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**IN THIS ISSUE**

**\* INTRODUCTION**

Michael Czerny, S.J.

**\* PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES on JUSTICE**

Working Group 3

**\* BASIC OPTIONS of DECREE 4**

Alejandro Tilve, S.J., Montevideo

**\* MEDIA GONE MISSING**

Raymond Parent, S.J., Rome

Martin Voill, S.J., Innsbruck

**\* The PROMOTION of JUSTICE:**

**A CHALLENGE for the whole SOCIETY**

Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, S.J., Paris

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# INTRODUCTION

When Jesuits speak of **inculturation**, the "service of faith" usually comes to mind rather than the "promotion of justice". But should we assume that "justice" means the same — historically, socially, notionally and emotively — in Madras, Madrid, Manila, Melbourne, Mogidishu, Montevideo and Montreal? Probably not! "PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES on JUSTICE" was originally written as part of preparatory Essay 3, *Good News and the Promotion of Justice*. Readers of the first draft reacted strongly, both in favour and against, and many of the points made were supplied by Jesuits who belong to very different cultural areas of the world. Is this a topic of research and discussion which should be pursued?

Its concept of "justice" may be occidental, but Decree 4's argumentation seems more cyclical than linear and its style rather dense, while its conclusions — the very options it decrees for the Society — are scattered throughout the document. As a contribution to the upcoming Congregation, Alejandro Tilve has gathered them together briefly and clearly in "BASIC OPTIONS of DECREE 4".

Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, who entered in 1984, was asked the deceptively simple question: "What does the promotion of justice mean to you?" After several months of discussion with classmates and elders in France, he wrote a careful and sensitive reflection on how young Jesuits make the Society's mission their own, how they integrate the cultural and social, communal and apostolic and spiritual dimensions, into a single vital commitment. Would Jesuits of another place or an earlier vintage (like 1964 or 1944) describe their process of appropriating the mission in similar terms, or very different ones?

Preparatory Essay 3 treated many aspects of Good News and the promotion of justice but blatantly overlooked the complex dimensions of social communications, both as constitutive of the modern milieu and as intrinsic to our work of evangelization. Raymond Parent and Martin Voill's substantive critique — exactly the kind of dialogue which the tabloids and essays were meant to inspire (though not by omitting key points!) — surely contributes to the fuller formulation of our mission.

If you are struck by the ideas presented in one of these articles, or have questions or comments on the preparatory tabloids **Challenges of Mission today to our *Minima Societas*** and **The Society Facing Challenges of Mission today**, your own brief response is very welcome. To send a letter to *PJ* for inclusion in a future issue, please use the address or fax number on the cover or by electronic mail\* to "czerny@geo2.geonet.de"

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\* For a brief introduction to the nascent Jesuit e-mail network, see *SJ News and Features* 21:6 (November-December 1993).

*Promotio Justitiae* appears in English, French and Spanish. Yet as anyone knows who has tried to translate, *translation is treason*: the editor is painfully aware of how much each text loses in nuance and richness when published in translation. Would the readers of *PJ* prefer to read each article in the original English, French or Spanish in which it was written? For example, to receive the current issue with Group 3's piece in English, Tilve's in Spanish, Martinot-Lagarde's in French, and Parent/Voill's in English?

The Social Justice Secretariat at the General Curia of the Society of Jesus (Rome) publishes *Promotio Justitiae*. If you are interested in receiving *PJ*, you need only make your request to Father Socius of your Province, while non-Jesuits please send your mailing-address (indicating the language of your choice) to the Editor.

Let us pray during Advent:

Come Holy Spirit  
and make this a time of grace.  
May the Society so undertake  
to reflect, pray and discern,  
as preparing the General Congregation requires,  
in order to "renew our way  
of prayer, action and life."

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**Editor: Michael Czerny, S.J.**

# PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES on JUSTICE

1. Philosophy and social sciences can strengthen our grasp of how the integral proclamation of the Gospel involves us deeply, intelligently and effectively in the world in our time. Without attempting a comparative analysis of all the diverse cultural presuppositions underlying "justice" and "the poor", these notes are offered to stimulate research, reflection and dialogue on the intellectual supports for our mission, with a view to G.C. 34.
2. First comes a survey of justice and poverty in the Western tradition: some achievements, shortcomings, and correctives. Then a sketch of some Eastern and Southern notions, suggesting the fruitful encounter between the very different philosophical worlds in which Jesuits are.

## Notes on justice in Western philosophy

3. Greek philosophy gave birth to the idea and values of democracy. Justice is the prime virtue that regulates relations among persons in the public order, both contractually and distributively, while *philia* is both the basis of social concord and its goal. Poverty was to be avoided as a source of disorders (Aristotle). Justice is understood ultimately as an adjustment to that natural order to which all individuals and states are subject. These conceptions endure in good measure through the Middle Ages, with the proviso that the natural order is now attributed to the divine law promulgated by the Creator. Developments in scholastic and humanist ethical and legal thought (e.g., international law), *caritas* and the defense of the poor, are associated with names like Thomas, Victoria, Suarez, de las Casas, Lessius. The concept of common good was central to the classical idea of justice, which is grounded in the relations among persons in community, as are the biblical and the oriental traditions.
4. In the modern era the accent shifts to the individual as the relatively autonomous subject of specific rights on the basis of reason, inherent dignity, or contractual arrangements. The contractarian view understands a just order as fulfilling individual rights and interests; poverty can be an obstacle to fair contracts among equals. Insofar as duties are typically derived from rights rooted in the dignity of each person, this modern vision emphasizes the **autonomy of the individual** — **protecting** individual rights and interests against the exercise of power by the stronger — and with this appears the new idea of social justice.<sup>1</sup>
5. Positive aspects of modern Western developments include personal liberty, democratic cultural ideals, religious tolerance, the emerging idea of inalienable rights, the critique of colonialism and domination. Marx, the marxian tradition, other currents of socialist or liberal-democratic thought

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<sup>1</sup> Social justice means redistribution of income and resources as well as participation: "Persons have an obligation to be active and productive participants in the life of society, and that society has a duty to enable them to participate in this way." U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All* (1986), N° 71.

and contemporary political philosophy seek new understanding of structural or institutional injustice<sup>2</sup> and thereby articulate the perspective of the poor.

6. Beginning in Western traditions, the contemporary doctrine of human rights is a great achievement. First came civil and political rights founded on the principle of equality which demands that people treat each other as equal in dignity in all their relationships. The international system of protection for these rights has been developing for nearly half a century. Economic, social and cultural rights have proven far more difficult to secure. The rights of peoples, for example, indigenous or ethnic groups, and the rights of humanity, for example, to a safe environment, are slowly emerging. Human rights has been evolving beyond its classical Western origins, and now urgently seeks its justification in Eastern and Southern traditions, too.

7. Legal notions of equality or reciprocity between citizens are not incompatible with the preferential option for the poor. In modern societies, equal access and reciprocity guaranteed by laws can protect the poor and defend the weak, though vested interests and corruption often prevent the poor from obtaining justice.

8. Perhaps the greatest weakness of modern Western trends (one which affects the legal and human rights traditions, too) is the person conceived-of as an autonomous individual at the origins of the contractarian approach. Recently contractarian individualism has been introducing "market" relations into not only the economic but also the interpersonal and ethical spheres. The post-modern eclipse of justice and indeed systematic analysis tempts the West to intellectual agnosticism and even despair. Ecological consciousness criticizes the irresponsible anthropomorphism in Western development.

9. The classical Western notions of duty and natural law provide a more relational understanding of justice. Contemporary philosophy demonstrates various efforts to overcome the individualist conception. Different kinds of communitarian ethics as well as philosophies of relationship explore a relational view of the person and put the priority on justice vis à vis individual rights. A conflictual-communicative concept of justice helps show how the option for the poor can be realized in a non-violent approach of dialogue and compromise. The right to resistance is also emerging in popular social thought.

10. Taking advantage of these philosophical resources may enrich the notion of justice. But there are other possibilities within and outside the Western tradition which could help render both our discourse and our struggle less limited culturally and ideologically.

### **Some Southern and Eastern perspectives**

11. Africa, Asia and Latin America differ from each other, and the people of each continent also differ greatly amongst themselves in religious perceptions, cosmologies, cultures. Yet they largely

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<sup>2</sup> *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* N° 16 and especially N° 36, which quotes *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (2 December 1984) N° 16 on the meaning of social sin.

share relational notions of justice and duty, contrasting with Western individualism, and have similar cosmic and communal connotations with strong notes of sharing and solidarity. The following notes, mostly contributed by Jesuits who criticized the earlier draft, suggest ideas which complement and correct Western notions of justice and poverty, or may stimulate a new South-South dialogue.

12. Primal or tribal religious traditions put emphasis on the solidarity and equality of all men and women. Justice in African philosophy and religion is closely tied to the importance of the group or community, so that justice regulates relationships for the good and harmony of the whole group. Individual rights are never as important as those of the group. Similarly African religion is always a group or community affair, never just individual. Since all aspects of life are perceived communally and considered whole and inseparable, therefore the link between faith and justice is obvious and unproblematic.

13. The indigenous people in South America have an oral rather than written philosophy. For example, the Guarani system of production is based on reciprocity. Values which emerge in their thinking include an appreciation for other religions, the experience of community, of communal leadership, of the tribe and the nation, and respect for ecology and peoples who are different.

14. Asian religions tend to be intuitive and hence emphasize the mystic integration with human and with all other forms of life, and urge compassion with the poor and the suffering. Buddhism and Hinduism insist on personal salvation as an ultimate liberation from all that is limiting, and equally on moral behaviour based on duties, rather than rights, both individual and social. *Dharma*, translated variously as duty, order, righteousness, regulates human and social behaviour relationships. This is illustrated more in the Epics than in the philosophical texts. They have inspired the practice of people like Gandhi.

15. A basic Confucian principle is that people are human because they are **moral** persons. Out of this moral character, which seems to be innate in humans, one individual relates to the others. Harmonious inter-personal relationships, the basis of Confucian ethics, are vital in the social structure of society, and justice is that harmonious relationship between people which does not violate their **moral character** as human. Taoism is based on the highly metaphysical principle of the *yin-yang* or the dialectical interaction of opposites. Justice then is the dialectical interaction — among people, and between people and nature — which results in harmony.

16. The individual vs state problematic of modern Western and Catholic social thought is resolved in many of these traditions by the *tertium quid*, the community. The person is prior to the State, but not to the community; the person never exists without the community. Duties or obligations towards other persons in the human realm and toward the cosmic and divine realms ground the rights and indeed the dignity of the human person.

17. Some aspects of Asian religious culture converge with central elements of traditional Catholic social teaching, such as the human, natural and divine realms as intrinsically related; the paramount **dignity of the person** but without human dominance over the rest of existence; the primacy of the

**common good** including a special respect and reverence for nature; and an **eternal principle of cosmic and moral justice** which converges with the classical idea of natural law.

18. Certain Western self-critiques coincide with, and may originate in, key Eastern traditions sketched here. The latter may also have something to learn from Western Enlightenment thought, without supporting forms of cultural imperialism. West and East and South all have to inculturate the language of faith in Jesus Christ starting from its original semitic roots.

19. At the same time we should not draw too sharp a divide between notions of justice based on communal relationships and notions that embody an emphasis on human rights. These approaches need to be synthesized, which is itself a major practical and theoretical task in the promotion of justice. Respect for ethnic identity and cultural diversity ought not to support inadvertently the relativism of some post-modern Western thought or the nationalist and communal fundamentalism that fires conflict in many parts of the world today.

20. The very fact of entering into the sort of dialogue exemplified in the above paragraphs testifies to "the displacement of the Society toward the East and the South" as described by one Jesuit critic. "Even G.C. 32 was still 'North-Western' but G.C. 34 seems inscribed within an unprecedented global perspective. Latin Americans have much in common with the South and the East but, having been 'Westernized', we need to learn a new language in order to enter into a fruitful dialogue as Christians and Jesuits. This requires a real cultural and epistemological breakthrough as well as spiritual conversion."

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# BASIC OPTIONS of DECREE 4

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Decree 4 on our mission today came out of all the deep and careful preparation for G.C. 32. The result to be expected was a long document rich in nuances, structured internally in a particular way, and with its conclusions scattered throughout the text. For these reasons, and with a view to preparing for G.C. 34, I was asked to prepare an outline summary of the **fundamental options** established in Decree 4. This being the only purpose here, I have left out many other considerations which are of utmost importance for the religious life of the Society, but which do not form part of the decree's basic objective or its originality.

The quotations of Decree 4 are taken from *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis, 1977), but following the style of documents put out by our Curia in Rome, I often substitute "men and women" for "men" (as Father Kolvenbach speaks of "men and women for others" adapting the already traditional expression of Father Arrupe's, "men for others"). Along the same lines, since I feel it does not change the substance of the document, I have also taken the liberty of usually replacing "man", when it refers generally to man and woman, by "human being". But not to make the reading difficult I leave out the brackets which would have identified each of these particular changes, as well as others which do not affect the essence of the decree.

## THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

**Origins of our spirituality.** At the origins of our spirituality is a "searching consideration of the world in order to discover its needs. The first companions thus learned to respond to the call of Christ and to work for the establishment of His Kingdom" (14). In continuity with them, we seek to discover what are the needs of our times in order to respond in a similar way.

**The contemporary age.** Our times are characterized by the emergence of "new opportunities — and problems — disclosed by the discoveries of technology and the human sciences" (25). This has produced a deep change in culture and society. New means exist which could "make the world more just — but we do not really want to employ them. Our new mastery over physical and human nature is used, often enough, to exploit individuals, groups and peoples rather than to distribute the resources of the planet more equitably. It has led, it is leading, to division rather than union, to alienation rather than communication" (27).

## THE BASIC AFFIRMATION

**An absolute requirement.** "The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" (2).

**Condition for fruitfulness.** In continuity with our first companions we want to respond to God and face the challenges of this our age, and so the promotion of justice has necessarily become a



component of proclaiming the faith (28). Furthermore the promotion of justice becomes the very condition for "the fruitfulness of all our apostolic endeavours" (29).

**Integral justice and proclaiming Jesus Christ.** There is an intrinsic relationship between promoting justice and preaching the Gospel. "There can be no promotion of justice in the full and Christian sense unless we also preach Jesus Christ and the mystery of reconciliation He brings" to its fulfilment. Just as, "conversely, it will not be possible to bring Christ to people or proclaim His Gospel effectively unless a firm decision is taken to devote ourselves to the promotion of justice" (27).

### THE OPTIONS TAKEN

1. **A total, corporate and multiform response.** Faced with a world divided by injustice, the response of the Society has to be "total, corporate, rooted in faith and experience, and multiform" (7). Partial responses will not do, of some few individuals or works, nor uniform responses. The whole Society has to embark upon the mission which today is seen as so fundamental, knowing that this necessarily means using many and various apostolic means.

2. **The littlest and the weakest.** We should make every effort "to recognize and respect the rights of all, especially the poor and the powerless," and moreover "work actively to secure them" (18).

3. **Transformation of structures.** While in other ages, evangelical or charitable work may have been directed at the individual person, now "it is becoming more and more evident that the structures of society are among the principal formative influences in our world, shaping people's ideas and feelings, shaping their most intimate desires and aspirations" (40). Given the influence of these structures, "we cannot be excused from making the most rigorous possible political and social analysis of our situation" (44).

4. **Injustice rooted in the human heart.** A structural perspective by itself is still not enough to encompass the problem of injustice. "Injustice must be attacked at its roots which are in the human heart" (32). "The inequalities and injustices of our world are the result of what man himself, man in his selfishness, has done" (27).

5. **Seeking God himself.** The service of faith, our active priestly service, should be indissolubly united with the promotion of justice. We should communicate "the truths which give justice meaning and bring men and women to find Christ in their daily lives" (52). This means responding "to humanity's deepest yearnings ... for God and His friendship — a longing to be sons and daughters in His sight." We have to "express the spirit of the Beatitudes and bring people to a real reconciliation" (33).

6. **Inculturation.** "The incarnation of the Gospel implies that the way in which Christ is preached and encountered will be different in different countries, different for people with different backgrounds" (54). And so "our ministry should be directed toward" inculturating the Gospel, that is, "incarnating the faith and life of the Church in the culture and traditions of the people among whom and with whom we work" (55).

7. **New forms of apostolic insertion.** Already beginning to develop, "new forms of apostolic insertion" are a real need of our times. "Whatever form they take, they require of us a solid formation, intense solidarity in community and a vivid awareness of our identity" (36).

8. **Collaboration with others.** This option will bring us to a close collaboration with others: "The involvement we desire will be apostolic to the extent that it leads us to a closer collaboration with other members of the local churches, Christians of other denominations, believers of other religions, and all who hunger and thirst after justice; in short, with all who strive to make a world fit for men and women to live in" (37).

9. **Review and evaluation of ministries.** This option involves "a thoroughgoing reassessment of our traditional apostolic methods, attitudes and institutions" (9), such that in each Province "there should be a definite mechanism for the review of our ministries" (77).

10. **Review of our loyalties.** Our origins, studies and connections "often insulate us from poverty" (49). We should "ask ourselves with whom we are identified and what our apostolic preferences are" in function of the promotion of justice (47). "Solidarity with men and women who live a life of hardship and who are victims of oppression should be a characteristic of the life of all of us as individuals and a characteristic of our communities and institutions as well. Alterations are called for in our manner and style of living" (48).

11. **Apostolic availability.** To assume this commitment as a body "demands of all of us a high degree of availability and a real apostolic mobility in the service of the universal Church" (69).

#### OUR READINESS PUT TO THE TEST

**Are we ready?** Surely we realize that, as a consequence of this option, the possibility always exists that some one or some community will have to suffer because of the concrete commitments made. "Any effort to promote justice will cost us something. Our cheerful readiness to pay the price will make our preaching of the Gospel more meaningful and its acceptance easier" (46).

And so there is a question which we always have to be answering in order to keep alive our option for justice. "Are we ready to bear witness to the Gospel in the painful situations where our faith and our hope are tested by unbelief and injustice?" (35).

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# MEDIA GONE MISSING

Raymond Parent, S.J. Martin Voill, S.J.

The media obviously went missing in the section *Good News and the Promotion of Justice* of the first tabloid prepared for G.C. 34. The apostolate of communication is noticeably absent at two levels.

It is missing first in the implied concept of society which this section is referring to. It is surely not easy to find out and define the main ingredients of our contemporary society. But few researchers would deny the factor "media communication" in their attempts to describe modern society.

In his analysis of the powers which rule the world, the philosopher Jürgen Habermas points out that politics, economy and the media are the three inter-dependent forces which control what is believed and finally done. "Only when private persons are organized," Habermas states, "can they take part in the process of public communication ... by using those channels established to enable both organizations and the state to express themselves." Concerned private persons, once organized, must use the mass-media to communicate with the state, because the media are the forum of public discussion today, and only within this process of public negotiation are "political compromises ... legitimated." By way of illustration Habermas quotes Karl Bücher's description of newspapers as "carriers and leaders of public opinion."<sup>3</sup>

The Society of Jesus is such an organization of private persons who may help to give the poor a voice. Since the poor cannot organize themselves, we must take up on their behalf the task of participating in public communication. Obversely, if we want to have an impact on policies or on public opinion which to a great extent determines politics, then we have to be present in the media as organized private persons. The poor cannot be so present.

However, the preparatory document reflects almost exclusively the socio-economic and political factors of society when talking about structural sin:

The gratuitous love of God for every person and all creation, and Jesus' commandment that we love one another gratuitously, is one basis for the praxis of Christian justice. In today's world fragmented by sinful structures of all sorts, where injustice masquerades as the truth (Romans 1:18), God continues to reveal Himself as the God of the poor, inviting everyone to participate in the building up of the Kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Kultur und Kritik: Verstreute Aufsätze*, Suhrkamp, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> *Good News and the Promotion of Justice*, N° 3.2.9.

Decree 4 cannot be updated for the 1990s without analyzing realistically how our "information-society" works. Otherwise we'll stay stuck in a 1970s worldview which does not represent the real society in which we have to work.

The media of social communication are surely extraordinary means of **information**, "instruments" apt to influence public **opinion**. Though they might be controlled by various powers, though they might often give a somewhat deformed image of events and of societies, though they might contribute to many injustices, they are in most societies the main source of information and the main factor in shaping public opinion. This aspect of the media can hardly be denied. And several Church documents express the opinion that these wonderful instruments ought to be put to use for evangelization and the promotion of faith and justice.

The media however are much more than means of information. They are the **myths** and **rituals** of modern society. They are society expressing itself to itself. They are probably the most important element in the search of modern man and especially modern society for identity. We Jesuits often remain insensitive to this rôle of the media in the contemporary world because to become so would involve recognizing the fact that the storytelling of the media is replacing our homilies. That the TV tower is replacing the steeple as the point of reference in modern cities.

When we look at the preparatory texts at the second level, that of Jesuit ministries, we see how the conception implied at the first level, brings the texts to ignore the apostolate of social communication. When Essay 3 presents an "appreciation" of the implementation of Decree 4 of G.C. 32, it gives eight positive examples, none of which is related to media apostolate. When it asks what might have been deficient in our implementation of the decree, eight negative aspects of our works are considered and the media are not even honoured with an allusion.

When the text considers how the "basic intuition" of Decree 4 could be implemented in our "works," the communication media are conspicuous by their absence. There is a paragraph about "education", one half-paragraph about "parish and retreat houses", the other half about "spiritual ministry for accompaniment". Of course, all the particular ministries of the Society could not be referred to. It seems though that, even in giving examples, especially when in this third section there are so many, an implicit acceptance of the priorities of G.C. 32 should have been taken into account, lest the reader think that these were already changed. "The General Congregation [32] wishes to continue along the lines given by Father General to the Congregation of Procurators of 1970 and to emphasize once more the importance of theological reflection, social action, education, and the mass media as means of making our preaching of the Gospel more effective."<sup>5</sup>

Priorities established by one General Congregation can be changed by a subsequent one, but let us leave this task to the next Congregation itself. Meanwhile in evaluating the past, the performance since G.C. 32, let us stick to the priorities it established, for example, when it recognized "communication as a high priority of the Society. Father Arrupe's idea was that, if communication is an essential component of the Jesuit mission to serve a faith that does justice, then the Society ought to

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<sup>5</sup> Decree 4, N° 59.

dedicate effort to the study of how modern cultures affect, and are affected by, the means of communication whose development is so rapid in our day."<sup>6</sup>

Had those drafting the final version of *Good News and the Promotion of Justice* included a Jesuit who actually represented the expertise of the Society in media communication, we are confident that a connection between social communication and Faith and Justice as well as option for the poor would have been discovered and proposed to the whole Society for consideration.

We are writing this note precisely so that the following opinion gets transmitted to the whole Society. Contrary to the impression which the tabloid sent to every Jesuit might leave, the commitment to Faith and Justice and the invitation to the option for the poor since G.C. 32 should be an integral part of our mission in every ministry. And proceeding to an evaluation of our Jesuit performance in this matter in view of future planning, we should include and even stress in our considerations the communication media apostolate, because it was defined by G.C. 32 as one of four priorities, because — as expressed by Habermas — it is one of the main forces shaping society and because — as expressed by Avery Dulles — communication is in the final analysis what the Church is all about.

We hope the above remarks do not hide the admiration we have for the documents prepared by Working Groups 1 and 3, of which Michael Czerny was the driving force. Everybody reading these recognizes a great ability of synthesis of difficult and complex subjects without neglecting for all that an inspirational quality animating the whole text.

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<sup>6</sup> Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture," Letter of August 1, 1993.

# **The PROMOTION of JUSTICE: A CHALLENGE for the whole SOCIETY**

**Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, S.J.**

## **Preamble**

Having written this text I find myself in a paradoxical situation. These lines have been pondered and meditated, though the path forward that they trace for me has hardly begun. I have been in the Society since 1984, and still feel as if I am at the pre-dawn of an apostolic life. Yet my topic throughout these pages is the apostolic work and the mission of the Society. So here I hazard the claim that it is possible to speak of the apostolic work of the Society even while one is still in formation.

After an exchange of views with some Jesuits in Paris (whose names I prefer not to give), I took two months to write this text which, with the opinions it attests to, is the fruit of my own reflections. No other views are quoted, even in part. However, I want not to testify, but to try and interpret the Society's life and mission.

It is not an a-historical interpretation, but a thoroughly conditioned one: partly, as I have said, by my own situation, but also partly by the period in which I have lived in the Society. I have only been able to observe recent history. If I refer to more remote history, it is always with the aid of accounts (*récits*)<sup>7</sup> by older Jesuits.

To develop this interpretation I propose two hypotheses: firstly, that one can make sense of developments in the Society only by examining the parallel developments in society at large; secondly, that one can go beyond the monographic genre to speak of religious experience, and that without becoming abstract.

This attempt at interpretation will leave a number of questions untouched. In particular I will not try to examine the rôle of the government of the Society in the body's lived dynamic.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The promotion of justice: under what conditions is it proclamation of the Gospel and therefore integral to the mission of the Society? Three conditions are necessary. Firstly, the ideal of justice must find a way to become flesh in a true desire for justice. Secondly, the effort for justice must not be privatised in the intimacy of one's heart, but must become the work of the body, so that the activities of Jesuits reveal the life of Christ who dwells within them. Thirdly, this work must meet

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<sup>7</sup> Several French terms, impossible to translate, are given with an equivalent word in English, and their meaning becomes clear in the course of the essay. (Editor)

the challenges of contemporary society: the difficulty of discerning the issues in the social field; rootedness in genuine spiritual experience; solidarity matured by friendship with men and women.

To bring these three conditions to the fore, I shall take three detours. In the first (§2), I give an account of the experience of young French Jesuits by showing the paths they have taken to express a true desire for justice. The second (§3) recalls the *Mission Ouvrière* as I read it without having taken part in it myself. And the third (§4) appeals to my experience and understanding of the work of CERAS.<sup>8</sup>

By way of preamble (§1) here are some remarks about my personal experience, so as to surface what might seem implicit in the rest of my paper.

## 1. FIRST PATH: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

If the Master of Novices had had me read Decree 4 before entering the novitiate, I would not have chosen the Society. This is obviously a guess, one cannot remake history. But it throws light on my personal journey. It was above all a personal experience of God I had during retreats, as well as contacts with several Jesuits, which led me to the Society.

In the noviceship I learned about the many works Jesuits are engaged in, until then I had known only one college. Experiments took me to social milieux of which I was ignorant, above all the world of workers. This encounter took place during a hospital experiment at a geriatric centre and later in a technical school. Further, Noël Barré came to the novitiate to introduce Decree 4, which he read in the light of the *Mission Ouvrière* experience.

My own questions about justice only got going in the course of several stays I was able to make overseas. The vitality of Indian villagers or Irish gypsy children, the close relations established beyond cultural barriers, opened me to this dimension of justice.

At the same time during my studies, I became aware of the importance of intellectual tools for deciphering social situations. The desire to equip myself with such tools took me to the United States to study demography for two years. There I also benefited from some contacts with social ministries in the Philadelphia area where I was living.

Today for me the concern to promote justice does not rest on some abstract idea of justice or of a just world, but is above all a desire which leads first of all to opposing injustice. Injustices takes various forms nowadays: sometimes the refusal to consider certain individuals or groups as equal (e.g. *apartheid*); sometimes the despotism of a violence that recognises no legal limits. Injustice is at work in the parcelling-out of wealth, of power, of rôles within a society. It is also the rejection of anyone who is different, distant, unknown, dissimilar.

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<sup>8</sup> Centre de Recherche et d'Action Sociales, Paris.

The desire for justice actively seeks to recognize the other in his dignity and in her identity. It seeks to make the other a neighbour. There can be no action for justice without respect, without memory and without hope. Respect is the condition for acknowledging the other precisely as different. Memory opens one to recognize injustice. Hope is the condition for a possible future with the other. In fine, in the commitment with others to justice one seeks the features of a human community.

This desire to work for the promotion of justice is a sort of passion: a passion to accompany people as they come to grips with complex social situations and try to grasp all that is at stake in their environment; a passion to discover the inventive creativity of those who have to live precarious situations and face difficult ones.

## **2. FROM AN HUMANITARIAN IDEAL TO THE DESIRE FOR JUSTICE: THE EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG FRENCH JESUITS**

For a desire for justice to become a reality, we often need a conversion. As justice always operates within a relationship to someone else, the locus of this conversion lies in our rapport with the world and with men and women. Respect for others depends on our having discovered our own social origins and where we fit into society. It is by means of these factors that our social identity is revealed and expressed.

The experience of young French Jesuits may illustrate this process of conversion. First of all, they are contemporaries with present changes in French society. Such changes today make it difficult to find one's place in society. On the other hand, many of our contemporaries are often moved by a deep generosity. It is this ideal put into practice which becomes the source of a desire to work for justice. In the case of young Jesuits this conversion is often brought about during a long stay abroad.

### **2.1 The basic shifts in French society**

Young Jesuits are contemporaries with recent changes in French society, participating in the dissolution of collective identities which, if they continue to exist, are given a very rough ride. Since World War II, French society has experienced a thorough shaking up. The working class has progressively integrated with the middle class, people's habitat has become urban. Along with the levelling of social groups, complex processes of exclusion today appear which tend to crystallise round conflict between people of foreign origin and those of French stock. Such crystallising gives a cultural aspect to social conflicts.

Since the end of World War II, two great shifts have occurred in French society.

On the one hand the working class has progressively dissolved within a heterogeneous middle class. The tasks of skilled workers tend to disappear in favour of work requiring technical skill and a higher level of abstraction. All the same, there remains a relatively important number of tasks needing only a low level of qualification, but attributed to people who occupy marginal status (because of their nationality or their way of life).



On the other hand, rural France has become urban. This uprooting from the soil has not yet been completely assimilated. Some still have rural connections (by way of family ties or owning a second home). But for many such links already belong to the past.

This twofold dissolution (of the working class and of rural society) is parallel to the **parcelling out** of the social field. We speak readily of a dual society. The dividing-up gets translated in terms of exclusions, which have become increasingly diverse and numerous. The sharp increase in unemployment (with 3.3 million unemployed in late 1993), the failures of the educational system (due partly to the economic crisis, but also to the complexities of the private sphere<sup>9</sup>), have greatly multiplied the processes of exclusion. In other words, the two chief supports for integration into French society, namely work and school, are today extremely fragile.

The conflicts and acts of violence which result from these changes have crystalized around cultural clashes. Immigrants and French people tend to oppose one other. They live separately. Immigrants and French see themselves as competitors in the job market. This opposition is not simply explained by the domination of nationals over foreigners. It is also the opposition of two ways of life, two views of the world and of society, that are not yet reconciled.

These deep changes in French society, however, should not lead one to think that social stratification has wholly disappeared. It is above all the social imagination which finds itself unable to describe and keep pace with the structural changes. This imagination overvalues the individual. It tones down a social stratification based on the social and family memory that is still present at the level of values but hardly ever spoken of. There is a kind of failure in expression. It is difficult for individuals to speak of their origins even if these exist and are socially noteworthy.

## 2.2 **The weaknesses of politics:** **From idealistic talk to the practice of justice**

The difficulty in speaking of oneself and one's origins may also explain in part the collapse of discourse on behalf of others, of political discourse. Certainly, some ideals which stress the individual at the expense of groups still seem to carry the day — talk of human rights in particular. Enthusiasm for humanitarian action seems to belong with this type of discourse. Such enthusiasm gets frustrated and disappointed, partly because of the difficulty of giving an explanation for conflicts of interests, conflicts among individuals and between individuals and groups.

Heartfelt passion and generosity exist among our contemporaries but are not sufficient to produce action. They neither coincide directly with the promotion of justice nor enter into its practice. Frustrations and bitterness have been too violent or too frequent for the concern to promote justice to find a way of expressing itself in action. The terms "justice" or "closeness to the poor" have lost their affective and mobilising power. They are sometimes rejected because, on the contrary, they

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<sup>9</sup> Dissolution of the private sphere: decrease in marriages, increase in remarriages, overlapping of generations within a single family unit, single-parent families....

have been identified with the experience of delusion or of powerlessness. They are also set aside for opposite reasons, when mediations (*les médiations*) have become so burdensome that they seem to mask or to counteract the passion and spontaneity of heart.

Enthusiasm for generous and utopian discourse such as accompanies humanitarian action conceals a profound difficulty which surfaces the moment one asks oneself about justice in our societies. In the concern for justice, the interest of the individual often comes into conflict with those of groups. Naming this conflict of interests helps to explain the bitterness one encounters when returning from having been radically committed in some humanitarian cause.

But before such conflict is identified, numerous forms of flight are still possible: escape into a technocratic rationalism, which under the appearance of a reconciling rationality causes violence to disappear; or escape into institutional work, in which one embraces the institutional norms which also serve to legitimize unjust practices. These protect the individual from the violence he exerts and which accordingly does not rebound on him any more.

In a positive way, only the appreciation by individuals of their own personal identity as a social and collective identity will enable them to overcome the conflict between personal and collective interests. This is first a task of memory, one which is not accomplished in the isolation of an ivory tower, but rather in encounter with others. To be effective, however, this encounter needs **mediations**. In the experience of young Jesuits I have heard talk of two forms of mediation: either a stay abroad, or institutional work.

### 2.3 The concern for justice among young Jesuits

Among young Jesuits interest in and concern for the promotion of justice have often taken root during a stay abroad or a placement in an institution. This experience has often given birth to what is really a passion. Friendships born in these privileged times have been kept up, and those moments are recalled with vivid emotion. These experiences may be overvalued sometimes, but they often underlie a more real and less imaginary desire to go out of oneself and move towards others. This desire is expressed through the **account** (*récit*) which a young Jesuit gives, and the desire tries to become incarnate when he is led to reflect on his apostolic orientation in future.

#### Foundational experiences

For young Jesuits the foundational experience often takes place not in France but abroad.<sup>10</sup> The type of work matters relatively little: teaching, pastoral or social work.<sup>11</sup> All that matters is the

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<sup>10</sup> A fairly significant number of young Jesuits have lived, usually for about two years, in the following countries: India, Haiti, Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, Cameroun, Ivory Coast, USA, Venezuela....

<sup>11</sup> Many experiences have occurred in the context of high school teaching. Others have done pastoral work (Haiti) or helped with development programs (Ivory Coast). Others have pursued an extended course of study (USA, Lebanon).

desire to enter into another culture. Many have reported stumbling blocks and frustrations. As a result of a desire born in France they have had to work out new ways of existence, to enter into relationships, to accept a relative ineffectiveness in their work. Once these obstacles are overcome, young Jesuits have experienced a certain closeness with others. They have adopted ways of life totally different from their own. This has been all the easier as their social connections in France scarcely came into the picture. They were all, for those with whom they came into contact, simply Frenchmen.

In other cases it is been involvement in an institution that has given rise to a foundational experience,<sup>12</sup> and here the rules of conduct involved in belonging to an institution become important. In a hospital, when a novice puts on a white coat, he becomes identified bit by bit as a care-giver and so identifies himself. All the same he is at pains to explain to himself that he is not quite the care-giver which others make him out to be.

In these two forms of experience one's personal identity is not at stake in any decisive manner. One thinks of the time that will come after the experience, this serves as a beacon and enables one to find oneself again. Young Jesuits let themselves be profoundly changed by a temporary environment.

### Consequences of the experience

Even when brief, the experience of what is foreign is also the experience of a **solitude** which some have lived in a radical way. The movement out of oneself is accompanied by a reappropriation of identities — human, social and family. In confronting cultural barriers and what of their own identity cannot be translated, young Jesuits re-express for themselves the essentials of their lives.

Lived in this context the experience of solitude is an opening out and letting go toward an acceptance that it is the Other, and above all Jesus Christ, the one who comes from without, who dwells in their lives. Here I have put in my own words a reality that was evoked several times.

If the experience of life abroad opens one's eyes, and allows one to be stripped of oneself, that's because foreign places represent literally a displacement. If young Frenchmen have few words at their disposal to express their own identity to themselves, they have equally few for saying among themselves what distinguishes them from one another. But through the mediation of a palpable difference, one can become aware of one's own adherences. In this way the features of the Other, stranger and already friend, can awaken the concern for justice.

### Returning home: account and commitment

The experience is so radical it impels one to talk about it. The experience of being radically opened up, if it is not talked about, loses its effect. Nothing of what I have just written would have been possible, had it not been recounted in the course of stories (*d'histoires*) which mingled and blended

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<sup>12</sup> Beside hospitals, by institutions I mean technical schools, drop-ins or homes for young marginalised people, or prisons.

with each other. It is just as essential that those who have gone off for a time should be able to return and talk about what they have lived through, as it was for the *Mission Ouvrière* to become a locus of sharing and exchange. This stems not only from the strongly emotional impact of what has been undertaken, but from the radical nature of the experience itself. Because in the intimacy of solitude a certain dispossession has taken place, the resulting conviction can persist only if it becomes public. Justice, concern for the promotion of justice as a conviction, remain ideals if they do not run the risk of the multiplicity of accounts and of experiences. In other words, the truth of the experience is measured by the humility of the account which someone begins to give.

Another form of opening-up finds concrete expression on one's return from these experiences. It is the acceptance of the plurality of the Society's forms of involvement. It is not simply a matter of recognising a *de facto* situation, but support for the multiple undertakings of a body. In this way I realise that my project is one project among others.

### 3. THE DESIRE FOR JUSTICE AS PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL: THE DYNAMIC OF A BODY.

The challenge of promoting justice is not confined today solely to the level of individual experiences such as those of the young Jesuits. There have been numerous individual initiatives, taken over by the government of the Society, which have led to a real incarnation of the promotion of justice. **What is mainly at stake, so that this concern for justice become an effective proclamation of the Gospel, is that the whole body in the diversity of its apostolates sustain the concern for the promotion of justice.** Within this dynamic, the concern to promote justice, the concern to build a community of brothers, is parallel to the universalising character of the Society's mission.<sup>13</sup> In this dynamic too, concern for justice becomes proclamation of the Gospel only when each one working for justice is revealed to himself and to the world by others as a witness to the Gospel. A privatised promotion of justice cannot be a proclamation of the Gospel. Human groups, as much as individuals, have to be evangelised.

#### Universality of the Mission and Promotion of Justice

The two themes, the option for the poor and the promotion of justice, have largely dominated recent General Congregations. They have to be interpreted from within a tradition: the Society expresses its mission to proclaim the Gospel as a universal mission.<sup>14</sup> But this universal character, if it is not

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<sup>13</sup> This concern for the Society's universal mission is not an end in itself. It is justified by the concern to see emerging a new aspect of the universality of the Church. The Society is one image of this universality and, like the Church, she is challenged to redefine it — called to live it, not in the domination of western culture, but in a universality that never ceases to respect the transcultural dimension of the Gospel.

<sup>14</sup> This character was affirmed at the outset when the early Society defined its mission as to both believers and unbelievers.

to remain an abstract utopian ideal, is constantly threatened and vulnerable. History tends to show that it is finally the concern for the poor, the marginalised and the excluded, that first disappears from within the mission. A few examples are indicative. In England and the United States, Catholics used to represent defenceless minorities. The Society devoted herself to providing education that favoured their social integration, and this proved effective. Then at the heart of this movement, the loyalties of the Society shifted. By the fact of her solidarity with those whom she had helped, the Society lost her solidarity with the poorest. Thus history lays bare the link between concern for the universality of the mission and concern for the poor.

To honour this universalising vision of her mission, the Society tries to go out towards all social groups or classes. A definition of mission that would privilege only the elite of a society is unsatisfactory. A different definition in terms of going only to the poor is no better. The wound of poverty, if it is the wound of a society, should be seen as the injury of one body some of whose members are healthier than others.

In the course of recent General Congregations the Society has become aware that the universality of its mission is vulnerable. It was a matter of "crisis". The experience of Latin American countries has shown other countries the importance of living there where this injury exists — the place of suffering for the Society and especially for all of society, but also the locus of salvation and redemption. G.C. 32 added to the proclamation of the Gospel and concern for faith, the promotion of justice as a critical dimension. Certainly, the promotion of justice by itself cannot be the Society's ideal: that would make of her a humanitarian institution. At the same time, it cannot be the relation between the service of faith as an end, and promotion of justice as a means. Experience is otherwise. The Society is called to dwell in the place of injuries in our societies. She is called to experience suffering and desolation there, and there to proclaim a message: God has care for the weak and the poor.

#### To join the poor inflicts a wound on the body of the Society

Some Jesuits have made their own the demand expressed by General Congregations. In various ways they are living a solidarity with the most defenceless. Others are present in other social milieux. By way of these solidarities, the social fragmentations of our societies inflict a sort of wound upon the body of the Society. The experience of the *Mission Ouvrière* in France illustrates this point.

A real concern to stand alongside people in their lived conditions has been embodied in different ways. In France the *Mission Ouvrière* has put the accent strongly on living and working with others in order to reach them effectively. It has brought into relief the importance of mediations such as labour and collaborating in production, for weaving the bonds of solidarity. Its also aimed at a universal vision. The worker-priest movement proposed a very universal project to transform society. It wanted to reconcile the Church and the world of labour. It wanted to abolish the dominant ecclesial image. But it was not able to anticipate the profound changes which the world of work was about to undergo. The working class became fragmented; people's identities took new shape in affirming a middle-class identity. At the same time the occasions for exclusion multiplied

with unemployment and the hurdles of professional qualification. Now the utopian vision of the early days has to be reshaped, it needs another form, other features.

However, in this situation the experience of the *Mission Ouvrière* has given rise to a thoroughgoing evangelisation which may prove to be the origin of the utopia of tomorrow. Jesuits who have dedicated their lives to this effort, sometimes in a voluntarist way, have had the radical experience of themselves being dispossessed. The accounts given by each one testify to that. The accounts of worker-priests emphasise the experience of change prompted by the physical travail of working on the assembly line, by subjection to the demands of production. In the same way the social apostolate has laid stress on the necessary mediations of social action. To accompany people in hardship it is necessary to acquire skills of a different order: medical, legal, technical, psychological. It is also necessary to join with others, non-Jesuits, taking part in social action. Acquiring these skills and this solidarity with social activists has also favoured a shift of the same order as that in the factory, an alteration (*altération*). Every Jesuit who has belonged to this movement has in a radical way lived through the experience of the other. He has reappropriated his own history by recognising within it a sacred history. Accounts given by different people testify to this experience, and testimonies gathered from factory mates also agree fully.

However, few among these testimonies have taken on a public dimension. The Church institution and the body of the Society have scarcely repeated these testimonies. Meetings of the *Mission Ouvrière* have allowed these accounts to emerge somewhat from anonymity. But the experience of evangelisation has stayed largely private. The recognition of this experience has been weak on the part of a Church distant from the endeavour of the *Mission Ouvrière*.

This distance has given rise to a good deal of suffering. Some have been able to live with the pain, tensions, even conflicts of their double affiliation: belonging to a working milieu and belonging to the Society. The ecclesial conflict bound to the very existence of the worker-priests has long remained an open sore. Within this conflict the two affiliations have seemed to be antagonistic, the first defining itself in opposition to the second. Instead of a transforming tension between affiliations, what dominated sometimes was a heavy sense of remaining unacknowledged.

#### That this pain become fruitful

Now it is on this transforming tension of affiliations, a tension that needs to become objective if it to be liveable, that evangelisation depends. The kernel of evangelisation in my view lies in — or the route of evangelisation passes through — this vital and fruitful experience of transformation by the other. Concern for closeness to the other can lead to loss of awareness of self, if the difference separating one from the other is not mediated by social and institutional affiliations. Conversely, the objectifying of the relation of difference by means of a technical skill can act to thwart what should take place, namely, that the stripping of oneself in the exercise of charity become an encounter with Christ. In this way activities are not to be reckoned solely as activities; they should be able to become actions, that is, a doing that reveals the doer to himself and to others. In this revelation it is the depth of desire that is brought to light, the dwelling-place of Christ in the exercise of charity.

This revelation of "the desire for the other" in the exercise of charity becomes very important at a time when society is prey to fragmentation. It is as important to act as to speak, not to privatise what is essentially public.

When the Society sends men to become involved in the field of social action, the body of the Society in itself gives an account of their actions. Exchanges, confrontations are the key to this relationship. The twofold risk in individual social action is, on the one hand, the privatisation of action in an individual apostolate and, on the other, the legitimisation of the conservatism of many through the bold action of a few. So that exchanges might take place, occasions and mediations are necessary: communities, informal networks. These can also become places of celebration, places where the account becomes thanksgiving.

This development locates us in a perspective different from that of Decree 4. At the time of its development, it gave witness to a courageous and somewhat voluntarist wager. It invited the Society to make vital shifts towards concern for the promotion of justice, and not to limit its apostolate to certain elite or bourgeois groups in society. It invited the Society to contemplate the world in its diversity. **Today some men, some Jesuits, have made this demand their own. Today the Society has engraved within herself the fractures of the social body. The principal challenge for G.C. 34 is that the body reappropriate these experiences, acknowledge them as its own.**

#### **4. LIVING THE UNIVERSAL MISSION AS SOLIDARITY WITH MEN AND WOMEN**

If the Society is no stranger to the wounds of the social body, and if these wounds are traced upon the very body of the Society, three requirements come to light for the future. Firstly, to continue living in prolonged solidarity in social milieux so that, in familiar contact with men and women, there develop a memory, condition for a future with them. Secondly, to tap the source of our apostolic dynamism in our spiritual tradition so that, within a concern for the greater good, our unity of hearts be forged. Thirdly, to work to read the signs of the times. We need to strive ceaselessly to become contemporaries in our world.

##### **4.1 Long-term solidarity**

Today the struggle for justice does not really take shape except at the cost of a lasting solidarity patiently ripened in friendship with men and women. The entrance into this solidarity is the opposite of the complexity of the realities in the social field. In the course of the story of the *Mission Ouvrière* this need for the long haul came to light and creates a fruitful tension for the Society's apostolate.

The need for the long haul can equally be expressed as need for memory. Living one's solidarities in a city, taking part in associations in an urban neighbourhood, these different aspects of daily reality give rise to memory. Not the memories of former combatants in hereditary struggles, this

memory is the sign of a vital passion for other people and at the same time the condition for a future with them.

This concern to create solidarity with others continually gives rise to tensions between the social affiliations of Jesuits. This tension between the body of the Society and the social affiliations woven by Jesuits pertains to the very dynamic of the Society. It is in some ways the condition for the fruitfulness of the Society's mission. It fits in at the heart of the Society's mystique that one can locate round two poles: a eucharistic mysticism and a mysticism of pilgrimage. The first orients action towards the formation of a community of faith, the second opens action outwards, towards the stranger to meet, the most defenceless.... The wager of the Society is to want to hold these two elements together and to see in the resulting tension the condition of fruitfulness of her action.

This tension between the forming of mature solidarity with others and the availability of the pilgrim ready to respond to the appeals of the Church and the world cannot be lived outside a truly apostolic body. The stress that is currently laid on collaboration between apostolates and on communication between Jesuits testifies to the vulnerability of the body. This is not new. Ignatius already took care to keep the dispersed members of the body in touch through letters. But today's vulnerability is redoubled by the fragmentation or weakening of social affiliations. So the challenge is doubled. However, two meeting points, two symbolic contexts in which the unity of the body is expressed, have in our time been strengthened: on the one hand Ignatian spirituality, and social analysis on the other.

#### **4.2 Towards a spirituality for the body of the Society**

Ignatian spirituality is a symbolic meeting place for Jesuits with the body of the Society. It is at the same time for each Jesuit a road which daily opens him more fully to the understanding of his own story as a journey following Christ.

In living out of Ignatian spirituality, Jesuits find a way of entering more fully each day into the following of Christ. On this journey they recognize themselves as sinners, fettered by certain bonds, by histories of struggle and of liberation. But in their own stories they also find the trace of an aspiration to live more fully under the standard of the Cross. In other words they are called to review their stories so as to discover in them the trace of the Spirit who visits each one. But they are also called to shape their lives, to seek in the strands of human solidarities the path of a *magis*, a greater conformity with the designs of the three Persons in the contemplation on the Incarnation. This vision of all humanity, with some in sorrow and others in joy, is universalist. It presupposes recognising the sorrows and joys shared in human solidarities. But it also invites one to go beyond present affiliations so as to attain solidarity with other men and women "both believers and infidels".

The experience of conversion offered to Jesuits in the Exercises is also a symbolic locus where the identity of the body of the Society is fashioned. This does not emerge as a locus of convergence where men have been marked by a project of seeking justice, a project of solidarity and friendship lived with other people. It emerges on the contrary as the meeting of men with no common project



at first, without friendship for one another. Jesuit communities do not choose themselves. What unites Jesuits with each other is the recognition that in the opening-up towards universal solidarity there unfolds a sacred history, the story of a man following Christ.

This radical opening of religious experience towards the universal in the world is the condition for the existence of the Society. The Exercises provide a fundamental entrance to this opening-up. When this doorway is neglected, when psychological and self-centred processes are substituted for it, then the essential is not attained. So the deepening of the process of the Exercises seems to me the condition, the necessary precondition, for the formation of a body such as the Society.

#### 4.3 "Legibility" of the social field and social analysis

If the Exercises constitute the front porch to the Jesuit approach, they summon the body of the Society to another kind of approach: the elaboration of a **common account of experience**. It is this account which conditions the new apostolic directions the body must take. It is also through this account that the Society will bear witness in the Church and in the world to its own charism. This account is worked out, beginning with the diversity of apostolates. In elaborating it the Society faces the loss of legibility (*lisibilité*) of the social field and has to call upon the tools of the social sciences.

The complexity of the challenges, the privatisation of responses, invite one to seek a type of discourse which brings problematics to the fore. This kind of discourse cannot be fashioned unless it takes root within different disciplines, but first it poses an important epistemological problem. The social field today cannot be approached at the outset by posing very limited issues: immigration, work, trade unions. These questions cannot be treated in juxtaposition. The multiple forms of exclusion, the weakness of traditional contexts for socialisation (work or school) bring multi-faceted processes into play which can make the issues less and less legible.

Faced with this difficulty, it is important to reflect critically on the images of the social field that come into play. More than formerly, the social field does not allow its reality to be discovered. On the contrary, it challenges one to undertake analysis in the knowledge that social reality is a construct. This means that enquirers must limit their object and at the same time anchor their discourse in a method of investigation. Here there are two fundamental challenges to the practice of social observation.

Delimiting his object involves the observer in a personal judgment. There are no ready criteria nor methods for delimiting the object. But there are traditions of interpretation, which may on the one hand give prominence to the economy as a criterion for defining the object, or may on the other hand let politics claim supremacy. Or again the criterion may be culture (language, customs).

The observer has to criticize these traditions. But such critique must also seek a first principle: which images open out to the future, making social actors true actors or innovators, and which ones enclose reality in the present without in any way allowing changes to occur?

Over and above choosing a tradition of interpretation of social reality, it seems to me equally important to define the methods of research. These cannot be determined in the abstract. They should serve to apprehend the object one wants to approach. In addition to the classical methods of social science (interviews, surveys...), Jesuits have privileged material at their disposal: the accounts of their companions who have forged links in different areas of society. These accounts need to be handled precisely as such, within a critical framework capable of bringing out what is particular and conditioned, but also given a place of honour in the social analysis.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The choice of the long haul, the option made for the ties of history, are often similar to a burying which it is difficult to accompany with reflection. But such analysis is the price, so that the memory of struggles can become a dangerous memory. The withdrawal is sometimes a sign of paralysis, as we have shown. But it can become memory if the account of the memory is open to a critique. It is the function of social analysis to open this memory to the future, to search for solutions. It is also the function of analysis to open up the particularity of the experience to the universal dimension of the Society's mission.

Just as in general the life of the body is the condition for the universality of the mission, so in a particular way the interaction between Jesuits who live in radical solidarity within a social milieu and those who do social analysis becomes fundamental here. A social science laboratory isolated from the rest of the Society can have no fruitful effect on the mission of the Society. Unfortunately in some provinces the practitioners of analysis have become separated from other Jesuits. This isolation is entirely harmful. But conversely, for mutual exchange to take place between this group of analysts and other apostolates of the Society, the former need to be rooted in a strong and lively intellectual community. It is this interaction between social analysis and solidarity with men and women that will allow the concern for justice to be translated in a new way as a challenge of the contemporary world.

It is in fact the loss of legibility of the social field that the Society along with the rest of society needs to face. The weakening of social ties, the conflicts that arise therefrom, cast the fragility of the social bond in relief. The Society can only confront contemporary challenges, the difficulty people have in living with each other, if she truly lives the universality of her mission. This universality cannot and should not become abstract, but should be rooted in a lived solidarity with diverse social milieux. But the cost of such diversity may be heavy. It can also take the form of a certain *anomie* in the body of the Society. To overcome this *anomie* is for the Society to accept the diversity of its apostolates, while each of them becomes close to the other apostolates. The Society, like any body, needs meeting points and symbols that forge its identity. Two meeting points have traditionally held pride of place: firstly, the spirituality of the Society which allows each member to make explicit for himself the experience of encountering the other as welcoming Jesus Christ. Secondly, social analysis provides another meeting point. But such analysis cannot be simply formal, rather it needs to allow discerning what is at stake in the future world as well as the new forms of "living together" in our societies, and should finally help the Society to write the account of her own history in the world.



## **GENERAL CONCLUSION: CONCERN FOR THE SOCIAL BOND**

In developing these three sections on the promotion of justice I have just shifted the stakes more or less. The first two sections, on young Jesuits getting into the promotion of justice, made it possible to show how the Society is bound up with the evolutions in society. The weakening of social affiliations puts the universalist mission of the Society at risk, a change which challenges one to state the Society's mission in new terms. We are past the time for multiplying initiatives towards the promotion of justice. Today we seem called to appropriate this heritage so that it becomes the heritage of the whole body. To uphold this universal mission we have certain assets at our disposal. Firstly, our solidarity in a number of apostolic fields. Secondly, our spiritual tradition. Thirdly, our intellectual tradition which enables us to appropriate our experience and make a common account out of it.

To define our mission in new terms involves a considerable shift and poses the question of the Society as a gift made to the Church. Yes, it is question of a shift. The restoration of the Society gave it a privileged position in education. Other activities of a social kind took place but without being included in the identity of the whole body. Today the mission of evangelization forces us to question the limitation of proclaiming the Gospel to certain social groups, and summons us to try ceaselessly to extend the reach of this proclamation. Such expansion cannot become abstract. In our mission we seek a universality lived in solidarity with men and women. This solidarity and this universality locate the Society in a particular way as a gift given to the Church. In living this solidarity we update the catholicity of the Church. Simultaneously we take a very critical stance toward a Roman catholicism which conceives universality as the domination of cultures by western culture. Always in a critical way, this form of universality forces us to take modern reality seriously and rules out every tridentine theological oversimplicity.

In making this mission our own, in affirming our concern for solidarity with men and women, we express once more the original concern of the Society. Our care for social bonds, for the ability of people to live together, only represents a new way of posing the question of the formation of communities which was obviously central to the work with unbelievers in the early Society. If in those days it seemed important to form Christian communities, that was because the first companions centred their evangelisation upon a eucharistic mysticism. As scattered apostles, Jesuits maintained this concern for the formation of communities. "Where several are gathered together in my name, there shall I be in the midst of them." It seems to me essential to continue along this way.

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