

PROMOTIO IUSTITIAE

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Michael Czerny, S.J.
Editor

Dedicated
to
Father Henry Volken, S.J.
17 April 1925 — 3 May 2000

Secretary of the Social Apostolate
and Editor of *Promotio Iustitiae*
1984 — 1991

"I was born on April 17, 1925 in Zermatt; I am the third of twelve children, the eldest of the boys." With these words, Henry Volken introduced himself in the Swiss Jesuit mission magazine. "When I was six years old, my father shifted his medical practice to his native town, Fiesch. The golden freedom of childhood passed by soon, schooling began: six months to learn, six to forget everything that is not important. After primary school I enrolled at the Collegium Brig. To become more familiar with French, I decided to finish secondary education in St. Maurice.

"Then came the decisive step. On a retreat, I found clarity for my way of life. I applied to the Society of Jesus, founded by St. Ignatius through whom God has given the Spiritual Exercises to the Church." In 1946 Henry entered the Jesuit Novitiate in Rue, Switzerland.

"From experienced people, I learned how important it is for missionaries in India to come to the country as early as possible in order to become familiar with the people, the customs, the climate. I applied to my Superiors, and my request was fulfilled." In 1948, together with his companions Hermann Bacher, Domnik Zemp and Emil Baumann, Henry arrived in India.

First he had to learn the Marathi language, followed by philosophy and theology in De Nobili College, Pune, where he was ordained on 23 March 1956 in St. Xavier's Church.

In 1962 Henry returned from specialised sociological studies in Paris and began to work in the Social Institute, Pune, which soon was transferred to the capital, New Delhi. In 1964 the Social Institute sent Henry to the refugee camps in Assam where about 170,000 Hindus fleeing from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) found shelter.

Henry confessed one day to Fr. Hubert Hänggi, S.J., Mission Director in Switzerland, that the desk in Delhi was not his proper world. He felt the urge not to write about sociology, but to meet the people. So he left the capital and settled in Bangalore, where he started a branch of the Indian Social Institute, which addressed the social realities of India and became a training centre for social workers.

"The Training Centre of the Indian Social Institute in Bangalore is very impressive," wrote the Swiss Ambassador after a visit in 1970. "Fr. Volken is able to make of Indians and foreigners a genuine team."

In the Centre, which enjoyed the support of the Swiss government, hundreds of social workers, men and women, of different castes, Hindus, Muslims and Christians have been prepared for their work.

After twelve years in Bangalore, Fr. Volken wanted to be even more directly connected with people in need. Together with Sister Sara and Ajoy Kumar, the agricultural specialist, he started the "Mobile Training Team" (MOTT). This team could be found literally anywhere in emergency situations. So Fr. Hänggi met Henry after the floods of 1978 in Andhra Pradesh on the east coast of India, where the MOTT co-ordinated the first reconstruction work. The book, *Moving Closer to the Rural Poor* (1979), recounts experiences of the team.

Typical of Fr. Volken is the second book, *Learning from the Rural Poor* (1985), whose title Henry explained to Fr. Hänggi in this way: "We want to come close to the poor, to help them in their need — till we realise that we must learn from them. We cannot teach the poor how they are meant to live, rather we learn from them how we have to live."

His work for the oppressed came to a climax in a Supreme Court judgement against landowners in the State of Orissa, which liberated two thousand "bonded labourers." This success however also marked the conclusion of his work on the frontlines, and he withdrew from his leading position. By 1984 he was ready for a new start. Father General Kolvenbach appointed him Secretary for the Social Apostolate in the Jesuit Curia in Rome.

The eight years in Rome proved to be very useful. Fr. Volken made his experiences in India fruitful for the wider world. He was in close contact with collaborators on all the continents. He proposed and discussed social projects, ever ready and interested to learn more. He worked closely with the Justice and Peace Promoters of the many Religious Congregations in Rome. In 1989 he was named a Consultor of the Pontifical Council *COR UNUM*.

To the question, *What stands out for you from the years you were Secretary?* Henry replied: "I consider the international meeting of the Provincials with Father General at Loyola in 1990 as the most important event I experienced. For the first time in the history of the Society of Jesus, there has been such a wide and direct interaction between the Provincials themselves, and between them and Father General with his Assistants, on the Society's social apostolate. This exchange was so enriching because, prior to the meeting, an intense dialogue at the level of Provinces had been initiated with pointed questions formulated by Father General himself. Reports on this process were sent to Rome — a formidable mountain! It was a fascinating task to analyse these with the help of Fr. Francisco de Roux, S.J., from Colombia. They reflected the persevering efforts of Jesuits worldwide in putting into practice the faith/justice mission and in confronting new challenges, as well as the great regional diversities. I had the joy of presenting the substance of these reports to the meeting at Loyola, and of witnessing how this gave a good start to the discussion in linguistic groups. The plenary assemblies, presided by Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston, S.J., turned out very fruitful. At the concluding session, Father General expressed his satisfaction, telling the Provincials: *You have given me more than I had anticipated.*"

In 1992, Fr. Volken returned to his native Switzerland to serve as pastor of St. Boniface, the German-speaking parish in Geneva. His engagement for the poor and marginalised remained undiminished, along with his pastoral duties. As president of the NGO committee for development at the United Nations and as the representative of the Christian Life Communities (CLC) at the UN, he continued his social involvement.

Fr. Joseph Hug of the Jesuit community of Geneva summed up Henry's faith and mission at his funeral: "Due to his life and his experiences in India, where he shared his life with the poorest, Fr. Volken has given us a liberating and life-orienting understanding of the Bible. In sermons, discussions and courses, he convincingly tried to form our socio-political conscience. He firmly believed in the competence and strength of women. He knew and analysed the structures of sin in society and politics, the mechanisms of abuse and injustices in today's world, and fought against them with all his energy. In spite of this struggle, he was always optimistic and happy about the commitment of many people for a life worthy of human dignity here and everywhere."

With his whole heart Henry reached out to all people, to people of the most different kinds, to the poor and to victims of injustice. As Liliana Carvajal of the Social Justice Secretariat testified, "Fr. Volken had a special gift or quality of knowing how to share with people so different. He overcame all discriminations, or maybe he had none, whether of sex, race, belief or religion, intelligence or social condition. Whatever people's struggles, he tried to understand them." He worked tirelessly in solidarity, as an educator and organiser and priest, to transform unjust patterns and structures in the light of the Gospel.

Henry lived to the full Father Arrupe's expression, "To live among the people and like the people." Given his excellent formation, this real inculturation, far from detracting from his priestly vocation, gave it an unusual, an extraordinary and magnificent meaning, always faithful to the Society of Jesus which he loved so much.

According to Liliana, Henry was a person of incredible generosity, sharing the little or nothing he had and always with a smile. His every energy was to give something which the world finds hard to find: "Love, faith, optimism, time, hope, affection, understanding" which Christ wants for everyone. He never subordinated the poor to other interests, but showed them a preferential love and treated them as persons, each one with something to offer life.

A long-time colleague in India, Gaëtane Gascon, wrote, "This humanist worked all his life to defend the poorest, and then he made his own passage of death in trust and without even losing his sense of humour, surrounded by the love of his family and friends. He inspires me to carry on the work."

Regarding the social apostolate today, Fr. Volken wrote: "I believe that, within a comprehensive perspective of human rights, we can best make the contribution of the Society of Jesus to the transformation needed for the survival of humanity: a transformation that makes human development possible, reverses the present trend of increasingly dividing humanity into rich and poor across the world, destroying the resources of the planet and fostering a culture of violence. We may work with people on both sides, provided our vision is clear and in tune with the requirements of God's dream of one united human family, living in solidarity and peace as universal brothers and sisters."

With the example of his life, Henry gave so much. He leaves a legacy of deep faith and boundless hope, dynamic energy and generosity, and a great sense of humour. Inspired by his example, by his way of following Christ, may many others take up his commitment for building up a world of greater justice and stronger solidarity, more human and more divine. May God grant Henry's generous and prophetic spirit to the social apostolate in which he served all his life.

The opening article, "The Social Apostolate in the Twentieth Century," looks back to the origins of the modern social apostolate and traces its development up to the present moment. Compared with well-established ministries in the Church and the Society, the social apostolate is still very "young," even if its roots reach all the way back through twenty centuries of Christian life to Jesus himself and even further back to the Prophets before him.

"The Twentieth Century" is a sweeping overview written for the Society of Jesus *Yearbook 2000*. It is republished here with the addition of foot-notes and of several interesting historical texts in boxes.

In such a short and popular presentation, there are certainly many elements that are missing. For example,

- The impact of Father Janssens' *Instruction* of 1949
- The story of many outstanding individuals and works or projects
- The narrative of the social apostolate in each Province

There are also many open questions of interpretation:

- How did the social apostolate respond to GC 32 in different parts of the Society?
- What effects did Decree 4 have upon the social sector itself?

Anyone wishing to supply a missing element of this history, or propose a different interpretation, is warmly encouraged to contact the Social Justice Secretariat.

The SOCIAL APOSTOLATE in the TWENTIETH CENTURY*

Michael Czerny, S.J. and Paolo Foglizzo, S.J.

Early in his public life, Jesus invoked the Jewish Jubilee to inaugurate his mission:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prisons to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.¹

Similar signs of the Lord's favour marked the activities of the early Jesuits. Ignatius took in the prostitutes and homeless in Rome; Laynez and Salmeron, sent as theologians to the Council of Trent, cared for the sick in the hospital of Trent; Jean de Brébeuf did everything he could for the "savages" of New France, so too Peter Claver for the Africans deported as slaves to New Spain, and Antonio Criminali for the fisherfolk of South India; and the Reductions of Paraguay sought to protect the life and culture of the Guarani threatened with slavery. And so, many Jesuits for several centuries.

The Jubilee tradition underlies the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus, too, but for a number of remarkable reasons, the real history is little longer than the twentieth century itself. It falls conveniently into four periods.

1. 1891 — 1949: A new apostolate is discovered

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII dedicated his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* to "the social problem" as a whole and called on all Christian people not only to respond with charity but also to transform society in the light of the Gospel. So the Church's traditional presence and action among the poor took a decisive turn.

The Pope's call was based on the new understanding that the institutions and structures of the industrializing world are themselves responsible for the miserable unjust conditions of working-class life, and therefore need to be changed. Without denying the need for individual works of mercy, the new mission is an essentially social one. The Church begins to discover her role in the world: to evangelize not just persons or communities but industrial society itself. With this discovery, the social apostolate in its modern sense is born.

A year later, in the 24th General Congregation, the Society of Jesus took it up. A single paragraph vigorously encourages associations to help workers and the poor become educated and develop, grow spiritually through the Exercises and sodalities (today's Christian Life Communities), and undertake "every work of piety and charity."

* Republished from the *Yearbook 2000* of the Society of Jesus, Rome.

¹ Luke 4:18-19.

In 1903 in France, Fr. Gustave Desbuquois founded the first Jesuit social institute, *Action Populaire*, focusing on justice in society, to form young workers and help them become organized. *Action Populaire's* many publications enjoyed wide circulation, especially the long-running series of *Yellow Tracts* which recommended changes and influenced legislation. In Germany Fr. Heinrich Pesch, regarded as the father of modern Catholic social thought, published his five-volume *Manual on the National Economy*, and Frs. Desbuquois and Oswald von Nell-Breuning of Frankfurt contributed to the writing of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).

In 1909 in England, Fr. Charles Plater started the Catholic Social Guild and, in 1921, the Catholic Workers College. In 1923 in Paris, the *Institut d'Etudes Sociales* began giving regular courses in Christian social teaching. In 1927 in Madrid, Fr. Sisinio Nevares founded the centre *Fomento Social*, and Jesuits were involved with the *circulos obreros*. In the United States, Fr. John La Farge did pioneer work with the Catholic Interracial Council of New York.

In 1938, the 28th General Congregation declared that social apostolic work, as understood in *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, is fully proper to the Society, among the most important ministries of our age, and to be promoted everywhere. The Congregation considered it urgent that Centres for social research and action be established with full-time Jesuit staff trained in economic and social questions at the graduate level. Others were to prepare for direct social ministry among the poor, among farm and especially factory workers. According to the 29th General Congregation in 1946, efficacy in such work would depend very much on the austerity of Jesuit community life.

After World War II, many other initiatives followed: in the Philippines, Fr. Walter Hogan founded the Institute of Social Order; in Chile, Blessed Alberto Hurtado founded the *Hogar de Cristo*; in Italy, the *Centro Studi Sociali* in Milan with its journal *Aggiornamenti Sociali*; in Germany, a centre began at Mannheim which then incorporated into the social policy institute in Munich; in the United States, Fr. Leo Twomey founded the New Orleans Institute of Human Relations, its bulletin *Blueprint* still publishing since 1948; and Jesuits in Brazil promoted the *Circulos Operários*.

Activities linked to the social apostolate soon became innumerable. Research into the causes of injustice, and action to influence legislative changes, contributed to the development of the new Social Doctrine of the Church. All this work required the employment, relatively new for Catholic thinkers, of the social sciences, and in Europe Jesuit social scientists began meeting as Eurojess in 1949. At the same time Jesuits, living close to the victims of injustice, served them directly and became involved in action among the poor and working classes.

This double approach — one day to be dubbed "head" and "feet" — has been a permanent trait from the beginnings of the social apostolate, as occasional disagreements suggest that arose between the activists and those engaged in study and reflection. A variety of centres and institutes put the stress on research but nearly always included programmes of formation.

During nearly sixty years, then, many initiatives came together and began to constitute a new apostolic sector in the Society.

Father Jean Baptiste Janssens, S.J., *De ministeriis nostris* (1947)

The last two Congregations have strongly commended to us the apostolate among those who may be called "neo-pagans,"^a among whom one may also well include those many whom — it is foreseen — this neo-paganism will soon have invaded. In addition to quite a few of the learned, religious indifference affects especially the working class or proletariat who, by their religious indifference, may soon end up in a practical atheism. Even after one of our very well-attended parish missions, if we compare the number of men who have participated — that appears quite remarkable to us — to the total number of residents of our parish; if we compare the sum of those who fill our city churches on a Sunday with those who were not present at Mass: we feel obliged to note how many regions which we consider Catholic are distancing themselves from the practice of the Christian life. This is most true of those who must obtain their daily sustenance by the work of their hands, who are plainly the vast majority of humanity. Almost all of Europe and Latin America is infected by this evil. Not a few of Ours, especially among the young, are extremely disturbed when they see that, held back by so many easier and less necessary ministries, we show little concern for those masses for whom hardly anyone cares. Are not the criteria of our Holy Father Ignatius regarding the selection of ministries applicable above all to this apostolate? Where is there greater need, where is there greater poverty, where is there greater danger to the destiny of the entire Catholic Church and the entire Christian way of life, than in the working class already being atheist, or heading toward atheism?

Provincials should not consider it necessary to retain all the ministries which their Province exercised or still exercises. As for our older houses, with good reason one can and must ask whether, with the passage of time, we have not gradually turned away from those who are in greater need, and toward those who have less genuine need. Where, I ask you, are our houses and residences which might have as their primary aim the salvation of workers? Where are there communities of our men who, themselves leading the life of the poor,^b work in those ministries of "a greater self-sacrifice among workers"^c? We need to think this way not only when beginning new works; we have to consider as well, in an unfeeling way, whether we need to leave behind certain works, without paying attention to false fame and public opinion, so as to come nearer to that "mobility" with which St. Ignatius wanted his Society imbued. Zealous pastors of souls, in virtue of their office and considering only their own flock, will exhort and beg us to retain our works, even though spiritual help might already be abundant in their areas; and indeed Bishops, utterly and ardently attentive to their own dioceses by proper law, will try everything they can to retain these supports for the pastoral care of their flocks. For that reason, it will be up to us to prevail upon the Bishops and pastors of souls — keeping in mind our more universal mission — to let us place our resources at the service of the Church there where the greater good of all demands it.

May all superiors and our younger priests especially reread the decrees of our most recent Congregations on these matters; they should consider them and meditate upon them; and Provincials should not judge their responsibilities of office to have been fulfilled unless they have started implementing them.

Acta Romana 11:3 (1947), n.8

^a GC28 (1938), D.29; GC29 (1946), D.29; reprinted in *Promotio Iustitiae* 66 (February 1997).

^b Cf. GC29, D.29, n.5.

^c *Ibid.*, n.2.

2. 1949 - 1975: The social apostolate grows and develops

An important turning-point opens the second period: in October 1949, Father General Jean Baptiste Janssens addressed his *Instruction on the Social Apostolate* to the whole Society.²

Since World War II prevented the social policies of the 28th and 29th General Congregations from being implemented "in an orderly and persevering manner," Father Janssens now insisted that Centres for Research and Social Action be set up "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."

Most striking is the *Instruction's* appeal to the whole Society to become "trained to that sincere and active charity which today is called 'a social attitude' or 'social-mindedness'". Through experience Jesuits should learn

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.³

Such an "unbalanced state of mankind" was unjust and called for profound change. "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, and make sure they are not almost exclusively conducted among the rich and the cultured."

The *Instruction* appeared in the post-war period, itself marked by two powerful new thrusts.

The industrial revolutions of 19th century Europe and America spilled over into other parts of the world and triggered far-reaching social and cultural changes. As the former colonies won independence, a world different from the western one came to the fore, conscious of its conditions of poverty and under-development. The concept of Third World was born as the "periphery" of the First World. The social apostolate, like many new movements in society, began responding to "global" disparities, especially in economic and social development, between regions, nations and "blocs of nations" and between "racially-different groups."

In the Church, Pope John XXIII unexpectedly caused decades of quiet preparation to flower in Vatican Council II, and the Council in turn generated fruitful changes in every area of Christian life. As the Church started taking her place in the modern world, many pastoral and educational ministries, in ever greater proximity to people who suffer, rapidly turned into works of development and consciousness-raising. In the European working world, a post-World-War-II mission of reconciliation gave birth to the Worker Mission (*mission ouvrière*) with its dynamic commitments within the important labour movement.

² *Promotio Iustitiae* 66 (February 1997), pp. 23-34.

³ *Ibid.*, § 9.

A period of innovation opened up. Social projects and centres were founded in newly independent nations, for example, in India in 1950 the Xavier Institute of Social Order, which later became the Indian Social Institute, was set up to spread correct social doctrine and assist practical work in the social apostolate. Similar developments occurred in Africa: 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 Democratic Republic of Congo in 1965. Fr. Emmanuel Foyaca was mandated to found centres for social research and action (CIAS) throughout Latin America. By the mid-1970s, there were more than two dozen social centres world-wide staffed by 170 full-time Jesuits.

The role of the social apostolate, according to the 31st General Congregation held at Vatican II was concluding, is 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, so that everyone "may be able to exercise a personal sense of participation, skill and responsibility in all areas of community life." But apparently some did not see the prevalence and urgency of social injustice or questioned whether the exercise of social concern was really faithful to our charism, and the Congregation took the trouble to insist that "the social apostolate is fully in harmony with the apostolic end of the Society of Jesus."⁴

Father Pedro Arrupe, elected Superior General in 1965, spoke out on a wide range of contemporary issues and tirelessly promoted social concern. He helped bring the promotion of justice to the fore as an element central to the modern Jesuit's identity and mission to the world. By encouraging other apostolic fields — education, theology, communications, pastoral and missionary work — to make their own social contribution, he foreshadowed and prepared what would become "the social dimension" of our mission.

For example, in the spring of 1971 at the United Nations in New York, Father Arrupe announced the founding of the Center of Concern (Washington, U.S.A.), with its focus 'toward a world that is human.'

At the same time, Father Arrupe gave the social sector a place within the Curia. His advisor, Fr. Francisco Ivern, set up the Jesuit Secretariat for Socio-Economic Development (JESEDES), today the Social Justice Secretariat. Its functions included promoting socio-economic work and studies in the field; fostering closer contacts and the exchange of information among Jesuit social centres; ensuring an active Jesuit and so Church presence in international associations and congresses concerned with development; and working closely with Church organisations such as the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace.

⁴ GC31, D.32, n.1, quoting Father Janssens' *Instruction* and referring to Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*.

The 32nd General Congregation wishes to continue along the lines given by Father General Arrupe to the Congregation of Procurators of 1970 and to emphasise once more the importance of theological reflection, social action, education and the mass media as means of making our preaching of the Gospel more effective (D.4, n.59).

Father Pedro Arrupe, "The Social Apostolate"

I would say that the "social apostolate" comes second in the order of precedence among the ministries of the Society today.

This surely will need no amplification, since we have before our eyes not only that multitude of men, "which no one can count," that lack the means necessary to live a life worthy of man, but also the unjust oppressions, the defective social structures, the attitude of indifference of those who live in wealth, and finally the intrinsic difficulty of an apostolate of this kind, in which it is sometimes so hard to determine the limits between the economic, political or social field and the announcing of the Gospel.

Just as in the theological field so too in the social field, it will be the task of the Society, assuming serious and scientific preparation, to be of assistance especially to all those who seek the solution of these problems throughout the world and, at the same time, along with them to discover the nature of the humanism of the technical world, of the true social order, of the meaning of natural values, on which the well-ordered evolution of man is based, finally what is the meaning of the presence of the Church and the priest in the world today. But all these are the products of deep and accurate scientific inquiry; and the danger is present that we may be found unprepared to attain to that summit, where the learned debate, as something beyond our reach.

In the social apostolate it is not a question of some local problem, but of the truly universal problem of men living below the level of human dignity (whom we commonly say are living a "marginal" existence), a problem which affects all nations, rich and poor, since everywhere is heard that cry, "much weeping and wailing" (*ploratus et ululatus multus*), which rightly demands the advent of another better world, which can be truly said to be and actually be "a kingdom of justice, love and peace."

Our Society is bound to think this problem through, and seriously toil by its study, its industry, its influence on all those who govern nations and make laws, especially on those who take part in international organisations, also by its testimony of poverty, simplicity of life and generosity, by its sense of true justice and love towards the poor and the abandoned, sometimes even by its sharing in the labour, in the indigence, in the anguish of men: it is bound, I say, to toil seriously so that the human condition of the whole world may become better day by day, and be transformed profoundly for the better.

This ministry of ours will be by no means easy, because it also demands great personal abnegation, but if the charity of Christ urges us, we will see more clearly than light its importance and its 'undeferable' necessity.

We have of course Social Centres in many Provinces: let us not readily think the social apostolate is to be entrusted to them alone, since it pertains to each and every one of us. Indeed there are nations and peoples so poor that the work that must be done in them does not brook delay. But it can be said that an equal responsibility rests on the wealthy nations, which possess the power of finding true solutions for establishing economic equilibrium, and for securing and attaining speedy development.

From Father Arrupe's talk on "The Four Priorities" at the Congregation of Procurators on October 5, 1970, published in the Yearbook of the Society of Jesus, 1971-1972.

3. 1975 - 1995: The social dimension becomes essential, the social sector expands

In 1975, for the first time since St. Ignatius, a deliberate question was raised about the Jesuit mission and identity: "What is it to be a companion of Jesus today?" And the 32nd General Congregation replied with decision:

It is to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our time: the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice constitutes an absolute requirement, since it pertains to human reconciliation required by people's reconciliation with God.⁵

Just as everyone is a sinner needing conversion, so too society bears the marks of its all-too-human makers or producers: unjust and sinful structures. Moreover, serious social analysis is required to understand such structures and their causes, and to identify appropriate remedies for the transformation of society.

"The promotion of justice is not one apostolic area among others;" rather, "it should be the concern of our whole life and a dimension of all our apostolic endeavours." So the promotion of justice, which accompanies the service of faith and forms an intrinsic part of evangelization, is to mark the Society's whole mission and every Jesuit activity. The social dimension, often labelled "faith and justice" or simply "Decree 4," is born with all the marks — and shock-value — of the Holy Spirit, but putting it into practice generally took many years, indeed a couple of decades.

What happened right away, paradoxically, was that Decree 4 provided enormous stimulus to the social sector itself. Jesuits moved out of monastic-style communities to live in the poor outskirts of cities or in peasant communities and experienced "the hard, everyday consequences of injustice and oppression." New thinking like Paolo Freire's from the Third World urged development rather than charity, liberation rather than development. The involvements — housing, primary healthcare, basic education, land reform, employment, human rights and civic rights, participation, advocacy and many others — all sought "to transform social structures in the interest of the spiritual and material liberation of fellow human beings."⁶

This period of creativity and change thrust the social effort into the limelight. "In all honesty, we acknowledge that this new understanding of our mission can lead to tensions."⁷ A unilateral emphasis on one aspect of the mission generated friction, as traditional ministries felt under-rated or threatened, new efforts felt hastily and harshly judged.

Father Arrupe stressed that our social apostolate, our struggle for justice, differs deeply from other types of human promotion or purely philanthropic, social or political work. What moves us is the love of God both in himself and in people. Responding to deep needs on the frontiers of the Church, this social work is apostolic and in full accordance with our Jesuit charism. For example, in 1980, moved by the plight of the boat-people from Viet Nam, Father Arrupe founded the Jesuit Refugee Service, as a responsibility of the Social Secretariat, to coordinate the work of Jesuits already serving both in the camps and to influence the larger political level. This magnificent work, now a

⁵ GC32, D.2, n.2 and D.4, n.2.

⁶ GC32, D.4, n.40.

⁷ GC33, D.1, n.33.

world-wide non-governmental organization, is Pedro Arrupe's testament for the whole Society and an example of the social apostolate developing.⁸

When the 33rd General Congregation elected Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach as General, it recognized the many graces and difficulties involved in implementing our faith-and-justice mission, expressed concern for new global issues of injustice, but said nothing specific on the social apostolate.

While developments continued at the local Province level, international meetings to share experiences and to net-work began occurring. In 1987 at Villa Cavalletti, directors of Social Centres recommended exposure to the reality of poverty and injustice in our formation and apostolic practice;⁹ in India in 1988, a conference on appropriate technology showed the value of South-South cooperation;¹⁰ an encounter of great spirit at Detroit in 1991 promoted solidarity among Jesuit ministries;¹¹ and in 1993 in Canada, the first world-wide encounter of Jesuits working among Native or indigenous peoples took the theme, "Let there be new light."¹²

Reflecting on the mandate of the service of faith and the promotion of justice, Father General formulated pointed questions about the social apostolate in 1989. Many Provinces gave evidence of putting the faith-justice mission into practice with perseverance and with sensitivity to the great regional diversities. Hundreds of Jesuits, some trained in social sciences, were hard at work in the most varied social works, ministries, actions around the world. At the same time, dangers including "burn-out" threatened the effort. The collated responses to Father General's questions were presented to the Congregation of Provincials at Loyola in September 1990 and generated a vigorous discussion.

The same Congregation became vividly aware that "some Jesuits have been exiled, imprisoned or put to death in their service of faith and promotion of justice." Between 1975 and 1990, well over thirty Jesuit priests and brothers gave their lives in the faithful exercise of their mission in Bolivia, Brazil, Chad, Colombia, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mozambique, Philippines and Zimbabwe. Provincials from all over the world were deeply moved to hear about the six Jesuits and two women violently killed, less than a year earlier, as promoters of justice and reconciliation at the Central American University in El Salvador, as well as the silent martyrdoms occurring for decades in the Soviet sphere. Martyrdom has always been seen as God's mysteriously sealing charisms with His divine approval. Both the social sector and the social dimension bore marks of this mysterious blessing.

⁸ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "On the Jesuit Refugee Service," June 24, 2000.

⁹ *Promotio Iustitiae* 35 (May 1987).

¹⁰ *International Jesuit Convention on Appropriate Technology: Report*, Baroda, India, 1988.

¹¹ *Faith Doing Justice: Promoting Solidarity in Jesuit Ministries*, Detroit, June 1991.

¹² *Promotio Iustitiae* 59 (March 1995), 25-26.

The third period closed with preparations for the upcoming General Congregation.

COMPLEMENTARY NORMS (1995)

SEVENTH PART: Mission and ministries of the Society

FOURTH CHAPTER: The ministries through which the Society fulfils her mission

7. *Social apostolate*

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

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

§2. Moreover, all should understand that they can and ought to exercise the social apostolate in their spiritual ministries by explaining the social teaching of the Church, by stimulating and directing the souls of the faithful toward social justice and social charity, and, finally, by establishing social projects by means of the members of our organizations.^c

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

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

301- §1. Our members should promote those things that, in the light of the social teaching of the Church, tend to infuse Christian principles into public life; they should not, however, become involved in partisan politics.^g

§2. Whether any of our members, in truly exceptional circumstances, may be permitted to take some active part in offices entailing a participation in the exercise of civil power or in political parties or in the direction of labour unions, is for the General to decide; he will take into account the universal law of the Church and the opinion of competent ecclesiastical authority.^h

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

106- §3. A certain experience of living with the poor will sometimes be necessary for our young men, to help them both to overcome limitations that may perchance spring from their own social background and to strengthen their love for the poor. However, this should take place under such conditions that it will be genuine, free of illusions, and productive of a true conversion. For this purpose, contact with the poor should be extended rather than occasional, and must be accompanied by careful reflection and integrated into training in socio-cultural analysis.^j

^a GC31 D.32 nn.1,4a; CG32 D.4 nn.40, 59-60; see also *Collectio decretorum* [122-137; 258-263; 419-422] (GC28 D.29; GC29 D.29; GC30 DD.52-53).

^b See GC31, D.32 n.3.

^c GC29, D.29, n.3 (*Coll.d.*[261]).

^d GC31 D.32 n.4 d-e.

^e GC34 D.5 n.9.7.

^f GC34 D.3 n.20.

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

^h See GC32 D.4 n.80; Code of Canon Law (CIC) 672 compared with 285 §3 and 287 §2; Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) 383, 1°, 384 §2.

ⁱ See GC31 D.32 n.4 b-c; GC32 D.4 nn.35,44.

^j See GC32 D.6 n.10; GC34 D.3 n.18.

4. 1995-2000 The social dimension is re-affirmed, the sector undertakes renewal

A good twenty years have passed since Decree 4. "If we have the patience and the humility and the courage to walk with the poor, we will learn from what they have to teach us what we can do to help them."¹³ What have we learned from them, from the martyrs, from the Lord?

In 1995 the 34th General Congregation vigorously reaffirmed the Society's single mission of evangelization, serving the faith and promoting the justice of the Gospel which embodies God's love and saving mercy, in dialogue with cultures and religions. In effect, it declared, Decree 4 rightly understood is our *mission possible* for the whole Society in common.

At the same time the Congregation explicitly charged the social apostolate "to strive with every effort so that the structures of human life in common be impregnated with a fuller expression of justice and charity."¹⁴

The moment was ripe for the social sector to take stock. A process of re-reading our experience, bravely called "Initiative 1995-2005," was launched with an apparently innocent but all-encompassing question: "*How do you Jesuits in the social apostolate bring the Good News to society?*" The question brought everything under scrutiny — our faith, the work we do, the life we lead. We asked about the spirituality and vision of our social apostolate in the light of the Gospel (why?); the different social and cultural contexts we work in (where?); and the very varied means and methods we use in close collaboration with our colleagues (how?). The questions stimulated reflection and, importantly, exchange and dialogue with one another.

These are the topics explored and celebrated in a wonderful international Congress in Naples in June 1997. Its theme was "to bring the justice of the Gospel to society and culture." The 160 delegates recognized the complexities of socio-cultural-religious change and joyfully accepted the difficulties with both realism and hope.

As a result, several instruments became available for Jesuits and co-workers. One is a video called "*Social Apostolate: Why?*" with many images filmed at Naples; it shows Jesuits facing the basic questions of the social apostolate. Another is a *Catalogue* which details, Province by Province, what Jesuits are doing in the social sector and in the social dimension of other sectors.

The most important tool of renewal is the *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus*, published in 1998 as a working draft.¹⁵ The new handbook conveys the essential concerns, the typical approaches and convictions, the "questions which cannot not be asked" and the "tensions to be maintained," the very desirable but elusive mutual collaboration of "head" and "feet." Our social ministries must permanently strive to incorporate these characteristics in order to be **both** socially and culturally effective **and** evangelically expressive of the Good News. With its renewal the social apostolate hopes to contribute more effectively than in the past to the social dimension of the mission in each Province.

¹³ GC32, D.4, n.50

¹⁴ NC298.

¹⁵ *Promotio Iustitiae* 69 (1998).

In 1999, a broad consultation was completed on ecology in relation to Ignatian spirituality, apostolic contributions and collaboration, and our lifestyle and decisions. Entitled "*We live in a broken world*," the study seeks to encourage both international awareness and local action on ecology.¹⁶

Father General's letter to mark the 50th anniversary of Father Janssens' *Instruction on the Social Apostolate* suggests that our specific response as Society of Jesus and as social apostolate, in face of urgent needs, must be a response in creative fidelity to the Ignatian charism, in close collaboration with others, in radical accompaniment of those who suffer injustice and oppression, and in service of the Lord Jesus who labours.¹⁷

The social apostolate is a passionate enterprise. Reality, with all its contradictions and difficulties: this is where we live, engaged, in community and as a team, with the Lord Jesus in the Church his Body and with the poor. Our endeavour is to work for effective justice in culture and society, to work with people for possible changes, for justice which is of the Kingdom. We have been given reasons to hope, abundantly. Let us proclaim the Good News and live the year of the Lord's favour.

Social apostolate secretaries in the General Curia in Rome

1968-1975Fr. Francisco Ivern (Central Brazil) established the Jesuit Secretariat for Socio-Economic Development (JESEDES), today known as the Social Justice Secretariat.

1975-1984Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston (Britain) turned the *JESEDES* bulletin into *Promotio Iustitiae* which, by century's end, numbered over seventy issues.

1984-1991Fr. Henry Volken (Goa-Pune) distilled all the Province responses into a panorama of the social apostolate at the end of the 1980s.

1992-....Fr. Michael Czerny (Upper Canada) prepared the justice theme before the 34th General Congregation and launched the "Initiative 1995-2005."

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¹⁶ *Promotio Iustitiae* 70 (1999).

¹⁷ January 24, 2000 (see pages 19-24 below).

On the SOCIAL APOSTOLATE*

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.

Dear Fathers and Brothers, the peace of Christ!

1. A few weeks after the opening of the Holy Door, I would like to recall that the Great Jubilee of 2000, like every jubilee, is a summons on the part of our Creator and Saviour to re-establish lost harmony and to advance in **social justice**. The loud trumpet — the *yôbel* — which sounded to open the holy year,¹⁸ called every injustice into question and gave hope to the poor! When Jesus begins to preach the good news, his anointing and mission are "to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."¹⁹ Now Pope John Paul II has reactivated the age-old purpose of the jubilee to restore this social justice. "The social doctrine of the Church, which has always been a part of Church teaching and which has developed greatly in the last century, particularly after the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, is rooted in the tradition of the jubilee year."²⁰

2. To be converted to this **social dimension** of faith, which pervades the biblical tradition and the Gospels, God our Father also calls the Society of Jesus anew. From its very earliest origins, the preferential option for the poor, assuming various forms according to times and places, has marked the whole history of the Society. With his powerful *Instruction* of fifty years ago, Father Jean-Baptiste Janssens oriented the Jesuit social apostolate "to procure 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."²¹

Father Pedro Arrupe took up this apostolic orientation passionately and based it solidly upon the thoroughly evangelical relationship between social justice, as well defined by his predecessor, and the new commandment of love — so new as to need a new word, namely, *agape*. A social justice integrated with the great commandment of love is always intended

* Available from the Social Justice Secretariat in English, Chinese, Czech, French, Indonesian, Italian, Polish, Slovak, Slovenian and Spanish.

¹⁸ Leviticus 25:9.

¹⁹ Luke 4:16ff.

²⁰ John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (1994), n.13.

²¹ "Instruction on the Social Apostolate" of 10.10.1949, *ARXI*, 714; *Promotio Iustitiae* 66 (1997), n.7.

On the Social Apostolate, 21

by the General Congregations. "The social justice we are called to is part of that **justice of the Gospel** which is the embodiment of God's love and saving mercy."²²

²² GC33, D.1, n.32; cf. GC32, D.4, nn.28,31.

Pope John Paul II, also asking if justice sufficed by itself, gave this response: "The experience of the past and of our own time demonstrates that **justice alone** is not enough, that it can even lead to the negation and destruction of itself, if that deeper power, which is love, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions."²³ Father Arrupe and the recent General Congregations, echoing the Holy Father's concern, acknowledge, on the one hand, how charity can be abused when it is a mere cloak or subterfuge for injustice but that, on the other hand, "one cannot act justly without love. Even when we resist injustice we cannot prescind from love, since the universality of love is, by the express desire of Christ, a commandment that admits of no exceptions."²⁴

3. Authoritatively synthesising the progress of the four General Congregations after Vatican II, the Complementary Norms affirm: "**the contemporary Jesuit mission** is the service of faith and the promotion in society of that justice of the Gospel which is the embodiment of God's love and saving mercy ... This mission is 'a single but complex reality, which develops in a variety of ways'"²⁵ in the very varied fields and works and activities in which Jesuits are engaged throughout the world. Despite the considerable difficulties and our many failures, we look back with gratitude to the Lord for the gifts received on this "journey of faith as we committed ourselves to the promotion of justice as an integral part of our mission."²⁶ The Society has evolved to the point where GC 34 voted unanimously in favour of the decree *Our Mission and Justice*, and the vast majority of Jesuits have integrated the social dimension into our Jesuit **identity** and into the **awareness** of our mission in education, formation and social communications, in pastoral and retreat work. In many places the concern for justice is an essential part of our public **image** in both Church and society, thanks to those ministries of ours which are characterised by love for the poor and the marginalised, defending human rights and ecology, and promoting non-violence and reconciliation.

4. Directly out of this contemporary mission with its integrating principle of faith and justice comes the social apostolate and its specific focus, as the Complementary Norms explain. "The social apostolate, like every form of our apostolate, flows from the mission; in the planning of our apostolic activities, in fulfilling today's mission of the Society in the service of faith, it should take its place among those having priority. Its goal is to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common."²⁷ In each Province and Assistancy, this **social apostolate** incarnates the social dimension of our mission, concretely embodies it in real commitments and renders it visible. In different places and in varying circumstances, the social apostolate takes multiple forms: social research and publications, advocacy and human development, and direct social action with and for the poor.²⁸

²³ John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia* (1980), n.12.

²⁴ Pedro Arrupe, S.J., *Rooted and grounded in love* (1981), n.56.

²⁵ GC34, D.2, n.3 (quoting GC33, D.1, n.32) and NC245 § 2; *loc.cit.* (quoting *Redemptoris Missio*, n.41) and NC245 § 1.

²⁶ GC34, D.3, n.1.

²⁷ NC299 § 1; NC298.

²⁸ Cf. NC300, § 2.

The Jesuit social apostolate today exhibits some noteworthy **positive elements**. Above all, it faces very different challenges in all corners of the world with dedication, energy and creativity. There are countless examples of Jesuits involved, collaborating with others, in projects and movements to bring greater justice and charity to society. Moreover, the social apostolate keeps showing the capacity to attract gifted and generous co-workers, as well as candidates to the Society. As if to confirm the mission of faith and justice, God has providentially granted the Society the mysterious gift of martyrdom in recent years.

5. At the same time and paradoxically, this awareness of the social dimension of our mission does not always find concrete expression in a vital social apostolate. On the contrary, the latter manifests some **troubling weaknesses**: There seem to be ever fewer Jesuits available and less prepared for the social apostolate, while those already in the field are sometimes discouraged and scattered, somehow lacking in collaboration and organisation. Factors external to the Society are also weakening the social apostolate: The times are marked by unforeseeable and very rapid socio-cultural changes, not easy to read and even harder to respond to effectively (e.g., globalisation, the excesses of the market economy, drug traffic and corruption, mass migration, ecological degradation, outbreaks of brutal violence). Formerly-inspiring visions of society and broad strategies for structural change have ceded to scepticism or a preference, at best, for more modest projects and restricted approaches.

Thus the social apostolate risks losing its vigour and momentum, its orientation and impact. Were this to happen in a given Province or Assistancy, then for lack of a vital and well-organised social apostolate, the essential social dimension would also probably fade away bit by bit. Such a process of **erosion** would inevitably reduce *Our mission today* (GC 32) and *Our mission and justice* (GC 34) to a few obligatory but rhetorical phrases in the discourse of the Society, leaving our option for the poor and our promotion of justice hollowed out.

May we not find ourselves ever less capable of being present — or even of hearing the call to go — "wherever in the Church, even in the most difficult and extreme fields, in the crossroads of ideologies, in the front line of social conflict, there has been and there is confrontation between the deepest desires of man and the perennial message of the Gospel," in the ringing words of Pope Paul VI addressing the delegates of GC 32 and of Pope John Paul II addressing those of GC 34.²⁹

6. So it seems of vital importance to keep striving to translate our social awareness, identity and image into effective, evangelically meaningful service to the poorest and most suffering of God's people. It is a matter of continually **re-discovering** and **re-discerning** — *in situ* — the demands and challenges which the recent General Congregations pose to our social action in today's societies, cultures and religions. In "the dialogue of action," for example, we are to collaborate with others, rooted in their own religious traditions, for the integral development and liberation of people.³⁰

²⁹ Allocutions of 3 December 1974 and of 5 January 1995.

³⁰ GC34, D.5, n.4b.

For, as we are increasingly aware, the **structures** of human life in common are of different kinds, not only economic and political, but also cultural and religious; all of them condition human life, all of them can weaken or destroy it, and all of them are capable of being impregnated by the Gospel and of embodying a greater justice and charity. So it is worth paying unflagging attention to the different aspects of the **contexts** in which we find ourselves, lest we end up oblivious of the changes developing or out of touch with them.

7. These are some reasons why, after GC 34, the social apostolate began a world-wide **examen**. It was deemed necessary to organise the 1997 Naples Congress in an effort to give new impetus within the Society to the social apostolate as a sign of our full commitment to the social dimension of our mission. Among some promising results of the process, programmed for 1995-2005, the following seem especially significant.

One is the importance of elaborating the **characteristics** of the social apostolate at the level of the universal Society and of adapting them at the local level. Such characteristics provide the framework for continually discerning, in creative fidelity to the social dimension of our charism, what the Spirit calls us to in the ever different poverties and injustices of the world. Some of the many insights and questions needed in this sense find expression in the working draft *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate*. Since the current draft is taking much longer to revise than foreseen, everyone is encouraged to send in comments and suggestions towards a definitive edition of these *Characteristics*, after study and discussion in communities and groups.

While each commitment can and must be very specific, we need to keep in mind the various levels of action and reflection which are involved, as the well-known expression "**local/global**" suggests. These levels go from the apparently simplest contact with and service to the poor at the grass-roots, through every sort of human development and promotion, to working for far-reaching change in structures nationally and internationally.

As we keep working at different levels, we also want to become aware of and remain up-to-date on how complex and changing are the injustices and the socio-cultural structures in today's world. This requires bringing a **plurality** of viewpoints to bear on problems and employing multiple ways of reading society and doing things there.

Finally, experience has taught us to ground our social commitment squarely upon the foundation of our Ignatian **spirituality** and our Jesuit **tradition**, both of which "place us joyfully with the Son and with those among whom the Son wants to be, the poor and neglected of the earth."³¹ We recognise that it is not possible to call oneself a companion of Jesus if one does not share His love for those who suffer.

8. These same elements suggest the direction in which to continue going and indicate some concrete measures to support the process currently underway.

An endless pluralism of approaches and variety of methods and organisational models constitute, without a doubt, an enormous richness of the social apostolate; but, in order to fulfil this potential and grow as an apostolic body, it very much needs adequate **co-**

³¹ GC34, D.9, n.18.

ordination. Accordingly, we need to make good use of the forms and structures of co-ordination already available and indeed strengthen them. I would like every Province, Region and inter-provincial body like Conferences of Major Superiors to have a co-ordinator of the social apostolate, supported by an appropriate commission, and with sufficient capacity, resources and time to play their role.

At the same time, a greater flow of useful and up-to-date **information** is needed in the social apostolate within Provinces and beyond them. Such exchange of information should encourage those involved, propose questions or instruments of reflection, and help networks to grow and function effectively. Much greater benefit can be drawn from the Church's social teaching and the social apostolate's experience accumulated since the *Instruction* of Father Janssens. I count on the Social Justice Secretariat at the Curia to continue its work of co-ordination and to strengthen communications throughout the social apostolate.

Compared with the work of other groups and organisations active in the social field, the social apostolate of the Society is notable for its presence at all the various **levels** from the grassroots to international bodies, and in all the various **approaches** from the direct forms of service, through working with groups and movements, to research, reflection and publication. In this typically multiple presence, a great but little-realised potential of the universal Society lies hidden, which we owe it to the poor and to the Church to make better use of. Let us actively look for ways of combining competencies in social analysis and theological reflection, with experience of closeness to the poor and work with those who suffer injustices of every sort, and of better exploiting all the possibilities that are given us as a universal and international apostolic body.

Finally, the perseverance and the development of the social apostolate cannot take place without the availability of qualified Jesuits and co-workers. Therefore, I encourage Jesuits involved in the social apostolate and those responsible for **formation** to co-operate in setting up well-designed programmes, within a Province or inter-Provincially, such as GC 34 asks: "Young Jesuits should be in contact with the poor, not just occasionally, but in a more sustained manner. These experiences must be accompanied by careful reflection as part of the academic and spiritual formation and should be integrated into training in socio-cultural analysis."³² The normal formation should provide scholastics and brothers with the social studies and apostolic experiences that will help all to grow in social-mindedness, allowing some to encounter in the social apostolate the sector in which they can fulfil their own personal and priestly vocation to the Society.

Our non-Jesuit **co-workers**, too, should be assured really good access to the Society's spiritual heritage and apostolic experience, wherefrom they can draw as they integrate their personal background and gifts. Opportunities for learning, reflection, prayer and on-going formation need to be offered our co-workers with, always, the greatest respect for their religious convictions. Some experiences already show the Characteristics to be a useful resource for these purposes.

³² GC34, D.3, n.18.

9. "Christ came to unite what was divided, to destroy sin and hatred, and to reawaken in humanity the vocation to unity and brotherhood."³³ The crying needs of the poor, the radical demands of the Gospel, the insistent teaching of the Church, and the prophetic calls of our General Congregations, leave us far from complacent with our response. "The commitment of the Society to a radical life of faith that finds expression in the promotion of justice"³⁴ has been, is and will be **a great grace** for us all. Much fine work is already being done and much renewal is already underway. With profound gratitude we appreciate the work done in the name of the whole Society by social works great and small, by the Jesuit Refugee Service and many Jesuit Volunteers.

These few pages suggest why and how to strengthen the social apostolate, locally and beyond, so that the social dimension of the Society's universal mission may find ever more concrete and effective expression in who we are, what we do, how we live. "How much the Society will accomplish" — declared Father Janssens at the end of his *Instruction* — "if only we unite our forces and, in a spirit of oneness, gird ourselves humbly and resolutely for the work before us!" May the Lord Jesus, with the intercession of Mary our Mother of the Magnificat, enlist us ever more fully and radically as servants of His mission.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Superior General

Rome, 24 January 2000

³³ John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2000*, n.19.

³⁴ GC34, D.2, n.8.

PRIORITIES and PROSPECTIVES

Michael Czerny, S.J.

Beginning soon after the 34th General Congregation in 1995, the Jesuit social apostolate has been undertaking its own process of *examen* and renewal, programmed for the years 1995-2005.

1995 The "Social Apostolate Initiative 1995-2005"³⁵ was launched, firstly, in order to discover and renew the identity of the Jesuit social apostolate; and secondly, to situate the social sector better in a Society of Jesus which definitely wants to strengthen the social justice dimension of its multifaceted evangelisation.

1996 Several provocative questions got the Society-wide *examen* going in all ten Assistancies:

How do you Jesuits in the social apostolate bring the Good News to society? —

Please describe your vision, the work you do, the life you lead.

The questions took more specific forms, such as:

What do you think is happening in society? How do you respond?

What's evangelical, Jesuit, priestly about your response?

Why do you do such work?

What do you hope to achieve?

How do you evaluate your efforts and institutions: what counts for success, for failure?

In some thirty meetings and workshops in the various Assistancies from July 1995 until April 1997, the various questions were debated and initial responses drafted and collated.

1997 The week-long Naples Congress celebrated the graces of the social apostolate, acknowledged the considerable differences, accepted the broad pluralism of approaches, and addressed some of the daunting difficulties of this sector. A certain consensus emerged to continue with the "Initiative." Coming out of the Congress, the first product was the video³⁶ presenting the social apostolate, the process underway, and some of the main concerns.

³⁵ Described in "Social Apostolate in the Twentieth Century" (see page 16, above) and in *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate* (1998), Appendix B, page vi.

³⁶ *"Social Apostolate: Why?"* Accompanied by its *User Guide*, the video is available from the Social Justice Secretariat in English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Slovak and Spanish, and in the required VHS system: NTSC, PAL or SECAM.

1998The whole "Initiative" so far and especially the Congress issued in the draft *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus*.³⁷ The *Characteristics* elaborate the purpose of the Jesuit social apostolate — *to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common, to bring the justice of the Gospel to society and culture* — and establish a common basis on which Jesuits and colleagues can meet, reflect, pray and work more closely together in the mission entrusted to them.

1999In response to a specific request of GC 34,³⁸ *"We live in a broken world": Reflections on Ecology* sets out a framework for reflection on ecological ministries and their renewal.³⁹

2000Father General's Letter "On the Social Apostolate" is a great event for the social apostolate. It appears mid-way through the Social Apostolate Initiative, at the beginning of the Jubilee year and on the 50th anniversary of Father Janssens' *Instruction on the Social Apostolate*. It touches on many key elements of our Jesuit way of proceeding in the social apostolate itself and the social dimension of our entire mission.

Summing up the process so far, the Letter serves as a kind of mid-way assessment or interim report on the "Initiative," and it renews the invitation to join in the process underway. Even more importantly, it sets the direction for the social apostolate during the coming months and years, by identifying the key practical points discovered so far which are now important for us to work seriously on together. These priority concerns are presented here under three headings: communications, co-ordination, and the characteristics.

1. Communications

When we think of communications, a most moving image of the young Society of Jesus is the letters which Ignatius and his companions wrote to one another and which criss-crossed the globe. How important those letters were for binding the members together in union, charity and love! "This bond is strengthened," and here we make a leap to the 21st century, "by their getting information and news from one another and having much intercommunication."⁴⁰

"Getting news and information and having much intercommunication" have become even more urgent and demanding today. In his Letter, Father General noted a certain "scatteredness" which typifies the social apostolate, given the enormous variety of social situations and of Jesuit responses to them. Despite immeasurably more sophisticated means available than in the days of St. Ignatius, the social apostolate often remains poorly inter-connected, and many members feel quite distant from each other in every sense of the term. They do not necessarily know one another's work or projects very well. *A fortiori*, the social apostolate remains poorly known by others in the Society and the Church.

³⁷ Available in English, Chinese (selections), French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish.

³⁸ See GC34, Decree 20, "Ecology."

³⁹ Available in English, French, Italian, Japanese and Spanish.

⁴⁰ *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* [821].

Within the social sector as well as in each Province and Assistancy, and beyond them internationally, the communication needs are indeed very great.

News and information have to be well-selected, contextualised, up-to-date and useful. They should transmit the sufferings of God's people and urgent situations for the sake of a more concerted solidarity; the challenges and problems which Jesuits and colleagues are facing; the various concrete means being tried; the alternative responses or solutions, whether successful or not. The flow and exchange should also include concerns, prayer, affection and zeal; they should convey images, feelings, spirit and hope.

Much of this is already there, waiting to be shared. There are many analyses, tested approaches and know-how, resources, spiritual and practical helps which, if made known and available, would nourish social ministries greatly and help them gradually to coalesce into a vital sector within the mission of each Province as well as inter-provincially.

Father General has mandated "the Social Justice Secretariat at the Curia ... to strengthen communications throughout the social apostolate."⁴¹ This means acquiring the capacity to select information, present it in an appealing style, and distribute it rapidly in several languages in both electronic and print media. In response, here are some of the means of communication which are available or being prepared at the international level:

Points is a new monthly communication with all the Co-ordinators or Delegates of the Social Apostolate, to orient and encourage them; it is starting to become a dialogue. Published in four languages, it is sent to Co-ordinators by e-mail and, where needed, by fax.

Headlines is planned as a brief regular flow of information and news about the social apostolate for Jesuits and colleagues working in the social apostolate and for others who request it. To be distributed monthly in four languages by e-mail and, where needed, by mail. (To begin as soon as possible in 2000)

The **Website**⁴² will be redesigned to offer up-to-date information and basic documentation about the social apostolate, to provide a constant overview of our concerns and activities. Several Jesuit networks on serious social topics have already sprung up⁴³ and others are beginning to form; the website will serve them as a kind of common electronic base. Better communication should assist existing networks and inspire new ones to form.

Promotio Iustitiae began in the 1960s and took on its current format after GC 32 to serve as a stimulus for reflection on the social experiences/aspects of the Society's mission. *PJ* comes out three-four times per year in English, French, Italian and Spanish; it is published on paper and posted on the website.

⁴¹ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "On the Social Apostolate," 24 January, 2000, n.8. See pages 19-24, above. Hereafter, "Letter."

⁴² The Social Justice Secretariat's web page is at <http://maple.lemoyne.edu/jesuit/sj/>

⁴³ *Promotio Iustitiae* 72 (November 1999), 126-34.

2. Co-ordination

The preceding section began with an image of communication from the early Society, but this one on "co-ordination" seems to be something new. St. Ignatius, in his meticulous treatment of every task and office in the Society, never mentioned the function of co-ordinator. Nevertheless, today's conditions and culture increasingly require this sort of service which, admittedly, we are only beginning to employ in carrying out the mission of the Society.

The social apostolate, adapting to the very diverse social circumstances around the world, includes projects and works of many different types. "An endless pluralism of approaches and variety of methods and organisational models constitute, without a doubt, an enormous richness of the social apostolate."⁴⁴ This rich variety is well documented in the *Social Apostolate Catalogue* covering all ten Assistancies, first published in 1997 and currently being up-dated. This same pluralism and variety is precisely what makes co-ordination an absolute necessity. "In order to fulfil this potential and grow as an apostolic body, the social apostolate very much needs adequate co-ordination."

In some Provinces, where very few people are doing explicit or full-time social ministry, Jesuits may meet only sporadically to reflect on our faith and justice mission, and so feel there is no social apostolate. In other Provinces there may be a good number of social projects, both well-established and even new ones, but still no corporate sense of being a vital sector and really contributing to the Province mission. In both cases the Provincial, in consultation with those already working in the social field, needs to identify those emblematic social works which the Province is invested in now and committed to in the future. Works of very different kinds — not only obviously social ones but also pastoral or educational ones involving poor and marginalised people — may legitimately be included in the social sector. Naming a co-ordinator can help a great deal to encourage a social sector to begin taking shape in the Province.

Many Provinces at this time feel a real need to establish or refound the social apostolate as a sector, both for its own sake and as a contribution to the social dimension. A revitalised social sector will contribute generous creativity to the other ministries, to our whole mission and our religious life and, God willing, to the attraction of vocations.

The *Social Apostolate Catalogue*

- Coordinator and social commission

Sector:

- a) Significant works of social action**
- b) Centres for social research, training and action**
- c) Collaboration with other groups or projects of social justice**
- d) Other noteworthy features of the social sector**

Dimension:

- e) Pastoral projects with a strong social aspect**
- f) Educational works with their justice dimension**
- g) Jesuit magazine, review or other media projects treating contemporary issues**
- h) Works of Ignatian spirituality with a social accent**
- i) Social experiments and reflection on justice in Jesuit formation**
- j) Other noteworthy aspects of the promotion of justice in the Province mission**

⁴⁴ Letter, n.8.

Experience shows that the social sector often develops in stages. The first stage may be called a "collection" of individuals or pioneers: some come when a meeting is called, others do not, everyone speaks but only to exchange news. The second stage may be called a "federation" of representatives: people come to defend or further their own interests or works. In the third stage, the members are well-linked; the co-ordinator and commission are able to care for the sum of projects, works and staff, and to exercise responsibility for the social sector as an organic apostolic body now and in the future. This includes questions of formation and assignments, evaluation of works, and even the vetting of project proposals being submitted to funding agencies.⁴⁵

Whatever stage of development a Province or Region finds itself in, a co-ordinator can work with those most involved and interested, and encourage them to meet and begin forming a social sector. The starting-point is "to make good use of the forms and structures of co-ordination already available and indeed strengthen them."⁴⁶ One such formal structure is the Province-level commission or committee. Often a new co-ordinator's priority task, with the help of the Provincial, is to get a social apostolate commission set up or renewed.

The commission does not need not to be large or broadly representative; on the contrary, it should be rather small so that it can meet easily and work well. It should include younger Jesuits in formation who have social interest, sensibility and vision — what Father Janssens in his *Instruction* called "social-mindedness." The active support of the Provincial is, needless-to-say, of vital importance, especially where initial steps are being taken.

"I would like every Province, Region and inter-provincial body like Conferences of Major Superiors to have a co-ordinator of the social apostolate, supported by an appropriate commission, and with sufficient capacity, resources and time to play their role."⁴⁷

3. The characteristics

Father General's Letter and the draft *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate* have this in common: both come out of a great deal of experience but, written for the whole Society, they cannot include all the specific references to and connections with the reality of each Province. Therefore the impact or relevance of both depends greatly upon their being read in the concrete circumstances of our social experience, our people's needs and our local Church, our projects or works, our Province's mission.

Father General's Letter encourages us to keep on adapting, using, testing and improving the characteristics of the social apostolate at the local level. Feedback out of this ongoing experience will nourish the effort to revise and re-elaborate the characteristics as relevant for everyone, with all the diversity of our involvements, at the level of the universal Society.

Drawn up out of our experience and tradition, the characteristics are neither description nor doctrine. They are authentic marks which give our work its Jesuit identity and assure its apostolic

⁴⁵ See *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate*, 1998, chapter 3.10, "The Jesuit Body."

⁴⁶ Letter, n.8.

⁴⁷ Letter, n.8.

effectiveness. They are emerging, in the course of the "Initiative," from the interplay of all three facets of the Jesuit social apostolate:

- "social" refers to the sufferings and injustices, the people's movements, the field or sphere in which we think, speak and act.
- "apostolate" means the work that we do (research and advocacy and action) as lay, diaconal and priestly ministry in the Church.
- "Jesuit" conveys the mission, body and spirituality of the Society of Jesus.

They suggest "what should be" without legal pretence of regulating an apostolate which by essence needs to be flexible and responsive. They "provide the framework for continually discerning, in creative fidelity to the social dimension of our charism, what the Spirit calls us to in the ever different poverties and injustices of the world."⁴⁸ In the light of experience, they continue to require revision.

Some of the many insights and questions needed — what has been discovered and learned throughout the Society — have been collated, distilled and edited in the draft handbook of *Characteristics*. This is not the place to make a new presentation of them, but it is surely worth taking a good look at the index:

1. *Who inspires us ? – Origins*

2. *What do we do and live ? – Basics*

3. *How do we work ? – Components*

a. Reading the situation

- 3.1 Socio-Cultural Analysis
- 3.2 Cultural Reading
- 3.3 Economic Reading
- 3.4 Political Reading
- 3.5 Religious Reading

b. Promoting the work

- 3.6 Teamwork
- 3.7 Cooperation and Networking
- 3.8 Planning and Evaluation
- 3.9 Administration

c. Forming the apostolate

- 3.10 The Jesuit Body
- 3.11 Next Generations

⁴⁸ Letter, n.7.

4. *How do we proceed ? – Style*

4.1 Discernment

4.2 On-going Tensions

5. *Why do we hope ? – Vision*

The sixteen chapters of the *Characteristics* strive to understand and explain the social apostolate coherently from multiple points of view — without exaggerating one aspect at the cost of others. The title of each chapter suggests an area of concern, points worth considering, "questions which *cannot not* be asked" by anyone involved in this apostolate and therefore worth-posing to oneself and one's colleagues. This is why they are characteristic, typical, necessary. They lead to making an *examen*, alone or together. Each chapter, each part of each chapter, sheds light on some aspect or experience in the social apostolate ... some more relevant here, others elsewhere, some relevant now, others later. Certain points may seem obvious, but experience shows that they cannot be taken for granted. Where some of these qualities already exist (for example, spirituality or teamwork or political analysis or good administration), they should be confirmed, enhanced and shared with others. Where weak or missing, they should be attended to, facilitated and promoted.

The draft *Characteristics* handbook is very much a "work in progress." Many in the social apostolate throughout the world are using different parts of the handbook and testing them. This patient collaboration and feedback will slowly clarify the whole and bring us to the definitive version of the *Characteristics*. Their implementation, indeed, is already taking place step by step.

Arriving at a definitive version of the *Characteristics* is taking more time than originally foreseen. So we need to keep on putting the current draft to good use and learning from each experience of trying to implement them. Everyone is warmly invited, after study and discussion of various chapters in communities and groups, to send in comments and suggestions towards a definitive edition of the *Characteristics*.

May this whole "Initiative," especially now with the guidance and support of Father General's Letter, help the social apostolate in each Province to grow and develop. The cry of God's people expresses their most painful sufferings and needs. Our social apostolate's mission in response is to work tirelessly and in collaboration at transforming terribly unjust sinful structures — economic, political, social, cultural and religious — into fuller expressions of justice and charity, and to share with everyone the real hope we feel in Christ for all human beings and creation.

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Beginning with issue no. 71, *Promotio Iustitiae* is published in Italian as well as in English, French and Spanish. A reader who would like to receive *PJ* in Italian (instead of, or in addition to, other versions), or who knows someone who would appreciate receiving it, please contact the Social Justice Secretariat by mail, fax or e-mail. Thank you!