

EXCHANGES ÉCHANGES INTERCAMBIOS SCAMBI

N° 75, 2001/2

† **Martin J. Royackers, S.J.**
1959-2001

* **Introduction** 38

* **Cancellation of the African Debt Will Not Change Anything** 39
Aquiline Tarimo, S.J., Tanzania

History of the Jesuit Workers' Mission
Noël Barré, S.J. 49
A Spiritual Testament
† Herman Pillaert, S.J.

* **Roots of a Specifically Jesuit Vocational Culture** 61
Gabino Uríbarri, S.J., Spain

* **Letter from Italy** 71

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Promotio Iustitiae is published by the Social Justice Secretariat at the General Curia of the Society of Jesus (Rome) in English, French, Italian and Spanish, and is printed on totally chlorine-free paper (TCF).

If you would like to receive *PJ*, please send your mailing-address (indicating the language of your choice) to the Editor.

Promotio Iustitiae will also soon be published electronically on the World Wide Web at the address:

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Michael Czerny, S.J.
Editor

† Martin J. Royackers, S.J. 1959-2001

On Sunday 17 June, Martin Royackers, S.J., preached about Jamaica's nagging problem of crime and violence: 453 people have been killed on the Caribbean island of 2.6 million since the beginning of the year. "This could also happen to me," he told his congregation, "And if it does, I want to be buried here among my people."

Four days later, on Thursday morning the 21st, the 41-year-old Canadian Jesuit was found face down in a pool of blood, shot at close range through the heart. There were no signs of robbery, and he lay on the veranda to his office clutching the church keys in his hand.

Fr. Martin was killed at St. Theresa Catholic Church, where he had been working since 1995 and was now pastor. St. Theresa's is in Annotto Bay, a small coastal town in St. Mary's parish (county) about 48 kilometres north-east from Kingston. "He was very dedicated to the people, as if he did not care about himself. Food was not important for him, nor was his dress. He was always with the people," said the parish deacon, Anton Fernandopullé, sobbing as he spoke.

Together with Jim Webb, S.J.,* the Jamaica Regional Superior, Martin was deeply involved in a development project which seeks, among other things, to put unused government land to food production. The St. Mary Rural Development Project (SMRDP) is a joint effort of the local people, the Canadian Jesuits, and CIDA (the official Canadian international development agency). In early June, the SMRDP office received a phone call threatening the two priests with death. The caller linked the threat with SMRDP's application to the government to release 60 acres of land for local agriculture. The Jamaican police, once informed, advised the fathers to take the threat seriously.

Martin Royackers was born on 14 November 1959 at Strathroy near London, Ontario (Canada). He entered the Society of Jesus at Guelph in 1978, was ordained at Toronto in 1988 and took his final vows in Jamaica in 1999. Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kingston, Most Rev. Edgerton Clarke, lamented the loss of a valiant priest and added: "Life in no area of society is held in any esteem or respect ... no one is safe anymore."

This gentle Jesuit worked tirelessly for the poor and with great pastoral dedication. Though a shy man, Martin was a forthright speaker and became a good friend to many. He served as chairman of two school boards and also taught Christian social development at St. Michael's Theological Centre.

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INTRODUCTION

The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 brought to light several urgent pastoral priorities that the Church needs to face in the Third Millennium, spelled out by Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, especially in chapters III and IV. Then in May of this year, an Extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals discussed the life of faith and the Church in relation to the dominant culture and the phenomenon of globalisation.

The Cardinals joined the Holy Father in praying for an end to the hostilities in the Middle East:

We direct a heartfelt appeal to all Christians to intensify their prayer for peace in the Holy Land, and we ask the leaders of nations to help Israelis and Palestinians to live together peacefully. The situation in the Land of Jesus has recently worsened, and too much blood has already been shed. In union with the Holy Father, we beg the sides in dispute to agree immediately to a “cease-fire” and return to dialogue on a basis of equality and mutual respect.

The Cardinals’ final message avows that the experience of faith lived during the Jubilee “encourages us not to be afraid, but to go forward.”

To live communion obliges the Church to show solidarity with humanity and especially, in the present context of globalisation, with the ever growing mass of the poor, the suffering, those who are deprived of their sacrosanct rights to life, to health, to work, to culture, to social participation and to religious liberty.

Towards peoples who suffer because of tensions and wars, we renew our commitment to work for justice, solidarity and peace. We are thinking particularly of Africa, where numerous populations are afflicted by ethnic conflicts, endemic poverty and serious illnesses. To Africa extends the solidarity of the whole Church.¹

This edition of *PJ 75* strives to contribute to this same solidarity, based on the experience and faith of Jesuits working with God’s people in very different ways and in all the different parts of the world.

Your comments are always very welcome.

Michael Czerny, S.J.
Editor

¹ Final Message of the Cardinals Meeting in Consistory, Solemnity of the Ascension of our Lord 2001, n. 6.

CANCELLATION of the AFRICAN DEBT WILL NOT CHANGE ANYTHING

Aquiline Tarimo, S.J.

Cancellation of the African debt alone is not enough. This is because the African debt crisis is linked with an unjust set-up of both national and international economic structures. If we are interested in searching for a permanent solution, then we have to know the root causes and be willing to change those structures that perpetuate this condition. This essay reflects on the consequences of the ongoing phenomenon of debt cancellation as a way of motivating Africa's economic growth. This discussion brings into focus three areas, namely, causes of the African debt crisis, cancellation of the African debt and the role of the Catholic Church, and what could be done in order to shape the future.

1. Causes of the African Debt Crisis

There are various causes of the African debt crisis. First, African countries, after independence, inherited from their colonial masters undemocratic institutions and styles of governance which had historically created a great deal of wealth in Europe. The models of governance and the policies practised in the colonies were not constructed in the interest of Africa. This situation predicted an institutional crisis. What happened is that, after independence, the African leaders had many traditional options available to help them design effective governments, but they ignored most of them and entrenched themselves in the undemocratic structures of their colonial masters. By such a move they failed the African peoples and frustrated the realisation of their dream for freedom, justice, and prosperity. This is what Basil Davidson calls "institutional crisis."¹

This reality affected not only the political but also the economic institutions. The colonial economic structures were not changed after independence. African countries continued exporting basic raw materials to feed industries in Europe. According to Sina Odugbemi, about 51% of African exports go to Europe, while about 27% go to developing countries.² Intra-African trade accounts for only 7.5%.³ This situation affects African economies so deeply because most of them depend on cash crops for foreign earnings. In addition, the prices of these crops have been irregular and often low on the world market.

Added to this is the problem of domestic savings. The problem is that a typical African country does not have sufficient domestic savings to raise the necessary capital for local development. Most countries fund their internal budgets with money borrowed from outside. This money comes from international donors in the form of loans and aid. To pay these debts the countries rely on money raised from exports. As already noted, however, the majority of African countries have only raw materials to export, and this does not generate the necessary cash inflows. The amount of money raised cannot cover the costs of the imports of the intermediate products needed to run the farms nor the country's budget as a whole. In fact,

¹ Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and The Curse of the Nation-State*, New York: Times Books, 1992, p. 12.

² Sina Odugbemi, "Brave New World," *West Africa* (17-23 April 1995), 582.

³ *Ibid.*, 585.

some countries are no longer able to produce raw materials for export. Lack of structural transformation does not, however, shift the blame entirely to the outsider. Corruption and mismanagement have continued to contribute to the deteriorating situation.

Second, the growth of the African debt reached disturbing proportions in the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1979, the external debt of developing countries increased by 400%.⁴ Two factors for this rapid increase were international lending policies and local mismanagement. What happened in the 1970s was that surplus dollars made during the oil-hike were invested in banks both in Europe and in the United States. These “petrol-dollars” were given as loans to the poor countries (PC). The trade imbalance between Europe and the United States of America also produced a surplus of dollars in Europe. These Euro-dollars were also invested as loans.⁵ The growth of the petrol- and Euro-dollars made loans readily available to the poor countries on easy terms and flexible interests rates. According to Claude Ake, “African countries took advantage of the availability of credit, borrowed enthusiastically, and made poor investments with their easy credit. Between 1974 and 1982, the normal dollar value of the debts of [many] countries rose from \$140 billion to \$560 billion.”⁶

A number of African countries found themselves borrowing in big amounts. As much as one can blame poor countries for this unreasonable borrowing, one must not lose sight of the fact that borrowers are impotent without the lenders. In other words, if the lenders had not made such monies so easily available, the borrowers might have contracted for the loans with more caution and less frequency. Thus William Darity and others have argued that these loans were pushed on PCs to increase the profit margins of the banks in the United States and in Europe.⁷ In an effort to dispose of their surplus from the petrol- and Euro-dollars in the 1970s, the banks pushed loans to PCs through a drastic softening of terms. In so doing the banks played a role of implementing strategies which created the financial crisis found in Africa today.⁸ The desire for profits ignited the rapid growth of PCs’ borrowing. This situation made things even worse when it overrode export earnings and coincided with a great deal of internal mismanagement. Social upheavals after the disillusionment of independence produced many dictators and military leaders. These leaders were the ones who contracted the loans. Many of the loans contracted at that time went into the wrong hands and were often misused. In several cases loans were used to buy weapons to quell political opposition within their own countries.

Third, the debt crisis of the 1980s was related to the response of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). Frantic efforts were undertaken by the financial community to bring African countries back into the system. There is no doubt that the international financial institutions played an important role in this crisis. The writing-off of debts was not a point of concern. Such a step would lessen the dividends of banks in North America and Europe and could in the long run lead to a total collapse of the financial markets around the world. This situation led the IMF to implement what has been called the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The 1980s were the years of the SAP in Africa. Its primary goal was not, as may have appeared, the alleviation of the economic problems of the PCs. It

⁴ Kristen Hallberg, “International Debt, 1985: Origins and Issues for the Future,” in *World Debt Crisis: International Lending on Trial*, ed. Michael P. Claudon, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger, 1986, p. 3.

⁵ Jo Marie Griesgraber, *Continuing Dialogue on Debt*, Washington, D.C.: Center of Concern, 1991, p. 5.

⁶ Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1996, p. 104.

⁷ William Darity, “Did Commercial Banks Push Loans on the LDCs?” in *World Debt Crisis*, pp. 199-225.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

sought to stabilise world financial markets without affecting the economies of the rich countries. Despite all the arguments made today especially by the IMF about the positive effects of SAP, one can argue that it did not have the PCs or the human person as its central focus. The truth is that financial institutions placed an unbearable burden on PCs. This meant more debt and more suffering for the PCs. In addition, loans given to Africa during this period targeted mainly security affairs and the stopping of communism rather than humanitarian needs.

Fourth, in order to understand fully the impact of the SAP on the economies of the African countries, we also have to examine the long-term effects of the SAP. The 1980s saw a major crisis for African PCs which had been started by increasing costs for imports and a decline in export earnings. This trend resulted in the policy of SAP in the hope of alleviating this crisis. SAP is a financial strategy which is "aid-based reliance on capital input growth."⁹ What were the fruits of SAP? The SAP brought untold hardships to ordinary people, with the explanation that such hardships were necessary for a better future. Among the conditions imposed were the restructuring of the public enterprises, the lifting of controls on retail and producer prices, the liberalisation of trade and exchange systems, and the broadening of the tax bases.¹⁰ These conditions affected the ordinary person more than the rich investors from abroad.¹¹ For the people of Africa, this meant an increase in prices of basic goods like food and medicine. In other words, the burden of this exercise was laid upon the borrowing countries while the lending countries and their institutions refused to shoulder an equally needed adjustment in international financial arrangements. The lending countries and institutions retained their advantages and remained in charge of setting the rules. What is clear is that the SAP strategy was unrealistic because the economic capacity of the poor countries had not increased; instead there was a growing dependency on foreign aid.¹² A repeated devaluation of local currencies further exacerbated this situation. Governments could do nothing more than urge the people to "tighten their belts." On the surface, the policies of IMF and WB were laudable but, considering the continuous devaluation of the local currencies and the suffering of the masses, the effects of such policies were tragic.

The SAP encouraged trade liberalisation and fostered the increase of Trans-National Corporations (TNC). These corporations take advantage of low wages and weak government regulations. One might argue that TNCs create job opportunities and boost capital in the countries where they establish themselves. This situation may be true theoretically, but the overall effect is disadvantageous to the PCs.¹³ Due to poverty and the need for capital, little is done to check the activities of the TNCs. Labour conditions are often neglected and the environment is abused. TNC profits are rarely reinvested in the country, but most of them are shipped back to the TNCs' countries of origin. The effects of TNCs on local industries is also disastrous. Local companies cannot compete with TNCs. They do not have the capital

⁹ Vic Missiaen, "Economic/Sociological Models of Development," *AFER* 37 (October, 1995), 192-305; see p. 296.

¹⁰ Guy Arnold, "An African Way?" *New African* (September, 1994), 17-26; see p. 26.

¹¹ Peter Henriot, "Effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes on African Families," *African Christian Studies* 11/2 (June, 1995), 1-16.

¹² For example, Thermon Djaksan's analytical report on the Sub-Saharan debt crisis of 1993, 1994, and 1995 shows that the increase of foreign aid and loans did not slow down the rate of economic decline ("Development Aid Committee's Annual Report," *West Africa* [18-24 March 1996], 430-35).

¹³ In many countries, TNCs are accepted with belief that the economic principle of trickle-down will change the situation. Unfortunately, instead of trickling-down, it trickles-up. For more details, see Michael P. Hornsby-Smith, "Justice and Peace: Theory and Practice," *The Month* 29/1 (January, 1996), 3-6.

resources nor the access to the international markets of the large TNCs. Many local industries head for bankruptcy and ultimate collapse.

The IMF and TNCs often deprive PCs of much-needed financial resources. In 1986, for instance, “forty-five Sub-Sahara African countries paid out \$895 million more to the IMF than they took in.”¹⁴ By 1993, the debt of Sub-Saharan Africa had increased by 354% while the First World experienced an increase of wealth.¹⁵ This wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. The 1992 report of the WB and IMF affirms that “the richest 20% of the population controlled 83% of total income, while the poorest 20% had to survive on 1.4%.”¹⁶

This reality is mirrored on the local level. More and more TNCs are taking advantage of the situation and making huge profits, while a majority of the people wallow in poverty.¹⁷ These realities raise questions of justice such as: Will African countries be subjected to a new type of economic slavery? Do African governments have power to pursue projects for the benefit of their people with limited external interference? What we have seen so far in this discussion affirms that the debt crisis, beyond doubt, will affect the future of the African economy, both in the short and the long term.

Fifth, in searching for solutions it is appropriate to consider the impact of the growing global market, political marginalisation of Africa, and prospects for the African economic future. The survival of the African economic future depends so much on the world’s political and economic strategies. The pace and scale of what is happening now in the global market suggests the marginalisation of Africa. The African economic marginalisation concerns “economic regression of Africa relative to other regions of the world and the diminishing importance and relevance of Africa to the global economy, particularly to the industrialised countries.”¹⁸ One can also account for the problem of the marginalisation of Africa as essentially a restatement of what Walter Rodney calls the “problem of underdevelopment.”¹⁹ Today, Africa has become stagnant, unattractive to foreign investors and donors, and unable to elicit the interest of the other regions in the world. This situation makes Africa a non-entity in world trade and forgotten in economic considerations. Such a deepening crisis of underdevelopment is referred to as marginalisation. Thus, the discourse about the African marginalisation concerns explicitly the strategies of the world market, financial institutions, and private donors who do not take enough interest in Africa.

I would also like to argue that the growing concern about the global market will not benefit Africa. This is because Africa is unable to integrate itself into a global trading system. The global trading system will only open up African markets to foreign goods, thereby aggravating its situation. Meanwhile, what is needed is to support Africa’s efforts to reform its economic infrastructure by pursuing meaningful structural adjustment programs. Such

¹⁴ Laurenti Magesa, “Christian Discipleship in Africa in the Twenty-First Century,” *AFER* 36/5 (October, 1994), 283-99, see p. 294.

¹⁵ “Sub-Saharan Africa: Route to Success Lies in Sound Economic Policies,” *IMF Survey* (February, 1995), 63.

¹⁶ “World Bank and International Monetary Fund: Guilty as Charged,” *Envío* 13 (December, 1994), 161.

¹⁷ An analysis of this case appears in Paul Valley’s *Bad Samaritans*, who points out that loans given to the Third World Countries are not genuine help, but a trade that makes huge profits by making poor countries poorer. He develops the same argument by providing concrete examples in the article, “How to Make the Poor Poorer,” *The Tablet* (24 February 1996), 248-50.

¹⁸ Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, cit., p. 113.

¹⁹ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington, D.C.: Howard University, 1982, pp. 33-200.

programs must include the process of strengthening grassroots structures and enforcing the rule of law in view of establishing a culture of respecting human rights, democracy, equality, and social justice.

There is no doubt that “powerful forces, including technological change, the dismantling of trade barriers, and financial liberalisation are transforming the shape of the world economy.”²⁰ Moreover, financial institutions like the IMF and the WB are increasingly acting as if the global economy consists of a “single market with regional sectors rather than as national economies linked by trade.... Perhaps, the most acute is that the caravan of global growth will exacerbate inequalities and leave the world’s poor even poorer. The evidence so far seems to justify some anxiety. Huge private investment flows are now pouring into developing countries. Only 6% went to Africa.”²¹ How will Africa survive if it continues to depend on such declining aid flow? So far there is no program designed to integrate Africa into the process of market globalisation. Justin Ukpong argues that “globalisation of the world economy, whereby the originally weak agrarian, non-technical economies of the Third World countries have been merged into the strong technological economies of Europe and America, must be seen as a form of economic oppression.”²² The fact is that the structure of global market benefits only rich countries. My argument here is that, as the global market system takes shape, Africa seems to be forgotten. This is because Africa lacks the ability to enter into this competition. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that there will be a fair play, for there are no clear guidelines to motivate participation of poor countries. The invention of a global market will, therefore, marginalise the African economy in the short and long terms. In order to justify this conclusion, it is appropriate to analyse carefully the change of strategies of the world economy.

It is now difficult to see anything that can keep Africa on the international scene. Such a dramatic change resulted from the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the global market. The reality is that Africa has been marginalised by developments in technology and strategies of the world economy. The rapid advancement in technology in recent years must be considered as a significant factor. Technology has made industrialised countries displace primary raw materials with synthetic materials. This means that the highly industrialised countries of North America and Western Europe are no longer dependent, as they used to be, on primary producers of raw materials. Furthermore, the deliberate manipulation of the world market and politics leaves Africa on the verge of total socio-economic and political disaster. These changes, without doubt, put Africa in a situation of marginalisation. Unfortunately, the force of monetarism makes people believe that, once financial institutions set the monetary incentives and policies, everybody will do the right thing and the economy will automatically bring forth the intended results.²³ It is not just a matter of reordering policies, but rather of transforming the whole infrastructure and creating an “enabling environment.”²⁴

Another point to bear in mind is that the loans received between the 1960s and the 1990s were without transformative strategies. The WB Report of 1988 addresses this same issue when it

²⁰ Charles Wookey, “Perils of a Global Economy,” *The Tablet* (18 May 1996), 640.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 641.

²² Justin S. Ukpong, “Option for the Poor: A Modern Challenge for the Church in Africa,” *AFER* 36/6 (December, 1994), 350-66; see p. 362.

²³ William Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa*, Indiana: Indiana University, 1984, p. 272.

²⁴ Thomas M. Callaghy, “The State and the Development of Capitalism in Africa,” in *Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa*, eds. Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan, Colorado: Westview, 1988, pp. 67-99.

emphasises the need to transform the economic structures found in Africa by creating an enabling environment.²⁵ The question of creating an enabling environment requires effective governance and political renewal. Better governance includes policy-making, good administration, enforcement of the rule of law, maintenance of juridical independence, honesty and accountability. African countries have failed to produce political and economic systems that can guarantee these conditions. In other words, basic structures are not organised in such way that they can promote a process of creating economic wealth. Looking at the political situation of Africa today, a genuine change will take a long time because political leaders are more interested in retaining political power than in building stable economic infrastructures. For example, most African leaders use public funds to buy political supporters and luxurious items for themselves. The possibility of linking political forces with economic logic will, therefore, depend on the context and co-operation of different institutions. Taking into account the enormous obstacles confronting African countries today, a positive change must be integral and foster grassroots structures. Let us now evaluate briefly the role played by the Catholic Church in this crisis.

2. Cancellation of the African Debt and the Role of the Catholic Church

Since 1995, the entire Catholic Church and especially the western Catholic Church and Catholic organisations have been advocating very strongly for the cancellation of the African debt.²⁶ The lobbying has been done in various international fora. One could say that, in the history of the universal Catholic Church, there has been no other issue related to Africa upon which it has been so united as the search for immediate solutions to this problem. Certain fruits are now seen since the debts of many countries are in the process of being cancelled. This is indeed a credit to the western Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, if the Church aims at promoting an awareness that could lead to the full elimination of this form of global injustice and poverty in Africa, more steps have to be taken quickly for the sake of securing the future of Africa. This effort must provide practical suggestions that can lead to structural transformation of the economy both at the national and international level so as to enable Africa to participate fully in the global market, enhance equality, and further self-determination.

In the end, however, much will depend on individuals who work with a will to change the structures that are at the roots of this crisis and that determine the policies of these institutions. The African crisis must be understood in such a way as to reassess the role of the State, the civil society, the economic sector, and the global economic order in which they must all operate. In their search for a way to establish an enabling environment, the worst thing Africans can do is to put too much emphasis on the question of debt cancellation. Debt cancellation alone will not change the real situation. Only structural change will create a new environment whereby participation, self-reliance, and creation of wealth are encouraged. My opinion is that, even if all of Africa's debts were cancelled, it will not make much difference due to the following conditions which continue to persist: poor planning, inefficient leadership, corruption, misappropriation of public funds, lack of civil society and

²⁵ World Bank, *Adjustment Lending: An Evaluation of Ten Years of Experience*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1988, p. 3.

²⁶ For example, Jesuits for Debt Relief and Development – JDRAD; 26, Upper Sherrard Street, Dublin 1, Ireland; fax: +353 1 8364 377 <cfj@s-j.ie> <<http://www.jesuit.ie/jdrad/>>.

participation, power struggles, overdependence, exodus of intellectuals and manipulation of the poor.

3. What Should be Done?

The causes of the African debt crisis are numerous, and they vary from one country to another. Consequently, solutions should also vary and depend on the contexts and conditions pertaining to each country. Searching for a way forward, it is appropriate to ask ourselves: What should be done in order to change the situation? For the sake of shaping our future, this discussion provides a few suggestions that I believe can promote justice on the global market as well as overcome administrative problems on the part of the African governments. My suggestions, in order to be brief, are summed up in ten points.

1. A genuine analysis of the African debt crisis must be situated within a wide range of causes both internal and external. Internal causes which are at the heart of African economic crisis include social organisation. Poor social organisation is portrayed by the lack of civil society, insecurity, institutionalised corruption, and ethnic conflicts which arise from the attitude of exploiting ethnic consciousness for political gain. Internal causes are compounded with the mentality of dependence and paternalism which are reinforced by international systems of trade, finance, and manipulative politics of rich nations. Such a situation calls those examining this crisis to make an effort to go beyond ideological biases which tend to limit this problem to the issue of overpopulation.

2. We have to acknowledge that the debt crisis is part of the global injustices that we are all part of as long as it deprives people of their basic needs. This affirmation presupposes that a burden must be shared. It does not, however, advocate the outright cancellation of all debts. Instead it challenges us to be considerate when a burden is injurious to the life of the community or state. If the debt is such that it threatens the basic needs of the poor like food, shelter, and clothing, then payments should be suspended. The question that emerges is: Since various countries and institutions contributed a portion of the loan, who should correct the situation of indebtedness?

3. Loans should be given on conditions that respect the minimum rights of the citizens. The conditions I have in mind here are accountability of governments, recognition of rights in the country, and participation of the citizens in the decision-making. Development projects are a first priority. African countries should promote economic growth by involving the citizens more in local projects of development. Genuine economic projects must begin from the capacities of the people. The caring approach aims at converting misused capacity into productive activity so that people can provide for their own needs. This approach includes caring for the common good at the national and international level. This means making people practice inclusive thinking by allowing them to see their own interests and linking them to the well-being of others; this ensures that the priorities of the majority are not neglected. Priority should also be given to programs that are for development and are people-oriented, rather than loans for buying military arms, luxurious items, and political supporters.

4. Policies of economic reform should be scrutinised. The current situation of the African economy needs a significant rethinking. It is a situation that demands a broad analysis and reflection on Africa's past and current economic relationship with Western countries, so that a new relationship based on mutual responsibility can be formed together. Such analysis will

challenge the common tendency whereby a donor-recipient relationship favours the donor through an asymmetrical reciprocity in trade policies and an unequal responsibility which is more likely to lead to dependency instead of development.

In the African context, the aim, the persons and institutions involved, and the conditions in which foreign aid is given and loans contracted, are not made public, but only the accumulation of debts and conditions of payment. The knowledge of the conditions in which foreign aid is given and loans contracted is important because foreign aid, for example, was never intended to be purely altruistic. Sometimes foreign aid and loans are given as a diplomatic gesture to maintain a long-term economic interest. It is true that foreign aid and loans are important complements to the reconstruction efforts of those countries that need them. However, these countries must constantly be encouraged to lessen their degree of dependency. In addition, donors and financial institutions are called to change their attitude of supplying aid which functions as chloroform. Foreign assistance should be directed to the efforts intended to readjust the economic infrastructure. In this way, foreign assistance can help to mobilise small projects and the private sector for income-generating and job-creating enterprises. It is important to strengthen grassroots economic structures because they play a more visible and basic role in the process of implementing proposed programs.

5. The mentality of excessive dependency on foreign aid should be discouraged. Africa's total dependency on foreign aid has made the continent fall farther behind. The fact is that foreign aid created a culture of permanent dependency. This situation is sometimes referred to by economists as "dependency syndrome." The giving of aid, as an economic assistance, has proven to be an outdated model that cannot change the reality of poverty in Africa. What is needed is the political will to look at human needs as a global problem to be solved together by establishing structures of partnership that give technical assistance.

6. For the sake of securing the future, African countries should invest in their own people through education. Since independence, the "major goal of formal education has always been the production of workers for the salaried job sector."²⁷ Since the 1980s, this kind of education oriented toward employment is becoming more and more irrelevant because there are no jobs. This situation, therefore, demands a change in the educational system. This change necessitates the formation of people who can challenge themselves to be open to new insights that promote integrity, commitment, creativity and self-reliance. Furthermore, I would like to point out that the economic development of Africa will also depend on the status of women. African women are pillars of African socio-economic life. If their status is improved through education, then it will positively affect the economic life of African countries. A relevant education will encourage them to overcome their inferiority complex and passivity.

7. African skilled workers and intellectuals are morally obliged to contribute their skills to their countries instead of going abroad in search for economic and professional advancement. Since the 1980s there has been a brain-drain from the African countries. This phenomenon has been caused by low wages, corruption and mismanagement, nepotism, lawlessness and dishonesty on the part of leaders. My conviction is that there will be no significant change either politically or economically as long as the exodus of intellectuals continues.

²⁷ Ajuji Ahmed and Ronald Cohen, "Education and Rights in Nigeria," in *Human Rights and Governance in Africa*, eds. Ronald Cohen *et al.*, Florida: Florida University, 1993, p. 220.

8. There is a need to strengthen intermediate associations. For about four decades, the one-party system and military regimes suppressed the role of trade unions, co-operatives, and professional associations. Today, the remaining associations do not have an ability to assert autonomy or challenge the repressive governments. Most governments continue to treat leaders of associations as their agents. This attitude is sustained by the practice of making sure that leaders of associations are controlled by the government. It is through this system that most governments find ways to reward associations that conform with them and harass those that try to assert their autonomy.

Intermediate associations are important because they play the role of shaping economic policies by providing alternatives and mobilising people from the grassroots level. In the African context, the idea of strengthening such structures would be one step toward the process of transforming economic infrastructures. Apart from overcoming totalitarianism, this process will improve the economy by making people co-responsible and go beyond the crisis-oriented approach which dominates economic planning in Africa. Associations can play the role of promoting the idea of common good, human rights, participation and creativity. This is done by ensuring that a sense of reciprocal obligations and expectations prevails among groups of different interests. These organs promote the sense of common good by articulating a mechanism that defines the relationship between State and civil society and safeguards the separation between them. The structure of intermediate associations can overcome bureaucracies and monopolies of socio-economic and political power concentrated in the hands of the “predatory elite.” Instead of allowing the political sphere, which is dominated by the elite group, to dictate everything in the socio-economic sphere, civil associations act as guardians of people’s opinion, and encourage participation and new ideas. This is done by helping the poor to defend their basic rights. In collaboration with skilled lawyers and human rights activists, victims of economic injustice will be able to decide for themselves how to improve their life standard. The process of developing such awareness will be effective because the assertion of rights is derived from the people’s sense of justice expressed in terms of strategies initiated and sustained by the people themselves.

The call to strengthen intermediate associations reminds us that, in the African context, verbal pronouncements alone are insufficient and create an insignificant impact. This is because there are no relevant structures that can convert such pronouncements into social action. Verbal pronouncements must be action-oriented. It has to be clear that there will be no effective way of talking about socio-economic justice and human rights in Africa if intermediate associations are not strengthened. In other words, socio-economic and political success will not occur in a vacuum. Multi-party elections, in themselves, do not guarantee democracy or economic prosperity, and should not distract people from continuing to search for concrete ways in which the economy can be reformed.

9. The Catholic Church can play a significant role in changing the current situation. This is possible if it co-operates more effectively with other Churches in influencing the process of policy-making, moulding of the public conscience, and promotion of human rights and social justice. “It is, therefore, no longer possible for the [Church] in Africa and, for that matter, the universal Church to look on the poor and the situation of poverty as something it may or may not take on as the central focus of its mission.”²⁸

²⁸ Ukpogon, “Option for the Poor,” *cit.*, 364.

10. Many development theories have been borrowed from abroad and imposed on people, but the living standard of the people has remained the same. Such an outcome shows that there is a need to analyse thoroughly our cultures and to come up with a developmental framework based on African cultural values and context. This approach entails critical evaluation of each individual and group in order to identify the strength which we could build upon. Such an adjustment needs associations. Associations provide people a platform on which they can dialogue creatively and identify problems which affect them. They recognise people's culture, interest and potentiality. Recognising people's potential provides self-confidence and courage to search for practical solutions to their own problems. It is a process which makes everyone in local communities act responsibly, knowing that their actions affect their own lives. Human development begins with a person and spreads through the family and to the community.

What is important in this discussion is the response given to the African debt crisis with a specific orientation. But the African debt crisis finally finds its answer in the African people, who are the future of the African continent.

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“In the European working world,” recalled the history of the Social Apostolate published in *Promotio Iustitiae* in 2000, “a post-World-War-II mission of reconciliation gave birth to the Workers’ Mission with its dynamic commitments within the important labour movement.” On the occasion of its seventh European meeting at Strasbourg in August 2001, the following article recounts the birth of the Jesuit Popular and Workers’ Mission, traces some of the significant moments of its history, and concludes with the current situation.

History of the Jesuit Workers’ Mission

Noël Barré, S.J.

Roots of the Workers’ Mission

During the 19th century, industry developed and along with it the working class. There was certainly a dialogue of sorts between the Church and workers, and some Christians were very concerned about social issues, but we know that a gap grew between the labour movement and the Church. Jean-Claude Dhôtel, in his book *Les jésuites de France*, quotes a Jesuit from the end of the 19th century: “We should no longer satisfy ourselves with hearing the confessions of the devout, directing pious congregations and giving academic speeches; we need to throw ourselves amongst the masses.... We are no longer accustomed to going amongst the masses because we were not allowed to.”¹

Jesuits would take part in the founding, support and development of working-class efforts that proliferated. There were Catholic Worker Circles, Worker’s Gardens, the Boatmen’s Charity (Douai), the Seamen’s House (Bordeaux). In keeping with Leo XIII’s *Rerum novarum* (1891) on the condition of the workers, in 1903 Fathers Leroy and Desbuquois founded *Action Populaire* which would support apostolic initiatives to benefit workers.

During the 1920s and 1930s, new ways appeared of evangelising the working-world: at the initiative of Abbot Cardijn, the Young Christian Workers (*Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* – JOC) was founded in Belgium. From the very beginning, Jesuits took part in this chaplaincy in Belgium and in France where Fr. Guichard was the first chaplain of the women’s JOC. Fr. Desbuquois supported Abbot Henri Godin, co-author with Yvan Daniel of the book *France: a missionary country?* (1943). In 1934, he wrote him: “Remain true, persevere in your idea of a workers’ ministry. I know very well that those who devote themselves to it have to fight for it. I’ve noticed that. But a few priests have to keep on going against the current, as the Pope demands.”

In the 1940s, during World War II, the loss of Christian faith among the working class and the gulf that had grown between their world and the Church became more and more obvious to priests in the various forms of contact they had, whether freely chosen or imposed on them: prison camps, deportation camps, resistance networks, clandestine chaplaincies among youth conscripted for obligatory work duty (STO) in Germany. Missionary initiatives were then taken: *Mission de France*, *Mission de Paris*, Worker-Priests. Out of this movement, other

¹ Jean-Claude Dhôtel, S.J., *Les jésuites de France: Chemins actuels d’une tradition sans rivage*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1987, p. 63.

initiatives would arise: Catholic Workers' Action, the Workers' Mission. All these examples from France should not make us forget what was accomplished in Belgium and other European countries, at the same time or in the years following, depending on the particular situations.

Birth of the Jesuit Workers' Mission (MOSJ)

In 1944, ten young Jesuits in France wrote during their Tertianship to their Provincials to call for the creation of "teams of workers' missionaries." Their aim: **"To introduce Christ to the masses and, with that purpose, to live among them."** Their request was heard and, from that moment on, the Provincials would send Jesuits on mission into the workers' world: to working-class parishes, to Catholic Action Groups for youth and for adults, to different kinds of presence among the poorest of the period, and to placements as workers in factories or as worker-priests.

Forty years later, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach recalled the initial intuition of what would become the Jesuit Workers' Mission:

I would like to ask you ... to remain true to the initial intuition which is to live at the heart of the workers' world and among the poorest, to open yourselves up by living among them, by sharing, by solidarity with them. Even if we properly acknowledge and do not minimise the great social and economic developments that have occurred in the world of the working class and the poor in Europe, nevertheless through all these changes the Workers' Mission maintains its way of proceeding: **to be with, to live with, to share the life, the living conditions and the exploitation, financial uncertainty and insecurity** which remain the same.²

True to this intuition recognised by the Society, the Jesuit presence in the workers' world took various forms: pastoral work (parishes, chaplaincies); social and/or educational work; professional (especially manual) work with an active and secular participation (in a trade union or other group). There were Jesuit worker-priests in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, and also a few in Latin America (Venezuela, Peru), all of them closely linked to the other worker-priests in their respective countries. Only those in Belgium and France had to endure the test of 1953.

In 1953, some ten Jesuit worker-priests were the first to be affected by measures that prohibited priests from henceforth sharing the lot of workers in factories. The reasons for this prohibition are complex, and they have to do with certain delays in theological and pastoral thinking that would not be addressed until Vatican II. While this had sad and painful consequences for Christians in the working class, it also meant that all the partners in the Mission began to co-ordinate their activities more effectively. The Workers' Mission was born of the French Church's desire not to dwell on this setback. From now on, those who took risks for the Mission would no longer be isolated but rather supported by others: lay-people, religious, priests, bishops. The French documents relating to these years of crisis suggest that the Jesuit worker-priests had the support of their superiors and their brothers, but the trial was a difficult one: Jo de Lorgeril died as a result, others were reassigned to pastoral work (for example, Jean Lefeuve in Chad) while hoping to resume their ministry.

² Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "Address to the European Jesuits in the Workers' Mission," Lanzo, Italy (7 August 1986).

The 1960s and 1970s

In the 1960s, along with other Major Superiors of France, the Jesuit Provincials worked to make it possible for the worker-priests to take up their ministry again. In 1962, Fr. Jacques Sommet, the promoter of the Workers' Mission in the Society, wrote a letter to the French Bishops explaining why the Society supported the Workers' Mission. This document remains completely relevant today, and certainly not only for the country in which it was written. Here are some extracts:

It is part of the Society's true nature ... to send its members all over the world, into the most difficult situations, there where spiritual needs are the most pressing and basic means are insufficient or completely lacking. ... The evangelisation of the French working world, with direct involvement in its work, is today an urgent and difficult mission field, to which the Society would contribute with its participation....

Because of its formation and its spirituality, the Society is concerned to reach people in the concrete reality of their daily existence, through the circumstances that historically determine their fate. In today's culture, a mass culture and a culture of industrial labour, the Society is necessarily attracted to this proximity with man's condition in factories and on work-sites so that, starting from this situation of shared experience, it may offer people the possibilities and the conditions of their integral development and their salvation.

The tradition of the Society and Father General Janssens insist on the necessity of being apostolically present, with an equal diligence, among those who are the poorest as among those who have the greatest responsibilities. The Society's vocation towards leaders and intellectuals must have its balance and counterpart in a presence in the working world so that, right within its heart, the Society can contribute to the very unification of the Church's presence in all walks, conditions and strata of life.

In France, the Society has contributed to the Hierarchy's apostolic concerns for the workers' world as these began: at the start of the JOC and the JOCF, in the founding of the LOC,³ in sending priests to work in Germany, in the worker-priest experiences until 1954, in the Houses for Young Workers ... as well as in other ways, for example, the first activities of *Action Populaire*. The Society plans to continue this work in the new form that worker-priests offer.

Under Father Sommet's leadership, the French Jesuit Workers' Mission took shape and acquired the means it needed to become responsive and assure support and discernment. In 1965, Vatican Council II recognised the ministry of the worker-priest.

The bishops of France sent fifty priests to work in factories, specifying the conditions of ecclesial life that were to support them and keep them in

Indeed all priests are sent to co-operate in the same work. This is true whether the ministry they exercise be parochial or supra-parochial; whether their task be research or teaching, or even if they engage in manual labour and share the lot of the workers, where that appears to be of advantage and has the approval of the competent authority; or finally if they carry out other apostolic works or those directed towards the apostolate (Vatican II, "Brotherly Bond and Co-operation among Priests," *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n.8).

³ JOC = *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne*; JOCF = *JOC Féminine*; LOC = *Ligue Ouvrière Chrétienne* (adults).

communion with their local Church. Among these fifty new worker-priests, there were five Jesuits, three in the Paris area and two in Le Mans.

In Belgium, Jesuits also numbered among the worker-priests but only after Vatican II. They did not experience the same difficulties as did the diocesan worker-priests in Belgium and France in 1954. They began under the responsibility and with the support of the Provincial, but often against the opinion and preferences of the fellow Jesuits of their Province. The accidental death of Egied Van Broekhoven after two years of work seemed to “justify” those who opposed this ministry. Public opinion in the Society changed thanks to Father Arrupe and to Decree 4.

In Spain, marked by the deep wounds of the Civil War and the dictatorship of nearly forty years of “national Catholicism,” a good number of priests and religious wanted to live close to the people of the workers’ world, in order to make the possibility of being both a worker and a believer in Jesus Christ more credible by showing a face of the Church that was different from that presented by the institutional Church. They got involved in jobs at the bottom of the wage scale, in trade union life and in friendships with militant groups. The secrecy required by such activities meant that many had to abide by strict rules and painfully forego certain things. They had to pay a high price in order to be considered “one of them.”

It was **in the 1970s** that the largest number of young Jesuits prepared for the Workers’ Mission and took part in it, in Belgium, France, Italy and Spain.⁴ A workers’ community was founded at Kreuzberg in West Berlin, Germany. During this decade, Father Arrupe asked Jean Lacan, one of the founders of the French Jesuit Workers’ Mission, to promote dialogue among all the Jesuits involved in the labour world, especially those who were working in factories. So bonds started to form between the worker communities in the different countries.

In 1975, Decree 4 of GC 32 validated the missionary initiatives undertaken by the Provinces with members engaged in the Workers’ Mission, and these companions found their basic guidelines especially in nn. 49-50:

The personal backgrounds of most of us, the studies we make, and the circles in which we move often insulate us from poverty, and even from the simple life and its day-to-day concerns. We have access to skills and power which most people do not have. It will therefore be necessary for a larger number of us to share more closely the lot of families who are of modest means, who make up the majority of every country, and who are often poor and oppressed. Relying on the unity we enjoy with one another in the Society and our opportunity to share in one another's experience, we must all acquire deeper sensitivity from those Jesuits who have chosen lives of closer approximation to the problems and aspirations of the deprived. Then we will learn to make our own their concerns as well as their preoccupations and their hopes. Only in this way will our solidarity with the poor gradually become a reality.

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. Without this arduous journey, our efforts for the poor will have an effect just the opposite from what we intend, we will only hinder them from getting a hearing for their real wants

⁴ See, for example, the different bulletins: from Latin America, *Enlace: Boletín informativo de jesuitas en el mundo obrero latinoamericano*; from Italy, *Fogli dei gesuiti in missione operaia/popolare*; and from Spain, *Boletín MO*.

and from acquiring the means of taking charge of their own destiny, personal and collective. Through such humble service, we will have the opportunity to help them find, at the heart of their problems and their struggles, Jesus Christ living and acting through the power of the Spirit. Thus can we speak to them of God our Father who brings to Himself the human race in a communion of true brotherhood.

Here they saw a recognition of their own mission; here they also found the demands that this mission would make on them: they were not to forget that the aim of their presence and their work was to help the men whose life they shared to find Jesus Christ; nor should they forget that they were not to cut themselves off in the peculiarities of their chosen path with a particular group of men, but that they were to continue working in close connection with the entire body of the Society.

The 1980s and 1990s

The Workers' Mission, like any other mission given by the Society and to the extent it is given by it, is a form of apostolate the Society recognises as its own, promoting, directing and taking responsibility for it. The worker Jesuit, priest or not, is a member of the Society from whom he receives the specific mission to insert himself into the world of manual labour and to carry out an apostolic activity there. Obviously this mission carries the same guarantees and conditions as any other in the Society with regard to origin, duration, dependency, availability, co-ordination, etc.

It is a vanguard apostolate since it tries to carry the witness of manual labour to areas not penetrated by other forms of evangelisation and where circumstances can even prevent or advise against any open proclamation of your task to spread the Gospel. The importance of your work from this point of view is twofold: on the one hand you are like a bridgehead to a continent still awaiting discovery; on the other your experience is of great value and should be integrated in the sum of experiences feeding the Society's reflection and discernment at all levels.

It is a privileged apostolate according to Ignatian norms for the selection of ministries (Pedro Arrupe, S.J., Meeting with Representatives of the Workers' Mission, *Acta Romana* 18 [1980], nn. 4,7,9).

In 1980, Jean Lacan and fifteen Jesuit worker-priests from Europe were received by Father Arrupe, after which he sent all the Major Superiors a letter about the Workers' Mission.

Father Arrupe understood that this ministry offered a crucial challenge and opportunity but he emphasised it in a bit too exclusive a manner. If in the Workers' Mission one takes only the worker-priests into account, one is unfair to all the other actors in the Mission, and it becomes difficult to face new situations arising out of unemployment, marginalisation and exclusion which were already calling for initiatives.

And so indeed, the first European meeting of MOSJ in 1983 raised this question: should we continue our commitment to the traditional working class, or should we get involved in the world of the socially marginalised and excluded? From now on, the companions of the Workers' Mission set up a co-ordinating committee made up of four delegates: a

Frenchman, an Italian, a Spaniard and a Belgian representing Northern Europe. The subsequent meetings of the MOSJ-Europe allowed everyone to get to know each other, at once similar and different, to bring our questions and our concerns together, and to address them courageously.

Our God is a Slave-Girl

† Herman Pillaert, S.J.*

Redemption and liberation are two topics that are perhaps more debated and written about nowadays than in the past: many varying opinions are expressed, for and against, and even outright condemnations. I would like to try to explain how I see all this.

The well-known verses "Blessed are the poor" and "Woe to you, rich" (Matthew 5 and Luke 6) have been interpreted in many different ways over the centuries. Ranging from "Blessed be you, the poor, for you will be well in heaven" to the most spiritual interpretation, "Blessed be you, the poor in spirit, you, the pure of heart." But why can we not understand these words in their literal sense? When Jesus said, "Blessed are you poor," he simply meant that the poor are blessed. Jesus was just describing what he saw. And he saw that the poor were blessed. He didn't want to put forward a programme, or describe a utopia or an imaginary dream; he simply expressed what he saw: "Blessed are you poor, and woe to you rich."

Living from day to day among the poor – and not as a do-gooder or social worker but as one of them – we find ourselves amidst the very proof of these words. The life, the truth and the way are all found in the sufferings of the poorest and most oppressed! There is no reason to be surprised – God is like that.

Sometimes when I visit an immigrant Turkish family I do some chores and get my hands dirty. When I'm finished, the wife or the daughter-in-law will arrive with a pitcher of water and a basin, crouch down before me and pour water over my hands to wash them. Inside I still rebel against this custom, but nonetheless I let them go ahead. Having been through it many times, I have begun to understand better what happened two thousand years ago at the Last Supper. "Jesus rose from the supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet" (John 13: 4-5). Jesus did what in that culture is done by a slave-girl. Peter's refusal and opposition are understandable: "Impossible!"

** Born at Antwerp on 30 April 1938 and entered the Society on 7 September 1955, Herman was ordained to the priesthood on 5 July 1969. After having been a worker-priest in Ghent, he was sent to Turkey on 16 February 2000 and died at Ankara on 21 July 2000.*

European Meetings of Jesuits in the Workers' Mission

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| 1983 | Sant Cugat, Spain, "On the eve of GC 33, three themes: the faith-justice option, the identity of our workers' missions, and the re-expression of our faith" |
| 1986 | Lanzo, Italy, "To deepen our shared knowledge in two senses: realities of work and socio-political realities – our spirituality and our theology" |
| 1989 | Aix-en-Provence, France, "What kind of hope do we bring into the situations of injustice and exclusion which we live and via our various solidarities?" |
| 1992 | Heverlee, Belgium, "A vision, a project for tomorrow" |
| 1995 | Loyola, Spain, "The faith-justice link" |
| 1998 | Naples, Italy, "The solidarity which goes beyond the borders of religions and cultures" |
| 2001 | Strasbourg, France, "Living in the neighbourhoods: social and ecclesial perspectives for today" |

During the 1980s and 1990s, various changes took hold:

- Technological changes and the economic crisis produced unemployment, precarious work, poverty and social exclusion. This put the solidarity among workers, the unemployed and other socially marginalised groups to the test. Many Jesuits, particularly retired worker-priests, became heavily involved with the Movement of the Unemployed. They also made links with the Third World, participating in various solidarity groups and sometimes actually going and working in those countries, either temporarily or for good.⁵
- The growing indifference towards religion in Western societies affected the Mission and diminished the Church's institutional position. There are still Jesuits involved in Catholic Action Movements and in parishes.⁶
- In large part nourished by liberation theology, there has also been a significant attempt over the last twenty years to put Ignatian spirituality at the service of the working class. This includes the Ignatian Retreat of the Workers' Mission every summer in Spain, the course of initiation to prayer and discernment and the retreats conducted by the VOVRI group in France,⁷ a group founded by Jesuits and today composed mainly of women religious. The last meeting of Jesuits in the Popular Sector (*Monde Populaire*) in France focused on the theme of "Access to God in the Popular World."⁸ In the Kreuzberg area of Berlin, Christian Herwartz and others began offering a retreat on the streets.
- In an atmosphere of consumerism and individualism, militant practice has weakened.
- The break-up of the Eastern bloc has shaken up the West where social solidarity and democracy have become fragile.
- Europe seems to be building up with economic interests as its only concern and starting-point, to the detriment of solidarity with the most disenfranchised in our rich countries and to the detriment of solidarity with people of the Third World. Our close connections with people in Africa and Latin America keep us on the alert.

⁵ See Jean Désigaux, S.J., "To Humanize and to Evangelize," *Promotio Iustitiae* 49 (March 1992), 9-13.

⁶ "Chercheurs de Dieu," *Lettre des Jésuites en Monde Populaire* 175 et 176 (July and October 2000).

⁷ *Vie Ouvrière et Vie Religieuse Ignatienne* (Workers' Life and Ignatian Religious Life).

⁸ "Accès à Dieu en monde populaire," *Lettre des Jésuites en Monde Populaire* 177 (March 2001).

But still. Washing his disciples' feet was not a unique symbolic act that Jesus undertook before dying. Reading the Gospels, we realise that this is the way he lived every day of his life. He lived among the poor and the powerless, being one of them, being poor, being the son of a carpenter, being a "slave-girl."

He ate with sinners and publicans, and he stood up for an adulterous woman – despite the civil and religious authorities. Paul understood this very clearly: "But he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant ... he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2: 7-8).

Knowing Jesus' reply to Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14: 9), we can say that our God is not a great God but a small God. Our God is not the creator of Heaven and Earth, our God is not the God of the Ten Commandments, our God is a slave-girl and, being a slave, he is the way, the truth and the life.

If we see God in this way, no one can be surprised that the poor should be blessed, that the life, the truth and the way should be found amidst the sufferings of the poorest and the most oppressed.

Reality is indivisible: As God is, so are the poor. As the poor are, so is God.

Karel Staes put it this way: "Infallibility and truth are found in the sufferings of the poorest. They know what goes on in the world, their intuition reveals God's vision for men. True authority is found in the hands of the oppressed people. Whoever wishes to remain in truth must live in communion with the poor or listen to the stories of their lives. Whoever's life stifles the voice of poorest, cannot live in the truth."

In the same flow of ideas, we can reflect on the word "service." Indeed, we are nowadays concerned with social relationships and justice. We frequently read or hear that people endowed with certain talents or riches should put their gifts or their capital "at the service" of the poor and oppressed. This is the wrong way to think. Such a notion of service comes, in fact, from the idea that life and truth are found among the talented and the rich, and that such people enjoy an intrinsic superiority.

- The presence of millions of immigrant workers in Europe has changed the realities of working-class life, both in the factories and in the neighbourhoods. Jesuits have been closely linked to these groups. Only one example: After his retirement as a worker, Herman Pillaert of Ghent (Belgium) was sent to Turkey to start a Jesuit community in Ankara, a task for which his long and close involvement with the Turkish population of his home town had prepared him. (See pages 54, 56, 58).
- Young Jesuits, of whom there are few in Europe, are less motivated today by the world of labour. They commit themselves more readily to various forms of social work than to sharing the conditions of the lowest-paid labourers. The militant culture that the Workers' Mission inherited in large part from secular and labour organisations is also less widespread among young Jesuits. Nonetheless, an exception must be made regarding NGOs.⁹ Many of those who join the Society have had the experience of international involvement in an NGO. Here is a spirit shared by the Workers' Mission and the younger generation. Another aspect of the Workers' Mission has been picked up by the young and by the different Provincials of Europe: the idea of living in a community in the midst of a poor neighbourhood and of connecting religious life with social and economic reality. Such communities, often called of "insertion," do appeal to the young today. The Workers' Mission contributed to the creation and growth of these communities.
- Finally, current ecclesiology assigns a new role to civil society. Relations between the institutional Church and civil society have been transformed through sharing work and living conditions with working and popular classes, and through participating in their struggle for liberation from exploitation and injustice. Within the Workers' Mission, the Church has engaged in dialogue with civil society, not just a dialogue within each member's personal conscience, but a dialogue of mutual respect between fully recognised partners.

All these facts were acknowledged at Heverlee 1992 and at Loyola in 1995. The original intuition of **living with** appears to retain all its meaning today, as was reiterated at Naples in 1998.¹⁰ It is evident everywhere that the number of Jesuits in the Workers' Mission has greatly diminished, and we now usually speak of the Workers' and Popular Mission (*Mission Ouvrière et Populaire*).¹¹ This membership points to a core of the identity of the Workers' Mission: we freely choose to get together in this group of Jesuits, and we remain close to the militant culture wherein belonging to a collective is both a sign and a method.

The testimonies and discussions that arose at the Naples meeting revealed that, despite it all, strong convictions still remain. The **initial intuition** "to introduce Christ to the masses and, with that purpose, to live among them" **still remains valid** but in a new context. If one had to describe the Workers' Mission today, one might say: "**To be with and to live with**" **the world of the workers, the poor and also the marginalised, to take part in common undertakings where the Church is not in a position of leadership**, still seems the best way

⁹ See Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, S.J., "The Promotion of Justice: A Challenge for the whole Society," *Promotio Iustitiae* 53 (November 1995), 13-26.

¹⁰ There were 73 participants: 29 from France (six women religious), eleven each from Italy and Spain, seven from Belgium, three each from Algeria and Portugal, two each from Holland and Ireland, and one each from Chad, England, Germany, Northern Ireland and Poland.

¹¹ The number of Jesuits in the Workers' Mission in France can be judged by the number of those who pay their membership dues: in 2000, there were 26.

The word "service" can only have one sole meaning: to wash feet, the service of a slave. This is the fundamental thing: to make yourself vulnerable alongside the poor. "Sell all that you have ... but when he heard this he became sad ..." (Luke 18: 22-23; Mark 10: 21-22; Matthew 19: 21-22). The well-known rich young man would truly have liked to help the poor, but here something very different is asked of him.

I dream that one day (perhaps the last day?) the rich, the powerful and the Church will recognise this truth. The poor are not far removed from the Church and society; in actual fact, it is the Church and society who are removed from the poor and therefore also from God. The rich, the powerful, the Church and society – they are the truly marginalised, the "fourth world." The poor and the oppressed have not only the power but also the obligation to make the rich and the powerful understand this; and to do so, if necessary, with whip in hand.

In this way, a liberated society and a liberated Church shall one day be made – a liberated society and Church that finally recognise that truth and authority are found in the sufferings of the poorest.

It is not easy to choose this way, to choose a vulnerable life: you can expect repercussions.

In 1974 our former Father General Arrupe said: "If we really mean to commit ourselves to achieving justice with all the consequences this may have, the cross will immediately appear to us including great suffering. We will see that many people – often those with a reputation as good Christians, or who are our benefactors or our friends or even our relatives – will turn against us. We will see them drop us and take away their support and their financial help. Are we ready to follow such a path? A path that will include civil and ecclesiastical authorities unwilling to understand, and even our best friends?"

Is this finally the reason why Jesus was nailed to the cross?

to characterise the way of proceeding of the Workers' Mission today, even if the forms of this **living with** keep changing.

The Jesuits of the Popular and Workers' Mission are interested in making the effort to reflect on, analyse and articulate better the initiatives relevant to the Social Apostolate. In fact, a number of them are deeply involved in it in Belgium, France and Spain. A reduction of members may force us to reconsider the way we operate, but it would be unfortunate if such a revision brought an end to a form of apostolic commitment that has been important in Europe and remains so and also – why not? – with appropriate changes in many countries where manual workers and support staff still make up the majority of the active population.

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ROOTS of a SPECIFICALLY JESUIT VOCATIONAL CULTURE

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Preliminary Remarks

1. Without a doubt, the Society is very concerned about vocations, particularly in Europe. On repeated occasions Father General has referred to this question with concern and hope.¹ The last General Congregation (GC) dedicated its Decree 10 to vocation promotion. The theme was not absent at the last meeting of Provincials in Loyola (September 2000), particularly within the European Assistancies.
2. The last continental congress on vocations (Rome, 5-10 May 1997) proposed to the entire European church the development of a vocational culture, capable of becoming an effective cultural medium for new vocations.²
3. While tracing in these pages some elements of a specifically Jesuit vocational culture, I have recourse to our history and our own tradition. My intention, then, is to present some roots of our way of proceeding, typically Ignatian and Jesuit, which can help us to articulate, recover or reinforce a vocational culture that is genuinely Jesuit today. I do not pretend to cover all the angles of such a complex theme. I will limit myself to highlighting some aspects which I consider especially relevant and which I think we should look at with greater care.

I. “Fervour is the Society” (Nadal)

I cannot hide the fact that I am fascinated by this sentence of Nadal, quoted by Father General in his discourse at the 68th Congregation of Procurators while discussing the theme of the refoundation of the Society. If people looking in on us from outside were struck with awe and declaring, “Fervour is the Society,” I doubt very much that we would be having a problem with vocations in many parts of the Society. If that were the case, we would not also be going around and around the theme of visibility that Father General has been insisting upon, that all the Provincial Congregations addressed, and that John Paul II also insists upon in his post-sinodal exhortation *Vita consecrata*.

It happens that Nadal has it right: “Fervour is the Society.” A series of seven features specifically taken from our way of proceeding will make this clear.

¹ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “On Vocation Promotion” (15 April 1985) addressed to all the European Major Superiors; “Ex-Officio Letters for 1993” (8 November 1993); “On the Promotion of Vocations” (29 September 1997).

² See the final document, *Nuevas vocaciones para una nueva Europa* [New Vocations for a New Europe], Madrid: Edice, 1998, especially § 13. I have reflected on the particular situation from a general perspective in *Reavivar el don de Dios* [Reviving God’s Gift], Santander: Sal Terrae, 1997; “Elementos para la construcción de una cultura vocacional” [Elements for the Construction of a Vocational Culture], *Todos uno* 143 (July-September 2000), 65-84; “Hacia una cultura vocacional” [Towards a vocational culture], *Sal Terrae* 88:9 (October 2000), 683-93.

1. Enthusiastic preaching of Jesus Christ

What Father General finds missing in the Society is a greater ardour in our missionary zeal, perhaps reflecting a certain lack of spiritual vigour. To cite one representative example, in his closing homily he said that GC 34 “concludes, finally, before the altar of St. Francis Xavier, as we acknowledge that in the present state of the Society we have ever greater need of his missionary passion to announce with greater zeal and vigour the Gospel of the Lord, the entire Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, as servants of Christ’s mission” (25 March 1995).

Missionary ardour has been one of the signs of identity of our Society, distinguished by the “defence and propagation of the faith” and by the constant creativity in its diverse ministries of the Word.³ The last GC emphasised this once again: “Ours is a holy boldness, ‘a certain apostolic aggressivity,’ typical of our way of proceeding” (D.26, n.27). When I read John O’Malley’s book on the first Jesuits, I was very intrigued by a custom of the first Jesuits: “to go fishing.”⁴ By this they meant going out on a Saturday afternoon in pairs to a busy place such as a square or market and beginning preach. The first companions had begun this practice of preaching even before the foundation of the Society. Speaking of their trials in Vicenza, along with Fabre and Laynez, the Pilgrim tells us the following: “After the forty days [dedicated to prayer], Master Jean Codure arrived; and the four together decided to begin to preach. The four went to different squares and began to preach on the same day and at the same hour, first shouting loudly and summoning the people with their caps. Their preaching caused a great stir in the city, and many persons were moved with devotion...”⁵

The first characteristic of our way of proceeding which Decree 26 of GC 34 takes up is “deep personal love for Jesus Christ.” This is the first thing that distinguishes the Jesuits. A love which, by its nature, tends to manifest and communicate itself in the form of helping souls, in the zeal to help other persons enjoy and be enriched by this knowledge of Jesus Christ. This love for Jesus Christ interpenetrates the Society in such a way that Nadal would say that the Society is “a light radiating from Christ.” This quote from Nadal was also cited by Father General when he spoke to the Procurators on the state of the Society, again in the section referring to the refoundation of the Society.

What I have said above is sufficient to make it clear that if anyone out-does us in missionary zeal, in apostolic ardour, in boldly uninhibited preaching of Jesus Christ, without beating around the bush, without embarrassment, complexes, shyness or shame, then it is for us to blush.⁶ Our tradition, our history, our spirituality, our way of proceeding all impel us toward enthusiastic, joyful and convincing preaching without any dissimulation, of Jesus Christ, the eternal King, who tells us: “It is my will to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of my Father. Therefore, whoever wishes to join me in this

³ *Form. Inst.* [1]; see the pages dedicated to the ministries of the Word in John O’Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1993, pp. 91-133.

⁴ See *ibid.*, 112-13.

⁵ *Autobiography* [95]. *Autobiography of St. Ignatius*, trans. Parmananda Divarkar, S.J., in George Ganss, S.J., *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, New York: Paulist Press, 1991, p. 108.

⁶ Father General asks us and himself, “Have we become lukewarm in the service and proclamation of the faith to the point that our enemies feel they have nothing to fear from us? Do we so shy away from positions that would seem integrist or fundamentalist that the cutting edge of our apostolic presence is blunted, that ‘it is no longer a light radiating from Christ,’ in the words of Nadal? In encounters with Jesuits, whether at work, in the community or elsewhere, do people have the sense of meeting a man for whom God comes first?” (“Discourse on the State of the Society to the 68th Congregation of Procurators,” Rome, 17 September 1999, § D.).

enterprise must be willing to labour with me, so that by following me in suffering he may follow me in glory” (*SpEx* [95]).

So we see that a first element of a Jesuit vocational culture according to our tradition is a burning, eloquent and contagious missionary fervour, which flows out of an intimate, awesome, grateful and enthusiastic contact with the Lord Jesus, whose heart is open and bleeding, pierced by wounded love which heals and reconciles a broken world.

2. Compassion with the crucified of history

Precisely the love of Christ crucified and humiliated, and the contemplation of his pierced heart infects us with Christ our Lord’s way of being in history and carrying out his mission. Especially since GC 32, the last GCs have certainly put the mutual interplay between the service of faith and the promotion of justice in the forefront. In order to bring the mission of the Society up to date, the last GCs have stressed one of the best features of our tradition, namely, that the companions of Jesus have always been faithful to his mission, have looked at the world with the merciful eyes of the Lord Jesus, and have thrown themselves into every type of ministry to alleviate suffering and combat injustice.⁷

The same Ignatius as the Pilgrim gave himself generously to the poor.⁸ When in his native land of Azpeitia, he arranged for the poor to be taken care of “officially and regularly” (*Auto.* [89]). Later as General, he undertook apostolic initiatives in this area: he founded an orphanage and a refuge for Roman courtesans to escape from prostitution.⁹ From his times as the poor Pilgrim on the road from Venice to Barcelona, comes the following anecdote, very illustrative of the prayerful contact with the Divine Majesty at work in his soul:

One day, whilst going through his devotions in the principal church of Ferrara, a beggar asked him for alms and he gave him a marchette, which is a coin of five or six *quatrini*. After that another came, and he gave him another small coin that he had, somewhat larger; and to a third he gave a *giulio* having nothing but *giulii*. The beggars, seeing that he was giving alms, kept coming and so all he had was finished. Finally many beggars came together seeking alms. His response was to ask pardon, as he had nothing left (*Auto.* [50]).

This spirit of service to the poorest of the poor shines forth clearly in moments of greatest need, as occurred during the dismal harvest of 1538 in Italy. Polanco tells the story this way:

In the year 1538 and the first months of 1539, a terrible lack of food afflicted many places in Italy, including Rome itself. Many poor people were lying in the public streets, dying of hunger and the cold. The house of the Society was located next to the tower called by the people *della Marangola*, and Ours brought there those who were lying abandoned in the street and gave them the alms which they had collected by begging. They also provided the needy with some beds from our house. This work of

⁷ See *Tradición ignaciana y solidaridad con los pobres* [Ignatian Tradition and Solidarity with the Poor], Colección Manresa 4, Santander: Sal Terrae – Bilbao: Mensajero, 1990.

⁸ See J.M. Rambla, S.J., “El Peregrino con los pobres” [The Pilgrim with the Poor], in *Tradición ignaciana y solidaridad con los pobres*, cit., pp. 17-35.

⁹ More details in R. García Villoslada, S.J., *San Ignacio de Loyola: Nueva Biografía* [Saint Ignatius of Loyola: New Biography], Madrid: BAC, 1986, pp. 528-33.

charity increased so rapidly that the number of those who were supplied with bed, as well as shelter and fire, rose from one hundred, to two and three hundred, to almost four hundred.¹⁰

Recapitulating this apostolic experience, the *Formula of the Institute* describes the mission of the nascent Society of Jesus and stipulates that the future companion of Jesus will have to be “ready to reconcile the estranged, compassionately assist and serve those who are in prisons or hospitals, and indeed to perform any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good” (*Form. Inst.* [1]).

Throughout our history,¹¹ many Jesuits have distinguished themselves in their commitment to the common good, whether through direct attention to the poorest of the poor, as St. Peter Claver gave the slaves and St. Aloysius Gonzaga the victims of the plague, or Luis de Molina and Oswald von Nell-Breuning reflecting on the common good and more just social structures, or by creating effective structures to alleviate poverty, such as the *Hogar de Cristo* of Blessed Alberto Hurtado, or *Fe y Alegría* of José Manuel Vélaz.

It also belongs to our tradition to look at the world with the compassionate eyes of our Lord Jesus. These eyes are transparent to the sufferings of the world, of the poor, of those without a voice, of the forgotten – those whose view of the world changes our own. It is his heart, overflowing with compassion to the point of shedding all his blood, which impels us to spend ourselves entirely for the reconciliation of men with God. It is his fate on the cross, unjustly condemned, which reminds us constantly of so many unjust condemnations, so many poverties, so much oppression, so much pain and so much injustice. From this flows the christological reading of the Society, its way of standing before the conflicts which take place in the world, the basic conception of its mission and the direct inspiration of its ministries and its way of articulating everything from the eyes and the compassionate heart of him who gave his life for the life of the world.¹² Thus a second element of our vocational culture consists in the inspiration of our ministries flowing out of affection for, interest in and compassion with those hard hit by suffering, poverty and injustice.

What seems indispensable to a vocational culture is to translate this christological reading practically and visibly into our apostolic options, the places where we work and the assignments of young Jesuits. Ignatius himself already told us, “Love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words” (*SpEx* [230]). In some parts of the Society we run the risk of going on incessantly and tediously about the poor and injustice, without translating the words into daily contacts and actions.

On the other hand, the preferential option for the poor has been a blessing for the Church and for the Society, wherever the step has been taken. Addressing the Congregation of Procurators, Father General insists that no type of work, even social work, is worth the effort if it is not accompanied by a series of factors. Linking together the Society’s diverse ministries from the viewpoint of the service of the poor can be and, in some Provinces, already is a wonderful factor in vocation promotion. This presupposes that we neither appear to be, nor understand and present ourselves as, mere social workers but rather as companions

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

¹¹ See O’Malley’s presentation of the social ministries in *The First Jesuits*, cit., pp. 165-99.

¹² See Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “On the Social Apostolate” (24 January 2000) in *Promotio Iustitiae* 73 (May 2000), 19-24.

of the Lord Jesus, servants of his mission and consequently servants of the poor. If we are or are seen to be mainly social workers, we may possibly raise up vocations to social or to volunteer work, but not vocations to the Society of Jesus. We can share with many others our social concerns and collaborate in many projects with persons of good will. It would not be good to do so at the price of shamefacedly hiding or disguising our identity as Jesuits or our motivations.

3. A very pronounced Marian profile

One of the constants of the spirituality of St. Ignatius is his devotion to Our Lady, to the Virgin.

A quick glance at the *Autobiography* shows this, recalling two significant episodes. Having begun to recover at Loyola and already in the full first fervour of his conversion, Ignatius starts to write down some of the things he found more notable. He tells us how, "...beginning to be up and about the house a bit, he set himself very carefully to write a book with the words of Christ in red ink, those of Our Lady in blue ink ..." (*Auto.* [11]).

On the road between Aránzazu and Montserrat the Pilgrim argued with the Moor over Our Lady. The text tells us:

At this, various emotions came over him and caused discontent in his soul, as it seemed that he had not done his duty. They also aroused his indignation against the Moor, for it seemed that he had done wrong in letting the Moor say such things about Our Lady, and that he ought to sally forth in defence of her honour. He felt inclined to go in search of the Moor and stab him with his dagger for what he had said ... (*Auto.* [15]).

We could lengthen the list of Marian episodes of Ignatius, for example, the consolation he had in seeing Our Lady with the Child (*Auto.* [10]) or the vigil of prayer in arms at Montserrat (*Auto.* [18]), etc.

In the **Spiritual Exercises**, the backbone of our spirituality, the Virgin Our Lady occupies an outstanding place, without putting into question either the christocentrism or the theocentrism of the Exercises. Thus, for example, besides appearing in the exercises in which her presence is obvious, such as the Incarnation (*SpEx* [102f]) or the Nativity (*SpEx* [111f]), she is also one of the mediators in the main colloquies (*SpEx* [63], [147], [156], [168]) which, as is well known, are found at the most decisive moments of the spiritual dynamic of the Exercises. These brief annotations are enough to make our point.¹³

Among the apostolic enterprises of which the Society can feel proudest are the **Marian Congregations**. The link between the Society and the congregations was so strong that, at several times of crisis, enemies of the Society considered the congregation members to be just

¹³ For this bibliography, see Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "Nuestra Señora en los Ejercicios Espirituales" [Our Lady in the Spiritual Exercises], Conference given on 1 February 1985 during the VIII Ignatian Course (Rome), published in *Decir ... al «Indecible»: Estudios sobre los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio* [To speak ... the "Ineffable": Studies on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius], Colección Manresa 20, Bilbao: Mensajero – Santander: Sal Terrae, 1999, pp. 133-43.

as much enemies, too.¹⁴ I have personally never participated in a Marian Congregation. Still and all, their very name and spirit make it more than abundantly clear that, in faithful continuity with the spirituality of the Society, their Marian profile was very pronounced.

An historian of the Society could add more details and greater erudition, but this is not needed for our purposes here. According to our tradition, a third root element of a Jesuit vocational culture is granting to Our Lady a special place in our piety, in our devotion, in our prayer; and consequently, teaching others to live in close contact with the one who is known in the history of salvation for her most wholehearted “yes” to the plan of God. Our Lady, totally consecrated to God’s plan and to service of the mission of Christ, her Son, is the mother of consecrated vocations.¹⁵

4. A mystagogical structure

The future of the Christian faith belongs to those groups which are capable of guiding, accompanying and bringing people to encounter God.¹⁶ In Latin America, the so-called “sects” base their strategy for capturing new members on their capacity to establish structures which facilitate and promote religious experience. In Europe, the new movements manage to transmit, stimulate and help bring about a powerful religious experience.

One of the most typical elements of the Society has been, and will always be, its use of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. They were the principal apostolic arm of the Pilgrim. With them he won over the first companions of Paris and later many other persons. O’Malley insists with a certain delight that the ministerial activity of the first Jesuits was determined and oriented by the Exercises and, most particularly, by the fifteenth annotation: “The Creator and Lord in person [should] communicate Himself to the devout soul in quest of the divine will, that He inflame it with His love and praise, and dispose it for the way in which it could better serve God in the future” (*SpEx* [15]). Precisely here rested the power of the Society, in that it spread the immediateness of the encounter with God. The Exercises are a privileged apostolic instrument, since they are basically a pedagogy of spiritual experience. The Exercises, in other words, are a mystagogical instrument: a manual of Christian mystagogy.

Accordingly, a fourth element of Jesuit vocational culture, faithful to our tradition, is rooted in a mystagogical structure which facilitates and assists the deep personal encounter with God. Whoever is in contact with Jesuits will, therefore, run a high risk of coming to an intimate, personal, powerful and engaging encounter with the Eternal Lord of all things.

II. “The Society is totally and without reservation *of* the Church, *in* the Church, and *for* the Church”¹⁷

At the same audience which John Paul II granted to GC 34, Father General also insists that the Society is an apostolic body of, in and for the Church. The refounding of the Society takes

¹⁴ In the case of Spain, see Carlos López Pego, S.J., *La Congregación de “Los Luises” de Madrid* [The Congregation of “Los Luises” of Madrid], Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1999.

¹⁵ See Uríbarri, *Reavivar ...*, *cit.*, pp. 47-62.

¹⁶ For a fuller development of this point, see Gabino Uríbarri, S.J., “*La mistagogía y el futuro de la fe cristiana: Una tesis*” [Mistagogy and the Future of the Christian Faith: A thesis], *Razón y Fe* 239 (February 1999), 141-50.

¹⁷ John Paul II, “Allocution at the opening of General Congregation 34” (5 January 1995), n.1.

place insofar as a strong ecclesial sense takes hold of our insides.¹⁸ It is enough to select two sentences from the address to the Procurators on the state of the Society: “Father Master Ignatius wanted us to be more on mission for the Church than tied to our own works” and “We ought to be recognised in the Church as people who foster communion in the Spirit and awaken in others the same missionary spirit.”

5. Feeling glad about the Church, the hierarchy and especially the Pope

Communion with the hierarchical Church is one of the conditions which make it possible for the Society to fulfil its mission. First, because we are at the service of the Church and its pastors, particularly at the service of the Roman Pontiff. The *Formula of the Institute* could not be more explicit: “...to serve the Lord alone and the Church, his spouse, under the Roman pontiff, the vicar of Christ on earth ...” [1]. Secondly, since one of the specific characteristics of our charism is to be in the vanguard, on the frontier, therefore the understanding, support and appreciation of our pastors became all the more necessary. If we cannot count on an initial vote of confidence such as explorers get, it will be much more difficult to accomplish our mission. Much energy will be spent in repairing misunderstandings, in giving tedious explanations, in asking for forgiveness, etc. Being that we are a group who wishes to situate itself in the vanguard of the Church, we need to be in its heart. And so, thirdly, the one who most suffers when our thinking with the Church is weakened, is the Society itself, since this is one of the characteristics of our way of proceeding (see, for example, GC 34, D.26, nn. 9-11).

The beginnings of the pontificate of John Paul II were tremendously stormy for the Society. With Paul VI there was also a bad collision over the issue of grades. In our history, relations with the pontiffs have not always been syrup on pancakes. Nevertheless, the spirit of the fourth vow and fidelity to our charism call us to a special adherence to the figure of the pontiff, over and above personal tastes. The text of the *Formula* is forceful and decisive:

...for the sake of greater devotion in obedience to the Apostolic See, of greater abnegation of our own wills, and of surer direction from the Holy Spirit, we have nevertheless judged it to be supremely profitable that each of us and any others who will make the same profession in the future should, in addition to that ordinary bond of the three vows, be bound by this special vow to carry out whatever the present and future Roman pontiffs may order which pertains to the progress of souls and the propagation of faith ... [3].

I think that on this point we are in need of conversion, beginning with myself.¹⁹ The Pope has recently written a letter to Father General asking him in so many words to send young Jesuits to the Gregorian University in Rome. How do we react to this request? With the promptness that Ignatius and Arrupe desired, so that the General Curia will be flooded by letters of so many men volunteering? Or by pretending not to notice, criticising the manoeuvres of the professors at the Gregorian, and hiding so that they don't put the fingers on us? How would other groups respond to such a request? I imagine they would have people lined up to volunteer and would consider the call of the Pope and their response as an integral element of their vocation promotion. Personally I have no desire to go to the Gregorian and, being a

¹⁸ See “At the service of the Church,” in Father General’s “Address to the Procurators on the State of the Society,” 1999, § D.2.

¹⁹ GC34 recognised the importance of this theme and dedicated its Decree 11 to “On Having a Proper Attitude of Service in the Church.”

professor of theology, I know I run a certain risk of ending up there. But if in the Society we do not feel enthusiasm for this type of pontifical mission, we are betraying our principle and principal foundation, what in our origins is most genuine.

A fifth element of Jesuit vocational culture is rooted, then, in putting our apostolic forces at the service of the principal objectives and the initiatives most highlighted by the Pope and the bishops. Out of this attitude of adherence to the Pope have been written some of the most glorious and sacrificial pages of our history, which have constituted our identity.

6. Community living the faith

I begin with three statements:

a) Two of the phrases from our tradition which Jesuits most like quoting today come, one from St. Francis Xavier, “Society of Jesus, society of love,” and the other from the Pilgrim, “friends in the Lord.”²⁰ These formulations stimulate young Jesuits and depict the Society in a way which they like to identify with.

b) According to O’Malley’s study, one of the reasons motivating new vocations to enter the Society during the first two generalates was the familiar and friendly way in which Jesuits treated each other.²¹ This is what we would include under the union of minds and hearts and styles of community life.

c) The bibliography on vocations and vocation promotion insists and repeats almost *ad nauseum* that one of the features most sought-after by new vocations today is community life. A vibrant community life must therefore be a major factor in promoting vocations.

Having made these three assertions, we can move on to reflection. Father General has insistently and urgently called us with frank, hard and demanding language, to review in depth our way of proceeding in this regard.²² There are some who claim that, without a thorough renewal of our communities and of our community life styles, 80 percent of the communities of the Society in Europe will disappear.

A sixth element of a genuine Ignatian and Jesuit vocational culture consists in a vigorous union of minds and hearts, the fruit of profound spiritual sharing among companions, of the celebration of the faith together, of sharing the mission, of helping each other to make apostolic decisions, of rest and relaxation together, of apostolic conversations, of mutual care and affection, of a religious and apostolic climate, and of an environment of poverty proper to communities made up of persons who seek nothing else than the interests of Jesus Christ.²³

²⁰ The first is taken from a letter of Xavier to Ignatius, written from Cochin (12 January 1549) and is quoted by GC34, D.26, n.10. The second is from a letter to Juan de Verdolay (14 July 1537). See also the study of Javier Osuna, S.J., *Amigos en el Señor: Unidos para la dispersion* [Friends in the Lord: United for Dispersion], Colección Manresa 18, Bilbao: Mensajero – Santander: Sal Terrae, 1998.

²¹ See O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, cit., p. 55.

²² See especially his *Letter on Community Life* (12 March 1998).

²³ See Ignatius’ letters to Juan Pelletier (Rome, 13 June 1551) and to Diego Miró (Rome, 1 February 1553).

7. Appreciation for priestly and consecrated vocations

Ever since Vatican II, one of the most debated topics has certainly been the interrelationship among the different vocations within the Church. Having with good reason set the former approach to vocation promotion aside, the one inspired by the theology of the state of perfection, we have ended up with practically no pastoral approach to vocations at all. It is costing us a lot to rebuild one, under new theological suppositions. There are some who think that anything like promoting vocations is out of date, or that it should be focused on empowering the laity in a Church which is still excessively clerical.

A glance at Ignatius shows us that one of his principal concerns was vocations. From Barcelona on, after the failure of Jerusalem, he began to gather companions (*Auto*. [56]). It cost him a lot to win over Master Francis Xavier and Jerome Nadal, to mention only two spectacular cases. In his instructions to those sent on mission, one of the recommendations to “extend their eyes” looking out for candidates apt for the Society.²⁴ Vocation promotion has therefore been a constant of our tradition and our way of proceeding.²⁵

The Exercises have been a formidable school of vocations and can continue being so. It will depend upon how we give them, on how we assimilate all the wisdom they contain about the need for a “choice of state of life,” that is to say, the discernment of each one’s particular vocation. This presupposes that the different forms of life which exist in the Church have already been exposed and explained, each with its own images, stories, and excellence. If we do not do this nowadays, if we do not get across the beauty of our vocation, we will be moving away from our tradition.

As a last example, within the realm of vocations, models to identify with and emulate continue to be of capital importance. In the old Church, the *Life of Anthony*, attributed to St. Athanasius, was the most important publicity for the monastic life. In the Society, the letters of Xavier had a powerful effect all over Europe. Unfortunately, in many of our schools and youth groups, the lives of our saints are unknown.

A seventh element of a Jesuit vocational culture will be a coherent catechesis on the various forms of life in the Church and their beauty, combined with both remote and proximate preparation for the choice of a state in life.

III. Our Hope

While vocations are surely a gift of the Lord beyond any merit or “mechanical production,” certain factors do just as clearly exist which help to establish a favourable breeding ground for them. On this basis we can embrace the hope that the same Lord who founded the Society, will preserve it for his service. For our part, useless servants that we are, the task is sincerely to strive for fidelity to our vocation and to our best tradition. And so, if in whatever ministry

²⁴ See the letter of Ignatius to Fulvio Androzzi, 18 July 1556. In the same sense, Osuna, *Amigos en el Señor*, cit., 245.

²⁵ See Victor Betancourt, S.J., “Ignatius and the Decree on Vocations,” *Promotio Iustitiae* 62 (September 1995), 93-98, as well as two unpublished works: *Ritos humanos y ritos cristianos* [Human Rites and Christian Rites], Rome 1995, and his thesis, *La promoción vocacional ignaciana: Teoría y praxis* [Ignatius’ Vocation Promotion: Theory and Practice], Frankfurt 1995.

of the Society, (1) we appear to be in love with Jesus Christ, whom we cannot stop talking about in season and out of season; (2) if this ministry takes on the world's suffering injustice and poverty and tries, in its own proper way, to alleviate it; (4) if in our ministry we adapt a mystagogical process from the Exercises and offer it to the poor and to our collaborators, (3) wherein Our Lady has a special place; (6) if in our ministry we share our faith with fellow companions, live it and express it communally, including the liturgy; and (5) if we are seen as an ecclesial group, inserted in the Church, sharing her joys and her sorrows, on the vanguard of the initiatives of the Pope for evangelisation; (7) with a good catechesis on the different forms of life in the Church, we will be faithful to our tradition and way of proceeding.

May the Lord of the harvest, then, with his compassion and supreme goodness, send many young men to the Society of his Son, to live and die with Him and for Him!

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LETTER

To the Editor:

I was very interested to read *Promotio Iustitiae* 72 and 73 and happy to note the underlying insistence, also in Father General's guidelines, on adapting the social apostolate still more to the ever-new requirements of the people it serves.

Then I was especially glad to see you put "Communications" as first among the "Priorities and Prospectives" as well as considering the new technologies to be helpful in "binding the members together in union, charity and love!" (*PJ* 73, page 26).

May the Sons of the Society – this is my fervent hope – finally realise how necessary it is to open up to the problematics of the new technologies, as the *Complementary Norms* 303 and 96 insist (see below).

But let's not see everything stop at the level of means or instruments.

Especially for the social apostolate in fact, these new means – right from the very beginnings of movies, radio and TV, etc. – have taken on special importance because they really work their way into people's nearly instinctive manner of seeing the world and so also of regarding things morally and religiously. For this reason, whoever is involved in the social apostolate today soon runs into new difficulties that must be faced without knowing how, whereas an adequate knowledge of these problematics could be very helpful. The fact is, the social apostle ends up dealing with persons (individuals and groups) who, without realising it, are acting under the media's influence with its imposition of a consumerist and reductionist mentality. So you think you can talk about flavours to people who have lost their taste for them.

And this is far more challenging than just adapting new means or instruments. It is a matter of helping older people who're nervous about the new media to understand, but also younger people who are somehow already victims of the new mentality and so resist waking up to it.

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Complementary Norms:

303 §1. The Society should acknowledge that communication is not primarily a sector restricted to a few Jesuit "professionals," but rather a major apostolic dimension of all our apostolates. Therefore, every Jesuit, in order to be apostolically effective, must be aware of

and well versed in the language and symbols, as well as the strengths and weaknesses, of modern communication culture.¹³⁹

§2. We must co-operate with the media, so that the Church's true face can appear and the Gospel can be inculturated in this new mass culture as well. Though we remain always loyal to the truth, our Ignatian sense of *sentire cum ecclesia* will lead us to present what is praiseworthy in the Church.¹⁴⁰

§3. [I]n order that we may more efficaciously use the social-communications media in a way that is adapted to the needs and opportunities of our apostolate in fulfilling our mission, major superiors should in good time choose and assign some men endowed with a religious spirit and other gifts, so that after they have become expert at various levels of specialisation and have acquired academic degrees, they may become competent in practising these skills and in directing others.¹⁴¹

96 §1. Throughout the entire course of studies, scholastics should practice those means of expression that are suited to the people of our age. Skilled in the arts of writing and speaking, they can become better preachers of the Gospel of Christ. Suitable opportunities should be provided for access to the audio-visual media and for instruction on how they can be used successfully in the apostolate.⁵⁹

§2. To secure this during both early and ongoing formation, we must provide well-organised communication curricula for all. These will show how to subject to critical evaluation the ways of self-expression that this new culture has, how to judge its aesthetic dimension, and how to use the communications media in group effort.⁶⁰

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¹³⁹ See GC34, D.15, nn. 1, 3.

¹⁴⁰ GC34, D.11, n.26.

¹⁴¹ See GC31, D.35, n.3; GC34, D.15, n.9.

⁵⁹ GC31, D.9, nn. 18,19; see GC32, D.6, n.27.

⁶⁰ See GC34, D.15, n.9.