

PROMOTIO JUSTITIAE

EXCHANGES ÉCHANGES INTERCAMBIOS

N° 65, September 1996

"Who's afraid of the Apocalypse?"

Umberto Eco and Carlo Maria Martini, S.J.

Italy

* HARMONY amongst BELIEVERS	69
Joost Drost, S.J., Indonesia	
* A REPORT on HABITAT II	71
James Hug, S.J., United States of America	
* SOLIDARITY and COMPASSION	72
Darío Mollá, S.J., Spain	
* "Can we be <u>not</u> poor?"	81
Luis Ugalde, S.J., Venezuela	
* Where to join-up	83
Gabino Uríbarri, S.J., Spain	
* LETTERS and a PRAYER	88
Dominican Republic, Taiwan, Uruguay	
* SOCIAL APOSTOLATE	91
Complementary Norms	

C.P. 6139 — 00195 ROMA — ITALY
+39-6-687.9283 (fax)
sjs@sjcuria.org

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.

Promotio Justitiae is also published electronically in English on the World Wide Web. If you have access to the Internet you can find *PJ* in the faith-justice section of the Jesuit page, at:

http://maple.lemoyne.edu/~bucko/sj_pj.html

Note that the character between the j and the p is an underline, not a dash. You need to reduplicate this address exactly in order to access the page. Once you find it, be sure to create a bookmark so that you can easily find the current issue of *PJ*.

If you are struck by an idea in this issue, your brief comment 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. The re-printing of articles (except the Eco-Martini dialogue in this issue, which is covered by copyright) is encouraged; please cite *Promotio Justitiae* as the source, along with the address, and send a copy to the Editor. Thank you!

Michael Czerny, S.J.
Editor

Who's afraid of the Apocalypse?

Umberto Eco and Carlo Maria Martini, S.J.

The premiere issue of the Italian magazine *Liberal*, sub-titled "an encounter between Catholics and Secularists," features the following exchange between the man of letters Umberto Eco and our Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., Cardinal Archbishop of Milan. The dialogue, translated into English by John J. O'Callaghan, S.J., is copyright © *Liberal* and published here with their kind permission. Permission to re-print may be requested by writing to Editoriale Atlantide, via del Sudario, 35 - 00186 Roma.

The Year 2000:

Now it's the secularist world which fears the Apocalypse

Dear Carlo Maria Martini,

Please do not take me for disrespectful if I address you by your name without referring to the office you bear. Receive it rather as a gesture of homage and prudence. Of homage, because I have always been impressed by how, when the French interview a writer or an artist or a political figure, they avoid limiting titles like professor, eminence or excellency. The interviewees are people whose intellectual credentials are established by the name they use to sign their own ideas. So the French address such people, whose most impressive title is their own name, by saying: "*Dites-moi, Jacques Maritain,*" "*Tell me, Claude Lévi-Strauss.*" This is to recognize an authority which would remain such even if the person had not become an ambassador or a member of the French Academy. Were I to address St. Augustine (and please do not think me even more irreverent this time) I would not call him "Lord Bishop of Hippo" (for there were other bishops of that city after him) but just "Augustine of Thagaste."

An act of prudence, I said too. As a matter of fact, what this magazine asked both of us could seem embarrassing: for a secularist

The Year 2000:

Yes, but we can now author a new hope together

Dear Umberto Eco,

I agree totally with your addressing me by the name I have in civic records, and so I will do the same as well. The Gospels are not much for titles: "You must not be called 'rabbi' ... and do not call anyone on earth 'father' ... nor must you be called 'teacher'" (Matthew 23:8-10). This will also make it clear, as you say, that the two of us are exchanging reflections in freedom, without the limitations and restraints of particular rôles. I too hope it will be a fruitful exchange, and so it is important to be frank, to find a common focus for our concerns, to clarify our differences with insight, and to be scrupulous in reporting where there is real divergence between us.

I also agree about "setting our sights high" in this first dialogue.

Certainly, ethical problems are among those which most immediately concern us. But the current issues which most sway public opinion (I refer especially to those involving bioethics) are often "cutting edge" issues — the kind which

[laico] and a cardinal to exchange ideas. The secularist could appear to want the cardinal to express opinions as a prince of the Church and shepherd of souls, something which would do violence both to the one asked and to his listeners. Better that the dialogue come across as what the magazine which brought us together intends it to be: an exchange of reflections between free men. At the same time, by turning to you in this way, I want to underline the fact that you are regarded as a master of the intellectual and moral life even by those readers who feel bound by no other magisterium than that of right reason.

With problems of etiquette resolved, there remain the ethical ones. For in the course of a dialogue which seeks some common ground between the Catholic world and the secularist one, I feel that what ought to concern us are ethical problems. (I would not consider it realistic to start a debate here about the *Filioque*.) But even so, as the one assigned to make the first move (always the more embarrassing), I do not think we ought to get involved in current burning questions — the kind of question, perhaps, that might immediately mark off positions all too divergent. Better to set our sights high and take up a subject which, while truly current, extends its roots quite a distance and has inspired fascination, fear and hope in all members of the human family over the last two millennia.

There, I have pronounced the key word. We are in fact approaching the end of the second millennium, and I hope it is still politically correct in Europe to reckon years by counting from an event which — even the adherent of another religion could agree, or of none at all — has certainly influenced the history of our planet profoundly. This anniversary approaching cannot but evoke an image which has dominated twenty centuries of speculation: the Apocalypse.

Popular history tells us that the final years of the first millennium were obsessed with

require an understanding of the scientific reality, first of all, before venturing hasty moral judgments which too easily pit people against one another. It is also important to focus on the larger framework within which our judgments get formed and which can provide clues as to why we give things different weights in the practical order.

So then, you pose the problem of hope, and therefore of man's future, as the third millennium approaches. You evoke those apocalyptic images which are said to have terrified the masses toward the end of the first millennium. That is a good story, even if not true, because fear of the future does exist, and various forms of millenarianism constantly keep reappearing down the centuries. Some are sectarian; some are implicit forms of chiliasm which urge and spur on the great utopian movements. And the former fantasies are being replaced by today's ecological threats whose scientific credentials make them even more disturbing.

What has the *Apocalypse*, the last in the collection of books of the New Testament, to do with all that? Can this book really be taken as a storehouse of terrifying images which evoke an impending and tragic finale? True, many pages of the *Apocalypse* attributed to John are similar to many other apocalyptic writings of those centuries, yet the interpretive key is different. We find it provided by the context of the New Testament within whose canon that book was (not without resistance) included.

Let me try to explain. In apocalyptic writing the dominant theme is usually a flight from the present in order to take refuge in a future. This future will overturn the current world-structures by force and impose a definitive set of values in conformity with the hopes and expectations of whoever is writing the

thoughts about the end of time. True, historians have by now branded as legendary the notorious "terrors of the Year One Thousand," the spectacle of groaning crowds awaiting a dawn which would never break. But others tell us that thoughts of the end preceded that fatal day by a century or two and, more curious still, followed it as well. And this was the source of the various **millenarianisms** of the second millennium, which were not limited to religious movements, whether orthodox or heretical. For many political and social movements now tend to be classified as forms of chiliasm, including ones of a secularist and even atheistic cast, which sought violently to hasten the approach of the end of time in order to bring about, not the City of God, but a new Earthly City.

It is a bivalent and fearful book, the *Apocalypse* of John, as are the apocryphal apocalyptic sequels associated with it — apocryphal for the Canon, that is, but terribly authentic in the effects and movements, the passions and terrors, which they gave rise to. The *Apocalypse* can be read as a promise, but also as the announcement of an end, and so it gets rewritten continually, as we await the Year Two Thousand, even by people who have never read it: no longer the seven trumpets, and the hailstorms, and the sea turned to blood, and the plummeting stars, and the locusts rising like smoke from the well of the abyss, and the armies of Gog and Magog, and the Beast lunging out of the sea — but the nuclear arsenals instead, breeding uncontrolled and now uncontrollable, and the acid rain, and the vanishing Amazon, and the hole in the ozone, and the disinherited hordes who migrate and come to knock, sometimes with violence, at the gates of affluence, and the hunger of whole continents, and incurable new pestilences, and the selfish destruction of the soil, and the changing climates, and the melting glaciers, and the genetic engineering which will forge our clones, and the suicide — for a mystical ecologism, the necessary suicide — of humanity itself which will have to die in

book. Behind the apocalyptic literature there are groups of people oppressed by serious religious, social and political suffering. Seeing no escape via immediate action, they project and await a time when cosmic forces will plunge earthward in order to overcome all enemies. In this sense, we have to say that in every apocalypse there is an enormous utopian thrust, a great reservoir of hope, but combined with desolation and resignation regarding the present.

Now traces of something like this may possibly be found in the individual documents which at some point came together in our extant book of the *Apocalypse*. But once read from a Christian perspective, in the light of the Gospels, the book undergoes a change of accent and meaning. It becomes, not a projection of present frustrations, but the prolongation of the experience of fullness, in other words, of "salvation," which the early Church had. There is no power, human or satanic, nor will there ever be, which can vie with the hope of a believer.

In this sense, I agree with you when you say that thinking about the end of time is more typical today of the secularist than of the Christian world.

The Christian world too was shaken by apocalyptic tremors which were partly collected together in obscure verses of chapter 20 of the *Apocalypse*: "He seized the dragon ... and chained him up for a thousand years ... the souls of the beheaded came to life again and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." One school of ancient tradition interpreted these verses literally, but such millenarianism never found a home in the Church at large. What has prevailed is the symbolic sense of these texts: in them, as in other pages of the *Apocalypse*, we read a projection into the future of that victory which the first

order to save the species it has almost destroyed, the mother Gea whom it has denatured and suffocated.

We are living out — even if we do it in that unmindful way to which the mass media have accustomed us — our terrors of the end. We can even claim to live them out in a spirit of *bibamus, edamus, cras moriemur*, "eat, drink, for tomorrow we die," toasting the end of ideologies and of solidarity in a vortex of irresponsible consumerism. So, everyone plays with the phantasm of the Apocalypse and all the while exorcises it, and exorcises it all the more, the more unconsciously it is feared, and projects it onto screens in the form of cruel spectacle, with the hope of thus having rendered it unreal. But the power of the phantasms lies precisely in their unreality.

Now I daresay that images of the end of time are more typical today of the secularist world than of the Christian one. True, the Christian world makes the end into an object of meditation, but acts as if it were alright to project it onto a dimension which is not measured by the calendar. The secularist world, for its part, makes as if to ignore it, but in fact is thoroughly obsessed with it. And this is not a paradox, for it only repeats what happened in the first thousand years.

I do not want to get involved in exegetical questions which you know better than I, but I do remind our readers that the idea of the end of time comes from one of the most ambiguous passages of John's text, the 20th chapter. That chapter gave rise to this "scenario": with the Incarnation and the Redemption, Satan was imprisoned, but after a thousand years he will return and then the final struggle between the forces of good and evil will take place, crowned by the return of Christ and the Universal Judgment.

John certainly spoke of a thousand years. But some of the Church Fathers already noted that for the Lord a thousand years are like a day, or a day like a thousand years, and so the

Christians felt they were living in the present, thanks to their hope.

Thus, history has been conceived ever more clearly as a journey toward a goal beyond itself, not immanently within itself. This view may be expressed in terms of three convictions: 1) history has a meaning, a direction; it is not an accumulation of absurd, senseless facts; 2) this meaning is not purely immanent; it is projected beyond history, and so it is the object, not of reckoning, but of hope; 3) this view does not weaken but rather strengthens the meaning of contingent events, and these are the ethical arena upon which the future beyond history of the human adventure is played out.

So far I see that we have been saying a lot of similar things, even if stressing different aspects and relying on different sources. I rejoice over this agreement on the "meaning" history has, which does indeed make it possible, as you say, "to love earthly realities and to believe — with charity — that there is still room for Hope."

It is more difficult to answer the question whether there is a "notion" of hope (and of our responsibility regarding tomorrow) which can be shared by believers and non-believers. It must exist somehow, in practice, because both believers and non-believers obviously live in the present, give it meaning, and commit themselves to act responsibly. That's particularly evident when someone gratuitously takes a great risk for lofty values, without any visible recompense. This must mean that there is a deep *humus* which thoughtful, responsible believers and non-believers both reach deep down into, without perhaps being able to give it the same name. At crucial moments of action, realities are more important than names, it not being always worth the trouble to look for what to call

reckoning could not be taken literally. And Augustine chooses to read the passage in a "spiritual" sense. Both the millennium and the City of God are mystical, not historical events, and Armageddon is not of this earth. To be sure, there is no denial that history can be completed one day when Christ comes down to judge the living and dead, but the accent is not on the **end** of the ages, but on their **unfolding**, dominated by the regulating idea (not by the historical term) of the Parousia.

With this shift, not only Augustine but the entire Patristic age gave the world the idea of History as moving forward, an idea the pagan world never had. Even Hegel and Marx are indebted to this fundamental idea, and Teilhard de Chardin was to carry it on. Christianity invented History, and indeed it is the modern Antichrist who denounces it as an illness. Secularist historicism may have understood history as infinitely perfectible, so that tomorrow always and unreservedly perfects today and, in the very course of history, God creates and, so to say, educates and enriches himself. But this is not the ideology of the whole secularist world, which has known how to perceive folly and regress in history. And yet here is a vision of history which is originally Christian, every time one embarks on the historical journey under the banner of Hope. So that, despite knowing how to judge history and its horrors, there is a fundamentally Christian tone when one talks, with Emmanuel Mounier, about tragic optimism or, with Antonio Gramsci, about pessimism of reason and optimism of the will.

I find a desperate millenarianism whenever the end of time is seen as inevitable, when any kind of hope cedes to a celebration of the end of history or to an appeal to return to an archaic and timeless Tradition which no act of the will and no, I do not say rational, but no reasonable reflection will ever be able to enrich. Whence is born the gnostic heresy (in its secularistic forms, too) which holds that the world and history are the result of an error, and that only an elect few, destroying both

something, a *quaestio de nomine*, when what is at stake is promoting or defending values essential for humanity.

Still, obviously, the names we give things are important for a believer, and in particular for a Catholic, for they are not arbitrary but result from an act of intelligence and understanding which, if shared by another, also lead to a theoretical recognition of common values. Here I think we have a long way to go in what might be described as exercising our intelligence and courage in a common scrutiny of simple things. How often Jesus says in the Gospels: "Let those who have ears to hear, hear! ... Pay attention! ... Have you no inkling yet? Do you still not understand?" (Mark 4:9, 8:17, etc.). He does not appeal to philosophical theories or scholastic disputes, but to the intelligence given each one of us to grasp the meaning of events and orient oneself. Every bit of progress in this understanding of the great, simple things would signal a step forward as well in sharing reasons for hope.

And one more final challenge in your letter strikes me: what critical function can be assumed by a way of thinking about the end which does not imply disinterest in the future but, instead, constantly puts the errors of the past on trial? It seems clear to me that what can help us evaluate the past critically is not just thinking about a menacing end. That would be, if anything, a source of timidity and fear, of turning in on oneself or of flight toward a "different" future, exactly as happens in apocalyptic literature.

So that thinking about the end might make us attentive to the future, as to the past, in order to re-understand it critically, it is necessary that this end also be "an end," that it have final, decisive value, capable of illuminating present efforts and giving them

world and history, will be able to redeem God himself. Hence come the various forms of the superman myth which claims that only the initiates of a privileged race or sect will be able to celebrate their flaming holocausts on the miserable scenario of the world and history.

Only those with a sense of the direction of history (even for someone who does not believe in the Parousia) can love earthly realities and believe — with charity — that there is still room for Hope.

Is there a notion of hope (and of our responsibility regarding tomorrow) which can be shared by believers and non-believers? What can it still be based on? What critical function can be assumed by a way of thinking about the end which does not imply disinterest in the future but constantly puts the errors of the past on trial?

Otherwise it is only fitting to accept the end as drawing near, without even thinking about it much, and to hunker down in front of the TV screen (that is, take cover behind our electronic fortifications) and wait for someone to **amuse us**, things all the while going the way they go. And to the Devil with whoever comes after.

Umberto Eco

meaning. If the present has meaning in relation to a recognized and appreciated final value which I can anticipate with acts of intelligence and responsible choice, this enables me as well to reflect on past errors without anxiety. I know that I am en route; I can make out something of the goal, at least in its essential values; I realize that I have been given the possibility of adjusting my course, of bettering myself. Experience shows that one only repents of something one sees one can do better. One clings to one's mistakes without recognizing them as such for failing to see anything up ahead, and so one asks oneself, why should I let go of what I have?

I think these are all changes rung on that word "Hope" — which I would perhaps never have dared to capitalize had you not set me an example. So the moment has not yet come to let television anaesthetize us while we await the end. There is still a lot left to do together.

Carlo Maria Martini

HARMONY amongst BELIEVERS

Joost Drost S.J.

Tolerance, in my opinion, which is commonly used in connection with interreligious relationships, should be changed to **respect**. Tolerance comes from the Latin word "*tollere*" which means to carry something. To be tolerant means to bear a burden. What is this burden? The person towards whom I show tolerance. Thus it has a negative connotation. A tolerant person is one who gives up, gives in to a situation. "Though I personally dislike it, this is just the way things are." The tolerant person would rather give in than cause trouble. Therefore religious tolerance is a kind of negative behaviour. "It would be better that the other religion not exist so that I might live my own religion happily and peacefully. But since this is absolutely impossible, it is much better to bear with (*tollere*) the situation than to make trouble." This account of mine may be too harsh, but it is a fact that interreligious relationship is often a sort of cease-fire. Why? Because tolerance is an attitude assumed and developed, not on a positive basis, but only to prevent conflict.

Harmonious interreligious relationships have to be based on mutual respect. I respect someone who professes a religion. I keep to my own, because I believe in it. I respect the person with another conviction. True, I cannot appreciate another religion as well as my own. For, were that the case, then why would I not become an adherent of that other religion? But I do respect others with their religion because I am sure that for them it is their way to be children of God.

I acknowledge that the prophet Muhammad had a true spiritual experience. This experience is the foundation of Islam. So I accept and respect the prophet Muhammad as a spiritual leader. I do not merely tolerate the prophet Muhammad because he is not a burden for me. Rather, I respect him.

If an adherent of another religion opposes me or trespasses against my rights, I could either defend myself or tolerate him. But the situation is always a tense one, and such tolerance makes for only an artificial harmony. I cannot really live harmoniously with someone whom I do not respect or want to avoid. This is merely hypocrisy. A harmonious relationship among different religious adherents should not just be an attempt to avoid conflict.

In Indonesia people try to form a common opinion by *musyawarah* or deliberations for reaching an agreement. The typical Indonesian way to end a discussion is *mufakat* or consensus, with everyone agreeing and no voting. But in such discussions, they say, minutes are saved and hours are lost.

My personal opinion is that *mufakat* on opinions is impossible. What is possible is consensus about implementation, and that is real democracy. A deliberation to reach consensus involves a number of educated people. They each have their own opinions. How is it possible for the participants to have the same opinion about important matters? On unimportant ones you do not need to have a discussion.

When people are educated, it is impossible to force them to have the same opinion. But it is different when a real consensus obtains regarding implementation. Then those who do not agree have to accept the decision and implement it even without changing their opinion. Why this

intermezzo? Because I want to apply the pattern of consensus to the problem of interreligious relationships among people of different religions and even with those who are irreligious. I emphasize **people**, because there is no dialogue among religions, only among people who are religious. In this sense the harmony of religions is impossible; what is possible is different religious people living in harmony. The basic impediment to fulfilling this expectation is that many people cannot distinguish between an opinion and the person who proposes it. In fact only an educated person is able to differentiate between a person and her opinion. It is hard to expect this of villagers. But we do have to ask it of the leaders in the villages. Because if they cannot make the distinction, then fundamentalism is the result. One who cannot distinguish between a person and his opinion will fight, not only the opinion, but the persons, too.

This is due to an inability to debate the opinion and criticize the concept which, in one's own eyes, is wrong. So one fights the person. Unfortunately this happens not only in the villages. Intellectuals, too, are often unable to distinguish between persons and their opinions. In September-October 1995 we had a number of disturbances with people murdered, property burned and looted. And all this, it seems, because of ethnic and religious intolerance.

What is possible, as I said, is the harmonious relationship among differently religious **people**. In this case, I can be a good friend to a person whose way of thinking does not satisfy me at all. This is the attitude of a mature person who is not easily influenced by primordial emotions based on ethnic or religious ties. Unfortunately not only common people but also many influential people have not yet matured in their way of thinking. Can our schools educate people to mature in this way?

At a session on interreligious dialogue of Secondary School Administrators, some mentioned as an obstacle the suspicion that Christians are using dialogue as a ruse to convert. This *kristianisasi* is one of the big problems in Indonesia.

Such suspicion will never be overcome as long as we are merely tolerant. Thanks to years of work in education in Indonesia, I have contact with many Muslims in government circles. I am fully accepted as a colleague although they all know that I am a Catholic, a priest, a Jesuit. We discuss religious problems and we respect each other. We are very good friends. And this is what we can give our pupils: not knowledge about each other's religion, which will be very superficial, but the formation to **respect** each other as persons, each one with the right and obligation to be a good Catholic, or a good Muslim, or a good Hindu. I do not agree with the policy of some Catholic high schools to keep the number of Muslim students below 10 per cent. Students at such high schools do not have a real opportunity to learn to respect non-Catholics. We Catholics are a very small minority in a country with the world's largest Islamic population. It is very dangerous for us to live in a ghetto.

In my opinion, Catholic high schools should accept at least 20 per cent Islamic students so that, studying together, playing sports together, and so forth, Catholics and Muslims alike learn to respect one another as persons as adherents of different religions.

Joost Drost, S.J.
Keuskupan Agung Jakarta
Jl. Katedral 7
Jakarta 10710
INDONESIA

A REPORT on HABITAT II

James Hug, S.J.

Habitat II was less well-known than the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995. And it certainly received much less notoriety and press attention than the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, September 1995. But the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, held in Istanbul, Turkey, June 3-14, 1996, produced some exciting developments for those engaged in struggles for justice.

The right of all people to adequate housing was reaffirmed and given global visibility. The international community came out against the disproportionate location of environmentally-dangerous projects, such as toxic waste dumps, among those who live in poverty or who constitute minority populations. The strongest language against land mines and other anti-personnel weapons was registered. And for the first time, the global community called for the elimination of lead poisoning, the most dangerous and destructive pollutant on the planet, as soon as possible.

But perhaps most surprising for those who have followed the debates during the series of United Nations conferences over the last six years is the strong, forthright call, repeated three or four times in different parts of the documentation, challenging corporations, including transnational corporations and financial institutions, to "socially and environmentally responsible investment and reinvestment in local communities" in which they operate and from which they draw their resources and profits.

The ideas behind this language is the fundamental concept of the common good and the notion developed extensively by Pope John Paul II, that on all private property there is a "social mortgage."

The language itself is derived from a successful law designed to regulate the activities of banks in the United States of America. Under the Community Reinvestment Act, banks are required to reinvest in the local development of the communities in which they operate. This prevents the siphoning of resources away from poor communities into the development of wealthier ones. Bank investments must be reported to the government, and the government makes the information publicly available. It is used by Federal regulatory agencies in evaluating bank performance and in reviewing requests for expansion or new programs. And it is available to community organizations, NGOs and others concerned with the common good.

By introducing this notion at Habitat II, the international community raised it to the global level and expanded it to cover all corporations, especially transnational corporations and financial institutions. National and local governments are called upon to promote socially-responsible community reinvestment. The UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, the regional and subregional development banks and funds and bilateral support agencies, are all called upon to "support and encourage public-private partnerships in community reinvestment programs ... and make publicly available the data and best practices developed through them."

The policy groundwork has been laid for strengthening and moving forward a global dialogue on socially- and environmentally-responsible corporate behaviour and beginning a global process of evaluation and regulation of corporations for the common good.

What happens next is up to all of us. Local authorities and national governments should be questioned as to how they plan to implement the new policy advances. They need to be encouraged to move forward creatively and aggressively, to gather stories of successful corporate community investment or reinvestment programs, publicize and reward them — and to make irresponsible corporate behaviour public and resist it. We need to develop and/or strengthen our networks of communication among NGOs, churches and other community-based organizations so that corporate behaviour in one part of the world — whether responsible and responsive to local communities, or irresponsible and exploitative — can no longer slip by unnoticed in other parts of the world.

A small but essential step has been taken toward the kind of global social restraint on corporations that is essential if livable human communities are to be protected and enabled to flourish. Jesuits, through our vast international connections, could be a force for promoting the implementation of these policy initiatives and monitoring their development.

James Hug, S.J.
Center of Concern
3700 13th St. N.E.
Washington, DC 20017
U. S. A.

+ + + + +

SOLIDARITY and COMPASSION

Darío Mollá, S.J.

1. Introduction

One of the most characteristic concepts of the 34th General Congregation, I think it's true to say, is "solidarity" and, more specifically, solidarity with the poor. Not only the frequency, for it is mentioned dozens of times, but especially the quality of its use, for very important aspects of the being and the doing of Jesuits are linked with the concept. Two sample quotations make the point: "We have recovered, for our contemporary mission, the centrality of working in solidarity with the poor in accord with our Ignatian charism." Or when the concluding decree establishes eight characteristics of our way of proceeding, the fourth of these is entitled "In Solidarity with those most in need."¹

¹ D.2, n.8 and D.26, n.12. In this regard see also the statements made in D.9, "Poverty," especially nn. 15 and 16.

The purpose of this article is to reflect in an orderly way on what GC 34 says and means regarding solidarity with the poor, the significance and intention of the GC insisting on this concept, and the challenging suggestions which derive from it for the future of our personal, communitarian and institutional life and action.

To begin, simply stating a point of departure: if I had to choose a definitive expression of what GC 34 wants to affirm and declare when speaking of solidarity, I would not hesitate to cite the final decree:

Ignatius and his followers began their preaching in poverty. They worked with the powerful and the powerless, with princes, kings, and bishops, but also with the women of the street and with the victims of the plague. They linked their ministry to the powerful with the needs of the powerless.²

2. Reasons for insisting

This insistence on solidarity, to what extent is it novel compared with previous GCs? Or, to put the question more provocatively, does this insistence on solidarity represent a step backwards, does it negate the promotion of justice affirmed by GC 32 in D.4? or, if not a total negation, at least the negation of very essential aspects?

The novelty is only relative, one must admit. Both the 32nd and the 33rd used the concept "solidarity" — even if, it's true, less liberally and less profoundly than did GC 34.

Look for "solidarity" in the thematic index of the Spanish edition of GC 32: the term does not appear, but this is deceptive because the expression is used to quite a degree at various points in D.4.³ For GC 32 "solidarity" has at least three meanings:

- an interior attitude that people have (D.4, nn. 38,48);
- closeness and friendship with the poor (nn. 49,74); and
- support for our fellow Jesuits who are more directly with the poor (nn. 45,62).

Nº 42 places "the promotion of justice, and solidarity with those without voice and without power" at the same level. Nº 48 makes solidarity "with people who have a difficult life and are collectively oppressed" the condition for assuring the universality of the faith-justice option.

GC 33 also uses the term "solidarity" although with less wealth of content than did GC 32. This time the term is found in the thematic index of the Spanish edition. I want to recall a significant affirmation of GC 33: "The validity of our mission will also depend to a large extent on our solidarity with the poor" (D.1, n.48).

GC 34 neither eliminates the concept **justice**, which predominates in the previous congregations, nor does it pull the concept **solidarity** out of a hat. "Solidarity" was already there, as we have

² D.26, n.13. This understanding of solidarity seems very close to that of Reyes Mate in his work, and I very much identify with it: "It's not a matter of distributing among the less equal the surplus of the more equal, but of organizing everything starting from the rights of the less equal," *Mística y política*, Estella: Verbo Divino, 1990, p. 54.

³ Especially in nn. 47-50, also nn. 38, 42, 45, 62, 74.

seen, but GC 34 considerably broadens its treatment and gives it remarkably greater depth. Why?

One might think that GC 34 is being trendy or, to put it nicely, making a concession to the post-modern sensibility. The insistence on the term solidarity would be a way of introducing what the scholastics told us Delegates of the Spanish Assistancy at a meeting before the Congregation:

We would rather speak of solidarity than of justice, and the terminological preference is significant. To be in solidarity alludes more to the closeness and the quality of the presence as we go out to meet the one who needs us. And to be in solidarity also suggests that we need the other in a precarious situation in order not to get lost. The need is reciprocal....⁴

The answer, as to why GC 34 insists on the term "solidarity," may not be found in this line of argument alone. At the same time I in no way regret at all that the Congregation paid attention to a new sensitivity regarding the theme of injustice which favours the direct and the personal, and which is very vital in the new generations of Jesuits.

In an interesting reflection on "The promotion of justice in GC 34," Ildefonso Camacho points to another reason: the desire to supply for deficiencies noted in recent years in putting-into-practice the option taken by D.4 of GC 32. Regarding the first draft document by the Commission on Justice, Camacho analyzes as follows:

This concern to place oneself with the poor and be converted to them does not exclude the task of transforming social structures; rather the sensitivity resulting from such contacts is the only viable point of departure for structural transformation. The draft expressly says, "The promotion of justice requires, before anything, our own personal, communal and institutional conversion to the cause of the poor" (52). And it urges our institutions not only to attend directly to the poor, but also to make society aware of the need for change and to mobilize society to create a more just social order (60). In all this, the "standing with" the poor predominates over the transformation of social structures. Does this reflect the sensibility of our time? Does it respond to the conviction that that is where the Society has most failed and where it costs Jesuits more of an effort to locate themselves?⁵

Some of these convictions certainly characterized the spirit not only of the Congregation but of the whole Society, as made manifest by the numerous postulates which asked that the spiritual roots of our option for justice be deepened or that this option be better integrated with other dimensions of our life.⁶ Even before the postulates, the document "The Good News and the

⁴ Mini-speech "Faith and justice," Minutes of the Alcalá Meeting of Scholastics and Delegates to GC 34 (15 October 1994), p. 2.

⁵ Ildefonso Camacho, S.J., "La promoción de la justicia en la Congregación General XXXIV," *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 71 (enero-marzo 1996), 63.

⁶ See also in this respect Camacho's article, or Alfonso Alvarez Bolado, S.J., "Nuestra Misión y la justicia: Introducción" in *Decretos de la Congregación General 34*, Bilbao: Mensajero y Santander: Sal Terrae, 1995.

Promotion of Justice" prepared at the Curia by a group of experts coordinated by Michael Czerny, stated:

The first thing to examine is how the poor and their problems become present in our life and works. As Jesuits we both belong to the poor and are distant from them: an ambiguity which runs through all our discernment. In their absence, efforts to implement the faith-justice commitment and the preferential option are doomed to abstraction and failure, whereas "friendship with the poor makes us friends of the Eternal King."⁷

In a GC more concerned about suggesting courses of action and making possible commitments more real than about finding new theories, to make the option for justice operational was thought to require the renewal and deepening of the personal, human and spiritual experience which underlies this option. And this is the context in which GC 34's discourse on solidarity is situated.

The call to penetrate the faith-justice option was not new. In the Workshop on this theme held in Gijón in December 1990 on the occasion of the Ignatian year, Henry Volken, at the time head of the Social Secretariat of the Society, said:

Everything that we do and plan should consider the effect it will have upon the least and the poorest. I think that this is an approach of solidarity and a way of serving God better. To speak of structural change has great reach and scope; what is important is that our solidarity help our work acquire a distinctive quality, perhaps less spectacular but doubtless more profound. This is what we ought to be going after.⁸

At the same 1990 Workshop at Gijón, *Cristianisme i Justícia* made a collective presentation which very accurately expressed the deepest reason, from my point of view, why today it is necessary to speak, and speak in depth, about solidarity with the poor in order to renew, that is, to make new and give new vitality to, the faith-justice option:

The crux of D.4 of GC 32 was an authentic spiritual experience, which sprang from God's view of the world.... But naturally ... this spiritual experience took flesh in a series of convictions typical of the age (the optimistic possibility of structural change through political action, etc.). And since these opinions were widely shared, it happened to be easy to believe that accepting them was to have already accepted the spiritual experience which was expressed in them. The logical danger is that today, when those convictions seem to be changing, there be no underlying spiritual experience capable of creating new convictions or of transforming old ones.⁹

⁷ *The Jesuits: Towards GC 34*, CIS 75 (1994), 3.4.2, quoting St. Ignatius' Letter to the Fathers and Brothers of Padua, 7 August 1547.

⁸ *Información SJ* (May-June 1991), 102. I want to mention that re-reading these materials written five years before the Congregation, from the experience of what was said in GC 34, proved to be extremely interesting. They take on new value.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

The emphasis placed on solidarity with the poor is the expression of GC 34's will, in response to many requests from the Society, to insist on the basic spiritual experience which gives rise to concrete action for justice.

This Congregation calls "solidarity" the itinerary which begins from personal experience and concludes in action for justice. The promotion of justice is a necessary albeit final phase of authentic solidarity, but it can be spoiled or foreshortened if one forgets the previous phases. On the other hand, a solidarity which does not end in vigorous action for justice would be an essentially mutilated and unfinished solidarity, and this in no way is what Gc 34 wanted to propose.

3. Which solidarity?

A General Congregation is not meant to be a doctrinal organ, and its purpose is not to elaborate precise and specific reflections. Nor did GC 34 attempt such. But a careful reading of its decrees lets us grasp the intention and the experience behind them.

GC 34 establishes a close relationship between solidarity and the nucleus of our spiritual experience as Jesuits. Solidarity is for the GC a basic component of our being Jesuits and of our being in the world as Jesuits. Following the progression of the Exercises, solidarity is linked with key notes of our spirituality. With his call:

Jesus Christ invites us and, through us, the people we serve, to move in conversion of heart, "from solidarity with sin to solidarity with him for humanity," and to promote the Kingdom in all its aspects.¹⁰

With the option for the standard of Jesus: "The promotion of justice requires, before all else, our own continuing personal conversion — finding Jesus Christ in the brokenness of our world, living in solidarity with the poor and outcast, so that we can take up their cause under the standard of the Cross" (D.3, n.17).

With our desire to be identified with Christ: "As the Risen Lord, he is now present in all who suffer, all who are oppressed, all whose lives are broken by sin. As he is present, so we too want to be present, in solidarity and compassion, where the human family is most damaged" (D.2, n.4).

This solidarity is repeatedly associated with physical presence, with closeness, with vital contact, with exchange of experiences, with sharing a social space, with taking the poor and those suffering injustice as our place in the world and the place from which we decide: "Our sensitivity for such a mission will be most affected by frequent direct contact with these 'friends of the Lord,' from whom we can often learn about faith. Some insertion into the world of the poor should therefore be part of the life of every Jesuit" (D.3, n.17).

Consequently, growth in solidarity comes from direct and real contact with the poor, not only in early formation, but throughout a Jesuit's life:

¹⁰ D.2, n.11, quoting Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "Our Mission Today and Tomorrow," *Faith Doing Justice: Promoting Solidarity in Jesuit Ministries*, 1991, p.49.

During their formation, young Jesuits should be in contact with the poor, not just occasionally, but in a more sustained manner.... Living contact with other cultures and a style of life in which "at times they feel some effects of poverty" [*Const.* 287] will help them grow in solidarity with the poor and with the "other" in our richly diverse world. Continuing formation of older Jesuits should also foster such experiences of different social and cultural realities.¹¹

One can speak, as we were doing earlier, of solidarity as an itinerary or, in other words, of the progression of solidarity: a process which begins with inner experience, is nourished in nearness, and gives rise to dedicated action.¹² But one can also treat solidarity as experience and try to describe not so much the process as its core. In this approach there are, from my point of view, two key and inseparable elements in all true solidarity: **compassion** and **commitment**. GC 34 calls them "compassion" and "work for justice," and presents their mutual implication as the internal link or coherence of solidarity.

4. Compassion and justice

GC 34 identifies the origin of our Jesuit work for justice in the experience of compassion. And this in a three-fold sense:

i) It is the experience of compassion received, of the mercy of God towards us, which sets off the dynamic of thanksgiving, of following and of commitment. Here is the robust affirmation of GC 32, repeated by GC 34:

"What is it to be a Jesuit today? It is to know that one is a sinner yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was." The mission of the reconciled sinner is the mission of reconciliation: the work of faith doing justice. A Jesuit freely gives what he has freely received: the gift of Christ's redeeming love.¹³

ii) Our compassion, a constitutive part of our solidarity, also participates in the mercy and compassion of Jesus for humanity:

Like that of Ignatius, our way of proceeding is both a pilgrimage and a labour in Christ: in his compassion, in his ceaseless desire to bring men and women to the Father's reconciliation and the Spirit's love, and in his committed care for the poor, the marginalized, and the abandoned (D.1, n.5).

And so, the last paragraph of the final decree of the Congregation takes up that prayer of Father Arrupe, "Teach me how to be compassionate to the suffering, to the poor, the blind, the lame and the lepers" (D.26, n.29).

¹¹ D.3, n.18; see also D.9, nn. 14 and 15.

¹² Joaquín García Roca spoke, in "*La cultura de la solidaridad*" (Alicante, 5 June 1991), of an itinerary of solidarity which leads to a personality marked by solidarity. According to the sociologist from Valencia, this itinerary consists of three steps: compassion, volunteer action, and militancy.

¹³ GC 34, D.26, n.4. quoting GC 32, D.2, n.1.

iii) And it is in our capacity for compassion and mercy that our working justice must be radically rooted. This was exactly one of the most repeated themes in the above-mentioned Gijón Workshop, for example, in the words of Michael Campbell-Johnston:

The deep motive for social action must always be a personal love for the poor and the oppressed. And it is precisely this which must characterize our way of proceeding as Jesuits.... For a Christian the action around justice is to love real persons in such a way that we want to change the structures which damage their dignity..., to love them so much that, rather than stop at a purely personal level, our love moves to concrete action to change the unjust structures which oppress them.¹⁴

Justice is fruit of compassion; justice is also sacrament, historical concretion and fulfilment of compassion — a compassion which wants to liberate effectively from personal and structural sin and from its consequences. The current mission of the Society is the service of the faith and the promotion in society of "that justice of the Gospel which is the embodiment of God's love and saving mercy."¹⁵

Thus the service of justice is a thoroughly priestly service and suitable for a priestly Order such as the Society. GC 32 already affirmed it and, despite controversy and hesitations, GC 34 repeats it in its reflection on priesthood in the Society:

A specific challenge today is to embody Christ's ministry of healing and reconciliation in a world increasingly divided by economic and social status, race and ethnicity, violence and war, cultural and religious pluralism. These divisions must be a focus of Jesuit priestly ministry because Christ's work of reconciliation breaks down the walls of division among peoples "in order to create in himself one new humanity" (cf. Eph 2:14f). We live in a broken world where men and women are in need of integral healing, the power for which comes ultimately from God. Therefore, Jesuit priestly mission is directed, inseparably, towards justice for the poor and the reconciliation of the world to God through the preaching of the Gospel.¹⁶

5. Communities of solidarity, mediation of solidarity

Mention solidarity in GC 34 and it is immediately associated with a concept which readers have found among the most Congregation's interesting: the concept of **communities of solidarity**. It is apparently an attractive concept, and also a point of confusion and mystery, for the Congregation uses it in neither a precise nor a univocal way. But the concept, the intuition behind it, the appeal it makes, are all suggestive. It is worth examining what the Congregation's texts provide in detail, as a point of departure for further developments and applications which doubtlessly are needed in this case.

The call to communities of solidarity, as a necessary mediation of our solidarity, is rooted, in my opinion, in several converging convictions:

¹⁴ *Información SJ* (May-June 1991), 98.

¹⁵ D.2, n.3, quoting GC 33, D.1, n.32.

¹⁶ GC 34, D.6, n.14; GC 32, D.4, n.18.

- That solidarity is impossible in isolation; in a system and a world following a logic of non-solidarity, to live and to think against the current needs to be reinforced in the long run by being shared.

- That authentic solidarity wants to be incarnated and take on the specific forms and signs of life ... and so community is the natural "space" for solidarity.¹⁷

- That what solidarity needs to expand its range in our world are not more speeches — more or less nice, convincing or otherwise — but rather structures of plausibility,¹⁸ of concrete actions which show that solidarity is possible and produces vitality and human fulfilment.

Were did this important concept of the Congregation come from? The first time it is mentioned is in the document prior to the Provincial Congregations, "Good News and the promotion of justice" which was prepared in the Curia under the coordination of Michael Czerny and which was condensed in the famous "tabloids." Speaking of biblical justice it says:

In the biblical tradition, the memory of God's actions in favour of the people oppressed in Egypt and in favour of Jesus who died on the Cross are at the centre of Israel's behaviour towards itself and of the Christian Church. In the power of Jesus' resurrection and the sending of the Spirit, the early Church builds up communities of fellowship and sharing.¹⁹

According to this first intuition, these communities are born out of the experience of God's love and saving power, which get embodied and expressed in a new way of life characterized by sharing and by witnessing to the resurrection of Jesus. One manifestation of the Resurrection, the one which the above text develops, is to become solidary with the needs of others.

The expression "communities of solidarity" does not appear in either of the two texts which the Commission on Justice later prepared. It reappears, and with force, when the so-called Team 1 (charged with editing the four documents dealing with the mission) offers the drafts "Servants of Christ's Mission" as well as "Our Mission and justice." "Communities of solidarity" was practically the only important addition which Team 1 made to the second draft of the Commission on Justice. And it appears in a double context: when D.3 mentions the need to promote a culture of solidarity (n.10), and when it lists proposals for putting our option for justice into practice (n.19). These communities appear and are proposed as mediations of solidarity.

What are the features which characterize these communities? The decrees are not explicit in this regard, but two suggestive and, in good measure, concordant characterizations of the communities which we should be and build, may be found in the preparatory document "Good News and the promotion of justice." They are applicable to our topic because in the decrees we

¹⁷ Analogous to Pietro Barcellona's signalling the need for an "other city" as a space for the rights of children, in his *Postmodernidad y comunidad: El regreso de la vinculación social*, Madrid: Trotta, 1992, pp. 105-106.

¹⁸ "The democratic culture of solidarity needs to get the okay from certain definite social conditions of plausibility. The problem does not get posed on the level of acknowledging whether solidarity is needed, but rather on that of 'the faith' in its being historically viable." Javier Vitoria, "Democratic culture of solidarity and trinitarian faith," *Iglesia Viva* 167, 421.

¹⁹ *The Jesuits: Towards GC 34*, n. 3.2.8, quoting Acts 4:32-35.

are indeed told that both our own communities and those which we form in our ministries have to be communities of solidarity. The decrees use the name without describing the model, while the preparatory documents describe the communities without naming them. But the intention and the context show that the two sources agree. Quoting the third preparatory essay again:

In many different ways and circumstances we are called to build community: inclusive, non-excluding community wherein people care for each other, seek the truth, welcome the poor, work together for justice. Without communities that are open, particularly to the excluded, can the Good News truly be announced and welcomed? (3.3.16)

Our parishes and retreat centres should serve the integral liberation of the human person, building a human community with Kingdom values, involving us in the struggle of the poor for human dignity, showing a special concern for the wounded, the weak and the weary (3.4.12).

What characterizes these communities, then, is their welcoming style of life, both internally and towards others, and their involvement in the cause of the poor.

The decrees of GC 34 define the objectives or the tasks of these communities more explicitly. We can group them synthetically in four lines of action:

- active critique of the values which generate insolidarity and injustice;
- the living and challenging proposal of other values (D.2, n.13; D.3, n.10);
- collaboration in creating a culture of solidarity (D.19, n.6);
- seeking justice and defending the rights of persons and of peoples, promoting a fully human development (D.3, nn.6,10,19).

Which communities are eventually called to be "communities of solidarity," or to which communities one can and should apply this concept, is considered in several ways in the decrees. They should be all Christian communities, as born of the experience of Jesus (D.2, n.13), and so our own Jesuit communities (D.9, n.13) should have this horizon. To create these communities should also be the objective of our ministries (D.3, n.19) to such a degree that the Ignatian criterion of "greater fruit" in the selection of ministries is connected with the creation of communities of solidarity (D.3, n.22), which shows the value given to this mediation. Finally the idea applies to all those communities which work for a culture of solidarity and for justice (D.3, nn. 6 and 10), with whom we are called to collaborate.

And so I end, although perhaps there are still things to say, especially in the area, much favoured by the Congregation, of the culture of solidarity. And I end expressing my conviction that assuming this entire reflection on solidarity, personally and communally, individually and institutionally, will help us, without a doubt, to give deep human and spiritual roots, quality and efficacy to our commitment for justice with *los "injusticiados"*²⁰, with those unjustly treated.

Darío Mollá, S.J.
Panizo, 36, 3ºB
28039 Madrid
SPAIN

²⁰ José M^a Vigil, "La opción por los pobres: Evaluación crítica," *Diakonia* (March 1995).

"Can we be not poor?"

Luis Ugalde, S.J.

It seems not. For fifteen years we Venezuelans have been suffering the insults of statistics which throw more and more alarming rates of poverty in our faces. A while ago we passed 50% and we keep going up. The fact itself seems far too serious for us to be worrying whether the percentage of poverty reaches 73% or stays at 69% or how much of this poverty is extreme, or relative, or simply miserably poor. What is clear is that it is intolerable poverty, and it is turning us into "a poor country." This hurts all the more since it's an illness which attacked us, or which we contracted, when in the mid-70's we were gloriously speeding along the highway "towards the great Venezuela" on the humming wheels of fabulous income from oil.

Whether we are poor or not, is no longer up for discussion. One does not discuss what's obvious. Just as, on the other hand, it is equally obvious that we have the same natural riches which we had twenty years ago when we felt rich, it is also obvious that one can be poor and die of destitution lying upon a heap of natural treasures which represent a fabulous potential. Perhaps we are in a better position today to understand what Adam Smith said two long centuries ago: the wealth of nations does not consist in the quantity of gold or silver they possess, but in the greater number of productive people.... An idea which many of our leaders find hard to admit when they harp upon our natural resources and encourage us over and over again to remain hopeful since we have fabulous riches in our petroleum, in Guyana and in our beaches, mountains and sunshine.

Who turns the potential into reality? Who is blocking this potential, prolonging the national agony of our medical centres, where human suffering and sickness arrive forsaken? who is rescuing our pillaged Social Security? or who will lead us to the liberation of our reduced and debased employment, with more than half working the informal economy, with housing impossible, cost of food sky-high and on the streets the proxy delinquency of "survival of the fittest"?

Is it the poor of Venezuela who are making Venezuela poor? Or is it the *nouveau-riche* managers and the majority of the population, with their expectation of subsidized living off of revenues, who have consumed and squandered the chance of putting our existing resources in order so that all of us Venezuelans become successful producers and beneficiaries of the goods and services which we so dramatically need? The problem of growing poverty is not only Venezuelan. It is the drama of all Latin America — including some countries like Chile which, while showing significant economic success, discover that, if there are to be no poor, the population is too large by a third. It is the tragedy of Africa, with all sorts of hopeless countries dismissed by the experts, the indelible mark on a good part of Asia, and even including the growing shame of Europe and the United States. How much prosperity and what great progress such that, in the world's super-power, the poor are more numerous today than yesterday!

A recent *New York Times* editorial (February 21st, 1996) about the Republican Party primaries, re-printed in *El Nacional*, impressed us with several truths it expressed, including the following:

The United States is bedeviled by growing economic inequality in the midst of plenty. The efficient, post-industrial economy is brutal in the way it separates winners from losers.

The bulk of the population, which has less than a college education, is falling further and further behind. This growing income gap is the critical political issue for turn-of-the-century Americans.

The Reagan-era policies of low taxes and restrained spending spurred growth, but they supply no comfort. When people are worried about being laid off from their jobs, losing their health care or not being able to give their children a better future, every statistic that shows the economy doing well makes them feel worse.

And in Russia which for half a century headed up the polar opposite of the United States, we find an impoverished and helpless majority about to grant electoral victory to the Communist Party out of frustration with its opponents rather than in support of the solutions it proffers, for it does not seem to have any.

But let us return to Latin America and Venezuela: can we, or can we not, stop being poor? Or is poverty our fate due to colour, race, religion, the Spanish heritage or the climate? Are the poor and their irresponsibility responsible for their poverty, or are the causes to be found in the exploitation of imperialism, the corrupt leadership or the acquisitive rich? Or is there another way of thinking and pursuing all this by concretely analyzing the institutions, the organizational capacities, the specific policies, the functioning of the State, education? These are old questions which come back time and again.

Dr. Chen, dean of the Faculty of Economics and Social Science at the Catholic University "Andrés Bello" (UCAB), often says that one cannot go on talking about poverty like in the past, nor believing in the formulae which the international and national institutions have been applying since the 1950's to help the poor and to combat poverty. If with such remedies the illness has gotten worse, it means that the so-called remedies are not remedies, the doctors have been misguided, the system as a whole is a factory which spews out poor and excluded, only to pretend then that one is doing something to help them and that the leadership with decision-making power over political factors and economic resources lacked either the will or the power to provide solutions. Thus the causes have to be confronted once again, creatively and with imagination, as well as finding ways out of the growing poverty.

With the hope of accomplishing a courageous task, at the end of February some thirty people from ten Latin American countries and from Spain representing sixteen different universities met at the UCAB.* They were seeking shared agreements and common bases for a coordinated research approach which treats the causes and points to solutions, combining individual and group attitudes and values with institutional changes, in economic policies, in organizational aspects, in educational and technological capacities, in work habits, in the action and the orientation of the State. We are coming to the end of one century and it seems quite clear that the new one will have to learn and apply policies and take actions coherently, stripped of all deceptive rhetoric. It will have to face squarely the challenge of arranging it that the majority of the population really be the producer of the goods, services and culture which it needs in order to cease being poor.

* The reference is to a meeting of the Latin American Association of Jesuit Universities (*Asociación de universidades confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina* — AUSJAL) held to launch a coordinated, continent-wide, interdisciplinary research programme into the causes of poverty in Latin America, and the search for alternative solutions.

I am one of those who do not believe in the fate of poverty nor in any inherited determinism which supposedly condemns us to it. Our society simply needs the decided will to get out of poverty and to apply effective means for doing so.

Luis Ugalde, S.J.
Apartado 29 068
Caracas 1021-A
VENEZUELA

+ + + + +

Where to join up

Gabino Uríbarri, S.J.

"New hopes, no matter how often proclaimed ... there's no reaching them without entering into the forms of life which correspond to them"¹

In what follows, I propose to meditate on a third standard.² These sketchy attempts of mine are meant to help us imagine ourselves involved in forms of Jesuit life which do serve as a place to join up, a recruiting post, for those whom the Lord wishes to call.

1. Composition of place: a predicament and an experience

a) The predicament: The Virgin does not usually appear

My fellow-Jesuits in Spain do excellent pastoral work with young people, especially at the highschool and university levels. Nevertheless, there's a sad impression about that such work is not yielding the fruit in religious and priestly vocations one might rightly expect from Christian communities open and sensitive to the whispers of the Spirit of the Lord. We know that quite a few young fellows do eventually feel nudged, whether willingly or not, by a religious or priestly vocation, often conceived as a vocation to the Society.³ Why then is the number of those who do decide so low?

Talk with these young people and you find out that, for them to say "yes" to the call, involves an enormous renunciation, like a total break and huge leap into the void. At least that's how they

¹ Andrés Tornos, S.J., *Escatología*, II, Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1991, p. 19.

² The original title, "*El banderín de enganche*," picks up on the two *banderas* or standards of the key meditation in the Spiritual Exercises 136-148. "*El banderín de enganche*" seems best translated as a place to enlist or join up.

³ The conclusions of a survey recently conducted by the firm "Training & Research" verify this fact. E. Montesinos, *Actitudes hacia la vocación: Investigación cualitativa para la Compañía de Jesús*, Madrid, 1995, pp. 53. The unpublished study is in the hands of the Provincial of Spain.

see it before taking the plunge. And so they are waiting for a very special, very strong, very unmistakable and very convincing sign to assure them that, without any shadow of a doubt whatsoever, this is certainly the call of God for them and that, in this calling, they will fulfil themselves thoroughly. They feel that, faced with the risk of the decision itself,⁴ they have something like a right to prior confirmation, and they think that, without it, it would be unwise to take the step. As if they reasoned like this: 'If God is asking something exceptional of me, let Him say so in an exceptional way.' As long as this great sign fails to materialize, one's halting prayer is not enough, nor are the dreams of dedication to apostolic tasks, for all these can take their course perfectly well in a committed life in the world. When all is said and done, the radical novelty of Vatican II was to restore adulthood to laypeople in the Church. The edge, then, is rather along the lay side: while religious and priestly life represent the Church of the past, the committed lay state is the shape of the Church of the 21st century.

In more homely terms, we quip that these young fellows are waiting "for the Virgin to appear to them." And since Our Lady does not usually to appear in such a spectacular and miraculous way to young people in Ignatian prayer groups, at least not in Spain, there eventually comes a moment when the vocation train stops passing by and other forms of life get chosen: marriage, profession, other commitments. Within the existential logic described, the alternatives open to us would be: Either, we can convince Our Lady, Mother of the Society, "to appear to them." Or alternatively, it is within our power to change their psychology in such a way that they won't expect prior confirmation before deciding. Both solutions obviously involve rather considerable difficulties.

b) A story with elements of "a place to join up"

Our ministry with young people has remained basically the same, yet one year there was quite an increase in requests to enter the pre-novitiate,⁵ namely ten (two of whom did not enter because their families adamantly and vigorously opposed it, but six of them did). Why? Had the Virgin suddenly "appeared" to several young men?

According to those responsible for the pre-novitiate, a certain catalyst had been at work the previous year and its effect, though difficult to reckon, was undeniable. It happened like this. A Jesuit from Perú, Moncho González Ecija, spent several months in Spain with *Allpa Kalpa*, an Andean folk-music group from the Urcos area where he worked. They arrived with a return ticket, nothing more: no lodging arranged, no performances lined up. Their idea was to raise money to fund several basic projects in their village. During their stay in Spain, supported by several Spanish Jesuits, a work-dynamic developed with them whereby, when *Allpa Kalpa* performed in highschoools and parishes, the young people of the Christian life groups found themselves, not amongst the spectators in front of the stage, but backstage by the side of Moncho and the group. That is to say, the young Spaniards really got involved with *Allpa Kalpa* and with Moncho. To be with *Allpa Kalpa*, to find schools and other places for them to perform at, to speak about these Andeans and stand up for them was thus, in some way, to play at being the

⁴ See the sign of Jonah in Luke 11:29-32.

⁵ The pre-novitiate in the Province of Toledo is a stage of discernment and confirmation of a vocation to the Society for young men who have already requested to enter. While the candidates continue living at home, the idea of the programme is for them to enter the novitiate with their sense of a vocation already confirmed with peace in daily life.

Jesuit who was accompanying the group. No clear boundary demarcated the labours of Moncho from those of the young fellows who wanted to support the players and became their friends. In an unreflective way and without realizing it, they were putting themselves into Moncho's way of life, into his concerns and efforts ... not by hearing about them devoutly in some Exercises or at a Mass or greatly admiring his heroism and authenticity, but by tasting them and suffering them, undergoing them and celebrating them with him and his Peruvians, whom they already felt to be their own kind. And for the Peruvians, similarly, the young fellows became their best friends in Spain.

2. To reflect and draw some benefit: the third standard or the recruiting post

"The call is perceived in the response"⁶

All I'm trying to suggest is something as simple as that, among the questions about how we promote vocations, we lack a place to join up. A "recruiting post," according to the dictionary, is the office where people go to enlist as soldiers. Here it would be the means, the "instrument" in Ignatian terminology, which we can bring into play on our part so that the desired confirmation take place prior to the decision, confirmation which young people with vocational inclinations both long for and fear. This would reduce, in part, the need for an unequivocal sign.

a) The messenger is the message

Regarding the theme of vocations, our pastoral messages fail on a crucial point: our way of life is not congruent with what we proclaim. We talk about brotherhood and community and friends in the Lord, but the young fellows do not easily pick up any communitarian strain amongst the Jesuits who live in the highschool where they study or in the residence where they meet. We say we preach in poverty and yet lack no comfort or, at the very least, no one notices it in the pace of our life, in the trips, clothing, vacations, cars, computers. We proclaim that the promotion of justice and the service of the poor are the soul of the mission of the Society in an up-to-date translation of the Gospel. And then a significant proportion of the scholastics spend their regency teaching religion, whether well or middling is not the point, without our really being convinced that giving religion classes is the best way of serving the poor and promoting justice (although maybe it is). We say that to celebrate the Eucharist as brothers is the centre of our day, but we scarcely prepare the celebration or indeed celebrate anything in it.

I suspect that our message is not the words we say in religion class, in catechism, in a retreat, in a homily, but our life itself and our form of life. The message of Jesus is, primarily, his own life: "the holy mysteries of the life of Christ our Lord." His are what explain his parables of the kingdom, his prayer, his death and his resurrection. He used to speak "with authority," the Gospels stress. As a result, I think, the main feature of evangelization is not our theological discourse, nor our words, but our own life. In an Ignatian term, one's very own *subiecto*, both personal and communitarian. If the medium is the message, the messenger is the message. And what would happen if we were to redistribute part of the energies which we spend in working ourselves to exhaustion among people outside the house, redistribute them in such a way that in

⁶ Emmanuel Levinas quoted without reference in J. Martín Velasco, *La experiencia cristiana de Dios*, Madrid: Trotta, 1995, p. 68.

my residence, in my highschool, in my university, there were a community capable of saying "come and see" (John 1:39)?

We often consider the time dedicated to community questions and meetings as robbing us of scarce time available to cover, and badly at best, the innumerable tasks which our mission requires of us. Thus, to dedicate time to the community seems like investing a precious resource in an enterprise which generates no profit or even runs at a loss. Unless this mentality changes, we will remain unable to build up groups of Jesuits who are authentic friends in the Lord, different from the sort of enterprising taskforces valued by any decent private business. I maintain that, within our crushing rhythm of work, the time dedicated to caring for and building the *subiecto* is the best apostolic investment that we can make, including the formation of a community, that is, something more than a mere agglomeration of apostles. And the *subiecto* is built up by caring in a balanced way for the following dimensions: prayer (meditation, community Eucharist, retreats, annual Exercises); the affective (rest, spiritual conversation); the apostolic (exercising obedience, preaching in poverty, learning from Christians and from the poor, practising works of mercy); and the intellectual (ongoing formation).

b) Offering a way of life, not words about it

This then would be the third standard or banner: our way of life.⁷ We mediate on the standard of Lucifer and the standard of Christ our Lord, "our supreme and true leader." Then, once outside the Exercises, we raise aloft our way of life and apostolic project like a banner on high. The banner is our real agenda, our real concerns and work, not our declarations of principle, to draw people⁸ or attract the attention of those manifestly sceptical or indifferent. For example, regarding the commitment to justice. There are relatively many young men and women who want to live an intense commitment along these lines. Nevertheless, when in our Lord they seek to walk further along this way, we put them in touch with other organizations and movements: *Caritas* shelters for those with AIDS, organizations for rehabilitating drug addicts, groups working in prisons. The social image we Jesuits have would not lead anyone to guess or imagine that a social vocation might be fulfilled within the typical scope of an institutional work of ours.

Nevertheless, amongst my companions in the Province there is commitment to God in abundance; a silent abnegation in favour of the disinherited; a loyal, deep and sincere friendship with other companions; and a fierce passion for the Kingdom. Not only am I convinced of this but, having been on the inside for eighteen years, I see it all and admire it. All this being true, nevertheless, in order to generate and awaken a greater number of vocations to the Society, we should create situations, ways of living and ways of working which include **involvement** or complicity with the mission of the Society (not just theory about it) and forms of imperceptibly initiating oneself in being a Jesuit so that the step of saying "yes" to the call, which comes

⁷ The Formula of the Institute is definitely a way of life: "According to the way of life established by them" (*FN*, II, p. 592), quoted and commented by Ignacio Iglesias, S.J., "Introducción: Leer la Fórmula hoy," in S. Arzubialde et al, eds., *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús*, Bilbao: Mensajero y Santander: Sal Terrae, 1993, p. 25, see pp. 24-29.

⁸ "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32).

radically from God our Lord, is none other than recognizing with deep feeling that I can found and build my future upon the rock of what I am living here and now with these companions.⁹

Even at the risk of too simplistic a formula, I propose the following three topics to guide us in an examen and a community discussion. Each work, each house (each Jesuit) can really be "a place to join up" or a recruiting post to the degree that these three conditions are fulfilled: First, that those who come into contact with the work or the community plainly notice that the tasks in which the Jesuits exert themselves are a real, truthful and appropriate exercise of their mission. This will shine through even more powerfully if Jesuits also live their mission eagerly and happily, not as a heavy burden which suffocates, exhausts and wipes them out. Secondly, that Jesuits allow ways of sharing complicity in this mission and getting involved in its concrete tasks, in such a way that young fellows manage, in and through the tasks, to understand themselves as living the mission of the Society. That is, that via the shared task they gain access to the Society's way of life. Thirdly, that Jesuits learn how to accompany this complicity, guiding it to an encounter with the heart of the body of the Society and the sources of its spirituality, and exposing it to the call of the Lord of the harvest so that He may choose whom He wants and as many as He wants.

I'm convinced that a few days spent living with the sick and their infirmarians in our houses of retirement (no one can deny that there are plenty of them in Europe) will do more to jolt a generous heart with vocational questions than a thousand perfect words about the poor. In the happy and grateful life of an old man there is no deception; in the daily and hidden generosity of the brother infirmarians there is no grandiloquent rhetoric, only evangelical love in its pure form.

Gabino Uríbarri, S.J.
«Diego Laynez»
La Bañeza, 43, portal 3
28035 Madrid
SPAIN

+ + + + +

⁹ See the house built on rock in Matthew 7:24-29.

YOU and I ARE CREATING US

Benjamín González Buelta, S.J.

In you I am,
from you I come,
to you I go.

You are outside me,
I can shut myself in.
You are within me,
I can shut you in.
I cannot cease
to be in you.

My flesh
puts out roots
which stretch out to you.
I can forget it.
My spirit
is a spark
which ignites
from your flame.
I can ignore it.

My eyes
seek their horizon.
My heart,
its universal home.
At a crossroad,
I can lose my way.
I can get stuck
in some place.
I cannot cease
to go towards you.
I cannot cease
to come from you.

I did not see your face
when I came from you.
It was not a farewell.
That's when an encounter
without limits
began.
Every evening
I add to my canvas
a new feature of yours.
Every evening
I add to your canvas
a new feature of mine.
Along the way
when guessing a face,
when reaching out a hand,
when looking into eyes,
as the future is born,
as the a present is dying,
I discover you,
I discover me.
Within me,
the two side by side,
the one towards the other,
we are creating us.

I look to the side:
a people in chains,
the cries of hunger,
the stolen day,
the night assaulted.
I see you in the bones,
I hear your complaint,
you clutch at justice,
you gather brothers.

You are people
and do not abandon your
body.
Now I see you,
marginalised
Lord,
serving
master,
spent
mother,
father
with nothing,
infinite
pleading,
free
nailed.
Now I see you
people on the way.
And in this mystery
my days are spent,
my ideas
and my dreams.
You and I,
we are creating us
your people.

La transparencia del barro
(The earthen transparency)

Benjamín González Buelta, S.J.
Apartado 76
Santo Domingo
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In a spirit of discussion and not argument allow me to respond to Paul Caspersz, S.J. I think it necessary to quote Paul for the reader to follow this discussion. He writes,

Daniel Ross (*PJ* 60, May 1995) finds fault with me for writing (*PJ* 59, March 1995) of "those whose work is not in the field of justice (for instance, enclosed Carmelites, school or university teachers)" without quoting the words which follow immediately: "but who consciously (also by prayer) play a role supportive of those actually working for justice."

I would respond that the addition of the words that I did not quote only adds to my position. I do not accept that the work of university teachers is a supportive role to those actually working for justice. What is "actually working for justice"? I cannot accept being defined out of the picture by someone who thinks we in university teaching are not "actually working for justice." We could with equal good will define the work of others as supportive of the "actual work for justice" that is done in the schools. But this type of distinction is not productive.

My response in *PJ* 60 is a little strong. This is in reaction to being "defined out of the picture" by many I have met in the so-called social apostolate. We certainly need a new definition of what is meant by the social apostolate. Why is teaching the young less a part of the social apostolate than helping the poor build houses? Not all teachers work as successfully nor as directly as others in the field of training for justice, but the same could be said of those in other work.

Let me draw a parallel example. Are we not all considered to be working in the promotion of vocations? It is not only those who are labelled "vocation promoter" who do this work. Needless distinctions divide us in our efforts.

I apologize to Paul if this sounds like I am attacking him. I am responding to those who have tried to define the work of those of us in the direct apostolate of teaching the young as outside of the "field of justice."

Daniel Ross, S.J.
P.O. Box 1-107
Hsinchuang, Taipei Hsien [242]
TAIWAN, ROC

+ + + + +

Dear Father,

With this letter I would like, first of all, to congratulate *Promotio Justitiae* and Gabino Uríbarri for the well-deserved honour of having his article "The Celibacy of Jesus, and Vocations" (*PJ* 59, March 1995) included "among the best articles in theology published in journals throughout the world."

Then, with our customary freedom of spirit, I'd like to express an opinion completely opposed to the one presented by Andrew Hamilton from Australia (*PJ* 63, March 1996). I do not agree

with his criticism of the decrees of GC 34, nor does it seem to me healthily humorous, despite being presented in a witty metaphor.

I have been praying over the first five decrees, at the same time I am trying to understand them. And I think that the great effort which you at the GC made to condense the 700 postulates which were approved, deserves gratitude and admiration, as well as recognition for their great richness.

It is true that the decrees do not come down to practice and remain at a theological level. But it is the postulates themselves that were of this nature and you were not going to invent what they did not say; the Commission at the GC tried to make summaries and not to deduce conclusions. This deductive and conclusive labour is of the whole Society, in community works and works of team, as is being done in different places, for example, in the Province of Loyola (according to a recent issue of the Loyola Province *Noticias*).

I think that at heart, Andrew's criticism seems to overlook the fact that two kinds of decree are possible: the **resolution**-type (at an executive and practical level) and the **principles**-type, which rather orients and illuminates. Among the latter are found the decrees of Vatican II, which Pope John Paul is so interested in seeing **become practical in the life of the Church**.

In case it may be of help, I want to mention how I am **praying** over these decrees and trying to penetrate their content. It is something like the *lectio divina* of Saint Benedict:

1. A **prior exegesis** of the text to be considered is needed, with an attentive pre-reading and consulting the explanatory notes (for example, the introductions in the Spanish edition).
2. Once this is done, the following three steps may be taken:
 - a reading of the text, repeated three or four times, until one manages to grasp its meaning and significance, according to the pre-reading;
 - meditation on one or more of the details which have been better understood;
 - **prayer** praising the Lord, desiring and asking for light to "feel, penetrate, so as to assimilate and live" what the decree presents us.
3. In a personal **evaluation** of the time spent on the *lectio*, one may gather whatever practical there is in order to **put it in common** at a later meeting or, if the prayer has been communitarian, then in the following period. In this sharing is when we can reach what is relevant for putting it into practice.

I hope, Father Czerny, that this approach which is giving me excellent results serves, not only to show in what way I disagree with Andrew, but also to encourage him — and others as well — "complaining" about the Decrees of the General Congregation — to practise this technique.

Daniel María Agacino, S.J.

«Manresa»

Avda. Luis A. de Herrera 4278

11700 Montevideo

URUGUAY

+ . + . + . +

THE COMPLEMENTARY NORMS

SEVENTH PART: Mission and ministries of the Society

FOURTH CHAPTER The ministries through which the Society fulfils her mission

*7. Social apostolate**

298- In the planning of our apostolic activities, in fulfilling today's mission of the Society in the service of faith, the social apostolate should take its place among those having priority. Its goal is to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common.¹³⁰

299- §1. The social apostolate, as every form of our apostolate, flows from the mission "for the defense and propagation of the faith and the progress of souls in Christian life and learning."¹³¹

§2. Moreover all should understand that they can and should exercise the social apostolate in their spiritual ministries by explaining the social teaching of the Church, by stimulating and directing the minds of the faithful to social justice and charity, and by establishing social activities through the members of our associations.¹³²

300- §1. Social centres of research, publications, and social action should be established by provinces or regions according to a plan that will seem better suited to the concrete circumstances of each region and time. They should be in close contact with one another both for the sake of information and for every kind of practical collaboration;¹³³ and in particular to identify and promote the liberating dynamics of the local religions and cultures, and initiate common projects for the building-up of a just social order.¹³⁴

§2. Social centres and direct social action for and with the poor will be more effective in promoting justice to the extent that they integrate faith into all dimensions of their work.¹³⁵

301- §1. Our members should promote those things which tend to infuse Christian principles into public life; they should not however become involved in political factions.¹³⁶

§2. The decision as to whether any of our members, in truly exceptional circumstances, may be permitted to take some active part in offices which entail a participation in the exercise of civil power or in political parties or in the direction of labour unions belongs to the General, who will take into account the universal law of the Church and the opinion of competent ecclesiastical authority.¹³⁷

* The major passages in the *Complementary Norms* concerning the social apostolate, in a provisional English translation.

¹³⁰ GC 31 D.32 nn.1,4a; CG 32 D.4 nn.40, 59-60; see also *Collectio decretorum* [122-137; 258-263; 419-422] (GC 28 D.29; GC 29 D.29; GC 30 DD.52-53).

¹³¹ See GC 31, D.32 n.3.

¹³² GC 29 D.29 n.3 (*Coll.d.*[261]).

¹³³ GC 31 D.32 n.4 d-e.

¹³⁴ GC 34 D.5 n.9,7.

¹³⁵ GC 34 D.3 n.20.

¹³⁶ See GC 31 D.32 n.3; *Coll.d.*[137] (GC 28 D.29 n.16).

¹³⁷ See GC 32 D.4 n.80; Code of Canon Law (CIC) 672 compared with 285 §3 and 287 §2; Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) 383, 1°, 384 §2.

302- In the entire course of our training, both theoretical, by serious study of the social sciences, and practical, the social dimension of our whole modern apostolate must be taken into account, and members who are to be specifically destined for this apostolate should be chosen in good time and appropriately trained.¹³⁸

98- §1. The studies of brothers should be in accord with the needs of the province and the Society as well as their future apostolic work. In the years immediately following the novitiate, a theological program should be offered to all as either the only discipline or at least the principal one. Nor should instruction⁶² "concerning behaviour-patterns, emotional attitudes, and thought processes of contemporary social life"⁶³ be omitted. There can also be cultural and technical studies during the time of formation. This instruction of the brothers should also be confirmed by appropriate degrees.⁶⁴

106- §3. An experience of living with the poor will sometimes be necessary for our young men, so that they may be helped both to overcome possible limitations of their own social background and to strengthen their love for the poor. The conditions of such an experience must be thought out carefully, so that it will be genuine, free of illusions, and productive of a true conversion. For this purpose, contact with the poor should be in a more sustained manner and not just occasionally, and must be accompanied by careful reflection and integrated into training in socio-cultural analysis.⁷⁹

243- §2. An appropriate course or programme on spiritual and doctrinal formation should also be set up each year for the brothers, especially for those who have not yet completed their final probation. On such occasions, lectures are to be offered on Sacred Scripture, liturgy, theology, and social doctrine.¹⁹⁷

Subject Index

Social Apostolate: - its importance and goal, 298; - it flows from the mission of the Society and can be practised in all ministries, even spiritual ones, 299; - Social centres, which are closely connected among themselves, are to be fostered for the purpose of reaching their goal, 300; - public life is to be imbued with Christian principles in the light of the social teachings of the Church, 301, §1; - participation in political factions is to be avoided, as well as in positions which carry with them the exercise of public power and in holding office in labour unions, without special permission of the General, 301, §2; - all our members are to be trained in the social dimension of our every apostolate, and some members are to be specifically destined for this work, 302; 106, §3; 98, §1; 243, §2.

¹³⁸ See GC 31 D.32 n.4 b-c; GC 32 D.4 nn.35,44.

⁶² See GC 32 D.6 n.40; GC 31 D.8 n.28.

⁶³ Vatican II, *Perfectae caritatis*, n.18.

⁶⁴ GC 31 D.7 n.7.

⁷⁹ See GC 32 D.6 n.10; GC 34 D.3 n.18.

¹⁹⁷ See GC 31 D.8 n.30.