

PROMOTIO IUSTITIAE

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Fernando Franco, S.J.	

SOCIAL APOSTOLATE IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

CHALLENGES AND SITUATION

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EDITORIAL

The decision to have a special issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* dedicated to the meeting of Assistancy Social Coordinators held in Rome last April was motivated by two reasons: the strong desire to offer all Jesuits and their collaborators the opportunity to reflect on the words of Rev. Fr. Kolvenbach's address to the Coordinators gathered in Rome, and secondly, to let the Acts of the meeting reach a wider audience.

In an informal but discerning way, Father General delicately traces the historical roots of our apostolic commitment to a 'faith that struggles for justice.' We need to deepen our understanding of 'justice,' and more urgently, to forge in our lives the linkages between the two. The reading of our struggle for justice in the light of faith needs to be based on the manner in which the Gospels depict the unbreakable unity between Jesus' words and actions. Father General also touches on new insights regarding the relationship between universal human rights, for example to livelihood, and poverty.

According to this creative approach, rights become the shield that protects the poor, and the struggle for justice or for sustainable development, is based not merely on the 'need' of the poor, on our compassion for them, but on the right of every human being to live life with dignity. The ethical basis of 'rights,' its foundation, is the dignity of the person as a social being. Our struggle for justice becomes the following of Christ's mission to ensure that the rights, and ultimately the dignity of every human being, especially of the 'poor,' are protected, ensured and made accessible to all. Our struggle for justice becomes an accompaniment to those groups and people who are already engaged in the struggle for dignity. It becomes a dialogue with all groups and forces in society engaged in establishing a national and international order based on rights, and is committed to widen and increase the access of all to an effective protection of these rights.

Addressing the Jesuit who makes this goal the specific trait of his vocation, Father General emphasizes once more the need to be close to those who struggle for justice and to live, whenever possible, like them.

The words of Father General are a rich canvas on which we can reflect on the *Acts* of the meeting. Alongside strengths and prophetic examples we need to reflect on the weaknesses that prevent us from responding to the present challenges and impede our concerted response. There is a message, an invitation to create synergies among Jesuits and social centres, and establish well-defined linkages between the pastoral, intellectual and social apostolates.

Father General vigorously stresses the need to make clear apostolic choices, the importance of discerning our specific Jesuit contribution, and the call to live for, with, and like the poor. May the Lord give us the courage to hear the words of the Eternal Father to Ignatius at La Storta: "I want you to take this man as your servant."

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**Father General in Conversation
with the
Assistancy Coordinators of the Social
Apostolate***

Rome 11 April 2003

I would like to thank you for the two presentations you have made regarding the external challenges we face and the situation of the Social Apostolate. I appreciate also the hard work of these days. You have laboured so hard that you have missed enjoying the beauty of Rome!

You have all come to Rome at an appropriate time. First, this is a time of change at the Secretariat: Fr. Michael Czerny has gone and Fr. Franco has taken his place. Something new begins when a new person takes on a job, and, as far as I can see, you have already given the new person a fair number of suggestions to make the Secretariat of Social Justice of greater service to you all in the Society. Second, as you know, the whole Society is undergoing an important period of prayer and reflection. Each Province has convoked a Provincial Congregation as a preparatory step to the Congregation of Procurators to be held in Loyola in September 2003. While the main function of the Congregation of Procurators is to decide whether or not to convoke a General Congregation, this meeting provides the whole Society a unique opportunity to gather very valuable information on our life and apostolates. It will also be an occasion for me to take up your concerns and plans to the Congregation so that the Society can know what these are. We will reflect on how to proceed in the Social Apostolate according to the highest authority in the Society, the General Congregation.

Let me now comment briefly on some of the points you have raised in your presentations.

You are right when you say that the Social Apostolate has weakened, that in some places it is in danger, and that in some Provinces it may have disappeared altogether. I believe that the moment has come to have greater clarity about the nature of the Social Apostolate. You all are doing an enormous amount of work, but it is almost impossible to find the unifying line, the unifying thread weaving all the various strands into one meaningful design that holds them together. This difficulty is not new. The problem, the drama, if you want to call it by this name, of finding the right expression started way back with GC 32. At that time, we spoke about the 'promotion of justice.' I was present at the birth of that expression. It was difficult to find a consensus, but I must admit I was not too happy with it. The word 'promotion' says too little about justice. It suggests that we have merely to organise a sales-promotion campaign for 'justice.' Our engagement with 'justice' is reduced to selling a new product! As a matter of fact,

* This text of Father General's address to the Coordinators bears the mark of an informal conversation among Jesuits who are friends in the Lord. The edited form of the talk has deliberately kept the freshness and warmth proper of a conversation. We are grateful to Father General for his inspiration and support. [Editor]

the General Congregation understood our engagement with justice to be a real struggle for justice. I am happy that, at least in Spanish, we normally use the term 'lucha', which means struggle. We need, therefore, to recover the challenging meaning of this struggle for justice as expressing one of the most important characteristics of our way of life. From a deep understanding of how He lived and struggled for the justice of the Kingdom, we are called to make 'greater efforts' to bring this justice to all, and especially the poor.

There are obviously historical reasons to explain why the term 'justice' then remained shrouded in a certain ambiguity. At the time of GC 32, many Jesuits from Communist-governed countries, especially in Eastern Europe, were apprehensive about the use of the term 'social justice.' I still remember how many Jesuits from Eastern Europe told me that when they heard other Jesuits speak of 'social justice' they felt they were listening to Radio Moscow! And so it happened that in order to achieve a consensus, the term 'justice' had to be left somewhat vague.

To complete the picture, we need to add that Father Arrupe was quite forthright in affirming that if the 'justice' we are speaking of cannot be shown to be linked to the Gospel, and to our way of following the Lord, then Jesuits will not follow this call to struggle for justice. The reason is simple: to be a social activist you do not need the Society of Jesus. It is only if you want to struggle for justice in a very specific way, in a way that flows from our faith, that it becomes worthwhile to live out this struggle.

The last comment leads me to speak about the link between faith and justice. As a matter of fact, it is not very difficult, because our Lord not only uttered words but performed certain actions, and His way of acting was a powerful instrument to communicate His message. We see Him always struggling in various ways for justice: feeding and providing nourishment, taking the side of the weak (children and women), cleansing the temple of unscrupulous traders, and feeling a profound compassion for the lost and abandoned. As the Gospel says, He was always surrounded by the poor.

These works performed by Jesus constitute an important source for us to discover our mission as His companions. We cannot be companions of Jesus if we do not share His option and struggle in favour of the poor. This option has an added significance today when we have recognised the growing distance that exists between Jesuits and the poor. The association between faith and justice cannot ever be established on the basis of a Marxist ideology, but on a constant, prayerful and authentic reading of the Gospel; a reading that results in a commitment to struggle for justice as Jesus did, and to be with the poor, as Jesus was.

I was very happy two weeks ago when all the scholastics studying in France, about 120, asked me to speak once more about the promotion of justice. They feel that this is something belonging to them as Jesuits, and they would like to know how to do it, because they have the impression that, on this point, the Society is breaking down.

Let me add a few comments on the term 'poor.' The General Congregation was clear that by poor we mean, as you have pointed out this morning, those who are socially and economically deprived. GC 34 was also clear that the poor cannot be understood only in terms of the UN-definition of the poor as those people living on less than one dollar a day. The poor must include those who are poor on various counts, those who are discriminated against, marginalised, and oppressed. These are the poor and we should help them.

There have also been significant advances in understanding the relationship between poverty and justice. As you are aware, poverty has been recently described by the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen as a lack of the basic capabilities needed to become a human person. This lack is considered fundamental because it affects all or any of three vital dimensions of human life: the material, the relational and the personal. Whenever, therefore, external resources, social recognition or the capacity to become integrated in a social body are lacking, a person's human life is in danger. This understanding of poverty agrees with the primacy accorded to the human person by the Social Teaching of the Church, and opens up the possibility of showing that the denial of these basic capabilities constitutes simultaneously a serious attack on fundamental human rights.

It is obvious that today we cannot do everything, and that choices have to be made. After GC 32, many Provinces made radical choices and some of them were difficult. I remember the choice made by the Mexican Province: they closed a very famous high school, "Patria." After an earthquake, they told me not to help the victims of the earthquake because they were not victims of socio-economic oppression or persecution. Others should do it, not we, they said, according to their interpretation of GC 32. You may feel that this is an exaggerated response, but the point I want to stress is that regarding the struggle for justice and being with the poor, we have to make choices because we cannot do everything. Our choice must be directed by a specific Jesuit approach that is understood by others, and that leaves us freer to choose other alternatives. There are many organisations like NGOs and networks doing a lot of work in this area. We have never been alone. Following the spirit and commitment of St. Ignatius we must discern our specific contribution. This, I think, is the way we have to proceed ahead. If we do not follow this way of proceeding we may end by doing a tremendous amount work, but we will be under the impression that it is hopeless because there are other choices we have not explored.

Let me give you another example. There was a time when Jesuit Relief Services (JRS) was not well thought of by those Jesuits who believed in the 'message' of GC 32. Many repeated to me: "JRS is not an example of the struggle for justice. It is only an assistential type of work. You help people in need, but you do nothing to erase or suppress the causes of this evil." The famous remark of Helder Camara was quoted: "As long as I give bread to the poor, I am a holy man, but if I ask the people the causes of this injustice, I am branded as a communist." This problem may be over now, but there was a time when a certain Provincial received a letter saying: "let everything which is assistential (medical care, legal aid, teaching...) be handed over to other religious families and let us work only to

make the people aware of sinful structures in the country." You have to judge whether this standpoint is the best one, but the point I want to make is that in the near future, and the near future starts tomorrow, choices have to be made. We are unable to do everything, not only because our means will always be limited, and our personnel will not increase, but because we are not Divine Providence, and we cannot take care of all the problems. So choices have to be made, and we try to make them according to our specific vocation. In this way we are of greater help to the poor, and not merely Jesuits who feel happy about how much we have done.

I have given you the example of JRS. Even now we need to make further choices. Not all people on the move are refugees or displaced persons. According to the spirit of Father Arrupe, our work in JRS was conceived as a service to the refugees in the camps, living with them. Advocacy is beautiful and should be done, fund-raising is beautiful and should be done, but it should never mean that we leave the camps and let others do the work in the camps. Is there something to guide our choice in this situation? Newspapers and the television create certain climate in which a country is 'in' the eyes of the media, and everybody is almost forced to go there. Afghanistan was an example, and Iraq may be the next one... But there are many countries that are seldom in the newspapers though they have thousands and thousands of refugees. We would like to go to these countries. Who speaks today about the refugees of Bhutan and Nepal? Who is in Namibia? Nobody! Who speaks about Somalia? Nobody! And those countries are full of refugees. One specific feature of JRS is the choice to be always in the camps with the refugees themselves (to be inserted in their situation, if you like to put it this way), and to be wherever everybody has forgotten to go. I myself worked in a Palestinian refugee camp. The Jesuits started them, but when they begun receiving substantial help, we just moved out because somewhere else there were refugees poorer than our dear Palestinians.

Making choices is also important for other types of social work. One of the most important criteria given by our Constitutions is that we should go wherever the most marginalised live, be with those whom nobody cares for and in whom nobody is interested. Being open to new needs is important because this attitude gives us the opportunity to make the kind of choices I have spoken of.

It follows that we have also to make choices about the 'poor.' When some insisted that we could only help those who are socio-economically poor, they forgot women, the problems of aboriginals, Dalits, and many others. We need to be open to every kind of need, especially the need of those most neglected, of those most forgotten. This should be our task. In a way we can apply here the Ignatian criterion of gratuity. St. Ignatius always insisted on it. It is gratuity because some of these poor may be ungrateful. From this commitment to them we derive neither profit nor prestige. In some cases, we may have to be ready to help them against themselves!

I am very pleased to know that Africa and the problem of those people on the move are among the apostolic priorities you have chosen. Let me add that the choice of Africa was made by the Jesuits at GC 34. Africa has been unhappily

called the 'lost Continent.' While there is always an interest in Asia because it accounts for the largest part of humanity, nobody is interested in Africa, a continent whose natural resources are being pillaged on a massive scale. One of the problems is that the borders delimiting the nations of Africa are an artificial construct inherited from the colonial past. It is also true that political leaders have decided not to touch the present borders, because once you start doing that, the whole map of Africa will have to change. This unstable situation, however, makes it very difficult to go and work there. There is an urgent need for the whole Society to keep the problems of Africa alive at international fora. We need to keep this issue alive in the discussions of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and at the UN. As I said earlier, if something tragic befalls Europe, everybody comes immediately to help; when something tragic happens again and again in Africa, nobody seems to care. Here we have a real task to do.

I would like to make a final remark about your observation regarding the growing distance between the Jesuits and the poor. This issue has to be taken up by the whole Society. I sent a letter on Poverty in which I wrote very clearly that, while the motivation of our poverty remains undoubtedly Christ (we don't like to be poor for ascetical reasons, or to be nice to our treasurers), our poverty has become more and more an act of solidarity with the poor, an act of sharing lived out in the name of the Lord as in the Church of the Apostles. We are, however, aware that all what we take for ourselves cannot be made available to the poor. This is true at the level of the community, the institution, and the universal Society. But it is also equally important to accept that there is something we can and should do.

Let me give you an example. When a community prepares its budget (and this should be done twice a year), is there a real discernment? Is it done properly? Do we really think it is necessary? Do we ask ourselves what the community can do out of solidarity with others? These 'others' may live around our house, around our community. When GC 32 started FACSI the original idea was to gather all the funds donated by each community out of this commitment to solidarity. FACSI is going on, but I am not too happy with FACSI because I would like it to become a 'living experience of solidarity' in the Society. The communities should decide what their contribution to the poor of the world is going to be, and put this at the disposal of FACSI. This original spirit is lost when the Province Treasurer transfers merely an amount of money from the right side to the left side of his accounting book. It becomes entirely an administrative operation! I have to come back every time to remind all that this cannot become an accounting or an administrative operation left to the ability or discretion of the Treasurer. Our contribution to FACSI must be the fruit of a communitarian discernment to be in true solidarity with the poor.

To labour this point a little more. The purpose of FACSI is not mainly to collect a certain amount of money in Rome. I would accept the decision of a community that decides to give its contribution to the poor around them. This decision is the result of discernment, a decision to be in solidarity with the poor; there is, at least, a discernment made out of solidarity with the poor.

Since we are talking about FACSI let me clarify another point. The money we receive from the whole Society is always distributed in its entirety. No capital or corpus has ever been built. We receive more requests from inside and outside the Society than we can attend to. Our goal is to restrict our disbursements, and as far as possible, to attend to real social issues. This explains why we stopped, for example, giving scholarships. I would like to help various projects so that all Jesuits become aware of, and increase, their affective and effective solidarity with the poor.

Let me touch also the point you have made about the role of formation in the Social Apostolate. It is with the intention of fostering this spirit of solidarity with the poor that, starting with the novitiate, everybody is asked to undergo some experience of insertion in the life of the poor. Since you know the situation, you may help the Novice Masters in selecting these places. There are two dangers with this preliminary experience. The first is that they believe this experience is only limited to the novitiate. We need, however, to remember that for St. Ignatius the *experimenta* were dimensions of Jesuit life, something you keep on doing all through your life. The second danger is that sometimes these *experimenta* may turn into what I would call "spiritual tourism." During these experiences we should learn to work with the poor and even under the authority of the poor.

I am glad to note that this spirit of having *experimenta* at different moments in our life has been put into practice by some Jesuits. Many Jesuits, for example Provincials, after finishing their term, offer themselves to go for one semester with the refugee service or to a similar place. There are Jesuits who seek such an insertion during their sabbatical. It is very important to maintain the contact with the poor in one way or another. In one Province they asked each community to have at least one Jesuit in direct contact with the poor. He carries this insertion, as it were, in the name of all the other members of the community. In other Provinces every Jesuit was asked to consecrate at least five hours every week to be with the poor (visiting a prison, a hospital, etc.). We need these concrete proposals to make sure that this effective and affective solidarity remains, without exception, at the level of all the Jesuits. For Jesuits, in all the decisions they take, in all the choices they make, must take the poor into account. I think, and I speak also about myself, that this is not always done. It is forgotten quite easily. This is so important that when new Superiors are appointed, we should know if they have this awareness of the poor.

I am very happy that something has been done by our Universities. When I visit them, they are able to show me programmes of conscientisation they follow or projects for the poor that they have undertaken. On this point, real progress has been made. Our retreat houses are also aware of this reality. We should never forget that, in the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, St Ignatius makes us responsible for the evil of the world. We are, in some way, responsible for the sinful structures of the world. He asks us to join Him, to build up with Him a new, more just and more true society. A Jesuit parish cannot be Jesuit if it does not have this dimension of working for the poor living inside or outside the parish. I think it is good we have taken parishes in poor areas. This has helped us to do what the Lord wanted.

A lot of things still remain to be done. The linkage with the educational sector is very important. It is up to you to make this link between the educational sector, and also with the media sector, so that they act always in favour of the poor. There was a time when it was not possible to think in these terms. For example, at one time, Fr. Ellacuria believed that it was a mortal sin to have a University! He did indeed utter this remark. And yet, it is also true that UCA showed the whole world, and not only the Society, how to become a real university, and, at the same time, how to take a stand in favour of the poor. The poor of San Salvador do not study in the UCA, but they all know that the UCA is working for them. The medical faculties do not allow their doctors to work only in cities; they have to commit themselves to go to the villages and exercise their profession in poor areas. Real scientific investigation in favour of the poor is possible and necessary.

To be FOR the poor is the vocation of all Jesuits, but not all Jesuits can be committed to this struggle for the poor in the same manner. I repeat, everybody in the Society has to be IN FAVOUR of the poor and work for the poor. But only some Jesuits can work WITH the poor. To be with the poor is not the vocation of all Jesuits; it cannot be done by everybody. Fewer Jesuits still can be LIKE the poor, work like the poor. Even among those who work with the poor not all may be able to work and live like the poor. To live and be like the poor is to be inserted among them. In short, all Jesuits must work for the poor; some (and they should not be a small crowd) must work with the poor; and some must be inserted in the life of the poor and live like the poor.

This, I believe, is our way of proceeding. We face many obstacles. First, the number of Jesuits continues to fall. While the number of Jesuit novices in the whole world is remarkably high (more than 900 in the world), it is not enough to keep the total number from declining. Second, there is a question not only of quantity but of quality; of having young Jesuits capable of assuming leadership in the Society. You may have an 'over-crowded' Province and yet leadership is hard to find. Look at the nature of the jobs most of you are managing; you need people with the gift of leadership to replace you. We face real problems in this area, and one way of solving this issue is to gear our formation to prepare young Jesuits for leadership. In this context we must bear in mind that the younger generation is somewhat afraid of taking up the burden of managing certain types of institutions, even if they are institutions working for the poor. We need to reflect on these points and see what can be done during the period of formation. We must admit that sometimes our formation has nothing to do with all we have been speaking about this morning. I still believe that better leadership qualities can be developed if we are able to influence the manner in which young Jesuits undertake their studies. Keeping in mind the possibilities offered by various formation programmes, we need to help them to sustain and hopefully deepen their initial sensibility to the poor. They cannot be Companions of Jesus without sharing this concern for the poor.

Thanks, and may the Lord bless you and your work.

***Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J.
Superior General***

THE SOCIAL APOSTOLATE IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS CHALLENGES AND SITUATION

ACTS of the Meeting of Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Sector*

Rome, 6-12 April 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This document on the status of the Social Sector is the result of a long process of reflection. The Social Sector that articulates the Social Apostolate¹ in the Society today faces challenges from a world ridden with increasing inequalities and marginalisation. The leadership change at the Social Justice Secretariat, and the prospect of the Congregation of Procurators at Loyola, September 2003, led to the decision, taken with the approval of Father General, to convoke a meeting of the Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Sector in Rome from 6-12 April 2003. As background preparation for this meeting, the Coordinators were asked to write a report on the situation of the social apostolate in their Assistancies, indicating the main apostolic challenges facing them, and the response offered by the Jesuits. A detailed questionnaire was sent to them with an outline of the main themes or areas to be treated. A number of questions dealt specifically with the approach and activities of the Social Justice Secretariat at Rome.

2. To make the information from the Assistancies available to all the participants before the meeting, these reports were distributed among them either in their own language or in the form of a translated summary of the original. All the participants at the meeting (Box 1) gathered in Rome on the morning of 7th April to sing the *Veni Creator*, asking the Holy Spirit for the grace of courage to interpret correctly the signs of the time (Mt 13/10-17).

Box 1 PARTICIPANTS	
ASSISTANCY	NAME
Africa	1. Muhigirwa Ferdinand (ACE)
East Asia and Oceania	2. Paul Wiryono (IDO)
Europe (Central)	3. Andreas Gösele (GSU)
Europe (Eastern)	4. Robin Schweiger (SVN)
Europe (Western)	5. Lucien Descoffres (GAL)
Europe (Southern)	6. Javier Arellano Yanguas (LOY) 7. Francesco De Luccia (ITA)
Latin America	8. Ricardo Antoncich (PER) 9. Rafael Moreno (MEX) 10. Sergio Vaillant (DIA)
South Asia	11. Joseph Xavier (MDU)
United States	12. Rick Ryscavage (MAR)
Social Justice Secretariat	Fernando Franco (GUJ) Sergio Sala (ITA)

* We have omitted from the original document the Annexes [Ed].

¹ By 'Social Apostolate' is meant the totality of actions and initiatives undertaken for the service of faith and the promotion of the justice of the Kingdom; noting that the inseparable link between the two, is the integrating factor of our mission (GC 34, D. 2, n. 14) which includes the dialogue with culture and other religions (GC 34, D. 2, n. 21). Some important characteristics defining this apostolate have been described in section 3.2 of this document. By 'Social Sector' is meant the officially approved organisational structure that integrates these initiatives and activities into a whole.

3. There was a high level of participation at the meeting. The group had the autonomy to chart its own course on the basis of a timetable agreed upon earlier. At significant moments, the group decided to break up into smaller teams so as to be able to deal more effectively with certain issues. At every stage, draft-summaries of matters already discussed were proposed for final ratification. This document is thus the fruit of a general consensus reached by the participants, truly a consensus because, first, many of the important parts of the document were agreed upon before the meeting was over; and secondly, a draft of the report was circulated among the participants before it reached this final form. The present version has also benefited from comments received from Father General's Council.
4. The document undertakes an analysis of the strengths, limitations of the Social Sector, as well as the challenges facing it, and presents an outline of our determined response to the apostolic challenges faced today by the Society of Jesus. This is not the order, however, in which these two thrusts of our deliberations appear in this document. In view of the apostolic character of the Society, we have decided to start with a look *ad extra*, that is, to decide first on the challenges we face and on the characteristics of our response; and then turn our gaze *ad intra*, to the situation of the Social Sector and the Secretariat of Social Justice.
5. Deeply aware of our desire to be present with the Risen Lord "in solidarity and compassion, where the human family is most damaged" (GC 34, D. 2, n. 4), we have felt the need to carry forward the insights gained since the Naples Congress (1997), and to continue our reflection on the "noteworthy positive elements and troubling weaknesses of the social apostolate" pointed out by Father General in his letter on the Social Apostolate at the beginning of the Jubilee Year 2000.
6. It is in a spirit of humility, trust and confidence that we present the fruits of this meeting to our Jesuit companions working in the social ministry and to their Provincials (and Moderators). The reflections and proposals contained in these Acts are not a set of unalterable rules engraved in stone, but an account of our consolations and desolations, which as we take into consideration the diversity of local conditions and priorities, may help us further in discerning together the will of God. They are dreams and plans that we want to share with the government of the Society at all levels in the hope that they will help formulate apostolic plans that respond better to the urgent and more universal needs of our time.
7. The meeting was a time of grace for all. We were blessed by the supportive and inspiring presence of Father General at one of our sessions. We became aware of the lights and shadows that frame mysteriously the quiet but determined struggle for justice carried on by Jesuits all over the world. We were deeply touched by the profound and tested faith of Jesuits and their collaborators in the mission of Christ. We were happy to share our work with the young (and not- so- young) Jesuits from our houses in Rome who gathered at the Gesù for an evening of prayer, sharing and reflection. We felt a deep sense of companionship not only because we listened to each other with sensitivity in the course of the meeting, but also because of the warm welcome we received from the Jesuits at the Curia.

8. We are grateful for the silent service of those who provided secretarial and technical assistance, and wish to express our gratitude also to the three translators who made the spirited interventions at the meeting easy to understand. It was indeed a time of grace for we felt the presence of the Spirit leading us to a land we had never imagined.

2. THE APOSTOLIC CHALLENGES

9. One of the most revealing conclusions that emerged from both the Assistancy Reports and our meeting is the fact that the challenges facing all Assistancies or regions have two features in common: the nature of the problems faced, and the felt need for an urgent, global and adequate response. Though the forms of these challenges in each continent or region have their own local flavours, the underlying causes are the same. These challenges and the proposed responses are schematically presented in Box 2.

Box 2	
CHALLENGES	RESPONSE
1. Migration	Devising in close collaboration with Provinces and Assistancies an organisational structure to coordinate more effectively and plan more efficiently our efforts on Migration.
2. The Dynamic Process of Global Marginalisation and Exclusion	Creating a Task Force
3. Violence and War with special reference to Africa	Creating a Jesuit network on Peace, Justice and Development
4. Social Movements	Participating in movements, events, and summits
5. Ecology and the Environment	Establishing better coordination among existing networks
6. Governance, Democracy and Participation	Creating a platform of existing networks

2.1 Migration

10. The phenomenon of migration understood as the movement of people from one country to another has rapidly increased over the last thirty odd years². As Jesuits, **we are concerned primarily with those migrants who leave their country pushed out by poverty, the lack of a meaningful future, the loss of their land, and the impossibility of living with dignity. The conditions under which these types of migration take place render the migrant population more vulnerable**, marginalise them and exclude them from full participation in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the adopted country³. This perspective leads us also to take account of internal migration, a phenomenon that creates a belt of poverty and squalor around many cities, especially in developing countries, where migrants make do with the poorest and most temporary of shelters.
11. A preliminary description of the most vulnerable and oppressed segment of the migrants needs to note that present migration, unlike in the past, is characterised by its universal character,⁴ an increasing variety of types and forms,⁵ and widespread feminisation.⁶
12. That the Society of Jesus has become increasingly aware of this problem is evident from the fact that Father General recently declared migration to be, in his opinion, one of the apostolic priorities of the Jesuits. A number of important and valuable initiatives have been undertaken in many regions and countries; and international and inter-continental cooperation is beginning to take shape. The outstanding work done by JRS among refugees⁷ has been commended by Jesuits and international agencies all over the world. In some countries JRS has already started working with migrants in what has been recently described as the ‘grey area.’⁸

² “Around 175 million persons currently reside in a country other than where they were born, which is about 3 per cent of world population; the number of migrants has more than doubled since 1970,” *International Migration Report, 2002*, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, United Nations, p. 2.

³ Among the most vulnerable forms of migration we may also include the phenomenon of ‘forced migration,’ understood as “a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (people displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects,” *International Association of Forced Migration*, (<www.forcedmigration.org/info/scope.htm>).

⁴ From 1970 to 1990, the proportion of receptor countries grew by 86 per cent, and that of sending countries by 90 per cent (S. Castles and N. Miller, *The Age of Migration, International Population Migration*, MacMillan, London, 1994).

⁵ We may mention, by way of an example, the case of war refugees, economic refugees in the form of cheap labour, highly skilled professionals and workers, students, executives, entrepreneurs; those movements that have a temporal, a cyclical or a permanent nature; those that take place with proper labour contracts or without them; those movements that are directed and coordinated by powerful mafia networks.

⁶ Though women have been part of the migration movements of the past, they constitute a considerable percentage of all types of migration. Many of them have migrated alone, and this process is related to the feminisation of many areas of the manufacturing and service sectors of production.

⁷ “About 9 per cent of the migrants are refugees. At the end of 2000, the number of refugees in the world stood at 16 million, of which 12 million are under the mandate of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and 4 million under the mandate of United Nations Relief and Welfare Agency (UNRWA). The largest number of refugees is found in Asia, 9 million and in Africa, 4 million. Three million refugees are in developed countries and 13 million in developing countries” (*International Migration Report, 2002*, p. 4).

⁸ “If on paper forced migration and voluntary economic migration can be easily distinguished, things are different in reality. There is a number of situations where elements of forcefulness and elements of search opportunities intermingle, and a number of situations where, whatever the motivation of the person, the system can misclassify them. All these situations make the ‘grey area,’ where it is not clear who is a refugee and who is

13. The large number of people affected by the phenomenon, together with its universal character, prompts us to set down migration as one of the most urgent issues requiring a response from the Society of Jesus in general, and the Social Apostolate in particular. The complexity and interconnectedness of the various economic, social, cultural and political forces causing this movement of people across countries and regions, and the variety of ways in which they need to be accompanied (educational, pastoral, legal, social) **urgently call for the Social Sector's involvement in this issue**. Integrating other sectors (educational, pastoral) in finding an adequate response to this issue would make for quicker and more efficient solutions.
14. On the basis of the experiences of many Jesuits working individually and through various institutions with migrants, and of the initiatives already taken to achieve a better inter-provincial and inter-Assistancy Coordination, we believe that the time is ripe to devise an appropriate organizational structure capable of coordinating, at the level of the whole Society, all these efforts and initiatives. Such structure may be characterised by (i) a de-centralised structure that recognizes the importance and autonomy of local entities, Provinces and Assistancies, (ii) an active role of the Secretariat of Social Justice in coordinating the efforts at the level of the whole Society, and (iii) the mechanisms to define clearly common objectives and lines of responsibilities.

2.2 The process of global marginalisation

*“In our times there is a growing consciousness of the **interdependence** of all peoples in one common heritage. The globalization of the world economy and society proceeds at a rapid pace, fed by developments in technology, communications, and business. While there can be many benefits from this phenomenon, it can also create injustices on a massive scale. Examples would be: economic adjustment programs and market forces unfettered by concern for their social impact especially on the poor; the homogeneous ‘modernization’ of cultures in ways that destroy traditional cultures and values; a growing inequality among nations and within nations, between rich and poor, between the powerful and the marginalized. In justice, we must work to counter this by building up a world order of real solidarity, where all can have a rightful place at the banquet of the Kingdom.”⁹*

15. We are troubled by the fact that this dynamic globalizing process described by GC 34 has continued to advance rapidly, with the consequence that the number of people who are economically, politically, socially and/or culturally marginalised has steadily increased.
16. We consider it an urgent imperative for the Society of Jesus, and more especially the Social Sector, **to assume a stronger stand protesting against this, and to contribute more effectively to finding an inclusive alternative**. It is of paramount importance that in dealing with this set of complex issues we prioritize the areas where our specific contribution would be feasible and meaningful, and that we collaborate with other groups and institutions engaged in the same endeavour.

an irregular migrant” (Raúl González Fabre, SJ, *Trends in Forced Displacement for the Next Years: Challenges for the JRS*, (mimeo, JRS, p. 68).

⁹ “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.” (Lk 14:13 and Lk 16: 19-31); see also *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 33. The quotation is from GC 34, D. 3, n. 7.

2.3 Violence and war with special reference to Africa

17. The prophetic words of GC 34 describing the widespread acceptance of a ‘culture of death’ have unfortunately become even more pertinent today. This culture has encouraged “war, terrorism, and violence”¹⁰ on an unprecedented scale. What has become increasingly evident is that these forces of death have been unleashed primarily in the African continent. GC 34 has asked the universal Society “to do whatever it can to change international attitudes and behaviour towards Africa.”¹¹ The urgency of this call sounds more acute today when war and violence have dramatically underscored “the *marginalization of Africa* in the ‘new world order’” in a way that “renders an entire continent paradigmatic of all the marginalized of the world.”¹²
18. By way of example, we may recall that, since 1994, the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has killed around 3.5 million people. In a situation of war and conflict people do not matter, and are used merely as tools to settle power-disputes and obtain economic advantages. In addition to those already dead, these conflicts have caused the internal displacement of millions who have had to flee their countries as refugees. In the process, they have lost all they had, and are in a situation marked by dreadful food scarcity, lack of proper shelter, and little access to primary health care. Not surprisingly, intermittent hunger, illness and, ultimately, death have characterized their lives.
19. The seemingly successful use of violence to achieve narrow interests appears to have become even more attractive and widespread, destroying the fabric of society, the rule of law, and democracy. Trust in human beings and in social institutions has been almost completely lost. People feel powerless and unable to control their future while criminals and terrorists have occupied the space created by lawlessness. The causes of these wars and conflicts lie in a powerful combination of internal and external interests bent on pillaging the natural and mineral riches of these regions.
20. Though Africa remains the most dramatic example of the manner in which these forces of death have destroyed the hope of life, similar situations prevail in other parts of the world, for example the Middle East, Colombia, and various countries of Asia. In these countries, the Society of Jesus has shown remarkable imagination and courage in finding new peace alternatives.
21. **Response of the International Society.** Efforts to promote peace and justice should use our networks more effectively and collaborate with other groups, NGOs and institutions; only then can we articulate this problem in a clear, loud and strong voice. We should join other NGOs and institutions which have access to the general public to lobby for peace and against the trade in armaments. It might be useful to utilise the consultative status of JRS and other Jesuit NGOs with the UN. If this were not feasible, we may need to have a Jesuit institution with consultative status with the UN. The formation of a Christian ‘political leadership’ capable of creating a viable option for peace should be supported in Africa and other regions sensitive to these issues.

¹⁰ GC 34, D. 3, n. 8.

¹¹ GC 34, D. 3, n. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*

22. **Concrete Proposals.** Setting up a network that could be initiated soon by the Secretariat with the collaboration of various centres already working on these issues.

2.4 Social Movements

*“At the inter-Province and international levels, the Society must continue to find ways to collaborate with other national and international groups or organizations, both nongovernmental and official. It is part of our responsibility as an international apostolic body to work with others at the regional and global level for a more just international order. The Society must therefore examine its resources and try to network as effectively as possible to carry out our mission also at this level.”*¹³

23. **Existence and implications.** The emergence of new social movements is a significant cultural event of our time. The Industrial Revolution was the source of a number of movements linked to economic issues: for instance, trade unions, the classic example of the most popular way in which they were articulated. We are today witnessing the emergence of a new type of social movements. Some of the best known are those defending issues relating to women, ecology, ethnicity, race equality, indigenous peoples, and peace. These movements have attained different levels of national and international organization; they maintain close linkages through the internet; they have achieved remarkable powers of mobilization; and they have agreed upon common goals such as the defense of life, human rights and individual and communitarian dignity. In the case of movements based on the defense of gender issues, our collaboration with them would be an optimal way of following the invitation of GC 34 to all Jesuits “to align themselves in solidarity with women.”¹⁴
24. These movements reveal **the need to affirm identities with reference groups** established in a sea of virtual communications. These identities go beyond traditional national and country affiliations, and coalesce around reference groups that may, on the one hand, have very specific characteristics (gender or race); and, on the other, provide enough ‘human space’ for people with different tendencies to join them. Individuals meet on a common platform but, most importantly, they find in these reference groups the opportunity to express themselves as active subjects in the face of significant human problems, such as war and peace.
25. As a challenge to our Jesuit response to global issues, these groups require from us attentive listening; they call upon us to integrate ourselves in their processes, to learn how to work together for a common cause, and to reflect together on the new human experiences of space and time created by the information revolution. We need, however, to remember that a **virtual organization requires also physical presence**, as was clearly demonstrated by the mobilization of human masses protesting against the war. We need to take cognizance of the fact that behind these seemingly amoebic structures, there exist powerful administrative grids that constantly generate new ideas and strategies.
26. These emerging social movements influence public opinion and communicate among themselves through the networking offered by websites and other internet facilities. This networking structure is based on the unity and diversity of its components, the flexibility to adapt to different themes and current issues, and the combination of low user-cost with great effectiveness.

¹³ GC 34, D. 3, n. 23.

¹⁴ D. 14, n. 13.

27. While accompanying these movements, we must discern the type of values underlying them, and become aware of the manipulations that are likely to infiltrate and permeate them. Being part of these movements, we also need, with the help of our Ignatian practice of discernment, to learn the evangelical values inherent in them, and sense there the prolonged incarnation of the Word who assumed human existence with all its consequences.¹⁵ Our involvement can then become a process to re-read the presence and growth of the Kingdom.¹⁶
28. **Our Response.** Gladly accepting the invitation of Father General “to build on the existing experience of many Jesuits, and to respond effectively to the complex challenges of today,”¹⁷ we propose the following:
- (i) Participation in worldwide movements and summits must be, as far as possible, the **result of our involvement in local, regional and national for a**.¹⁸ Participating in grassroots movements will lend credibility to our presence at international events and help our efforts to accompany the poor in being subjects of their destiny. The articulation of various levels must always begin from the bottom and move upwards.
 - (ii) For strategic purposes we may distinguish between (local, national and international) movements, and summits that become significant moments in the articulation of these movements and in expressing their goals.
 - (iii) As an international body, **we must actively participate** (becoming members whenever appropriate) in social movements like the World Social Forum and international summits on ecology, sustainable development and other issues organised by various UN bodies where civil society organises parallel encounters.
 - (iv) The **objectives** of our participation in movements and events must be clear. The most obvious of these are the opportunity to learn and understand the issues involved, to exchange information and establish contacts, to extend our solidarity to popular struggles and to contribute, from an ethical and theological perspective, to the movements and to the periodic summits. Our limited experience tells us that this contribution is often expected and welcome.
 - (v) This proposal strongly favours the institutional or official participation of Jesuits in regional/international movements and events as this makes clear the corporate character of the Society. Institutional/official participation in these events – not as individual Jesuits supported by non-Jesuit organisations – requires the specific mandate given directly by a Jesuit Superior (Provincial, Assistant, Moderator) through the respective Social Coordinator or through the indirect approval obtained by a network which is ultimately approved by a Jesuit Superior.
 - (vi) The Social Justice Secretariat (SJS) **must play a complementing and motivating role** in fostering this type of participation. When the SJS decides to convoke Jesuits to

¹⁵ “The dialogue between the Gospel and culture has to take place within the heart of the culture. It should be conducted among people who regard each other with respect, and who look together towards a shared human and social freedom. In this way, too, the Gospel comes to be seen in a new light; its meaning is enriched, renewed, even transformed. Through dialogue the Gospel itself, the Word ever ancient and ever new, enters the minds and hearts of the human family” (GC 34, D. 2, n. 17).

¹⁶ “Working for the kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God’s activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms. In a word, the kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God’s plan of salvation in all its fullness. (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 15)

¹⁷ Letter of Father General on ‘Networking in the Social Area,’ Rome, 15 January 2003.

¹⁸ For example, the Continental Alliance in Latin America which is fighting against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

participate in an international event, the decision must always be taken in consultation with the Assistancy Coordinator of the region where the event takes place. Care must be taken that information is distributed among all Coordinators, and that the latter are consulted before finalising the list of Jesuits to be invited. A meaningful participation in these fora invariably requires a serious groundwork prior to the meeting including a thorough preparation of planned interventions.

2.5 Ecology and the Environment

29. The document published by the Social Justice Secretariat, *We Live in a Broken World*, and Father General's accompanying letter, have been generally well received in our Provinces, and can be rightfully regarded as a response to the mandate of GC 34. We regard it as a good basis on which to work out even more effective and coordinated responses.
30. The Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg made explicit the close relationship between ecological concerns, the eradication of poverty and sustainable development. A number of issues regarding the use of energy, biodiversity, water and sanitation, food security, agriculture, trade and finance, and other concerns form part of the final document. New forms of partnerships and platforms on thematic issues have been proposed, and a large number of NGOs, and other organisations have taken up this challenge.
31. A number of Jesuit ecological networks have been created. It is extremely important to foster a greater coordination among them, to make a careful selection of those issues and perspectives more specific to our Jesuit charism, and to develop a truly Ignatian ecological spirituality. Our commitment to live a life of evangelical poverty demands an acceptance of sustainable life-styles.¹⁹
32. We suggest that SJS may explore the ways to help the process by calling on certain networks and centres already existing to play an important role in establishing a Jesuits platform of networks working on ecological issues.

2.6 Governance, Democracy and Participation

33. The relatively recent concern about the issue of *governance* has arisen from the debate generated by international institutions on the failures of the economic reforms (structural adjustment) initiated in the 1980s and the early 1990s. The debate concluded that earlier efforts did not yield results because the 'institutional factor' was not sufficiently taken into consideration. The new or revised consensus speaks primarily of 'good governance' as a new paradigm where the functions of the State are clearly curtailed, social capital or the collaboration of various social actors is skilfully developed, and conditions (especially those dealing with labour) are put in place so that the market can flourish. The centre of 'good governance' thus understood by these international bodies is the market and not people.

¹⁹ *'We Live in a Broken World,'* p. 45.

34. Civil society organisations have challenged the meaning given to this term, have recognised the importance of involving, at various levels, all stakeholders of civil society in the democratic process of controlling the State, and have underlined the importance of responsive, transparent and accountable structures of political participation.
35. **The real ambit of governance.** From the perspective of good governance promoted by civil society organizations, we may indicate some of the most significant initiatives.
- (i) Research and advocacy on democratization, transparency and accountability of existing international financial institutions.²⁰
 - (ii) Democratic control over Transnational Companies.²¹
 - (iii) Proposals to reform existing international institutions and the creation of new ones.²²
 - (iv) Education on citizenship and participation.²³
 - (v) Experiences of strengthening democracy at the local level through analysis and debate on the policies of public institutions, participatory budgets, and analysis of budgets from the perspective of the needs of the marginalized sectors.²⁴
 - (vi) Monitoring how different social actors respect human rights and how governments fulfill their commitments in international treaties.
36. **New Proposals.** The strengthening of a social network of active and responsible citizens together with the establishment of more democratic political structures is the only guarantee of lasting and meaningful social change. These twin processes must be at work, affecting regional, national and international governance.

3. THE SITUATION OF THE SOCIAL SECTOR

3.1 Reasons for Gratitude

37. Beyond being a functional division within the Society, the Social Apostolate is a **community of Jesuit companions** who “set out on a journey of faith as we committed ourselves to the promotion of justice as an integral part of our mission.”²⁵ Within the universal mission of the Society to “*serve the faith in which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement, including as integral dimensions of evangelization the inculturated*

²⁰ One of the sub-groups of IJND is working on this issue.

²¹ The US Assistency has started the Socially Responsible Investment (SRI). The Centre of Concern (Washington) works in a network to increase the accountability of agribusiness.

²² A number of universities have done work on these issues, for example, Deusto University (Spain).

²³ There is a variety of experiences related to efforts at empowering groups: efforts and projects at enhancing the political participation of Adivasis (indigenous people) and Dalits in India; educational programmes on civic and political responsibility in many centres of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe; many initiatives undertaken in the areas of popular education and pastoral activities; more concretely we recall the work of IBRADES (Brazil) in the formation of young leadership, as well as the efforts made, in the same line, by the University Ruiz de Montoya (Peru).

²⁴ The Indian Social Institute (New Delhi) collaborates on this theme with other organisations. There are similar initiatives in Brazil; in Cochabamba (Bolivia), a Water Management Committee has been formed to do away both with inefficient political control, and expensive private management.

²⁵ GC 34, D. 3, n. 1.

proclamation of the Gospel and dialogue with members of other religions,"²⁶ it is a grace to have been called to live out this call to justice in a specific way, **with the poor**, and in some cases, **like the poor**. Compelled by the needs of our sisters and brothers, our vocation as Jesuits seems to us to be built up and strengthened in the measure in which we respond to the voice of the Lord speaking through his friends.²⁷

38. To have been placed in such good company is truly a gift of the Lord.²⁸ We are more aware daily that the **poor evangelise us**, and that the poor are the main actors in the task of achieving *full human liberation*.²⁹ Our understanding that to be friends of Jesus is to be friends of the poor leads us to see our vocation as one in which we become companions of the poor, walking with them and offering ourselves in service to them in their mission.
39. More especially, we feel that it is a special privilege to be able to share our vocation and way of life with numerous other Jesuits and collaborators, men and women **who bear witness to their faith** through their commitment to justice and human dignity, a commitment which leads them to offer their lives and sometimes even to give up their lives for others in martyrdom.
40. **Deepening our spiritual tradition has been very important to us.** The rediscovery of the social dimension of the Spiritual Exercises and the pedagogy of discernment not only strengthens our faith but is also a crucial factor for the future of an apostolate lived out in a world where the ideological reference points of the past are no longer relevant.
41. We are also grateful for the **documents** expressing the common discernment within the Society during the past few decades: the last General Congregation, the Characteristics of the Social Apostolate and the Letter of Father General on the Social Apostolate written in 2000. All these documents inspire our mission and offer us concrete guidelines about how to proceed and what to practise. The documents of the General Congregations and the letter of Father General representing, as they do, the commitment of the entire Society to the poor, enable us to feel that we have been sent out on a mission and supported in our task by our companions.
42. In the past few years an important effort has been made to clarify the difference between the **social dimension** of every apostolate of the Society and the aspect that specifically characterises and determines the existence of the **Social Apostolate**. This dynamic has enabled us to develop the identity of the Social Apostolate, which is by definition multifaceted and plural. We were requested to examine further the characteristics of the social apostolate so as to make them wholly functional. By way of response we have gathered various points of view from all the Assistancies, and propose a synthesis in the following section.
43. The **variety of works** and social interventions that make up the Social Sector of the Society is truly impressive. This diversity is precious but also a challenge. It is precious because it brings us closer to the reality of others and shows us actual people who have been able to improve their own lives and their social environment. It is challenging

²⁶ *Complementary Norms*, 4 §§ 1, 3.

²⁷ GC 34, D. 3, n. 9.

²⁸ GC 34, D. 3, n. 1.

²⁹ GC 34, D. 3, n. 10.

because the search for an effective apostolate in an increasingly interconnected world requires us to find shared understandings of the issues involved and calls us to walk together as we evaluate proposals that need to be articulated at different social levels.

44. It is also true that some of the **international projects** established in the last few years are a good example of the possibility of working closely to create a dynamics that builds on the capacity of different people, institutions and provinces.
45. Finally, we recognise that the specificity of our apostolate reaches its full potential within the mission of the Society as a whole. We experience with great joy and hope the **inter-sectoral collaboration** that has developed over the past few years in some of the Assistancies and Provinces, and believe that this collaboration is indispensable for the development of the Social Apostolate and the social dimension of the Society as a whole.

3.2 Characteristics of the Social Apostolate

46. We are in general agreement that the Social Apostolate may be characterised as the sum of apostolic activities, rooted in the Church's³⁰ and the Society's³¹ commitment **to the poor**, expressing this common dimension of all our apostolates by means of our work **with the poor**, and in some cases, **living like the poor** (Box 3). This specific apostolate seeks to achieve the structural changes necessary to create a more just and fraternal society. It follows that in our mission.
 - (i) We must actively incorporate the **perspective of the poor and excluded**. This may be achieved in various ways: by ensuring that our social and cultural research is rooted in their perspective, by accepting that working with them is primarily a matter of accompanying them in their struggles, and in some cases, by living in physical proximity with them. To be able to become their friends and assume critically their perspective demands, in all cases, that we cultivate a vital nearness to their lives.
 - (ii) In our apostolic activity we must ensure that the poor and excluded are the **subjects of change**; they can never become the object of our work. The recognition of their dignity and capacity is a prerequisite for them to take responsibility in building a more just society.
 - (iii) One of our specific contributions to working **with the poor** is the analysis, from a **global perspective**, of the root causes of their social problems as they appear in a local context. This analysis can also help us to search for feasible social alternatives at each moment in history.
 - (iv) Our commitment to working **with the poor** requires a common effort in order to change the matrix of human relations that constitutes society as a whole. A **rigorous social and cultural analysis** is necessary to achieve this goal.
47. The above definition outlining the specificity of this apostolate must be complemented by an **inclusive sensibility** that aims to bring together other Jesuits and collaborators who live in close contact with the excluded. This will give us a sense of being companions

³⁰ "By virtue of her own evangelical duty the Church feels called to take her stand beside the poor, to discern the justice of their requests, and to help satisfy them, without losing sight of the good of groups in the context of the common goods" John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 39.

³¹ "We have become aware of critical situations affecting hundreds of millions of people which call for special concern in the Society" (GC 34, D. 3, n. 11).

engaged in the same task in which the insights of both serve to illuminate an overall reflection on the causes of injustice and mechanisms to overcome these situations.

Box 3

Characteristics of the Social Apostolate

By the term ‘Social Apostolate’ in the Society we understand every apostolic activity that,

- is rooted in its preferential love **for the poor** (universal dimension);
- concretises this common dimension of all our apostolates by being **with the poor**, and, in some cases, **living like them**;
- seeks, from the perspective of the poor and marginalised, to achieve **structural transformations** towards a more just and humane society;
- takes for granted that the poor are always the **subjects** of change and never objects of our work;
- is carried out **locally** with an **increasingly global** articulation structured from the bottom upwards;
- presupposes a rigorous **socio-cultural analysis**;
- is implemented by a **team** with an inclusive sensibility aiming at eliciting the cooperation of **other Jesuits, religious women and men together with lay persons**.

48. There are **other important characteristics** which should be highlighted:

- (i) We are encouraged to **work closely with religious women and men as well as lay persons**, social groups and organisations in order to create networks that enable our actions to be more effective.
- (ii) We accept that the mission of the Social Apostolate, given its characteristics, requires **full-time dedication** to the task and that the **preparation** for working in this apostolate must be as rigorous as the preparation required for other apostolic sectors.
- (iii) We support **collaboration with other sectors**, in particular the pastoral and educational, as well as universities and social communication.

3.3 Reasons for Concern

49. The responsibilities that we face require us to **evaluate certain aspects** of the Social Apostolate that are of special concern. Precisely because our experience so far has strengthened our faith and hope, we are able to take a critical and compassionate view of the reality of the Social Sector in order to improve and make an adequate response to the challenges we come across.

50. Firstly, the **contact we have with the poor seems to be weakening**. In the majority of the Assistancies, the dwindling number of Jesuits working and living with people excluded from the social mainstream is a widespread phenomenon throughout the Society. In the course of the last few years the number of so called ‘insertion’ communities and, in

general, communities which, through their structure or location, facilitate daily contact with the poor, has diminished, as has the number of Jesuits working in these communities.

51. We are particularly concerned about the tendency **to weaken the political dimension**³² of the Social Apostolate. The crisis in traditional ideological discourse, the relatively unsuccessful results achieved by apostolic tools aimed at socio-cultural transformation, the aggressive response provoked by the search of social transformation, and the perception that the Social Apostolate has shown far too secular a face has led many Jesuits to favour assistential types of work which create closer emotional ties with the poor. This tendency, which may well be a counter-balance to the ideology-laden discourse of the past, risks becoming an act of complacency unless it is linked with an analysis of, and the struggle to remove the causes of increasing poverty and exclusion among an ever greater number of people. The difficulties of analysis, the implicit ambiguities characterising any agenda for change, and the patience needed for this type of work are all objective difficulties that invite us, from the perspective of the Ignatian *magis*, to incorporate the political dimension as our contribution to the Church today.
52. In line with GC 34, we are more aware today of the complexities of society and the need to **add a cultural and religious dimension** to our analysis and political action, so as to create communities based on solidarity and authentic subjects of social change. The incorporation of these new dimensions must enrich our capacity to analyse and propose alternatives leading to action. In a world devoid of social and moral points of reference to regulate society, Ignatian spirituality, as a means to discern the presence of the Spirit in life, is a valuable tool which we can, and must place at the service of those who seek more just models of social interaction.
53. In almost every Province with a Social Apostolate, the number of Jesuits assigned to the Social Apostolate has **decreased**, not only in absolute numbers but also in comparison with other Sectors.³³ However, there are **some cases** in which the Social Apostolate has been supported, structured and **strengthened**, and of these we are deeply appreciative.
54. The former can only happen if a large enough number of **Jesuits is formed** to undertake their mission in this challenging apostolate. During the past few years, in practically all the Provinces, unfortunately fewer Jesuits have been directed to **study the social sciences**. It will not be long before the effects of this are felt not only in the Social Sector but the Society as a whole.

³² Without intending to provide an exhaustive definition of the sense in which the term 'political' is used here, we may point out the recent call of John Paul II to ordering human affairs in a more just and fair way. It is in the context of striving for a peace based on justice, credibility and transparency that the Holy Father speaks of the "continuing and deepening processes already in place to meet the almost universal *demand for participatory ways of exercising political authority, even international political authority, and for transparency and accountability at every level of public life*" (Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2003, n. 6). We, therefore, understand 'political dimension' as that aspect of our work for justice that accompanies the demand of the poor and marginalised to have a meaningful voice in public life. In doing so, our work for justice leads us to analyse the way in which political authority is exercised for the common good, and to take a stand against those local, national or international political instances that oppose fair, just and participatory ways of exercising political authority.

³³ In quantitative and approximate terms, 5 to 10 per cent of the total number of Jesuits working actively in the Social Apostolate although in some cases their work is not in the Social Sector. If we take this point into account then the number of Jesuits in the Social Sector is even less.

55. The young men who enter the Society display a marked sensitivity to social issues at the time of joining. In some Provinces and Assistancies, the social commitment of the Society inspired by the last General Congregations, the achievements of past decades, and the martyrs of the Society are presented as some of the main vocational attractions. We have, however, observed with great concern that during the **formation process** their sensitivity seems to be lost and/or replaced by other apostolic interests. While it is true that during formation there are several “experiments” of insertion among the poor, these are seldom accompanied by reflection and analysis to help understand the significance of the experience. It has become obvious that sensitivity, unaccompanied by **rigorous social analysis**, by **personal theological reflection** and lacking in an articulated institutional or apostolic response to the poor, tends to become weaker and eventually disappears from the horizon of the young Jesuits. We must, however, accept that no easy explanations can fully account for these facts.
56. As members of the Social Sector we acknowledge that, together with the Jesuits responsible for formation as well as those who are in formation, we too must take responsibility for this situation. Together we must look at ways in which the **capacities of young Jesuits to undertake social analysis** can be developed and strengthened throughout Jesuit formation so that the younger Jesuits’ experience of closeness to the poor leads to a deepening of their spiritual experience, helping them to discern their possible vocation within the Social Apostolate.³⁴ We hope too that the young Jesuits who come from socially and economically poorer backgrounds remain close to the concerns and interests of the poor.
57. Another reason for concern in some of the Assistancies of the Society is the **lack of adequate financial resources** of the Social Apostolate to develop its mission. The apostolic poverty required in the use of means should not impede the efficient development of the apostolate. In general, the situation of the Social Apostolate compares unfavourably with the financial resources at the disposal of other apostolates.
58. Though less problematic than in the past, in many Provinces the **relationship of the Social Sector with other apostolic sectors** can be undoubtedly enhanced. The need to improve this relationship is particularly crucial with regard to the university, and the educational and pastoral sectors.
59. As regards our **collaboration with universities and institutions of higher learning**, it is of utmost importance to determine jointly the areas of research and teaching from the perspective of the poor, and to ensure that these have a connection with key issues of social life. On the one hand, without this specific contribution from the universities, the Social Apostolate will lack the capacity and the financial means to engage in a sufficiently serious social analysis. On the other hand, without a link with the Social Apostolate, universities will become increasingly detached from the interests and needs of the poor, and thus respond primarily to the needs of existing political and economic powers. This close collaboration between the Social Apostolate and our Universities will benefit from a joint search to root our apostolic identity in “a service of faith and of the radical implications of faith in a world where it is becoming easier to settle for something less than faith and less than justice.”³⁵

³⁴ GC 34, D. 3, n. 18.

³⁵ GC 34, D. 2, n. 11.

60. In the Pastoral Sector it is important to highlight the role of many **parishes** which undertake social work in poor areas. Collaboration with them is important and will benefit both Sectors.
61. One of the traditional difficulties of the Social Sector has been the tendency towards **individualism and the lack of co-ordination** between its different platforms and institutions. This tendency, which may be attributed to the specific historical conditions under which the Social Apostolate has developed, contradicts the mission to create *communities of solidarity*³⁶ and works as an obstacle to strengthening it. The situation today is even more paradoxical as we are all acutely aware of the need to create networks if our work is to have the required impact.
62. These are some of the concerns that appear to **endanger the future of this sector**. We would like to call to mind the words of Father General reminding us that “the social apostolate risks losing its vigour and momentum, its orientation and impact. Were this to happen in a given Province or Assistancy, then for lack of a vital and well-organised social apostolate, the essential social dimension would also probably fade away bit by bit.”³⁷

3.4 Urgent measures to strengthen the Social Apostolate

63. Taking into account the weaknesses of the Social Apostolate (Box 4), we Jesuits committed to the Social Apostolate feel that, in order to strengthen this apostolate, the Society **may consider** the need to adopt urgently the following measures.
- (i) Support communitarian life-styles and Jesuit insertion which facilitate **personal contact with the poor**. These communities of Jesuits must be closely accompanied by the Province’s government as well as by the co-ordinators of the Social Apostolate.
 - (ii) **Assign young Jesuits to the Social Apostolate**. After discerning the way in which the mandates of the last General Congregations should be implemented, the government of the Society may consider making the necessary apostolic choices to facilitate these appointments. Those working in the Social Apostolate must also be ready to accompany these young Jesuits and bring them closer to our apostolate.
 - (iii) **Encourage the formation of young Jesuits and lay collaborators** in the social sciences so that our apostolic contribution may be able to match the needs of the poor.
 - (iv) **Support** the Social Apostolate **financially** in some Assistancies and Provinces so that its works can be carried out.
 - (v) Strengthen the **formation of the young Jesuits and lay collaborators in Ignatian spirituality**.

³⁶ GC 34, D. 3, n. 19.

³⁷ P. Kolvenbach, *Letter on the Social Apostolate*, 24 January 2000, n. 5.

Box 4

The structure and functions of the Social Apostolate

*“An endless pluralism of approaches and variety of methods and organisational models constitute, without a doubt, an enormous richness of the social apostolate; but, in order to fulfil this potential and grow as an apostolic body, it very much needs adequate **co-ordination**. Accordingly, we need to make good use of the forms and structures of co-ordination already available and indeed strengthen them. I would like every Province, Region and inter-provincial body like Conferences of Major Superiors to have a co-ordinator of the social apostolate, supported by an appropriate commission, and with sufficient capacity, resources and time to play their role.”*

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach – Letter on the Social Apostolate

1. In theory it is generally accepted that the **Provinces are committed** to creating structures through which to develop the Social Apostolate. In practice, however, this is not always the case. In the majority of Provinces, a co-ordinator has been appointed but in many cases the coordinator does not hold a full-time position nor have his responsibilities been defined.
2. In many Provinces **Social Apostolate Commissions** have been established but in many cases they are not actually functioning.
3. **Assistancy level Co-ordinators** have been nominated in a some Assistancies (ALM/ALS, ASM, AFR, USA, EOR). Other Assistancies are in the process of discernment in order to find the most appropriate person
4. In the cases where the Social Apostolate is developing well, this development has generally been accompanied by the creation of a **specific structure of the Social Apostolate**; the existence of a coordinating body with authority and means to implement its responsibilities; the functioning of a Commission in which joint apostolic discernment and planning have taken place; some strategic appointments of Jesuits; and a clear policy of support and communication on the part of the Province’s government.
5. There are other **striking examples** of Provinces which, without developing a specific Social Sector, have a vibrant Social Apostolate. In these cases, the Social Apostolate can be found in different Sectors (e.g. Pastoral), or is incorporated into a single apostolic sector. In these cases, the Social Apostolate does not become merely a diluted social dimension, but continues to have specific social works, for instance, institutes of social sciences, development institutes, and grassroots education. By means of a planned coordination, these social works have generally developed close links with other types of apostolic platforms such as the university, parishes, and educational centres.

3.5 Challenges to enhance the effectiveness of the Social Apostolate

64. We are all aware that during the last few years all societies have become **interdependent**. There are very few issues that can be tackled at the local level alone. The solutions to the social problems we face require the articulation of local responses to social processes at higher levels. This observation compels us to **increase inter-provincial and international co-operation**.³⁸ We need to create both, a work dynamic, and flexible co-

³⁸ GC 24, D. 21, n. 2.

ordinating structures that facilitate our common work and help us take advantage of existing capacities.

65. The **practice of networking** seems to be the most cost effective mechanism to achieve greater integration and cooperation. Networking implies the creation of an organisational matrix based on the prominence of nodal points within the net; speed in disseminating, digesting, and acting on the flows of information; and decisiveness in setting up clearly the objectives and responsibilities of each network. In this manner we can avail of **light and flexible administrative structures**, foster short thematic meetings, and provide temporary consultancy whenever required.
66. We must make an effort to turn **inter-sectoral co-ordination** into an important means of advancing our Apostolate. While networking with all apostolic sectors is important, **collaboration with Universities and Research Centres is certainly the most relevant**. If the perspective of the poor can orient our research this collaboration will be of vital importance for the future.
67. Following our way of proceeding it is necessary to acknowledge and respect the **responsibility of Provincials/Moderators** in the development of the social apostolate. We need to achieve greater **transparency in defining the relationships** between social Coordinators, their respective Provincials/Moderators and the central government of the Society. We need to emphasize the aspect of team-work among the Secretariat and the Assistancy Coordinators, and this may be strengthened in the coming years by an annual meeting of the latter with the Secretary of the SJS.
68. We must work together with **social movements** in order to build-up networks to give greater power to the poor.
69. We believe that the challenges we face are not new. They are all clearly expressed in the documents of General Congregation 34 and in the letter of Father General on the Social Apostolate; both documents are still pertinent. What is new is the **call to take immediate action**. We find ourselves at a historic crossroads. On the one hand, the social problems are more acute than ever, and we hear continuously calls that reflect the needs of millions of people. The lines of action along which we want to articulate our mission at the international level are a clear indication of this. On the other hand, our capacity to respond has been weakened. It is abundantly clear that we must **make choices** that will enable the Society to respond.
70. This document is sent to you on the feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, in the hope that his readiness to hear the call of those suffering victims of plague may inspire all of us “to continue on our journey towards the Kingdom with great hope.”³⁹

On the feast of St Aloysius Gonzaga
21 June 2003
Rome

³⁹ GC 34, D. 3, n. 24.

† **XABIER GOROSTIAGA, S.J**
14 January 1937 – 14 September 2003

In Memoriam

As we go to press with this issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* we learn of the demise of a great Jesuit and an inspiring Jesuit companion: Xabier Gorostiaga. He surrendered his life to God on the 14th of September in Loyola (Spain) this year. We would like to join many, many other Jesuits in Central America, and his friends and fellow travellers all around the world in thanking the Lord for his exemplary and enlightened dedication to the struggle for justice. We celebrate his memory with an excerpt from a moving tribute 'Xabier Gorostiaga: a Life in the International Social Apostolate' written by his friend Juan Hernández Pico SJ few days before his death.

Xabier may not have had the distinction of being officially called a 'universal Basque,' but he was indeed one, in the womb of his mother. Pregnant with her still unborn son, she had to board a goods train to Galicia, accompanying his father as he escaped from General Franco's dreaded police who were after him for his alleged militancy with the Basque nationalists.

He studied in the Jesuit school of Bilbao, where he was known as a mischievous student. Joining the novitiate in 1954, he was sent to Central America, and arrived in Cuba in 1958 where he started his studies in the Juniorate during the last months of the Batista regime. He witnessed the entry of Fidel Castro into La Habana and had his first brush with death when part of his stomach had to be removed. Fr. Azcárate, Rector of the Juniorate and later Auxiliary Bishop of La Habana, accompanied him with great tenderness during this experience. His study of political economy and his deep engagement with social analysis were the legacy of his days in Cuba.

He visited Ecuador and Nicaragua before his Regency, and in 1962, arrived in Panama. During the period of his regency, he offered courses in social analysis to school students and to business people who were former alumni of the school. In 1965 he began his theological studies in Oña, and in December of that year, was part of a group of Jesuits who founded the CIAS of Central America. After Theology he was sent to Cambridge University to study Economics, securing a scholarship that paid for all his studies. What was remarkable and a sign of the ease with which Xabier moved through the entire social scale, is the fact that the Panamanian Government invited him to be part of an advisory team to renegotiate the canal treaty with the US government and, no less remarkable is the fact that the Provincial told him to accept this job.

Xabier played an important role in supporting the courageous steps taking by the Latin American Bishops on social issues. With a group of social scientists, he made a significant contribution while advising the Third Latin American Conference of Bishops (Puebla, 1979). 1979 saw the beginning of his life in Nicaragua, where he stayed for 18 years. Soon he was appointed an Adviser to the Planning Ministry and was involved with the revolutionary process, gathering around him a number of his old friends from Cambridge. In 1981, however, the demands of honesty and consistency required him to renounce his job.

After the sudden death of Fr. César Jerez, in 1991, Xabier was appointed Rector of UCA. The collapse of the revolution made these years difficult to live through. In 1998, he was appointed Executive Secretary of AUSJAL, and in collaboration with the President, Fr. Luis Ugalde, played a role as facilitator and animator in the creation of the NGO Magis. Two years later he was appointed Superior of the Jesuit community at the University. These last appointments helped to ease a painful doubt in Xabier's heart: "does the Society of Jesus appreciate my work? A work that has flowed from the running waters of a profound and spiritual experience of God?"

In his last days at the infirmary of Loyola, when they suggested that he should ask for a miracle from Blessed Brother Garate or from Fr. Arrupe, his answer was: "The miracle has already happened — you are the miracle."

May he rest in peace.