolic discernment in the methods and characteristics of the social apostolate was a communal form of reading the signs of the times. Reading the signs of the times is a social form of discernment, because social phenomena are the data. But doing the reading as a community, not just as an individual, makes this social discernment communal, and this is the novelty. Then the community's transformation by the process and the phenomena becomes part of the data for discernment, together with the social phenomena that are the 'signs'. Interestingly, this is precisely how each of GC 34's four mission documents did their discernments –in each case, a recognition of particular ways in which the Society had been transformed since GC 32 became a criterion for recognizing how God was at work in the world. Secondly, while retaining the normal aspects of analysis, advocacy and accompaniment, communal discernment enables our method to be spiritual from beginning to end, instead of primarily at the level of motivation. Integrating communal discernment is also much more consistent with GC 34's emphases on the Society as a body, and on our religious experience. Just as the decree "Servants of Christ's Mission" uses the Contemplation on the

Incarnation to observe what Christ is doing in the world, so communal discernment also shifts the central question from "what are the needs out there, and what are we to do" to "what is God doing in the world" and "what is God doing in us, that is, how is God inviting our participation in this divine activity"? Discernment cannot replace a rigorous analysis of needs, but it does situate the question of need and response in a religious context. Thirdly, this method makes social justice work liturgical, for it expects that the primary agent or celebrant is not us, but God, through Christ in the Spirit. Thus social justice work becomes less a religious application and more of a religious experience through and through. Finally, incorporating apostolic communal discernment is also a question of self-coherence. For, to draw on the theologies and philosophies of Bernard Lonergan SJ, and Emmanuel Levinas, if subjectivity is not taken seriously, then any use of "objectivity" will only do intellectual and moral violence to subjects, and we can hardly promote justice and peace that way. So, as we learned at Santa Severa, "knowledge is not only between the ears, it is also between noses" –and the same goes for discernment.

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Discernment for Non-Violence Some Personal Reflections on a Recent Workshop

Rudolf C. Heredia SJ

The Social Justice Secretariat of the Society of Jesus organised a workshop on 'Violence and War: Cultural and Economic Interests.' 4–17 September 2005 at Santa Severa, Italy. Three kinds of methodologies were involved at three different levels of engagement. The first level is *discussion*. Here there is an input in terms of position papers or academic studies. The purpose is primarily an intellectual quest to clarify ideas. This is what a dialectic process is all about, but all too easily it can be stymied in fruitless debate.

The second level would be one of *dialogue*. Here the emphasis is on open communication between the participants for a conversation in an effort to understand, not just intellectually or notionally but at a more comprehensive and inclusive level, a more human and personal one. Many cultural and religious differences can only be usefully engaged with at this second level.

The third level would be one of *discernment* where the priority is to listen together to the inner voice of conscience, where the presence of the Spirit that can best be heard and felt in the 'gentleness of the breeze' that blows where it wills, and we often know not where it comes from or where it goes. Such listening is a spiritual experience and may well be counter-intuitive as when it leads to a prophetic witness.

The first level of discussion is well suited to clarifying issues and concepts and so deepening insight and sharpen ideas. It is all too often more ideologically than intellectually driven, especially when sensitive and divisive political and social concerns are involved. As a result the clarity and incisiveness it effects may well bring difference and division into the open without necessarily reconciling or integrating them. As such, it may be a useful but still a first step in a constructive group encounter. But discussion can get so polarized as to be unable to proceed any further.

The second level of dialogue must then follow on first. Defensiveness and distrust do not make for open communication. We all have our baggage of suspicions and apprehension and so a measure of self-awareness and introspection is a necessary condition for any real open communication. Hence, a fruitful dialogue demands careful preparation. However, open communication without some clarity and comprehension of the issues we are dialoguing about can only lead to a sharing of ignorance, not to a real understanding, or worse, to misunderstandings. Obviously, dialogue is a delicate matter and is best seen as an on-going learning process inviting us into ever deeper sharing. It is not just a one-off event. The mutual understanding and self-discovery that such a dialogue results in becomes the basis on which contentious issues can be resolved and acted upon.

There are however issues which are complex and complicated beyond any clear certainties, yet demanding a response. Confronted with such human ambiguities and uncertainties, when we have reached the limits of our own abilities, we must seek the guidance of the inner voice of the Spirit to make a prudential judgement and act. This precisely is what discernment is all about. The Spirit does not substitute for human endeavour but meets us on the way to guide us farther along. Hence, group discernment must follow, not precede a dialogue in open communication. This dialogue in turn must be first enriched by a discussion that leads to a clearer understanding and wider comprehension of the issues involved.

The workshop at Santa Severa was organized to include these three methodologies in a process that reiterated itself over two weeks. If it demonstrated anything, it was surely how rewarding such a process can be for the participants. The inputs from the experts, the three case studies (from Chad, India and Colombia), and the issues and concerns arising from all this, represented the first level of discussion. The dialogue on these expressed the second level in this group sharing. And finally, a careful attention to the movements of one's heart and the urgings of the inner voice of the Spirit culminated in the third level of the group discernment.

Without doubt, this is an experience and a methodology to be replicated on any issue as complex and urgent as the one this workshop was gathered around. But if replication demands that we learn from what went right, we must also be sensitive to where we fell short. And here I express a personal disappointment, a sadness, at 'the path not taken,' even though the general consensus seemed to be moving in this direction. Yet forcing a conclusion on the issue of non-violence would have been a contradiction in terms. However, I still retain the hope that the threshold will be crossed in some future follow up.

Non-violence does find an important place in the workshop's statement, but it did not become an explicit option in its recommendations. I believe the lack of clarity at the first level of discussion did not make for a deeper dialogue and a more sensitive discernment of the question that gripped us all: how far is an option for non-violence viable in a violent world? To address such a question in dialogue and discernment we must first clarify the issues involved. Now if we understand "violence" as the violation of persons, of people of groups and communities, then it cannot ever be justified. To speak of "*defensive violence*" is extremely problematic, if not a contradiction in terms. It is far more exact and proper to speak of the legitimacy of, and justification for "*defensive force*" against violators who have forfeited their rights by failing to respect the same in others, and so can justifiably be restrained and prevented by proportionate and appropriate force as required or necessitated.

The option for non-violence does not condemn the use of such "defensive force". Rather it is sensitive to the real possibilities of any use of force, particularly in situations of collective violence where it too often results in unintended and uncontrollable collateral damage. In the most complex situations, there are no precision-guided instruments even for the use of defensive force. I am not here urging this as an option for all, or even for all Christians. But just as the option for the poor is not an option against the rich, but a prophetic witness to the kingdom, so too some can be called to make a similar option for non-violence without judging those who do not.

To suggest that this is an impractical option, is to ignore the freedom movement of Gandhi that brought down an Empire, or the civil rights movement of Martin Luther King that steered the racial violence of the ghettos away from further bloodshed, or the peaceful coup against the armed power of President Marcos in the Philippines led by Cardinal Sin, or the "Rainbow Coalition" of Nelson Mandela in South Africa that avoided a blood bath there. We need only to imagine what the use of even defensive force, however justifiable, might have meant in all these instances in order to realize how the moral power of non-violence can be both realistic and humanising.

Too often discernment has focused, not on non-violence as a prophetic response, but on violence and force as a justified defence. Undeniably structural violence in society, genocidal massacres of defenceless victims, pogroms against ethnic minorities … are difficult and intractable issues. However, we have been better at developing a theory of a 'just war' that justifies force, than adept at discerning non-violence as the means to a just peace. How different would this workshop have been if it had focused on "Non-Violence and Peace"? For non-violence is more than the avoidance of violence or the renunciation of force. It is a positive option to suffer rather than inflict suffering, an appeal to conscience premised on the moral authority of the cause and its promoters.

Surely, this is the way of Jesus, the way of the Cross, of power in powerlessness, the Paschal Mystery? But of course, it is those who have experienced the injustice and terror of violence that can speak for such an option. To propose such an option from a position of power and pelf, of privilege and security cannot ring true. Nevertheless, there can be some who are called to make such an option as they listen to the inner voice of the Spirit and the still small voice of conscience. Archbishop Oscar Romero did make such an option even as he refused to condemn those who did not. There are many Jesuits who have witnessed thus with their blood and surely not in vain, from those martyred at San Salvador to others in similar situations across the world.

The workshop at Santa Severa did not conclude with such an option, but it did not close the door either. Perhaps at some later date, may be at the next General Congregation, the door will open again and the Spirit will invite us to walk through, to walk as Jesus walked, for he too lived in a violent world, and in truth triumphed against it non-violently in the end, but only at the cost of his own violent death. This is the cost of discipleship that we are called to discern.

Santa Severa, 4–17 September 2005

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Victor Moses SJ (Gujarat - India)
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