

# PROMOTIO IUSTITIAE

## From *RERUM NOVARUM* to DECREE 4

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

# INTRODUCTION

It is a real pleasure for me to introduce a special issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* documenting the first eighty years of the Society's social apostolate: "From *Rerum Novarum* to **Decree 4**."

The Church's commitment to bring the Gospel to modern society was first fully expressed in Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. Here, the essay by Fr. Joseph Gavin, S.J., professor of Church history at the Gregorian University, presents the fascinating evolution of Catholic social teaching as the context of our apostolic development.

*Rerum Novarum* soon found its echo in the Society. The twenty-fourth General Congregation of 1892 and subsequent Congregations applied its teaching and further insights to various Jesuit ministries, including new social ones, as the decrees of GC 24 through 31 printed here show. The essay by Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston, S.J., who served Father Arrupe as secretary for the social apostolate after GC 32, traces the history of Jesuit social action up to the 1970s.

In 1949, Father Jean-Baptiste Janssens published his magisterial **Instruction on the Social Apostolate**. The point of departure at that time was the virtue of justice, from which the General deduced with calm urgency the Society's inescapable obligation to respond. The **Instruction** inspired a wide range of works in the social field and its influence reached through to GC 31, but the fuller mobilization of the Society still had a decade and more to wait.

With Vatican II and the generalate of Father Arrupe, the point of departure shifted from justice as **the** virtue to injustice as **the** scandal and sin of the modern world, and from Christian formation of workers to a more general promotion of justice. The appeal from patent persistent injustice motivated Christians and Jesuits individually, and the Society and other religious families corporately, to new commitment, new thinking, new action.

Fr. Jean-Yves Calvez, S.J., general councillor to Father Arrupe from 1971 to 1983, reflects by way of conclusion on the recent evolution of the Society's social doctrine and practice, especially since 1975 when the decided commitment to "the service of faith and the promotion of justice" placed social concern at the heart of all Jesuit service.

I am happy to see the Society's basic documents on the social apostolate from 1892 to 1966 published in an accessible edition, since they are relatively unfamiliar compared with the Decrees and letters dated after 1975. The original translation of the Latin **Instruction** into English also conveys the distance of those times from ours. Amidst antiquated forms of expression, though, Jesuits and colleagues will find concerns and analyses which are astonishingly up-to-date and always counter-cultural if not prophetic.

This historical dossier, "From *Rerum Novarum* to Decree 4," also contributes to the "Social Apostolate Initiative" currently underway throughout the Society of Jesus (see *Promotio Iustitiae* 64 [June 1996]). Both the Initiative and the dossier mean to help Jesuits and their colleagues discover God's call to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to society, to grasp better what the social apostolate is and should be about in the coming twenty-first century.

The goal, in an expression which harkens back to GC 28 through 31, is "to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common" (*Complementary Norms*, § 298). This purpose, GC 32 elevates into "the service of faith and the promotion of justice," making our entire mission explicitly, necessarily social in its reach and ramifications, and so too our identity. New social ministries sprang up quickly, while slowly our spirituality and formation and community, existing apostolates, and collaboration with others also began to change. For this conversion GC 34 gave eloquent thanks to God, acknowledging our failings and facing how much there remains to do.

Now going back "behind" Decree 4, let us read the **Instruction** and Decrees of GC 24 through 31 with a discerning attitude such as St. Ignatius recommends in his very wise rules. "Be attentive not only to the origins but also to the development," Ignatius would say, which here we apply to the social apostolate so that, grasping the early inspiration and also seeing how what began with such inspiration has evolved, we can reflect on the aspects "tending towards what is wholly good" and those can ending up in something less (Sp.Ex. [333]).

In this light, let us meditate ever more deeply on the relation of faith and justice: how the struggle for justice flows from personal and communal faith and makes it credible; how proclaiming the Gospel does or should promote justice in different cultures and in dialogue with different religions; how the promotion of justice — especially where there are other faiths or none at all — is genuinely evangelizing. Let us examine honestly if and how we are falling short of "what is wholly good" in the complex changing social arena.

Just as Jesuit identity originates in the Exercises and Constitutions, I hope that our apostolic identity will be nourished by returning to sources such as the **Instruction** and by working out essential characteristics of Jesuit social ministry. Pope John Paul II's social teaching, an integral part of the new evangelisation, should guide us in this search. We very much want to express anew, in a clear and forthright manner, the social mission and vision which we share with non-Jesuit colleagues and co-workers and which the Society proposes to our younger members and candidates.

With the essays of Fathers Calvez, Campbell-Johnston and Gavin as examples, may other Jesuits with experience and learning in the social area feel encouraged to write down the chronicle of their Provinces' social apostolate. For historical understanding sheds important light on what we are tending towards ... and what the Lord calls us to, too.

May the history recovered in these pages, and the current initiative to renew the Jesuit social dimension and sector as well, enjoy all God's blessing and prove very fruitful in the service of His people. This hope and petition of mine are perfectly expressed in the words with which Father Janssens concluded his **Instruction**:

May our Saviour grant us in His kindness the grace to lay aside completely the spirit of the world and, in obedience to His spouse, the Church, to bend every effort to restore the Beatitudes of the Gospel not only in the private lives of individuals, but in the life of society as a whole. 'A brother helped by a brother is like a strong city' (*Proverbs* 18:19). How much the Society will accomplish if only we unite our forces and, in a spirit of oneness, gird ourselves humbly and resolutely for the work before us!

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.  
February, 1997

# CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: 1891-1975

Joseph B. Gavin, S.J.

The history of the social teaching of the modern Church is generally recognized to have begun with Pope Leo XIII (+1903) and his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891). An early phase of social teaching, the first seventy years from Leo XIII to the end of Pope Pius XII's pontificate (+1958), can be clearly distinguished from a later phase from Pope John XXIII (+1963), the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and Pope Paul VI (+1978) to the present day. During the first phase, Catholic social teaching developed into a fairly coherent body of teaching deriving from Christian doctrine about the dignity, nature and destiny of the person and the family. This teaching was generally expressed in scholastic language and presented as obligations based on natural law rather than as moral teaching intrinsically rooted in the Gospel. In the later phase we detect a changed approach beginning with the encyclicals of John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, and continuing with Paul VI and the liberationist perspective formally adopted by the Latin American bishops at their Conference in Medellín (1968). Catholic social teaching adopted, reconstructed and consolidated a number of radical modern ideas, and was acknowledged as an essential form of evangelization to the modern world.

During the first phase, two central themes were constantly present. First, there was considerable concern for the workers, particularly those in the industrial areas, and for the poor and the powerless in society, and also a marked criticism of the political and economic systems, both liberal capitalism and socialism. The second principal theme was a consistent defence of certain basic human rights, such as private property, a just wage and better working conditions.

In his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII laid the foundation for an official social teaching by bringing together the reformist ideals developed by socially-minded Catholics such as Adolph Kolping and Wilhelm von Kettler, the Fribourg Union and others throughout the nineteenth century. Leo XIII, well-informed on the problems which were besetting workers and the poor, decidedly placed the Church on their side. Hence, the new encyclical's reception was tremendous, and remained a kind of Magna Carta for subsequent social teaching for decades. By it the Church was called not merely to acts of charity on behalf of the down-trodden and oppressed, especially in the terribly poor industrial areas, but more importantly to reconstruct society altogether, a task which would have to engage people at all levels of society beyond their personal acts of piety or works of mercy. By the encyclical, the pope insisted that the Church had a duty to intervene in social matters, while the state had a responsibility to intervene to defend those who suffered the most from the economic system. He reasoned that the structures and institutions of industry were themselves responsible for the wrongs in society, and hence had to change before justice could be attained for the working and poorer classes. Only an organized effort on behalf of all could bring about such a fundamental change in society, and it was towards this that Leo XIII directed his encyclical. As a result, it had considerable influence on the organization of Catholic workers' movements, and on a general awakening of Catholics to social and political action for social legislation which would last throughout the twentieth century.

Unlike his predecessor, who was passionately concerned with social issues and with bringing the Church to a new realisation of its social responsibilities, for Pope Pius X (+1914) social issues were

not uppermost, and his interventions touched only indirectly upon social matters. He was more concerned about doctrinal issues and especially worried about "Modernism". It was not, of course, that he was disinterested in social issues or in the bettering of conditions for workers or the poor. As his two *Motu proprio* (1903 and 1910) revealed, his dissatisfaction was with Catholic trade unions and those various "Catholic Action" groups which were often founded or led by lay people or even by clergymen who, it was thought, might be too prone to act outside of episcopal authority since they favoured social change for workers often through political means. His paramount concern was the principle of autonomy in social matters on the one side, and the competence of the Church in such matters on the other.

His successor, Pope Benedict XV (+1922), had the great disadvantage of becoming pope at the outbreak of the First World War (1914). In many ways his heart was probably close to Leo XIII's on social doctrine. Scattered throughout his writings are important things on charity, reconciliation and justice among people. He did not discourage Catholics from taking a much greater role in politics. Nor was he opposed to the trade union movement and Catholic participation in it. In fact, he believed that trade unions were inevitable, and the sooner the Church came to acknowledge this, the stronger voice it would have in the unions. Yet the long years of the war took all his energy and time as, almost alone of world figures, he pleaded for the ending of hostilities and the advent of peace. It was in these efforts for peace that Benedict XV significantly contributed to Catholic social teaching, which Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI would later develop in their search for world peace. He not only strove hard to convince the warring sides to come together and end the fighting, but also offered the Church as a mediator among them. He was determined to give the Church a new voice among the world's nations, and to change attitudes and international structures. His greatest effort in this regard was the peace plan which he submitted to the warring parties in 1917. Unfortunately the international powers rejected both his plan and his offer to act as a mediator. After this international rejection, he remained silent about such matters until his encyclical *Pacem Dei Munus* (1920). In response to the simmering international tensions which the peace process following the war had not brought to an end, he pleaded, to no avail, for a restoration of harmony and love among people and nations.

In the midst of the social and economic crises of the 1920s and 1930s, Pius XI took up the cause of the workers and the poor in society in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). Written to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, it portrayed the same anxious concern for the welfare of the workers and of the poor and their families as well as for the kinds of constrictions placed on them by the state, by industry and by finance capitalism, and especially by the economic and social problems flowing from the stock market crash in 1929 and the devastating world-wide depression which followed. *Quadragesimo Anno* confronts four serious contemporary problems: wealth continued to remain in the hands of a very few people; such concentration of wealth led to the amassing of economic and political power in the hands of a few individuals or nations; although the conditions of workers had improved since *Rerum Novarum*, especially under pressure from the trade unions, there was still a large increase in the number of the industrial poor, while the lot of farmers everywhere had not improved at all; and the problems of unemployment had risen alarmingly, especially in the industrial cities following the collapse of so many companies and industries after the stock market crash.

*Quadragesimo Anno* took its place with *Rerum Novarum* among the Church's great social encyclicals. It developed the teaching on the common good of society and on the obligation of the state to champion the temporal well-being of every sector of society. This principle of state intervention was

balanced by another fundamental principle, that of "subsidiarity". Subsidiarity was to regulate the rights and duties of governments to intervene in social and economic affairs, and the extent to which they should intervene. Here the pope was arguing especially against communist and socialist states which assumed to themselves all responsibilities within society, leaving nothing for individuals or smaller groups to handle. Subsidiarity would become an important doctrine in Catholic social thought; it emphasized people's rights to care for each other in an atmosphere protected by just laws and just governments acting for the common good. Another area of concern in this encyclical was to lessen disputes between workers and employers. To maintain and strengthen harmony between classes, he proposed structural as well as moral changes in society along vertical rather than horizontal lines. The encyclical also introduced two new concepts, those of "social charity" and "social justice", although the enlargement of "social justice" would have to wait for several decades until Paul VI.

In a very precise way, *Quadragesimo Anno* told the world and Catholics themselves that Catholic social teaching was concerned with the welfare of workers, of the poor, of employers and even of governments in so far as they had duties towards individuals in society. It became, with *Rerum Novarum*, a kind of social gospel until the time of John XXIII, to guide the Church and to inspire Catholics to get totally involved in Catholic social action. As a result, the social teaching of the Church became an integral part of Catholic thinking and education, in Catholic schools and universities, in Catholic newspapers and journals, in the pulpit, in the teaching of bishops, in the training of priests, in parishes. Altogether, Catholic laity and clergy were assured that they indeed had a teaching authority to guide them. Catholic workers themselves could count on the Church as a strong voice in their favour, ready to protect them, to warn leaders and employers about social injustices, and to inspire them with moral and spiritual norms.

Shortly after *Quadragesimo Anno*, on the eve of the Geneva disarmament conference in 1932, Pius XI issued a second encyclical, *Nova Impendet*. Specifically it treated the international financial crisis following the stock market crash, the subsequent world-wide economic depression and the distress of unemployment. Condemning the military arms-race in Europe and Japan, it was the first of many statements by the Church against international militarism and the build-up of arms. At other times too, he denounced the spreading misery in the world due to this arms build-up and the inherent dangers therein.

Among his other social concerns was the rise of totalitarian states and their effects on individuals and societies. To this end, he produced three major documents against totalitarian governments and about obedience to such authority. The first of these, *Non abbiamo bisogno* (1931), denounced Mussolini, Italian Fascism and totalitarianism in general, and sharply criticised the Fascist use of force and denial of human rights to achieve its political ends. Six years later, *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937), spoke harshly against National Socialism and the Nazi regime in Germany, and condemned it for its atheism and inhuman cruelty. Five days later appeared his third encyclical against totalitarianism, *Divini Redemptoris*, in which he condemned atheistic communism for its brutal destruction of individual human rights and freedoms, its savagery against humanity and its bellicose attitudes and practices against its neighbours. Pius XI was determined to exercise the Church's social responsibility to speak out internationally on matters political wherever these impinged and infringed on human rights and people's welfare. He therefore frequently emphasized the dignity and rights of each person, the sanctity of the family, and the role of the Church in stabilising society. At the same time, he wanted to give the Church itself, at a time of increasing international tension and crisis, a clear understanding of the very significant international role it must play to protect both the common good and the good of individuals.

His successor, Pius XII, never issued an encyclical expressly about the Church's social teaching. Nevertheless, he certainly spoke time and time again on all kinds of social questions, in allocutions, radio addresses and in private conversations, and in this way developed new nuances and ideas on social teaching. His pontificate was racked by the Second World War and the following difficult years of re-building, the so-called "Cold War" period of the late 1940s and 1950s,. Not surprisingly, therefore, much of his social thought centred on war and peace, and on the necessary social and political restoration and reconciliation among peoples. He also insisted that a bilateral, controlled disarmament policy was essential, as an effective means to prevent war, if world peace was to be persevered.

Another of his concerns was the powerlessness of the individual in face of powerful social structures which pursued their own ends rather than the common good and the good of each one. He maintained that one of his tasks as pope was to help ordinary people have a better understanding of democracy, and consequently often urged democratic leaders to show "compassionate solidarity" with ordinary people. He believed that atheistic ideologies like communism, even when supposedly promoting people's welfare, was not at all caring for them, and destroyed both their initiative and their rights. This led him to favour both democracy and moderate capitalism, although he was opposed to capitalism's underlying philosophy of extreme individualism. To off-set this he favoured social things such as social insurance and a mild welfare state system so long as these did not crush individual freedoms in society. The state's role was to remain sufficiently aloof except where it was obviously needed to set standards and maintain justice for all. In this his was a world voice as international champion of individual freedoms, rights and responsibilities. This concern for the common good and for the person in society led him to take important stances concerning the ownership and distribution of property. He spoke forcefully about this matter in an address on the fiftieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. The welfare of society cannot and should not be measured solely in terms of material prosperity. If wealth was not evenly distributed in society but was seen to be the private property of only a few, if people did not have the opportunity to share equitably in their nation's wealth, then that country did not in fact have "economic prosperity". This was the first time in the social teaching of the Church that the idea of private property was expanded to include the notion of the individual's "economic prosperity". Further, he maintained that because people have a right to the goods of the earth as a prior right to private property, an individual's right to a particular item of private property did not therefore negate the more general and prior human right of all to share the goods of the earth. This was an important development in Catholic social thought concerning private property and its use. His teaching on this would set clearly the direction of Catholic social teaching concerning the responsibilities which rich nations have towards poorer ones, and of rich individuals and groups in society towards poorer members. This idea concerning human rights and private property would lead eventually to "development" as part of the Church's social teaching.

In formulating a social teaching, therefore, between 1891 and the Second Vatican Council, the Church put forward certain fundamental principles about human nature and about the nature of human society in its economic, political, social, cultural and religious outlook. These included: the right of man to work; the right of individuals to own property; the right of workers to join associations and unions; the right of a family head to be paid a just family-wage for work done; the duty of citizens to obey lawful authorities; the duty of mothers to care for their children in the home; the duty of governments to work for the common good of all citizens; the right of citizens to resist oppression by lawful means; the obligation of governments and of the rich and powerful to help workers and the poor; the duty of governments, companies, factories and other large agencies to respect the principle



of "subsidiarity"; the right to freedom of worship; the right of the Church to carry out its functions and to speak out on issues of public morality. The Church's voice supporting those who were oppressed or ignored by society had become a powerful one, and was recognized even by those hostile to it as a positive force for industrial workers and the poorer classes. Catholic social teaching was marked by genuine concern for them and for the conditions in which they worked and lived.

If during the years before the Second Vatican Council the Church's social teaching contained strong reformist impulses, its main emphasis was on the organic unity of society, on cooperation, on shared values and most especially on respect for authority. Within this context the struggle for justice was to take place. It was therefore not until the time of John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council and Paul VI that there was any notable shift in Catholic social teaching. Although still rooted in its past, Catholic social teaching became more biblical in the articulation of its precepts and responsibilities. Certainly John XXIII based his encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963), on revelation and the gospel while raising fundamental questions about human rights, the individual's duties in societies, and the duties of states towards each other. The Second Vatican Council likewise reflected this change in social teaching. Notably its document *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) stressed that the specific mission of the Church in the modern world was to teach that all individuals and governments must undertake a genuine sharing of their goods, and especially to provide poorer individuals and nations with the means to help and develop themselves. Only in this way would humanity be led to a more just and peaceful society.

Yet it was essentially Paul VI who firmly established a new and radical way of thinking in social teaching. His thinking contained throughout a kind of "liberationist" perspective, and was reflected not only in his *Populorum Progressio* (1967), *Octogesimus Adveniens* (1971) and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), but also in *Justitia in Mundo* of the 1971 Synod of Bishops. The growing need for fundamental change was best expressed in two phrases: the "preferential option for the poor" of *Populorum Progressio*, which practically permeated the documents of Medellín by advocating liberation from oppressors, domestic and foreign, and participation in power, free from domestic or foreign exploitation; and the "action for justice" of *Justitia in Mundo* which advocated this as an intrinsic part of preaching the gospel. As a result, throughout the 1970s the Church increasingly insisted that both of these were essential for evangelization.

*Populorum Progressio* shone with a new radical vision which Paul VI hoped would be supported by the rich nations to bring about a more just economic order. This radical change aimed to develop a new and more just society, was most particularly applied to workers and the poor, and reflected a social teaching grounded in the transcendent and social character of each person. Justice demanded solidarity with the poor and oppressed. In their historical situation, however, it was the poor and the oppressed and especially those in the poor countries of the south, who were called to be the agents of this social change. It was the responsibility of all people to make every effort, through dialogue and human solidarity, to ensure that everyone shared in this process of authentic and humanizing development. Through such solidarity, obstacles would be overcome such as the unjust distribution of income, nationalism, racism, economic protectionism, the trade in armaments, and the abuse of private property. For Paul VI, development included all those things which make a person truly human; it was not merely an economic contribution to individual welfare, however important this might be. Such a development in turn would lead ultimately to world peace. In this the pope renewed the idea of development by linking it with peace, and set Catholic social teaching on a new path.

By the mid 1970s, Catholic social teaching had not only become a prophetic and practical stand against injustices, but it also expressed a biblical-theological vision which came to be accepted as an essential part of the Church's evangelical mission. This is clearly expressed in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in which Paul VI rejected the idea that "action for justice" is extrinsic to evangelization. The Church had the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions from those structures which kept people in bondage, something which, he insisted, was not foreign to evangelization; the mission of Jesus Christ proclaimed the liberation from everything which oppressed people. It was the duty of all people to continue this liberating mission in order to bring about a more just and humane world.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY

**Michael Campbell-Johnston, S.J.**

Care for the poor and sick was a prominent feature in St. Ignatius' life from the moment of his conversion and a marked characteristic in the apostolate of the first companions and most early Jesuits. As General in Rome, fully occupied with the care of a rapidly expanding order and in writing its Constitutions, Ignatius still found time to promote a wide variety of charitable works for homeless beggars, the hungry, penitent prostitutes, orphans and even converts from Judaism. His instructions to Lainez and Salmaron to visit hospitals and minister to the poor while acting as Papal Legates at the Council of Trent set the pattern for future generations of Jesuits, large numbers of whom died ministering to the sick poor during the various epidemics that plagued Europe and the New World before the discovery of modern medicine. To more famous names, such as Peter Claver or Aloysius Gonzaga, must be added the 1,190 Fathers and Brothers who, according to Fr. Alegambe's catalogue, died as victims of charity serving the sick during the hundred years following St. Ignatius' death. Not all this activity was confined to the traditional corporal works of mercy. There is no doubt that some, such as the reductions in Paraguay or Fr. Antonio Vieira's defense of negro slaves in Brazil which led to his expulsion, would approximate to what we now understand as the social apostolate.

However, in its modern acceptance, the term "social apostolate" or others like it, such as "social action", came into general use around the time of and partly due to *Rerum Novarum*, of 1891, the first papal encyclical to address the social problem in its entirety. Leo XIII's call to action marks a turning point in the Church's understanding of her role in the world. Henceforth the entire Christian people is called not merely to acts of charity, but to reconstruct society: a task clearly beyond the scope of private piety or the personal exercise of corporal works of mercy. This call is based on the understanding that the institutions and structures of the new industrial world are themselves responsible for misery and injustice and therefore need to be changed. Such a change can only be achieved by organised effort, by a social apostolate in the strict sense of the word.

Early Jesuit initiatives were, in accordance with the appeals of the encyclical, centred around workers' education and the spreading of Christian social teaching. *Action Populaire*, the first Jesuit social institute, was founded in Paris by Fr. Gustave Desbuquois in 1903 with the specific intention of helping young workers train and organise themselves. In 1923 the *Institut d'Etudes Sociales* was set up to give regular courses in Christian social teaching. In England, the Catholic Social Guild was started in 1909 and the Catholic Workers College at Oxford in 1921, Fr. Charles Plater being largely responsible for both. In Germany Fr. Heinrich Pesch, regarded by some as the father of modern Catholic social thought, published his five-volume work *Lehrbuch der National Okonomie*, Manual on the National Economy, from 1905 to 1923 and thus provided the link between *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* which continued to be developed after him by his two disciples, Frs. Gustav Gundlach and Oswald von Nell-Breuning. In Spain there was early Jesuit involvement with the *círculos obreros* and the centre *Fomento Social* was founded by Fr. Sisinio Nevaes in 1927. Similar developments took place in other European countries and, especially after the 1931 publication of *Quadragesimo Anno*, began to spread elsewhere. The pioneering work of Fr. John La Farge who founded the Catholic Interracial Council of New York in 1934 and of Fr. Leo Twomey in the New Orleans Institute of Social Order had a deep influence on Catholic social thought in the United States.

It was not however until the GC 28 in 1938 that the major legislative body of the Society specifically addressed itself to the social apostolate for the first time. Its Decree 29 declared that social apostolic work, as understood in *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, is fully proper to the Society, should be commended to all, promoted everywhere and considered among the most important ministries of our age. It was described as consisting in giving spiritual help to workers and employers through the Exercises and religious talks, explaining the social teaching of the Church, and promoting social groups and organisations. There should be special care for the poor in rural areas and urban suburbs. The principles of social justice should be taught in our schools and studied by scholastics during philosophy and theology. To achieve all this it would be necessary to set up *centra actionis socialis*, centres for social action, staffed by full-time trained Jesuits. And the Congregation added that, if a particular Province or country found itself unable to spare men for this work, then the Provincial and his advisors should take a close look to see what other works could be relinquished in favour of "a more universal good" (D.29, n.15).

Taking place immediately after the war in 1946, GC 29 was even more aware of the importance of the social problem. Again in its Decree 29, it called on all Provinces or regions to set up as soon as possible, if they had not already done so, a *Centrum aliquod actionis et studiorum socialium*, a Centre for social action and research. To the calls of the previous Congregation were added the challenge to exercise a social apostolate in other ministries and the pertinent observation that efficacy would depend much on austerity of life.

Three years later, on October 10th 1949, Fr. Janssens published his well known **Instruction on the Social Apostolate**, the first time a General addresses the whole Society on this topic. After pointing out that World War II had prevented the implementation of the last two General Congregations "in an orderly and persevering manner" (2), he renews the call to set up Centres of Information and Social Action whose principal function "should not be so much to further actual social works, but to teach the theoretical and practical social doctrine to others, especially to priests, educated laymen, and the better educated working men, and to help them by counsel and advice" (13).

But direct action among the poor and under-privileged is also advocated, together with the need for some fathers "to take part in the actual manual toil of the mines, the factories, or the workshops" (15). Other apostolic works of the Society must also strive to "establish a right social order," especially colleges whose students "should not acquire any spirit of a special, privileged social class" (19). But perhaps the most striking and original part of the Instruction, foreshadowing subsequent developments, is the call for the whole Society to become "trained to that sincere and active charity which today is called `a social attitude' or `social-mindedness'"(8). To achieve this,

it is necessary that Ours should see what it means to spend a whole life in humble circumstances, to be a member of the lowest class of mankind, to be ignored and looked down upon by other men; to be unable to appear in public because one does not have decent clothes nor a proper social training; to be the means by which others grow rich ... and at the same time to behold about one the very men for whom one works, abounding with riches, enjoying superfluous comforts, devoting themselves to liberal studies and the fine arts, loaded with honours, authority and praise (9).

Such an "unbalanced state of mankind" is unjust and calls for profound change on our part

to prevent our Society from justly being classified with the rich and capitalists, we must direct with utmost zeal many of our ministries towards the poorer classes.... It is certainly necessary, especially in some Provinces, that superiors make sure our ministries are not almost exclusively conducted among the rich and the cultured (17).

The effects of this letter can be seen both in Fr. Janssens' own government of the Society and in social initiatives taken in a growing number of Provinces around the world. The General renewed his appeal on several occasions (for example, the 1953 Congregation of Procurators) and attempted to define a genuine social apostolate in ever clearer terms. On the canonization of Joseph Pignatelli he wrote:

In the Instruction I gave on the Social Apostolate, I tried to distinguish between beneficent works and what is today called social action. The first of these forms of charity, the only one known in the time of St. Joseph Pignatelli, is good. Our Lord Jesus Christ praised it and the Church has always recommended it. It helps the suffering members of Christ in this world. It can never disappear because "there will always be poor among you." The other form of charity is better: more universal and more lasting, it expresses a higher degree of love. Beneficent works soften some distresses; social action suppresses, as far as possible, the very causes of human suffering. It is the whole of Christ's mystical body that is made healthier and stronger.<sup>1</sup>

In the Provinces, the repeated calls to establish social institutes were beginning to take effect. In the Far East, Fr. Walter Hogan founded the Institute of Social Order in the Philippines in 1946. Later he became the first executive secretary of SELA (Committee for the Development of Socio-Economic Life in Asia), started in 1959 at the request of Fr. Janssens to co-ordinate the social apostolate of the then Far East Assistancy. In 1951 the Indian Social Institute was founded by Fr. Jerome D'Souza and located first in Pune, then in Delhi. In 1954 the Institute of Social Order was founded in Australia by Fr. William G. Smith. And in 1951 a Faculty of Social Sciences was set up in the Gregorian University in Rome with an invitation from Fr. Janssens to send scholastics there for a

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<sup>1</sup> *Acta Romana* 12 (1954), 696.

biennium even before their theological studies. Similar developments took place in Africa, with INADES (*Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social*) founded as an offshoot of *Action Populaire* in 1962 in Abidjan, Silveira House in 1964 in the then Rhodesia, and CEPAS (*Centre D'Etudes pour l'Action Sociale*) in the then Belgian Congo in 1965.

But it was especially in Latin America that efforts to strengthen and, in some cases, start a social apostolate were concentrated. In 1955 Fr. Emmanuel Foyaca was appointed Visitor to Latin America "*de re sociali*, on social matters," with power to act in the name and with the authority of Father General. Over the next few years, social institutes (*Centro de investigación y acción social*, CIAS) were set up in most Latin American countries with some, such as the *Centro Bellarmino* in Santiago, rapidly acquiring fame and influence. Many young Jesuits were directed to study the social sciences. There was some opposition and, in 1960, Fr. Janssens wrote to Latin American Provincials exhorting them to examine with their consultors each point of his 1949 letter together with Father Visitor's *Memoriale*, and to send him a progress report within two months. Two years later, he wrote again to congratulate them on results achieved and emphasise the urgency of this apostolate. The same year, Fr. Foyaca was appointed international Social Secretary for Latin America with his office in the Curia in Rome.

With the election of Fr. Arrupe as General in 1965, the promotion of justice as an indispensable element in the service of faith gradually came to be recognised as central to the modern Jesuit's identity and mission to the world. This was in large measure due to Fr. Arrupe's own leadership. As the many collections of his writings show, not only was he himself a tireless promoter of the social apostolate, both writing and speaking on a wide range of world issues in a way no previous General had done, but he also insisted from the start that the social or justice dimension should be present in all our apostolic work. GC 31 which elected him had itself recommended that "in the entire course of Jesuit training, both theoretical and practical, the social dimension of our whole modern apostolate must be taken into account" (D.32, n.4b). As well as confirming what previous Congregations had said about social centres, it attempted to define more distinctly the nature of the social apostolate which was seen as comprising those activities having as their objective: **not only** to provide the poor and underprivileged classes of society with the amount of temporal and spiritual goods required to lead a more human life, worthy of their vocation and dignity, **but mainly** "to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common" and thus to enable every one, not only to have a sufficient amount of temporal and spiritual goods, but also "to exercise a personal sense of participation, skill and responsibility in all areas of community life."<sup>2</sup>

Barely elected, Fr. Arrupe also turned his attention to Latin America in an attempt to complete what had been started by Fr. Janssens. In July 1966 the first meeting of the Latin American CIAS took place in Lima and concentrated on clarifying the nature and purpose of a CIAS. It also asked Father General to set up a coordinating council for the CIAS to replace the existing secretariat and to make an official declaration on the Society's standpoint regarding social conflict in Latin America. Fr. Arrupe reflected on the CIAS role and promulgated their formal statutes:

The fundamental purpose of a CIAS (like the fundamental purpose of the social apostolate) is to transform minds and social structures to a greater awareness of social justice, especially in the area of popular promotion so that "every man may be able to exercise a personal sense of participation, skill and responsibility" in all levels of human life.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> GC 31, D.32, n.1 quoting the "Instruction" and John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Acta Romana* 14 (1966), 794-95, cf. GC 31, D.32, n.1.

A Latin American coordinating council for the CIAS, the CLACIAS, was set up with Fr. Hernan Larraín as Executive Secretary and four regional coordinators. And Fr. Arrupe deliberately directed this "official declaration" to the whole Society: "It is sad and serious that there are still in the Society today, even among those who occupy positions of great responsibility, some who have not understood the urgency or prevalence of social justice."<sup>4</sup>

In May 1968, the Provincials and Vice-Provincials of Latin America met, together with Father Arrupe, in the retreat house of Gávea, Rio de Janeiro. A fruit of that meeting was the so-called *Letter of Rio*, addressed to all Latin American Jesuits, one of the constituent documents of the social apostolate in the two assistancies. In September 1968 Fr. Arrupe appointed Fr. Francisco Ivern his advisor for the social apostolate and at the same time set up in the Curia the Jesuit Secretariat for Socio-Economic Development (JESEDES), today the Social Justice Secretariat. Its principal functions were: (1) to promote socio-economic work and doctrinal studies connected with it; (2) to foster closer contacts and the exchange of information among Jesuit social centres; (3) to ensure that, through the Society and its members, the Church be actively present in the main international associations and congresses concerned with development; and (4) to establish a close relationship between the Society and Church organisations such as the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace.

A year later, Fr. Ivern and his Secretariat were strengthened by the appointment of a nine-member international Jesuit Commission for Social and Economic Development activities. Five members were chosen from developing countries and all were expected to be actively engaged and/or experienced in the socio-economic development field. This Commission held three meetings (1970, 1971, 1973) and made a significant contribution to forming Jesuit policy for its expanding social apostolate. In a report drawn up in preparation for GC 32, Fr Ivern lists 26 social institutes staffed by 170 full-time Jesuits and notes the many different forms the social apostolate is beginning to take in other apostolic fields: education, communications, pastoral and missionary work, and international organisations.

With its commitment to promote justice in solidarity with the voiceless and the powerless as a constitutive part of the mission to proclaim the Gospel (cf D.4, n.42), the 32nd General Congregation gave the Society's social apostolate new emphasis and direction. Especially important was the insistence that the promotion of justice is not one apostolate among many, reserved for a few specialised experts: "For us, the promotion of justice is not one apostolic area among others, the 'social apostolate'; rather, it should be the concern of our whole life and a dimension of all our apostolic endeavours. Similarly, solidarity with men and women who live a life of hardship and who are victims of oppression cannot be the choice of a few Jesuits only. It should be a characteristic of our communities and institutions as well." (47-48). Also important was the repeated emphasis on the structural causes of injustice (6,27,31) and the consequent need for serious social analysis to understand these and identify appropriate remedies (44). Finally there was a strong call, again addressed to all Jesuits, to experience themselves "the hard, everyday consequences of injustice and oppression" (35), to share more closely the life of the poor, and even to learn from them (50).

Many Church documents, such as the 1971 Synod of Bishops' *Justice in the World* and statements from many regional Bishops' Conferences, reflected changing conditions in the field of socio-

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<sup>4</sup> P. Arrupe, S.J., Letter on the Social Apostolate in Latin America, *Acta Romana* 14 (1966), 790, n.8.

economic development and a new understanding of the social apostolate. Terms such as 'justice' and 'liberation' began to replace 'development', while 'grass-root participation' was seen as essential to any genuine process of growth. JESEDES in the Curia became simply the Social Secretariat and Fr. General's Advisory Commission for Socio-Economic Development was disbanded in favour of more flexible *ad hoc* meetings of different groups in the future. Fr. Arrupe alluded to some of these changes in his Report on the State of the Society presented to the 1978 Congregation of Procurators.

In the social sector properly so-called we see new commitments, both personal and institutional. The Social Institutes or Centres which played such an important role in the past are passing through a crisis in some places. They are trying to adapt to new needs by linking themselves more closely with those working at grass-root level and by co-operating with other sectors of the apostolate (education, pastoral, theological and interdisciplinary reflection, etc.) and thus extending their field of action.<sup>5</sup>

The range of new commitments in the social field can be gauged from a 1979 publication of the National Office for Jesuit Social Ministries in Washington which lists 798 Jesuits engaged in social ministries in the United States in no less than nineteen different fields or types of work. A similar directory published the following year by the Indian Social Institute in Delhi lists 246 Jesuits in India with training in the social sciences and also engaged in a wide variety of social work.

A lengthier examination of new tendencies was undertaken in June 1980 by a seminar on "The Social Apostolate in the Society Today" held in the Curia and carefully prepared by means of a preliminary questionnaire and preparatory document. In addition to Fr. Arrupe and his principal advisors, it was attended by 23 participants from 17 countries who were either directors of Social Institutes or regional Co-ordinators/Advisors for the Social Apostolate where such existed (East Asia, India, Italy, Latin America, United States). The four themes discussed indicate social apostolate priorities since GC 32:

- the social apostolate today;
- the role of a social institute;
- integration and co-ordination of the social apostolate with other apostolic activities and sectors;
- international issues and co-operation.

Though no one definition either of the social apostolate or of a social institute was proposed, the following characteristics suggested for a 'new-look' CIAS are worth noting since they show the distance travelled since the first initiatives of Fr. Foyaca:

1. A group of Jesuits radically committed to the promotion of justice in solidarity with the poor;
2. which seeks structural change in society and not merely the conversion of individuals;
3. with the aim of contributing to the building of a new and more just society based on participation;
4. which determines priorities and decides on action through the use of a scientific analysis of reality, an analysis not only of structures but also current events and trends; and also from an outlook of Christian faith;
5. associating itself in various ways with those who share the same ideal of transforming society;
6. in critical dialogue with groups that seek change in a different way from us;
7. and which pursues the goal of communion with the Church and the whole Society.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Acta Romana* 17 (1978), 464.

<sup>6</sup> *Promotio Justitiae* 18 (July 1980), 98.

In an important talk at the end of the seminar, Fr. Arrupe stressed the fact that a genuine social apostolate must integrate faith and justice and that such an integration will find its deepest expression in Christian love.

In this way our social apostolate, our struggle for justice is something quite different from and much superior to any type of merely human promotion or to purely philanthropic, social or political work. What moves us is the love of God in himself and the love of God in men. Thus our work is apostolic in every sense and, as such, fully Jesuit and in accordance with our charism.<sup>7</sup>

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June, 1984

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 128.



## DECREES on the SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

GC 24 (1892)

D.20

4. The congregation was asked to see to it that associations of men, and especially groups of workers assembled for their education and development in accord with our institute, should be strongly commended to Ours. With an impressive meeting of minds, the congregation decided and decreed its recommendation that Our Father most vigorously support, through superiors and others of Ours, the spiritual care of men, especially workers and the poor, and bring it about that, through the Spiritual Exercises and our sodalities [today's Christian Life Communities] conducted in accord with the early norms of the Society, they might lead them with full zeal to every work of piety and charity – with the precaution, however, that Ours do not in any way embroil themselves in the administration of temporal affairs or in political negotiations.

GC 27 (1923)

D.221

Men especially, ecclesiastics in particular, and also workers and the poor, should be formed in the Exercises.<sup>8</sup>

D.226

1. Marian sodalities of our students, of young people, and of men should be particularly fostered, and workers and the poor are by no means to be neglected.<sup>9</sup>

2. So that greater profit may be realized from these,

1. Let the most capable men be chosen as moderators, let them be well trained, and let them not be readily changed.

2. Let the sodalists be carefully chosen and skilfully formed; most especially, let them be imbued with the interior spirit of the Christian life, and be strengthened in solid virtue.

3. Let them be trained in works of charity and mercy, and let them be inflamed with zeal for souls and for the sturdy defense of the Catholic religion.

4. Let the unity of sodalities among themselves be fostered either by meetings of their moderators or by other means that are in conformity with the spirit of the sodalities and are duly approved by superiors.<sup>10</sup>

D.229

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<sup>8</sup> GC 24, D.20, n.4.

<sup>9</sup> GC 24, D.20, n.4; GC 25, D.12, n.3.

<sup>10</sup> GC 26, D.20, nn.1-5.

*Promotio Iustitiae* 66 (1997), 16

1. Social works, as they are called, which are so urgently recommended by the Church, can be promoted by Ours in accord with the institute, provided that those norms are observed that the superior general has prescribed or will prescribe in view of circumstances of time and place.
2. In fostering these, Ours should beware of involving themselves in the temporal management of those works or in matters of politics.<sup>11</sup>

#### **D.239**

1. Ours should refrain from engaging in any political activities;<sup>12</sup> and, to the extent possible, they should also be careful to avoid any complaints arising from unfounded suspicions.<sup>13</sup>
2. Those matters, however, are not prohibited that pertain solely to the conscience or the spiritual direction of princes or others who seek counsel,<sup>14</sup> or that bear on imbuing public life with Christian principles, provided that in these matters the means that are used are in conformity with our institute.

**GC 28 (1938)**

**D.29, On Ministries**

On restoring Modern Society to Christ

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<sup>11</sup> GC 24, D.20, n.4.

<sup>12</sup> GC 24, D.20, n.4.

<sup>13</sup> GC 5, D.47.

<sup>14</sup> GC 7, D.46.

1. Beginning with the very Formula of the Institute, our Society has been established for this in particular, to direct its efforts to the defense and propagation of the faith.<sup>15</sup> Today vast numbers of humankind appear to be estranged from God and the Catholic Church, and the entire way of thinking and living espoused by a great many and their institutions of public life appear to be withdrawing daily from the Christian faith. Ours should understand that this is their primary most important task in these times, to strive for their own part to bring about the reconciliation of the whole of public and private life with the teaching of the Gospel and the restoration of the lost sheep to the fold of Christ.

2. It is therefore necessary that all of Ours should be thoroughly steeped in this spirit; and while certainly not spurning those ministries that are performed chiefly for those who have remained in the family of the faith, they should have special concern for the multitudes of those who for whatever reason have become estranged from the life of religion and the influence of the Church, whether they belong to the class of more educated men or to the class of workers and farmers. Ours should clearly understand the great and diverse errors of this age, as well as other causes for withdrawing from God and the Church; and, driven by the love of Christ, they should strive with all their strength to set forth correctives to these evils of our times.

3. Let Ours continue, to be sure, with great zeal to cultivate the usual ministries of the Society in the defence and spread of the Christian religion; but at the same time, let each one struggle in his own role to have an efficacious influence on those media that are wont to dominate public opinion to such a degree. Let Ours ever keep in mind that goal which the Church, from the very beginning of the Christian religion, has ever sought; namely, that the teaching of the Gospel should permeate and profoundly reshape the life of every individual and the whole of human society.

4. To multiply our strength in such an arduous task, Ours should everywhere strive to imbue and foster lay Catholics with a truly apostolic spirit.

#### On the Social Apostolate

5. Apostolic social works already undertaken with much fruit by Ours, in accord with the encyclical letters of Leo XIII<sup>16</sup> and Pius XI,<sup>17</sup> are strongly commended to all of Ours as being entirely suited to our Society<sup>18</sup> and are everywhere to be strongly supported and reckoned among the more urgent ministries of our time.

6. Therefore Ours, in keeping with the diverse conditions of regions, with which they ought to be thoroughly acquainted, should diligently stress the promotion of the religious, moral, and even temporal welfare of workers.

7. They should take special care (a) to provide spiritual help for workers and their leaders, especially through the Spiritual Exercises and religious associations; (b) to explain the social doctrine of the Church in all sincerity, charity and prudence to everyone – labourers and employers – and to refute erroneous opinions, whether theoretical or practical; (c) to foster unions and social institutes.

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<sup>15</sup> *Formula of the Institute*, approved by Paul III and Julius III, n.1.

<sup>16</sup> Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, May 15, 1891.

<sup>17</sup> Encyclicals *Quadragesimo anno*, May 15, 1931, and *Divini Redemptoris*, March 19, 1937.

<sup>18</sup> See *Constitutions VII*, c.2, E [623,a].

8. Ours should exercise special concern for those who, because of a lack of priests or churches in the countryside or the outskirts of large cities, are in greatest need of religious help and have fallen victim to religious indifference; this they should do even by erecting mission stations where the needs of souls call for them, whether or not a bishop has committed a special territory to the Society. But when such an area has been sufficiently developed, Ours should turn it over to the secular clergy to administer.

9. Let the principles of charity and social justice be carefully impressed upon the minds of the students in our schools, on both the higher and the middle levels.

10. Ours ought to be well versed in the principal elements of the social doctrine of the Church. Thus, this doctrine should be properly explained to the scholastics in both philosophy and theology.

#### On Atheistic Communism

11. Because atheistic Communism today assails nearly the entire world and threatens destruction to the very foundations of Christian society, deeply conscious of this danger Ours should gird themselves to war against it with their united strength, and should exhort and prepare everyone to ward off so great a danger.

12. Since atheistic Communism usually draws its strength in part from agitation and anti-religious propaganda and in part from short-comings of justice in the social order, Ours should zealously attempt to clearly expose the internal errors of atheistic Communism and to wisely use the correctives for it indicated by Pius XI,<sup>19</sup> so that they may strengthen divine faith in the minds of men and cooperate towards establishing a just social order.

#### On Errors of Race and State

13. Adhering closely to the mind of the Church, let all with prudent zeal also refute those errors that, subverting the right order among natural and supernatural goods and between the human person and human society, extol the cult of race or nation or state to such an extent that they deny or completely weaken the most fundamental rights of the human person, the family, other nations, and the very Church of Christ.

#### On the Proper Priorities to Be Observed in Today's Apostolate

14. So that this apostolic labour may be done with greater order and more abundant fruit, centres of social action and a secretariat for the defense and propagation of things Catholic must be fostered, as is already being done in some places; and care will have to be taken that Ours of one and the same province, of the same nation, and finally of the entire Society give aid to one another through mutual communication and cooperation. So that this may come about, truly suitable fathers should be chosen for this apostolate who can give themselves over to it entirely.

15. If in any province or nation Ours are so overwhelmed by the amount of their work that they scarcely have any strength left to expend upon this apostolate, the provincials should confer among

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<sup>19</sup> Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*, March 19, 1937

themselves whether Ours are pursuing other ministries less useful or necessary that, after consultation with Our Father if need be, could be given up, so that we may direct our efforts toward the more universal good.

16. As in other ministries, Ours should draw the efficacy of their external actions especially from internal means that conjoin the instrument with God.<sup>20</sup> They should always be ready to render obedience to the Apostolic See, keep reverently in mind the mandates of the sacred hierarchy, faithfully obey the directions of superiors, and continue to cooperate in a friendly manner with both clergies and with Catholic Action. But they should avoid becoming involved in temporal administration or political matters.

## GC 29 (1946)

### D.29, On the Social Apostolate

Among many peoples not only the Christian social structure but even the foundations upon which the social order ought to rest have collapsed before a nearly universal onslaught. All of Ours, therefore, in testimony to their love for Christ the King and his spouse the Church, should be convinced particularly that it is the role of our Society to spare no labour or exertion to help restore the proper order of society according to those principles which our more recent Supreme Pontiffs have so brilliantly expounded.

1. Therefore, in addition to the other principles prescribed in an outstanding manner by GC 28 in its D.29, this present congregation decrees that as soon as possible some "centre" for social research and action is to be established in each province or region, if one does not already exist. It should be staffed by experts and sufficiently subsidized so that it is truly capable of explaining and fostering the social apostolate and providing initiative and direction to the social action of Ours. Moreover, in places where significant numbers of workers dwell, let the provincials designate one or even more fathers to devote all their energy to this social apostolate.

2. As to the methods by which either individual leaders and spokesmen, chosen from among the workers and farmers, can acquire correct social ideas and a cultural formation consonant with their status, or the whole mass of the "proletariat" can be won anew for Christ and the Church, it will be permissible to make use of a variety of ways and means suited to the differing circumstances of people and events, provided everything is done with the permission of the provincial; moreover, in more significant or unusual cases, the prior permission of the superior general should be obtained. The congregation feels that those of Ours who exercise ministries involving greater self-sacrifice among workers are worthy of special praise.

3. Indeed, all our fathers engaged in spiritual ministries – such as giving spiritual conferences and directing the Spiritual Exercises, training young people, moderating Marian sodalities and other groups under our guidance – should understand that they can and ought to exercise the social apostolate by explaining the social teaching of the Church, by guiding the souls of the faithful towards social justice and social charity, and, finally, by establishing social projects by means of the members of our organizations.

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<sup>20</sup> See *Constitutions X*, n.2 [813].

4. All scholastics, in accord with the norm of GC 28, D.29, n.10, should be instructed early on in social teaching. And those of them who seem to be more suited to the social apostolate should be chosen early so that, after laying down a solid foundation in our own studies, they can be assigned by superiors to special studies in the theory and practice of social activities.

5. Let all of Ours be mindful that the efficacy of this social apostolate depends in great part on the austerity with which they live this life of ours.

#### **GC 30 (1957)**

#### **D.52, On the Spiritual Care of Workers**

1. The Thirtieth Congregation has high regard for the procedures that many provinces have designed and implemented in order to carry out the decrees of GC 28 and GC 29 and the norms contained in the letter of Our Very Reverend Father on the social apostolate. At the same time, it feels that the mission to workers must now be fostered even more by the Society.

2. The congregation strongly recommends trade schools and night schools for the education of young working-class people wherever this work will be judged to be truly useful.

#### **D.53, On Knowing the Social Teaching of the Church and Putting It into Practice**

1. All of Ours, whether they are priests, scholastics or brothers, as their work and status will require, should as soon as possible be appropriately instructed in and imbued with the social teaching of the Church and learn to employ it in their life's work, so that, endowed with good judgment and moved by love for working people, they will of their own accord recognize the dignity and rights inherent in all men.

2. Superiors should be watchful that all, whether Catholic or not, who help us with the work of their hands or their minds, are treated with Christian charity and polite reverence. They should be paid what is owing to them, complying with the norms of the social teaching of the Church and the civil law.

#### **GC 31 (1965 - 1966)**

#### **D.32, The Social Apostolate**

1. The 31st General Congregation wishes to recall to all members of the Society that the aim of the social apostolate is "to provide most men, and indeed all of them insofar as earthly conditions allow, with that abundance or at least sufficiency of goods, both temporal and spiritual, even of the natural order, that man needs lest he feel himself depressed and despised."<sup>21</sup> The scope of the social apostolate is broader, therefore, than the task of exercising our ministries or maintaining social works among workmen or other groups of the same sort that are especially needy. These works, indeed, according to the mind of the 28th General Congregation, decree 29, and the 30th General Congregation, decree 52, are to be promoted with great diligence, especially in those regions that are economically less developed. But the social apostolate strives directly by every endeavour to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common. Its goal in this is

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<sup>21</sup> Father Janssens, *Instruction on the Social Apostolate* (October 10, 1949), n.7 *Acta Romana* 11 (1949) 714.

that every man may be able to exercise a personal sense of participation, skill, and responsibility in all areas of community life.<sup>22</sup>

From this it is clear that the social apostolate is fully in harmony with the apostolic end of the Society of Jesus accordingly, namely, to that distinctly Ignatian criterion by which we should always keep before our eyes the more universal and more enduring good. For social structures, above all today, exert an influence on the life of man, even on his moral and religious life. The "humanization" of social life is, moreover, particularly effective as a way of bearing evangelical witness in our times.

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

The Society of Jesus, which has its home "in every corner of the world," seems suited in a special way to entertain this universal or "catholic" vision of the social apostolate by endeavouring with all its might to see that the less developed regions of the world are helped "in deed and in truth" by the more advanced and that the whole world movement of economic progress is imbued with a Christian spirit. It can do this by contributing as well to establishing the presence of the Church in the great national and international associations and congresses that attempt to bring about such progress.

3. Since, finally, every form of the apostolate of the Society of Jesus flows from its mission "for the defense and propagation of the faith and the progress of souls in Christian life and learning," we must be very careful lest the social apostolate be reduced merely to temporal activity. This is all the more necessary because in these activities men are often affected by one-sided "ideologies" and violent passions. Never more than in our day is it necessary, therefore, that that "universal love which embraces in our Lord all parties, even though they are at odds with one another,"<sup>23</sup> should shine forth among the companions of Jesus. Our men should be looking only to this, that they are trying to restore "peace on earth." a peace that is "based on truth, on justice, on love, on freedom." We are not forbidden, therefore, to undertake those things "which tend to infuse Christian principles into public life, provided that means in keeping with our Institute are employed,"<sup>24</sup> in the light of the Church's teaching and with proper respect for the sacred hierarchy.<sup>25</sup>

4. In order that those prescriptions concerning the social apostolate already laid down in the decrees of general congregations and in the Instruction on this subject may be more effectively carried out, the 31st General Congregation earnestly recommends that:

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<sup>22</sup> See John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, *passim*.

<sup>23</sup> Cons [823].

<sup>24</sup> Coll.Decr. 239 § 2.

<sup>25</sup> See GC 28, D.29, n.16.

a) in the planning of apostolic activities, the social apostolate should take its place among those having priority;<sup>26</sup>

b) in the entire course of Jesuit training, both theoretical and practical, the social dimension of our whole modern apostolate must be taken into account;

c) members who are to be specifically destined for this apostolate should be chosen in good time; provincials should not hesitate to assign some men among them who are endowed with truly outstanding gifts both of mind and judgement and of virtue, and train them in the best universities;

d) social centres should be promoted by provinces or regions according to a plan that will seem better suited to the concrete circumstances of each region and time; these centres should carry on research, social education, both doctrinal and practical, and also social action itself in brotherly collaboration with the laity;

e) centres of this kind should be in close contract with one another both for the sake of information and for every kind of practical collaboration. Such collaboration should also be encouraged between centres in developed regions and those in regions which are less developed.

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<sup>26</sup> See GC 28, D.29, n.5.



# INSTRUCTION on the SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

## TO ALL PROVINCIALS

Dear Father,

Fr. General asked me to send you this "Instruction on the Social Apostolate." Sufficient copies are enclosed to be sent to those of your Province who work in this apostolate.

That this Instruction might be used most effectively, Fr. General has decided that it should be read at table in all Our houses. In addition, you are to convene a special meeting of your consultors as well as a few other Fathers with experience in the social apostolate. They should have enough time before the meeting to read the Instruction and consider the conditions of the Province so that they will be well-prepared to proceed. At the meeting, they should consider before the Lord and discuss with religious freedom what should be done in the Province with respect to the social apostolate now, as well as in the future, according to the norms of the Instruction. Afterwards, please send Fr. General a report of the social apostolate in your Province and the decisions taken in this special consultation.

Antonius Maria de Aldama  
Secretary of the Society

10 October 1949

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## **INSTRUCTION on the SOCIAL APOSTOLATE**

**Rev. Father General John Baptist Janssens, S.J.**

1. In our anxiety to meet the threats that are at present confronting us in daily increasing numbers, there is danger that we may fix our attention on the present evil effects rather than on their root causes and thus, overlooking the wider and more enduring good, dissipate the apostolic efforts of the Society in the pursuit of immediate and less important objectives. The last two General Congregations sought to provide some remedy against this error in several of their decrees. But due to the clamour of World War II and the ensuing unrest, as well as to the fear of still another conflict, we have been prevented from carrying out these decrees in an orderly and persevering manner. It is our duty however "amid the changes of the world to keep our hearts fixed where true joys are to be found."<sup>27</sup> Our vocation demands that we should occupy ourselves in procuring the salvation of souls by the most efficacious means, whatever the external circumstances may be; whether we can freely exercise our ministries, or, because of persecution, we are hindered in them.

2. The present situation is serious. Danger threatens all Christians, as the enemies of God and man, the materialistic atheists, who have already subjected by force a great portion of the world, put forth all their efforts to extend their sway farther. And there is some foundation for their hope that, with the wide diffusion of their doctrines, the whole world will shortly be under their rule. The inequitable condition, both temporal and spiritual, of by far the greater part of the human race provides a most fertile soil for subversive doctrines. For thereby the wise and gracious plan of Divine Providence has been thwarted and life on earth, consequent to the disregard of social justice and charity, has for millions of people become like a cruel purgatory, not to say hell itself. Still, we shall seek in vain to

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<sup>27</sup> From the Collect of the Mass for the Fourth Sunday after Easter.

win our fight against Communism unless "a proper social order is established according to those principles which our more recent Supreme Pontiffs have so brilliantly expounded."<sup>28</sup>

Liberal Materialism

3. And opposing the communistic atheists, there is another form of materialism which is called "liberal." Its disciples are to be found among the wealthy and property-owning classes who have lost their faith in God and in Christ, or at least disregard or deny it in practice, especially in public affairs. It is their own comforts and privileges they seek to promote rather than the common good of the whole human race, believing that the wretched state of the common man is to be corrected by merely economic and material adjustment, or by force – even, if necessary, by force of arms. They do not realize that great wealth, unless its use be regulated by the Ten Commandments, will rather foster wickedness, particularly that unrestrained selfishness and lust by which man descends to the level of the beast, and that it will increase those very evils of which we complain. Then too, in many cases, in place of the despotic rule of political parties or of the state, by which Communism deceives the working man, they substitute the tyranny of plutocratic corporations which allow whole nations to be tortured by poverty and starvation rather than lessen or forego their profits.

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<sup>28</sup> GC 29, D.29, preamble.

4. Yet, in many parts of the world today, not only in those regions which we call mission countries, but even in the so-called Christian nations, the ferment of the Gospel which has been entrusted to the Church has not leavened the mass of mankind, because, as some have remarked, it has not been put into the mass but alongside it. Meanwhile the mass of the working classes, blinded by materialism, has for the most part no knowledge of the Church, whatsoever. To the working man, she is the Church of the upper classes only. For what poor man, they ask, enjoys the leisure and social position required of her members? Or else they consider her as demanding merely the external fulfilment of certain ceremonies. For it seems that they have never heard of her as the representative of a kind, gracious Father, proclaiming the Beatitudes on earth and in the everlasting life to come. The situation, it is true, is not the same everywhere, but in many of our industrial cities and towns, the number of those in the working class, who profess and live the faith, is so small that one could easily find a greater number in mission countries. Granted that the rich, too, have their share of those who are indifferent to the faith or who have abandoned it, still a far greater proportion is to be found among the working classes. And yet we read: "He hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart."<sup>29</sup>

5. With us, Christ's love is a compelling motive. And Christ, in an untold number of His members, still suffers hunger, nakedness, exile and contempt. Let us turn our eyes attentively to sights which daily meet our eyes and, in the light of truth, study conditions to which we have grown accustomed and even indifferent. They must not be tolerated; there must be a change. Is it right that the sons of God and the members of Christ's Mystical Body should live in the filth and corruption of slums, which so many millions inhabit not only in Asia and Africa, but in many parts of America and Europe as well — slums where neither health of body nor purity of soul can be preserved without a miracle? Was this the reason that "God so wondrously established the dignity of human nature, and yet more wondrously restored it"?<sup>30</sup> That a few rich men might heap up wealth and condemn so many of their brethren in Christ to destitution? Was not this, rather, the reason why God in His bounty enriched the earth: that not only the few, but the majority and even all men might lead, if not a comfortable, at least the ordinary and enduring life which is necessary if one is to observe the Commandments?<sup>31</sup>

### Ordinary Folk

6. Now works which are founded for the benefit of the poor who cannot provide for themselves, for the aged, for orphans and for the sick are certainly praiseworthy. It is fitting to love Christ and to serve Him in His suffering members. Moreover, the common good of society requires that they be

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<sup>29</sup> Luke 4:18.

<sup>30</sup> From the Ordinary of the Mass.

<sup>31</sup> "To each, therefore, must be given his own share of goods, and the distribution of created goods, which, as every discerning person knows, is labouring today under the gravest evils due to the huge disparity between the few exceedingly rich and the unnumbered propertyless, must be effectively called back to and brought into conformity with the norms of the common good, that is, social justice." Pius XI, "*Quadragesimo anno*." *Two Basic Encyclicals*, Washington, Catholic University Press, 1943, 127.

"The immense multitude of the non-owning workers on the one hand and the enormous riches of certain very wealthy men on the other establish an unanswerable argument that the riches which are so abundantly produced in our age of industrialism, as it is called, are not rightly distributed and equitably made available to the various classes of people." *Ibid.*, p 129

"It is not rash by any means to say that the whole scheme of social and economic life is now such as to put in the way of vast numbers of mankind most serious obstacles which prevent them from caring for the one thing necessary, namely, their eternal salvation." *Ibid.*, p. 175.

not abandoned, nor forced to obtain sustenance for themselves and their families by dishonest means; and for this reason such charitable work is rightly called "social" at times. This work too is certain to receive its reward from the Divine Judge who said: "Come ye blessed of my Father ... for I was naked and you covered me..."<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, I do not now intend to treat of such charitable work, which I may call extraordinary and which is exercised toward those members of the poorer classes, who, because of special circumstances, must be sustained by alms. Rather I will treat of those ordinary folk who, although they have the strength to earn a decent living, are prevented by the imperfection of the social order of today from providing for themselves and their families, even though they live hard-working, frugal and thrifty lives. And they are actually deprived of spiritual benefits also, such as a more refined education and a deeper supernatural life, which, while they afford joy, peace of soul and a tranquil hope for future happiness, usually presuppose a certain amount of temporal possessions.<sup>33</sup> Now such people actually constitute by far the greater proportion of the human race.

7. Accordingly, the social apostolate of which I am speaking should aim at procuring for as many men as possible, or rather, in so far as conditions permit for all men, an abundance of both temporal and spiritual goods even in the natural order, or at least that sufficiency which man of his very nature needs that he may not feel depressed or looked down upon, nor be exposed to trials or temptations which only men of heroic mould, aided and sustained by extraordinary grace, are able to withstand. Or, more exactly, we should strive to reduce to practical effect the wise plan of the Divine Creator, so that all the children of God may duly attain that happiness for which the infinitely generous and self-diffusive goodness of God has destined them.<sup>34</sup>

8. It will be in vain, however, that I exhort Ours to this social apostolate, unless "the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Ghost is accustomed to write and imprint in our hearts" guide them from within.<sup>35</sup> In vain will you urge the man who is not inflamed with the love of God and of his neighbour "to have compassion on the multitude" in any meaningful way. Therefore, before all else Ours must be trained to that sincere and active charity which today is called "a social attitude" or "social-mindedness." They must learn the correct teaching of the Church, and all must learn, each for himself, to work for the preparation and formation of a better world.

9. That true charity will be better stirred up and sustained if Ours are taught to see clearly the actual lot of by far the greater part of mankind. Since most of Ours were raised in comfortable circumstances, or else were isolated from their youth in a minor seminary, there are very few who could learn to know for themselves the actual daily life led by the working man and the farmer, by the clerk and by the lowest employees in the courts and in business. Yet it is necessary that Ours should see what it means to spend a whole life in humble circumstances, to be a member of the lowest class of mankind, to be ignored and looked down upon by other men; to be unable to appear in public because one does not have decent clothes nor the proper social training; to be the means by which others grow rich; to live from day to day on nothing but the most frugal food, and never to be certain

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<sup>32</sup> Matthew 25:34, 36.

<sup>33</sup> "Nevertheless, an abundance of corporeal and external goods is likewise a characteristic of a well-constituted State, the use of which goods is necessary for the practice of virtue." Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*. *Two Basic Encyclicals*, 45.

<sup>34</sup> "For, according to Christian teaching, man, endowed with a social nature, is placed on this earth so that by leading a life in society and under an authority ordained of God he may fully cultivate and develop all his faculties unto the praise and glory of his Creator; and that by faithfully fulfilling the duties of his craft or other calling he may obtain for himself temporal and at the same time eternal happiness." Pius XI, *op. cit.*, p.167.

<sup>35</sup> *Const.*, poem., n.1, [134]; *Summ. const.*, n.1.

about the morrow; to be forced to work either below or above one's strength, amid every danger to health, honour and purity of soul; to be unemployed for days and months, tormented by idleness and want; to be unable to bring up one's children in a decent manner, but rather to be forced to expose them to the common dangers of the public streets, to disease and suffering; to mourn many of them who, lacking the tender care which they need, have been snatched off by death in the bloom of their youth; never to enjoy any decent recreation of soul or body; and at the same time to behold about one the very men for whom one works, abounding with riches, enjoying superfluous comforts, devoting themselves to liberal studies and the fine arts, loaded with honours, authority and praise. Now while they think this over, let Ours consider how many there are in their own country who enjoy privileges and how many there are who live in humble circumstances. And if there are any who think that this unbalanced state of mankind is not all that unjust and that the poor should accept it with patient resignation, let them consult the pontifical documents, beginning with the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and continuing right down to the allocutions of our happily reigning Pope Pius XII, and they will see what is the attitude of Christ our Lord.

### Training of Ours

10. The desire for a more perfect reign of justice, equality, and charity in the world should be instilled in our young men from the novitiate onwards. They should be taught to love and esteem workingmen and ordinary folk as daily benefactors. At the time of the novices' hospital and catechism trials, the master and socius should strive to open their eyes to the lot of the workingman. Superiors should not be afraid to propose to me certain changes by which some of the novices' experiments may be adapted, wherever needed, to improve their formation. I have willingly granted permission already for novices, under certain conditions, to beg from door to door for the poor and to distribute in the hovels of the needy whatever alms they collect.<sup>36</sup> In some places, too, I have allowed certain picked men to be sent into factories for a short time, to work with the men and share their life. And in more than one place, novices working as helpers in our retreat houses have, with great profit, come to appreciate members of the working class making their retreat there. Above all, that worldly notion of what I would call social caste should be completely uprooted from the minds of the novices. I mean that notion which considers a man more worthy than others of esteem and respect and the bestowal of spiritual care merely because of his family's prestige, or his wealth. What would you think of a man imbued with this spirit, who, on meeting our Lord and His Blessed Mother as they lived on earth — poor certainly, and living by the toil of their hands — would look down with contempt on them, or, at least, would be indifferent to their lot and pass them by? "As long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me."<sup>37</sup>

11. In the remaining time of their formation, in their literary and scientific studies, wherever occasion offers itself, the defects and needs of the modern social order should be brought briefly, for the most part, and in passing, to the attention of Ours. As I shall indicate later on, while speaking about the colleges, this can and should be done without adding new lectures or courses, and even without lengthy, irrelevant digressions.

In philosophy however and theology, GC 28, D.29 may be appropriately applied: "Let Ours be well acquainted with the principal doctrines of the Church on the social order; these ought, moreover, to be properly presented to our Scholastics in philosophy and in theology" (n.10). Here again, there is

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Constitutions* IX, c.3 E [748].

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 25:40.

no need for the introduction of new courses; but care should be had that courses in ethics, in social economics, in moral and pastoral theology be applied to modern times and needs. Now there are many textbooks, especially in moral theology, which we have long used, but which do not satisfactorily meet modern needs in this matter. The outcome of our courses and the attitude of those who followed them are ample proof of this fact. Therefore, it will be the professor's duty to supply what is lacking and thoroughly to explain the social doctrine of the Roman pontiffs, while treating in short summary certain other points in his tract which are easier or somewhat out-of-date.

12. The aim of tertianship is, and ought to remain, not pastoral training for the work of the ministry, but training for a more profound and solid interior life. To this end everything else should be subordinated, not the reverse. Nevertheless, during this time the Tertians should be more thoroughly instructed both in the theory and practice of the ministries proper to the Society. Hence the Instructor, calling to his aid, if need be, a man more skilled in such matters, ought to explain what the Institute, and in particular, what the last two General Congregations have to say about the social apostolate. It is his task, too, to direct the first trials of the Tertians in the ministries which, during the time of this probation, should be exercised especially among the poor and workingmen. Wherever the Instructors propose it, I shall allow the Tertians more readily than novices to go into workshops or factories, either for spiritual ministry alone, or even to work with the men themselves, provided they never be forgetful of their priesthood. By all means they should visit the working classes and the poor in hospitals, in institutions, and, under proper circumstances, even in their homes. They will learn to know the wretched state of their homes, their poor food and clothing, by actually seeing it; they will learn to know their ignorance, their lack of refinement and education; by actual experience they would see the difficulty – I almost said the impossibility – of true Christian virtue, which we ourselves could not cultivate in the same circumstances. Unless they have actually experienced these things, and not merely heard about them, there is a danger that later, while preaching Christian resignation, justice and chastity, they may seem to make light of the poor, and even make themselves and the Church objects of scorn.

#### University Formation

13. At home in the Provinces but especially in the missions, certain Fathers of suitable talents, industrious, and of reliable and strong character, should be trained in theoretical and practical studies for the express purpose of directing and taking part in social work. In theoretical studies, I say, and those of the highest type, in one of the few graduate schools or universities in Europe or America where they are properly taught. They should join to these studies some months or even a year of practical social work in different fields, in those regions especially where Catholic social work has already begun and already borne fruit.

The more learned of these Fathers should form a "Centre of Information and Social Action" unless, of course, such a centre already exists.<sup>38</sup> The function of this centre should not be so much to further actual social works, but to teach the theoretical and practical social doctrine to others, especially to priests, educated laymen, and the better educated workingmen, and to help them by counsel and advice.<sup>39</sup> This centre will spread the social doctrine of the Church as has already been done in certain places, by publishing books, by periodicals and various writings, by conferences, lectures, conventions, and the like, and it will strive to apply that doctrine to the needs of particular regions.

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<sup>38</sup> GC 28, D.29, n.7; GC 29, D.29, n.1 (*Epitome*, n.680).

<sup>39</sup> GC 29, D.20, n.1 (*Epit.*, n.680).

14. I think that there are two types of institutes which will be especially fruitful in social action; both are in harmony with the spirit of our Society. We should have, either separately or together, schools and courses for the employers in which they would be taught their rights and duties, and schools and lectures on social doctrines for the better educated and more capable members of the working class. Since, as can be seen, the future leaders of labour will be those only who come up from the ranks, and since there is a paramount need to save many, or even the mass of labour, and lead them along the right paths, this second type of school seems to be more important and of greater moment now. This is especially true, if anywhere, of our missions in Asia and Africa.

15. Certain Fathers who will take part in these social works may receive less scientific training. It will be of great advantage for them, either in Tertianship or later, to visit frequently the workers in their homes, and learn at firsthand the condition of their lives. It will also profit them, if their health and the requirements of Christian prudence allow it, to take part in the actual manual toil of the mines, the factories, or the workshops.<sup>40</sup> The Fathers who are destined for the Social Centre would profit especially by such experience.

#### Role of Laymen

16. Ordinarily the promotion and direction of the social works is not our task but that of laymen. Such works pertain for the most part to the temporal order, and Ours, since we have had little experience in conducting temporal affairs, would come to them unprepared; such interests too, would withdraw us from that spiritual function which only a priest can perform. It is our task, as I have just indicated, to instruct the laity, and to help them by our counsel in moral and doctrinal fields. But, outside the sphere of our priestly function, we leave to them autonomy in their own affairs.

In certain regions, however, where laymen capable of this leadership are not yet at hand — this frequently happens in the missions — it will be our task, for the time being, out of charity towards the leaderless masses, not only to promote economic undertakings, and other corporal works of mercy, but to direct and regulate them as well. This method has already been used with success in certain places where successful and effective social works are now conducted by laymen, trained by their clerical predecessors.

17. It is certainly necessary, especially in some provinces, that superiors make sure our ministries are not almost exclusively conducted among the rich and the cultured.<sup>41</sup> I admit that inspiring such men with the right norms of Christian charity is a matter of no small merit. For not only owners of shops, but many who are professionally educated, namely doctors, lawyers, technicians, and bankers, have too often abandoned the spirit of the Gospel, and have striven by every possible means to further their own private gain only, and not the common good or the good of the majority.

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<sup>40</sup> GC 29, D.28, n.2 (*Epit.*, n.680).

<sup>41</sup> "To priests in a special way We recommend anew the oft-repeated counsel of Our Predecessor, Leo XIII, to go to the workingman. We make this advice Our own, and faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church, We thus complete it: 'Go to the workingman, especially where he is poor; and in general, go to the poor.'

"Let our parish priests ... dedicate the better part of their endeavours and their zeal to winning back the labouring masses to Christ and His Church. Let them infuse the Christian spirit into quarters where it is least at home. The willing response of the masses, and results far exceeding their expectations, will not fail to reward them for their strenuous pioneer labour." Pius XI, "*Divini Redemptoris*," *Catholic Mind*, XXXV (1937), 467.



But it is not sufficient to minister to these classes alone. Let us not depart from the spirit of Christ our Lord, nor from the mind of our Founder, nor from the directions of the General Congregations, especially of the more recent ones. To prevent our Society from justly being classified with the rich and the capitalists, we must direct with utmost zeal many of our ministries towards the poorer classes. Our Society has never lacked praise for such a course of action, especially in the mission lands; it now remains for us to see that in those places where many men are engaged in the ministry of the colleges, the remaining members devote a like, and even greater, care for the poor than they do for the rich. Our residences would be suited for such an apostolate, if, turning over the faithful flock for the most part to the care of other shepherds, they centre their zeal especially on the scattered sheep that are lost.

18. Up till now, I have dealt with those phases of the social apostolate which the most recent General Congregations explicitly demand of us. I shall now take up those opportunities – by no means to be belittled – which the ordinary, time-honoured ministries of the Society offer us. For in these customary ministries of the Society, in our colleges, in our giving of retreats, in our sodalities, in our missions, in our ordinary parish work, and in our publication of periodicals, we can and should accomplish much which will greatly help to establish a right social order.<sup>42</sup> There is no need for me to go through all these activities; I shall merely refer to some of the more important ones by way of illustration.

#### Role of Our Schools

19. It is perfectly clear how much good can and should be done by the foundation of chairs or faculties dealing with social questions in our universities. By university, I mean all our schools of higher studies, no matter how they are actually designated in different regions. I wish superiors to be alert to the need for such chairs and faculties in the universities of their foreign missions. And let them not delay, I beg of them, as has happened in the past in some parts of Europe, until materialism will have infected the minds of the people.

As for our colleges, I shall make a few suggestions for the studies which are generally called secondary. It is our aim above all in educating the young men we have accepted in the name of the Church, to instill in their hearts the charity of Christ as it is applied to modern problems in the encyclicals and other papal documents. We should not allow the prejudices which they have perhaps learned at home to take a deeper root while they remain with us. There should be no distinction in our colleges between rich and poor. They should not acquire any spirit of a special, privileged social class, which I have earlier designated as a social caste. The students should learn to have a spirit of reverence and gratitude towards the workingman. They should be taught not to set their hearts on wealth, but on "having food and sufficient clothing, with these let us be content."<sup>43</sup> Let them hunger and thirst after justice, the justice which sees to it that all men receive the due reward of their labours and that there be a more just distribution of temporal goods. They should learn that all men deserve the name and affection of a brother of Christ; that those who have received gifts in greater abundance do not have the right of use and abuse, as the law of the pagans proclaimed, but the obligation of using these gifts for the good of the majority, and indeed, of all men, if that is possible.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> GC 29, D.29, n.3 (*Epit.*, n.680)

<sup>43</sup> 1 Tim 6:8. "To be sure of eternal life, therefore, and to be able to help the poor effectively, it is imperative to return to a more moderate way of life, to renounce the joys, often sinful, which the world today holds out in such abundance; to forget self for love of the neighbour." Pius XI, "*Divini Redemptoris*." p.464.

<sup>44</sup> "The substance of all this is the following: whoever has received from the bounty of God a greater share of goods,

It is not desirable, either in our colleges or in our scholasticates, to increase the number of lecture periods. The young men will acquire an elementary knowledge of the encyclicals from their religion classes; but over and above this, it is of especial importance that the teacher himself, eager with the charity of Christ, should use every opportunity to fill the hearts of his students with love for the masses. Lectures on the ancient writers, on history, on the native literature of each country, will offer many an occasion by a passing reference for forming these attitudes. For in literature and history we are constantly confronted with the conflict between the selfishness of the kings and nobles and the misery of the people, by whose labour the former indulge in great pomp, wage wars, and win glory for themselves. In this way let the young men learn to hate social evils, which far outweigh those which afflict mere individuals; let them learn, too, to love the virtues which have a wider scope and tend to the common good; and let them practise these at once within the modest limits of their own family, school and friends, with the desire to cultivate them on a broader and fuller scale later on.

In keeping with these constant reminders our students should take up the practice, according to their age, of visiting the homes of the poor, the workshops and mines of labourers, and their social centres; let them not only hear the words of their teacher exhorting them, but let them see with their own eyes and touch with their own hands the proof of how truthfully he speaks to them. The Society will certainly achieve a work of no small merit in the eyes of God, if from her colleges young men, freed of that pagan mentality which adores riches, go forth steeped in that charity which seeks above all the good of others and is ready to work with the Church in bettering the temporal and spiritual conditions of the greatest possible number of human beings.<sup>45</sup>

### The Spiritual Exercises

20. It is obvious to anyone who pauses to reflect on the matter that nothing solid and lasting can be obtained in social reform unless the souls of men are inwardly conformed to the true principles of the Gospels. If the captains of industry and other rich men are filled with greed for amassing limitless wealth and for enjoying without restraint luxuries and the pleasures for which these prepare the way; and if workingmen, in their lower state are likewise filled with self-love, envy, sloth and a similar craving for wealth and pleasure; if in neither management nor labour, the benevolent, humble and generous charity of Christ holds sway, then to no purpose will either private groups or governmental agencies strive to accomplish anything worthwhile for the benefit of the labouring classes. Greed on one side, hatred on the other, will make dissension more acute and breed ever greater evils.<sup>46</sup> Hence

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whether corporeal and external, or of the soul, has received them for this purpose, namely, that he employ them for his own perfection and likewise, as a servant of Divine Providence, for the benefit of others." Leo XIII, *op. cit.*, p.31.

<sup>45</sup> "We desire therefore ... that this divine precept, this precious mark of identification left by Christ to His true disciples, be ever more fully explained by pen and word of mouth; this precept which teaches us to see in those who suffer Christ Himself, and would have us love our brothers as Our Divine Saviour has loved us, that is, even at the sacrifice of ourselves, and, if need be, of our very life." Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, p.463

<sup>46</sup> "Since religion alone ... can remove the evil, root and branch, let all reflect upon this: first and foremost Christian morals must be reestablished, without which even the weapons of prudence, which are considered especially effective, will be of no avail to secure well-being." Leo XIII, *op.cit.*, p.81.

"By all means in their power let them strive for the well-being of peoples; and especially let them aim both to preserve in themselves and to arouse in others, in the highest equally as well as in the lowest, the mistress and queen of the virtues, Charity. Certainly the well-being which is so longed-for is chiefly to be expected from an abundant outpouring of charity; of Christian charity, We mean, which epitomizes the law of the Gospel, and which, always ready to sacrifice itself for the benefit of others, is man's surest antidote against the insolence of the world and immoderate love for self; the divine office and features of this virtue being described by the Apostle Paul ... is not self-seeking ... bears

it follows that the Spiritual Exercises, conducted for the owners and managers of industry and also for the workingman, must be reckoned among the most effective means for promoting this social-mindedness. From the Exercises, these men will effectively imbibe a spirit of abnegation in regard to temporal things, a spirit of poverty and humility, reverence for the commandments of God, and finally, love of God and their neighbour. This will be all the more surely accomplished if the director of the Exercises applies them to modern conditions, as he ought, and shows just where the duties of justice, equity and charity rest today for the owners and for the workingmen.<sup>47</sup>

21. The man who understands the genuine rules of the Sodality of Our Lady will easily appreciate how much they contribute to the common good either by those sections devoted to study or by those devoted to apostolic work. If we wish, we can easily make the Sodality of Our Lady the principal instrument for instructing both rich and poor in the interior life and in charity, as well as in the teaching of the encyclicals, for the betterment of their personal lives and the lives of their subordinates and associates.

22. In some provinces, the Sodalities of Our Lady or colleges and residences of the Society have very wisely established schools in which young workers, the poor or orphans or those otherwise deprived of help, are instructed in a trade, and receive a literary and spiritual training at the same time. I urge that in addition to these, especially in our colleges, classes should also be conducted in which workingmen who are somewhat older and experienced in their trade may devote themselves according to their ability to literature and the liberal arts, which up to the present have been almost exclusively the privilege of those who were quite well-to-do. For social tranquility and genuine progress of the under-privileged, it is not sufficient merely to provide for their material needs. Even in the natural human order the maxim is true: "Not by bread alone doth man live." A somewhat more liberal education, moreover, will be of advantage to the promising labour leaders of the future.<sup>48</sup>

#### In and Out of Season

23. There is no reason why I should delay on the other ministries of the Society. It is clear how the preacher, in parish missions especially, or how the pastor in his parish, or especially how the writer for one of our periodicals, particularly for the ones that are cultural, can and ought to drive home, "in season, out of season," a knowledge of the true teachings of the Church, wisely indeed and prudently, but with all human respect thrown aside, since the truth will never please everybody!

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with all things ... endures all things." *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> "But above all, let them hold in high esteem and assiduously employ for the good of their disciples that most valuable means of both personal and social restoration which, as We taught in Our Encyclical, *Mens Nostra*, is to be found in the Spiritual Exercises. In that Letter We expressly mentioned and warmly recommended not only the Spiritual Exercises for all the laity, but also the highly beneficial Workers' Retreats. For in that school of the spirit, not only are the best of Christians developed but true apostles also are trained for every condition of life and are enkindled with the fire of the heart of Christ. From this school they will go forth as did the Apostles from the Upper Room of Jerusalem, strong in faith, endowed with the invincible steadfastness in persecution, burning with zeal, interested solely in spreading everywhere the Kingdom of Christ." Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, p.181.

<sup>48</sup> "That these whole classes of men may be brought back to Christ Whom they have denied, we must recruit and train from among them themselves, auxiliary soldiers of the Church who know them well and their minds and wishes, and can reach their hearts with a tender brotherly love. The first and immediate apostles to the workers ought to be workers; the apostles to those who follow industry and trade ought to be from among themselves." *Ibid.*, p.189.

24. In regard to our missions however I cannot refrain from stressing not only the necessity of teaching the true social doctrine, but even more of promoting social works and a public order that is in conformity with justice and human dignity. For there is danger, since we are not aroused by what has become customary, that we shall hardly notice to what degree most of the natives are deprived of the condition of life that befits a human being and a Christian. How often the lot of workers and farmers, especially in Asia, must be judged not only hard but inhuman! Unless we are impelled by the charity of Christ to work zealously for the bettering of their condition of life, we open the door to atheistic Communism and expose our neophytes to the danger of presently learning about social progress elsewhere in an atmosphere devoid of all Christian spirit, and thus easily losing their faith. For it is not merely souls but men that we must love in Christ.

25. GC 29 wisely remarked that our private life should agree with the doctrine we preach, so that our preaching may be the more sincere and effective.<sup>49</sup> If we really see Christ in our brothers, how can we be resigned to see ourselves deprived of nothing and even treated sumptuously while beneath our very eyes our neighbour is destitute of everything, and tortured by hunger and cold? Is the disciple above his Master? It is true that the Institute does not ordinarily impose on us a very austere poverty; it does commend however the spirit and practice of greater abnegation, which in these days must be insisted upon more forcefully. Those European provinces which were tried by two wars have discovered how many and how great are the things, formerly considered almost necessary for life itself, that can be taken away without detriment to health or work; nay rather, with benefit to both. Let each member of the Society in the spirit of the Constitutions, see what he can give up, as he ponders the love of Christ for the poor. Let us as religious reject especially whatever modern times have devised for the mere convenience of a more comfortable life, and thus we shall imitate the example of Christ suffering in His poor. GC 29 praised those of Ours who in the rooms where they live, the clothes they wear, and the ordinary food they eat, are content with the standard of living common to the workingmen in their country.<sup>50</sup> Our young men especially, as far as a prudent care of their strength permits, should accustom themselves to a more austere way of life, from which they have banished the superfluous use of candy, finer drinks, tobacco, easy chairs, journeys and public amusements. The older members whose health allows it ought to set an example in this to the younger men.<sup>51</sup>

### Our Helpers

26. To this good example of austerity we must add that of justice, equity and charity in dealing with our servants, workmen, and all our lay helpers, especially those who are teachers and professors. They should receive a just wage according to the norms of the encyclicals;<sup>52</sup> in the matters of food, dwelling, clothing, in their allotted schedule of work, they ought, *mutatis mutandis*, to be on a par with Ours. For these are the things which are in keeping with the dignity of the human person and a Christian man. A great many men of today are not ready to admit that religious, professing poverty, be treated more sumptuously at table and in the other phases of their daily life, than their spiritual and temporal assistants. To these fellow-workers Ours must show due reverence, respect and love. Superiors are to correct anyone found guilty of pride or harshness towards our servants or workmen; it is Christ Himself whom he has contemned and injured. Let those who work for us be considered

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. GC 29, D.29, n.5 (*Epit.* n.680).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. GC 28, D.25 (*Epit.* n.478); GC 29, D.29 (*Epit.* n.680).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Cod.Iur.Can.*, can. 1286.

sons and brothers of our family; and let it be clear that in this matter, too, religious think and act differently from those of the world.

27. Finally — and this is practically a summary of the whole matter — let our principal aim in the social apostolate never be anything negative, no matter what form it takes in practice. Our task is by no means finished when we fight against materialism, whether it be against Communism, or against those who abuse capitalism. Our task is positive: to spread the Kingdom of God and Christ on earth, and to make sure that the human race, according to the plan of its Creator and Redeemer, will some day come, after a life in every way worthy of sons of God and members of Christ, to the eternal company of the Supreme Good. The Kingdom of God is "the kingdom of justice, love and peace."<sup>53</sup> As long as Christ suffers injustice and is treated harshly in even the least of His brethren, as long as there is hatred between men individually and as members of conflicting social classes, it would be treason for us priests and religious, or for any Christian at all, to rest from labour. Even if Communism or some other form of materialism were not plotting against the Church and actually persecuting her, the obligation would still rest on us to come to the assistance of all our brothers in Christ, by striving for a more equitable distribution of both material possessions and goods of a higher order.

28. May our Saviour grant to us in His kindness the grace to lay aside completely the spirit of the world and, in obedience to His spouse, the Church, to bend every effort to restore the Beatitudes of the Gospel not only in the private lives of individuals, but in the life of society as a whole. "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city."<sup>54</sup> How much the Society will accomplish if only we unite our forces, and in a spirit of oneness, gird ourselves humbly and resolutely for the work before us!

Ioannes Baptista Janssens, S.I.  
Rome

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## In CONCLUSION, the EVOLUTION

Jean-Yves Calvez, S.J.

The first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII, concerning the conditions of working-class life, appeared in 1891. Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus is dated 1975. In the intervening three quarters of a century plus, the social apostolate of the Society has also been marked by significant development and evolution.

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<sup>53</sup> From the Preface of the Mass of Christ the King.

<sup>54</sup> Proverbs 18:19.

Even before then there were precedents and it would be interesting to know them better. For Jesuits of an earlier age took up tasks whose purpose, in the context of their time and reality, was similar to the purpose of the modern social apostolate. Starting with Saint Ignatius himself, they endeavoured to help specific types of poor people....

A Jesuit should show himself no less useful in reconciling the estranged, in holily assisting and serving those who are found in prisons or hospitals, and indeed in performing any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good.<sup>55</sup>

....as well as being concerned, in the Sodalities of Our Lady in the 17th and 18th centuries, about the organization of society. The modern Jesuit social apostolate for its part was directly inspired by *Rerum Novarum* with the birth at Reims in 1903 of *Action Populaire*, a centre for formation, publication, and action focused on society, especially on justice in society. This model was imitated in various ways throughout the world.

It is also important to mention an equally early and independent initiative, the Catholic Workers' College in Oxford, whose very name expresses its purpose and which was also much imitated. *Action Populaire* was distinguished by the breadth and quantity of its numerous publications, which enjoyed wide distribution. It worked effectively at influencing legislation through recommendations made in the famous long-running series of "*brochures jaunes*" or tracts. Fr. Gustave Desbuquois, the centre's second director, played a key role in the Church's efforts to tackle social issues during the 1930s. His house in a suburb of Paris, where he moved after World War I, was a buzzing hive of activity visited by many from France and the whole world seeking his advice. An important biography of Fr. Desbuquois shows him contributing along with Fr. Oswald von Nell-Breuning of Frankfurt, to the writing of the 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*.<sup>56</sup>

A centre called *Fomento Social* soon opened in Madrid and, after World War II, many others followed: *Centro Studi Sociali* in Milan; a centre in the Southern German province, first located in Mannheim, but then incorporated into the *Institut für Gesellschaftspolitik* at the Berchmanskolleg in Munich; the Institute of Social Order in St. Louis, Missouri; following on India's independence, the Indian Social Institute in New Delhi. I will not list the many other examples, enough to fill a directory. It suffices to recall that Father General Jean-Baptiste Janssens, anticipating the turmoils which would flare up in Latin America, took the important decision to encourage the establishment of a social institute or apostolic centre in each province or region. Not that social action had been totally absent in Latin America. During the war and immediately afterwards Fr. Alberto Hurtado of Chile was among the very first, apart from a few Brazilian initiatives such as the *Círculos* in San Paulo, to get involved in the social apostolate along specific lines. Fr. Hurtado was beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 16th, 1994.

All these efforts were not equally successful. The Society can take pride, however, in the number and variety of centres as expressions of the Church's social concern. They were founded in the Philippines, Japan, and in West, Central and Eastern Africa, to name a few places. Other contributions to the Jesuit social apostolate must not be forgotten either. Various universities

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<sup>55</sup> Formula of the Institute 1550.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Droulers, S.J., *Politique sociale et christianisme: le Père Desbuquois et l'Action Populaire: Débats, Synicalisme et Intégristes (1903-1918)*, Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1969, pp. 435.

established departments for social research and formation. Some names stand out, such as Fr. Joseph Fitzpatrick, a sociologist at Fordham University in New York, who died recently.

To this list must be added the innumerable activities, very closely linked to the social apostolate, among farm and factory workers during the years after World War II. No need to emphasize overmuch the disagreements that arose between the activists and those engaged in study and reflexion. A variety of centres and institutes, some with "social research and action" in their name, put the stress on research but nearly always included programmes of formation.

It has never been easy to define "the social apostolate." During the 1930s, several documents of the Society tended to identify the social apostolate with the ministry *apud operarios*, among workers. Later, let us say after World War II, one would tend to make a distinction between them. With the advent of the worker mission in the strict sense, the worker priests developed a commitment within the labour movement itself, nearly always very different from what one could call the "general" social apostolate.

A greater effort was made after World War II to specify what the social apostolate should be as such. The key term in the definition became the word "structures":

The scope of the social apostolate, said GC 31 in 1965, is broader than the task of exercising our ministries or maintaining social works among workmen or other groups of the same sort that are especially needy.... The social apostolate strives directly by every endeavour to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common. Its goal in this is that every man may be able to exercise a personal sense of participation, skill, and responsibility in all areas of community life<sup>57</sup>.

The aim is to incarnate the Church's vision of a just society. In the mind of GC 31, social ministries and works on behalf of workers or other needy groups can and must contribute to the achievement of this goal. But the social apostolate must work directly at the transformation of the very structures themselves — this is its objective. "For social structures, above all today," according to the Congregation, "exert an influence on the life of man, even on his moral and religious life. The 'humanization' of social life is, moreover, particularly effective as a way of bearing evangelical witness in our times."<sup>58</sup> A few years later, Pope Paul VI would take up the idea in a related, but only related, sense of evangelizing our "culture." This is obviously an appropriate work for the Society of Jesus which, according to its Constitutions, must always seek the more universal good in its apostolate. In the official documents of this period one notes as well the Society's concern for global issues: "global" disparities of all sorts, between economic sectors, between regions, between nations and "blocs of nations" and similarly "between racially-different groups." The "overwhelming and global problems of economic and social development" of under-developed peoples are also at stake.

Is all this a matter of major economic and political problems? Yes, of course, within the approach, still and all, of a religious order like the Society whose essential mission, GC 32 would say in 1975 ten years later, is the service of the faith which integrally includes the promotion of justice. For its part GC 31 urged us to "be very careful lest the social apostolate be reduced merely to temporal activity."

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<sup>57</sup> GC 31, D.32, n.1, see John XXIII *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, *passim*.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Then with its focus on the service of faith and the promotion of justice GC 32 broadened, one might say, our social concern into concern above all for justice, and tied every activity and every ministry into it far more explicitly than before, for example, education, spiritual direction, catechesis and "missionary" evangelisation. The promotion of justice which goes along with the service of faith – and forms an intrinsic part of it – must mark every Jesuit activity, always adapting to the varying circumstances.

With this all-embracing concern, GC 32 surely pays somewhat less attention to the more specific social apostolate. But the Congregation continues to presuppose it, and this in several ways. It insists first of all on the need to work at transforming social structures so as to bring about the spiritual and material liberation of fellow human beings, and also on the influence we should try to exert upon people who bear some responsibility for or influence over social structures.<sup>39</sup> This appeal is made not only to those involved in the specific social apostolate as a sector, but to everyone. Evidently the specialized centres have a big part to play in all this.

When the Congregation calls "social analysis" necessary, the Society cannot fail to equip itself with the corresponding means:

We cannot be excused from making the most rigorous possible political and social analysis of our situation. This will require the utilization of the various sciences, sacred and profane, and of the various disciplines, speculative and practical, and all of this demands intense and specialized studies. Nothing should excuse us, either, from undertaking a searching discernment into our situation from the pastoral and apostolic point of view. From analysis and discernment will come committed action; from the experience of action will come insight into how to proceed further (n.44).

Naturally, this should be the work in a special way of the social apostolate as such, which the Society has been developing for a long time.

In addition, GC 32 recognized "how important it is that we be present and work with others in different areas of human activity, especially in those parts of the world which are most secularized.... Real opportunities for apostolic work are afforded, in some cases, by the practice of a profession or by taking a job not directly related to the strictly presbyterial function" (n.78). It even accepted that, for the common and social good "some kind of involvement in civic activity, even of exceptional forms," might be considered (n.80). Without making this an exclusive prerogative, might it not be an appropriate expression of presence and commitment for the social apostolate in the strict sense?

Other affirmations of GC 32 necessarily imply new styles of approach for the social apostolate. For example its insistence on being near and present to the "victims of injustice" – in addition to those responsible for structures and those able to influence them – is again an insistence for everyone, but should it not entail special consequences in the social apostolate?

According to GC 32, on the other hand, all methods of apostolic action should be better and more explicitly integrated into the service of the faith with which everything in the Society is connected. Thus the search for new approaches is again recommended. The centres of social action are still

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. GC 32, D.4, n.40.



needed by the Society and – GC 32 said as well – all the more so when it addresses itself to the problems of injustice, with all the required sorts of cooperation, at an "international level."

The question to ask now, I think, is whether the institutions of the social apostolate as such, which to many already seen old, have given sufficient scope to the new style required since GC 32? They have begun developing, in that direction, I think, but after GC 33 and GC 34 it's no doubt very important to continue working on such changes of approach whereby the Society's social apostolate will fully respond to the demands of GC 32 ... in continuity with the Society's age-old history.

In spite of the burden of our institutions and of our personal weaknesses, we have reason to be grateful for the wealth of effort undertaken towards renewal. All this work of evolution needs to be better known and studied. For it has much to contribute to finding new approaches, more needed than ever, especially as we now face the new "socio-cultural" challenges so well analyzed by GC 34 which we have been too slow to integrate into the social apostolate.

The evolution, changes, adaptations and progress of the social apostolate have been remarkable these recent years. To think about the future and do planning, we can draw on past experience, on studies of the deep transformations which the societies we live in are undergoing, and on the indications provided by GC 34.

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