

# PROMOTIO IUSTITIAE



*Editorial*

*The Passion of Mel Gibson*

*French Seafarer Priests*

*Below the Poor are the Marginalised*

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## Meeting of Assistancy Social Coordinators

Father General on Social Issues

Proceedings

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Rome 10<sup>th</sup>—16<sup>th</sup> May 2004

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## EDITORIAL

In today's world optimism is important. Asked often about the crisis of the Social Apostolate and its future, I am tempted to reply with a well-known quotation attributed to Gramsci: "Optimism of the will. Pessimism of the mind". The meeting of Assistancy Coordinators held in Rome, 10-16 May 2004, is an example of the determined effort made by all Coordinators in close collaboration with the Social Justice Secretariat to tackle an array of issues and dispel the shadows that the mind often weaves in front of our eyes.

The meeting was enlivened by the thoughts Father General shared with us. In his informal talk, with which this issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* opens, Fr. General reflects on some of the themes occasionally associated with the Faith-Justice dyad and outlines some concrete avenues which our projects and action can follow in the future. His plea to the group of Coordinators to search out and propose viable strategies shows the confidence reposed in the group and stresses the need to bring more achievable and concrete plans to the table of Provincials and Moderators.

The publication of the official 'Proceedings' of the meeting will be useful, we hope, in acquainting our readers with the main areas covered in our full agenda. Our first task was to reflect on the Data Base and the Draft Study on Jesuit Social Centres (JSCs) diligently prepared by Costanza Pagnini and Daniele Frigeri SJ. As a result of our deliberations three important documents were drafted and agreed upon: a new definition of JSCs, their lights and shadows, and our final recommendations to Fr. General. Our main goal was to provide the social sector with greater visibility and corporality. We are aware that many of these JSCs face a precarious situation for lack of trained Jesuit personnel and appropriate finance, but the study helps us to know who they are, where they are, and what steps are likely to be taken to utilize effectively the apostolic resources that the

Society has gathered so painstakingly and sensitively over the years. Our recommendations also make it amply evident that the increasing insertion of the JSCs into the governing structure of the Province and the Assistancy (including the apostolic planning) will signal the beginning of a new epoch in the Social Apostolate. The final version of the Study incorporating the Data Base should be ready by the end of November. The publication of this version will follow subsequently.

Readers will be interested, we believe, in a number of decisions taken to concretise our response to the six challenges chosen the previous year. The group also gave the green light to the future publication of a short official booklet containing the most significant documents agreed upon in our last two meetings. The booklet may establish a link with the document the 'Characteristics of the Social Apostolate' and carry forward its proposals into the new millennium. With the aim of strengthening the creativity of a young generation of Jesuit and lay partners, the group approved, in addition, a modified version of an International Advanced Workshop which will take place next September in Rome.

Though agreeing on a common text appeared at times maddeningly difficult and a waste of time, the awareness of having succeeded even partially in building up a common platform is crucially important. It is this effort of finding a common fulcrum from our valid and diverse experiences that will provide us with the necessary momentum and force to bring about new hope and alternatives to the sector. I am convinced that this way of proceeding takes us closer to the organisational forms that the new social movements are experimenting with. The problems and challenges today are so complex that we need to abandon unmovable ideological positions, isolated charismatic enterprises and internal infighting. We must rather engage in the grinding process of an inclusive dialogue

that bridges varied and, at times, opposing interests, in order to arrive at a common good. Our collective efforts, in this case a set of documents, are quite different from alternative reports that each of us would have written individually. What this shows is the power of dialogue as an instrument of change; above all, it has given us an intimate experience of the 'graced wholeness' of what Ignatius called the 'body of the Society'.

We also publish in this issue some of the reactions to the last numbers of *Promotio*. Reactions to the publication of the section 'Remembering Rwanda' have generally been positive. There have also been important critical comments. We have taken them seriously and have not published them out of respect to the wishes of the authors. We have also shared them with those who can act on them. We are grateful to all.

This issue carries two articles dealing with the theme of the Passion of Jesus according to Mel Gibson. The decision to include them in *Promotio* has been motivated by our desire to engage various 'cultural signs' of our times, one of which is suffering and violence. This increasingly unsettling topic is not only important in itself, but it affects primarily and unfortunately the lives of the poor and marginalised. They become once more the main victims of violence and they suffer its most cruel and bitter consequences.

This may be a good occasion to thank publicly many young and not so young Jesuits who, amidst tight and heavy schedules, have found the time to help us with translating the contributions received into various languages. Given the increasing costs of printing they have made possible the publication of *Promotio* in four languages. May this also be an invitation to others to follow their example.

At the end of the 'Proceedings' we publish the list of all the Coordinators present at the

meeting. It is a humble way of acknowledging their indefatigable cooperation and the inestimable effort they have made to find the will of God for the social sector in the signs of the times. It seems fitting to end these lines with an expression not only of personal gratitude, but also with the appreciation of the social sector and the whole Society for their availability and patience in fulfilling their task.

**Fernando Franco SJ**

# REFLECTING ON SOCIAL ISSUES

## INFORMAL TALK OF

### FR. PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH SJ

#### Meeting of Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate

Rome 14<sup>th</sup> May 2004

**H**earing my voice it may seem that, meeting you, I am very moved, but the truth is that I have a very bad cold, which I caught in Genoa where I was invited to go and boost the social work that they are doing. This is the famous work of St. Marcellino, to help people who have no home, and while it has existed for many years and is still doing wonderful, outstanding work, it still needs, like every effort of social work, to be encouraged and helped. I had to speak to a huge crowd, and I was very impressed to find that during my speech everyone was very silent; usually, the audience talks quite a lot when I speak!

I would like first of all to thank you for this meeting. I really believe that, as Jesuits, it is very important for the social dimension of our work to have meetings of this kind. There is no way we can come together to make a common effort except by meeting one another; it cannot be done just through letters, by email or fax. You have to meet personally and arrive at a common plan. Most especially, I am very grateful for the recommendations you have worked out as I can use them immediately in meetings with the different Provincials next week. It will be in Miami, as you know, that the Provincials of North and South America will be meeting for the first time; and there is no doubt that, thanks to the work done by some of you, social issues will be included in the well-planned programme. But there will be other meetings of Provincials as well, and it is very important for this topic to figure there. You must understand that the Provincials have many concerns and their concerns are similar to the ones here: personnel, means, planning. It can easily happen that in the final analysis social issues are not taken, as you say, seriously; with the consequence that social involvement has long remained very weak and been carried out without any coordination whatsoever.

*I am very happy with what you have emphasised in the recommendations, especially the need for clarity within the apostolic orientations of each Assistancy. This important concern is expressed when you mention the need to discuss apostolic planning and the role of the social sector in particular in the course of the Provincial Congregations, and also at the forthcoming meeting of all the Provincials next year in the last week of November 2005.*

*In the face of all this, I truly believe what you have said. I accept the picture presented by the Social Centres of an increasingly complex and global reality, and the fact that it is one on which the Social Centres, lacking an adequate articulation, have had a weak impact. But this weakness can be healed when the Centres come together to think globally, even if they have to act locally, and come up with clear projects. This same concern is mentioned when you speak about finances. Funds from international agencies make the work donor-driven. There is sometimes a mismatch between the types of projects that they are interested in supporting and those we would like to foster. I do not have to tell you that when we speak about social concerns, the reality is tremendous, very global, highly differentiated and seems often to be hopeless. It often happens that when people who deliberate about issues look at disasters in the world in the hope of doing something, there is so much that they are overwhelmed to the extent of being paralysed. This happens, for example, when we say that large sections of humanity are still below the poverty line. And what can you do? You are paralysed, and even if you want to do something, there is so much to do that action seems almost hopeless. It seems to me that that movement towards action has to come from you because nobody else will be able to do it in the Society. It is very important for the work of the Society that you help us to make choices.*

*There is an enormous field of areas in which we must act. We are not Divine Providence, as Fr. Janssens always said, but something has to emerge with the means that we have, the personnel that we have and from our specific way of proceeding. We always act as Jesuits, and in this way we make our*

choices, and from our choices spring our projects. I think this will also aid the Provincials to be more helpful in finding the means and the personnel. If someone comes and tells them all that has to be done, they can get paralysed, but if the Social Centre or Social Institute has a clear plan – ‘this is what we would like to do’ – then the Provincials too will see clearly where the train is going, and then they will take that train. If things remain vague you cannot count on their support.

I would like to stress that this is important not only for the Social Sector as such, but for social awareness in the Society as a whole, and though this has already been said at the Congregation of Procurators, I repeat a little bit of that here, that if social awareness is increasing in the Society, it is thanks to GC 32. There is not a single ministry today in the Society that feels that it has nothing to do with the social dimension, or with, if you prefer the phrase, the promotion of justice.

A parish is not a Jesuit parish unless it takes up the social responsibility of all the people living in the territory covered by the parish, a point that was especially stressed in India. Our retreat houses today are not only speaking about, let us say, the spiritual development of the person. By reading the diary of Mons. Romero who made the Spiritual Exercises, we discover that the Spiritual Exercises lead us to assume the responsibility for everything that is going badly in the world. I am referring to the historical meditation of the first week where, according to St. Ignatius, we are all, in one way or another, responsible for what is happening and for what is going wrong in our world. But on the other side, during the second week, the Lord calls us to start a new society more just, more divine, more human; there too we have a common responsibility. When Mons. Romero speaks about the social he radiates the spirit of the Spiritual Exercises.

I am very grateful that today, while visiting practically any University or a High School, we invariably hear about the social programme that they have. There was a time when Father Ellacuría said that what Jesuits were doing in some of our Universities was a mortal sin. It is indeed true that he said that, but I think that at the end, he himself saw in El Salvador that a University could also be a Social Centre, capable of educating future leaders in social awareness. I think that this

was the reason why, in Mexico, they sent out the same message by closing the famous elitist College “Patria”. We need today to move in another direction, a direction that they later discovered when they realised that handing over the education of an elite leadership to all the rightist forces of the Church would not be very responsible on our part. It is better therefore that we take in hand the responsibility of educating the leaders of the future and do what Father Arrupe always asked us to do: educate people to be men and women for others.

Going through all the ministries in the Society, it is possible to see that social awareness is growing. This year, at the request of the Provincials, we started once more to speak about poverty, (the Statutes on Poverty, a Letter on Poverty). And I believe that everybody has now discovered that the call is surely to follow our Lord as poor. But the motivation of these documents on poverty is not *merely* to preach to our treasurers, nor only to foster the practice of asceticism, but also to live in solidarity with the poor. We have discovered that all we take for ourselves is taken away from the help to be given to the poor, and that solidarity is the strongest motivation for our religious poverty. In this way, I can truly say that social awareness in the Society is increasing. There is, however another aspect: the social sector in the Society is suffering and, if we are not very careful, it could very easily disappear.

The Provincials in practically all the Provinces, even in Provinces where they have many young people, complain that leadership is not always available. A Province can have quite a lot of young men, but many of them will never be able to assume the responsibility of leadership. So far, in all the Provinces, the question is: where do we send them; what are our priorities? It is true that the educational sector is as powerful as it has always been, and it is also true that the educational sector is now aware of its social responsibility. Of all this there can be no doubt, but it can still happen, and easily happen, that the Social Sector as such disappears because nobody is sent, or, even more important, nobody is prepared in terms of skills to work in the Social Centres. Preparedness is not only a question of generosity, or of someone who knows how to raise his voice and shout. It is a question of competence. We cannot have influence in the World Bank, in the Monetary Fund, in Brussels,

or in any of these kinds of organizations if we do not come armed with competency in economics or similar fields. And so, all these men have to be prepared. I do not have to tell you that many young people are ready to start immediate action with the poor, but to go through five or six or seven years of University studies before they can go into the social field is, for many of them, too heavy a sacrifice. Still, it has to be done if the Social Sector is to prepare itself for the future.

I would like to stress what I have already said many times: without a concrete social centre in the Province, social awareness will finally decline. There has to be in the Province itself an element that constantly reminds everyone of social issues and social problems. Everybody knows this; it is impossible not to know. But to be touched by this reality you need people who are immersed in this work, and who are living not only for the poor (many will do this), but also with the poor, and in many cases, like the poor. It is they who can really move their fellow Jesuits to stay and grow in social awareness.

It is also true, as far as I can make out, that there is a generational shift in the social sector. The first Jesuits who entered this sector, as you have already mentioned, came during the time of Father Janssens. Fr. Arrupe also stressed the importance of the social sector. But this generation is now - I do not like to say this, but it is true - dying out, perhaps because they were very strong prophets, not people who worked easily together with others. With them the work also died. It is a fact that the younger generation likes to work much more as a team, greatly prefers to work together, to learn from one another, to do things together. If this is a generational shift, it will also be a shift in mentality. The first generation was the generation of the Cold War, of the Berlin wall, with Capitalists on one side and Communists on the other side; everything was good or bad, was well or badly done. You could really shout. Today the wall has been broken and everything has become very vague. And the fact that everything is not absolutely clear could easily paralyse our social activity.

Often in the Society they will tell you that we watered down the decrees of GC 32. I hope that it is not true. But what is true is that everything has become less clear and increasingly complicated. At the time of the

Cold War, the question of justice was mainly seen from a socio-economic point of view, whereas today, especially listening this morning to the issues you raised, the problems related to justice seem to be manifold. For example, the problem of terrorism seems to be, by general consent, also part of the social effort; now this is something that in the years of GC 32 nobody would have spoken about. The Province of Colombia is today strongly moved to reconciliation for peace. I believe that in the minds of those attending GC 32 this would have been considered as none of our business; only socio-economic issues mattered then. And now everything comes up: the problem of globalisation, the problem of minorities, of groupism, of women, - the last of which was strongly stressed in the last Congregation. All of these seem to be justice questions that have become very complicated and highly global. It becomes more difficult therefore to fit this new understanding of justice into the socio-economic approach that characterised justice in the documents of GC 32. This is the situation as it is now, and I really believe that your ideas, your recommendations can help us to move ahead. For this I am very grateful; it is not necessary for me to tell you that the lead has to come from you.

Are we faring well in this social area? First of all, I want to say that the 'famous problem' of Faith and Justice is disappearing even if there is still some uneasiness in the Church about the social involvement of those living a consecrated life and the involvement of Bishops and priests. We have never opposed the social commitment of the laity, but many feel that it is not our business to be involved in social issues.

I believe that we should always take the word justice very seriously. As you know, GC 32 coined the expression: "Promotion of Justice." This is difficult to translate in many languages, and even when you do, it sounds strange. 'Promotion' means, in general, to sell products. Why did the GC use this expression? First of all, to make sure that the Congregation would vote for it, because here is a typical case of what linguists call "linguistic ambiguity." Half the Congregation believed that the justice meant was the justice of the Gospel: "Be just as your Father in Heaven is just". Others believed that justice meant socio-economic justice. So, thanks to the linguistic ambiguity of the word, everybody could vote in



favour...and they did so! And why was the word 'justice' used and not the word 'charity'? The reason for this was Father Arrupe's insistence; he thought that charity is not enough. To pay people out of charity for the work they are doing is injustice; what they need, and what is right, is to receive justice, not mere charity. Furthermore, the word 'love' was thought to be so ambiguous that it was not used. Father Arrupe coined an expression – whether it is orthodox or not I cannot judge – but **he called justice the sacrament of love**. By this he meant that what we call Christian Love, Agape, is only love if it is concretely expressed in justice. And that was the reason why Father Arrupe pushed the word justice so strongly. For him, there was absolutely no problem in putting faith and justice together because faith would be a pure ideal without this sacramental concretisation of justice.

As you are aware, the relationship between the 'diaconia fidei' (the service of faith) and the 'promotion of justice' faced some problems of interpretation during GC 32. A fear was expressed that they could be seen as two parallel services in the Society.<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable, however, that Decree 4 insisted on the inseparable connection between the two.<sup>2</sup> The basis of this inseparableness is explained in various complementary ways. The Decree speaks, for instance, of the inseparable relationship existing between "conversion to the love of God and to the love of neighbour" (28); on the theological understanding of salvation as consisting of "an undivided love of the Father and of neighbour" (28); on our personal call to be "witnesses to a Gospel which links the love of God to the service of man" (31); and finally on an explicit understanding of the "promotion of justice," the "proclamation of faith", and the ministry "to lead others to a personal encounter with Christ" as "three inseparable elements of our apostolate" (51).

The emphasis of GC 32 on the inseparableness of the 'service of faith' and the 'promotion of justice' was not always maintained. Though Decree 4 also states that there exists a certain 'theological priority' in considering the mission of the Society as "the priestly service of faith" (18), the living experience of many Jesuits later confirmed and made more explicit to all of us that our faith in the Risen Christ and in the Gospel is the source of our struggle to denounce and

announce justice.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, I want to say something about the orientation taken, more especially in view of the projects and the choices you will have to make, always a very painful process. As you know, we, as Curia, are in contact with quite a lot of people who are in this sector, not only the Vatican and Cor Unum, which is like the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Vatican, but also Caritas International.

All these organizations like Missio, the Italian Conference of Bishops, Misereor, Renovabis, Adveniat, are all our benefactors; all these organizations help the Society with quite a lot of money. If you listen to them, their attitude gives us an orientation: they also make choices. If you go to them and only mention your recommendations, they will sometimes say: "We have money for this, we do not have it for that." For example, some agencies do not fund education. They may deny it, but it is a fact. Others will say that they help only non-religious projects. "We do not assist religious projects," they say, thereby making choices. But still, there are some common areas and I would like to mention these to you, especially because these will probably be discussed at a big meeting on consecrated life to be held in November of this year. Ten years after the letter of the Holy Father on Consecrated Life, more than 1000 religious, sisters, brothers and priests will come together in Rome to ask: "What are we doing?"

The first thing that comes up, but laced with many ambiguities, is **globalisation**. This is seen not so much a project, but as a way of acting in accordance with globalisation. There is a tendency, because of the ambiguities inherent in the term, to look more at the negative aspects of globalisation, disregarding

<sup>1</sup> One may observe this desire to clarify the relation between the service faith and the promotion of justice in the following text of GC 33: "Definitions alone cannot clarify the apostolic directions of our ministry. Such clarity can only come when we are faithful to the process and conditions of communal discernment and to the lived experience of religious men striving to labour with Christ in serving the Kingdom. For we will understand better how the service of faith and the promotion of justice are not two juxtaposed, much less conflicting goals, but a single commitment which finds its coherence and deepest expression in that love of God and love of neighbour to which God calls us in the One Great Commandment" (D. 1, n. 42).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, GC 32, D. 4, nn. 2, 30, 51. This unity is also expressed by linking always the two terms by the conjunction 'and' (GC 32, D. 4, nn. 7, 69, 74, 76).

<sup>3</sup> "The mission of the Society derives from our continuing experience of the Crucified and Risen Christ who invites us to join him in preparing the world to become the complete Kingdom of God" GC 34, D. 2, n. 6.

the positive sides. The simple fact that you are all here together shows the positive side of globalisation. In the Society it is very clear that we have to work together; and because the Society was universal and international right from the beginning, and because we are available to go to any place where there is a need, it is up to us to show how globalisation can really be a tremendous help in social work. It is true that the neo-liberal ideologists or the market economy are largely responsible for the negative side of globalisation and that the rich are becoming richer and the poor are becoming poorer, and that their only interest is: "Can we make profit out of it, yes or no? Can we sell it?" All other questions, whether it is good for humanity, or good for this country, are of no importance. And there certainly we have to assert the so-called prophetic commitment and stand up against this understanding of the market economy. As you also know, the Vatican, and especially the Holy Father, is coming up quite strongly in favour of an economy that is really at the service of every human being, not an economy that favours only a small section of mankind.

The second question that comes up everywhere and with multiple projects is the one that is seen as a priority of the Society: "**People on the Move**," or, if you like, the problem of 'human mobility' or 'migratory phenomena'. I do not have to stress this for we know that poverty, war, political instability, and religious intolerance drive all kinds of people to leave their homelands and move away. It is a point to remember that today to speak of refugees does not make sense if by that term we exclude the condition of undocumented people. We need to include displaced persons, all kinds of immigrants who are just looking for a better position; but all these people are on the move and they are not welcomed. I do not know exactly how it is in other continents, but in Europe a political party that is against foreigners will usually win. Not affording any kind of welcome to the immigrants is the programme followed systematically by all rightist parties, supposedly to keep a hold on their constituencies, indeed, their countries. This is somewhat hypocritical because they need them – to do all the dirty work that they themselves don't like to do. They are only too happy that people from other continents come to do it, but at the same time, they will not

recognize them as citizens possessing equal rights with other citizens. In France someone used the famous slogan: "They eat the bread of the French." But the bread of the French is made by foreigners, because the French will not start at 4 o'clock in the morning to prepare the bread to be had for breakfast by the French!

In religious life too there is a tremendous interest in people on the move. We see it in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament the gospels show that our Lord himself was 'on the move' to Egypt. Hence, it is important to know how to welcome the people coming in, how to accompany them, how to take care of those who form the majority among marginalised groups in our societies. Thus, projects in this area are a priority of the Society and we have backed them because the issue is of general interest everywhere. On these lines, I would like to say that it is always good to have our own specific way of helping them. There are all sorts of ways of helping them, no doubt, but the specific Ignatian way is to help those forgotten by others.

The third issue, which is very well known, is what we call the **promotion of justice**. It means to denounce injustice in every society and every exploitative economy in the world, in the knowledge that solidarity with the poor is an essential part of our faith. As the Gospel says, we must build up a more just world against an unjust economic system, for example in the case of the foreign debt carried by many poor countries. On this point, I like to say that while the projects may be very clear, it all depends enormously on the situation on the spot. This is really a concern not only of the Society but of societies everywhere.

There is a point that was never mentioned in the GC 32, but I now see mentioned in the second sheet of recommendations, an issue that is emerging in the Society: that point has to do with **promoting and protecting human life**. I do not think that in GC 32 they would have called this promotion of justice. As far as I know, in GC 32 nobody spoke about this, and this was considered as another area not belonging to us. However, today it is really a challenge, and I see now that some Provinces are speaking out more and more about this protection of life. For example, even in the Society we now have an AIDS network in Africa. It is true that we did not do very much at the level of the

universal body of the Society in the area of abortion, but this by no means suggests that the Society is indifferent to the issue. It is simply that until now it has not entered the category of promotion of justice. As you know, nobody spoke about it in the first drafts of GC 34; then some Jesuits grew nervous and asked whether it was no longer the case that the Society protects and defends human life; and then the text of GC 34 spoke about it.<sup>4</sup> But there is still some uneasiness because some say, 'Yes it is an issue but is it really an issue of the Society? Is it in our line to do this? Have we to take up all these problems, for instance, the issue of euthanasia?' The challenges in the field of justice are much clearer for us than in this field of defending and protecting life. We need, however, to keep in mind that many Provinces have spoken out strongly and explicitly against abortion and that the Society has strengthened the work done in the bio-ethical area.

However, we have discovered the justice dimension of protecting life when it comes to the issue of Ecology.<sup>5</sup> In GC 32 nobody spoke about ecology. However today, and this came up very strongly in India and in Africa, we believe there is injustice in attacks against the environment, against ecology. We are not in favour of ecology in the manner of our Franciscan brothers who taught us how to love nature, animals and birds; but we are in favour of ecology because it is a human right.

Finally, I want to mention one word that is heard in over and over again in many countries, that is, **pluralism**. I may be wrong, but if you listen to the Provincials of India they are greatly preoccupied with the issue of communal harmony. There is so much of casteism, groupism, ethnicism, nationalism – as in other parts of the world – that for them, communal harmony becomes an overriding issue, the most important project, so much so that matters clearly linked with, let us say, poverty, are given less priority than this issue of communal harmony. There are many projects, costing a fair amount of money, backing this issue of communal harmony. As in other parts of the world today, the movement for peace is present everywhere. This is typically an issue you will have to discuss. Some may even say: 'This is not exactly promotion of justice; we do not discover the justice dimension in peace and in

communal harmony; we are in complete agreement that other people are engaged in it, but this is not our business, nor our ideal of working for justice.' And this is something that you will have to discuss so that we can say 'We cannot do everything, we have to make choices.'

What I have mentioned are the trends prevalent practically everywhere in the world today. Should we say 'We take up all this because all this is important,' or should we say 'No, stick to the promotion of justice in the real and clear sense; if someone wants to work for peace we are in full agreement but we have other things to do.' That is a question you will have to decide and thereby help the Government of the Society. I am quite aware that it is not an easy choice.

Finally, I wish once more to thank you for all the work that you are already doing. You know that at the practical level you are responsible for increasing social awareness in the Society. And social awareness in the Society will depend on your choices, on your reflections and on your initiatives. Everything that we can do to help you is in our own interest, and so you can be sure it will be done. But many times you feel you do not get the men, you do not have the means; often we do not know where we should go, and when this happens then it is very difficult to invest – to use the language of economics – in these areas.

Thank you so much for this meeting.

<sup>4</sup> GC 34, D. 3, nn. 8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> GC 34, D. 20.

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

## OF ASSISTANCY COORDINATORS

Rome May 2004

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Assistancy Coordinators for the Social Apostolate met in Rome from 10-16 May, 2004 at the Curia<sup>1</sup> (Annexure 1).
2. The Assistancy Coordinators (ACs) dealt primarily with three main themes: a discussion of the Draft-Report on Jesuit Social Centres prepared by the Secretariat for Social Justice (SJS); an evaluation of the steps taken by the SJS and the ACs to implement decisions taken at the meeting in 2003; and a discussion of four important issues touching the social sector. In presenting this report of the meeting we follow the order of these three topics.
3. Having dealt last year with the six principal challenges facing the social sector (and the Society of Jesus), we thought it necessary to pay attention to strengthening the sector and giving it a certain 'visibility'. After clarifying the practical goals to be achieved and the challenges to be met (see Acts 2003), it seemed important to direct our attention to the instruments, that is, the Jesuit Social Centres (JSCs) through which these goals can be achieved and the challenges faced. One of the main outcomes of the meeting has been the new understanding of the 'Jesuit Social Centre' and the Recommendations submitted to Fr. General.
4. This *Proceedings* document deals primarily with the main decisions taken at the meeting and leaves to the Annexures the various prepared interventions made during the proceedings and other material used in our deliberations.
5. An important moment of our encounter was the meeting with Fr. General. His talk is being published in this issue.

### 2. JESUIT SOCIAL CENTRES (JSCs)

6. The discussion opened with a presentation of the Draft-Report on JSCs prepared by the SJS. The Draft-Report contained mainly three parts: an introduction explaining the history of JSCs with an attempt to develop a definition of the term; a description of the 306 JSCs contained in the data base; and finally an analysis of the 166 questionnaires we received prior to the meeting from JSCs all over the world.<sup>2</sup>
7. The rich discussion that ensued led the group to prepare a text **defining the JSCs anew**, to detail a set of **recommendations addressed to Fr. General**, and to suggest a new format for the final report to be prepared on Jesuit Social Centres by the Social Justice Secretariat.<sup>3</sup>

8. In attempting to widen the definition of a 'Social Centre', the group's main objective was to **strengthen the basic institutional structure of the social sector**, a feeling expressed in various ways by the participants. One spoke of contributing to "a re-thinking of the social sector by itself" and on "the need to institutionalise the sector so that internal integration is strengthened and appointments to it become easier." Another spoke of the need to "map the institutional side of the social sector." Expressing it differently, someone else mentioned the need to find a strategy that helps us "to give visibility to the sector" or "to incarnate the social sector."
9. It was equally evident from the discussion that broadening the definition of a 'social centre' might create some confusion, or dilute the social research component that characterised the original CIAS. Members of the group debated on whether to speak of 'centres' or 'institutions'. That the same dilemma may have faced the Jesuits who attended the Second International Conference of Directors of May 1987 held in Rome is evident from their title, which uses both words: 'social institutes/centres'. In the end, the idea of integrating institutions that map the social sector prevailed and the term 'centre' was used.<sup>4</sup>
10. The question also arose of whether it is valid to compare the set representing the social sector and the set of Social Centres in a Province. Overall, as a result of widening the definition of Social Centres, the new definition of the social sector suggests that the two sets, representing the social sector on the one hand, and the social centres on the other, are almost the same.
11. We may finally add some elements incorporated in the three parts of the final document approved by the group. Besides the carefully selected criteria to characterise a social centre, the first document '*Characterising Jesuit Social Centres*' (**Box I**) contains a brief history of the on-going reflection of the Society of Jesus on social centres, and the need to accept the

<sup>1</sup>The detailed agenda of the meeting has been reproduced in Annexure 1. Given the length of all the Annexures of this document it has not been possible to publish them in this issue of *Promotio*. All those interested in getting them may ask for a copy to <sjs@sjcuria.org> writing as 'subject' in the message *Annexures 2004*.

<sup>2</sup>After the meeting the data-base has been updated resulting in few changes. We have also incorporated into the analysis of Jesuits Social Centres (JSCs) all the new answers to the questionnaire that arrived after the meeting. At present, the total number of JSCs registered in the data base is **323**, and the number of answers to the questionnaire received is **213**.

<sup>3</sup>The final version of the study on Jesuit Social Centres will be published by January 2005.

<sup>4</sup>Since a few misgivings about this point have remained among two participants at the meeting, and in the interest of respecting local conditions and practices, it seems appropriate to allow each Assistancy/Region Coordinator after due consultation with Jesuits from the social sector of their respective Assistancies/Regions, to use both terms "Jesuit Social Centres/Institutions" in documents that have a national/regional audience.

diversity and flexibility of different regions and continents. This latter aspect has been included in the last section. A theme that frequently surfaced in our deliberations was the need to underline the 'dynamic' aspect of these centres. Given the rapid and profound changes in the socio-cultural, economic and political forces surrounding the centres, the need for continuous adaptation and constant discernment is of the utmost importance if the centres are to fulfil the mission that the Society and the poor demand from them. Three words may summarise the characteristics of a Jesuit Social Centre: **transformation, integration and discernment**. The institution must be oriented towards the promotion of justice (transformation); it must be integrated within the social sector (integration); and it must imbibe the Ignatian tradition of discerning the will of God for us (discernment).

### BOX 1

#### CHARACTERISING JESUIT SOCIAL CENTRES

##### (1) RATIONALE

At the second meeting of Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate we realized that over the last few decades the understanding of what constitutes a Jesuit Social Centre has undergone an important change. Fifty-five years ago, Fr. Janssens<sup>1</sup> defined a type of Social Centre as a unit which combined research and social action, and General Congregation 31 described Social Centres as carrying out "research, social education, both doctrinal and practical, and also social action itself in brotherly collaboration with the laity" (GC 31, D.32, n.4). These Social Centres came to be traditionally known as *Centros de Investigación y Acción Social*, CIAS (Centres of Research and Social Action).<sup>2</sup> Since then, in an effort to respond to new social challenges, these centres have undergone profound changes<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Janssens, *Instruction on the Social Apostolate* published on the 10th October 1949 (*Acta Romana*, 11, 1950, 710-726).

<sup>2</sup> The letter of Fr. Arrupe dated 15 January 1977 clarifies that though the promotion of justice is the responsibility of all Jesuits, the CIAS have, after GC 32, an even more important and necessary role to play in "establishing a more humane and just society" (*Acta Romana*, 17, 1978, 157).

<sup>3</sup> An international seminar on the Social Apostolate held in Rome from 2-5 June 1980 suggested a few characteristics of the Social Centre (*Promotio Iustitiae* 18, 1980, 81-124). The Second International Conference of Directors of Social Institutes/Centres was held on May 1987 at Villa Cavalotti in Rome. One of the main objectives was "to evaluate the role of the centres ...to face the new challenges that have emerged since 1980" (*Promotio Iustitiae* 35, 1986). The recommendations of this conference acknowledged the significant evolution that they have experienced. (*PJ* 36, 1987).

While affirming important elements of these centres (GC 34, D. 3, nn. 2, 20; D.5, nn. 9.8; D.13, nn. 11-13; D. 18, n. 4), GC 34 actualised the law of the Society and provided a comprehensive definition of a Jesuit Social Centre as a centre carrying out research, formation and direct social action.<sup>4</sup>

In a similar development, there have emerged, and are still emerging, new types of activities and approaches that are expressed in new forms of organization. The result of all these changes is that in various Assistancies, the same phrase 'Social Centre' refers to different types of organizations.

Keeping this in mind, we have considered it important to suggest a **NEW CHARACTERIZATION** of 'Social Centres' broad enough to express adequately the richness existing in the social sector, and simultaneously, help the Society of Jesus give an orientation to these Centres. In this new situation, the work carried out by the Centres of social research continues to be vital. Without this contribution, other activities would lose their quality and relevance. Concurrently, new forms of presence and work serve to enrich the research activity.

We hope that the characterisation of the Social Centres presented below will contribute towards

- (i) higher visibility for the identity of the social sector as a concrete response to the mission of the Society understood as the service of faith and the promotion of justice (GC 34, D.2, n. 14);
- (ii) greater institutional consistency of a sector marked by diversity and fragmentation;
- (iii) enabling the institutions of the social sector to recognize themselves as parts of the same body;
- (iv) facilitating joint action through the coordination of persons responsible for the sector in the Province or Assistancy.

<sup>4</sup> "Provinces or regions should sponsor social centres for research, publications, and social action" (*NC* 300).

## (2) CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUIT SOCIAL CENTRES

Jesuit Social Centres are characterised by the fact that they

- (i) promote justice as one of their main goals;<sup>5</sup>
- (ii) aim at the transformation of social structures by means of research, and/or formation, and/or social action.<sup>6</sup> Though not all of these three activities need to be present in each centre, close interaction among them needs to be ensured through an adequate coordinating mechanism;<sup>7</sup>
- (iii) are considered as part of the social sector or at the very least, have an explicit coordinating mechanism with it<sup>8</sup>;
- (iv) are committed to an attitude of discernment encompassing the different dimensions of the organization as it attempts to adapt to the changing reality. This adaptation is important in the following areas:
  - mission and vision, especially as they relate to our fundamental Jesuit charism (GC 32, D. 4, n. 9 and GC 34, D. 2, n. 14);
  - methodology, organizational structures and types of action;
  - selection of national and international partners;

<sup>5</sup> The term 'promote justice' can be generally interpreted as that action which denounces injustice and proposes more fair and humane alternative social arrangements. This characteristic does not require the 'promotion of justice' to be an exclusive goal and it opens the door to include, for example, semi-independent institutes or organisations within a University or any other Jesuit institution which simultaneously may have other important goals, while accepting the 'promotion of justice' as one of their main goals. Given the fulfilment of the other three characteristics such institutions would be considered as JSCs

<sup>6</sup> Centres engaged predominantly in assistential type of works will not be considered as JSCs.

<sup>7</sup> Instead of considering social research as a constitutive element, the new definition, while emphasizing the importance of research, considers centres involved in direct social action as JSCs.

<sup>8</sup> The linkage with the social sector through the Social Coordinator may exclude centres that operate outside the coordinating function of the social sector (Provincial or Assistancy Coordinator). On the other hand, it may include centres, which though not belonging legally to the Society, have accepted a well-defined coordinating role of the Provincial or Assistancy Coordinator

- openness to discern in common with other Centres of the sector and to collaboration with other sectors and institutions;
- use of intermediate social and hermeneutical tools of analysis

## (3) GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY

This deliberately broad characterization of the Social Centres takes in the heterogeneity of our institutions. In each Province and Assistancy the JSC takes a concrete organisational form which follows its own specific history and culture and grows in accordance with the level of social, political and economic development obtaining there. In each specific situation it is necessary to determine what the meaning of 'social transformation' is in that context, and which of the possible activities needs to be prioritized.

12. The second document '*Strengths and Weaknesses of Jesuit Social Centres*' (**Box 2**) was prepared by the group on the basis of the self-assessment done by the 166 Jesuit Social Centres that responded to the questionnaire.<sup>5</sup> Keeping these strengths and weaknesses in mind, the group decided to prepare a third document, '*Recommendations*' (**Box 3**), setting out some practical recommendations to support the strengths and to obviate the obstacles confronting the centres.
13. With the reports prepared by each Coordinator<sup>6</sup> in mind, the group also decided to introduce a few changes in the Draft-Report, update the data-base according to the new definition, and consider responses to the questionnaire which could not be processed before the completion of the Draft-Report

<sup>5</sup> Please see footnote 2. The strengths and weaknesses described in Box 2 continue to reflect the main concerns expressed in the new answers to the questionnaire received after the meeting.

<sup>6</sup> See Annexure 2.

## BOX 2

STRENGTHS OF THE JSCs<sup>9</sup>

We are grateful for these strengths that are at the service of the Society's mission. They will help in structuring the social sector and continue to show our commitment to be with the poor and learn from them.

## (1) AS REGARDS THEIR GOAL AND THEIR WORK

## The JSCs

- are relevant and have a positive impact;
- have played an important role in the formation of social leaders;
- are well supported by the people they serve; and
- are generally inserted among the poor.

## (2) DIVERSITY among the social centres is an asset

## (3) COLLABORATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

## The JSCs

- show a high degree of collaboration;
- offer consultancy services to NGOs and other sectors of civil society;
- contribute to the formation of social leaders;
- create a space of contact between the Society of Jesus and civil society;
- are involved with social movements.

## (4) RESEARCH

- This is undertaken by relatively few centres, but is generally well received.
- Some documentation centres have made special efforts to record and keep alive the memory of special historical events.

(5) INVESTMENT<sup>10</sup> OF THE SOCIETY IN TERMS OF

- Jesuits: about 450-500
- Collaborators and Employees: 10,000
- Annual budget: 90-100 million US \$

<sup>9</sup>The evaluation presented in this and the following section is based on the self-assessment done by 166 JSCs, included in the Draft-Report presented at the meeting of Coordinators, and was approved after a discussion.

<sup>10</sup> The figures are projections based on the sample of 166 centres.

## (6) PERSONNEL

- In many JSCs, the staff is committed and efficient.
- In a number of JSCs, lay people have proved to be highly competent directors

## 3. WEAKNESSES OF THE SOCIAL CENTRES

## (1) PERSONNEL

Many JSCs perceive the motivation and efficiency of the Jesuit and lay staff to be their main strength, but they also mention lack of Jesuit personnel as one of their main concerns:

- In some provinces Jesuits in the centres are aging and replacements are not readily forthcoming.
- In some provinces there is a lack of young and qualified Jesuits

## (2) FINANCES

- Funding for a good proportion of JSCs is unstable and insufficient.
- A large part of the funds for JSCs in developing countries comes from international agencies.
- Funds from international agencies have been decreasing these past few years, a decline that is expected to continue in the future.
- Funds from international agencies make the work of the JSCs donor-driven. Sometimes there is a mismatch between the types of projects the donors are interested in supporting, and those which the JSCs would really like to do.

## (3) INTEGRATION

- A fairly large number of Social Centres are not integrated among themselves at the Province, national and international levels.
- In some Provinces, there is lack of apostolic planning and implementation. In some cases, despite successful apostolic planning, the role of JSCs was not clearly specified.

BOX 3

RECOMMENDATIONS

We make the following recommendations to Fr. General:

- (1) As regards the strengths we mentioned above, Social Centres need to be encouraged to continue developing and enhancing them.

AS REGARDS PERSONNEL

- (2) The JSCs need to be equipped, as far as possible, with adequate and especially qualified Jesuit staff.
- (3) Considering the decline in numbers of Jesuits in social centres, some provinces might consider new organizational structures to ensure that the Jesuit character of the JSCs is maintained and fostered.
- (4) The greater role of lay people in our centres makes it necessary to put emphasis on their formation. Wherever required, adequate initiatives need to be taken to provide them with professional and spiritual formation.

AS REGARDS FINANCES

- (5) Each Province should effectively exercise its financial responsibility towards the JSCs and other institutions working with the poor. This financial assistance is understood as a way of supporting the ‘social project’ of a Province. This may be done by
  - (i) increasing the Province’s financial resources for activities with the poor, including its social ministry<sup>11</sup>;
  - (ii) sharing with its Social Centres some of the surplus of other institutions and communities;
  - (iii) setting up a development office which could assist social and pastoral centres in fund-raising.

<sup>11</sup> We use the term ‘social ministry’ in the sense in which a broad variety of social activities are referred to in some Assistancies. Some of them may fall strictly outside the ambit of the social sector.

- (6) At the Province level (and whenever appropriate at the Assistancy level), a SUB-FUND should be established within the ‘apostolic works’ fund (*ARCA*) to be used for helping Jesuit Social Centres.

- (i) This sub-fund may be used to enhance the
  - financial sustainability of the centres, especially those which will be affected by the expected decrease of funding from foreign sources;
  - independence of the centres in carrying out their mission without being dependent on the priorities set by donor agencies;
  - financial self-sufficiency of the centres for carrying out ‘core activities’;
  - commitment of the centres to the ongoing formation of the laity.

- (ii) The sub-fund for social centres in developing countries could be augmented through the special collaboration between provinces and institutions from all over the world.

AS REGARDS INTEGRATION

Social Centres, if integrated into the overall apostolic planning, can offer their resource of socio-cultural analysis and the perspective of the poor to the universal Society and each Province, and thereby help to draw an accurate picture of the situation around us. We propose to

- (7) Ensure that apostolic planning is done in all provinces. Such planning needs to emphasize the social dimension of all our works, to clarify the role of the social sector, and to include appropriate strategies to implement the provincial plan.<sup>12</sup>
- (8) Suggest that during a Provincial Congregation, an appropriate time is allocated to discuss the apostolic plan of the Province and the role played by the social sector.

<sup>12</sup> We are aware that a number of provinces have undertaken apostolic planning. In these provinces the social sector is generally well integrated.



- (9) Consider including the issue of integrating the social sector in the preparation of the upcoming meeting of Provincials in Loyola (2005).
- (10) Ask Directors (Jesuits and lay people) of JSCs, and other concerned persons to communicate to Father General matters regarding the integration of JSCs in the next ex officio letter.
- (11) Foster the practice of appointing a Jesuit with a sound knowledge of the social sector and the social situation of the country to the Provincial's council.
- (12) Ensure that social projects and Social Centres founded by individual Jesuits are, whenever possible, gradually integrated into the province mission.
- (13) Ensure that within the apostolic orientation of each Assistancy, the role and responsibility assigned to the JSCs be clearly specified.
- (14) Recommend that JSCs,
  - (i) have periodic meetings at the Assistancy level;
  - (ii) work on this document at the next Assistancy meeting; and
  - (iii) propose, if they so decide, to have a meeting of their representatives in Rome.

#### AS REGARDS THE IMPACT OF SCs ON THE REALITY OUTSIDE

- (15) We recommend that JSCs
  - (i) increase and strengthen the importance given to social research;
  - (ii) ensure that research, formation and social action are always carried out from the perspective of the most impoverished and marginalised; and
  - (iii) concentrate their efforts around the main challenges defined in 2003, and on those decided at the Assistancy level.

### 3. EVALUATION OF THE PLAN FOR 2003-04

14. After the presentation of the Annual Report by the SJS,<sup>7</sup> the ACs presented their own reports.<sup>8</sup> For brevity's sake we summarise the main conclusions reached on the various steps suggested in the *Acts 2003* as response to the 6 challenges.

#### 3.1 Global Marginalisation

15. The group welcomed the establishment of the Task Force on Globalisation-Marginalisation, which will have its first meeting in Rome on 1-6 November 2004.

#### 3.2 International Migration

16. The position adopted by the SJS of **supporting the various initiatives undertaken by various regions was endorsed**. There was no extended discussion on these topics, as the initiatives reported in the SJS Status Report seem for the moment to be sufficient. In due course we may take up the issues again to see whether additional steps need to be taken. Representatives of the Social Apostolate have been involved in various initiatives and we would like to accompany and strengthen whatever is being done at a more local level. Two initiatives are underway: the collaboration between the CPAL (Latin American Conference of Provincials) and the US Conference, and the successful efforts of the Task Force on Migration in Europe.

#### 3.3 War and conflict with special reference to Africa

17. The group decided the following:
  - (i) To **support the initiative taken by the Provincial Coordinators of Africa to hold a Seminar/Convention on this issue some time after Easter 2005 in Nairobi.**<sup>9</sup> The SJS is prepared to give any support asked for, especially in the preparation of a list of possible participants, representatives from centres, initiatives and projects from outside Africa. The coordinators will give suggestions to the SJS.
  - (ii) In explaining the context of the present wars and conflicts, the African delegate emphasized the role played by cultural (religious) and economic interests (multinationals looking for the exploitation of natural resources) in various conflicts. This latter theme became the topic of an interesting discussion, to be dealt with later in this report. A future issue of *PJ* will carry a debate on terrorism and the war on terrorism. Coordinators will provide SJS with the names of possible authors.

<sup>7</sup>See Annexure 3.

<sup>8</sup>See Annexure 4.

<sup>9</sup>The final dates have yet to be decided.

### 3.4 Ecology

18. The report on the challenges presented in the Acts 2003 asked the SJS to facilitate the creation of two networks or platforms. The group reflected on the situation of existing networks in Latin America, South Asia, USA, Canada and Africa, and decided on the following plan for 2004-5.
- (i) Identify better all the groups working on issues of ecology and prepare a data base. It may be useful to 're-visit' the document published by the SJS, '*We live in a broken world*', contact the persons who contributed to putting together the report, and examine the need to develop some aspect in greater detail.
  - (ii) Together with this effort and taking into account the expertise of the organizations and Jesuits named in the above document, the SJS will try to assess the need for, and chances of, a future network and identify the areas that could become the focus of the network. Some likely areas are: the 'spirituality of creation', the GMO controversy, coherence of our works and communities with environmental concerns, natural resources, and health. As mentioned by one participant, the theme of health is treated better by other religious institutions and may fall outside the scope of the Social Apostolate.
  - (iii) The SJS will prepare an issue of *PJ* on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of *We live in a broken world*. The original contributors (and possibly others) could be asked to respond to the question: Where do we stand now, five years later?

### 3.5 Social Movements

19. The Jesuit participation at the World Social Forum in Mumbai (India) was seen as very positive for the South Asian Assistancy. It seems important, however, to ascertain the opinion of Jesuits from other Assistancies who participated at the Forum. The SJS has made a modest effort in this direction by publishing an article in *Promotio Iustitiae* (82, 2004/1) by a participant from Latin America.
20. The delegate from Brazil announced that the next WSF will be held in Porto Alegre. The dates have been officially announced: January 26-31, 2005. In a recent letter, the organisation of the WSF states that a new proposal has been accepted to establish more 'inter-linkage' and 'aggregation' among the different events. Jesuits from the Brazilian provinces have decided, in principle to participate in the event and all the Coordinators from Latin America have agreed to support them.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.6 Governance

21. During the meeting a proposal for carrying forth the network on governance and democracy was presented, together with a detailed plan of action for the coming six months. Instead of creating a new network, the proposal aims at **strengthening and enlarging the already existing IJND working group on governance**. Alboan (the Bilbao-based Jesuit NGO coordinating the IJND working group on governance) has agreed to take the lead of this project. With the support of the SJS it has drafted an introductory concept paper illustrating the rationale and the objectives of a strengthened governance working group and started informal consultations with the remaining two IJND working group members. Next it will identify, in collaboration with the Assistancy Coordinators, potentially interested Jesuit-related institutions. These centres will have to show a definite and clearly defined interest in governance-related topics. It will, then, circulate a "governance working group" concept paper that will be the basis for discussion during a seminar that Alboan is planning to organise before the end of the current year.<sup>11</sup> During the seminar representatives of participating JSCs will discuss in detail the underlying scope, activities and the operational procedures of the working group.

### 3.7 Additional Challenges

- (i) Two proposals were made to expand the list of the 'challenges': the issue of fundamentalism (South Asia), and the defence of life. It was decided not to extend the original list of 6 challenges on the grounds that the theme of fundamentalism and cultural pluralism is an important element of the challenge of violence and war as well as of governance and participation; and the defence of life forms an integral part of the concern for the environment, the causes and victims of war and terrorism and the global process of marginalisation.
- (ii) An issue of *PJ* will take up the question of human dignity and inflicted pain.

### 3.8 Advocacy

22. After the presentation of the Assistancy Reports it became clear that the **theme of 'advocacy' is of great importance** for many Assistancies. With this need in mind, the following proposals were made.

<sup>10</sup>At a meeting of all Provincial Coordinators of the Social Apostolate in July 2004 a decision was taken to collaborate with the proposal of *Caritas Internationalis* and to cooperate with IJND in organising a joint seminar at the WSF.

<sup>11</sup>The first meeting of this group will be held on 11-12 November at Loyola (Spain).

- (i) The Coordinator from the US offered the services of his office for advocacy with the (US) government, corporations and the UN. Details may be clarified with him through email.
- (ii) The Latin American Assistancies are in the process of establishing a Human Rights Antenna in Brussels.
- (iii) For Europe the reformulation of the role of OCIPE remains an important task. It could become an instrument for advocacy at the EU level.
- (iv) The SJS offers its help to the African Assistancy in the effort to develop the necessary preconditions of successful advocacy (gathering of information, communication inside Africa, opening of communication channels elsewhere, etc.).
- (v) It would be helpful if the moderator of the African Assistancy could take an official stance on the question of advocacy, especially on the possibility of an African Jesuit in Brussels entrusted with the task of lobbying.

### 3.9 War and Terrorism

- 23. During the discussion on our response to the challenges, and especially to the wars and conflicts that threaten the stability of the African continent, we spent considerable time reflecting on two issues.
- 24. The first relates to the role that various economic interests (multinationals) have in gaining access to the various natural resources of the continent. It may not be entirely possible to discuss the causes of these wars and the widespread traffic of arms without analyzing the competing claims by outside economic forces to these natural resources (oil, minerals, timber, and even water). There is a rich fund of documented evidence regarding the role these interests have played in Angola, R.D.C., Rwanda, and now in the countries of East Africa.
- 25. The second relates to the new global phenomenon of terrorism and the concern with national and international security. Though there are reasons for concern regarding the loss of innocent life, the manner in which the word 'terrorism' is increasingly applied in all continents to describe social struggles is also a matter for concern. At the same time, there is reluctance, as John Paul II has often remarked, to look for the ultimate causes of these acts of terrorism. If most of those involved in armed conflicts are simply labeled 'terrorists', the process of dialogue to find a peaceful solution becomes almost impossible, for the simple reason that 'one does not negotiate with terrorists'. This attitude has increasingly led to armed and military repression as a solution. We are worried because this may be an easy way to penalize social protests.

## 4. ISSUES OF THE SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

- 26. The agenda of the meeting<sup>12</sup> listed four issues related to the Social Apostolate for discussion: the government of the Society and the Social Apostolate; the Faith-Justice dyad; the relation between the intellectual apostolate (Universities) and the Social Apostolate; and the follow up of the 'Characteristics'. For lack of time it was decided to leave out the theme of the relationship between the intellectual and the social apostolates. After a moment of discernment, the group focused its attention on the following issues: structures of the social sector; formation; the dyad Faith-Justice; the future of the document 'Characteristics', and a brainstorming session on the 'Advanced Programme/Workshop' proposed by SJS. We take up these issues in this order.

### 4.1 Structures of governance in the social sector

- 27. After hearing the three presentations on this issue<sup>13</sup> and the discussion that followed, two things became clear: first, the most important issue was intimately related to job-description, and the role played by the Coordinators and the Commissions; second, given the different histories of the Social Apostolate and the perceived needs and priorities in each Assistancy, it seemed necessary to examine separately the situation in each Assistancy or region. We divided ourselves into various groups to map the role and the job-description, and the actual roles of Assistancy Coordinators and the corresponding role of Provincial Coordinators and the Commissions in each Province.<sup>14</sup>
- 28. It was also clear that there was a need for re-adjustment at the Province and Assistancy levels in tune with the changes taking place at the global level of governance in the Society: the existence of the Conference of Latin American Provincials (CPAL), the Conference of European provincials, and the recent contacts between the South Asian and East Asia and Oceania Assistancies.<sup>15</sup> Given the different situations of the social sector in the Provinces it was thought useful to distinguish between the role of the Coordinator and of what was called 'link-person'. The latter seemed necessary in a situation where, for various reasons, the social sector does not formally exist.

<sup>12</sup> See Annexure 1.

<sup>13</sup> See Annexure 5.

<sup>14</sup> See Annexure 5.

<sup>15</sup> It was also suggested at the meeting that in the context of the dynamics of today's world, it seems somewhat misplaced that the Canadian provinces continue to form part of an European Assistancy and that French- and English-speaking Jesuits working in the Caribbean remain with no formal linkages with the CPAL.

29. At the end of the discussion on this topic it was agreed that each Assistancy Coordinator, in the course of the year 2004-5, would prepare a short document stating/clarifying

- (i) the structure of their Assistancy in terms of Coordinators/Link-persons;
- (ii) a minimal job description of the AC; and
- (iii) the relationship of the Provincial Coordinators with the AC.

#### 4.2 Formation

30. The document *Acts-2003* made a number of important observations on the perceived attitude of young Jesuits towards the Social Apostolate and proposed some recommendations to deal with this situation.<sup>16</sup> The group **reiterated the same preoccupations** and expressed them in the following points.

- (i) One perceives, in general, that young Jesuits are less attracted to the Social Apostolate.
- (ii) The motivation to live the option for and with the poor, which is often a motivation to join the Society of Jesus, is sometimes lost during the formation years.
- (iii) There is a need to support community life-styles and acts of Jesuit presence that enable the vital contact with the poor. Young Jesuits need to be accompanied closely by the government of the Province as well as by the Coordinators of the Social Apostolate. In this manner the experience with the poor becomes more meaningful.
- (iv) It is necessary to examine the manner in which the Social Apostolate may enhance its presence during the process of formation and in all its dimensions (spiritual life, studies, and apostolic experiments).
- (v) A sound preparation is indispensable for work in the social sector, and this implies the study of social sciences.
- (vi) Members of the social sector need to be ready to accompany young Jesuits in the process of becoming closer to the social sector.

31. In the light of these points a proposal was made to undertake, at the Assistancy (or regional) level, a **study of the relationship between formation and the Social Apostolate** comprising two areas: an examination of what is being done during the various formation stages, and an inquiry to be undertaken among young Jesuits to understand their point of view. This study would be conducted with the

cooperation of the General Councillor for Formation, and the results of the study could be discussed at our next meeting in 2005.

32. The above proposal was generally accepted and a number of suggestions were made. The inquiry may include not only young Jesuits but also the formators. The methodology of the inquiry should avoid using questionnaires and employ the method of interviews. We need to emphasize throughout the need to listen to young Jesuits and perceive their sensibility. We need to approach the exercise in a “listening mood” and without preconceived judgements.

33. It was decided to ask the SJS to take up this suggestion in consultation with the General Assistant for Formation.

#### 4.3 The Faith-Justice dyad

34. After listening to the three presentations on the issue,<sup>17</sup> the group went into a lively discussion. The following **points** were made in the discussion.

- (i) We may fall into the trap of dealing with this issue only from a theological perspective. It is necessary to **incorporate the experiential dimension** which in general is not promoted enough because we do not come together. Developing the ‘spirituality’ of this sector is related to this.
- (ii) We need to be **careful with the language** we use, for example the expression ‘a faith that does justice’. We have to become aware of the various ways in which the language of ‘justice’ is a block. It may be more important to centre our discussion on the dignity of the human being.
- (iii) We are facing a situation in which there has been a **sea-change in the conceptual understanding of both ‘faith’ and ‘justice’**. While there has been a gradual extension of the areas covered by the concept of justice (cultural and inter-religious issues, gender, the environment, etc.), the dimension of ‘faith’ seems to be shrinking (faith becomes individualistic, personal and self-centred).

<sup>16</sup>It was specifically mentioned that during the formation process the sensitivity of young Jesuits to social issues “seems to be lost and/or replaced by other apostolic interests” (55). Apostolic experiments “are seldom accompanied by reflection and analysis” (55). Furthermore it was mentioned that “we must look at ways in which the capacities of young Jesuits to undertake social analysis can be developed and strengthened” (56). This is the responsibility of all. In the set of recommendations it was proposed that more young Jesuits be appointed to the Social Apostolate, that those working in the Social Apostolate be ready to accompany young Jesuits and bring them closer to our apostolate (63). The numbers in brackets refer to the document ‘Challenges and Situation’, *Promotio Iustitiae* 80, 2003/4.

<sup>17</sup> See Annexure 7

- (iv) We need to take into consideration the **increasing influence of the charismatic movement** in many of the old Basic Christian Communities in Brazil. The latter face a decline. What is of greater concern is that many of these evangelical churches have been promoted by neo-liberal forces and seem uninterested in taking a stand on this issue.
- (v) We need to **examine the faith-justice dyad in different cultural settings**. In Africa, for example, one may connect this idea to a biblical tradition of peace, harmony, transformation, life, dignity, the common good (the earth as common patrimony), and reconciliation.
- (vi) In East Asia one notices the **development of powerful lay movements**, for example, 'Couples for Christ', who focus on the family and some of whom have moved into social work. They are able to capture the heart and imagination of people, and know how to use symbolic language effectively.
- (vii) In Eastern Europe, the term still sounds **strange and unclear**. This is complicated by the fact that the young are losing contact with the Church and hence the term 'faith' is losing relevance. The situation may be summed up by the following words: 'to believe without belonging and belong without believing'.
- (viii) From the **experience of Latin America** the following remarks emerged:
- There seems to be a process of intellectual rationalisation.
  - The faith dimension always has had a commitment to the poor. A spiritual experience that does not concomitantly have a projection towards the community is not authentic. The faith-experience cannot become a 'place of withdrawal', a 'refuge', a 'hiding place'.
  - We have also to acknowledge that in the past 'faith' was neither an instrument, nor the engine of our social efforts.
  - We have also to recognise the great weakness shown by some Jesuits vis-à-vis the temptations of power and money. They were finally deeply hurt by pride and arrogance. Inasmuch as faith aims at transforming and converting the heart of each person, it does not become purely personal and self-centred. We must be clear that many times, we have masked the psychological with political reasons, and we have experienced frequent cases of personal

rivalries that have destroyed a group.

- What seems to be important is to **experience the God that does justice**. The practice of the Spiritual Exercises as a discourse does not change anything. At the same time, we need to be committed not for the sake of a political ideology but because of a spiritual experience.

35. Since there was a general consensus regarding the need of a new dynamic to actualise the Faith-Justice expression, at the end, the group decided to **recommend the following plan** of action.

- (i) **Appoint a sub-group** among Assistancy Coordinators that may work in collaboration with some social centres and the SJS to engage in the following:

As regards '**Justice**'

- 'globalise' the concept of 'justice' so that it may better comprehend aspects of the reality outside;
- integrate in the term other aspects (environment, culture, etc)
- focus it towards the concept of 'global harmony'.

As regards '**Faith**'

- develop the rich spirituality of Jesuits working in the Social Apostolate;
- give greater importance to the lived experience of Jesuits

As regards **cultural differences**: make an effort to understand the dyad 'faith-justice' from the context of emerging cultures.

- (ii) Propose the **publication by the SJS of a book based on the 'narratives' of Jesuits from all over the world recounting their life-experience** of commitment to a faith that does justice. These narratives could be reflected upon by a group of Jesuits with experience in Jesuit spirituality.

- (iii) Some Social Centres could be asked to propose new themes for reflection in the area of Faith-Justice.

#### 4.4 The future of the document '**Characteristics**'

36. The three presentations on the topic<sup>18</sup> broadly reflected the opinion of the entire group. The discussion brought certain urgent needs to light. The following reflects the decisions taken by the group.

- (i) The document '*Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus*' (henceforward

<sup>18</sup> See Annexure 8.

‘Characteristics’) was published in 1998 by the SJS as a “working draft,”<sup>19</sup> and a definitive version was expected to be published by early 2000. For various reasons this final project could not be completed.

- (ii) The ‘*Characteristics*’, the result of a sustained and generous effort on the part of Fr. Michael Czerny, the SJS, and many other collaborators, **was hailed as a very positive step in the development of the Social Apostolate**, has been discussed very profitably in many Assistancies and Provinces and generated a considerable amount of reflection and self-assessment. No less important is the role played by the ‘*Characteristics*’ in bringing to the fore the variety and richness of the social sector, and in attempting to structure and strengthen it. Given the diversity of circumstances and challenges faced by the social sector all over the world, it is also natural that the final outcome of this process of reflection has been uneven in all Assistancies.
- (iii) The unanimous opinion is that, at this point of time, **there is no need to bring out a “definitive” or “final” version of the text**. The text in its present form represents an important stage in the development of the Social Apostolate after the Naples Congress, and may be profitably used by all. Given the marked differences in the development of the social sector across Assistancies and regions, and the rapid pace of socio-cultural, economic and political changes, it does not seem appropriate to engage ourselves in the preparation of a ‘new’ version of the ‘*Characteristics*’. It is also not feasible to prepare a document for the Social Apostolate which may be perceived as having, in some sense, a normative character.
- (iv) After the publication of the ‘*Characteristics*’, the SJS brought out the ‘*Reflections on Ecology*’ (1999), and sometime later Fr. General published a letter on the Social Apostolate (2000). Two years later, the SJS published the ‘*Guidelines on Jesuit Networking in the Social Area*’ (2002). All these are precious documents that mark the route traversed by the Social Apostolate and reflect faithfully the new challenges and difficulties it has faced.
- (v) The annual meetings of the Assistancy Coordinators in 2003 and 2004 have made an effort to take this process of discernment forward. ‘*Acts-2003*’ set down six global challenges facing the Social Apostolate (and the Society), proposed some steps to be taken by way of response, described briefly the main characteristics of the Social Apostolate, and

finally, reflected on the lights and shadows of the social sector. The document *Proceedings-2004* gives an account of the main themes discussed this year. By providing a new and broader definition of Jesuit Social Centres, and preparing a set of recommendations to support their strengths and obviate their difficulties it has attempted to give more institutional visibility to the social sector.

- (vi) It has, however, been felt that these new steps taken by the group of Assistancy Coordinators and the SJS representing the Social Apostolate of the universal Society need to be brought out in the form of an **Official Document**, preferably introduced by a letter of Fr. General, explaining the new steps taken, clarifying our way of proceeding, illuminating the goal towards which we are moving, and giving some ‘official’ status to the advances made. We are of the opinion that in this swiftly changing environment this act of taking stock of where we are, and of discerning the way ahead helps us to be better prepared to become “servants of Christ’s mission” (GC 34, D. 2, n. 1).

#### 4.5 A proposed ‘Advanced Programme/Workshop’

- 37. The group discussed a proposal presented by the SJS to gather a number of Jesuits and lay persons actively involved at senior levels in the Social Apostolate (and Social Centres) to reflect on a current issue, develop adequate analytical skills, foster the ability to look creatively for shared strategies, and strengthen the linkages between Jesuits and lay collaborators. The proposal was accepted but the group suggested important modifications in the content and methodology.
- 38. Keeping in mind the new challenge of war, conflict, terrorism, and their hidden cultural and economic causes, it has been decided to propose the topic of **‘War and Conflict: Cultural and Economic Interests.’**<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.6 Next meeting

- 39. Three questions were put for the group to consider: when and where to celebrate the next meeting, and second, the most appropriate composition of the group. The following decisions were taken and proposed to the SJS for their consideration.
  - (i) It seems fruitful to have a **third meeting next year of 4-5 days** to bring to a close the special

<sup>19</sup> “Since the current version of **Characteristics** is a working draft... A definitive edition of **Characteristics** is expected in early 2000” The *Characteristics*, Rome 1998, (inside cover).

<sup>20</sup> See Annexure 9.

efforts that have been made to give direction and strength to the social sector. The dates will, in all likelihood, be during April-May 2005.

- (ii) While grateful for the offer made of holding the next meeting in Manaus (Brazil), it seemed more convenient **to have it in Rome**.
- (iii) In order to achieve a better balance and to

follow more closely the principle of **one participant per Assistancy**, it was decided that the Assistancy of Southern Europe will send only one representative. In the case of Latin America (two Assistancies) a consultation will be held with the Coordinator of the Social Apostolate at the CPAL.

#### BOX 4

##### PARTICIPANTS

NAMES	PROVINCE	RESPONSIBILITY
Antoine Berilengar	AOC	Coordinator of AFR
Jorge Julio Mejia	COL	Coordinator of CPAL
Rafael Moreno Villa	MEX	Assistent to the CPAL Coordinator
Paulo Sérgio Vaillant	BAM-BAH	Coordinator BRA
Javier Arellano Yanguas	LOY	Coordinator ESP
Christopher Boles	BRI	Coordinator of EOC
Francesco De Luccia	ITA	Coordinator of ITA
Andreas Gösele	GER	Coordinator of ECE
Robin Schweiger	SVN	Coordinator of EOR
Roberto Yap	PHI	Coordinator of ASO
Joseph Xavier	MDU	Coordinator of ASM
James Stormes	MAR	Coordinator of USA

# COMMENTARIES

## “THE PASSION” OF MEL GIBSON:

### BETWEEN THE BAROQUE AND THE BARBARIC

Fabricio Alaña E SJ

**B**aroque, as I understand it, was the predominant artistic style in Europe from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its chief characteristic of combining opposite elements in a passionate fusing of spirit and matter was expressed in architecture, painting, sculpture. In this encounter spirit seduces and subdues matter, demanding the maximum from matter by way of expression; literally making it burn in inaccessible and audacious forms. The Baroque *Christs* are expressive of a total and painful annihilation. There are also some who see in the Baroque an “extravagant and ridiculous error.”

By Barbaric I mean representatives of those peoples of the 5<sup>th</sup> century who invaded the Roman Empire, people whose strategies of domination were characterized by violence and strength. But ‘barbarian’ or ‘barbaric’ also has the connotation of excellent, attractive, suggesting awe, astonishment and surprise.

*The Passion by Mel Gibson, has much of the baroque and much of the barbaric*

For me, and this is my modest opinion (I am not a cinematographic expert), my first impression on seeing the film of the Passion by Mel Gibson, was that it has much of the baroque and much of the barbaric. There is no doubt that technically it is a good film; there are some scenes which certainly make an impact on the spectator,

and even invite us to enter imaginatively into the scene. But it is not easy to interpret what Mel Gibson intended, because if he wanted to render homage to the Christian Faith, he could have worked more to produce a better film and offered the spectator more elements of discernment and reflection on such questions as: Why does the Lord die? What does this have to do with my life? These are key questions that go by in brief phrases copied exactly from the Gospels. That is why I can say that the film does not take seriously the **theological question of the Passion.**

The theological question of the Passion is something which requires greater, deeper treatment, and this the film does not achieve. At the end I ask myself: who really dies in the Passion: Jesus the man or Christ God? So much pain and so much barbarism, typical of the films which Mel Gibson has produced, (“Brave Heart” above all), point to a preoccupation in the Producer- Director; it is clear that this is his vision of Christ the Saviour. The Roman soldiers did not seem to be Roman soldiers, but were rather like the barbarians who invaded Europe, or

perhaps the protagonists of “Brave Heart.”

Theology asks itself, ‘How does God save us’ and arrives at the answer that this can only be done in a human manner, by “carrying our sins” humanly, like a human being. There is no doubt that Jesus suffered and He is the Son of God who saves us by the suffering which He assumes for our salvation in the Passion; this can only be by what is, humanly speaking, bearable. On the contrary, we will be going back to the ancient interpretations of the supernatural against the natural. The film prefers a traditional interpretation of the Passion, that of the expiatory death. By presenting on the screen what one normally reads in the Gospels, he leaves open only a literal interpretation: things happened thus and there is no more to it. And this is dangerous, because it can arouse anti-Semitism in stressing the role of the Jewish religious authorities as protagonists and silencing the prophetic actions of the historical Jesus which led him to risk his life.

The question remains open. Perhaps the believer can ratify his faith in a God who suffers, yes, in seeing the brutality of his people, but who invites us to hope. The final scene is well done, indicating that Jesus emerges alive.

Original Spanish  
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## CROSS AND VIOLENCE<sup>1</sup>

Jorge R. Seibold SJ

### About Mel Gibson's "The Passion of Christ" and the bloody terrorist attacks in Madrid

**W**orldwide reaction to the terrible terrorist attacks in Madrid which left hundreds dead and wounded, and to Mel Gibson's recent film "The Passion of Christ" with its images of the cruelty unleashed on the body of Jesus before his death on the Cross, together bring to the fore the full horror of violence in our modern world. It is not merely a question of suffering – that is as old as man himself – but one of arbitrary and subhuman violence that falls on innocent people and crushes them. This violence is present in both Gibson's film and the events in Madrid. The victims are not only those who actually fall in a terrorist attack but indeed the whole of humanity. The banner carried by the young in the demonstration in Madrid the day following March 11, proclaiming "We were all travelling on that train" (*La Nación*, Saturday March 13, front page) says it all.

But we may advance a little in understanding the mystery of Christ's Cross through the extreme violence suffered not only by Christ in his own body but also by all those who share this violence and pain with him. The full redemption of such pain and violence will only be possible in a new dispensation of pure Love, one that Christ fulfilled with his life, death and resurrection, and which those who wish to follow in his footsteps must make their own. It leads to the final setting-up of the Kingdom where all violence and all structures that subject and enslave any human being will be wholly eradicated. A glance at the history of the Church will help us understand how she represents the Mystery of the Cross and the crucified, and the close link between the Mystery of the Cross and its many historical manifestations through time.

### The Cross as an instrument of punishment

The cross was probably introduced and used as a means of punishment and execution by the Persians long before the time of Christ. Later it was adopted by the Greeks and Romans who introduced it into Palestine. The Jews were more accustomed to execution through stoning, a method they used to kill Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 7, 58). In the Roman world it was customary to scourge the condemned to weaken them and force them to carry the crossbar or "patibulum" on their shoulders to the place of execution. Jesus in all likelihood went through this process. At the place of execution, nails were driven through the hands and feet to the cross to which they were tightly bound so the body would not be ripped apart. There, totally naked, they remained hanging, until they were finally finished off by having their legs broken; the Roman soldiers did this to the two criminals crucified with

Jesus, but seeing that Jesus was already dead, they only pierced his side with a lance (Jn. 19, 34-36).

For the Romans death on a cross was an atrocious, degrading and scandalous act. They were exempt from such punishment through being citizens unless the gravity of their crime had earlier deprived them of their citizenship rights. Cicero wrote: "even the very name of the cross should be far, not only from the body of Roman citizens, but also from their thoughts, eyes and ears."<sup>2</sup> Such was the horror produced by the mere sight of the cross.

### The Cross of Jesus in the gospel narratives and apostolic tradition

The crucifixion of Jesus is unanimously vouched for by all the scriptural sources of the New Testament, by the four Gospels as well as the Acts, several apostolic letters and the Apocalypse. Nevertheless the facts cannot be reconstructed in complete detail, for example, the kind of cross Jesus carried and was crucified on, whether it was it T shaped, a Latin cross, or some other kind of cross.

Neither do the accounts of his death give evidence as to whether he was nailed to the cross, though in the resurrection narratives Jesus appears with his hands, feet and side pierced (Jn.20, 25), which leads one to suppose that Jesus was executed in the Roman manner. More than this is not known.

But beyond these facts, what was central for the first witnesses of Christ's Death and Resurrection was the meaning that the Cross of Jesus Christ soon acquired; very quickly it was seen not as an instrument of punishment but as a sign of salvation.

Rather than recount details of the Cross or the crucifixion, the evangelists were more interested in giving their own salvation view of the passion events. John and each of the synoptics, Matthew, Mark and Luke, had his own view of the events and were concerned to emphasise certain aspects of the Lord's passion. Thus, for example, Luke was interested in underlining the sense of conversion produced by Christ's Cross. Matthew and Mark took pains to stress the iniquity of the judgement against Jesus who at each moment appears as just and innocent, abandoned by his own, persecuted and condemned by his enemies and even left in the greatest solitude by his Father in the supreme moment of giving his life on the Cross for love of Him and mankind (Mt 27, 46; Mk 15,34).

John's gospel presents the death of Jesus as the manifestation of his "glory". Jesus "raised on high" will attract all towards Him (Jn 12, 32). Jesus' arrest in the garden of olives, his betrayal by Judas, and his successive appearance before the Jewish tribunal of the High Priest

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*For the Romans death on a cross was an atrocious, degrading and scandalous act*

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*For the first witnesses it was seen not as an instrument of punishment but as a sign of salvation*

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<sup>1</sup> We publish a few sections of the original article which analyses in detail the history of the symbol of the cross. Those who wish to read the Spanish original may find it at <sjs@sjcuria.org>.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *Pro Rabirio*, 5, 16.

and the Roman tribunal of Pilate, turn his trial into a genuine enthronement. His very crucifixion is a sign of the glory and dignity that will accompany Jesus in his last moments. The Cross is no longer an instrument of cruel punishment, but an instrument showing God's unimaginable love.

The disciples found it very hard to accept that Jesus should take the way of the Cross in obedience to his Father. Aware of this difficulty, Jesus began right from the middle of his ministry to speak ever more clearly of this Mystery of pain and suffering bound to his mission of love (Mk 8, 31; Mt 16, 22s; Lk 9, 22). But the disciples failed to understand his teaching (Lk 9, 45; Mt 17, 22; Mk 9, 30-32). Hence the consternation and disillusion they suffered when they witnessed the events that led to the arrest, judgement, condemnation, execution and death of their Lord and Master. Still less did they understand that this way of the Cross, shown by the Master, must be theirs as well (Mk 8, 34; Mt 10, 38; 16, 24; Lk 9, 23; 14, 27). Only with the Resurrection of Jesus and the light of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost would the disciples understand that this way of the Cross suffered by Jesus and shared by them was truly a way of love leading to eternal Life and the Kingdom.

For his part, Paul, converted on the road to Damascus, exploited this new understanding based on faith and make of the Mystery of death on the Cross and resurrection the supreme manifestation of Christ's love in obedience to his Father (Rom 5, 6ss; 8, 32ss; Fil 2, 6-11). Paul, challenged by pagan wisdom and the hostility of Jewish communities refusing to accept Christ as the Messiah, fearlessly proclaimed a "crucified Christ", the new wisdom of the Christian, the "madness" of the pagans and "scandal" of the Jews (1 Cor 1, 18-25). In the same way, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews sees in Christ the supreme priest who doesn't make an offering outside himself but makes Himself the offering which in one act purifies the sin of all and unites them to God (Heb 2, 10; 4, 14ss; 5, 7ss; 19, 1-18).

This saving doctrine of Christ's Cross, he says, will have visible effects on the conduct of the faithful. For Paul, baptism has produced a new creature. This enables him to say: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2, 19ss). This already implies a radical change of life. The "old man", with all his concupiscence, has been "crucified" thanks to Christ's Cross, and the "new man" has been born through the force that comes from his resurrection (Gal 5, 24; Rom 6, 1-11; Col 2, 12ss).

Just as the paschal mystery operates all the time in Christ, so in the same way the Christian should allow Christ to die and rise to life continually in him. Paul will say that he carries on his body the "marks" of Jesus (Gal 6, 17), and even that his own sufferings "make up all that still has to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col 1, 24). This is the doctrine with

which Paul already lays the foundations of the mysticism of the Cross, widely accepted afterwards through the history of the Church. The unique characteristic of this mysticism places Love at the centre of divine and human life, above suffering and pain. This development allows the Christian to reach a life full of the Love of God and neighbour, so beautifully expressed in the hymn to Charity (1 Cor 13).

This following of Jesus in his passion gets more accentuated when the Church has to pass through periods full of contradictions and persecution. Then the example of Jesus becomes a source of strength, encouraging the Christian not to weaken in following the Master (Heb 12, 2-3; 1 Pe 2, 21ss).

### **The Cross in the modern contemporary world**

In these modern times the human subject is valued in his/her totality, not excluding the corporal dimension. They are times of freedom and of the inner being of the subject, and such cultural change brings new and suitable discoveries referring to the Mystery of the Cross. In the 17th and 18th centuries, devotion to the Cross acquired intimate dimensions of reparation which flowed from the tradition of venerating the holy wounds of Jesus' body, his blood, his face and especially his open side, in the Mystery of His Sacred Heart.

The impiety of modern times in which laicism bred indifference, even opposition, to religion and the Church, was the background which favoured development of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, as revealed to St Margaret Mary Alacoque in France in the middle and end of the 17th century. From this perspective, Christ in his historical passion not only received insults and blows then on behalf of human beings, but continues to receive them even now. Hence the need to approach Christ's Heart to console it and make reparation for these wrongs.

But this personal and intimate interpretation of Christ's Cross leads to a reparation expressed mystically in relation to the Crucified is also reflected in actions of solidarity with the poor who suffer in their bodies the same suffering as Christ on the Cross. Such was the understanding behind the charitable actions of St Vincent de Paul (+1660) in helping the poor who sought shelter from the fierce winter under the bridges of Paris.

Sympathising with Christ now means approaching the poor and serving them as Jesus himself recalls in his teaching on the final judgement: "For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me..." (Mt 25, 31-46). The pain of Jesus now begins to be seen and come alive in the most poor and needy.

The Cross is not a symbol that records only the suffering and love of Christ. Anyone who suffers shares in Christ's suffering and deserves our compassion, help and love. This attitude of solidarity became increasingly

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*The Cross is not a symbol that records only the suffering and love of Christ. Anyone who suffers shares in Christ's suffering and deserves our compassion, help and love*

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stronger in the 18th and 19th centuries when the industrial revolution led to inequity and injustice for by the proletariat, and in the 20th century it has spread to entire peoples living in abandonment and misery in Latin America, Africa and Asia. This has led to the discovery of a mystique of Christian solidarity as recently lived out by the Blessed Mother Teresa with the mortally ill in Calcutta.

Even if, by the middle of the 20th century and under pressure from strong secularist trends, some of the traditional forms of devotional practices relating to the Cross have fallen away and diminished in their external practice, it is nonetheless still certain that these new challenges of human suffering have led Christians to look afresh at the Mystery of the Cross in their lives. Suffering caused by wars, violence of every type, injustice, and unforeseen disasters which neither modern science, nor national governments nor international organizations can wholly counter, have brought the extreme gravity of human suffering to contemporary consciousness as never before, with an understanding that such suffering is increased by human negligence and perversion. In the face of this terrible reality the Cross of Christ rises again like a light that shines in the darkness, embracing all in its Love.

## Conclusion

The recent attacks on the Twin Towers and the trains in Madrid have brought the problem of uncontrolled violence in our societies to a new level never before reached in world awareness. The World Wars, the Jewish holocaust in the Nazi concentration camps, the recent war in Iraq were events which, at the time, moved large communities of people, but none of these, horrible as they are, provoked such universal condemnation as these events we feel part of today. Any one of these events, whether it be the War, the holocaust or the recent conflict in Iraq, was much more serious than the two attacks on the Twin Towers and Madrid. Nevertheless, to judge by world reaction, a new level of conscience is forming in the world according to which both these recent attacks constitute an attack against humanity itself. Obviously not everyone thinks like this. But something new is taking place, something to do with solidarity between every human being of whatever condition, race, nation or belief.

Just as the youth in Madrid had written "We were all travelling on that train", so we could have said "We were all in the Twin Towers." And if we follow this argument to the end, we should say of any act of violence against an innocent person "We were all involved." This is a new spiritual reality. It reflects the same universal awareness Jesus had when He said in the Gospel that any act we do for the smallest and poorest of this world we do to Him, and when we deny them we deny Him (See Mt 25, 40-45). In each person, bearer of the humanity of all, we meet Christ.

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This culture of violence in which we live, with horror at its most extreme, helps us discover in the Cross of Christ a new dimension, hidden till now and perhaps only visible to the first witnesses of the crucifixion and the first confessors of the faith in the early centuries of the Church, which they did not emphasize for the very horror it produced among them. Today the Cross has to show not only the agony Christ suffered, as medieval piety did, but even more the violence he suffered, the penalty and brutality directed against an innocent person, facts that increased his pain and agony. In the same way Gibson's film helps us to imagine and own this violence perpetrated on the body of the Crucified. Gibson himself said in recent declarations: "I wanted to cause shock. I also wanted it to be excessive. I wanted to drive spectators to the limit. And it does it. I believe it carries us to the limit... in such a way that we see the enormity of the sacrifice; we see that someone can bear this and even then still react with love and forgiveness, in spite of having borne the pain, suffering and ridicule" (*Clarín*, 24 February, 2004, p. 7).

And he did it not to let us indulge our morbidity through the violence savagely unleashed against an innocent person, but to make us aware of our own latent violence and the terrible violence we see today committed against millions of innocent people. Gibson's film is not, as some of the media have tried to make out, an anti-Jewish lampoon, but a tremendous plea against the foolishness of violence and the irresistible strength of love and forgiveness which can be practised even in such extreme and terrible conditions.

Today, extreme injustice experienced in many spheres of our society, sometimes afflicting whole nations, brings this mystery of the violence committed against Christ closer to people and speaks to them in new ways unknown in other times. Not long ago when we were in a state of crisis with the happenings of December 2001, a group of women from northern Argentina decided to protest against their distressful situation, not with saucepans as in Buenos Aires, but with wooden crosses tied to their shoulders to show that they too were "crucified." This was not only a new type of social protest but a manifestation of the Mystery of grief and violence that seeks liberation, as in the gesture of Christ.

The way of Jesus has often been interpreted as a way of pure pain and the Christian was expected to embrace the painful Cross of Christ. In recent years and in the light of the serious conflicts of suffering and injustice that envelop the world, a new theology of the Cross has arisen that puts the accent not on the suffering itself and the sacrificial aspect it implies, but on Christ's love in approaching men of all times, to bind them to his Kingdom of Love, to encourage them in their struggle for liberation from all evils so that, finally freed from oppression, they might enjoy **that life** of full communion with God and with others for which they were created.

This option for the Kingdom and for Love was the basic option of Jesus. This option for Love will often bring with it

pain and death; will attract, as it did for Jesus, opposition and persecution, the cross and death, and also, glory and victory. But the central point will not be the pain or the violence suffered, but the Love which gives meaning to the pain, violence and death. As Sesboué says: “God in his Son comes to share this suffering, physical, moral and spiritual; he comes to bear in his flesh the pain of the agony and of a particularly cruel death. And he does it, not for love of suffering, but for love of people who suffer.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus the path of the Christian who follows Christ will never be a path of pure suffering borne with resignation or of pure violence borne with stoicism, but it is and will always be a path of pure Love, open only to the “little ones” who have rejected the sovereignty of unjust power and fratricidal violence, who place their pleasure in serving the poor and those who suffer with no thought of rank, and above all, those who suffer from human malice in whom Christ can be more clearly seen.<sup>4</sup> This basic rejection of power does not mean they are unqualified to act in the world; on the contrary, it places them in the best position, being no longer bound by ambition and the desire for riches, to commit themselves to the world and transform it into the Kingdom. This is the “utopia” to which we are called today.<sup>5</sup> It is the utopia of the Kingdom of which Jesus speaks in his Gospel (Mt 5, 1-12), which so many men and women of good will are already building, their gaze fixed, in spite of continuing injustice and violence, on a world more just, more brotherly and at peace.

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<sup>3</sup> Sesboué, B, article *Diccionario Teológico*, Salamanca 1992 “Cruz”, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> For this theme, see my article “La mística de los humildes” [“The Mystic of the Humble”], *Stromata* 59 (2003), 21-62.

<sup>5</sup> Sobrino, J, “La utopía de los pobres y el reino de Dios” in *Revista CIAS* 518 (2002) 546-572.

## EXPERIENCES

### OUT IN THE DEEP!<sup>1</sup>

Roland Doriol SJ

*A Native of Sene, in the heart of the Gulf of Morbihan, Roland Doriol spent 22 years traversing the seas as an electrician on big cargo ships. While he has retired from the merchant navy, he continues to serve the mission, this time from the shore. At Cebu in the Philippines, where he is Chaplain at the Maritime School, he founded a ‘welcome centre’ for sailors from all countries who pass that way. This Centre is the Stella Maris. (ndlr)*

Calls to sail and navigate are not lacking, even if today this mean surfing and navigating the Web, which seems to draw the curious or the professionals. The Web is not a sea that I know very well and this call to sail does not appeal to me the way it did 40 years ago when I presented this proposal as an “apostolate” and a “mission” in France and around the world. And yet, it was by taking into my heart this apostolate, the profession of sailing over 22 years as electrician on board ships, that my vocation as a Jesuit grew and sustained itself, rebounding sometimes to the spring of its beginnings. The God of Open Spaces is also a member of the crew.

#### A call that comes from afar

To be sure, the decision to follow this profession was borne along on the high winds and strong currents of '68 in France but I must confess something more secret and hidden, going back to the gentle breezes of the Gulf of Morbihan and to Penbo'ch. The Gulf and a little beyond is where I spent many years of my childhood, often on the sea with my father and grandfather, both of whom were sea fishermen. And Penbo'ch is where I, like so many of generations of students at St Francis Xaviers College, stopped to hear the call of the sea. *Duc in altum* – Leap into the deep. These three words were the key to the retreat at the end of my course of studies just before entering the Jesuit novitiate at St Martin d'Ablois on 5<sup>th</sup> October. These three Latin words were strong enough and inspiring enough to keep me from falling during those years of formation. They express well the wish to free oneself from one's moorings, and a way of rebounding back again. This call kept coming back to me during my philosophy studies in Chantilly, during those summer months when, as a 'passenger', I boarded the trawlers that go high-sea-fishing to Concarneau, a fishing port in Brittany, more on a chance of discovering Breton priests who might be engaged in the

<sup>1</sup>This article was originally published in the revue of France Province *Jésuites de France* 2004, pp. 37-39. An English version with the title: “Going into the deep: My life as a Jesuit sailor!” appeared in the section Vocation of the Jesuit Review of Philippines Province: *Windhover*, Fourth Quarter 2003, pp.18-19. The present translation is based on the French original and the earlier English translation.

Mission of the Sea, seagoing fishermen like the Little Brothers of Jesus (Les Petits Freres de Jesus). These attempts made the efforts of my own fisherman father, who had sworn that he would not live to see me follow a seafaring career, capsize (!). But the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, especially in contrary winds!

May 1968, the compasses were whirling and the currents quite violent. But the decisions had been taken, in consultation with our formation superiors, regarding the first steps beyond the green 'curtain' of Chantilly. For some of my companions, it was Asia, for others Africa; some were to go for studies in the social sciences. A group of five or six comprised part of the newly revived 'Jesuit Workers Mission', in which was included, for me, life at sea and training with the crew of the Mission of France/ Mission of the Sea, Marseilles. There is a time in the life of a Jesuit when one needs to find the daring to say "Yes, I'm going", and also a time, not to be missed, to hear another companion say "Go"! This is the start of a search that makes the "return" and "render account" process possible. It is this that, for me, lies at the bottom of the parable – forty years in the Society, living the life of a wandering sailor, living the mission on the seas of the world.

### Crew and community

What did the Society hope for by sending me out to sea? The message most clear to me – and it is one that nourished our best deliberations at that time, especially in the Jesuit Worker's Mission, was the following: "To learn from those we serve." That seemed to me a sure guide to evaluate what one carries in one's heart. And I wish to attempt to give an account of what was given to me in the course of those years, through learning from those among whom I lived and worked, learning also from events lived out at sea.

The letters of St Francis Xavier are surely a precise reference and I reread them in the course of the third year after having been nourished by them in the novitiate. Henceforward, correspondence became part of my style of life as a Jesuit. I did not miss writing down my reflections and the attraction I felt towards my new career as an electrician, at first on the fully automatic ships under the French flag and with a French crew. I never missed the opportunity of inviting my Jesuit companions on board the ships so that they could share and understand my human environment a little better. From another point of view, it was a way for my shipmates to know my companions who sent me those letters. This is what I call 'making a crew' both at sea and at home. It is the most concrete way of digging our wells together and finding the source that holds us together in this vocation. Thus when my ordination to the priesthood was announced, it did not fall like a strand of hair into the soup (that is, cause much surprise), nor did it seem like a decision taken at the seminary. When the Bishop of Vannes, president of the Episcopal Committee of the Mission of the Sea in France,

came to Marseilles for my ordination, I received as a bonus the command "Now return to the sea to live there and celebrate with the sailors what you have received today."

### With those who walk on the sea

When one is out at sea, events occur that shake up the security of the initial stages and add a little spice to life. On two occasions in the middle of the turmoil of the 80s, we picked up Vietnamese refugees on the China Sea: another way of preparing a bridge on board towards a mixed crew, including refugees in distress on the sea. Moreover, sailors under the French flag were no longer assured of their future. We resisted the commercial committee, but at the end of it all were driven to accept some reserved posts for Frenchmen, mixed with Indians and Filipinos, sailing under whichever flag was convenient. That was how another stage of bonding in my Jesuit vocation was being prepared for me: a chance of enlarging my vocation with those who 'walk on the sea', whether they be Indians, Filipinos, Sri Lankans or Pakistanis... truly another stage driving me to learn another language, to prepare for another 'grounding': as chaplain in the midst of more than 5000 students at the Maritime School of Cebu in the Phillipines, to following them through the sweat of the sea, continuing to listen to the 'waves' in their lives, putting together their story and their letters... A new form of companionship for this active retirement.

"Go...Return...Render accounts" – this is perhaps a good thread that helps one to navigate and trains one to be part of the crew, to keep the companionship of both yesterday and today...But it also teaches to know how to rebound, how to invite from time to time a casting off of moorings for a *Duc in altum*, rich with promises and faces, shores to discover and love. May we set out towards God!

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*What did the  
Society hope for  
by sending me  
out to sea?  
"To learn from  
those we serve"*

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## FRENCH SEAFARER PRIESTS<sup>1</sup>

Catherine Berger, SIRC

### Introduction

Given the constraints of time and space here, I will concentrate on the main characteristics of the ministry of the priests I have called “seafarer priests” i.e. full time workers on board ships who have not at any time relinquished their priesthood. I then propose to show in what ways their presence can affect the life of the crew on board, and conclude with the more practical aspects of the organization that has enabled this system to function for more than 55 years.

One might think that a “movement” which started in the very specific context of post-war France and was originally meant to address the problem of a totally de-christianised working class, can bring little more than historical interest to research more concerned with seafarers’ welfare in a globalised maritime world. Yet, the experience of seafarer priests might still be a source of inspiration for projects concerned with religious presence at sea for the reason that seafarer priests have shown their capacity to adapt to changes. They invented a new form of apostleship and a new way of life for priests in conditions wholly unknown to them. To remain among seafarers when the French merchant navy began to disintegrate and industry to reorganise itself along ultra-liberal lines these priests had to adapt themselves to a different type of sailing under other flags with multi-national crews, and they often experienced job insecurity and the degradation of very poor working and living conditions.

### A mission at work

It is essential to keep in mind that that priests went to work on ships for deeply religious motives. The Mission de la Mer (Mission of the Sea) that launched the experimental programme of sailing priests and monitored it from the start, working together with the Mission de France which is at the origin of the worker priests movement. Most seafarer priests belonged to the first mission, many belonged to both. As they went sailing, on their own, far from everything familiar, the priests were going on a mission, but they approached it in a way somewhat different from the traditional.

The first seminarians and priests who spent some time on ships had come mainly to discover the world of sailors before becoming chaplains on shore, but they soon realised that it was only at sea that they would really encounter seafarers. If they were to communicate with men who were very far from God and transmit His message, they had to be able to understand them “from within” and speak their language. This could only be

achieved by sharing their life.

Some priests began to sail as regular crewmembers. They were hired and paid to perform one of the usual duties on board and were not expected to have any kind of religious function or to do any social work.

In the early days it was indeed through work that the priests usually managed to be gradually accepted by the other members of the crew, many of them anti-clerical. Even today, it is still work that justifies their presence on board. As workers, the priests are never superfluous; in fact, they are indispensable for the proper functioning of the ship. This explains why they believe it is essential to be perfectly competent in their work, whatever their position. In an environment where everyday life is mostly devoted to work, only common efforts, shared know-how, and familiarity with the culture can make you belong to the group.

The priests have always been concerned with working and living conditions on board. In most cases they have been members of unions and actively involved in moves, whether local or on a larger scale, for the protection and improvement of the condition of seafarers. They are of course concerned with the terrible degradation that globalisation can cause in the life of seafarers, especially the poorest. Some of the priests for many years shared the life of seafarers from the Third World, not only their often appalling conditions on board but also the very hard periods ashore when they were looking for a job. All the priests of the last generation have known job insecurity and experienced periods of unemployment. One has to mention here, even if this goes beyond their activity on board, that they have always tried to explain to those who live ashore what the life of a seafarer is like. Because they had a capacity to express themselves that the most destitute do not have, they repeatedly denounced in numerous articles and conferences, the impact of competition on the lives of men at the lowest levels.

At the start of the programme, the priests had no religious role at all and were careful to avoid any form of proselytisation. They practised their religion on their own and in private, except when another seafarer happened to wish to join them for Holy Communion. Whenever possible, the priests tried to start small Christian communities on board. With a change in mentality, and especially with the development of multinational crews, priests got more frequent requests from believers who asked them to say mass or conduct a ceremony, for example, burying the dead. The priests agree, provided there is no risk of creating divisions within the crew.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was presented to the XXI<sup>o</sup> Apostolatus Maris World Congress, Rio de Janeiro, 29<sup>th</sup> Sept-5<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2002 and is a brief summary of the results of a research study on French priest seafarers conducted by the author for SIRC (Seafarer's International Research Centre), a research centre based at Cardiff and affiliated to the University of Cardiff.

### The effect of the priests' presence on the crew.

As previously mentioned, the seafarer priests have never sailed as social workers. This does not mean obviously that their presence on board has not affected the social life of the crew and the welfare of the seafarers. On the contrary, all my evidence shows positive effects on individuals as well as the group. It is necessary to point out, however, that these are elements that cannot really be quantified and that it is always difficult to make generalisations.

The priests have a deep interest in the men they live with and are particularly concerned with the quality of life on board. Their shipmates are quite aware of this and feel they are "recognized" both by the priests and, to some extent, by the Church that the priests represent. The seafarers also appreciate the fact that the priests remain on board a long time. They do not come as passers-by; this is something that matters a lot to the sailors who see it as a sign of the authenticity of their attention.

It is important to stress the fact that for the seafarer priests it is life at sea, among seafarers, which is the central element. In many seafarers' experience, life at sea is a painful sacrifice. They accept it in order to support their families but, in a way, their life is postponed and they seem to be in a state of waiting all the time. By deliberately choosing to be present at sea, the seafarer priests help restore some meaning to this life on board the ship. They acquire an in-depth understanding of this way of life and of subjects such as absence and the difficulty of coming back. Very often, believers as well as non-believers enjoy discussions on these personal and philosophical subjects, which, in their opinion, matter only to those who have an experience of life at sea.

The priests know how to listen. Some of them say they are rather "silent," they wait for people to come to them. They stress the need of not appearing as sermonizers or leaders who might prevent others from expressing themselves or from taking the initiative, attitudes that affect relationships negatively. They take great care to avoid whatever might cause divisions or tensions within the group, and stress instead the value of sharing life. While holding strong moral values they do not moralize. But they do not hesitate to step in if they witness unfair situations, and they try to modify behaviours in the long term.

Many accounts clearly indicate that they inspire a feeling of trust. They are considered to be "true" friends and the respect they show for others is highly valued. Another sign of trust may be seen in the fact that they are frequently elected by their department as board representatives in ships where this system exists.

The fact that there is a priest on board is of course appreciated by Catholic believers but also by those who have another religion (particularly Islam). Muslim seafarers have on occasion turned toward the priest when

they wanted someone to calculate the direction of the Mecca.

It may be noted that the presence of the priests can be felt far beyond their own ship. Even before the multiplication of means of communication, their influence was said to touch the whole company.

### Organization, recommendations

It is important to note that the priest who is at sea must be seen not as an isolated element but as part of a whole. He doesn't sail for his own benefit, but rather, he represents the sailing arm of a group. The priests are sent on a mission by their superiors who remain in contact with them through letters, through reports they ask from the priests while they are at sea and through meetings when they are ashore. The support and occasionally the control exerted by their superiors are necessary to stay in the right direction. If the Church gives more visibility to this form of ministry that will do a lot for its success.

Seafarer priests have often belonged to a team located in ports such as Dunkirk, Le Havre or Marseille. Meetings for seafarer priests were organized. Contact was maintained through letters, bulletins such as the "Letter to seafarers" which gave the news of each seafarer priest to all the others. It has not been entirely easy to make these systems work but they have the merit of not leaving the seafarer priest altogether on his own.

Even before the beginning of the experiment, the Mission de la Mer organized training sessions. Seminarians and priests from coastal areas attended courses on the maritime world given by all sorts of contributors: social workers, captains, heads of Maritime Vocational Schools, theologians, etc. These sessions aroused interest and were helpful in spotting new recruits.

There have been seafarer priests on practically all types of ships and the priests have taken jobs on deck as well as in the engine room or in the catering department. The first seafarer priests insisted on taking unskilled duties such as deck boys, mess boys, or kitchen hands in order to remain among the poorest but, with the evolution in the type of jobs available to French seafarers, they had to take more qualified positions as cooks, electricians, and third or fourth engineers. To this end, they attended training courses in Maritime Vocational Schools or other training places. Positions in the catering department turned out to be particularly well suited since one is in contact with crew members from all departments and informal social relations are fairly easy.

One of the advantages of this type of programme, and an important one too, is that it requires no funding from the Church. Seafarer-priests are paid by their employers and they are the ones who often contribute to the funding of other projects.

The period spent at sea constitutes one period in the apostleship of the priests among seafarers. In many cases, it

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is followed by other types of commitments in the maritime world. Obviously the quality of attention they give to seafarers while visiting seafarers' centres ashore, during a ship or hospital visit, or with young maritime students, is coloured by their experience as seafarers.

### Conclusion

I have not yet mentioned the number of seafarer priests. My investigations indicate that there have probably been at least 60 seafarer priests on merchant ships during the whole period. Some of them have only sailed for a few months, others for a few years, others still for 20 or 30 years. One of them stopped sailing less than a year ago after 38 years at sea. Today, only one priest is still sailing. This is due to the fact that there are very few French seafarers left and also has to do with the difficulties faced by the Church of France in recruiting young priests. Does this mean that seafarer priests belong to the past? The men who have experienced irreplaceable relationships with seafarers through shared work and shared life are well aware of the rich value of this experience for themselves as well as for their shipmates and even for the maritime world. They hope that in countries from which seafarers still come today, this type of commitment will appeal to young priests with a strong religious motivation and a taste for action and adventure in the service of men. They hope the Church will want to maintain this type of presence at sea in a world where the life of seafarers counts for very little much and where decisions are made by those who have no knowledge of this life.

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*They hope that in countries from which seafarers still come today, this type of commitment will appeal to young priests with a strong religious motivation and a taste for action and adventure*

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## A PORTRAIT OF AN INHABITANT OF THE VIETNA SHANTY TOWN, BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL

Angel Adrián Ayala SJ

Here in the *fabela* (shanty town), we already have the reputation of being criminals and that all ugliness emanates from here. We are caught between two wars: the first is waged among the drug-traffickers; the second rages on, outside the *fabela*, where all have to struggle to keep their jobs, to manage the little money they earn as wages and, worse still, ensure that they do not lose their jobs for making slight mistakes which will leave them with nothing at all. Yet, the worst war, the cruellest and most terrible, is the everyday struggle for survival by those who are jobless but still have to find a way to live. In this area, most people do not live; they survive with the little they manage to get.

The world is at war and we are the victims, because we are subject to disinformation and we believe everything the media tells us. Most people think that because we live in this neighbourhood we are worthless, suspect, and responsible for the crimes that are committed around us. Having a dark skin, cutting your hair in a certain way, wearing certain kinds of clothes, are enough to betray the to which group you belong: society automatically considers you a criminal. Many believe that they will become

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*The worst war, the cruellest and most terrible, is the everyday struggle for survival by those who are jobless*

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someone if they wear sneakers or the clothes that are advertised on TV. Here, people survive. Most of them come from the rural areas. They have come to the city hoping to improve their lives, but find themselves in the midst of a closed society that has no place for them in its plans and projects. They have then ended up empty-handed, in neighbourhoods like this one. The only thing left is the courage to survive. Most of those who live in this area do not know how to reach the centre of the city; they have no idea which bus goes to the city centre. They survive in any way they can. Almost all of them end up as drug dealers. Despite the dangers that this implies, they see in drug-trafficking the only way to survive.

Drug trafficking demands of you only the courage to survive. Many children dream of becoming drug dealers, it is the one dream they have. The police only come here to arrest or kill people, and the people accept it because all they have left is the courage to live. When they get involved in drug trafficking, it is because they have lost all desire to live. Some 15-16 year-old youths only want to die, most of them already carry the burden of several deaths, and since it is heavy to support this burden the only way out is death.

People believe that the life of a drug dealer is easy, but in fact it demands a lot of discipline: one has to pay the deals daily and failure to do so means certain death. If one wants to stay long in the traffic one must have immense



self-control because a great deal of money passes through the hands of the dealers; and this money does not belong to them but to the dealers who live outside the *fabela*.

When there is a problem, the solution is not appealing for justice but resorting to the dealers. It is they who exercise justice, and conflicts among dealers can cost the people dearly. In case of conflicts, you have to choose which side to lean on, it is impossible to remain neutral because in any case they will kill you if you don't back them up. There is no escape here: one has to live with them and under their rules.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### FAITH & JUSTICE AMONG THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF MALAYSIA Ricardo Falla SJ

Jojo M. Fung SJ, *Ripples on the Water: Believers in the struggle by the indigenous of Malaysia for a country of equal citizens*, Johor (Malaysia): Diocesan Office of Social Communication, 2003, 264 pages.

The chief merit of this book by a Jesuit companion Jojo Fung shows not only how faith and justice necessarily interact with each other but also with the dimensions of inculturation and inter-religious dialogue among disparate indigenous peoples of Malaysia as they struggle for their identity, culture and survival as peoples. (The Malay word for indigenous or native people is *Orang Asli*). It also has the virtue of presenting the faith dimension from personal experience, for the author, though basing it on a doctoral thesis for the Union Theological Seminar of Chicago, gives it a spiritual, Christian and profoundly universal tone.

In the best traditions of GC 32 and the Conference of Latin American Bishops at Puebla (1979), the spiral of Jojo's intrepid journey takes off from real men and women, mainly women, since one detects in the writing a sense of someone who has fallen in love, though he is silent on the subject. This spiral move-

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*The spiral of  
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and women,*

---

ment then rises to his contacts with indigenous peoples and communities in other parts of the world (India, Sioux, Apaches, Inuvaluit) and the Orang Asli of Malaysia who have captured his heart. In a small forest village in the mountains he found the burning bush, the basic and lasting grace that stamped indelibly his commitment to indigenous peoples. Reading this decisive passage, one cannot but remember St Ignatius in La Storta: "I knew then in the depth of my heart that God had captured me for a mission," says Jojo (p. 89).

From there the spiral turns upwards to an historical vision, analytical and serene, as if it were the Trinity looking down on the evolution of the Orang Asli and hearing their groans as they clashed with the dominant society, the latter like a tiger, the Malayan tiger, trying to finish them off! The intellectual aspect of his doctoral thesis, with its copious notes and references to a wide bibliography, is very much in evidence here. The clash with the dominant group was spread over four periods: the Malayan regime (-1786), the British regime (1786-1957), the communist uprising (1948-1960) and the modern State of Malaysia (1957). The spiral then reaches up to the eternal structures of myths, those trinitarian eyes leading us to discover in the depth of the indigenous mind: the meaning of the tiger, the fish, the child and the force of the people's curse which stops the tiger where he is and prevents him from devouring the child, while the fathers are distracted

in fishing according to their traditional culture (pp. 145-155). The tiger is the terrible threat to these people who constitute half the total population, confronted as they are by mega-projects trying to civilize them into extinction (p. 152). The threat is extinction, ethnocide, and disappearance from the map of the peoples of the world.

The spiral suddenly turns and places us in the world of Jesus. We are in the second week of the Exercises. Jojo does not say this, but it is a fact. He unconsciously produces the way of thinking that has nourished his days in the novitiate. He is not engaged in contemplation here – he is doing theology. He recalls the violence in Palestine in the Greco-Roman world and the birth of the Jesus movement and the Pauline communities. The spiral has been dizzy. From the tiger we have passed abruptly to “the woman bent double” in Luke (13, 10-17), pivotal symbol of the people whom Jesus raises up. And Jesus makes the woman

speaking with the tiger (he may not say so explicitly, but it is obvious): we infer that the bent and humiliated woman represents today the Orang Asli and the tiger the violent Greco-Roman world. In this “triple dialogue” (p. 177) between a downtrodden people, the oppressive dominant society and Jojo placed there as a believer, he finds the bases for his theological reflection. As he hears God groaning in these peoples he draws the motivation to become an agent of faith (wave in the water), forming communities in solidarity with a supportive Christian movement among these peoples. Nevertheless, speaking of believers, Jojo allies himself with those of the great religious traditions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism who among themselves make up urban communities of solidarity with the indigenous peoples on the coast and in the mountains, and these also among themselves. Such an organized network combines, as we said at the outset, dimensions of inter-religious dialogue and inculturation with faith and justice in a harmonious and organic whole.

The spiral suddenly begins to come back to earth in experience. What Jojo analyses and recommends, he himself practises and sees put into practice around him. Courageously he comes down to the personal (which requires daring), and describes in detail how he himself has been converted into a small “ripple” by the experience of God received among the Orang Asli and how this ripple has created others. Beginning with middle class urban groups, using the sacred texts of each religious tradition with a theological slant (“a theological course is an effective method...to form a support group for the Orang Asli”), he has formed people, mainly women, who in turn form groups or organizations, the principal being Kawat Senoi (Friends of the Asli) which, after concentrating its efforts in a mountain community and supporting it with education, joins a network of all the indigenous peoples of Malaya, thereby directly influencing the dominant society. Many enlightening examples of how to practise solidarity with indigenous peoples can be found in this last chapter.

Jojo’s book is like the Orang Asli curse which prevents the tiger taking human form. Though academic, it

raises awareness and is confrontational without actually saying so. Up till now – he finished it in 2002 – it seems that he and his support communities have confronted the tiger with works of assistance, development and education in the villages, with workshops and awareness meetings about the dominant society, with political activity in support of indigenous organizations demanding equal treatment of all citizens on the part of the state... but it seems they, together with several communities, have not yet directly confronted the tiger with a mega-project. They are getting there, getting near there... Beware of upsetting the tiger! Beware of the roar of the mega-projects that have vested interests in the urbanization of indigenous territory.

At the end, Jojo quotes some prophetic words of Jon Sobrino on the cost of solidarity with the poor: “One must be ready to suffer any type of persecution the powerful of this world can unleash against the poor and those who take their side.” Jon wrote these words prophetically in *Spirituality of Liberation* four years before the powers of El Salvador massacred our brothers of the UCA. One wonders whether or not Jojo quotes these words prophetically. One remark, Jojo, martyrdom is a grace. One must give thanks for it but not try to pluck it from God’s tree.

We are sure the reading of this book, written in English, not in Malay, nor in Chinese (Jojo is a Malaysian of Chinese origin), open to many worlds and cultures, can illuminate many of us who work with indigeneous peoples. At times it can sound utopian, at times too candid and sincere, at times too dense, too unequal, at times even somewhat nonsensical. Incapable of joining styles and themes of the spiral in a simpler unity; at times, for a person like me, ignorant of Malaysia (only though the journeys of St Francis Xavier to Malacca or through some British document on counter-insurgency have I learnt know anything about Malaysia), difficult to read for the number of strange words and places which will be well-known to locals but unknown to the foreign reader...it is still a very stimulating book to read.

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*Jojo’s book is like  
the Orang Asli  
curse which  
prevents the tiger  
taking human  
form*

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## PRESENTATION

**Francisco Ivern SJ<sup>1</sup>**

Ricardo Antoncich SJ, *Social Apostolate: Sector and Apostolic Dimension, Folleto de la colección CPAL*, CPAL: Rio de Janeiro, 2004, 102 pages.

**T**he Social Apostolate is not only an important sector of activity in the Society of Jesus but also a dimension that should permeate all our apostolic works and our ministries. On the one hand, the existence and vitality of this sector are essential in reminding all of us that without a social dimension our apostolic efforts will not respond adequately to the exigencies of our Faith. On the other hand, if that dimension truly marks all the sectors in which we work, then initiatives, works and concrete projects will surely emerge, and, they will, in their turn, strengthen the social sector.

One need hardly stress the importance of the “social” as sector and dimension in the concrete context of Latin America where inequalities and injustices are vast and profound and where poverty is widespread. In fact, some of the Social Decrees of the General Congregations of the Society (in particular, the well known Decree 4 of Congregation General 32, “Our Mission today: Service of Faith and Promotion of Justice”) came into being largely because of the initiative and petitions of the Latin American Provinces. I dare to say that it was in Latin America where those Decrees had a greater impact. The history of the Social apostolate has in the Society of Jesus, especially in our region, a long and rich history not exempt from difficulties and suffering. As we know, many of our brothers gave their lives for the cause of faith and justice.

It is that history of the social apostolate as sector and dimension that Father Ricardo Antoncich, member of the Central Team of CPAL, has written in the pamphlet which we are publishing. The author does not limit himself to describing the more important stages, the facts and events of this history, but also offers a series of criteria allowing us to evaluate whether the social dimension is present as it should be in our religious and apostolic life. It is a valuable instrument which all our communities and apostolic works could use with great profit.

No one is better qualified than Father Antoncich to write this pamphlet. He has not only participated directly and actively in this apostolate, but has never abandoned it and always followed it closely, even when obedience called him to missions not specifically related with the social sector. During the past three years, as member of CPAL and coordinator of the social sector at an inter-

provincial level, he has once again made direct contact with grass root workers in the social field, and has done so with the same dedication and enthusiasm that have always distinguished him.

In the name of the Society of Jesus in Latin America I thank Father Ricardo for this pamphlet he now offers us. I am convinced that it will help us to be more faithful servants of faith and the promotion of justice in this continent that stands so much in need of love, justice and solidarity.

Original Spanish

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*The author offers a series of criteria allowing us to evaluate whether the social dimension is present in our religious and apostolic life*

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<sup>1</sup>Fr. Francisco Ivern is the President of the CPAL (Conference Jesuit Provincials of Latin America).

# LETTERS/COMMUNICATIONS

## BOURGEOIS HOUSE<sup>1</sup>

Modesto Vásquez-Gundín SJ

### THE BOURGEOIS

#### Some characteristics of the Bourgeois today

1. Has financial autonomy: *capable of surviving* easily, of being well-off because of his earnings, work or inheritance. He does not work as one ‘subjected’ to another, as ‘under’ another in the economic sense.
2. He does not participate – nor does he depend – *on work under equal conditions with others*: he does not form part of a *chain of work*, but rather
3. bases himself on his individual initiative and his own resources;
4. is self-sufficient and can defend his status through his own means (does not need to coordinate with others to support himself in a larger group).
5. He does not take recourse to ‘corporative strikes’ to obtain claims or demands: he is essentially “individualistic”.
6. He ‘affectively’ rejects collective mobilisations, neither participating in them for himself, nor on behalf of others); he is not in solidarity out on the street with the non-bourgeois.
7. His place of work is ‘his office’, not other people’s houses, nor ‘industrial premises’.
8. His autonomy tends to isolate him; it prevents him from thinking about ‘dependence’ (which is not the same thing as ‘being in a team’); it makes him feel annoyed when he has to share time, tasks, and to displace himself with/for others.
9. Because of the law of the ‘sociology of knowledge’, his social thought is individualistic; he supports everything that defends the individual vis-à-vis the social and the process of socialization.
10. His time is time-for-himself. Time spent in common with others annoys him.
11. He is hedonistic, narcissistic as regards his own task, with a hedonism that will gradually penetrate his “treasures”, riches of time, honour, friendship, mission (!?)
12. Committed persons, such as Jesus, interest him, at most, as an ‘amusement’. His alienation from his unconscious is obvious for all to see.

### THE NON-BOURGEOIS

#### Some characteristics of the non-bourgeois today

1. Lacks financial autonomy; he survives because he sells his work. He works ‘submitted to’, as ‘under’ another in the economic sense (he struggles to get a just salary).
2. He works under conditions equal to those who are his *working companion*; he may or may not work in a chain.
3. He depends on the initiatives and resources of a managing leadership.
4. He defends his rights (salary, holidays, time-schedules, etc.) in coordination with others.
5. If the case arises, he has recourse to corporative strikes: he feels himself to be essentially a member of a group (collective) sharing similar conditions.
6. He experiences ‘affectively’ the need for collective support to defend his rights.
7. His place of work is not ‘his’ office, but a place (domestic, industrial...) owned by others.
8. By the law of the ‘sociology of knowledge’ he is not individualistic; the less individualistic the more he has to carry out his work in union with or in a chain with other workers.
9. His time is a ‘time-for-others’; the time *with* others is an exigency (not always lived with all its consequences, but conditioned because of fears and alienation...)
10. His most precious treasures are found outside the working place.
11. His sense of festivity is popular and he enjoys himself among crowds of ordinary people.

<sup>1</sup> The original Spanish contribution bears the subtitle **In the ‘Two Standards’, 1st Standard, House of Herod (Mk 6, 14-30).** As the author himself comments, it is a brief preliminary note: “While directing the Exercises during several consecutive years to the same Community, trying to avoid repeating myself, and searching for different ways of following the process of the [Ignatian] ‘Weeks’ in various contexts, I found the formula of following the ‘Houses’ appearing in the Gospel narratives. The House of Herod, so well presented symbolically in JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, offers us the opportunity to understand how ridiculously certain members of the bourgeoisie can sometimes act, “in the style of the court of Herod”, a pathetic and extreme incarnation of the “world” in the meditation of the ‘Two Standards’. From these remarks it is easier to understand the title of these notes on the bourgeoisie, the non-bourgeoisie and Religious Life, which I have collected to be discussed, criticized, corrected and/or completed

**THE RELIGIOUS (MAN-WOMAN)  
Risks of some in some clear contexts**

(Thinking on the basis of the DEBATE of PJ 82)<sup>2</sup>

1. These are persons in particular, specific situations in relation to the bourgeois and non- bourgeois.
2. They are **individual-persons in an individual collectivity**. They are self-sufficient as a group, do not need supports nor do they make any claims outside their work; they do not have recourse to the world for solutions.
3. Their particular situation makes them self-sufficient without need of support from outside their religious condition; the world of labour in which people sharing the same conditions live is foreign to them: they are foreign *to that world, and are considered as foreigners by that world*.
4. In the political domain they tend to 'think' and to 'feel' as *individuals in an individual collectivity*; they see the political as a foreign field and religiously dangerous; or, rather, as one of 'intellectual interest'; the ecclesiastical separates them from the political: they run the danger of distorting the religious-social perspective of Jesus, the Kingdom and His commitment into a 'theocratic' society.
5. They run the risk of using 'bourgeois' criteria in judging the political aspect of the Gospel; the individualistic alienation is a real danger.
6. They tend "to want to feel evangelically" well-established *outside the social and the political* and thus
7. They hate the mobilisations of the non-bourgeois, considering them to be destabilizing.
8. A person with "religious vows" involved in mobilisations appear strange and dangerous; it destabilizes the community.
9. They hate to dedicate time to form themselves in the social, to try living for this cause and suffer its consequences. They take refuge in an angelic evangelism away from socially bleeding situations.
10. They are not easily aware that their life is like an apartment, a narcissistic refuge **outside** life itself; and are in danger of deceiving themselves about their life-style and their supposedly evangelical attitude.
11. According to the laws of the sociology of knowledge, their 'thinking' is born out of, and grows within the social, economic status of the milieu in which they live (individuals in an individual community); **inserted communities** show what the change of

habitat does to a person...

12. The dream of living faith as **necessarily implicated in social justice** is, for all practical purposes, a utopia: it does not facilitate the birth and development of this conversion. We may find among them a certain smugness (alienated? not conscious) in 'thinking that one thinks' about this kind of faith...
13. There is **unquestionable generosity in what is assistential (charitable)**, especially that which comes from female Religious Life; but it is not easy to raise basic questions on the problem 'justice-faith-justice' as *modus essendi and standi*. Thus it may be said that while, because of their great personal and even institutional generosity, many of the members suffer very keenly the social consequences of structural injustice, share their situation with the marginalized and serve them with great charity, the problem of structural justice is still not a concern in 'their' work.

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<sup>2</sup>The intention is to deepen that debate, to reflect on why we have the impression (or are told) that there is a weakening in the process of unifying faith-justice, in the faith-justice-apostolate; imperceptibly we drift away from this inseparable commitment. We do not seek to be right, but to arouse reflection and contributions (AMDG).

## RWANDA-BURUNDI

We have received here in Kigali issues 83-84 of *Promotio Iustitiae* containing a number of articles under the title of "Remembering Rwanda".

On behalf of all the Members of the Rwanda-Burundi Region, I want to thank you for having dedicated some pages of *Promotio Iustitiae* to reflections and testimonies related to the terrible events which we went through ten years ago.

With the people of Rwanda, our Region is attempting to go forward with a process of mourning, justice and reconciliation. With God's help, we grope our way along. We cannot say that the road tentatively traversed during the last ten years is flawless nor that there may be a message to transmit to the whole Society of Jesus. Nevertheless, we believe that God has guided us, that we have managed to take some steps that might encourage other Jesuits who may be going through similar situations and, at the same time, inspire everywhere more prayers for our people's healing.

The articles which you have selected and published, thanks to the initiative of Michel Kamanzi SJ and the collaboration of several Jesuit companions who are not all from Rwanda, indicate a moment in our journey with its strengths and weaknesses. Together with you, we entrust our small collaborations to the Lord, so that he may use them in favour of the great reconciliation with each and everyone in the True Life.

We thank you and your colleagues, and indeed all those who contributed to the making of that publication.

With my fraternal regards, I remain yours in Christo,

Original French  
Translation by Christian Uwe SJ

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I read every article (almost without stopping) in the section "Remembering Rwanda" (*PJ* 83-84, 2004/2-3). It made me feel part of that great tragedy, gave me a sense of what fallen human nature decomposes into; and yet, every writer draws some aspect of hope from that evil time. Death and resurrection, hope from despair ... every expression falls short of the awesome evil and the still more astounding emergence of reconciliation evoked in every writing.

Thank you for an inclusive editorship which brought contributions from far away persons like myself (although Gujarat's riots have a parallel to Rwanda) to meditate on the closeness of evil that can only be countered by the prayer "deliver us from evil" and reconciling action.

Thank you

Godfrey D'Lima SJ (BOM)

I was greatly impressed by this issue of *PJ* (No 83-84, 2004/2-3) for its focus on the genocide of Rwanda ten years ago. The reflections were also very good. I appreciate the method employed in working out the articles.

Thank you immensely.

Ashok Ohol SJ (PUN)

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Thank you for publishing my poem. I have received many reactions and comments from different people. Some could not contact me immediately because you forgot to put my address with the text.

Some examples of feedback:

1. Professor Tom Massaro, American Moral theologian and Director of Social Justice Forum (SJF) at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Boston-USA, asked me to read this poem during the forthcoming first session of SJF in Boston, Massachusetts. As there will be many people and not enough copies of this issue, this poem will be photocopied and distributed.

2. A Jesuit in Germany wrote me a very nice email. I quote from one of the paragraphs: "I am writing to tell you that your poem on Africa has been chosen by the Central European Assistency of the Jesuits as its beacon text and background for the annual congress of the Jesuit Social Apostolate (8-12 September). This year the theme will be: "A new language for Africa. Political, economic and cultural analyses: The Grans Lacs region of Africa." Thank you for this beautiful cry – of prayer and of questioning – and for this deep and powerful voice that you lend to our African soul."

Many other friends are asking me for copies.

Let me tell you that this issue on Rwanda is very moving as well as prophetic. I especially like the article on "the pairing of faith and justice in Decree Four..." written by José Virtuoso. I will use it in the new discussion group that I am initiating with a group of students. We call ourselves "GREC" (Group of Reflection for Christian Engagement). We will reflect and analyse the José text as it justifies the keeping together of faith and justice. My thanks to *Promotio Iustitiae*. I am happy to receive it and be part of it. I hope that *PJ* will continue to challenge us and mobilise us for more peace, justice, dialogue and reconciliation in our broken world.

Ad Multos Annos, dear Fernando and all the *PJ* team!

Bienvenu Mayemba SJ (ACE)

\*\*\*\*\*

Congratulations on the fine double issue of *Promotio Iustitiae*. And it was good to see articles from my dear friends, Mark Raper and David Eley. The poem at the end is very powerful.

Arthur White SJ (CSU)

## BELOW THE POOR ARE THE MARGINALISED

Jaime Garralda<sup>1</sup> SJ

*From a distance we are all more or less the same.  
When you get near, you see that they are not the same.*

*This happens with the "poor" and the "marginalised".*

*They are enormously different.*

*And they cannot be treated in the same way from the social, psychological or pastoral point of view.*

*A poor person is a rich person without money.  
But his values, his desires, his dreams, are the same.*

*The poor would like to have access to good houses, services, cars...*

*But they have nothing.*

*As soon as they get something,  
they abandon a bit the life of the poor  
and get close to the one they desire:  
that of the rich.*

*I have lived during many years in "chabolas" (huts or shacks)*

*with the poor, and that was their dream.*

*The old women of my suburb  
told me again and again: Signor Jaime,*

*I have seen one of those "poor",  
your boys... These women have not a penny.*

*But they are not marginalised.*

*The marginalised are something else.*

*They know that they do NOT belong to this society.*

*They are outside. Rejected, despised, and feared.*

*Especially the "evil" or bad marginalised.*

*Because there is also a difference.*

*The "good" marginalised: the serene physical  
or psychic disabled,  
racially discriminated...*

*they are marginalised.*

*They cannot live for the higher values of society:  
good careers, good employment, good money,  
form a family, succeed.*

*But they are another thing.*

*The "evil" or bad marginalised know  
that they do not belong to this society.*

*They know that people despise, fear,  
and reject them.*

*These are the people of drugs,  
prison, AIDS, alcohol, homeless.*

*Never will they open a bank account.*

*Never will they deposit money  
to gradually buy an apartment.*

*Never will they organize their future  
even if they are a couple and have a child.*

*Never will they save anything.*

*Never will they go to the employment office.*

*Never will they study anything.*

*Never will they look at you in the eyes (neither will you).*

*Never will they learn a profession.*

*Never will they leave their controlled areas,  
except in order to "plunder".*

*Sometimes, in the trunk of a stolen car,  
you may find great sums in bank notes.*

*Because they robbed them.*

*Or small bags of drugs that cost a fortune.*

*They are not poor.*

*They are marginalised.*

*Tomorrow they will be penniless,*

*with not so much as a speck  
or grain of those drugs.*

*Under the impressive effects of drugs,  
trembling, without having eaten*

*and without wanting to eat.*

*They may look like the poor.*

*They are marginalised.*

*Jesus Christ, it is said, "walked with the poor".*

*But we must also distinguish clearly  
what that means.*

*What profoundly identified Jesus Christ is that  
he went with the marginalised.*

*Especially with the "evil" or bad ones.*

*Other saints went, and still go, with the poor:  
silent people who are hungry and who are cold,  
old people, sick people,*

*children who have problems.*

*The "losers" of all times.*

*Jesus Christ distinguished himself because  
he went with the "evil" marginalised:*

*The tax collectors were... marginalised.*

*The adulterers and prostitutes were... marginalised*

*The sinners were... marginalised*

*The publicans were... marginalised*

*The lepers were... marginalised*

*The prisoners were... marginalised.*

*At the time of Jesus Christ*

*these were more or less the evil marginalised.*

*And if you open the Gospel,*

*all these people had a place of honour in his life.*

*I think that today,*

*the signs of the times call us Jesuits*

*to know, to understand*

*and to help – in some way –*

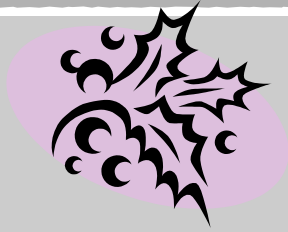
*the marginalised of today.*

*The "evil" ones.*

Original Spanish

Translation by Mary Berchmans Rjm

<sup>1</sup>Jaime Garralda works in *Horizontes Abiertos* (Open Horizons), an NGO which he created and which is dedicated to the care of prisoners, especially women and their young children who are in prison.



*From the Social Justice Secretariat*



Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year