

PROMOTIO JUSTITIAE

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INTRODUCTION

Nearly three months after the 34th General Congregation concluded its labours, Father General invited members of the Curia staff to reflect on the results:

Some observers have noted that the General Congregation was more faithful than creative and that, without being conservative, it was rather "classical," with all that this word evokes of solid value and of recognition of what a past marked by much experience and experimentation can mean for the future of the Society. Supposing that this characterization is correct, it can only mean "classical" in the Ignatian sense. For the three months of the Congregation, Ignatius was in our midst as a pilgrim, not one walking calmly from one village to the next, but a pilgrim battling the winds in order to move forward solely on the road to God. The classical Ignatius is "moved by diverse spirits," by spiritual movements of consolation and desolation (Sp.Ex. 6), stirred by the spirit which, according to the Gospel, creates conflictual situations which we have to pass through.¹

Four authors in this issue of *Promotio Justitiae* present clear, strong indications how to read the Decrees and re-read the "conflictual situations" in which we live. Mr. Boisvert, Frs. Beckers and Irrázaval pose specific questions about God and the contemporary world, about culture, faith and justice. Fr. King finds four key words — "dialogue, partnership, solidarity and friendship" — to systematize the results of a Congregation characterized by Father General as "a classic."

The word of the Lord marks our way of proceeding: we **leave** our own home, we **break** with our own family to follow the Lord, because no one can serve **two** masters. All this means we unavoidably enter into conflict with the world of idols. By **choosing** to follow Christ, the classical loyalty and solidarity of consecrated life, the General Congregation places the Society before hard choices and painful conflicts as inherent traits of our vocation and our mission. It is an Ignatian classic. Contemplating the life of the eternal King, Ignatius came to an offering of greater value, but an offering which translates concretely into **confronting** our own self-love and worldly love (Sp.Ex. 97).²

Twenty years ago, the 32nd General Congregation urged us to make "the most rigorous possible political and social analysis of our situation," using "the various sciences, sacred and profane, and the various disciplines, speculative and practical," as well as "undertaking a searching discernment into our situation from the pastoral and apostolic point of view" (Decree 4, n.44). In order to take up the Mission intelligently and wholeheartedly, new kinds of analysis — cultural and religious and global as well as social and political — must be used and accordingly new instruments or tools of analysis developed.

¹ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "Introduction to *Tempo Forte*," Rome: Curia, 12 June 1995.

² *Ibid.*

It is also an Ignatian classic to situate our choices and apostolic options in the heart of the conflictual reality within our megalopolis, where Lucifer (Sp.Ex. 138) who makes a show of bearing the true light and casting it over the entire world (Sp.Ex. 141), never leaves in peace those whom Christ sends into the world. Thus the unavoidable necessity of ceaselessly defending and promoting the Gospel and its values, in their human and evangelical roots, by passing through the midst of conflicts. So it is not surprising if the General Congregation, which made bold to study deeply the real state of the Society, the Church and the world, did not leave us a legacy of pacific documents which allow for a serene and comforting reading. Rather, it often gave us tortured decrees which refuse to bypass the conflicts which exist in our world today, which touch the Church and which divide the hearts of all those who are companions of Jesus.³

Fr. Gabino Uríbarri insistently draws both members and friends of the Society to consider the future of these "companions of Jesus." On July 31st, let those who pray and especially those who preach, make their own the words of Gabino in which one detects the accent of Father Kolvenbach and the spirit of Master Ignatius.

³ *Ibid.*

Michael Czerny, S.J.
Editor

The Social Justice Secretariat at the General Curia of the Society of Jesus (Rome) publishes *Promotio Justitiae* in English, French and Spanish. If you would like to receive *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.

If an idea in this issue strikes you, your brief comment or response is very welcome. To send a letter to *PJ* for inclusion in a future issue, please use the address, fax number or e-mail address on the cover.

On VOCATIONS¹

Gabino Uríbarri, S.J.

Dear friends of the Society:

Today is a great day for us all. Today we give thanks to God for Master Ignatius. Ignatius did not hoard God's gifts for himself but shared them freely with others: first in spiritual conversation, then in giving the Spiritual Exercises, and yet more intensely by gathering a group of companions as "friends in the Lord," which would later become the Society. The fact that we are gathered here today is doubtless due to the intrepid boldness of Ignatius who dared to share with others the intimacy of what God was doing with him.

Following our Founder's example, I dare to share with you today one of the Society's and Father General's major concerns.

Many of you know that the Society is now preparing to hold its 34th General Congregation which will begin in January 1995. It will set our direction for some years to come. More than a year ago, Father General wrote to the whole Society and said:

It is obvious that all the work of preparation for the General Congregation will make little sense if there is no one to follow up on it. (8 November 1993)

Dear family, friends and benefactors of the Society, you know full well how serious this statement is. Just look at the sanctuary and see the grey hairs and balding heads of our concelebrants! Many of you would like to educate your children in schools and universities of the Society, but there are already hardly enough Jesuits in our educational institutions to have direct and constant contact with all the students. Many of you appreciate the Spiritual Exercises and look for spiritual directors who can guide you in this encounter with God. But it is becoming impossible to replace those who because of age or infirmity can no longer work in this ministry fulltime.

And not only you but also the Church and the bishops expect and seek the Society's help in many other areas as well, especially in difficult or urgent areas where they cannot send sufficient human resources — areas such as theological and philosophical research, priestly formation, responding to atheism, implementing Vatican II, promoting the justice which springs from faith, inter-religious dialogue, enculturating the Gospel, and so forth. Particularly painful for us is not being able to take up all the work that the Holy Father would like to entrust to us, or not being able to respond with the desirable and necessary human resources. In recent years, John Paul II has asked the Society to become involved in the apostolate in Albania, Cameroon and Russia — with great efforts we have been able to set up an international Jesuit group in Moscow and Novosibirsk.

¹ Homily preached on July 31, 1994, feast of St. Ignatius, in the church of Saint Francis Borgia, Madrid. See "The Meagre Expression of our Mysticism, and Vocations," *PJ* 54 (February 1994) and "The Celibacy of the Lord Jesus, and Vocations," *PJ* 59 (March 1995).

Plato said, "The things of friends are in common." It is in this spirit of friendship that I share our concerns and our hopes with you. I ask for your help and cooperation. I am confident that you too want the Jesuits to continue, and I hope against hope that five or ten or fifteen years from now — our formation takes a long time — on a day like today the sanctuary will be filled with thick heads of hair, and they'll outnumber the bald and white-haired ones.

What can you do for vocations to the Society? Many things, both invaluable and indispensable:

- **Prayer:** pray for vocations. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to His Society. Pray individually, in public, and as a family.

- **Advertise** vocations to the Society. Talk about this life, explain its greatness and beauty without hiding its difficulties, but stressing the joy it gives you when someone accepts this call with faith and enthusiasm, a call which is from God and for His Church.

- **Other initiatives:** In the United States an association of lay people exists, the International Serra, to promote Church vocations. I call upon your initiative and creativity, so that the Spirit of God may live in you and "move" and inspire you.

I am optimistic. First of all because I have faith in God — He founded the Society and He will sustain it. Also because I believe in my brother Jesuits and in the beauty of the Jesuit vocation. And because I count on your support. Following the example of Master Ignatius, I would like to share with you something of the intimacy of what God does in anyone whom He places as a companion of His Son. Being a Jesuit means, among other things:

- **Living intense friendship**, sharing life deeply, allowing others to enter your life, being supported by them and fraternally caring for others.

- **A profound experience of God**, experiencing how He progressively penetrates every pore and space of your existence, taking you where you do not want to go so that then, prostrate with joy and in truth before the crucifix, you say, "Jesus is Lord."

- **To be the consoling hand and voice of God**, to encourage, console, strengthen, heal, help and accompany His people who are tired, lost and far from their Lord.

- **To undertake great works for the Kingdom and for the Church of the Lord Jesus**, a bit frightened at getting involved in difficult tasks for which grace makes us bold, such as: working on the frontiers of faith and of the Church, finding paths not well trodden; long and serious studies on urgent spiritual and social problems; fidelity in ongoing, routine and hidden tasks — working like yeast — teaching catechism, forming Christian youth, helping communities of Christian life like CLC, listening to those burdened with sorrows, seeking out the marginalized and helping unjustly treated: AIDS-sufferers, the unemployed, drug addicts, immigrants, refugees.

If this attracts you and you feel something eating at your heart at Jesus' call to leave everything and follow Him; if the Gospel passages on the call of the disciples move you and make you want to both read them and erase them forever from the Gospels; if this call keeps nagging at you even if you keep turning it down: then have no doubt that to be a companion of Jesus is to bear "a gentle yoke and a light burden" (Matthew 11:30) with other companions and to be strengthened

by Jesus Himself, who takes us into His confidence so that we can be ministers of His Gospel (see 1 Timothy 1:12). If the one who is nagging you is me, then pay me no heed. If it is the fire of the Holy Spirit that is burning in you and beginning to melt the barriers of your egoism and your security, then you are face to face with the possibility of gaining your liberty by handing it over as a gift.

The Jesuit is a person with a mission, just like Jesus, sent on mission by the Father. Today I would like to make each of you a bit Jesuit. As a priest of God for His Church, I am making you partners of the Society in this task and send you on mission: go everywhere and work together so that there be many "Companions of Jesus." Follow the example of Master Ignatius and with self-confidence and without shame communicate the gifts of God to others. May the Divine Majesty graciously grant you wisdom, courage and perseverance.

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PRAYER for VOCATIONS to the SOCIETY of JESUS

Eternal Lord of all, you graced Ignatius of Loyola with interior knowledge of your Son in order better to love and serve Him and you guided him to seek companions for the greater good of souls. We pray, through the intercession of Our Lady, that you continue to send many to be "Companions of your Son." Amen.

A YOUTHFUL READING

Jean Beckers, S.J.

My 17-year-old students of religion at the European School in Brussels were very impressed with Geoffrey Williams' article on post-modernism, "Witnessing in a Post-Modern Age" (*PJ* 59). Here are some of their reactions:

- Both society and Church are living in rural, urban, modern and post-modern cultures all at once, with some nostalgic or retrograde types still stuck in the Middle Ages. This is especially true in other religions that are caught in a fundamentalist upheaval.

- It's essential to appropriate the new means of communications which will allow us to communicate with others according to their mental categories.

- When everybody talks about crisis, it's a sign that change has taken hold of our world. The crisis doesn't affect only the west but also other areas of the world. Everyone everywhere is experiencing the same "crisis."

- We must communicate with the "others" in order to solve the problems we're discovering at home but which also exist where "they" are.

The reactions of my students seem to reflect what may be read between the lines in various decrees of GC 34. For example,

In our ministry today we respect and appreciate the good in contemporary culture, and critically propose alternatives to the negative aspects of that same culture. In the context of the complex challenges and opportunities of our contemporary world, this ministry requires all the learning and intelligence, imagination and ingenuity, solid studies and rigorous analysis that we can muster. To overcome ignorance and prejudice through learning and teaching, to make the Gospel truly "Good News" in a confused and troubled world through theological reflection, is a characteristic of our Jesuit way of proceeding.¹

What mainly interested them was the spirit of Williams' subject, that is, everything which invites the reader to get ready to change his or her mentality for the future. The students feel challenged by this. They want to try to live in a world where the old (and even the modern!) categories and patterns have to face new challenges that unsettle the values of the past. For example, do we always have to talk about individualization in the pejorative sense of "individualism" as if it necessarily entailed egoism? The positive aspect of becoming-an-individual, becoming-a-person, is also worth talking about in relation with all the communal and social dimensions of life.

"Culture" means the way in which a group of people live, think, feel, organize themselves, celebrate and share life. In every culture, there are underlying systems of

¹ "Characteristics of Our Way of Proceeding," Decree 26, n.22.

values, meanings and views of the world, which are expressed, visibly, in language, gestures, symbols, rituals and styles.²

They consider it exciting to adapt, for example, our way of believing as Christians when we relate with other cultures, religions, ethics, etc. The values of the "others" are sometimes positive, and we should try to enter into their world in order to appreciate from "inside" or "within" what they are living. The hope is to initiate action mutually, so that their action and ours might meet. The media or means of communication are often mentioned as the most important realm of action, in which young people see the chance of relating to other people everywhere. One gets in touch with different points of view that way, but — careful! — at the risk of missing the nuances of what the other persons really feel.

The documents of Congregation 34 also call us to learn how to be helped by people: how to be poor, how to see the Church as enriched by lay leadership, how to listen to the experience of women today, how to find God in the religious traditions of people from other beliefs, how to engage in respectful dialogue, how to become involved in the new cultural world of communication, and how to let the young give us hope and dreams for the future.³

In other words, the "New Evangelisation" is not only our work, but the "others" share in it, too, once we all accept that believing and hoping and loving are not the monopoly of Christians alone. The New Evangelization can be undertaken by "others" who use different symbols and a different "logos" which we must be able to decipher or decode.

There cannot, in short, be an effective proclamation of the Kingdom unless the Gospel, having been brought to the very centre of a society, touches its structural, cultural and religious aspects with its light.

There is effective dialogue with members of other traditions when there is a shared commitment to a transformation of the cultural and social life within which people live.

If our faith is directed towards God and his justice in the world, this justice cannot be achieved without, at the same time, attending to the cultural dimensions of social life and the way in which a particular culture defines itself with regard to religious transcendence.⁴

So there's a richness which could upset the traditional symbolism....

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² "Our Mission and Culture," D.4, n.1, note 1.

³ "United with Christ on Mission," D.1, n.6.

⁴ "Servants of Christ's Mission," D.2, n.18.

DIALOGUE, PARTNERSHIP, SOLIDARITY, FRIENDSHIP

Geoffrey King, S.J.

The Jesuit Superior General, Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, convoked the 34th General Congregation in order to review the Society's mission and operations and to set a course for the 21st century.

GC 34 reaffirmed the Society's commitment to the promotion of justice, a commitment pledged by GC 32. The 1995 Congregation reasserted that work for justice is integral to Jesuit purposes today, then sought to reach a deeper understanding of the mission this implies and to broaden its practice. In doing so, it followed the example of GC 32 in taking a "God's eye" view of the world, a world of injustice but also of hope.

One thing that is immediately striking about the twelve paragraphs of Decree 3 on "New Dimensions of Justice" and "Urgent Situations"¹ is that the tragic situations so often involve "border crossing." First in the sense that the problems are usually international in scope — violations of human rights, environmental degradation, international attitudes and behaviour towards Africa, refugees. But also international are the signs of hope, "a growing consciousness of the interdependence of all peoples," for example. And so the Congregation recognized that the situations can be addressed effectively only if they are addressed internationally, by crossing "provincial" borders. And indeed by Jesuits crossing the border between their Society and the rest of the Church and world. In other words, partnership is an imperative, not an option.

All this is obvious, once you think about it. Jesuits have been made to think about it by the effectiveness of some international and collaborative works that we are already engaged in (the Jesuit Refugee Service is a striking but not an isolated example). In ways that it at least partly acknowledged, the Congregation was building on that experience.

The border-crossing attitude shows itself in an emphasis on **dialogue**. Dialogue here means much more than conversation: "There is effective dialogue with members of other traditions when there is a shared commitment to a transformation of the cultural and social life within which people live."² The decree on inter-religious dialogue speaks of (a) the *dialogue of life*, where people share their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations, and (b) the *dialogue of action*, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people. The divisions in our world can be overcome only by cooperation with "all men and women of good will in promoting peace, justice, harmony, human rights and respect for all of God's creation," by "dialogue with those inspired by religious commitment, or who share a sense of transcendence that opens them to universal values".³

¹ "Our Mission and Justice," Decree 3, nn.5-16.

² "Servants of Christ's Mission," D.2, n.18.

³ "Our Mission and Inter-religious Dialogue," D.5, nn.4,2.

Crossing borders also shows up in an emphasis on **culture**. Justice cannot be achieved without attending to cultural dimensions. More importantly work for justice (and indeed service of the faith) must be done from within a culture, by sharing in the life and life struggles of a people. Inculturation, then, is not primarily about adopting local rituals and symbols, important as that may be. It is first about sharing of life — dialogue of life leading to dialogue of action. From that involvement, the shared symbols can emerge.

In other words the Congregation was reminding Jesuits that their mission of faith and justice can never be achieved by them alone but always in partnership or dialogue, and can never be achieved by those who somehow stand outside the real life of people.

The idea of partnership recurs, naturally enough, in the decree on cooperation with laypeople, in phrases like "partnership with them in mission, and openness to creative ways of future cooperation."⁴ Or in the introductory decree: "an attitude of listening and exchange with those who will be vital partners in our service of Jesus Christ and his Church."⁵ Or in speaking of the situation of women: "Listening, in a spirit of partnership and equality, is the most practical response we can make, and is the foundation for our mutual partnership to reform unjust structures."⁶

An important shift of emphasis (even a bit of a Copernican revolution) has taken place here. Previous Congregations tended to speak of, and encourage, the cooperation of lay people in Jesuit works. GC 34 speaks of Jesuits as being at the service of the mission of the laity. The shift is not unlike that called for by the decree on the Jesuit Brother. Since the time of Ignatius, Jesuit brothers have been technically called "Temporal Coadjutors." It may sound even rather grand, but it tends to imply that the brothers (and the priests who are Spiritual Coadjutors) are assistants to the "real" Society, the priests who take the fourth vow of obedience to the Pope. GC 34 decreed that brothers are henceforth to be called, not Temporal Coadjutors, but Brothers. This is part of an effort to assert and live the fact that priests and brothers share the **one** vocation and mission. Likewise, the Congregation sees lay people no longer as "assistants" but as partners. If anything, it is the Jesuits who are to be "coadjutors" of the laity.

I think that this in turn can be seen as a wider concern of the Congregation to encourage the crossing of borders — between brothers and priests, religious and lay, women and men, between members of different cultures, adherents of different faiths. Certainly the Congregation recognized that the collapse of older barriers like the Iron Curtain or the Berlin Wall has led to no new world order but to a new disorder with new barriers isolating and fragmenting peoples.

A few examples will have to suffice. We have already seen that the Justice decree highlights situations of marginalization, fragmentation, isolation, exclusion, displacement. The "Servants" decree recognizes conflicting ideologies, hatreds, and nationalistic, racial, economic and sexual violence.⁷ The decree on ecumenism acknowledges that religious divisions are a major

⁴ "Cooperation with Laypeople in Mission," D.13, n.25.

⁵ "United with Christ on Mission," D.1, n.11.

⁶ "Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society," D.14, n.12.

⁷ "Servants of Christ's Mission," D.2, n.12.

contributing force to injustice, violence and warfare.⁸ The one on priesthood sees as a "special challenge" the embodying of "Christ's ministry of healing and reconciliation in a world that is increasingly divided by economic and social status, race and ethnicity, violence and war, cultural and religious pluralism."⁹ The decree on chastity calls for the practice of this virtue to counter the situations "when so many tend to put whole classes of human beings beyond the margins of their concerns."¹⁰

In the light of all this, the Congregation challenges Jesuits to work with others to build "communities of solidarity":

Full human liberation, for the poor and for us all, lies in the development of **communities of solidarity** at the grass roots and nongovernmental as well as the political level, where we all can work together toward total human development. And all of this must be done in the context of a sustainable, respectful interrelation between diverse peoples, cultures, the environment, and the living God in our midst.¹¹

Every Jesuit ministry, involving both Jesuits and their colleagues, should participate in this process, whether by direct service and accompaniment of the poor, by advocacy, or by consciousness-raising.¹²

So far I have been underlining words like partnership, dialogue and solidarity. But there is another word that comes through perhaps even more strongly in the documents. It is "friendship."

The "Servants" document quotes a remarkable passage from Polanco, the secretary of Ignatius: "So great are the poor in the sight of God that it was especially for them that Jesus Christ was sent into the world.... Friendship with the poor makes us friends of the eternal King." And the next paragraph continues: "Being 'friends of the Lord', then, means being 'friends with the poor', and we cannot turn aside when our friends are in need. We are a community of solidarity with them because of Christ's preferential love for them."¹³

Decree 3 begins by giving thanks for the commitment to justice made by GC 32, and continues: "That commitment was a wonderful gift of God to us, for it put us into such good company — the Lord's surely, but also that of so many friends of his among the poor and those committed to justice." Later it states: "Our sensitivities for such a mission will be most affected by frequent

⁸ "Ecumenism," D.12, n.1.

⁹ "Ministerial Priesthood and Jesuit Identity," D.6, n.14.

¹⁰ "Chastity in the Society of Jesus," D.8, n.10.

¹¹ "Our Mission and Justice," D.3, n.10.

¹² *Ibid.*, n.19.

¹³ "Servants of Christ's Mission," D.2, nn. 8, 9.

direct contact with these 'friends of the Lord' from whom we can often learn so much about our faith."¹⁴

Surely one of the major fruits of this "frequent direct contact" is precisely the forging of friendships. The poor become no longer a category to be concerned about (and perhaps even patronized) but some people whom I know and indeed love. Likewise refugees, or Buddhists, or foreigners, or agnostics gain faces, personalities, names, individual histories. Hopefully some of them become my friends. This kind of friendship takes us across borders, makes "communities of solidarity" possible. It is from our friends that we learn the deepest truth about ourselves. Friends are the people who tell us of the goodness within ourselves. It is also friends who are able to tell us painful truths about ourselves in a way that we can hear; the same thing said by an "enemy" may produce only denial and defensiveness. Presumably this is what the "dialogue of life" is about. It forges the friendship that makes possible truthful and respectful conversation even about what divides us.

The first Jesuits spoke of themselves as "friends in the Lord." GC 34 gave thanks for the fact that, in recent times, we have "in a resilient way" re-captured that vision,¹⁵ but called for it to be an inclusive and outward-looking friendship. The sort of friendship that is ready to go beyond the margins, to cross borders in the hope that the borders can be broken down. Jesuits are again being asked, in the variety of ways that I have tried to indicate, to be not just "for others" but "with others."

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WHAT IMAGES OF GOD?

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When international religious congregations (like the Society of Jesus or my own Congregation of the Holy Cross) promulgate new decrees or constitutions, the texts often lack an ecumenical and pluri-cultural language about God. We are happy to be among different peoples, but we seldom think with their languages of faith. This was the concern I had in mind when I read the Decrees of GC 34 of the Society of Jesus, particularly the first section on Mission. As religious

¹⁴ "Our Mission and Justice," D.3, nn.1,17.

¹⁵ "Servants of Christ's Mission," D.2, n.1.

we live, pray and work among peoples of the world who address the Mystery with rich images and concepts. Are these present in our apostolates, spiritualities, and documents?

Reading the first section, "Servants of Christ's Mission" (D.2) and the accompanying decrees on Mission and Justice (D.3), Culture (D.4), and Inter-religious Dialogue (D.5), I would like to characterize the language about God, Christ and the Spirit.

God: The main words associated with God are Kingdom (22 phrases), creation and world (12 times), justice (10), love and compassion (7), work and action (6), culture (5), dialogue (3), gift (3), search (3), in our midst (3). Concepts used once or twice: heart, life, will, glory, people, mystery, trinity, history, goal, salvation, revelation, freedom, peace, poor, light, reconciliation, goodness, mercy, children, father.

The sources of this God-language are mainly Scripture and the faith experience according to western or european philosophy. God is not spoken of according to the variety of cultures and spiritualities in today's world. There is an effort to see God in creation, history, human relationships, and the faith of the poor. The document does not consider the other side of God-language, that is, the problem of contemporary idolatry.

Christ: The most important symbol is being servants of Christ's mission (17 phrases) and companions in his ministry. The doctrinal background is the Paschal Mystery; a sharing of the Cross and Resurrection (18 expressions). A clear accent on the Risen Lord includes his presence to all human beings. There is also an accent on the Word (10 times). Mission among the poor, and the poor themselves, are associated with Christ (6 references). Here we have a deep acknowledgment of being friends of the Lord, as friends of the poor. Other concepts (when Christ is mentioned): grace, call, presence, community, prophecy, reconciliation, King, Incarnate Son, Companion, people, charity, commandments, redemption, transformation, liberating presence.

Thus we have a Christology of service within the Lord's mission, faithfulness to the Word, option for the marginalized and for justice, participation in the work of the Church. The ways non-western non-european peoples feel and understand Christ are not mentioned. However, the strong accent on service is counter-cultural with regard to modernity.

Spirit: In comparison with other Church documents, "Our Mission" is most creative in pneumatological terms. The Spirit of God is recognized in today's world and humanity (13 times): opening the hearts of all peoples to the Mystery, as the Risen Christ's Spirit in the world, destroying sinful structures, in the communion of peoples, in human growth. He is also present in the Church's mission (4 times), in nature and creation (2 times), and especially in different religions, beliefs and cultures (5 times).

So the Spirit is seen often, but usually within Christianity and personal sanctification. GC 34 is certainly opening up new theological paths. We now need to spell out how the Spirit is present and addressed in particular cultural and theological ways throughout the world, and this is not found in GC 34.

My conclusion is that the section "Our Mission" has some marvellous elements, especially the service of justice reaffirmed and now complemented with the cultural and the interreligious. But rather than praising what's excellent, I prefer to point out the great absence of God-language and

God-images according to people's faith and praxis. For example, in Latin America, experiences of healing are most important when we talk about God; also important are images of the Saints, icons of Jesus and Mary, family bonds, the dead and 'souls', walking with God, dance, music, social liberation, humour and play, joy, tears, fear, tenderness, Mother Earth, spirits of afro-american and of indigenous traditions, work, struggle, dreams, friendship, martyrdom. Using these words, the common people speak about God and understand His salvation. With such terms they listen to and contemplate the Mystery present in their life journeys. Besides, their language uses mostly diminutives: God as daddy, little God, etc. In addition, the marginalized make a critique of 'gods of power' connected with success, money, racial and gender discrimination, and such a critique is theologically absent in GC 34.

"Our Mission" has some beautiful insights: friends of the poor, friends of the Lord. The Risen Christ and the Spirit of God in today's humanity, history, cultures, religions. A critical understanding of modernity, and its wonderful "silence surrounding the nature of God."

May we, as religious, continue discovering God and communicating the divine presence among us. A God who is walking, dancing, healing, struggling, weeping, being compassionate, among our peoples. Their wisdom about God can become part of our theology, our God-talk-prayer. May the "little ones" always guide our Congregations.

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INVENTING the FUTURE?

Dominique Boisvert¹

Right from the beginning I acknowledge the limitations and modesty of my reflections. I am situated in a precise context and a concrete place (Montreal, a large city in Quebec, at the confluence of European heritage and imperial American success), a confused era (the end of the twentieth century when technological changes are happening faster than ever before in history), and a searching body and spirit (a keen awareness that human intelligence is incarnated in the flesh, in the unconscious, in history and geography).

¹ A Quebecois lawyer and the father of two active teenagers, the author has worked for international solidarity, human rights, refugees and peace and, since 1990, at the Jesuit *Centre justice et foi* in Montreal which publishes the monthly magazine *Relations*. Mr. Boisvert participated in a colloquium, organized by the French weekly, *Témoignage chrétien*, on the theme, "What has become of the Christians on the left?" and the results have just been published under the same title in a special number by *Éditions témoignage chrétien*, Paris, 1995.

And so, given where I am, I try to understand as best I can what is happening to me and where I am going, as an individual and in a society, groping in the dark, mistrusting certitudes that come too quick or go too far.

More and more dramatically our world is "split in two." Rich societies splitting onto dual and unequal tracks, a widening gap between North and South, deep and widespread marginalization. The need for justice has never cried out so strongly, whether in the Third World or here: refugees, wars ignored or treated as media events, poverty, unemployment, alienation from society and school, loneliness....

Our world is changing with objectively unprecedented rapidity. The technological discoveries of our century surpass in number, and by a very long shot, those of all preceding centuries. The movement of people and of all kinds of information has accelerated prodigiously and continues to increase geometrically (particularly in information technology and computer science). With these developments come such consequences as mobility of persons (migration), of capital (globalization), of knowledge (information highways), of perceptions (global village), etc.

More and more thinkers are saying that we have entered a civilizational shift as profound as the ones produced by the invention of the wheel or, later, by that of printing. Are they right? Only history will answer definitively, but I share their hypothesis, and this inevitably colours my analysis of the present and the future paths I foresee.

Concretely, this means that first of all we must humbly take **reality** into account such as it is and such as we find it. We are in great and troubling confusion. "Things" are not only "cooking" but constantly on the boil, exploding into new forms; people are questioning their religious, political and social certitudes; there is a real search for meaning, as genuine as our own, even when it takes very different forms.

Whether one likes it or not, **our world will never be the same**. Full employment is probably a thing of the past, at least in so-called "developed" societies. Medical and genetic advances confront us with agonizing choices. More and more with each passing day, technological developments favour the satisfaction of individualized needs over collective ones. Access to an ever more gigantic mass of information creates, paradoxically, more and more illiterates. According to all appearances, the rapidity and ease of communications will first profit the strongest in society and thus accentuate the splitting or dualization all the more.

I do not write this with joy in my heart. I am deeply committed to the fight against dualization. I do not believe that history is univocal or irreversible. But I do believe that we must see the real **as it is** and not as we would dream it to be. Furthermore, this SEEING is the preliminary and indispensable step to JUDGING and only then to ACTING, even if we sometimes like to give precedence to action.

I go further. Not only must we see the real, we must also LOVE the real as it is. Loving the real does not preclude judging it or wanting to change it. Rather than be defensive or judgmental, we should adopt an attitude of listening, right from the start, of openness and of sympathy because to love the real is first of all to love the **persons who live this reality**. We must love the victims, to be sure, but also the ones who derive profit from the real, because all of them make up our world, our brothers and sisters, in whom our struggle for justice should

take flesh. This is surely the best way — in any case the way of Jesus — to be accepted along with our own questions.

Inventing the future? Nothing is ever invented out of the blue. We draw from what we have received in order gradually to discover our future.

How are we to hand on, in turn, the treasures we have received? the values which found our commitment as well as the ones which found our faith? How does handing-on occur?

This passing-on seems to me to consist principally in two dynamics, both of which largely escape our control. They are: dominant social ideologies and ... grace! Let me explain.

"The proletarian revolution," "socialism" or "the working class" effectively mobilized millions of people and became concepts of analysis and action which became more inevitable in some epochs than in others because of dominant social currents. The same goes for the indissolubility of marriage, the importance of the nation-state, or classicism in art. This is not the place to analyze why, but to show that dominant ideas change, sometimes dramatically, calling into question (often happily so) yesterday's certainties (for example, Galileo or the Inquisition, among many others).

In this sense, questioning the value of the communal for the sake of the individual, weakening tradition for the sake of research, breaking up unity for the sake of plurality — all these deep currents basically go well beyond merely individual choices. They take away neither our responsibility nor our free will, but they do condition them in an important way. One certainly can be critical and work to modify these trends, but one cannot do so without recognizing them, without grasping them, and without incarnating them ... in order to shed a different light on them.

To transmit our values to our children and the generations that follow is to accept the fact that we are only one set of actors in a complex process which includes school, television, the mass media, their neighbourhood chums, and the many "dominant social trends" whose sources are difficult to discern. It comes down to casting one's bottle into the sea with confidence and hope, even while accepting that the bottle irretrievably escapes us because the other (even if one's own child) is other, and rightly so, and has to invent his or her own life. This is to place confidence in the "other" again and again, unflaggingly, with love, openness and availability.

The other dynamic of transmission is grace! Grace is the complete mystery of God's loving gratuitousness. Grace is so disconcerting and often seems arbitrary to us, incomprehensible, even unjust. But this gratuitousness is real, it enlightens suddenly, at times it waits at a side road or makes its way obscurely and patiently or discretely supports without ever speaking His name.... We wish for grace, long for it, we can ask for it both for ourselves and for others. But one can only receive it humbly, gratefully, if and when it is offered.

Are we so far from "the Christians of the left"? I do not believe so. If I were to play the futurologist, I would venture that tomorrow's Christian of the left will be more immersed in the nitty-gritty than ever before (a heritage from the insights of the worker-priest movement), whether in the vast field of culture (giving meaning to life and work as well as to social activity, meaning to a new organization for a society which tends toward dualization, meaning to the

management of masses of information, etc.), or tapping the riches of the many sources of spirituality, or living the Church essentially in small groups, gathered together in networks.

For tomorrow's Christian of the left shall be, like yesterday's and today's, at the heart of the fights for justice, for respect and dignity, for unconditional acceptance of the very least, for the lived brotherhood of the children of the same Father. Tomorrow's world, different as it will have to be, will thirst for the same "values," but lived, understood and expressed differently. Just as we ourselves have been, so too will our children and grandchildren be loved by God, but differently. God's grace will not be lacking.

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HUMAN RIGHTS in our MISSION TODAY

Michael Czerny, S.J. and Thierry Monfils, S.J.

Human rights, "one of the positive aspects of our modern world which we should support and strengthen" can be "an application of our preferential option for the poor and our commitment to the promotion of justice," according to a recent Province Congregation. An historic occasion to appreciate this achievement and opportunity is approaching: the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10th, 1998.¹

How may Jesuits join many people and nations in marking the 50th anniversary? The present article is an invitation to an open discussion on human rights in our mission today, an exchange of experiences and concerns, an international symposium perhaps leading to a publication in 1998.

The Universal Declaration with its thirty articles covers the most basic ways in which human existence must be protected and supported: life, housing, income, family, development, work, environment, education. In 1966 the Declaration was followed up and made more effective by the adoption of the two Covenants: on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and on Civil and Political Rights.

The human rights system which exists today is a complex and indeed magnificent achievement. It has a certain coherence with an objective relevance everywhere, and it continues to develop or evolve. Its thirty articles constitute a good basic anthropology and ethic, a framework for

¹ Signed at San Francisco, U.S.A., December 10th, 1948.

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action and reflection. These are the claims we need to ponder, question, verify, put to the test and thereby celebrate in the international exchange we hope to have among us.

1) Jesuits and colleagues are deeply involved in the daily practical and, indeed, pastoral tasks of human rights which, in many countries, necessarily include legal and even political struggles. Surely human rights "on the ground" and in pastoral practice is our point of departure. The grassroots groups that we are close to and even the poor whom we encounter, perhaps aided by our social centres, might exchange experiences and concerns.

2) The human rights system was born out of World War II and developed during the Cold War. With geo-politics no longer riven by the East-West confrontation, what is the place of human rights in the current global disorder? What are the effects of the neo-liberal market (in theory, in practice) upon the defense and promotion of human rights? Paying the price for a certain success, human rights gets used by states and manipulated for ideological purposes — "human rightsism" (*droit-de-l'hommisme*) as Bernard-Henry Levy puts it. Appalling violations repeat themselves with sickening impunity no less today than fifty years ago. There are reasons to be discouraged. Some people have reason to fear that the entire international human rights edifice, so laboriously built up since 1948, might possibly collapse.

Yet the present difficulties and shadows do not completely obscure the balanced synthesis of 1948 which evolved into an omnipresent if ambiguous concern for human rights everywhere and at every level. Is there not a desire for a universal system, truly fair, truly human, politically effective and yet beyond partisan politics? Let us exchange about this, too.

3) In the name of universality, human rights standards are imposed by the powerful on weaker nations; in the name of cultural specificity, inexcusable violations are papered over or even legitimized. Some very deep inter-cultural questions about the occidental origins and nature of human rights cannot and should not be dismissed, even as they profoundly challenge the way in which human rights has been conceived and applied until now. At the same time experience shows that people of different faiths and of good will can work together with great dedication and self-sacrifice in the defence of human rights.

If people's rights are to be effectively protected and promoted in the different countries of the world, human rights must be more deeply inculturated. Does the emphasis on specificity not highlight the need for concreteness, and for universality to be rooted? and does the violence not highlight the need for effective protection? Our international symposium could usefully put human rights to the test inter-culturally.²

4) Ever since 1948 the human rights system has been developing and evolving. Recent UN initiatives in peace-making and peace-keeping — Bosnia, Burundi, Cambodia, El Salvador, Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia — with their modest successes and well-known impasses, shine new light on the mission to safeguard the peace, as defined after World War II. It is not enough to insist on the inviolability of each right by itself; human rights over-all should be put to the test as both "doctrine" and "functioning system" and to be strengthened in every way. We may join activists

² Very similar questions arise about the universal validity and cultural specificity of the notion of justice. See "Philosophical Notes on Justice," *PJ* 53 (November 1993) and "Notes on Justice in an Indonesian Perspective," *PJ* 56 (June 1994).

and intellectuals in declaring, "Despite all the obstacles, human rights must be defended, and this is why."

5) Human rights now form an important part of the Church's evangelization and social teaching, although this was not always so. Many fundamentals of Christian philosophy and theology — "The glory of God is Man fully alive; moreover Man's life is the vision of God"³ — may be found embodied in human rights, and the Declaration can highlight how Man⁴ cries out and struggles, how the Lord works, and how the Church acts, celebrates and sees things in God's light. Like a great tree in whose branches the birds of the air take shelter, so the Declaration may be a multi-branched structure in which to distribute many aspects of the promotion of justice and the Church's social apostolate. Indeed each tradition, secular and Church, sheds critical light on the other. "Here is how the Church promotes human rights in the light of the Gospel now, and here is how we can go farther."

Thus the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration should celebrate human rights in many, complex facets, and perhaps we can contribute to this healthy, questioning complexity. Here are some of the urgent **issues** and **questions** which we could write and exchange about:

- description and analysis of one human right (one article of the Universal Declaration), in practice and in law, locally or in a given country or on a continent;
- the world situation of one human right (for example, freedom of speech or the right to work), the evolution of the international system and, in future, the possibility of enforcement;
- the very notion of human rights historically (1948-1998) and now inter-culturally;
- fundamental bases and sources of human rights in the Christian and other religious traditions;
- human rights praxis and thinking as a real link between social justice and Christian faith;
- theology and spirituality of human rights;
- the meaning of the rights of peoples, e.g., to self-determination;
- the meaning of rights of humanity, e.g., to a clean and healthy environment;
- perspectives for local action and international collaboration in general, especially in the Society.⁵

³ St. Irenaeus, *Adv.haeres.* 4, 20, 7.

⁴ "Because the English language does not attribute masculine or feminine gender to inanimate things and abstract concepts, it has a greater potential for sexist or patriarchal expressions. God should not be masculine; neither should "Man" (*anthropos*). In many other languages, there is a word for Man and another for male. The sad fact of history is that males have monopolized humanness. To use the word "humanity" for Man is too abstract; and "humankind" is an expression of Darwinistic ideology (as if Man were a species). To say "man/woman" or "he/she" only deepens the lethal split of modern culture. Waiting for an *utrum*, a new gender that would include masculine and feminine without being neuter (*neutrum*: neither nor), I use "Man" with capital M when referring to *anthropos*" (Raimundo Panikkar, *The Silence of God: The Answer of the Buddha*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989, p. xii), and *Promotio Justitiae* proposes to do the same.

⁵ Global and regional networks of persons and institutions should be capable of addressing global concerns through support, sharing of information, planning and evaluation, or through implementation of projects (GC 34, Decree 23, n.14).

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Jesuits and colleagues are hereby invited to take up this 50th Anniversary proposal.

With the above concerns in mind, we might well re-read thoughtfully what recent General Congregations have said, implicitly and explicitly, about human rights:

1965 GC 31: Today our Society, along with the whole Church, finds the conditions of human history profoundly changed. The members themselves share in the contemporary "social and cultural transformation," and the new ways of living which arise from socialization, urbanization, industrialization, and ever widening communication among men, and they do not fail to participate in the changed ways of thinking and feeling and weighing the values of human life. They experience also the fact that a keener sense of liberty has developed and there is a more universal desire for the "full and free life."⁶

1965 GC 31: In our day the focal point of the social problem goes beyond the inequality between different social groups to "global" inequalities between sectors of economic life, between regions of one nation, between nations themselves or classes of nations. Again, the social problem today is also a matter of inequalities between different racial groups. And people today are not troubled only by particular questions, for example, about wages or working conditions, about family and social security. They are especially concerned with the massive worldwide problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, underemployment, overpopulation. Thus it is that social action looks more and more to the development of economic and social progress that will be truly human.⁷

1975 GC 32: There are millions of men and women in our world, specific people with names and faces, who are suffering from poverty and hunger, from the unjust distribution of wealth and resources and from the consequences of racial, social and political discrimination. Not only the quality of life but human life itself is under constant threat. It is becoming more and more clear that despite the opportunities offered by an ever more serviceable technology, we are simply not willing to pay the price of a more just and more humane society. Note: We find a Gospel echo, a truly apostolic echo of the anguish and questioning of our times, in *Gaudium et Spes*, *Mater et Magistra*, *Pacem in Terris*, *Populorum Progressio*, *Octogesima Adveniens*. In these documents of the church's magisterium the needs of our world touch us and break in upon us both on the level of our personal lives and of our apostolic service.⁸

1983 GC 33: Among certain problems that call for our special concern and which the General Congregation now wishes to bring to the attention of the whole Society: "attacks by governments on human rights through assassination, imprisonment, torture, the denial of religious freedom and political expression: all of which cause so many to suffer, some of them fellow Jesuits.... As an international body, the Society of Jesus commits itself to ... a lasting peace based on human rights and freedom."⁹

⁶ GC 31, "The Mission of the Society of Jesus Today," D.1, n.5.

⁷ GC 31, "The Social Apostolate, D.32, n.2.

⁸ GC 32, "Our Mission Today," D.4, n.20.

⁹ GC 33, "Companions of Jesus Sent into Today's World," D.1, n.45,46.

1995 GC 34: More recently we have become increasingly aware of other dimensions of this struggle for justice.¹⁰ Respect for the dignity of the human person created in the image of God underlies the growing international consciousness of the full range of **human rights**. These include economic and social rights to the basic necessities of life and well-being; personal rights such as freedom of conscience and expression and the right to practice and share one's faith; civil and political rights to participate fully and freely in the processes of society; and rights such as development, peace and a healthy environment. Since persons and communities are intertwined,¹¹ there are important analogies between the rights of persons and what are sometimes called the "rights of peoples," such as cultural integrity and preservation, and control of their own destiny and resources. The Society, as an international apostolic body, should work with communities of solidarity in supporting these rights.¹²

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If you wish to help clarify the focus or scope of the proposed project, please write to *PJ* before the end of 1995: Are there certain key articles to focus on? Are there a few key problems to work on together? How to assure the broadest international participation and the deepest interdisciplinary exchange? Regarding one or more rights, or the system generally, is there any chance of developing a new praxis or new thinking?

The Social Justice Secretary, as initial coordinator of the project, here seeks the help and interest of all. *Promotio Justitiae* will serve to keep the Society informed and, in the first issue of 1996, will publish the prospectus and invitation. Let us hear from you!

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LETTERS and COMMENTS

We are in the middle of our "summer" season here, three months of drought and superheated air that leave the body gasping and the spirit flagging. In my work at *Radio Progreso* I have gotten something of a second breath and feel newly-energized to pursue creative projects. A half-dozen things are moving forward that will help give the radio a bit more personality and identity. In this part of Honduras anyone with a radio can easily hear about twenty AM and thirty FM stations, and so *Radio Progreso's* one AM and one FM frequency have a lot of competition. It's foolhardy to try to compete with the big stations primarily in terms of newscasting or musical

¹⁰ See *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 26.

¹¹ See *Redemptor Hominis*, 14; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 29.

¹² GC 34, "Our Mission and Justice," D.3, n.6.

programming; they have far more resources than we'll ever have for such things, though our news programmes and the station generally are widely recognized for their support of popular causes and organizations.

The one resource that none of the other stations has and of which we need to take advantage is the wide network of grassroots activists working with the Church or with people's organizations. There are eight or nine parishes in El Progreso and adjoining towns, each with a vast panoply of lay ministers. My main project right now is to tap into that ferment of Church life which is truly remarkable in its vitality. The aim is to make the radio truly **popular, participative and of service to the community**. Here in Honduras, as in most of the rest of the world, those who wield power want nothing else than that the people work hard for low wages, watch mindless TV programmes and, above all, shut up and be submissive. Our little radio voice is a small cry of rebellion in the wilderness of modern society, but some will hear it and be inspired, we hope, to prepare a roadway for the God who humbles the mighty and lifts up the lowly.

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As one who has known of Bernard Lonergan since 1958, I was pleased to read Joe Owens' paper. I never really understood Lonergan, but I like the paradigms given of intellectual, moral and religious conversion.

Intellectual conversion means, in our educational apostolate, a radical openness to understanding and truth. This opens the way for critical understanding, which is to be the mark of Jesuit education. But it is demanding in that we need to be concerned about reality, objectivity and knowledge.

Moral conversion is to follow on this with a radical discernment of the truly good. In our social research and action, it means to take steps to have a world where beauty and value develop.

Finally, religious conversion — to be in love unrestrictedly. In our pastoral work it means leading ourselves and others to transformation of our living and feeling into dynamic self-surrender and the experience of God's gift of love, in openness and availability to God. Amen. And may GC 34 then guide us. It will also help in celibacy (which Gabino Uríbarri reminds us) is to show that the Kingdom of God is among us. And we need this to help us in our struggles and in the malaise of sexual morality around us.

Tourists are those from whom I have bleary eyes, and I see many in Hong Kong. There is a ministry to them, as James Spillane points out, but I trust that Jesuits in joyful praise will be aware of the destruction tourism brings to local people culturally, as well as ecological devastation. Hong Kong can handle it, with 5 million tourists a year, as they are very much contained to certain areas. They seem to contribute about 13% to the economy and fit into the

Hong Kong business arena, being at the top of the world business economy. But I trust that Jesuits will be frugal and austere, not comfortable and protected in the consumer affluence that surrounds. Is it not better to be vulnerable and outgoing, trusting and hopeful, as we endeavour to follow the Lord?

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WOMEN and the CHURCH: An ISSUE of SOLIDARITY

In the light of GC 34's decree 14 on the situation of women in Church and civil society, readers of *Promotio Justitiae* may be interested in a pamphlet by four Irish Jesuits who call for women to be more involved in decision-making in the Roman Catholic Church.

The authors point out that ordained men make virtually all the decisions involving jurisdiction or policy in the Church. Women's feelings and ideas are not a serious part of this decision-making process. A particularly sensitive area is Church teaching about family planning.

The pamphlet came out of a series of meetings in which women spoke of their feeling sidelined or not being taken seriously in the Catholic Church.

The authors believe that this sense of alienation is shared by a very large number of women. Great harm is done to the Church as it loses the experience and insights of half its members. Priests, all of whom are male, have to listen to the experience of women much more deeply.

Many men still subscribe to 'macho' values, and there is an attitude in Ireland that tolerates domestic violence. "To women looking for support, the relative silence of the Church on the issue of male violence in the home seems to be another manifestation of the 'nod and wink' culture." The four Jesuits call for a campaign in the Church to uncover and stop violence against women.

Women and the Church: An Issue of Solidarity, by Jesuit Fathers Brian Lennon, Gerry O'Hanlon, Bill Toner and Frank Sammon. The pamphlet may be obtained from the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 26 Upr Sherrard Street, Dublin 1, Ireland. Remittance of £1 per copy to cover costs would be appreciated, but is not necessary if onerous.

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