

Press release

THE NEW WELFARE THAT WE ASK OF POLITICS

The Ten Commandments of the Jesuit Social Network in view of the 13-14 April elections

Going to vote, choosing the candidate **who promotes both a new welfare centered on the weak and an inclusive civil community**. For the Jesuit Social Network (JSN) this is the criterion by which to judge both the programs of the different party platforms that are offered for the 13-14 April elections and the work of the future government.

The JSN is a **network that connects Jesuits and laity who, in different ways, are active in the social sector**, from the South to the North of the country, in approximately thirty cooperatives, foundations, centers for research, and informal groups. More than one thousand individuals (both employees and volunteers) work to support those in difficulty, youth at risk, single-parent families, elderly living alone, the handicapped, immigrants, the incarcerated, the homeless, and the substance dependent. Among the better-known works of the JSN we highlight the Centro Astalli in Rome, the Pedro Arrupe Institute for Political Formation in Palermo, the Hurtado Center in Naples, the San Marcellino Foundation in Genoa, Villa Sant' Ignazio Foundation in Trent, the San Fedele Cultural Foundation in Milan (publisher of the journals *Aggiornamenti Sociali e Popoli*).

Proceeding from personal experience with individuals who work daily in the social sector, the associates of the JSN have decided to intervene in the electoral debate to give voice to those they encounter in their own work, underlining ten political priorities for a nation that is more just and more attentive to the weakest:

1. The fundamental condition for every political activity tending to the common good is that individuals and their actions be **morally upright**, which certainly implies a clean criminal record, but, above all, implies both a vision of politics as service and a choice not to employ politics for personal interests.
2. There is urgent need for **a strong response to the presence of the Mafia**, pervasive in the South, but not only there: in the outskirts of our poorer and more problematic cities, in institutions, in the civic community, in the economy, at the local, national, and international levels.
3. **Financial politics** must treat available resources by directing them toward inclusion, not toward a misunderstood concept of freedom that excludes others. This must determine different priorities (less military spending and less public waste, more money for education, social politics, sanitation) and a more decisive defense of common goods (water, for instance).

4. The **worker** must assume the central role as a person. What are the approaches? Combat unemployment and black-market work; place limits on insecurity, flexibility and mobility; undertake serious action to prevent injuries and on-the-job fatalities; guarantee a growth in ability to receive stipends and pensions.
5. The recent **school** reforms have reduced the quality of studies and have penalized young people in situations of extreme cultural poverty who live in a disadvantaged social context. There is a need to redefine the relationship between the role of the public and the private school, in complete respect for the Constitution.
6. The question of **immigration** cannot be confronted only as economic or security problem. There must be approaches that look for integration and mutual living; an international political economy that favors the development of the country of origin, thus reducing the flight of emigrants; legislation that is clearer and more open for refugees, a reconsideration of the presently ambiguous role of the Cpt.
7. **Jails** are again full of drug addicts, immigrants, the mentally ill, and the homeless. These situations are not resolved behind bars. There is a need to pass from the “penal” to the “social” and, in the most effective way, to open up to alternative means of detention.
8. The number of the **new poor** is growing; no politics that respects individual persons can ignore the salaries, pensions, aids and means that grant a dignified life to all.
9. Say no to business and mercantile strategies for handling **sanitation** and no to the privatization that, in fact, excludes the poorest citizens most of all.
10. The **mass media** must also be at the service of the common good, of democracy, of social justice. The exclusion of the voice of the poor and of those who live in difficulty is worrisome.

The document of the Jesuit Social Network, signed by 26 national groups that belong to it, is available (in Italian) at www.jsn.it

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