Social Justice Secretariat

Nº 83-84, 2004/2-3

PROMOTIO IUSTITIAE

Reflection

The pairing of Faith and Justice in decree four of the 32nd General Congregation

José Virtuoso SJ

EXCHANGES ÉCHANGES INTERCAMBIOS SCAMBI

Remembering Rwanda

Mark Raper SJ

Emmanuel Uwamungu SJ

William O'Neill SJ

Théoneste Nkeramihigo SJ

Octave Ugirashebuja SJ

Michel S.Kamanzi SJ

Aloys Mahwa SJ

Yves Djofang SJ

Christian Uwe SJ

Jean Gasenge SJ

Debate

The Faith-Justice Dyad

Participants

Stefano Bittasi SJ

Anthony Carroll SJ

David Eley SJ

George Keerankeri SJ

João Batista Libânio SJ

Alain Thomasset SJ

Pedro Trigo SJ

Editor:	Fernando Franco S.J.
Associate Editor:	Suguna Ramanathan
Publishing Coordinator:	Liliana Carvajal
Graphics by:	Daniele Frigeri S.J.

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.
PJ is also published electronically on the World Wide Web at the address: **www.sjweb.info/sjs** If you are struck by an idea in this issue, your brief comment is very welcome. To send a letter to *PJ* for inclusion in a future issue, please write to the address, fax or e-mail on the front cover.

EDITORIAL

In one of its March issues, *The Economist*, noted for its staunch, even if enlightened, defence of neo-liberal policies, published an article attacking the recent academic preoccupation with alarming and increasing world-wide economic levels of inequality, and with the pernicious role that inequality plays in precluding the efforts to reduce poverty. Such an attack betrays the fear that the deepening cracks crisscrossing the jaded and tensed face of neo-liberalism may turn it into the countenance of a defeated old man.

These are not empty words. Consider the following. Since the end of the Berlin wall, wars have cost over five and a half million lives. What is worse, about 80 per cent of these are civilian deaths. The vast majority of armed conflicts are located in low-income countries ravaged by local mafias and private armies, supported by hidden, though well orchestrated economic interests in search of oil, mineral resources and timber. The moment has come to accept the fact that we seem to be caught in the vicious grip of poverty and war. The relationship between poverty and war is disturbing because it lays bare the relationship between cause and effect: between structural economic, social and political inequalities, and armed conflicts. Neo-liberal policy makers ought to be worried and alarmed because this increased violence is beginning to penetrate and hit the soft spots of the affluent world, and is spreading the highly contagious and destructive virus of fear among those accustomed to living in the comfortable security of a welfare society.

By remembering the tenth anniversary of the tragedy of Rwanda, *Promotio Iustitiae* invites its readers to gaze at this plague of violence and war through the eyes of the victim, from the standpoint of those women and children who at times appear to be the naked symbol of the meaninglessness of the Crucified. We cannot evade any longer the responsibility of denouncing the unsustainable levels of structural inequality between and within nations breeding resentment, discontent, and anger. “Injustice is not just a *consequence* of conflict, but is also often a *symptom* and *cause* of conflict” (Rama Mani).

The initiative of remembering our dead in Rwanda came from a young African Jesuit. The proposal grew in dialogue with the Secretariat and with other Jesuits. All the articles have been reviewed by a committee of three Jesuits appointed by the Regional Superior of the Region of Rwanda-Burundi. The few changes suggested have been accepted generously by the authors. We are grateful to all of them for sharing their hope and pain with us. This issue closes with a poem about the pain and hopes of Africa.

We are grateful to those Jesuits who have responded to the debate on the Faith-Justice dyad. With the publication of a few more contributions we rest the debate here for the time being. Some of the issues raised have found an echo in many Jesuits across the world. One Jesuit from Chile invites us to read an editorial he has published on the traits of a newly developed city, Santiago, that “segregates the rich in a few well-serviced quarters and fragments the poor in far-away barrios”. He ends with a question we make our own: “How can we communicate the Gospel and the Ignatian message to struggle for justice in a society which is becoming more and more plural and secularised?

The articles on Rwanda’s genocide and those rounding off the Faith-Justice debate amount to more material than we usually carry. We decided to print them together and bring out a **double issue** of *Promotio Iustitiae*. The next in November will carry the talk of Father General and the Proceedings of the Coordinators’ meeting in May 2004.

Fernando Franco SJ

REFLECTION

THE PAIRING OF FAITH AND JUSTICE IN DECREE FOUR OF THE 32ND GENERAL CONGREGATION

José Virtuoso S.J

Decree Four of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus established that the relation between faith and justice is the hermeneutic key by which the content of the Jesuit mission in the modern world may be discerned. This perspective introduces a new period in the Order's history, marking its understanding of the world, its spirituality and work, and its new conflicts.

Recording the history of how this decree was drafted helps us understand better why its formulations claimed to interpret the Order's Charism in consonance with the newest and most relevant ecclesial expectations of a given historical context. Recalling this history shows how possibilities for action in society have been envisaged by the Order in recent times.

DRAFTING OF DECREE FOUR

Antecedents

As soon as the 1970 Congregation of Procurators was over, preparations began for the Society's 32nd General Congregation (GC). That the Society was passing though a time of great effervescence and tensions was an open secret. GC 32 proposed to channel all this dynamism, an effort that enthused some and disconcerted others, both within the Order and outside it. This was manifest in an exhaustive sociological study of the process covering the period from the Second Vatican Council and GC 31 to the start of the next General Congregation in December 1974[1].

The Society of Jesus was also greatly influenced in this matter by Fr. Pedro Arrupe's active leadership

In this context of change and transformation, a concern that emerged repeatedly through the voices of Jesuits in various parts of the world was the relation between the Order's mission and the problem of injustice. The 1971 Synod of Bishop's proclamation of the promotion of justice and liberation from every oppressive situation as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel, played its part in disseminating this concern.[2] The Society of Jesus was also greatly influenced in this matter by Fr. Pedro Arrupe's active leadership in promoting new theological awareness of the theme of justice and its implications for Christian spirituality and evangelisation.[3]

In the Church of Latin America the concern for justice had already been given institutional expression in the statements of the Second Conference of Latin American Bishops, held in Medellin in 1968. The conclusions had begun, in just a few years, to inspire a new theology: the Theology of Liberation. The first systematic expression of this is the book bearing that title by Gustavo Gutiérrez in 1971.The Society of Jesus in Latin America, encouraged by Fr. Arrupe's leadership, and in the ecclesial context already described, proposed to address, at least through the voices of its Provincials, the need of transforming the continent so as to project the perspective of the poor and oppressed and answer their cry for liberation[4].

The preparation of General Congregation 32

The preparation of GC 32 began officially with the confirmation of the preparatory commission and the naming of its President, Fr. Jean-Yves Calvez, in April 1971[5]. The preparation for the Congregation was proposed as a long path of discernment for all Jesuits considered individually, as groups of communities, as provinces and as a universal body[6]. Following this methodology, a timetable was set up to discuss the most diverse themes seen as relevant for the Order since GC 31[7].

Strangely, as Jean-Yves Calvez notes, the preoccupation for justice appears as just one more theme among many in the stages of preparation, and records of the discussions

[1]The Faase, Thomas Philip, *Making the Jesuits More Modern* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1981). As one of the signs of internal changes brought by the new changes in the Order, the author notes: "Between 1966 and 1974, 1,500 priests left the Society, and overall membership declined by 6,500" (p. 47).

[2]In effect, the final conclusions of the 1971 *World Synod of Bishops* proposed that the Catholic Church look at the "signs of the times" which indicated grave injustices covering the world with a network of controls, oppression and abuses that suffocate freedom and prevent the greater part of the human race from sharing in the construction and enjoyment of a more equal and brotherly world. A new conscience is being born in groups and among the people themselves which shakes them out of resignation to fatalism and impels them towards freedom and responsibility for their own fate. Movements were born reflecting the hope for a better world and the will to change all that could no longer be tolerated. This situation invited listening to the Word of the Gospel which asked the Church to commit its efforts to the aspirations for liberation of those suffering violence and oppressed by unjust mechanisms. In this perspective the Synod advanced its fundamental thesis: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation" (Conclusions, n. 5).

[3]See the intervention of Fr Arrupe in the 1971 Synod: 'Contribution of the Church to the Establishment of Justice'. See also his address to the World Congress of ex-Alumni celebrated in Valencia in 1973.

[4]See the joint document of the Major Superiors of the Society of Jesus in Latin America, Rio de Janeiro, May 1968.

[5]See Letter to the whole Society of Fr Arrupe 3/04/1971.

[6]See Letter to the whole Society of Fr Arrupe. 25/12/1971.

show a great variety of positions with regard to justice,[8] ranging from those seeking a more precise and effective formulation in the document "on the 46 proposals"[9] to those who held that "if one is looking for a sure way to destroy the Society, it will be enough to politicise it."[10]

Nevertheless, another force emerged during the period immediately preceding the General Congregation. In his long letter of convocation, Father Arrupe underlined its central objective: "...the need to seek, specify and define, even more and more effectively, the service that the Society should give to the Church in a world changing so rapidly, and the need to reply to the challenge such a world places before us..."[11] The postulates from the Provincial Congregations would basically reply to this objective. In fact, a huge number of postulates on the apostolate in general, and on the mission and the charism of the Order were sent to GC 32. There were clearly a proportionally higher number of postulates on the social apostolate, the social commitment of the whole Society, the preoccupation for the poor, and the priority to be given to serving them. The discussion on the vow of poverty in the Order, in particular, had a strong social and political component, suggesting that living evangelical poverty implies a deep commitment to the struggles of the poor, to their liberation and to sharing their way of life.[12] On the specific theme of the promotion of justice, the Provincial Congregations sent 40 postulates, of which 15 were from Asia, 9 from Latin America, 10 from the United States, 3 from Canada and 3 from Europe.

The majority of these postulates on justice were inspired on the text of a postulate prepared by the Provincial Congregation of Mexico

According to Jean-Yves Calvez, the majority of these postulates on justice were inspired on the text of a postulate prepared by the Provincial Congregation of Mexico which served as a model, because if its broad diffusion in various languages since the 20th January 1974.[13] This postulate proposed the following.

1. *That the GC defines explicitly, from the beginning of its work, an option of the Society vis-à-vis the problems of international justice, in such a way that, all the deliberations of the Congregation regarding our life and mission in the world today be placed within the perspective of this fundamental option.*

2. *That the Congregation approve –and urge Father General to implement– a programme of reflection for all members of the Society on the problems of international justice.*[14]

The Composition of Decree Four

When the sessions started the Congregation had placed justice fourth in a list of major priority themes for discussion. It was also proposed that, given the importance of all the selected themes, it was necessary to indicate which of these had priority, in other words, a "priority of priorities". This theme, be treated first, would be the context for discussing the other themes, becoming thereby "the criteria for apostolic service today and the promotion of justice." After several general discussions another theme was added: the mission of the Society of Jesus as a body.[15]

The three joint commissions drew up four versions of a document that aimed to give a synthesis of the main points of the themes being dealt with. The detailed proposals in the document were fully debated, many amendments added and modifications suggested. Finally, the definitive text was approved during the last days of the Congregation.[16]

The first version of what would finally become Decree Four was presented in the General Assembly on 1 February 1975. In this document the themes of the Society's mission in today's world, basic apostolic options (among which the promotion of justice was one), criteria for the apostolate and the characteristics of the Society of Jesus as an apostolic body were itemised and broken down. This first version is a long list of the principal concerns shared by the General Congregation. There is an attempt to synthesise each of the sub-themes treated but no systematic vision of the whole.[17] The second version, presented a week later on 7 February, took up the amendments made but kept the same structural characteristics as the first version.

The third version, presented on 18 February, already contained the formulation that would characterise Decree Four, though the process of arriving at a fuller synthesis was still on:

[7]The process of preparation for GC 32 lasted from April 1971 to the convocation of Provincial Congregations on 8th September 1973, which was the step immediately preceding the Congregation convoked for 1st December 1974. This time of preparation was marked by discussion and selection of propositions considered most relevant to the concerns of the Society, based on the documents drawn up by the preparatory Commission. At the same time, the specialised secretariats drew up special studies on their respective areas which were studied in the corresponding apostolic sectors in the provinces. Judging by the method adopted, the Society, as a body, certainly debated widely the themes of greatest interest to its members and achieved a wide degree of consensus on these questions.

[8]Calvez, Jean-Yves, *Fe y Justicia: La dimensión Social de le Evangelización* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1985) pp. 40-44.

[9]The synthesis of "46 propositions" sent by the preparatory Commission to the provinces for their study in September 1972 contained 6 propositions on the theme of justice, grouped under the subheading of Jesuits and politics. See Documentation on the early preparatory phase of GC 32.

[10]*Synthesis of Reflections from the Provinces on the "46 Propositions,* October 1972 - February 1973, p. 27. (See Documentation on the remote preparation for GC 32).

[11]Fr Arrupe: *Convocation* of GC 32.

[12]The total number of postulates sent to GC 32 was 1,020, of which 934 were sent by Provincial Congregations. See Postulates for GC 32.

[13]Calvez, Jean-Yves, *op. cit*. pp. 45-46.

[14]Provincial Congregation of the Province of Mexico, February 1974.

[15]Acts of GC 32.

[16]Idem.

[17]See Documents Our Mission Today. Commission I, II, IV. Versions 1/2/75 and 7/2/75.

> The mission of the Society of Jesus today is to place itself at the service of faith. An integral part of this service is the promotion of justice and the development of a humanity in which each can be reconciled with the rest and it becomes possible for all to arrive at the knowledge and love of God.[18]

The final text presented and corrected during the Congregation's session (1-3, March), produced the following central formula:

> The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. For reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another.[19]

Content of the Decree

The theologian Juan Alfaro, who participated as a delegate in GC 32, explains the content of Decree Four according to the following outline:

a) Primacy of the Society's apostolic mission: *diakonia* of the faith;
b) Commitment to the promotion of justice, as required today by the service of faith;
c) The reason for this bond between the service of faith and the promotion of justice is the reconciliation of men with God (the Pauline formula of Christian salvation), and such a reconciliation implies the reconciliation of men among themselves in love and justice.[20]

This formulation carries with it a series of important innovations. In the first place, the promotion of justice is not only a requisite of faith and evangelisation as shown in the last synods,[21] but in addition, in the case of Jesuits, remains incorporated in the mission of the Society of Jesus as a constitutive feature, thus bringing up to date the very formula of the Institute of the Order. The promotion of justice thus acquires such high relevance as to become the sign of a Jesuit's identity, that is, of his spirituality, of the expression of his religious profession and vows, and of the criteria to define the apostolic mission. All this was to have very important repercussions on the future life of the Society because from now on the promotion of justice is not only a requisite of the "signs of the times" in the expression of the Second Vatican Council, or a proposal that comes from a theological or ecclesial vision, but presents itself as a constitutive mark both corporate and personal.[22]

Decree Four, in presenting this bond between faith and justice in the Society's mission, is especially concerned with the practical character of the relationship. That is, the theoretical reasons explaining it are virtually taken for granted, and the emphasis placed more on the promotion of justice as service of faith, and a sign which announces the faith, that is, the reconciliation of men with God.[23] There is, however, no explanation of what is meant by "justice". This is a key omission.

Indications are that this lack was deliberate and the attempt at resorting to mere adjectives was a way of not coming to terms with the substance.[24] The manner in which the decree was drawn up leads to the conclusion that there must have been, in all probability, fundamental theoretical disagreements[25] that could not be resolved in the time period of the General Congregation; this made it necessary to accept a certain ambiguity in order to obtain an agreed text.

The reason for this bond between the service of faith and the promotion of justice is the reconciliation of men with God

Another important element is the importance given to the historical context of our apostolic mission by Decree Four and the other main decrees of GC 32, following the objectives set out by Father Arrupe in his convocation. The word "world" is used 30 times in Decree Four and expressions such as "today" or "our times" are frequently used. There are also many equivalent expressions, for instance, "our contemporaries", "men and women of our time". Specific problems that have to be faced are indicated: social structures, injustices suffered by the poor, peoples' aspirations for liberation, and so on. All this implies a position that takes account of history, aims at replying effectively to its problems and building into it signs of salvation, signs which show God's will for men. The thrusts of the Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* and of *Lumen Gentium* of the Second Vatican Council find an echo here.[26]

[18]Document Our Mission Today. Commission I, II, IV. 18/2/1975.
[19]Final version of Decree Four of GC 32, n. 2.
[20]Alfaro, Juan: 'Alocución a un grupo de jesuitas en la ciudad de México' (Talk to a Group of Jesuits in Mexico city) 21/8/1975.
[21]The 1971 Synod of Bishops was followed by the 1974 Synod dedicated to the theme of evangelisation. One of the problems addressed by the Bishops was the relation between evangelisation and liberation. In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975) Paul VI reflected the synodal discussion in the following words: "The unceasing interplay of the gospel and of man's concrete life... involves an explicit message... especially energetic today about liberation." (n. 29).
[22]Bisson, Peter, *Toward a Soteriological and TheologicalGrounding of the Promotion of Justice*, (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 2001)
[23]Bisson, *op.cit*. pp. 90-91.
[24]For some this was one of the reasons why the promotion of justice acquired many false meanings within the Order, both from the point of view of its implications in the social field and from a theological perspective. This obliged Father Arrupe to produce many letters with nuances and clarifications.
[25]These disagreements were strongly influenced by the East-West conflict. Some Jesuits feared that, behind the preoccupation for justice, there might exist an open influence on the processes being developed in the socialist countries. Other Jesuits coming from these countries viewed with fear the results on their apostolates and the security of their own lives that an open politicization of the Order might bring.
[26]Bisson, *op. cit*. pp. 93-98.

THE CAPABILITY OF DECREE FOUR TO GUIDE THE PREOCCUPATION FOR JUSTICE IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Decree Four succeeded in grounding the link between faith and justice in the very demand of faith to the Church. Justice is understood as the effective sign of reconciliation of men with God and among themselves. The service of faith therefore necessarily implies service to justice, as an historical sacramental service that announces the definitive hope of eschatological reconciliation.

It could only be in those Churches, however, where awareness had matured in the light of the Second Vatican Council and Paul VI himself, that the Society of Jesus could give specific content to this outlook. This was the case of the Society of Jesus in Latin America where, thanks to the work of the second and third Latin American Episcopal Conferences (1968 and 1979) and the contribution of liberation theology, it was possible to achieve a level of understanding which involved accepting a concern for justice as a requisite of faith and of the mission to evangelise.[27]

The importance given to the historical context of our apostolic mission

Faith and Justice in Latin America

The starting point of church thinking in Latin America, which is taken up and developed in liberation theology, is the existence of a believing and oppressed people who, by deepening their faith, find the motivation for their own liberation.

From this perspective, justice is an effective form of love which is learnt from the very praxis of Jesus in the Gospels and the way God revealed himself to his people in the Old Testament. The archetypal case is Yahweh's revelation to Moses in the desert, in accordance with the book of Exodus, a paradigm repeated clearly in many prophets and in the historical and wisdom traditions of the Old Testament.[28]

This form of love possesses specific characteristics in accordance with biblical revelation in general and the practice of Jesus in the gospels:

♦Love like justice seeks first integrity with reality and recognises the existence of a great majority of men and women who are in a position of weakness compared with others, a weakness which puts them in danger of death or at the mercy of the strong and powerful, or simply converts them into the dominated and oppressed. So justice begins as a judgement, minimal certainly, but decisive, on the truth that comes from reality. A judgement that qualifies this situation as sinful since it contradicts God's will and his creation.[29]

♦On discovering that the life of the majority is threatened or denied, justice will try to refashion this humanity, giving it life from its most elementary levels. Faith will seek to come alive searching for salvation in history so that it may become a history of salvation. It will carry out this search in a real and effective manner, producing a genuine transformation that will enable passing from "conditions of life less human to conditions of life more human", to use the words of Paul VI. To achieve this, an accurate analysis will be necessary and the use of the most viable and opportune means to obtain the desired end.

♦Justice built in this way will be a sign of faith, following the framework of Christian faith, according to which only through the mediation of the sign is God revealed and becomes accessible. In fact, according to the Bible, God can only be reached through mediation. For the Christian, the fundamental mediation of God in history has been the Word made flesh, Jesus, his Son. And we reach God through the signs which reveal the presence of the Spirit of Jesus. Effective justice will be for Christians a sign of God's presence in history, in so far as it has made possible that this history be salvation history for those who were condemned to death.[30]

♦Faced by a world so full of poverty and misery that does not respond to God's creative will and is in open contradiction to his eschatological promises, God's will, so often discerned by Christian thought throughout history, is that man, through his work and freedom, builds a world where the whole human race can live in brotherhood, ensuring resources for the needs and requirements of all its members. God is especially close to the poor and marginalised because they are, contrary to his plan, subject to the reality of huge poverty and misery in this world.[31]

♦The Christian, because of his faith, makes an option for the poor in solidarity with his struggle and hope for a world more in accordance with God's creative plan. This invitation to make an option for the poor is made to the poor and the non-poor. The poor person is invited through faith to become an active agent in building history in solidarity with his own. The non-poor are invited to a solidarity with their poor brothers, taking on their struggles and hopes.

Original Spanish
Translation by Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ

Francisco José Virtuoso SJ
Centro Gumilla, Apartado 4838
Caracas 1010-A—VENEZUELA
<jvirtuoso@etheron.net>

[27]Ellacuría, Ignacio: "Fe y Justicia", *Christus* (October 1977). Sobrino, Jon, 'La Promoción de la Justicia como Exigencia Esencial del Mensaje Evangélico', *Revista ECA*, 371 (1979)

[28]Aguirre, Rafael, 'Justicia, Perspectiva Bíblica", *Mysterium Liberationis*, Vol II (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1980) pp.539-560.

[29]Sobrino, *op. cit*. p. 785.

[30]Ellacuría, *op. cit*.

[31]Gutiérrez, Gustavo, 'Pobres y opción fundamental', *Mysterium Liberationis,* Vol I: *Conceptos Fundamentales de Teología*, (Madrid,: Editorial Trotta, 1990) pp. 303-322.

REMEMBERING OF RWANDA

ANALISIS

REMEMBERING RWANDA 1994 - 2004

Mark Raper, S.J.

During early April this year thousands of quiet, sad memorials will be held across Rwanda. Holy Week also falls in early April, but the passion that Rwanda will re-enact is its own. Ten years ago, on 6th April 1994, a raging genocide was unleashed that claimed over 800,000 Rwandan lives in 100 days. This densely populated and beautiful central African country was decimated and 2 million of its people displaced. The world was shocked but also paralysed.

From 1993 to 2000 I was a frequent visitor to the 'Great Lakes' region, as the central African countries are often called, because of the 15 inland African lakes, such as Lake Tanganyika, Victoria and Kivu. Since early 1993 I had been on several missions to neighbouring Burundi, because the agency I then directed, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), had been invited to help displaced people and refugees to return home. With the outbreak of violence in Rwanda, we went to Bukavu in Zaire (now Congo) at the southern part of Lake Kivu at Rwanda's southwest corner, to prepare for the possible arrival of refugees. The community at a large Jesuit school, Alfajiri College, agreed to assist, although none of us could possibly have imagined the deluge of humanity that would soon wash over this remote corner of the country.

Once the fury of the conflict had ebbed, I made my way to Rwanda's near deserted capital, Kigali. At our Jesuit retreat house, Centre Christus, I found the blood-soaked room where just some months before, on 7th April, the first day of the killings, a group of people had been assassinated. Among them were three Jesuits, Innocent Rutagambwa, Chrysologue Mahame, and Patrick Gahizi. Patrick was the superior of the Jesuits in Rwanda and the director of the local JRS program, helping refugees who had fled Burundi after the assassination of its president the previous October. I picked up a spent cartridge that I still keep as a relic, along with others I saved from Liberia and from Bosnia.

Whenever I chance upon these relics, I search for some meaning to these events. What really happened? Why did it happen? Could something like this happen to us? How could the international community be so quick to respond to the humanitarian tragedy, yet so impotent to intervene so as to prevent it? How can the Rwandan people mourn their losses, find a realistic sense of justice, and be reconciled and united as a people?

What did happen? It was portrayed as ethnic conflict, as if that truth was also an answer or an explanation. On 6th April 1994, the plane carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, was shot down as it landed in Kigali. The President, a Hutu, had been preparing, under intense international pressure, to sign into law the Arusha Agreement which would allow a more democratic process in the country despite the risk of losing his own 20 year grip on power. Immediately the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and Hutu militia (the interahamwe) set up roadblocks and went from house to house, killing Tutsis and moderate Hutu politicians. The following day ten Belgian soldiers with UNAMIR (the UN peace keeping forces), assigned to guard the moderate Hutu Prime Minister, were killed along with the Prime Minister.

It was portrayed as ethnic conflict, as if that truth was also an answer or an explanation

Prising open the layers of Rwandan society, one can find factors that help us at least begin to understand. The withdrawal of colonial power after gaining independence in 1962 appeared to accentuate ethnic cleavages, which were often manipulated through media propaganda, inequity in employment practice and discrimination in education policies. Exclusive ethnic conceptualisations of what it meant to be Rwandan were promoted.

Rwanda's population, some 3 million in the sixties, had risen to around 7.5 million in 1994 and its density was among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The new experience of nationalism in Africa rigidified borders and made the natural nomadism of previous centuries impossible. By the mid-eighties, the family farming plots had been divided up as much as seemed possible, leaving many second, third and fourth sons without an income and without a future. At about this point in time the international market for Rwanda's principle commodity, coffee, collapsed to a half of its former value. Another factor was the growing scourge of HIV/AIDS, which left many young people without the care and direction of their parents.

Since independence the Belgians had intensified their input into education for the Hutu population; thus, many boys and, for Africa, a high proportion of girls, had the opportunity for secondary school education. Now there was a significant population of young people whose hopes and expectations had been raised by their schooling, but who were now uprooted, left landless, jobless and futureless. Rwanda was like a dry forest after a long drought. It needed just a spark to kindle an inferno. The desire for power and the precipitating fear

gave that spark. Individuals with political aspirations exploited the discontented mass of young people, using radio stations to send them to the hills with a poisoned message of ethnic hatred. Ethnicity and discontent, bred from poverty, were exploited by individuals for corrupt reasons, allowing the conflict to escalate steadily until the planned and speedily implemented genocide of 1994.

Could the international community have done something to stop the Rwanda genocide? With the warnings of NGOs, (such as my own JRS) on the ground, could not powerful nations have done something? General Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian chief commander of UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda) from 1993-1994, tried in vain to persuade his superiors (Kofi Anan was then head of Peace Keeping at the UN) to send more troops. He left Rwanda in 1994 with a post-traumatic stress disorder and recently published his autobiography, Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda, which gives a first hand account of the genocide. The reluctance of the USA for humanitarian intervention, shaped by its humiliating 'Black Hawk Down' incident in Somalia, influenced other powers in their vacillation and tragic inaction.

I learned that there is a natural progression from truth to justice to reconciliation

What can be done now? The Rwandan people have put enormous energy into reconciliation, rebuilding and overcoming its debilitating history. Last year the people cast their votes peacefully, approving a new constitution outlawing incitement to ethnic hatred. There are positive moves to achieve a sense of national unity and a more inclusive, ethnically heterogeneous national identity. Structures and rhetoric are intended to hold the people together as one nation. Despite the pride in these efforts, there is still grief. Of course people cannot forget what has happened.

Creative attempts to seek justice have been enacted in Rwanda. Because of the immense number of people accused of involvement in the genocide, and because of the limitations of people competent to enact the existing justice system, many accused were still awaiting trial years after 1994. So a village justice system, 'gacaca' was set up, to help all Rwandans acknowledge the truth. Last year 40,000 people were released under the 'gacaca' system but not only are the prisoners released, so too are the survivors, who risk being prisoners of the past. It has been important to find a system of justice that will not be so heavy that the whole society is forced to carry its burden.

Rwanda's experience is very particular, but carries echoes of other stories of survival after crisis. In my twenty years with the Jesuit Refugee Service I came into contact with survivors in many countries including East Timor, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cambodia, Angola and Bosnia. Those who have experienced such brutal atrocities have found a range of emotional and psychological survival tactics. While some survivors choose to forget, others were clear that only by remembering could they be helped to recover. Most wanted to know the reasons and to learn every detail about what happened and who was responsible for the disappearance or death of their husbands, mothers, siblings, friends and colleagues. They wanted to bring these people to justice and so be able to begin to put the past behind them. They said, "We don't seek revenge but justice, and the perpetrators have to be responsible for their acts." They want reconciliation but reconciliation with justice. They do not want past events to recur.

One cannot come to justice until the truth comes out. One cannot come to reconciliation if justice is by-passed. In El Salvador I learned that there is a natural progression from truth to justice to reconciliation. Then in Rwanda we learned that one cannot begin to enquire into the truth of what happened until the mourning is finished. And mourning does not end until the bodies are properly buried and the spirits of the dead are able to rest at peace. As the time for mourning passes, in the calm that follows, it becomes more possible to learn what really happened. Judgements can then be made on the basis of the facts, establishing the truth as much as possible and enabling decisions about reconciliation. Yet while the truth must come out, there is a risk that by continually repeating the stories, sentiments will only harden.

The immense heaviness of the Rwandan story was from the beginning lightened for me by the qualities of many people whom I met, whether in Rwanda or in the refugee camps. I witnessed great kindness and repeated acts of courage. Hundreds of families took in orphaned children, as the most natural and most African thing to do. Tutsi widows helped their Hutu neighbours to prepare food to bring to the men in prison who possibly killed their husbands. In his book, We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families, Philip Gourevitch tells the stories of two groups of school girls in Kibuye and Gisenyi, who, during an attack on their schools were roused from their sleep and ordered to separate themselves – Hutus and Tutsis. The girls refused, saying they were simply Rwandans, so they were beaten and shot indiscriminately. Gourevitch concludes, "mightn't we all take some courage from the example of those brave Hutu girls who could have chosen to live, but chose instead to call themselves Rwandans?"

Should we hold memorials, or should we try to forget? Well, no one can tell a grieving widow to forget the love of her life or the child of her flesh. Ten years is a short time for mourning and recovery from such an immense national tragedy, and memory is important. But

alongside the tragedy it is important for the Rwandan people to remember the heroism shown by those girls. And it is important for us, international friends, to know that side of the story too. Rwanda remains poor, the extreme pressure for land remains. The Rwandan people deserve our prayers certainly, but also our solidarity in looking to the root causes of their grief and of the injustices they have suffered.

Mark Raper SJ
P.O. Box 6071
Hawthorn Vic 3122—AUSTRALIA
<jesuits@jesuit.org.au>

GENOCIDE AS A POLITICAL CRIME

Emmanuel Uwamungu SJ

Introduction

Genocide, as the planned collective murder of a well determined human group, has moral, juridical, social, affirmative, religious and historical aspects that it would doubtless be interesting to examine. But our aim is more modest: we will address the phenomenon of genocide in its juridical aspect. Two reasons lead us to single out the juridical approach. First of all, this approach permits characterising the crime of genocide as a political crime fully implicating the responsibility of a State. Secondly, it shows up the ideology justifying the genocidal policy of the State which it can propagate through to the media under its control.

In Rwanda, as everywhere else that a similar crime has been committed, the 1994 tragedy does not reveal an atavistic conflict of several centuries as if such massacres were no more than the aggravation of an almost natural ethnic fate written into the genes of the two great components of the Rwandan people. The Rwandan genocide is the result of a campaign of hatred and exclusion carried out through the media by a State which wanted, for ideological reasons, to get rid of a part of its population which it considered a danger to its own existence.

By way of introduction, we wish to dedicate this brief study, on the one hand, to emphasise the link which usually exists between political power and genocide; and, on the other, to describe briefly the ideology which led to the carrying out of genocide in Rwanda.

Genocide and political power

We do not intend to follow all the stages in the juridical clarification of the term genocide through the different attempts to define it and codify its repression. For our purposes two important points of reference will be sufficient. The first comes from the initiative of Lemkin who invented this word in 1944 to describe the new form of destruction with regard to the Jews by the Nazi regime. The second comes from the reflection of Yves Ternon who brought to light the State's involvement in the crime of genocide.

Lemkin, in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, published in 1944, creates the word genocide and describes it in the following terms:

> "By 'genocide' we understand the destruction of a nation or ethnic group (...). In a general manner, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when it is carried out by the mass murder of all the members of a nation. It refers rather to a plan coordinating various actions which seek to destroy the essential foundations of the life of national groups in order to wipe out the group itself."[1]

In fact, Lemkin's book does not only invent the word. It also lays bare, through the analysis of the concept and the proposals made to the lawgivers, the essential elements of genocide: the identification of the victim, the criminal, the intention and organisation of the crime. So there is genocide when a State undertakes, with intent, to annihilate a well determined group with the aim of reducing the threat this group is supposed to pose to itself and using all the institutional and non-institutional means of which it disposes.

The premeditation of murder and the identification of the members of the group concerned are the necessary conditions of genocide

According to Yves Ternon, Lemkin certainly had the merit of opening a debate on genocide by affirming the principle of the criminality of the State, that is, the State as responsible for the offence. He thinks however that the term genocide, because of its etymology, carries an ambiguity which has misled some jurists into ignoring, as criminal, the very specificity of the crime they wish to denounce. The use of '*genos*' is in itself a contradiction. '*Genos*' means race rather than tribe, it does not refer to people ('*ethnos*'). Whence the paradox: the word conceived to designate the crime takes up in its own

[1]The description continues: "The aims of such a plan would be the disintegration of social and political institutions, of the culture, language, national feelings, religion and economic life of the national group, and the destruction of personal security, freedom, health, dignity and even the lives of the individuals belonging to the group. Genocide is directed against the national group as such, and the actions it involves are directed against individuals, not because of their individual qualities, but because they belong to the national group." Lemkin, R., Axis *Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for World Peace, 1944) p. 79.

[2]Ternon, Yves, 'Groupement pour les droits des minorités', *Les minorités à l'âge de l'Etat-nation* (Paris: Fayard, 1985) p. 227.

name the ignorance of the criminal and the jurist warns of a scientific error which he undertakes to denounce.[2]

This is why other jurists have abandoned the etymology of the expression to give it a legal content which specifies the crime of genocide, on the one hand, through the identity of the victim and, on the other, through the intention of the criminal. The victim is a minority which a power gets rid off by exterminating it or reducing it to a minute fraction. The premeditation of murder and the identification of the members of the group concerned are the necessary conditions of genocide.[3] The role of ideology is also involved because genocide "is a logical crime, a perfect crime where the murderer creates his alibi and sets himself up as judge, a crime overturning untruthfully the position of the victim, who becomes culpable and obliged to justify himself before his all-powerful judge.**"**[4]

The responsibility for genocide always lies with a State

But, in the eyes of Ternon, Lemkin and all his juridical followers did not manage to "isolate the specific character of the 20th century genocides: the liquidation by a State of groups constituted by its own citizens."[5] It is precisely this specific character that Ternon intends recalling in his book. We propose to resume in its essential lines his thought which establishes that "an umbilical cord links genocide with the power of the State."[6] and that, in the 20th century, genocide, which is always directed towards a group within a totalitarian State, is ideological.

The fundamental thesis of Ternon is that "the responsibility for genocide always lies with a State."[7] And it is this which distinguishes genocide from massacres committed by groups not mandated by their government.[8]

According therefore to this author, the threat of genocide appears with the State. This does not mean that every State is potentially genocidal; but there is a self-understanding of the State which can inevitably lead to the practice of genocide. It is the totalitarianism of state power that breeds the germ of genocide. The totalitarian State unites in itself all the conditions that permit carrying out genocide.

A totalitarian regime offers specific characteristics which distinguish it from despotic regimes: "one party; an ideology to which the party gives an absolute value and which becomes the truth affirmed by the State; control by the party of the economy, means of communication and the police."[9] By these specific traits, totalitarianism ends by setting up the power of the One, that is the power of a State which exempts itself from managing civil society and considers itself the source of all individual rights.

In fact, in a totalitarian regime, the power of the State is exercised by an elite at the centre and it becomes its chief's main aim to hold on to power for his own preservation. And, with the aim of ensuring a monopoly of power, the leading group provides itself with an ideology which it tries, by every means, to impose on all the citizens. This is why such a State is, like fundamentalism, manichean. For it, there are only two sorts of citizens, the good and the bad. The good are its collaborators, those who accept its ideology; the bad are those who oppose it, those who wish for a different form of social organisation. The good are friends whose rights and social advantages the State feels obliged to protect. The bad are enemies who represent a threat to the nation and who the State must prevent, with all the means at its disposition, including death, from harming the survival of the nation. And, in reality, "the victim's only fault is to be member of a group collectively judged guilty by a State which needs to denounce this guilt to justify its action."[10] This is why "genocide does not destroy individuals but a group. For the murderer, the victim has ceased to be a unique being; it is his label, his belonging to the group which singles him out for death."[11]

This effacing of the individual through a collective accusation of guilt is precisely the result of the power of a totalitarian ideology to arrange the citizens of the same State into two ontologically opposed categories, that of the good to be protected and of the bad to be eliminated. Thus genocide is essentially ideological. It is committed in the name of the ideology professed by a totalitarian State which, to preserve its monopoly of power, decides to get rid of a group of its citizens which it judges constitute collectively a danger to its survival.

Genocide, springing from a decision taken by the public authority to eliminate physically the group which bothers it, has this characteristic that it engages the responsibility of a whole people to carry it out. For all genocide implicates the bureaucratic organisation of a State, and the more or less effective collaboration of the members of the group controlled by the elite in power. Also, in a country or place where genocide has occurred, the group supporting power is largely in favour of the criminal action of the State. Clearly the danger of globalization must be avoided and the fact underlined that, in the first instance, responsibility is individual and challenges each one personally. But it must also be recognised that

[3] Ternon, *op.cit*., p. 228.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Ternon, Yves, *L'Etat criminel : Les génicides au XXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1995) p. 61.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 65.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] "Genocide is a crime of the State, the execution of the will of a sovereign State. (...) The elimination of a group requires at each stage of its realisation the support of the leading political class and the participation of the organs of the State, their complicity, their submission, their silence. The sovereign State sets itself up as the source of law. Would the circumstances seem to require it, it places itself above morality and outside conscience to dispose of the life of those deemed undesirable. If it orders genocide, it remains master of the game, defines the rules and controls the development of the murder." (*Ibid.* p. 65).
[9] Ternon, *op.cit*. p. 73.
[10] Ternon, *op. cit*. p. 78.
[11] *Ibid.*

responsibility in the execution of genocide is shared and that its degree depends on the grade occupied by the individual in the genocidal structures. Normally four categories are distinguished and therefore four levels of responsibility and blame among the perpetrators of genocide: the planners, the bureaucrats and technicians, the executors, and finally the observers.

The category of planners includes both those who have deliberately decided to eliminate a specified group and those who have planned the best way to carry out this aim. Among the many possible options (imprisonment, expulsion, putting to death, etc...), these last chose one and set up a programme to carry it out.

The category of bureaucrats and technicians is composed of people who provide the tools for the genocide. The bureaucrats supervise the progress of the different stages in the genocidal programme. They "coordinate the moments of the crime without questioning the end result they share in producing."[12] Their role is also to stifle the consciences of those carrying it out by convincing them their task is reasonable and noble. The bureaucracy itself is not responsible for choosing the destructive ends, but it facilitates their achievement by making the obedience of its agents routine, each trained to fulfil a role without asking questions about the purposes of the action.[13] The technicians provide the executors with instruments and tactical help in such a way that their conscience is concentrated more on the technical aspect of the operation than its significance.

The category of executors includes those charged with physically administering death. They are often the regular armed forces or militia expressly formed for the job. One finds among them ordinary people strongly supportive of the cause including, as in the case of Rwanda, women and children. At the bottom of the ladder are the spectators, divided among those who are silent and those who approve, encouraging the killers by songs of hatred and bellicose attitudes.

Conclusion

It is clear that, at least in the case of Rwanda, the fact of a responsibility shared at different levels is an undeniable sign that a great number of the population accepted the murderous ideology of the then leading group together with its propaganda of hatred and exclusion of the other. Also I accept the following conclusion of Semujanga:

> "It is undeniable that the rapidity of the conflagration is witness to the fact there existed a threshold of acceptability concerning the exclusion of the Tutsi from within the Hutu population. This fact shows that the *Parmehutu* reasoning cannot, without violation, be separated from its cultural context which only permits adhesion from those accepting Hutu racist ideologies. This threshold of accepting the exclusion of the Tutsi, based on the racial stereotypes of the Hamite-Tutsi, is by nature collective and explains individual acts in executing the genocide. And this same threshold is a result of the transformation of old memories through schooling and socialisation which have consolidated an ideology of exclusion of the other and marked in a profound manner the younger generations."[14]

So the ideology, which has such a deadly power in a totalitarian State, made possible the genocide in Rwanda.

Original French
Translation by Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ

Emmanuel Uwamungu SJ
L'Arbalétière, 137 rue de Saint Cyr
69370 Saint Didier au Mont d'Or—FRANCE
<uwemma3966@jesuits.net>

[12] *Ibid.* p. 101.

[13] Frein, Helen, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1979) p. 22.

[14] Semujanga, J., *Récits fondateurs du drame rwandais. Discours social, idéologies et stéréotypes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998) p 14.

REMEMBERING EVIL: REFLECTIONS ON THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

William R. O'Neill SJ

The Holocaust Museum here in Washington begins its story of one genocide by recalling another: "Who remembers the Armenians?" asked Hitler. How we answer, then as now, speaks not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence–what we say of genocide in our own time. It is fitting, then, on its 10th anniversary, that we remember the Rwandan genocide. The killings began on the evening of Easter Wednesday, April 6, 1994, and continued for three months. By the end, over 800,000 Tutsi as well as moderate Hutu opposing the genocide were massacred. Between the second week of April and the third week of May, it is estimated that the daily rate of killing was at least five times that of the Nazi death camps. Three quarters of the Rwandese Tutsi population fell victim to the genocide; the elderly, children, the infirm, all were killed; nor was there haven. The churches, formerly offering sanctuary, were the first places to be attacked.[1] In their environs, "more

[1] Prunier, Gérard, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 237-68. Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell The Story* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), pp. 1-30. Gourevitch, Philip, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux: 1998). Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 337.

Rwandese citizens died...than anywhere else."[2]

The horror was unmitigated, but not inexplicable, for the killing was due less to atavistic enmity than to other causes, among them we may note a racist mythology, nurtured in the colonial period and abetted by Belgian and later French *Realpolitik*. Although favouring elite interests, the totalizing myth of Hutu supremacy divested the imagined "other" of moral standing so that the massacres by the militia (*Interahamwe*) seemed banal. In a perverse inversion of Emmanuel Levinas's dictum, neighbour refused to "see" the neighbour's face upon which was inscribed the command: "Thou shalt not kill."[3]

Neighbour refused to "see" the neighbour's face upon which was inscribed the command: "Thou shalt not kill

Tragedy, however, is never simply given. Major powers refused to acknowledge the Rwandan killings as genocide lest they incur legal obligations under the Genocide Convention (to which they were signatories). At the behest of the US, UNAMIR troops in Rwanda were summarily withdrawn; in the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame's words, "All these powerful nations regarded 1 million lives as valueless, as another statistic and could be dispensed with."[4]

Whether *we* see these cruellest months as morally tragic or merely an unimportant failure of global politics depends upon our evocation of what is effaced, our bringing to word the transgressed command. So Hannah Arendt writes that to "describe the concentration camps *sine ira* [without outrage] is not to be 'objective' but to condone them."[5] Similar sentiments are voiced in the International Panel commissioned by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to investigate the Rwandan genocide:

> Our experiences in Rwanda–the witnesses to whom we listened and the memorial sites we visited–often left us emotionally drained.... The nature of these events demands a human, intensely personal response... Readers have a right to expect us to be objective and to root our observations and conclusions in the facts of the case and we have striven rigorously to do so. But they must not expect us to be dispassionate.[6]

In the wake of the *Shoah*, the developing *corpus juris* of international human rights' law provides the rudiments of such a response. We speak "where language halts" of atrocities and crimes against humanity. The term "genocide," itself of modern coinage, is such an evaluative description, invoking a "national, racial, or religious group[s']...natural right to exist." Such law, of course, remains comparatively weak and the powers of enforcement often wanting, as the unfolding tragedy of Sudan amply attests. Yet the rhetoric of rights remains a lingua franca, giving voice to what Adolofo Pérez Esquivel describes as our "internationalized conscience."[7] In victims' testimony, the unspeakable *is* spoken: the litany of rape and torture; of Tutsi children "murdered in their homes, hospitals or schools, drowned, burned alive...; of parents, who "threw their children into the [river] to spare them death with a machete," as "in the words of one survivor, 'a last gesture of love'."[8]

The rhetoric of rights tempers our remembrance, evoking the morally tragic character of suffering. Rwanda's killing fields will not admit of redescription, rape is just that, genocide perforce genocide. Nor is this bringing to word morally nugatory, for the intent of the *genocidaire*, after all, is to efface, to deny the primordial command of the face. What Elaine Scarry says of torture is apropos; for genocide's atrocities reduce the victim to a state where "in the most literal way possible, the created world of thought and feeling, all the psychological and mental content that constitutes both one's self and one's world, and that gives rise to and in turn is made possible by language, ceases to exist." To be reduced to "cries and whispers," to be denied even the mark of Cain's humanity, this is the "unmaking" of the victims' world, the effacing of memory.[9]

Rights rhetoric demands that we name atrocity, that we remember morally, precisely to redeem the cry, "never again." Our rights' rhetoric, in this respect, is Janus-faced, for in narrating genocide, as in the OAU report, we illumine the systematic distortions, the complex

[2]Africa Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, rev. ed. (London: Africa Rights, 1995), p. 865.

[3]Levinas, Emmanuel, *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), p. 89.

[4]Kagame, Paul, cited in Emily Wax and Nancy Trejos, 'Ten Years Later, Rwanda Mourns,' *Washington Post* (8 April, 2004), A1, 22.

[5]Hanah Arendt, 'A Reply', *The Review of Politics* 15 (January 1953) p. 79.

[6]'Introduction" of OAU Report', *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide* (OAU: 2000), 2.

[7]Pérez Esquivel, Adolfo 'Afterword', in *The International Bill of Rights*, ed. Paul Williams (Glen Ellen, California: Entwhistel Books, 1981), p. 105.

[8]Africa Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, p. 798f. Women and children were especially vulnerable. "Thousands of Tutsi women were raped...[T]he systematic rape was a form of terrorism against the Tutsi community–intended to intimidate, humiliate and degrade the Tutsi women and others affected by her suffering....Some of the girls and women...suffered horrific physical tortures before they were raped....Systematic rape was one of the instruments of genocide used to devastating effect by the extremists" (748-50). [A] substantial portion of children who have survived massacres and attacks have suffered horrific wounds" (pp. 798-99). Many children witnessed the atrocities and many were displaced or orphaned (pp. 853-61).

[9]Scarry, Eileen, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 30. Cf. David Hollenbach, 'A Communitarian Reconstruction of Human Rights: Contributions from Catholic Tradition', in R. Bruce Douglass and David Hollenbach, eds., *Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 127-50.

causal nexus culminating in collective violence and mass atrocity. Yet if rights permit us to "unearth the whole offence," so they spur us, in the words of the OAU report, "to make sure that it will never happen again." In Murambi, a school where hundreds of children were murdered, their bones left as memorial, I wrote these words in the visitors' book, as I had written many years before as a teenager in Dauchau: "never again," again. We remember in vain, conversely, where the sway of political "realism" condones or abets what the Rwandan theologian, Augustin Karekezi SJ calls a "culture of violence and death"; for as Primo Levi observed of the *Shoah*, the simple fact is that it has happened once, and it could happen again.[10]

So much more might be said. Yet I conclude where I began. For to "remember" the Armenians, yet fail to redeem the cry "never again," is not to remember genocide but to condone it. Citizens of the US cannot, I believe, invoke the rhetoric of human rights, without a profound, chastened humility before the people of Rwanda. We must begin to remember.

William R. O'Neill SJ
JSTB
1735 LeRoy Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94709-1193—U.S.A.
<woneill@jstb.edu>

[10] Levi, Primo, *Se questo è un uomo* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1958).

REFLECTION

GENOCIDE AS A CHALLENGE FOR ETHICS[1]

Théoneste Nkeramihigo SJ

Genocide constitutes an ethical challenge for at least three self-evident reasons. First, by presenting in atrocious terms the suffering of innocents, it shows the failure of the moral vision that establishes a causal link between the evil suffered and the evil committed. Unless it is accepted that belonging to an ethnic community constitutes a punishable crime deserving capital punishment, nothing justifies the extermination of so many human beings who are victims simply because of being who they were. Genocide makes the juridical ethics of retribution burst out as something in which the suffering inflicted is, at one and the same time, a sign and a sanction of the evil committed. To the moral conscience, suffering causes no problem; it is the just punishment for an evil act; but once the conscience is aware that the law of retribution does not render an account of the evil for which it is inflicted, suffering appears as an enigma. From the moment that the requirement of justice can no longer embrace it, the "unjustifiable" suffering provokes or brings about the revolt of conscience and questions the ethical order of retribution as well as the foundation of that order. Unjustly accused and unjustly punished, conscience, in turn, accuses the iniquitous judge who appears as the *Evil one* meditating on the deaths of the innocent. Thus, such unjustifiable evil discovers a suffering inflicted which exceeds every requirement of justice and which suspends the legal ethics of retribution. In this situation, the victim's awareness that there exists an evil incapable of being assumed in freedom and responsibility engenders a tragic sentiment of inescapable culpability simply by virtue of being who he is.

Once the conscience is aware that the law of retribution does not render an account of the evil suffering appears as an enigma

In the second place, genocide relegates the ethic of retribution to an evil place by showing how human responsibility overflows into evil. It forms an experience of evil which is beyond the habitual criteria of immorality. Because of the horror and the anguish which

[1] This article is an extract from the contribution of Father Théoneste Nkeramihigo SJ for the book *Rwanda: L'Eglise Catholique à l'épreuve du génocide*, published by Editions Africana in 2000 under the direction of Faustin Ruembesa, Jean-Pierre Karegeye SJ and Paul Rutayisire. The central part of the article 'The genocide like an ethic challenge' (pp. 199-213) tries to understand the "possibility of genocide" starting from the analysis of the uncontrolled increase and perversion of ideological power. [See his article on this issue of *Promotio*. Note of the Editor]

it provokes, it shows a culprit who seems not susceptible to being judged in himself since he seems so much to be "out of himself," out of what is human, "possessed". Possession expresses an essential component of this evil. Everything occurs as if the man is incapable of bearing by himself all the burden of the evil which he experiences in the world. The evil which he commits manifests an origin of evil which he can no longer assume, but in which he participates every time that he commits evil. This is why the acknowledgment of evil is much larger than any sense of individual responsibility and overflows into a "quasi exterior" aspect exceeding personal imputation and proposing seduction as the reason for the evil act. The acknowledgement of evil as something human arouses a second degree order of acknowledgement: that of evil as inhuman. The experience of temptation also discovers not only the *evil* of the fault but also the *other pole* of human evil. This stretches the human act beyond into a type of a non-human origin, constituted into an anterior Adversary of man. There is thus a diabolical face of the human experience of evil which one discovers from the quasi exterior structure of the temptation and which designates the *other* aspect of this evil for which, nevertheless, man is responsible, but in such a way that man appears not as the absolute evil one, or the principal source of evil, but as the evil in second place, the evil one who is seduced and consents to a source of evil which pushes him to do evil. Once again, the tragic element suspends ethics in revealing a being who is, at the same time, the victim and the culprit of the evil. Man commits the evil that he suffers in a certain way. From here comes the image of the bewitchment which expresses the enigma of a human will that has become a diabolical will, of a vertiginous liberty which has decided knowingly to commit the absolute evil. We balk, or shrink from, or refuse to accept this reality of the insanity of reason, of the absurd will because it would be contradictory to the reasonable essence of man. And all the same, genocide proves that the unlikely is real, that man can realise the inhuman and that, in the concept itself of man, nothing opposes itself to the diabolical human, the non-human aspect of man willed by man. That the diabolical human goes against our ethical sensibility and that it exceeds our power of speculation does not prevent it from being "imaginable" and even realisable, even if, in the (historical) event, no individual is purely diabolical. Genocide challenges ethics in so far as it gives it the task of thinking about this "diabolical human" who draws individuals for its service without taking away their entire responsibility.

Genocide proves that the unlikely is real, that man can realise the inhuman

In the third place, genocide provokes ethics by spreading the mortal conflict of adverse moral systems. We must never lose sight of the fact that it is in the name of a certain ethics that the genocide has been perpetrated. It is this ethics which has imposed and justified the final solution and which has determined that a whole population participate, as in a game, in the extermination of their co-citizens in the belief that they were fulfilling their duty. Even if the horrible scenes of slaughter leads one to think of the overturn of reason, those who committed the genocide had not lost their reason. The men who directed and executed the genocide were, and continue to be, intelligent, sensible, reflective beings and not barbarians at all or murderers by vocation. They obeyed a certain ethic, a complete and coherent system of convictions which governed their acting and gave them criteria that permitted them to establish the distinction between good and evil, between what was licit and not licit, and consequently, to evaluate their actions. It is following this ethical system that the majority among them think that they acted well, have nothing to reproach themselves for; they plead not guilty, they deny the reality of the genocide and would even be ready to begin again to finish the "work".

As an absolute historical evil, genocide is the work of a diabolical human will. But the diabolical, even if it points out towards a place of extra-human iniquity, can be conceptualized within the limits of simple humanity, in terms of ideological power, which in order to prove its own power, explodes with pure violence against all those who have a different political conviction, no matter what the criterion by which this power is given to concretely designate the enemy; the criterion could be the race, ethnicity, social class, religion, whatever.... That such a power constitutes a challenge for ethics is evident from the fact that it develops a system of convictions which permits those who adhere to it to envisage the genocide not only as a solution, and humanly speaking, acceptable, but even as the unique solution conceivable in a situation judged by them to be extremely serious. But that reasonable and sensitive men can adhere to a genocide ethics, allow themselves to be seduced by an ideological power and consent to their own perversion by reason of that same power which they themselves established, is an enigma challenging the ethical reason of the victim and of all persons who retreat or withdraw. Perhaps the believer, despite the horrible threat that presses relentlessly down on humanity and pious protests raised in order that it will never happen again, will understand that the plea addressed to his Heavenly Father has sense inasmuch as it constantly reminds him of his fragility and his duty to be vigilant. Perhaps he will understand that, in order to nourish and

Can be conceptualized within the limits of simple humanity, in terms of ideological power

revive this vigilance, he must ceaselessly pray in this way: "Our Father who is in Heaven! Let us not fall into temptation but deliver us from evil". But, how, starting from this invocation, can we imagine an ethic that effectively fights against genocide ethics? This is a challenge which we must face, in the humility of our human condition, letting our reason accept the power inherent in the limitation of our human finality.

Original French
Translation by Mary Berchmans rjm

Théoneste Nkeramihigo SJ
Pontificia Università Gregoriana
Piazza della Pilotta, 4
00187 Roma—ITALY
<nkeramihigo@unigre.it>

CAN GENOCIDE POINT TO A NEW DEPARTURE?

Octave Ugirashebuja SJ

The duty to remember

1994 was described as **a year that will never end.** How can Rwandans ever forget the murderous madness that for three months plunged the country into the blackest of nights, bloodied hills and valleys, and branded their history? And every year, around April 7, when the nameless carnage that would carry off over a million of their fellow countrymen began, they commemorate the event, creating new gestures to deepen their understanding of it.

It is obvious that some would like to stop recalling this tragedy to mind; they fear it might be a way to deepen a desire for revenge in the hearts of survivors. In fact, such a desire can only grow in an atmosphere of ideological genocide, in the conviction that the extermination of the other is possible. But the Rwandan people, emerging from the ashes of genocide, only dream of justice and reconciliation, however difficult these may be. More than others, they cry desperately "Never again!" As for remembering, it is **an inescapable duty of devotion and truth**.

As for remembering, it is an inescapable duty of devotion and truth

The international community itself, aware of this need, has just decided that, on 7 April each year, the whole world should commemorate the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994. The Society of Jesus should associate itself with this symbolic gesture of solidarity and compassion. The year 1994 will never be over and done with; rather, it involves the community of nations.

As Jesuits we do not wish to think of the genocide and massacres of 1994 as an ultimate catastrophe, some sort of divine punishment, but rather as **a challenge to the Rwandan people and the entire world**. We have witnessed a boundless manipulation of hatred and the exclusion of a part of the Rwandan population: the Tutsi. Destruction, expulsion, assassination have followed them in an ever faster rhythm from 1959 to their fatal conclusion, the genocide of 1994. The perpetrators of these acts of terrible and unpunished injustice became used to it; and as for the victims, feeling abandoned by the whole world, they never opened their mouths. It was an operation behind closed doors. Adalbert Munzigura, a killer who is at present in the Rilima prison, said; "We were certain we should kill everyone without it being considered bad."[1] In fact, the international community saw nothing blameworthy in it, and only now, ten years later, it is beginning to wake up.

Those who were massacred were guilty only of being born Tutsi, or of not wishing to take part in the genocidal plan of the government. They died as martyrs. I say this thinking explicitly of our three brothers killed in the Christus Centre on the morning of 7 April: Fathers Chrysologue Mahame, oldest of the Rwandan Jesuits, Patrick Gahizi and Innocent Rutagamba. The first two were Tutsi, the last Hutu, but they shared, over and above their ethnic difference, the vocation of companions of Jesus and the ideal of justice and peace. We will speak later of the legacy they left us.

What should this tenth anniversary mean?

We need to take account of time. Old Heidegger used to say rightly that **time is being**. We need time to grow, to love, to become aware of what is happening, to reconcile ourselves with ourselves and with others. Time is space for changes, many and different, interior and exterior. With time, appearances and landscapes become different, judgements are corrected and adjusted to reality, feelings become less intense, and one can speak of the unspeakable. This is what we have experienced at the end of these ten years among a large number of Rwandans. We have shared in thousands of initiatives undertaken by the government, churches, victims, some perpetrators of the genocide, foreign partners, as they begin to climb out of the abyss. There have been kinds of attempts: psychological attempts through conflict resolution and trauma treatment, spiritual attempts through prayers and frank dialogue in a special diocesan synod, political attempts at national unity through government and parliament. These are directed towards the setting up of Commissions of Human Rights, Unity and Reconciliation, the free return

[1] Hatzfield, Jean**,** *Une Saison de Machettes* (Paris: Seuil, 2003) pp. 111-112.

for refugees and restoration of their properties, reinforcement of security measures for all, special attention for survivors, sharing in a participative and reconciliatory justice *(gacaca* courts), a massive drive to rebuild the economy, the admission of genocide crimes by those responsible, and finally, a recognition of responsibilities not met by the international community, a failure of which we await the consequences. It has been then a time of grace, allowing us to lift up our heads and to move forward.

I would like to speak especially of the initiatives of the Catholic Church. She was unjustly accused of having taken sides with the genocidal State by those who would have liked to see a more courageous stand against the latter. The truth is that the Catholic Church, like all the other churches, associations of Human Rights and NGOs, both national and foreign, were overwhelmed by the extreme violence of a genocide planned and carried out by an all-powerful State that was everywhere, determined to transgress all moral limits and go to the bitter end. A great number of those responsible for the genocide and its victims were officially Christian; three bishops and hundreds of priests, religious and sisters were caught up in an irresistible cyclone.

But once the storm had died down, over these last ten years, the Church has sought to take part in the rebirth of a Rwandan nation reduced to ashes by the immense crime. For the jubilee of a hundred years of Christianity in Rwanda, she launched a special diocesan synod entirely devoted to discussing among Christians the evil of ethnic prejudice in order to overcome it. She organised an international colloquium of exchanges to promote peace and reconciliation in Kigali from 20 - 27 October, 2002. The bishops have invited the churches of South Africa, Germany, Burundi, and Northern Ireland, all churches that have known difficulties similar to ours, and have set out on a path of reconciliation. She has accompanied in action and with solicitude groups of widows and orphans from the genocide, and supported government initiatives, especially in the *gacaca* courts, and recently, from 29-31 March 2004, she organised a national colloquium on the theme: "The Church and Rwandan society in the face of the genocide and massacres, ten years after". The Church has fully taken its place in the struggle against all the demons that tried to destroy this people ten years ago.

This is why, wishing to be positive, we dare speak of a new departure. What happened in 1994, a year which never ends, forbids us forever from taking again the road of death, or singing again the monstrous chants of the ethnic racism of the *Interahamwe*. Living through such a descent into the depths of suffering and solitude, coming out of such a long confrontation with an absolute evil which is limitless hatred, destroying everything and creating nothing, gives us the strength to proclaim and build a new Rwanda.

Patience

But let us not forget that a section of Rwandans, the unconditional supporters of the recent regimes, those truly responsible for the genocide and some of their western friends, accept nothing of what has happened these past ten years. They are disappointed, those who spared no effort that this should be a time of despair and desolation, of years of cries of rage and hatred against the Hutu, of blind revenge, a time for a second genocide. Things have not turned out as they would have liked. That is why, for them, this anniversary is meaningless. In short, after having committed the crime of genocide, they add to it the crime of denying it; it is diabolical but logical. The most disturbing thing is that, dispersed in many foreign countries, these disillusioned compatriots continue to spread an image of Rwanda that is smugly pessimistic. Patience, their time will come!

After having committed the crime of genocide, they add to it the crime of denying it; it is diabolical but logical

Other Rwandans, among them victims of the killings, have undergone such a trauma that they cannot accept talk of reconciliation. They must be accompanied with solicitude in their terrible grief which goes on and on and sometimes gets worse. We are aware that, for some people, psychologically, the lapse of ten years is still too short, and time itself needs more time. "Patience, patience in the heavens. Every atom of silence has the possibility of a ripened fruit" (Paul Valéry).

The Magis

For us Jesuits in Rwanda, meditation on the immeasurable suffering of the genocide victims and the moral and human degradation of those responsible for the crime produces a strong cry of defiance. We are in no way inevitably bound to these horrors; on the contrary, from this experience of descending into hell and the magnificent effort to climb back during these ten years, we uncover an extraordinary confidence in man. "Despair in man is not allowed", as someone said. And we know that the glory of God is man alive; that the Rwandan man can still believe in life and a future is a paschal mystery of world importance. And many eminent foreign personalities, academics and politicians, visitors to the celebrations of this Anniversary, have said the same thing. In our tradition of the *magis*, the situation we have lived through does not imprison us in resentment, but projects us towards a future of newness, creativity and hope.

Our Apostolic Plan 2000-2005 urges us to take on boldly the challenge of ethnicity. "This challenge instructs us to give a very high priority to the apostolate of reconciliation and to consider all our endeavours in the light of this

essential purpose."[2] It tells us that "the aim of reconciliation should determine the formation we give to our young companions and animate all our apostolic activities."[3] Our small number and our desperately limited resources do not allow us to carry out all that the Society's ideal invites us to undertake. In the meantime we, *minima societas* that we are, collaborate humbly with the Church, the government and civil society. The Episcopal Secretariat 'Justice and Peace', pastoral work in prisons, and participating in the National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation are all part of this collaboration. In 1995 we took 250 genocide orphans into our novitiate buildings at Cyangugu; at the moment, we are setting up a non-formal education centre to provide professional training for youths unable to follow the normal educational system (Centre Mizero).

In our tradition of the magis,* the situation *we have lived through does not imprison us in resentment

All this is only a drop of water in the ocean. But we are sure that, with the support of the universal Society, we will be able to play our part in rebuilding a peaceful Rwanda, to the greater glory of God.

"Jesuits are never content with the status quo, the known, the tried, the already existing. We are constantly driven to discover, redefine, and reach out for the *magis*. For us, frontiers and boundaries are not obstacles or ends, but new challenges to be faced, new opportunities to be welcomed. Indeed, ours is a holy boldness, 'a certain apostolic agressivity', typical of our way of proceeding."[4]

This is the meaning we want to give to this Tenth Anniversary, and such is the challenge to which we invite our companions throughout the world and all men of good will.

May God protect Rwanda.

Original French
Translation by Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ

Octave Ugirashebuja SJ
Centre Christus
B.P. 6009 Kigali—RWANDA
<octagira@yahoo.fr>

[2] *Projet Apostolique de la Région Indépendante Rwanda Burundi*, December 1999, p. 3.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] GC 34, D. 26, n. 27.

RECONCILIATION

RECONCILIATON?

Michel S. Kamanzi SJ

Reconciliation…all speak to us of, and invite us to, reconciliation. It is clear that reconciliation is a condition, and better yet, a necessity, so that Rwanda, the land of a thousand green hills, may find a thousand solutions to the thousand problems engendered by the frightful genocide of 1994. This year marks the tenth since approximately one million of our brothers and sisters were killed in the span of a hundred days in the face of the international community's complete indifference. As we pause to recall this wound in our history (a wound equally present in humanity's history), I should like to bring to the fore a few questions that I asked myself five years ago while still a novice. The death of abbot Modeste Mungwarareba, a Rwandan priest who survived the genocide and who for me embodied what I understand of the beatitude 'blessed are the artisans of peace,' prompted me to put these questions to paper.[1]

While we have to turn our gaze to the future, I remain convinced that we must first take time out to mourn in a dignified and respectful manner. And to this task of recollection must be added the project of justice. If possible, equitable justice ought to be sought for all. Assuredly we must undertake the risk of reinventing the workings of justice itself, especially through the popular jurisdictional process known as '*gacaca*.' We must cultivate an authentic dialogue by encouraging testimonials that are solidly rooted in courageous, free, and liberating statements. Then, maybe, in the grace of time, we will no longer speak of 'a season of machetes'[2] in Rwanda, but rather of a 'season of reconciliation.'[3]

I remain convinced that we must first take time out to mourn in a dignified and respectful manner

With the challenge of reconciliation before us, we might, in the name of a certain kind of modesty, tend to think that the path of silence is the soundest, and even the most conciliatory one to follow. But, following in the footsteps of the German theologian Jean-Baptiste Metz, I believe that we ought to adhere to a 'mystique of the open eyes' by taking the risk of speaking out. In order for us to be reconciled with one another, we will certainly have to agree to give testimony, to think, to write, to pray- in short, to accept the task of being mystics. "The mystic is assuredly not mute- nor does he talk endlessly. Rather, his words are measured since they are too charged with

[1] These questions are taken up again in the second to last paragraph of this article.
[2] Hatzfeld, J., *Une saison de machettes* (Paris: Seuil 2003).
[3] This paragraph synthesizes my essay published by the journal *Etudes* under the title 'Rwanda: quelle réconciliation?', May 2004.

memories for speech to tumble out in a rush. But they are also too generous to keep them from giving themselves over. The mystic puts forth words, a voice, a verified discourse. Nothing is more opposed to him than the incomprehensible, he who, precisely from being, found once again a tranquil intelligence. His discourse inscribes itself in the grand conversation which from always to always constitutes the common history and experience of humanity. He speaks only because he has crossed the silence of a desert, the opacity of a night. He was tried by rejection; he did not grasp what was coming about, and he knew not why all paths were closed off to him. But his exhaustion caused far off words to stammer forth, and they brought themselves near, into him who awaited them."[4]

Reconciliation…Reconcile yourselves…let us reconcile ourselves with each other! What could this injunction possibly mean, an injunction that invites us to a process of mediation, discernment, and action? Might it simply be a rote exercise, an evasive tactic, or simply a distraction? Is there conviction in this call to reconciliation? Is it a 'password,' the key to an unsolved enigma? Or is it a new illusion, or even a provocation? Should we dare to believe in this call? And if we do believe, how then are we to go about fulfilling its mandate? Can we envisage a process of reconciliation without an applicable way of proceeding? How are we to cultivate hope after so much violence? What guarantees are there that transparency will halt the vengeance? Is there a chance that peaceful cohabitation can put an end to mutual suspicion and that fraternity can become reality? What are we to do, so that love and peace might finally triumph over war? Reconciliation…is not this for us the crossroads of the Scriptures, the table over which we break the bread, the inn of our resurrection?[5]

In the name of hope, I dare to believe in reconciliation. I have the courage to hope despite the persistent trauma. I hope because, more and more, there are men and women, Christians and others who are engaged in working for reconciliation. Let us recall all the work towards reconciliation that has been started since 1995, whether it be at the level of Rwandan society or that of Christian communities.[6] Reconciliation is 'a long path towards liberty,'[7] and so we will have to continue labouring patiently, while it at the same time, we seek to learn from the experience of others. What is good to know is that the Church and the Society, faithful to their charism to be men for others and with others, are also working towards furthering this process of reconciliation.

Original French
Translation by Mark Doherty SJ

Michel S. Kamanzi SJ
128, rue Blomet
75015 Paris - FRANCE
<kamanzi@jesuits.net>

[4]Laux, Henri SJ, *Le Dieu excentré* (Paris : Beauchesne, 2001) pp. 106-107.

[5]Rimaud, Didier SJ, 'Jésus qui m'a brûlé le Cœur', Hymn.

[6]As Jean-Claude Michel SJ affirms in a commentary regarding this reflection: "The message that the population of Rwanda and the Christians of Rwanda give to the world today is the reality of living together, as well as the reality of the initiative for a synod taken by the Christian based communities before celebrating 100 years of evangelization; it is the realization of common services on the part of women survivors and wives of prisoners; it is the development of active non-violence groups; it is the development of official symposiums as well as meetings organized by the representatives of different religions, by the community of St. Egidio, and other events; it is the request for forgiveness made by the Bishops at the time of the centenary celebrations. There is a whole dynamic which is instilling itself deeply in peoples' consciences, as well as a move to draw deeply from Christ's spiritual forces found in the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist. It is these very signs of the times, these signs of hope, which give reason to believe that reconciliation is marching forward while remaining uncertain since it depends on the evil in the world."

[7]Mandela, Nelson, *Un long chemin vers la liberté*, (Paris: Fayard, 1995).

RWANDA: RETURN TO LIFE TEN YEARS AFTER THE GENOCIDE

Aloys Mahwa M SJ

"Who has been cannot now not have been"
Vladimir Jankelevitch

Introduction

Ten years is a long enough time to review a journey and replenish one's energies so as to note mistakes in one's perspective. Those who are honest about Rwanda, that is, those who have known it during the 100 days of torment (April to July 1994) – which consisted, according to a well thought-out plan, of "killing one thousand Tutsi every twenty minutes"[1] – speak of a 'miraculous decade.'[2] How could the **fears** of another possible genocide, given the limited financial and health resources of the country, be transformed into **strong hopes** that motivate a belief in a better future?

Ten years after the genocide, Rwanda is back on its own two feet, offering a space where birth (life), studies and work, as well as our apostolic projects are once again possible. All this in the place that in 1994 many considered to be the one place in the world map to which one would never return, for, they said, "it's a country of cemeteries that the guardian angels have abandoned.".[3] Before 1994, killings and impunity had become an everyday thing (*Akamenyero*) in Rwanda.[4] The Rwandese code of laws did not yet contain any article that punished this crime against humanity that repeated itself in the course of history.

Ten years of visible changes (1994-2004)

We believe that the ten years between 1994 and 2004 have marked a period of many corrective changes. They have seen remarkable changes; prophetic or not only the future will tell. I feel that in such a journey there have been a) **opportunities** in favour of Rwanda, b) but also a confidence in our means, though they were minimal, c) together with the **will** of substituting for the pre-1994 negative values other values that rebuild the social tissue left in tatters by genocide. Thus, national unity took the place of regionalism and ethnic separatism,[5] which were criteria for discrimination in Education and Civil Service. Justice that condemns genocide as a crime against humanity took the place of a culture of impunity. The notion of a political majority has replaced that of ethnic majority. Equality of opportunity as regards access to education has replaced the politics of ethnic quotas, and other such policies. Such transformations make tangible the will of moving on and not falling back to the errors of the past. "Nobody was ever lost in the right path (Goethe)". Only with time do positive values take root.

The ten years between 1994 and 2004 have marked a period of many corrective changes

a) Chances and opportunities in favour of Rwanda

Transforming in ten years the chaotic stage[6] of a genocide into a theatre of life and safety is truly astonishing. These are glad happenings that favour Rwanda and are very reassuring. Today, Rwanda is something of an oasis of peace and security surrounded by neighbours at war. For the first time in its history, Rwanda's football team has taken part in the African Nations' Cup 2004[7] in Tunis and managed to do well there. For the first time, in August 2003, Rwanda successfully organised locally-sponsored democratic elections. One may add to this the regular visits of important foreign delegations.[8] Such a resumption of ties with Rwanda is a sign of hope; the country may once again be visited and attract foreign investment. Some may say that all these facts indicate divine intervention. God is capable of changing the course of history and of offering opportunities that marvel humans. Chance is in the hands of God and we believe that in Rwanda, Having God (*Kugira Imana*) and having good fortune are but one and the same thing. Speaking of the noteworthy achievements of these last ten years, the South African president claimed, in the Amahoro Stadium in Kigali, that Rwanda has restored our dignity as Africans.

b) With our limited means

The return to life has also been possible thanks to the faith that with our five loaves and two fishes (Mk 6, 37) we are able to do great things. Gérard Prunier wrote on the morrow of the genocide that "in the absence of funds, death will return to Rwanda"[9]. One knows how vulnerable Rwanda is to the constraints of structural adjustment and that it continues to bear the weight of past debts. One knows that there were cases of bribery and political manipulation aimed at discouraging the reconciliation effort on the ground. This shows not only a lack of compassion, but also a cynicism that suggests Rwanda makes of its genocide a 'basis for commerce'[10]. Meanwhile, in spite of the lack of financial support, we have seen brave achievements such as the locally-financed August 2003 elections: death has not returned to Rwanda. We believe that, with our slim resources (five loaves and two fishes), it is possible to reconstruct a nation shrouded in the gloom of genocide. After the destruction of its vital places (houses, schools, churches, sports facilities, markets…), Rwanda is once again a 'work in progress' and may once more welcome

[1]Destexhe, Alain, 'Rwanda: une commémoration incomplète', *Le Monde*, 10 April, 2004.

[2]In the book, *La diplomatie pyromane, entretien avec Stephen Smith*, (Paris: Calman Lévy, 1996), the UN representative in Burundi, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah writes: "If what happened in Rwanda after the genocide were to happen outside Africa, one would call it a miracle".

[3]Speech by Thabo Mbeki, president of South Africa, during the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the genocide, 7th April 2004, at the Amahoro Stadium in Kigali.
(See http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2004/mbek0407/htm).

[4]After 1959 in Rwanda, the genocide of Rwandese Tutsis was flagrant. There were other seasons of killings in 1959, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1966 and in 1973 during the period of the so-called 'Hutu Republic' (1959-1994).

[5]The ID card mentioning ethnicity (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa) was introduced in 1931, and it has served as an objective criterion to exclude Tutsis from education and public office. It was abolished only in 1994. The happy consequence of this has been equal opportunities in education.

[6]The amount of damages was immense. Besides this, in 100 days, Rwanda lost between 11 and 13% of its population. Such a figure is one of the highest death tolls not due to natural causes ever recorded anywhere in the world.

[7]Since 1994 the national soccer team 'AMAVUBI' is included among the symbols of national unity.

[8]On the 12th September 2003, 12 heads of African States met in Kigali as Paul Kagame was sworn in as President. From the 14 to the 14th February, 12 heads of State gathered again in Kigali for the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) meeting, and recently on 7th April 2004, on the occasion of the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the genocide, important delegations from all over the world were present to mourn with Rwanda.

[9]Prunier, Gerard, *Rwanda: Histoire d'un genocide 1959-1996* (Milan: Dagorno, 1997) p. 421.

[10]Note, from this perspective, Filip Reyntjens' proposal to the international community not to sponsor the presidential election of August 2003 (Filip Reyntjens, 'Analyse de l'avant-projet de la constitution de la République rwandaise', *Dialogue* 230).

and organise gatherings of great African renown. Thanks to the support of the friends of Rwanda, beautiful buildings have come up, as well as new residential quarters; everywhere in the towns and hills, the Rwandese citizens have rebuilt their homes and brought the surroundings back to life.

c) Resulting from a will

The other factor that has allowed such a return to life is the will of the Rwandese to mend again the torn social tissue and truly reconstruct the Rwandese nation. This will acts through the love of what one does (love of work), without which not even generous means would allow us to achieve anything. As the saying goes: where there is a will, there is a way. Such a will brings to mind the culture of excellence (*Kurwana Ishyaka*) that consists in never resting content with what is already there, and in clearing new paths to come out of chaos, whatever the price. In the list of what gives hope we also note the emergence, in just 10 years, of a variety of public[11] and private[12] educational institutions that widens the opportunities of access to learning, as well as a flourishing of IT and communications. Ten years of such grand recovery seemed astonishing and atypical after the chaos of 1994.

Genocide is not merely a matter of numbers of deaths but rather one of an ideology that plans such deaths

What are the foundations for our future?

Preventive measures are needed to fight against the causes of genocide if we want to ensure that such a crime **never again** finds a dwelling among us, and if we want to guarantee to posterity that this absolute evil does not prove to **return eternally**. What have we learnt from our sorrowful history? What changes do we have to make? The road ahead remains a long one if we want to allow the transformations to take root. I think that preventing the return of death entails, namely, (1) a vivid consciousness of the sufferings caused by such a crime; (2) a knowledge of the misdeeds resulting from the myth of ethnic quotas, distant and immediate cause of the 1994 genocide, and (3) a memory of past catastrophes engendering the determination and hope of **never ever** turning back.

a) The term 'genocide': how frightening and grave does it sound today?

What fear have we still of such a crime? In the hope of 'never again', it would be useful to redefine this crime and to distinguish it from all other situations that could weaken its gravity. It is not truly possible to awaken the consciousness against the eternal return of genocide unless one holds such a crime in utter disgust and unless 'one is determined never to render banal its seriousness'. "Genocide is immoral in its very essence. There is no such thing as a 'good genocide' or a 'just genocide'. It is the consequence of a way of thinking by a State that believes in the necessity or the utility of such a measure."[13]

Almost every minute people die in the world: soldiers killed in the battlefields, eighty-year-olds passing away in their beds, fishermen drowning in crocodile-infested rivers, people succumbing to AIDS and malaria, victims of volcano eruptions, and so on. Human lives are so worthy of compassion that a single drop of blood shed by a human person should call out to the whole of humanity (Emmanuel Levinas[14]). But such deaths, many as they may be, cannot be considered genocide. Genocide is not merely a matter of numbers of deaths but rather one of an ideology that plans such deaths. If we want the battle against genocide to lead to a worthier humanity, it is necessary to cultivate an awareness of evil, an education of consciences and a watchfulness that never wanes. It is also a task of Christians to pray unceasingly for a genocide-free Rwanda where Otherness will never again mean 'such and such race to be eliminated', but rather 'this person in front of me, created in the image of God and whose face demands of me never to kill'.

b) The myth of racial arithmetic against the true meaning of democracy

If we were to name another objectionable thing that has grieved us in Rwanda, we would surely mention the racial differentiation and the manipulation of proportions between the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa races. Since 1930, official documents claim the following ratios: 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, and only 1% Twa. Such ratios have remained unaltered until 1994 for political reasons. "Awareness of difference – even racial – is indispensable for human beings, but it becomes alarming from the moment when it starts being considered a value, a criterion of truth, a justification of a behaviour."[15] Ethnic considerations have served as a criterion more of marginalisation than of emancipation of the Rwandese people. Is it possible to

[11]Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), Kigali Health Institute (KHI).

[12]University of the Great Lakes (UNILAC), Kigali Free University (ULK), Adventist University of Central Africa (UAAC).

[13]Ternon, Yves, *L'Etat criminel* : *les génocides au XXè siècle* (Paris : Seuil, 1995) p. 10.

[14]Levinas, Emmanuel, in *Humanism of the Other* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2003) investigates the relationship between Me and the Other. "The other is she who calls out to my responsibility and whose face imposes itself to me not allowing me to stop being responsible of her misery", (p. 52, French edition).

[15]Kundera, Milan, *Jacques et son maître, hommage à Denis Diderot en trois actes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981) p. 11. The play has been published in English under the title, *Jacques and his Master : a Homage to Diderot in Three* Acts (London: Perennial, 1985).

move from ethnic separatism to political democracy? Clearly, in a democracy, a political majority wins over an electoral minority. Democracy in Rwanda between 1930 and 1940 was not based on a political majority but on an ethnic majority; it was inconceivable that a Tutsi or a Twa could reach the heights of political power. Just as in France a Breton may vote for a Norman, a person from Alsace for a Savoyard, we believe in a future where, in a democratic Rwanda a Hutu will vote for a Tutsi and vice-versa. Political democracy makes use of a numerical majority, racial differentiation too uses a numerical majority; now, the number of men and women is not only a rich resource *for them*. One needs a good moral and intellectual formation if one is to become a worthy citizen of one's country. In the perspective of a 'no-return to death', human resources contribute to the flourishing of the whole of Rwanda. We can begin to hope that death will not return when Rwanda will no longer be considered an association of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa peoples, but a single nation that each will have the duty of promoting.

c) A forgiveness founded on memory

We are convinced that all humans need to develop an awareness of the richness of humanity and of the spiritual forces that make up the dignity of the person. Hence, after the 1994 genocide, there were friends who shared the same bread and who ended up healing their neighbours. That is why we speak of a **genocide of proximity**. Ten years after the torment, the voices of those who deny the Tutsi genocide and the massacre of the Hutu opposition in Rwanda propose forgetfulness as a point of departure for a new future. Furthermore, some people still believe that only the disappearance of the Tutsis will allow Rwanda to live in peace. On the other side, some idealists propose a forgiveness that also buries the sorrowful past in forgetfulness.

Pardon, nonetheless, assumes that one knows how to remember

I think that proposals of forgiveness are necessary for our future and also for living together sincerely. Pardon, nonetheless, assumes that one knows how to remember. Nietzsche, in his 'Genealogy of Morals', mentions a certain Mirabau, one who did not have any memory of the insults and disparagements that he had received, and who therefore could not forgive for the simple reason that he had forgotten. Remembering, in the end, is being aware of the object of pardon. The history of Rwanda will never again be written without a reference to the 100 days of mourning. In a film starring Demi Moore,[16] David Murphy says to his wife Diana, after a terrible lapse of conjugal trust, that "what makes us live together again is not that we have forgotten but that we have forgiven one another". This is the challenge we face: on one hand forgiveness is necessary for our future, but, on the other hand, memory must shatter the eternal return of genocide and of the ideology that underpins it.

Conclusion:

We believe that important progress has been achieved in Rwanda in a short time and with little means. The future of the Rwandan nation was in danger of death due to the virus of ethnic discrimination that spawned cycles of death. A single decade has shown that it is possible to eradicate it through positive achievements. If there are so-called 'preventive' wars aimed at terrorists, I admit there could be one against genocide and its determinants. Reflection is urgent and necessary in order to conceive life together after 1994. Several philosophers of Jewish origin (Emmanuel Levinas, Hannah Arendt, Eric Weil, Primo Levi, Vladimir Jankelevitch, to name only a few) have made from their experience of the Holocaust and the concentration camps a point of departure for rethinking evil, forgiveness and ethics. Why do we not create ethical think-tanks so as to promote in our country a serious reflection on the consequences of living together without racial differentiation? This is for us a provision to ensure that death will never again return among us and that a return to life will be never-ending.

Original French
Translation by René Micallef SJ

Aloys Mahwa M SJ
Communauté du Centre Christus,
B.P. 6009 Kigali—RWANDA
<mahwasj@jesuits.net>

[16]Nietzsche, F., *La généalogie de la morale*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) p. 38. For a recent English edition, Samuel Horace Barnett (ed), F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, (New York: Dover Publications, 2003).
[17]*Indecent proposal*, directed by Adrian Lyne (Paramount Pictures release, 1993).

NEVER AGAIN
Yves Djofang SJ

For ten years now, the International Community has been invited, more or less explicitly, to commemorate the tragic event that befell upon the people of Rwanda in April 1994. During these years, lots of things have been said on the history and the execution of this genocide; abundant and amazing writings on it abound… On our own part, we wish to honour these thousands of people killed by simply saying that never again would our continent serve as a habitation for such manifestations of inhumanity. Not forgetting what happened is the first step towards this.

To commemorate is all about undertaking a work of memory with respect to ourselves and our societies

Celebrate in order not to forget

"It is necessary to forget all". Unfortunately, it is in these terms that Africans are generally invited to wipe away the event, which they passed through, or are passing through, in their history. From slave trade to colonization and to re-colonization, keeping in mind the shameless exploitation of their wealth and the confrontation of western multinationals via groups of people regimented in their soil, they (Africans) have always been invited to forget, to do *tabula rasa* to their memory. Did Hegel not dare to affirm that Africa is not a historic part of the world; that reason cannot eternalise itself in the injuries inflicted upon individuals, for particular goals are subsumed in the universal goal; that along the path of history, life regains itself by dying, hence, all death, all evil, is manoeuvrable? However acute his reasoning might appear, we cannot subscribe to such a position that serves to justify the unjustifiable.

Indeed, the Rwandan genocide provokes our indignation especially at the sight of these battered bodies, positioned in a supplicating posture that the media presented to us in April/May 1994. While giving testimony to the inhumanity in the human person, these bodies carry, in their being, the stamp of the Intolerable, and thus testify, in spite of all speculations, to the need of respecting human dignity. We cannot put evil in bracket! We know that this event is not inscribed in destiny, that it is not a law of nature, but rather, the consequence of the human factors (cultural, socio-economical and political). In other words, a consequence of a system that can be changed.

A patient work of memory

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the genocide is not simply to do a duty of memory vis-à-vis the victims, instead, it is all about undertaking a work of memory with respect to ourselves and our societies. This work of memory consists in studying, deciphering, thematizing this history, our history, in order to dwell upon its meaning. Tragedy has left behind a deep wound on the Rwandan people which is difficult to heal. Nonetheless, we observe, at the same time, that reconciliation is on the way. Who knows, this genocide may have brought out of us, the experience of pardon and tolerance… We are invited to reflect better our living together and to refuse to explain away what should be recognised as the real problem. In other to achieve this, a sustained effort is required, bearing in mind that no profound conversion takes place in a short time. It is expedient to arm ourselves with patience without forgetting that the latter is not the absence of determination. It is a duty that summons each person as an individual but also, and especially, all the Rwandan community. And this duty can only be accomplished in the absence of ethnic prejudice. It is in pondering lucidly and serenely this page of history, that we could be able to heal numerous injuries and prevent their future occurrence. To treat an injury, one has to begin by cleaning it and disinfecting it, otherwise, it develops into a gangrene disguised as a healing process.

Original French
Translation by Eusebio Anieke SJ

Yves Djofang SJ
15 rue Marcheron
92170 Vanves
FRANCE
<yves86.djof@laposte.net>

TOGETHER WE HAVE A FUTURE
Christian Uwe SJ

If we had to choose two 'words of flesh and blood' to indicate what these pages attempt to say, 'Mandela' and 'Tutu' would be a good choice. To be sure, the richness of these two figures cannot be expressed in just a few lines, but, at the same time, their names are spontaneously associated with some great values. Nelson Mandela – the man who fought and still fights for the dignity of all; the man who refused to leave prison except with his whole nation; who did not hesitate to trust his former prison guard and make him a personal bodyguard. Desmond Tutu – the man given over to the education of a whole nation; he, for whom there is no future without reconciliation, who is convinced that one cannot deny the dignity of another without denying one's own dignity. When South Africa created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission it understood at least two things: that lies kill humanity, and that reconciliation is as much – if not more – a matter of the future than of the past. Without a

reconciled humanity there is no future, and such awareness draws the tempestuous memory of the past into a process of integration and reconciliation.

The case of post-1994 Rwanda has often been compared, rightly or wrongly, with that of South Africa. The year 1994 is considered the centre of a burdensome and controversial history because of the genocide that cost nearly a million lives. That event was also followed by broad media coverage which glibly persists in dividing Rwanda into two camps: the victims, and the executioners. These two camps are as irremediably opposed as the extremes of Cartesian dualism. Too easily we forget a significant "grey zone": mixed families who could not be either in one side or the other; Hutus who were killed because they were moderate; and those who preferred to die along with those they were hiding. We ought to honour the young boarding school students who preferred to die rather than divide themselves into Hutus and Tutsis. We risk relegating to obscurity these people, for whom no Nobel prize drew the attention of the world. At the same time a desire for a better future shows itself in diverse initiatives toward justice and reconciliation. And the question that inevitably comes is: can a people who have known the despair of genocide seriously envisage unity as the way of the future?

Lies kill humanity and reconciliation is a matter of the future

The thesis of this article is simple: that only together, in unity – and a demanding unity – can Rwandans seriously hope for a more merciful future[1]. We will first review the history which has caused so much blood and so much ink to flow; then we deal with questions and problems posed today, and finally we propose some pre-conditions for a viable future.

Lower than the earth?

The history of Rwanda raises controversies, both for historians and for lay persons. If it is undeniably sown with moments of violence, the interpretation of these moments, far from being unanimous, may be at times contradictory. At the heart of the equation lies the role of ethnic identity in the exercise of power, as much in the time of the monarchy as in the Republic, as well as the role of the colonial teacher, taking advantage of the school and of power as two golden opportunities to "divide and conquer". Whatever the divergence of opinion may be over the genesis of the discord, no one can deny the chain of bloody events which have marked the last 50 years. Only, if we can notice this spiral violence that riveted the eyes of the world under the name of the "Rwandan genocide of 1994", the divergence of points of view over those responsible reveals, at least, the difficulty – ten years afterwards – in knowing the truth about this sinister publicity that obstinately presents itself wherever the name of Rwanda is mentioned. When meeting Rwandans, many foreigners have two favourite questions to ask: one about their ethnicity and the other about the machete which they surely have hidden in their luggage. Have Rwandans fallen this far? They evoke nothing more than ethnic groups or machetes and rifles, instruments all the more devoid of humanity since they undid the human face of their neighbour?

The year 1994 has thus become a symbol. To be sure, a rather equivocal symbol since it is interpreted in several different ways, but certainly a symbol which returns us, one way or another, to the "flowers of the evil ethnicists" with their poisoned fruits. Even before the media had imposed that unbreachable caricature of a barrier between two ethnic groups considered irreconcilable, there had been words and actions that conveyed the same vision of two mutually exclusive communities.[2] So much so, that one could ask whether the greatest error to which the Rwandans surrendered was not precisely to have believed that there was no future inasmuch as the Other was there and was different. Thus the fear of the other reveals the anguish of men and women who are gradually blinded to their shared humanity, a humanity which is the basis of the inalienable right to life and of the sacred dignity of the human person. And, as in the case of all wars, the Rwandan case reveals men who are sufficiently de-humanized to encourage and profit from this fatal error as from a blood-soaked manna. The symbol "1994" therefore presents the horror of the blasphemy of blasphemies: the negation and profanation of the face of man for the profit of interests which only death can serve.

At the heart of the equation lies the role of ethnic identity in the exercise of power

This blasphemy seals the supreme insanity, that of the person who, in ridding himself of the other, profanes himself although without knowing it. This insanity is born of the greatest lie of our history, of which few people can claim to be completely innocent and which consists in doubting the humanity of the other person, of denying it to the point of losing the sense of our own. A lie that is accompanied by the loss of all merit. Happily, not all have succumbed. But it is no less true that we share a common duty of restoring that betrayed humanity, both in the other and in ourselves.

[1]This is not far from stating the obvious; nevertheless it is quite evident that it cannot be repeated often enough.

[2]On this point a study of speeches made by certain Rwandan politicians would be sufficiently illuminating, for example, certain pres articles during 1991-1994.

Dizziness

Do we not hesitate a moment when the sceptics declare, "there is hardly any hope"? We hesitate because we wonder if, in the end, their opinion is perhaps reasonable. To be sure, there are sceptics, but worse still are the cynics who render banal or even justify what is unjustifiable. The crime against humanity makes losers of everyone, although in different ways. Some pay with their life though they do not deserve it. Some are capable of doing something against the crime, but, for one reason or another, fail in their duty. And there are those who commit the crime, and since it is precisely a crime against humanity, they also commit it against themselves for they deny that humanity in which all participate. What all have in common is that scorned humanity:

> "If society is organized in such a way that one part of the community denies its membership in humanity, with all the obligations and responsibilities which that implies, the other part is equally enslaved… [Because it is harassed] by fear and anguish."[3]

A favourite saying of Tutu is a Xhosa proverb that says, approximately, "A person is a person through other persons".[4] That proverb doubtlessly indicates the most precious thing man can carry in himself: *ubuntu*, which translates awkwardly as "humanity". More precisely we can say that without *ubuntu* there is no longer a person and that *ubuntu* is inconceivable in an individualist, exclusivist logic. In the presence of *ubuntu* this latter is as inadmissible as the trivialization of genocide.

Nevertheless, it happens that we feel disillusioned at the extent of the impact which the last decade has had on Rwandans. In a sense we could speak of "past shock", a shock due precisely to the negation of humanity, and consequently to a pessimistic vision of the world as given over to savagery because it is stripped of humanity. This shock tends to return all realism to scepticism and even to pessimism – and it is all too easy to imagine the scenarios such a sentiment would offer if nothing comes to attenuate it. In fact this type of pessimism is open to the temptation of seeing everything as absurd, and can be evoked in order to excuse or even justify attitudes capable of perpetuating violence and which clearly are to be prevented.

Some initiatives have been taken to build a more viable future. We may mention here initiatives in favour of unity and reconciliation led by commissions such as Justice and Peace. Some people wonder if talk about unity, after the shock briefly described above, does not arise from pure fantasy. After such a failure of humanity, the thought of unity would seem a vertiginous utopia. There are some who even suggest, that it is pure cynicism to want to reconcile two communities that had lethal designs on each other. But is it not just the simplistic caricature of this dualism that errs? To be sure, it would be naïve, after the horrific shock of the past, to expect a future filled with miraculous reconciliation, but to deny, as a consequence, any possibility of unity would be to exalt the bankruptcy of humanity and resign oneself to suffer the abundant shocks of a blind fate.

An Easter to invent and to receive

We have already suggested that it is at once wrong and right to compare the histories of Rwanda and South Africa. If the communities in conflict during Apartheid were separated by such visible barriers as territory, language and race, it was not so in Rwanda. If South Africa has a great multiplicity of cultures,[5] Rwanda has only one culture and one language. On the other hand, on both sides, the thirst for power and the illusion of an exclusive life have carried more weight than the right to life and to human dignity. On both sides, disunity eroded society until there were moments of explosive violence. And on both sides, a serious effort for unity and reconciliation proved necessary to avoid plunging back into the events of the past. Rwanda can thus learn something from countries like South Africa, provided it does not lose sight of the new dimension, as it were, of its history.

"A person is a person through other persons".

One could suggest that Rwanda faces two serious issues alternatives: the impasse of perpetual discord, with its promise of death; or the "utopia" of a unity[6] open to incarnation. There is no need to prove that discord is a dead-end. The history of Rwanda has proved it in the most convincing and tragic manner, but in a sense, Rwanda has at the same time shown that another way is possible, one of a future in which unity and truth show the way. For those who want to believe in the future, unity and truth are not luxuries but imperatives –utopian imperatives, perhaps, but also ideals. Mandela and Tutu are there to tell us that they are more or less accessible. We would certainly not want to deny that that it is a demanding and arduous way. Truth will seek to visit all regions of history, even those which are seldom spoken of or which are still the object of bitter controversy. We know, thanks to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, that some truths are difficult to unveil. The process could take much time. But for what would we have time, if the concern for a

[3] Du Boulay, Shirley, *Desmond Tutu : La voix de ceux qui n'ont pas la parole*, (Paris: Centurion, 1989), p. 133.
[4] *op. cit*., p. 150.
[5] It is expressed in another term, as optimistic as it is poetic, in South Africa: the 'Rainbow Nation'.
[6] For Desmond Tutu this word evokes, among other things, the affirmation of the other and of myself in the same movement. It is neither a fusion, nor the negation of the difference, but the acceptance of the difference within the human family which is one. See Du Boulay, *op. cit*. pp. 133, 150, 214, etc.

better future did not receive all the attention required?
It was said at the beginning that Mandela and Tutu eloquently stated the content of these pages. But can we realistically hope from everyone the heroism of these great men? Are we proposing an unreachable goal? The merit in choosing these figures for our consideration is that they call each person to give the best of him or herself for the construction of a new future. The heroism of each one is not in being extraordinary but in discerning his or her proper role and in giving oneself to it as generously as possible. Besides, both figures are signs of hope and courage in moments when everybody can be conquered by dejection. There was a time when a South Africa open to all in a spirit of dignity and equality was nothing more than a utopia. Today that utopia has become flesh and blood. In our opinion we cannot evade the effort, but, at the same time, we need an attitude of waiting, of availability – dare we say – of grace.

Must we conclude?

At times, it is hard to find words to express the suffering with which the history of this nation is loaded, but it is equally possible to meditate so much on this suffering that it becomes almost impossible to hope. In the same way, it is possible to reduce unity to a convenient slogan, all the more convenient when it can be brandished without believing in it. Nevertheless, to go beyond cynicism, pessimism and scepticism we must rehabilitate our profaned humanity and work toward a future founded on the truth of humanity, its dignity and unity. Only when Rwandans unite can they imagine a smiling future – only if they seek unity. For only in this condition will they be strong enough to face the dangers that threaten this future. Perhaps under these conditions, the future of Rwanda may seem as improbable as an Easter morning, as inconceivable as the resurrection from the dead. But in some way, it is the same about Easter – an Easter which is only possible if we dare to believe that life can return to the crucified body of a wounded nation, pierced through the heart. Such a faith produces the only truly Paschal hope, that which offers and receives: which offers its crucified body that it may be incarnate in a life which surpasses scandal. A faith which opposes its folly to the insanity of the negation of man. It is the only perspective that can conceive, while keeping sense and accessibility, the utopia of unity in the service of justice.

Original French
Translation by Joseph Newman SJ

Christian Uwe SJ
40 rue Abbé Boisard
69007 Lyon—FRANCE
<chrisleast@yahoo.fr>

WITNESSING

TEN YEARS AGO!
Jean Gasenge SJ

The author of the article was Novice Master in Cyangugu in 1994. The novices were from Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire. The small city of Cyangugu is located 300 kilometres West of Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, precisely on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (the Zaire of 1994), and so near the Zairian city of Bukavu, where the Jesuits run a High school and a Retreat house. The Provincial at that time lived in Kinshasa, more than 1,500 kilometres South West of Bukavu).
Through this essay I want to address my Fellow Jesuits who lived through that unforgettable period, especially those who were novices during the years 1994-1996, the 'Exodus-to-the-West' generation and the one that began the return to the new Region of Rwanda-Burundi (RWB).

On April 7, 1994, at 5:40 in the morning, I receive a phone call from dear Fr. Patrick Gahizi, delegate of the Provincial of Central Africa (PAC) that interrupts my journey to Kigali for a meeting of the ministries committee. The presidential plane, he tells me, has been hit on its flight from Dar es-Salaam and smashed to pieces with all the crew, right over Kanombe airport. Kigali has been under fire since 20:30 the previous evening. Patrick's call has a special significance for me: his early morning voice, **that very Thursday**, signals for me the paschal way to follow, although I am far from situating myself on this path. I still hear him today as if he meant that our encounter should be there where he was, with so many other people so savagely taken away from our lives but remaining with us all along our earthly ways. At 6:30 a.m, gathering the 35 novices for morning prayer, I give them the news I have just learned from Fr. Patrick Gahizi. I think that some novices understand the gravity of the situation better than others. The day's programme is announced as usual, but with its own cloud that each one will penetrate according to his own state of mind. At 10:00, frightened people start coming to our novitiate of Cyangugu (South West of Ruanda). We direct them towards the pastoral centre of the cathedral where a multitude of the displaced has already gathered after the assassination of a local leader.
Ten years! Yes, ten years ago! That evening I had received a phone call from Fr. Innocent Rutagambwa, nothing alarming, just a fraternal sharing of information useful for our life of poverty. A little later I called Fr. Chrysologue Mahame to get more news about Kigali: I received an unexpected answer from him: *the news is only bad*. Such pessimistic words coming from his mouth made me understand the gravity of the times. He spoke of concrete examples of already known assassinations and kidnappings, no one knew by whom or where. Around 15:00, I learned of the massacre of three of our fellow Jesuits with other priests, as well as the members of the

Vita et Pax Institute. They were meeting at Centre Christus when they were killed; among the slain was Louis Ruzindana, the cook of Centre Christus from the time it had been inaugurated. There were 17 persons locked in room 28 of our Spiritual Centre (Centre Christus), victims of a hand grenade. This was at the beginning of the genocide.

A phone call from Fr. Matungulu, Provincial, came at 23:00, on April 7, 1994. I already knew of the horror that had befallen our companions at Centre Christus. Calling from Kinshasa, Marcel Matungulu told me in a grave and compassionate tone: "If the wheat grain that falls on the ground doesn't die, it remains alone" (Jn 12, 20-35). He added that provision had been made for the Amani retreat house of Bukavu to be placed at our disposal for as long as necessary. The essence for me was revealed in this message. I felt restless and relieved at the same time. What should I do? My fellow Jesuits from Kilgali, I felt, I was in a special communication with; they were with me, I was with them. But where and how was I to overcome my limits? I felt the difficulty of my teaching to the novices: "To reach to the widest, but to be contained in the smallest, that is a divine thing". How was one to refuse a challenge in these circumstances? I could not but accept it. It was not in the ways of the flesh that I could pretentiously go on following the horizon of the lives of Chrysologue, Patrick and Innocent. They had lived up to the challenge of following Jesus on the terrain of his messianism. "I will give up my life for you", says Peter to Jesus (Jn 13, 37). That is the only clearly open horizon. But it is unfeasible outside the spiritual power of Christ.

On that Thursday night three calls from outside reached me, meant to encourage me and to give me condolences. They were, at the same time, full of emotion and moving. I perceived through each one of these messages, an emphasis given to the sense of responsibility in that critical moment. The most pressing anxiety was to act rapidly to safeguard the future of the mission, In fact, all was summed up in what everyone was repeating all through the day: "leave, leave, beginning with the Rwandans and Burundians. Fr. Master must leave too." The Zairians panicked, the nightly shots were multiplying at the rate of one a minute, more and more discordant. Many could not sleep. We then went to the soldiers of the ONU Mission (MINUAR) to get more precise information about security in our zone, Cyangugu. Their information was blunt: "five Tutsis have been assassinated; the genocide has begun at Cyangugu also".

After a brief meeting of formators, we addressed a letter to Mr. Prefect of Cyangugu, in which we pointed out to him that we were an international community and that the insecure situation was forcing us to look for refuge somewhere else. The answer came at once, and on 8 April, in the afternoon, the first group left Cyangugu for Bukavu (in Zaire) where the others were to join them in two groups. The second group went two days later, under several threats and the third one at the end of April. Since the security situation had turned highly dangerous, I left with the first group. Each one took with him a small bag packed with the bare minimum needed. Three soldiers of the MINUAR escorted us to the bridge of the Rusizi river; Rwandan soldiers insulted them from their armoured cars.

A little later, I learnt of my nice Eugenie's death along with all her family; they lived in Kigali. The eve of the exodus, 7 April was a moment of strong emotions and much embarrassment. It was necessary for the novices who had relatives, especially in Kigali, to collect information about how they were doing. Some of them had nothing to tell! The only thing to share was the faith of each novice and that of the community of the Novitiate, tested by the situation, and encouraged by the courage and attention towards our other companions in Bukavu. At Amani (Bukavu), we celebrated the Eucharist frequently, with tears in our eyes not only for the companions of whom we had only bad news, but also for our own families that had been exterminated, be it at Kibuye or in the nearby town of Butare.

I think that the gravity of what happened forced us to confront an unknown world

The Novitiate functioned at Bukavu, in the retreat house (Amani) from 7 April to 16 June 1994. While we waited, the tension got worse as the days passed. Some clarifications reached us, as some people from Cyangugu had managed to escape impending death. After Fr. Vice Provincial's visit, and then that of the Provincial himself, who came with plane tickets in his pocket, the exodus began. The destination was Kinshasa but, in the end, for an indeterminate period. Paul Miki House at Ingani, in the Diocese of Popokabaka (in Zaire), put us up while the permanent Novitiate of the Central African Province was being built at Kisantu, about 120 kilometres from Kinshasa.

"The history of the Rwandan genocide will take a long time to be written"[1]. Each one of the 35 novices who were with me between 1993 and 1994, shared their private grief and those of their families at the consequences of the overwhelming phenomenon of genocide. Jean Hatzfeld points out that "genocide is an inhuman enterprise imagined by humans, too foolish and too methodical to be understood". The great lesson of those days of sorrow, of unspeakable suffering, especially for those most hurt by the blatant extermination, was the experienced grace of cohesion: a mutual help, an attention to one another, rarely experienced as in those days. I think that the gravity of what happened forced us to confront an unknown world. We could not see its meaning. It was a deadlock that each one lived and resented in his or her own way. The words 'absurd' and 'disgusting' come out often in conversation and are the only ones apt to express one's feelings. Living

[1]Hatzfeld, Jean, *Dans le nu de la vie, récit du marais rwandais*, Paris, Seuil, 2000, p. 9.

through this time in an organized group like the Novitiate, in the company of friends sensible to the misfortune of others and knowing how to authentically share their feelings through human gestures, was also a part of life, of the human journey that must be assumed, no matter the impressions of the moment, and the blows suffered. A secret and real joy emerged from this passage though the darkness.

I have to add the joyful experience of recognizing among the young, a capability to adapt to difficult situations ignored before 7 April, 1994. It seems to me that another generation starts off learning to live on a daily basis and to discover newness even in multi secular documents. It was the time when GC 34 of the Society of Jesus was taking place. The Decrees being elaborated were communicated to us on a regular basis and they stimulated us to be united to the Society in the present world. It is, as someone said at the Congregation, the occasion "to leave it to the young to make us dream of the future".

Cyangugu-Bukavu-Iniangi: an overview of the lessons of history. Formators and beneficiaries, we learn that man can remain free under pressure, and learn to resist the unleashing of violence, and strive to share and give under the sign of that generosity whose secret each one keeps and can manifest in his or her own way.

Original French
Translation by Francisco López Rivera SJ

Jean Gasenge SJ
Communauté de Kiriri
B.P. 2130 Bujumbura
BURUNDI
<sjkiriri@cbinf.com>

DEBATE:
A FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE

THE PROPHET IN THE FACE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE: A MODEL OF FAITH WHICH DOES JUSTICE

Stefano Bittasi SJ

Rather than speaking about the real capacity to relate our faith with justice in our Jesuit way of proceeding, I want to confront it with a prophetic attitude which is proposed in the Scriptures.

Introduction: The prophet and his social context.

Every prophet in the Bible, like every Jesuit today, is a man of his people and of his time. The prophet's experience of his own reality is an important starting point to understand his message. The prophet lives the reality which he judges! Seeing reality with the eyes of God, does not put the prophet at a different level in relation to reality. Jesus himself experienced this situation (Mk 6,1-6):[1]

> [1]Jesus left that place and went to his home town accompanied by his disciples. [2]When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue; and the large congregation who heard him were amazed and said. [3]'Where does he get it from?', and, 'What wisdom is this that has been given him?', and, 'How does he work such miracle? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' So they fell foul of him. [4]Jesus said to them, 'A prophet will always be held in honour except in his home town, and among his kinsmen and family.' [5]He could work no miracle there, except that he put his hands on a few sick people and healed them; [6]and he was taken aback by their want of faith.

The contempt which Jesus expresses in this situation is the symptom of the 'normal' condition of a prophet. Especially when it touches the social relations of the people with whom he lives. This is, however, a normal attitude: none of us accepts a critique of our way of living, of the social system sustaining us, from someone who is 'with us and like us'. And yet even in this we find an evangelical icon of this attitude. Remember Herod with John the Baptist (Mk 6, 18-21a):

> [18]John had told Herod, 'You have not right to your brother's wife.' [19]Thus Herodias nursed a grudge against him and would willingly have killed him, but she could

[1]The English version of the texts from the Old and New Testament have been taken from *The New English Bible: Oxford Study Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

not; [20]for Herod went in awe of john, knowing him to be a good and holy man; so he kept him in custody. He liked to listen to him, although the listening left him greatly perplexed. [21]Herodias found her opportunity…

There is an interesting parallel between these two situations and our lives. An author has referred to this phenomenon as prophetic *alteration*:[2]

"It is from this *alteration* that the pain of the prophet starts. A man becomes *different*. He is torn away from his own family, his environment, from his life situation, from his way of thinking, from his temperament and thrown elsewhere by God. He is pulled from his own self and, transformed, he does not recognise himself. He becomes his own contradiction, he says what he has never thought, proclaims what he has always feared. His existence is the paradox of his being.. […] The prophet faces that which is 'absolute". **The final consequence of alteration is abandonment… Transformed by prophecy, to the eyes of people, the prophet is in the Absolute; and to God, he is among people. He is himself, without ever being so.**[3]

To the eyes of people, the prophet is in the Absolute; and to God, he is among people. He is himself, without ever being so

So what the prophet is called to do, naming reality as it is seen by God, does not put him in a comfortable situation. He finds himself having to proclaim not a painful and inevitable *status quo*, a situation which is unacceptable to everyone. No, he finds himself having to proclaim the incongruity between this reality and the Absolute. A reality, however, wanted and sought by the most important and influential people (and often the largest group, that *majority* which has become synonymous with democratic justice and justification of the rightness of the common choices). This makes him truly isolated in his own reality, which yet he shares.

As an example we can take the prophet Micah as a starting point. This prophet lives in the Jerusalem of the 8th century BC. At that time Jerusalem's context is characterized by two phenomena which are interrelated: large landed property in the countryside and the consequent wealth in the sacred city. Whoever would have entered that world as a tourist would certainly have been struck by the wealth of the city, its luxury, architecture, and the numerous stores. A prosperous and peaceful city. Furthermore, the external appearance of the countryside, gave the impression of fertility, of order, and of easy and intense agricultural business transactions, favoured by the network of national and international relations. And the tourist would have definitely appreciated the luxury enjoyed by the big families, the financial transactions and the variety of the cultural world. And yet Michea in his time does not offer a 'tourist' vision, but a 'prophetic vision. He sees with the 'eyes of God' and, from this perspective, he highlights the consequences for the majority of the exploited poor rather than the artistic or cultural beauty of the homes of the 'financial operators' (as we would call them today). He highlights the hypocrisy of the religious hierarchy which hides this situation by providing a reasonable 'plausibility' for the beauty and solemnity of the sacred and devout worship. In other words, he puts before our very eyes an uncomfortable and critical perspective, which, however, as we will see, is open to God's logic, who is always open to an encounter with the people when the conditions of their earthly lives provide a possibility to experience fraternity.

Mi 2,1-3: Large landed property and the mentality of landowners

[1]Shame on those who lie in bed planning evil and wicked deeds
and rise at daybreak to do them, knowing that they have the power!
[2]They covet land and take it by force; if they want a house they seize it; they rob a man of his home and steal every man's inheritance.
[3]**Therefore** these are the words of the Lord:
Listen, for this whole brood I am planning disaster,
whose yoke you cannot shake from your necks and walk upright; it shall be your hour of disaster!

The mentality of accumulating land in order to gain wealth (very similar to today's economic accumulation which has to multiply wealth going beyond the need of each 'actor') supplants the rights of the small owners for whom their small plot of land is the source of their survival. In order for wealth to be accumulated in the hands of a few who want ever greater access to prosperity, the very survival of the poor is denied. These either submit to the logic of large landowners, or they die. This logic is well described in the first two verses which refer to the nightly 'planning', which begins in the mind in the evening and is implemented at sunrise. It is a particularly significant image which shows the 'omnipotence' of the rich. They can plan their schemes at night and execute them in broad daylight, without

[2]The term 'alteration' used by the author refers to the **change** that takes place in the life of a prophet after his call.
[3]Neher, Andrè, *L'essenza del Profetismo*, (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1984) pp. 244-246.
[4]The translation of this verse offered by the original Italian version of the author reads: *can do anything they want*. The linguistic term '*sintagma*' is a verbal structure containing, in this order, a verb, an adverb and a complement. [Note of the Editor] This is the meaning of the Hebrew *sintagma* "*have the capacity in their hands*".

needing to be afraid! If there were risks, they would plan during the 'day' and they would act 'at night'!!! In fact it is said that *they have the power*.[4] There is a *taking* which is the consequence of *coveting.* It is not a coincidence that here the same verb as in the Ten Commandments is used (Ex 20, 17): the coveting forbidden by the commandment is the driving force for the wealth of the landowners of Jerusalem.

We note that what is put into question is not the way the system is managed (more or less violent or with 'a human face'), but the very roots of the system, which does not reflect God's vision of the earth, of wellbeing, of human relations.

The prophetic *therefore*, announces in an interesting way how God will use the same "way of proceeding' used by landowners, and the rich, against them. The same words are used. The game in fact is not a *punishment,* but making them touch with their own hands what they inflict on others. This is one of the key interpretations of each so-called divine punishment in the Bible. It is not a judicial sentence, but a way of experiencing which has to lead to the life of the sinner, to his becoming aware and to what we call his *conversion,* in other words to a change in mind and heart which is the consequence of 'having had an experience'.

What God is interested in is not to judge and reward those who are good and punish those who are evil, but to rebuild just relations

3. Mi 3, 9-12: Prosperity, is it a sign of justice and blessing?

> [9]Listen, you leaders of Jacob, rulers of Israel, you who make justice hateful and wrest it from its straight course; [10]building Zion in bloodshed and Jerusalem in iniquity.
> [11]Her rulers sell justice, her priests give direction in return for a bribe, her prophets take money for their divination, and yet men rely on the Lord. 'Is not the Lord among us?' they say; 'then no disaster can befall us.'
> [12]THEREFORE, Therefore, on your account Zion shall become a ploughed field, Jerusalem a heap of ruins, and the temple hill rough heath.[5]

The second passage which I propose refers to the reaction of the prophet to the thinking of those who believe that their prosperity is an acquired right and a sign of God's blessing which extends from the more specific religious and cultural aspects to the more civilian and administrative. I do not think that there is much need to comment on these verses which, in this context, are very explicit and evocative.

First, the prophet uncovers the very basis of Jerusalem's prosperity. The city (with all its characteristic symbols) is presented not through its externally admirable appearance, but through the foundations which in God's eyes sustain it: *social injustice, blood, crime* of the powerful against the powerless.

Then the prophet shows one way of operating. There are, in other words, self-made rules which guide the economic actors, there are the 'rules of the game" which do not take into consideration the *others.* The machine runs favouring the interests of those who run it! And furthermore, the result, the success, the very functioning of the 'machine' is perceived as the intrinsic sign of its *goodness*, which includes the very relationship with God.

The comment made by L. Alonso Schökel is interesting: "they consider the presence of God incompatible with evil understood as misfortune, while in fact his presence is incompatible with *evil* understood as *injustice*".

Here, once again, we are faced with the *therefore* of God which reaches a level of violence unheard of. In order to understand why this oracle is considered to be one of the most violent against Jerusalem in the whole Bible[6] we have to begin by understanding the symbolic significance of Jerusalem. This city, the city of David, is first of all the place where God is present among the people through the 'king'. It is also the place of the Temple, of the mysterious presence of God.

Well this city is proclaimed to be abandoned by God in a state of total destruction (the image of the *ploughed field*) and, even in stronger terms, the Temple is called by the prophet, who claims to be speaking God´s Word, "a rough heath" (a term used for the sanctuaries of Baal built on the hills).

You can understand how the denunciation of the mechanisms which generate injustice is not just a question of "morality" (custom). In the prophetic discourse there is a close link between the way we live our social life and the very relationship with God. What would we call today a statement like this? Our awareness of the 'secular' nature of social relations has taught us not to confuse the supposed 'will of God' with specific political or social models. And yet, in my view, there is a strong invitation to keep *eyes of faith* when we look at the social phenomena which take place, with the capacity to both 'see' and 'judge' them, when we witness the same mechanisms at work in the past and today.

[5]According to the *New International Version-UK*, this last verse reads: "Therefore, because of you, Zion will be ploughed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets." followed by the author [Note of the Editor].

[6]See the note of the TOB: "It is the first time that the announcement of such a radical destruction of the city and its sanctuary is heard in Jerusalem. This prophecy will provoke such an impression that a century later the hearers of Jeremiah will not mention it" (Jer 26, 18).

Michea 7, 8-20: Hope.

[8] O my enemies, do not exult over me;
I have fallen, but shall rise again;
though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is my light.
[9]I will bear the anger of the Lord, for I have sinned against him,
until he takes up my cause and gives judgment for me;
until he brings me out into the light, and I see his justice.
[18]Who is a god like thee? Thou takest away gilt, thou passest over the sin of the remnant of thy own people, thou dost not let thy anger rage for ever but delightest in love that will not change.
[19] Once more thou wilt show us tender affection and wash our guilt, casting all our sins into the depths of the sea.
[20]Thou wilt show good faith to Jacob, unchanging love to Abraham, as thou didst swear to our fathers in the days gone by.

The few verses that I propose here are the beginning and the end of the last page of the book. It is the canticle to a Jerusalem which the prophet considers to be totally destroyed. The holy city is no more. The 'curse' has come true (and this more than one century before it really happened). And yet in the midst of this destruction the canticle of hope for the sinful city arises. What it says is very interesting because it constitutes both the authentic horizon for the resolution of social injustice, and God's gaze over the sick human reality.
Social sin is defined by the city *a sin against God* and because of this understanding, the destruction is accepted. Yet, this very reference to God allows the city to declare firm and proud words against its *enemy* (the foes of Israel and Judea). God is presented as the One who has destroyed Jerusalem for the love of the poor…. Jerusalem, destroyed, has become in turn 'poor'. This is why God now defends the sinner who has understood his own life with authenticity. The city waits for the overturning of the situation which at this point as a double overturning:

Beautiful and prosperous city
but with obvious social injustices

↓ destruction
fall/darnkness

↓ reconstruction
rising /seeing

It is interesting that now God' *justice* becomes the *right of the city* and becomes the light through which 'one can see'. What a difference from darkness!
The praise is for a God who removes sin and makes of mercy his own identity. What God is interested in is not to judge and reward those who are good and punish those who are evil, but to rebuild just relations. God is interested in building a more 'just' world, where the term 'just' does not refer to a retributive or legal justice, but to a world regulated by just reciprocal relations.
I emphasise only verse 19 because here the image of Exodus 15.5 in relation to the Egyptian troops is used: *the flood waters covered them, they sank into the depths like a stone.* Now it is said with the same images: *he will treat underfoot our guilt and he will cast into the depths of the sea all our sins.* The enemy that God will win over is no longer external to the people, but is within it, it is that *sin* that God will bury in the depths of the sea, because his logic of love will guarantee the promise made to Abraham, to have descendants who are called to be brothers among them.

Jesus did the same when he gave us the prayer *Our Father.* That should be the basis for us to build a world of brothers and not a world where we seek our own wellbeing without considering the interests of the others, or worse still in destructive competition with them.

Original Italian
Translation by Jenny Cafiso

Stefano Bittasi SJ
Pontificia Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Meridionale -
Sez. San Luigi
Via Petrarca 115
80122 Napoli—ITALY
<bittasi.s@jesuits.net>

A FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE
Anthony Carroll SJ

Introduction

In this short article, I would like to consider how the cultural situation of Europe has affected our commitment to justice on this continent. As GC 34 noted in paragraph 4 of its third decree on "Our Mission and Justice", there is an intimate link between the Christian Faith and the promotion of justice, but why does this connection seem less and less important to many Christians today?

A Cultural and Social Crisis in Europe

Recently, I moved back to England after living for the last ten years in Spain, France and Germany. This experience has caused me to consider the question of European identity and culture on a number of different levels. At the theoretical level, I have been preoccupied with the questions surrounding the contemporary claims that European culture and society have moved beyond the vision of the Enlightenment and its claims to universal reason and solidarity that have defined European culture and society since the French Revolution. At the practical level, I have been trying to come to terms with the different cultural and social universes that constitute Europe. Even at the level of framing questions, let alone answering them, things are very differently understood in different countries. Not, of course, that this diversity is new. It is perhaps simply that, as countries in Europe come closer together, these differences are becoming more apparent. However, one thing seems clear: young Christians in Europe today are less and less concerned with questions of social justice. There is a sense that these concerns were concerns of yesterday, and that somehow faith is more of a private affair. Something between you and God. Why is this the case? Has social justice gone out of fashion? And if so, why?

One of the major aspects of this crisis is an increase in individualism and a resulting lack of community

I believe that what many commentators have called the crisis in European culture and society is a major cause of the lack of interest in social justice. One of the major aspects of this crisis is an increase in individualism and a resulting lack of community. If you speak with trade unionists they will tell you the same story. Young people feel uneasy to commit themselves to collective organizations that seem to belong to a bygone generation. This social crisis, a crisis of being unable to identify with a group is further compounded by the cultural crisis of the end of belief in reason and justice. Young people are looking for particular answers to regional questions and less for general answers to universal questions of justice and solidarity. A lack of trust in politics is permeating European societies as a result of these cultural and social crises. If you no longer want to identify with the wider society and pursue societal goals of justice and solidarity, then why believe in politics? Moreover, a second area is at play in European discontentment: a crisis of meaning. People are now looking to religion less and less to change society than to give them personal meaning in their lives. In fact, I am sure that this is not only a European phenomenon. I recently read a book on popular religion in Brazil in which the author claimed that there was a decline in the Catholic approach of trying to tackle underlying structural problems and an increase in the popularity of the evangelical approach – dealing with concrete problems such as alcoholism and family conflicts through charismatic prayer services and direct charity work.

A decline in the belief of general answers and contentment with particular solutions to concrete problems is a pragmatism that is itself becoming a universal model for both religion and politics. The problem, of course, is that social questions such as the question of social justice are not made thematic in such an approach. No doubt the end of a period of ideological standoff between different visions of society has been a major contributory factor in the decline in the belief of the social. Now the social has been eclipsed by the individual and his or her needs, whether these be material or spiritual. The end of the grand-narrative means the beginning of the local tale.

The question arises here for those of us concerned about the link between faith and justice as to what our response should be. How can the Jesuit commitment to faith and justice speak to such an individualised society?

Clearly, as Pope John Paul II has pointed out in his Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, n. 25, our commitment to justice is not based on any political ideology but on the gospel demand of universal brotherhood and sisterhood in the Kingdom of God. However, the difficulty is that if one is to go beyond the justification of the Christian principle of justice to its mediation in concrete political action one faces the difficulty of what I have called the eclipse of the social. How can we make the social once again visible?

It seems to me that a crucial aspect of the General Congregation's decree on "Our Mission and Justice" was the realization that the social is made visible in our era through the community. The concept of a "community of solidarity" is very important in this regard. The extent to which our communities can find real ways of joining our concerns to the concerns of the poor and marginalised in our societies is, I believe, the extent to which our mission of faith and justice will help to make the concerns for

social justice once again visible in our society and culture. This is not to reduce theory to practice; it is to see the link between the two, which is in serious need of reinvigoration. Two tensions occur here. The first is that to a significant extent much of the work of our communities of insertion has been based on the gifts of our charismatic individuals who have created projects often alone. The institution has often placed them on a pedestal and reinforced a cycle of making such communities exotic and, perhaps now, even an endangered species in many of our provinces. The second is that as the age profile of Jesuits in Europe continues to increase there is the danger that, rather than adopting a missionary strategy, we will choose the maintenance option and play safe. However, playing safe will not bring new vocations to the society. It is only when our life is visibly different from professionals around us that a young person will be encouraged to risk his or her life for the gospel in religious life. If the concern for social justice is eclipsed in European society and culture today, then perhaps we should ask the question, is it also eclipsed in ourselves?

A crucial aspect of the General Congregation's decree on "Our Mission and Justice" was the realization that the social is made visible in our era through the community

Anthony J. Carroll SJ
Institute of Religion Ethics and Public Life
Heythrop College
University of London—Kensington Square
London W8 5HQ—UNITED KINGDOM
<t.carroll@heythrop.ac.uk>

A FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE: WHAT HAPPENED?

David Eley SJ

The Society of Jesus took a prophetic stance to commit itself to seek justice in the context of faith and saw this commitment as a refocusing of its mission. The Society is now wondering if this was the right thing to do in the first place, or if, after having tried to do it, we have, as a body, truly embraced this mission.

Influences

I would like to point to a particular moment in our history to begin this reflection on the dyad of faith and justice; this is the document of The Second Vatican Council, 'The Church in the Modern World' (*Gaudium et Spes)*. Other documents of the Council, '*Lumen Gentium*' and '*Ad Gentes*', contain a similar scope and theology. In a spirit of openness and updating, *aggiornamento*, the People of God, the Body of Christ tried to prayerfully face, at that time, the concerns, the peoples, other faiths and social realities, including the unjust structures of the contemporary situation: "they judge themselves deprived either through injustice or unequal distribution." (GS #9) The Church made its commitment to attend to the needs of the world, and further understood this as part of its self-definition.

This moment had been preceded by the experiences of the worker priests through which the Church reached out to the working classes of Europe and embraced developments in the theology of the incarnation and biblical studies. A very complicated set of concerns motivated the Council but some of them deal with the church's relationship with its own members, the role of the laity, and the relationship with other cultures and religions. There had been an opinion that since the restoration of the monarchy in 1812 after the French Revolution, and the restoration of the Society of Jesus at the same moment, the Church found its relationships to be largely with the upper classes and experienced great difficulty establishing relationships among the newly emerging working classes and the poor. The graces of the 1960s provided an opportunity for the Church and the Society of Jesus to make a renewed effort to work and live among working class people and even among the poor, and throughout the world. The concern for the poor has been a constant concern of the Church since its foundation, expressed in different ways in different eras. The Society of Jesus, too, has had a calling to the poor since the days of St. Ignatius. But a new structural understanding of injustice and structural remedies was being developed which would critically refocus our efforts.

There is a flattening out of emphasis that takes place when the application of a concept is broadened to include everything

The ferment of the 1960s brought social and cultural changes from below, a new sense of internationalism, often through the newly acquired independence of African and South American nations from their colonial powers and profound awareness of the poverty and inequalities of the world situation. Further, structural relationships between the wealth and the development of the first world countries and the poverty and depletion of the third world became more evident in the post-colonial era. A morally healthy concern for war and peace, a green environment, civil rights for African-Americans in the United States all added to the increased consciousness of the injustice in the world.

For Christians, these concerns for the injustices of the world, for the poverty and violence that were crushing

such a proportion of the world's population, were motivated both by a response to structural social and economic realties and by convictions from the traditions of the Gospels. "Feed the hungry, welcome the stranger" is an imperative of the Gospel even if we are not conscious that we were doing it "to Christ." (Mt 25) Some important international organisations, such as Doctors without Borders, Amnesty International and Greenpeace, all formed from coalitions transcending denominational confines, addressed the needs of the poor and of the planet without explicit religious motivation. The injustice and needs themselves called out for a human and moral response. Many Catholic organisations and NGOs were created during this period.

The Society's Commitments

The Society of Jesus responded to the Vatican Council in GC 31 (May 1965 in two sessions through to November 1966) by articulating the Jesuit form of commitment to involvement with the modern world, through the Mission of the Society and attention to our Apostolate. GC 31 expanded the meaning of mission, from ministries and "missions" to mission as one comprehensive category subsuming all the things we are sent to do. This mission was consistent with the Constitutions, and under the Roman Pontiff would help revitalize the Society.

At the level of an operational definition it has not been able to transform all of the more traditional works of the Society

GC 32, using the context provided in GC 31, expanded the notion of justice from its place in the social apostolate to a dimension of the entire Jesuit mission. In Decree 4 the religious dimension of justice and the primacy of the service of the faith are strong, especially at the beginning of the text (at the end, the sense is more strictly economic, political and social.) Both GC 32 and GC33 speak of the "integrating principle." The concepts of faith and justice are being used in more global and comprehensive ways.[1]

GC 34 takes efforts to explain the strong preoccupations of the earlier congregations and to assert the primacy of the mission of Christ as the context. The Society's mission in the mission of Christ and the Spirit, in the context of the Church, becomes the chosen language and emphasis, rather than the "promotion of justice," now the "struggle for justice." This is a significant shift of stress; we are now with Christ on a mission. This could be interpreted as a corrective to previous congregations. And what is the mission of Christ? It can be put in diverse terms, redemption, the completing of the creation and the celebrating of the new creation, the proclamation of the kingdom as the vehicle of these actions of God among us, through teaching, healing, and through community. This view of the mission of Christ does not reduce what appeared to be a tension between the religious claims of the celebration of faith and the agenda of the social sciences (economic, political and social) which articulate the justice issues of our day.

What do we make of it now?

The Society of Jesus has experienced three sources of reflection throughout this history, each of them difficult: 1) the shifts of meanings and the differences in the texts of the general congregations; 2) the range of interpretations of these meanings: a development? a departure? a corrective?; and 3) the reception these expressions of Jesuit mandate and purpose have had in the Society and beyond it. (This I suppose is the point of this exchange or debate.)

Part of our Jesuit reflection on the meaning of faith and justice and how they are inter-related is focused on our General Congregations from 31 to 34. But something else is reflected in what has happened to the Social Apostolate during that same period of time.

There clearly have been shifts of meaning from congregation to congregation. The mission (sense of purpose) of the Society has been focused on the relation of issues of justice to the broad primacy of faith. But two things might have happened here. 1) By "extending" the demands of justice to all the works of the Society, the "prophetic edge" in the social justice works has been lost and the specific ministry has been diminished; and 2) the lived practice of justice has been diluted because every ministry, be it a university or a parish, tells itself that it is working for justice somewhat independently of the social, political and economic realities of the situation. Something similar happened in the Communication Ministries, which are now greatly diminished when they were adopted by the category of faith and culture. There is a flattening out of emphasis that takes place when the application of a concept is broadened to include everything. There has been a diminishing of the social ministries even though the needs of the world augment and the cry of the poor is even more vivid.

Further, the self-definition of the Society is involved here. We have chosen an explanatory definition: we are a company committed to the mission of a faith that does justice. But at the level of an operational definition it has not been able to transform all of the more traditional works of the Society. Perhaps it has been resisted and ignored. But perhaps it was wrong headed in the first place from a theological and motivational perspective. Is

[1]Peter Bisson SJ is about to publish a thesis on these topics. I am grateful for his assistance

the theology that reveals the nature of justice too narrow in scope to serve the Society as motivation for its mission? We have been living through the tension of a re-focusing of the articulation of the mission or 'end' of the Society. The new articulation is some distance away from the original Ignatian one, although connected. Ignatius expressed the end of the Society in other terms, in terms of salvation as it is expressed in the Constitutions: "The end of the Society is to devote itself with God's grace, not only to salvation and perfection of the members' own souls, but also with the same grace to labour strenuously in giving aid to the salvation and perfection of the souls of their neighbours." (*The First and General Examen* [3]) The expression of the GC 34 that we are "with Christ on a mission" seems broad enough to embrace the original Ignatian theology of salvation but is less explicit about the call of justice in our day.

David Eley SJ
Assistant for Social and International Ministries
1325 Bay Street, Suite 300,
Toronto, ON—CANADA M5R 2C4
<david.eley@utoronto.ca>

THE INTEGRITY OF THE FAITH-JUSTICE VISION

George Keerankeri SJ

The Biblical Basis of the Faith-Justice Vision

The biblical basis of the faith-justice vision, spirituality and action has been amply discussed and established as firm and incontrovertible. Both the Old and the New Testaments provide abundant data that support and reinforce it in no uncertain terms. Not only does the book of Exodus furnish us with a fundamental paradigm for it, but much of the prophetic literature consistently emphasises it as the central demand God requires his covenant people to fulfil, and the ignoring of which is to invite severe divine judgment. Jesus' own preferential option for the marginalised, clearly shown in his close association and table fellowship with tax-collectors and "sinners", the ones despised and rejected by the religious elite of his society, carries forward this basic stance. It also finds its realization in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom with its blessing to the poor (Lk 6,20) and his humble service to the suffering and the disadvantaged of all hues and varieties that illustrates it.

The necessary connection between Jesus' commitment to this vision in his ministry and the death that he suffered for it

Jesus' commitment to the faith-justice vision took also a more conflictual shape with his prophetic denunciation of corrupt and misguided religious authority with its legalism and externalism that betrayed the basic demand for mercy (Mt 9,13; 12,7 = Hos 6,6). His ministry of the Kingdom of God in this perspective also led him to his death, manipulated by the powers-that-be to snuff out his prophetic voice that spoke out in favour of God's poor. All these and more have rightly and eloquently been pointed out, in similar or related terms, not only in Liberation Theology but also in much of contemporary reflection on the issue in the Society of Jesus.

While all these are basic motifs supporting the faith justice-vision in the Bible, perhaps needing no particular restatement, I shall here briefly dwell on a related issue that, to my mind, is often not fully integrated in some of the discourse on this question. This has to do with the necessary connection between Jesus' commitment to this vision in his ministry and the death that he suffered for it. As the latter is the price Jesus paid for his mission and the high point of that mission, a coherent integration of the latter with the former is of great importance if we are to see the integrity of this vision, both theologically and practically. Besides, it is also fitting to reflect on this point in the current liturgical context of the Pascal Season.

The Integrity of the Faith-Justice Vision in Luke

It is widely acknowledged that among the gospels it is Luke's gospel that presents Jesus, his ministry and death-resurrection most consistently along liberational lines. Justifiably, it is also Luke's gospel that is employed most in the faith-justice discourse. In this connection, mention is often made of the famous inauguration of Jesus' ministry in the synagogue assembly of his native Nazareth where, invited to read for the Sabbath assembly, he chances upon the mission statement of Trito-Isaiah (Is 61, 1-3). He solemnly reads this and then goes on to identify his impending mission in terms of the liberative vision embodied in this text (Lk 4, 21). By thus initiating his public ministry the Lukan Jesus, it is rightly claimed, clearly projects his ministry as one of liberation of the poor, the marginalised, and the oppressed. The subsequent unfolding of Jesus' ministry with its special focus on the poor and the oppressed also justifies, in large measure, this understanding of the gospel.

It is, however, to be noted that the passage in question (Lk 4,16-30) does not end with this solemn identification of Jesus' unfolding ministry in liberative terms (4,16-22a). There is a second part to this passage namely, 4, 22b-30, which forms an integral part of this unit. At v22b the mood of the people suddenly changes and their

superficial understanding of Jesus as Joseph's son, whom they know only too well, becomes a stumbling block to their acceptance of him. Jesus knows that, based on this, they will cynically demand that he repeat the same signs they have heard he worked at Capernaum. In the context of their superficiality and unbelief, he pointedly alludes to the ministries of the great OT prophets, Elijah and Elisha, who exercised a ministry to the Gentiles because of unbelief and rejection by Israel, a reference meant to imply the same course for his own mission in the face of the same attitudes by contemporary Israel. Furious at this critical reference, the people of Nazareth turn violent and nearly do away with Jesus although he escapes this bid on his life (Lk 4, 28-30).

By accepting death through crucifixion Jesus thus shared the worst lot of the victims of human hatred and cruelty

While the sudden change of mood on the part of the people of Nazareth in this passage is puzzling, especially coming immediately after their high estimation of Jesus (cf. 4,22a), this unit in its entirety is, for Luke, the programmatic summary of the whole gospel. What takes place at the micro-level of this unit is played out in full at the macro-level of the total gospel narrative. Thus, both the liberative vision of the Nazareth sermon and the tragic rejection of Jesus by his townspeople are programmatic in relation to the wider gospel account. Just as the liberative vision of the sermon foreshadows Jesus' unfolding ministry, the rejection of Jesus in his native Nazareth foreshadows his future rejection by Israel, his people, in his Passion and death. This means that the programmatic summary, and hence also the whole gospel, presents Jesus, the Son of God, as God's end-time liberator prophet who exercises a mission of God's liberation in Israel and is tragically rejected. However, in the gospel, this bitter rejection is no accident but *a divine necessity* that coheres in the realization of the plan of God for liberation, as the risen Jesus clarifies to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, shattered by the tragedy of Jesus' crucifixion (cf. Lk 24, 25-26).

A Not-uncommon Deficient Reading of Luke's Vision

Although in Luke's vision the two parts of this pericope are well-integrated and together form the programmatic summary of the liberative mission of Jesus, the passage is often mutilated, both in liturgical usage and in liberation apologetics. Invariably, the use of this passage finishes with 4, 16-22a and the second part 4, 22b-30 is discarded. It seems to me that this is more than an instance of accidental mutilation of a scripture passage. Perhaps it is illustrative of our resistance to integrate the Passion destiny of Jesus into our faith-justice vision and praxis as its integral part, indeed, as its crowning climax. Whatever be its motivation, this division and the consequent one-sided reading of this passage is surely unhealthy and involves a distortion. It can even give rise to an ideologisation and sloganeering of our mission which underplay the centrality of the cross in the faith-justice mission. At any rate, this division is something to be remedied in the interest of the integrity of the faith-justice vision, spirituality and praxis. Jesus both exercised a ministry of liberation in courageous proclamation, humble service and prophetic denunciation. His Passion destiny and his death are the price he paid for this mission as well as the final and crowning act of this ministry. We thus miss something vital to the faith-justice mission if we de-emphasize the second part of this passage. As Luke would have it, to commit oneself to the work of liberation, to the faith-justice ministry, is both, to participate in Jesus' ministry of liberation and to share in his Passion destiny as well as experience our vindication by God of them.

Models of true Integration

It is certainly not my intention to suggest that the faith-justice engagement has been lacking in heroes of this integration. We have an imposing line of such models. The outstanding examples of the modern martyrs of this ministry are there for all to see. In this connection we may respectfully remember- Archbishop Romero, the El Salvadorian martyrs, and several others; and in our context in India, our own fellow-Jesuit Fr. A.T.Thomas and Sr. Rani Maria, a member of the Franciscan Clarist Congregation. These are people who have combined the two aspects of this vision: the exercise of the faith-justice vision in their apostolate and the paying of the price for their commitment with their lives in a final act of service, after Jesus' own example. They have exercised a truly liberative mission and drunk deep of the cup of Jesus, his Passion and death in the service of the marginalised, and also experienced its vindication by God. Clearly, these, and surely many others like them who are less well-known, are true embodiments of this integral faith-justice vision, spirituality and action. What I wish to underline is simply the consistent emphasis, both in theory and practice, of the very same integrity of the faith-justice vision that these models actually represent.

The Role of the Passion in the Faith-Justice Mission

This share in the Passion of Jesus as a necessary and inevitable part of the faith-justice mission has more than one scope. For Jesus, his Passion was his sharing of and identification with the most abject, detestable and humiliating suffering in the human condition. By accepting death through crucifixion Jesus thus shared the worst lot of the victims of human hatred and cruelty.

But he thereby not only participated in their lot but also brought a ray of hope into this abyss of darkness. By his surrender to the unalterable will of God in total trust even in the face of the experience of God-forsakenness, Jesus transformed this bitter negativity into a source of life. Through the patience, obedience and love that embodied his acceptance of it, he made it a life-giving reality. Jesus thus also opened up a new perspective on suffering and human tragedy when accepted in patience, obedience and trustful love of God and people. He thereby transformed the human condition in its bitterest and most negative into a source of liberation and life.

Our conscious sharing of Jesus' Passion entailed in the faith-justice mission is, when integrated, a participation in this achievement of Jesus. Not only is it an act of identification with those who suffer oppression for whom we struggle, but it is also an imitation of the patience, trust, obedience, and surrender of Jesus to God (his love of God) and his love of people. Through this we also analogically transform the negativity we face into a source of life and of integral liberation. It thus becomes a share in the death of Jesus "for us and for our salvation", a share in the vicarious nature of his suffering in the interest of total human liberation.

Conclusion

It seems to me that a clear and conscious emphasis on our share in the Passion involved in the faith-justice mission will enrich this God-given mission of the Society in our contemporary world. In the measure in which we share in the cup of Jesus as part of this mission, we shall also experience God's vindication of our mission in small and big ways. It will also convince the world of its inherent truth.

George Keerankeri SJ
Vidyajyoti College of Theology
4-A Raj Niwas Marg
Delhi 110054
INDIA
<keerankeri@jesuits.net>

FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE
João Batista Libânio SJ

GC 34 took place at a time when liberation theology in Latin America had already become rooted in important sectors of the church and the Society of Jesus. The phrase "faith and justice" appealed to their deepest longings. This theology did not simply fall on untilled soil. The minds of many Jesuits were ready for it, and GC 34 was received with enthusiasm and gratitude.

Identifying the present day charisma of the Society with this option for the poor has helped Jesuits to reflect and put into practice a liberating social engagement fed by an enlightened faith. After a period of hesitation in which social engagement became so prominent that the spiritual dimension began to wane, the thrust of GC 34 helped achieve a better balance between the social and spiritual poles. Without question, at the centre of our understanding of the decree was the option for the poor; this allowed for two movements. First, it allowed us to leave behind concrete social and political engagement in order to reinterpret the meaning of faith, in order to free faith from alienation. This first movement occurred during the immediate reception of the decree.

When asked which spirituality could help the liberation process, Gustavo Gutierrez unhesitatingly pointed to that of Ignatius

The starting point for the second movement was the experience of God in the poor. The pursuit of a spirituality of liberation became more relevant, correcting secularist exaggeration in some of the more engaged groups. Ignatian spirituality revealed itself to be an inspiring way of achieving a better articulation between faith and justice, so that when asked which spirituality could help the liberation process, Gustavo Gutierrez unhesitatingly pointed to that of Ignatius. This affinity between spirituality and social liberation allowed for a better reception of the proposals of GC 34.

The concept of justice, even though rooted in Scripture, was understood in the Latin American context to address mainly the social justice perspective. This meant the exploitation of the poor and marginalised. Consequently, there was a shift from understanding poverty as a lack of the necessary goods for sustaining life – implying the need for a pastoral ministry of charity – to understanding poverty as the result of unjust economic structures. Social analysis came to the forefront implying the need for a pastoral stance that could target social structures.

For decades thereafter, until the fall of Socialism, the practice of justice – influenced to some extent by Socialism itself – concentrated on the transformation of the social reality. This was the hegemonic discourse. This emphasis awakened in the dominant classes and in cer-

tain church sectors the suspicion that faith was being politicized and ideologised. It is difficult to understand this accusation.

In the context of Latin America, the Puebla Conference was dominated by this kind of polemic. A deeper reflection showed that the questions arising from liberation theology were not so much an indictment of our involvement in social issues. It was, rather, a question of the dominant classes rejecting social involvement and attracting to their side some in the church who could, or would not, take the political criticism aimed at the church and the church's power structure.

Throughout the seventies it was said "The church is born of the people." Later, to avoid any misunderstanding, "...by the work of the Holy Spirit" was added. Such a church was seen as rising from the base communities. Some feared such a notion would risk undermining the hierarchical principle of the church. The dream of John XXIII of a church of the poor, a grass roots church, was getting eroded.

In spite of the fact that the condition of the poor has not changed to any extent, the fall of Socialism, globalising neo-liberalism, and the culture of post-modernity have dramatically modified the understanding of the relationship between justice and faith.

Back in the sixties, the challenge where faith was concerned was secularization; the challenge where justice was concerned was its seeming irrelevance to the liberation process. Some militants of Catholic Action abandoned not only religious practice, but faith itself. They alleged that, having become acquainted with the Marxian tools for social transformation, they no longer knew what to do with faith. Had there been an understanding of a "faith that does justice," surely those idealistic militants, coming from a church background, would not have abandoned it.

Nowadays, what is threatening the Christian faith is the explosion of religious beliefs that undermine its critical strength. Injustice is no longer understood as the main problem, despite the fact that injustice continues to grow. To a large extent, the poorest social classes have lost the hope of a profound transformation of society. The fall of Socialism in 1989 left the world devoid of ideology. Neo-liberalism does not even deserve the label of ideology insofar as it does not offer any hope to anyone. It offers only an immediate, sophisticated, and consumerist well-being for a minority, always in contrast to the huge underclass of the wretchedly poor.

Pentacostalist and Neo-pentacostalist denominations, along with some Catholic charismatic groups, now serve the multitude of the poor. They offer not a critical faith with a relation to justice, but rather expressions, rites, and religious signs intended to console or perform miracles. These religious forms are meant to give solutions to immediate problems in an efficient and immediate manner; they are not meant to sustain faith.

The same lack of meaning affects the upper classes. As part of a hedonistic and consumerist society, they too are seeking life's consolation and joy. This is not the goal of a critical faith which struggles for justice. Such a faith is being replaced by engagement in prayer groups, praise gatherings, "Cercos de Gericó", and countless parties, especially of young people.

Nowadays, what is threatening the Christian faith is the explosion of religious beliefs that undermine its critical strength

Meanwhile, the situation of the poor is worsening, both in terms of the number of poor people and in terms of their needs. The new poor are the ones who are ever closer to physical, cultural and religious death. These poor simply do not matter. Once, when someone accused a businessman of exploiting the poor, he responded without hesitation, "I do not even want to have them as employees'. That is the most terrible form of oppression: ignoring the poor as though they did not exist even if their number runs to the millions or billions.

The neoliberal form of capitalism has no face, no name. It comprises financial transactions that go around the world by means of high speed telecommunications. The faith which does justice is not satisfied with charity works any more, even if those works still do some good. However, they are unable to affect the financial system, so powerful is it. We need to find new ways of acting.

The Porto Alegre World Social Forum opens new ways of doing things, opportunities for consistent action by Christians who are moved by an engaged faith. More than just criticising the exploitation of the poor, which continues to be violent, it is a question of articulating and sharing experiences from around the world. Both the Church and the Society have the resources, especially intelligent and committed people who will walk together with the best in civil society towards a new utopia: A different world is possible.

Original Portuguese
Translated by Ronald Boudreaux SJ and Mário Almeida SJ

João Batista Libânio SJ
Instituto Santo Inácio
C. Postal 5047
31611-970 Belo Horizonte, MG—BRAZIL
<jblibanio@cesjesuit.br>

SOCIAL COMMITMENT AND THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH: HOW TO EXPRESS THEM AND LINK THEM TOGETHER?

Alain Thomasset SJ

Rather than speaking in a theoretical way about the new relationship between faith, justice and culture, I would like to outline the way in which some Christians who are currently involved in a variety of social fields in France speak about the relation between their faith and their social commitment, and how, through that, they express a new understanding of their relation with God. It seems to me that the current difficulty in expressing the relationship between faith and justice comes partly from the lack of a vocabulary adapted to the new situation in which Christians live. Young people, in particular, do not find in the Church's recent tradition an expression of their particular and unique experience. The question is thus at least as much cultural and theological as social or political.

The current difficulty in expressing the relationship between faith and justice comes partly from the lack of a vocabulary adapted to the new situation in which Christians live

For the last four years, we have invited Christians engaged in the social, economic or political field to speak at a research seminar organized by the Centre Sevres in order to express not only how their faith influences their work, but also how their commitment makes their faith develop. In a number of cases, the study of the testimonies revealed common structures. The life-narratives often hinge on existential crises lived as moments of truth, and as moments of transformation essential to their faith-journey. It may be said that their faith-itinerary is structured by two thresholds or moments of rupture. The first threshold, which can be called 'moral', corresponds to the moment when witnesses describe setting up a critical distance from their Christian background and from society. This moment is marked by certain radicalism, often directly inspired from the faith, characterized by a utopian vision of society, a strong and even exclusive militant commitment, and rather prophetic inspiration, in which the dimension of Christ's call is strongly felt. A second threshold corresponds to a consideration of the tragedy of existence, and leads to an existence more rooted in a reality that is more relational, as well as to a humbler and more simplified faith. This is the threshold of 'hope' where the commitment privileged by the first threshold is moderated by a distance and a wisdom which does not cancel it, but in which it is lived differently, more prayerfully and in which the images of God are more marked by forgiveness, the Cross and the Resurrection. There is a move from an active engagement to an acquired trust in God, from a utopian and radical period to a period marked by tolerance and hope… This passage usually happens by means of a crisis which emerges from the ordeals of engaging with others, such as conflicts within the trade union, personal failures in relating to others, within the life lived by couples, the test of the life with the poor, political divergences and struggles, or conflicts within the company.

These encounters in truth are often the place of a revelation of God. It is the crossing of the experience of alterity or otherness which is an invitation to live a certain passivity or trustfulness, an attitude of listening and compassion. One of the witnesses describes her, as yet brief, itinerary and manner of seeing Christ as the passage from a 'Che Guevara' Jesus, who is a social prophet, to a Jesus who prays, enters into relationship with his Father and who invites the recognition of oneself as son or daughter in one's own turn. Another quoted the narrative of the rich young man (Mt 19, 16-30). At the beginning of his testimony this passage is used to justify a radical detachment from his family and middle class comfort. At the end of the testimony, this passage is used again to illustrate, on the contrary, compassion with respect to this young man who goes away sad; it is, in this way, an invitation to a tolerant attitude with respect to those which remain locked up in their safety.

It should also be noted that this passage from a utopian stance to a relational one, marked by humility and compassion, is also accompanied by a certain disappearance of the images describing social reality. An ideal and global vision of the social life which animates them at the beginning (the struggle for justice, the reform of the society, the fight for the oppressed…), partly inspired by the Christian faith and an interpretation of the Gospel, gives way to an increasingly strong insistence on individual relationships, interpersonal relations, local solidarity, and care for the neighbourhood. This attention to personal relations and the conversion which it indicates, is no longer accompanied by a new manner of imagining society on a large scale. It is as if the representations and the words that express the importance of structural justice (the relevance of which remains) have become null and void and that no clear

One describes her itinerary and manner of seeing Christ as the passage from a 'Che Guevara' Jesus to a Jesus who prays, enters into relationship with his Father and who invites the recognition of oneself

alternative arises. On the other hand, new images of the Church or more partial collective experiments can appear: for example, the communion of the people, the experiment of communities of solidarity, places of celebration of a meaningful human reality, the importance of the liturgical dimension to symbolize a still inchoative common feeling. For many of them, the relationship with the political dimension remains difficult. But the 'social', and not only the interpersonal world, remains the place of their commitment. Certainly no longer as an ideal construction but as a place itself always traversed by contradictions such as violence and injustice, which is also opened to a broader solidarity. In this breach, in this testing place, our witnesses discovered themselves invited to live a "presence".

This attention to personal relations and the conversion which it indicates, is no longer accompanied by a new manner of imagining society on a large scale

Finally, we have noted a difference between the younger generation (25-35 years) and the older one (45-55 years), in the particular in which they refer to the Word of God. In brief, older people seem to have an indirect relation with the biblical texts, while the younger (for which the experience of spiritual retreats is central), speak about these texts in a more personal and more direct manner. Admittedly the older people quote passages of the Bible, as inspiring their faith and their engagement, but it seems that they are quoting these passages to illustrate an attitude which finds its consistency elsewhere (for example, hospitality, as Jesus does when he eats with the sinners). Obviously a whole tradition supports them (in particular that of the 'Catholic Action '), where the Gospel already has a social interpretation and results in a commonly accepted way of being. For young people, on the other hand, for whom no tradition of social action is obvious in the evolution of their faith, everything occurs as if a strong spiritual experiment were necessary so that such social commitment can refer to the faith. At the same time, it is among them that we find ways of conversion where the faith is found in a new way through action. The itinerary of such or such young person is symptomatic of an "inductive" progression, where the faith is only really discovered as a personal experiment by means of a strong social commitment. For them, it would be, to some extent, justice which causes the faith rather than faith that does justice.

As we can see from these brief remarks, it is necessary to develop in a nuanced way; for these witnesses social practice brings meaning and provides a matrix for a new understanding of the mystery of God. This is especially the case when this social engagement is lived out in close proximity with people in such a way that the witness experiences also his or her own fragility. Social practice, which at the beginning could be lived as a natural consequence of the faith they have received , becomes the place of the revelation of a God who comes close to human beings in their vulnerability and their misery. The experience of a common humanity with the poor' (with their weaknesses and their strengths) and the discovery of the face of Jesus Christ dead and risen are then perceived in correspondence with each other. One could even say that they really constitute the two faces of the same social reality lived in the faith. That suggests that a new manner of expressing the bond between social commitment and experience of faith is being born.

Alain Thomasset SJ
CERAS, 14, rue d'Assas
75006 Paris - FRANCE
<alain.thomasset@jesuites.com>

JUSTICE TODAY
ECLIPSE OF JUSTICE IN THE HORIZON OF THE EPOCH

Pedro Trigo SJ

The first thing to be pointed out is the eclipse of justice in the public horizon and the consequent disappearance of the concept of justice from the ecclesial, and in particular, the theological horizon. I say 'consequent' because I feel that there is a relation of cause and effect. In a number of cases this arises from a positive lack of transcendence, by which I mean to say that many of the institutions which make up the ecclesiastical setup and particularly religious life, are acquiring a 'corporate ethos' by trying to distinguish themselves from each other and offering something specific to a segment of the market that they try to preserve and increase by all possible means. The same occurs, to a great extent, with the theology that is written: it is an expression of the university world in which it is inserted and of its intellectual connections with ideologues expressing the dominant direction of this historical reality.

Fundamental reason for justice going out of the public and vital horizon is the totalitarianism of the market imposed by globalised corporations

I believe that the fundamental reason for justice going out of the public and vital horizon is the totalitarianism of the market imposed by globalised corporations. In the market everything is private, including the work contract. Only the contract between demand and supply counts. Justice becomes the fulfilment of this contract subscribed to according to the requirements of law. The courts determine Justice. There is no constituent link. Society is an athletics track: each one runs on his own track and if he loses out in the competitive race he can blame no one for it. If he cannot sell anything he must resign himself to not buying anything. The most 'just' allocation of resources takes place when these resources are competitively distributed. Each one can consume in the measure in which he produces. The tendency is for everything to fall within this logic.

Today it is generally accepted that a great part of the world competes in the market with an almost insurmountable disadvantage. It is praiseworthy to help them initially, and such altruistic behaviour must be encouraged. We may well agree that it is necessary to fulfil the obligation of apportioning the famous 0.7% share of the GDP to them, and we might even discuss the possibility of increasing this share. But we must be clear: this utilitarian generosity has nothing to do with justice. In terms of justice, we owe nothing to them and they can claim nothing.

Justice as a Responsible Recognition of the Constituent Links

From a Christian point of view, the proposal of Justice has to do with the acknowledgement that we are not isolated individuals. We constitute ourselves as persons by accepting God's relationship to us, a relationship that makes us his sons, and by accepting the bonds of fraternity which bind together the sons of God. The fraternity of God's children is grounded on the relational quality of all human beings, which in turn, becomes the ground-base of humanity understood as a real social body and not only as something merely ideal. In turn, humanity is rooted in this system of systems making up the earth. Humanity belongs really to the earth, and, at the same time, is the highest expression of life's evolution in it.

Moral freedom, which is the level of reality in which the human being, in so far as he or she is human, acts and moves, is not autarchic, that is, it does not determines its own paradigm of choice. Freedom, inasmuch as it is distinguished from free will, becomes free and realises itself, when each person takes charge responsibly of his earthly condition, and accepts his membership in humanity. This perspective prevents him from sacralizing ethnic bonds or institutional affiliations; it prevents his personhood from being reduced to that of a mere individual being and equating it with the relations and contacts he establishes on the basis of pure preferences. A middle path has to be struck between two extremes. The first assumes that a human being is fully determined behaviourally by family, ethnic group or institution (even an ecclesiastical institution). The second rejects the conception of a 'risk society' where each one receives integrally his gain and builds up privately his own social security without the mediation of the State. Doing away with the institutions and mechanisms that channel solidarity does little justice to the bonds that shape us; it is a sort of irresponsibility that makes it difficult – nay that it positively hampers – the life of others and dehumanizes the life of those who accept this scheme. There is, certainly, in this privatised world, a greater mobility, but also a growing polarization, which in itself causes both a terrible violence to the defeated (the poor), and a loss of humanity to conquerors (the rich). Delegating the responsibility of establishing solidarity completely to the State or to any another institution is also an abdication of responsibility, since in both cases it will shift the burden of carrying the earth and humanity onto others. My proposal is that we need to keep up a balance open to multiple possibilities, between representation and participation.

Justice in the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in Today's World

Vatican Council II anchored justice in the universal destiny of the earth's goods: "God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, (…) created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner. Whatever the forms of property may be, as adapted to the legitimate institutions of peoples, according to diverse and changeable circumstances, attention must always be paid to this universal destination of earthly goods. In using them, therefore, man should regard the external things that he legitimately possesses not only as his own but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only him but also others" (GS 69a; cf. 12a).

The scandalous inequalities existing today are an authentic sign that this universal destiny has not been fulfilled: "although rightful differences exist between men, the equal dignity of persons demands that a more humane and just condition of life be brought about. For excessive economic and social differences between the members of the one human family or population groups cause scandal, and militate against social justice, equity, the dignity of the human person, as well as social and international peace" (GS 29c; 66a).

In this unified world an individualistic ethic is not admissible: "Profound and rapid changes make it more necessary that no one ignoring the trend of events or drugged by laziness, content himself with a merely individualistic morality. It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life (GS 30a).

The increased power of humanity demands that his social responsibility be increased in the same measure: "For the greater man's power becomes, the farther his individual and community responsibility extends" (GS 34c).

The evolution of humanity is directed towards a progressive autonomy which includes a growing responsibility: "Throughout the whole world there is a mounting increase in the sense of autonomy as well as of responsibility. This is of paramount importance for the spiritual and moral maturity of the human race. This becomes clearer if we consider the unification of the world and the duty which is imposed upon us, to build a better world based upon truth and justice. Thus we are witnessing the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined, first of all, by this responsibility to his brothers and to history" (GS 55). Thus, the universal destination of the earth's goods is not a capricious decree of God. It is based on the fact that the possibility of life on earth is linked also to the fact that life forms a system of systems. Humanity forms part of this system. The existence of each one is possible because of the co-existence of all. This dynamic structure of reality has higher value because it renders possible the simultaneous increase of autonomy for every human individual as well as of his responsibility to all. If he fails in this responsibility he does not do justice to reality. Since the form of existence of persons is moral freedom, responsibility cannot impose itself only as social pressure; on the contrary, this must also be one's own choice. For this reason, there is need for a real democracy and, even more, for a culture of democracy.

The justice of the Kingdom signifies first, our responsibility to the entire human race; second, our conviction that helping the needy is the highest form of achievement; and third, the ultimate test of our life is doing good to our enemies

This democracy does not exist. Today, the absolute liberty recognized by law is that of private property. This makes all other things relative and subordinate. The most significant application of this relativity occurs in the ambit of the so-called intellectual property, which is sheer piracy in the name of patents secured by global corporations. It is understandable that these rights exist, but while the gains obtained by this method remain so much out proportion with the effort invested, we have a right to resist it, and the political means resorted to by the States to avoid it, are an abuse of power.

The Justice of the Kingdom

For Paul, justice is the justification of sinners which God brought about through Jesus. The justice of the Kingdom mentioned by Matthew, and also by the Synoptics refers to the adequacy of God's way of acting with us, which culminated in the life of Jesus. God, in Jesus, reveals himself as the maternal Father who unconditionally forgives and who makes us his sons in his unique Son, Jesus. To follow the justice of the Kingdom is to accept the condition of being sons, trusting the Father unconditionally. Thus we are free from worrying about our life and from greed. When our freedom is freed, we can dedicate ourselves to act as the heavenly Father: doing good without any discrimination. Putting it negatively: this must lead us to de-emphasize our close set of relationships (neighbour, family, the ethnic group and political community), to privilege those in need, and not to exclude the enemy. In short, the justice of the

Kingdom signifies first, our responsibility to the entire human race; second, our conviction that helping the needy is the highest form of achievement; and third, the ultimate test of our life is doing good to our enemies. In being all this, the justice of the Kingdom becomes a radical form of living.

Original Spanish
Translation by Mary Berchmans rjm

Pedro Trigo SJ
Teologado Pedro Arrupe
Apartado 30.025
Caracas 1030-A—VENEZUELA
<trigo@gumilla.org.ve>

Bitter Paradoxes : the Cry of My Bloodstained Tears

Bienvenu Mayemba K.-B. SJ

Africa! Africa! Africa!
Open your eyes to the paradoxes and tragedies
Your ears to the bursts and explosions
Listen to the cry of my bloodstained tears
And the delirious chant of unarmed souls

Africa! Africa! Africa!
I mourn my father strangled by drunken rebels
My mother torn apart by anti-person mines
I mourn my brother lost in the dense forest as he fled from war
I mourn my sister executed with neither case nor appeal
I mourn all the dead of whom the media say nothing

Africa! Africa!Africa !
I think of all the churches burnt down or profaned
Of all the women abducted and raped
Of all those child soldiers drugged and abused
Of all my sufferings and dying
I think of all those innocents tortured and slain
Victims of murderous wars and arbitrary violence
Delivered into the hands of politicians
twisted and corrupt,
arrogant and condescending,
smug and delinquent

Africa! Africa! Africa!
Bitter are my tears
Threatened my destiny
My future dark
Dangerous my wandering
My journey perilous
My deliverance distant
My strength declining

Africa! Africa! Africa!
My dignity has been snatched by force from me
My freedom is no more than a mirage
Safety has distanced itself from my life
My life nothing more than a play, a tragedy
My destiny is covered by thick shadows
My cries shake the mountains and hills
But cannot break the silence raised by the indifference of stony hearts

Africa! Africa! Africa!
Where are you going Africa?
Which path do you walk on?
Towards which horizon?
Towards which sunset?
Which star do you see?

Africa! Africa! Africa!
You, cradle of humanity!
You, land of my fathers!
You, so full of riches!
Overflowing with resources!
You, bearer of promises!
So sensitive to the Sacred, the human and the Divine!

Africa! Africa! Africa!
Why so much misery?
Why so many wars?
Why so much violence?
So much suffering?
So many arms?
So many tears?

Africa! Africa! Africa!
Why all these political negotiations?
These violations of justice?
These acts of territorial aggression?
Why these constitutional manipulations?
This anti-constitutional corruption?
Why all these arbitrary arrests?
These summary executions?

Africa! Africa! Africa!
See other peoples!
They seek unity
They seek brotherhood
They see communion
They foster dialogue
They promise pardon
Favour reconciliation
Privilege justice
They work for peace

Africa! Africa! Africa!
See your people!
See the fruit of your bowels:
Always in conflict
Always in discord
Always divided
Always tensions
Always rebellions
Always in arms and tears
With no sense of the common good
Always like puppets

Africa! Africa! Africa!
Tell us, Africa!
When will injustice end?
When will violence cease?
When our happiness?
Our peace of mind?
Our good humour?
When our liberation?
Our transfiguration?
When will our sun rise so
That we contemplate the early morning
And celebrate the dawn
And sing of the birth of a new day

Day of Joy and Dance
Day of Truth and mutual Respect
Of Living Together without discrimination
Day of Pardon and Reconciliation
Of Dialogue and Peace
Of Human Rights and the Common Good
Day of Justice, Gaiety and Joy.

C.P. 6139—00195 ROMA PRATI—ITALY
+39 06688 06418 (fax)
sjs@sjcuria.org