

Promotio Iustitiae



Debate

**Obstacles to the Justice
Commitment**

José María Mardones

**Obstacles to the Faith-Justice
Mission**

Patxi Alvarez SJ

EXCHANGES ÉCHANGES INTERCAMBIOS SCAMBI

Reflection

**Jesuits, Intellectual Life and
Mission in India**

Ambrose Pinto SJ

A Response

Lisbert D'Souza SJ

**The Social Apostolate in
Eastern Europe**

Robin Schweiger SJ

Experiences

Christ in a lowly place

Jean-François Thomas SJ

Documents

In quest of an Asian Jesuit Identity

New Delhi 2004

Editor:	Fernando Franco SJ
Associate Editor:	Suguna Ramanathan
Publishing Coordinator:	Liliana Carvajal
Graphics by:	Daniele Frigeri SJ

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

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

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

The re-printing of articles is encouraged; please cite *Promotio Iustitiae* as the source, along with the address, and send a copy of the re-print to the Editor. Thank you!

EDITORIAL _____	4
<i>Fernando Franco SJ</i>	

DEBATE _____	6
---------------------	----------

Present Religious and Ideological Tendencies that are an obstacle to the Commitment to Justice

José María Mardones SJ

Current Religious and Ideological trends as obstacles to the Faith-Justice Mission

Patxi Alvarez SJ

REFLECTION _____	20
-------------------------	-----------

Jesuits, Intellectual Life and Mission in India

Ambrose Pinto SJ

Jesuits, Intellectual Life and Mission in India: A Response

Lisbert D'Souza SJ

The Social Apostolate in the Eastern European Assistency

Robin Schweiger SJ

EXPERIENCE _____	26
-------------------------	-----------

Christ in a lowly place

Jean-François Thomas SJ

DOCUMENTS _____	27
------------------------	-----------

In quest of an Asian Jesuit Identity, New Delhi 2004

BOOK REVIEWS _____	29
---------------------------	-----------

Decent Working Conditions

Joseph Joblin SJ

Managing HIV/AIDS

Alan Peter SJ

AN EXCERPT _____	31
-------------------------	-----------

Genesis of the DHRRAs

Antonio L. Ledesma

EDITORIAL

It happened during the warm, festive and colourful days of the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre. After a tiring day two of us, returning to the spiritual centre, stopped at a sidewalk café to have a quick sandwich. In the course of our distended conversation we started remembering the highlights of the day, but we moved soon to touch other areas of concern in the social apostolate. It was a spontaneous moment of sharing with another Jesuit companion, one of those special moments that remain etched indelibly in our hearts and memory. I was struck by the words my Jesuit companion used to describe an unsettling side of our life in the Society: "There are Jesuits today who feel that we have reached the end of the road...that we are doomed to become extinct...and this may explain the tepid vocation campaigns we run, the lack of attractiveness in our way of living, and the incessant critique, the constant undermining and the insidious de-stabilizing tactics some Jesuits seem so keen to follow *vis-à-vis* their own brothers." All this seems to be part of a culture of defeat and cynicism that may be eating at our entrails.

A few (I do not really know how many) will argue that in the hard, fragmented and confusing world we inhabit, each Jesuit is entitled to throw in the towel, call it a day, and retire with dignity to a life of quiet pleasantness... and one may add with some harshness, a private world of concealed smugness.

Listening to my fellow-Jesuit's words in far-away Porto Alegre, I was reminded of the words of another Jesuit companion, Patxi Alvarez, uttered at a conference in Madrid and published in this issue of *Promotio Iustitiae*. He was speaking at the annual meeting of *Fomento Social* on the obstacles to the dyad Faith-Justice rising from within our Jesuit structures. At one point in his intervention, he spoke of the 'professional complainers,' quoting Robert Hughes in words that kept pounding my heart in Porto Alegre, the venue of the World Social Forum, the meeting place of those who still hope that another world is possible.

[A] complaint is a defeated version of rebellion.... It is the hideout of the person who, dissatisfied with the solution given to life, sets out to hunt. To complain.. [is] to live a common exchange of nightmares, groans, slanders and deceits

What touched me deeply was the image of our professional complainers setting out for a weekly or monthly night hunt. One does not want to dramatise ordinary gossip; but the threatening existence of corrosive and hopeless talk lurks at the back of some of our communities, and adds a home-touch to the widespread idea that 'There is No Alternative' –the TINA factor in Indian political parlance– to whatever is happening around us.

We all seem to share in this pragmatic sense of 'realism' that stands Ignatius' *magis* on its head. It is no use simplifying innocently the complex set of reasons that have brought the Social Apostolate to a difficult turn. There are some who believe it may be only a crisis of the 'sector', a few Jesuits working with and like the poor, but not of the 'dimension' of Justice permeating all our ministries. Things obviously are not so clearly demarcated and, in real life, both the 'sector' and the 'dimension' live enigmatically and dangerously in constant symbiosis.

This issue of *PJ* continues to delve into the obstacles facing a faith that does justice. The discovery, the realisation is that there may be a murky relationship between this internal culture of complaint, this personal addiction to hunting, and the external TINA factor. We publish in this issue two important contributions that may throw some light –and we are aware that illumination nowadays is always partial and fragmented– on this issue. Paxti Alvarez looks with compassion and honesty at the obstacles from his experience of the Society in Spain. Though his comments have a particular and limiting context, he describes phenomena that touch the Society globally.

The second contribution by Professor Mardones is a lucid exposition of the unstated presuppositions that make the

promotion or the struggle for justice irrelevant, meaningless, odd and unattractive in today's world. The article is a slightly modified version of the talk he gave to a gathering of more than 50 Spanish Jesuits at the *Fomento Social* meeting. In his concise exposition he quotes a number of thinkers who may not be easily recognisable by all. In order to introduce their thought without troubling the author for a much longer article he had politely excused himself from writing, we have added more than the ordinary share of footnotes and a few Annexures. The latter are also meant to provide an annotated bibliography for those who would like to explore some of the issues further. This explanation seemed needed to account for a rare editorial practice in *PJ* which we do not intend to repeat.

Important as it is to confront, from a somewhat Western perspective, the fundamental obstacles that impede our apostolic commitment to a faith inseparably linked to justice, it may be more appealing to share with our readers the positive attempts to look at our weaknesses and strengths from a South Asian perspective. The contributions from Fathers Lisbert D'Souza, and Ambrose Pinto are meant to provide this perspective. In the section 'Documents', we have published the 'Delhi Declaration' on Asian Jesuit Identity, the result of a common discernment undertaken by Jesuits from Asia at a meeting in Delhi. These attempts at capturing, re-creating, and rekindling the 'ideal' or the distinctive character of our mission and life may go a long way to strengthen what Paxti Alvarez calls the "fiesta, joy and hope components of our life."

The Jesuit delegation at Porto Alegre observed a moment's silence for the Asian victims of the tsunami. We would like to join many such moments of silent prayer and express our condolences for all the pain and suffering that many are still experiencing. From Aceh in Indonesia to Tamil Nadu (India) and Sri Lanka, Jesuits have been among the first to render much-needed help and also among those now planning the complex process of rehabilitation.

The year 2005 may turn out to be a watershed in the international fight against poverty. The coming year is dotted by three crucial events: on 6th July 2005, the G8 Summit will open at Gleneagles in Perthshire, Scotland; from 6 to 8 September, the United Nations will hold a summit to review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs¹); and from 13 to 18 December, Honk Kong will host the Sixth Ministerial WTO meeting. Seemingly unrelated, all three will have to face the issues of peace and development for all. Preparations by civil society have begun on a war footing and Porto Alegre was the ideal place to forge alliances and prepare strategies.

Jesuits attending the World Social Forum were of the opinion that the Society needs to participate in this global shaping of dissent and in creating new alternatives. The forthcoming meeting of Assistancy Coordinators (May 2005) will attempt to evolve common policies based on the emerging voices from different parts of the world. The African Assistancy will have a Seminar on Peace in Nairobi (April 2005) with Jesuit representatives coming from all African Provinces and regions. It is from these local and regional initiatives that our strength as an international body must be built to join others as an expression of our faith doing justice.

Fernando Franco SJ

¹ The MDGs were commonly accepted in 2000 by the international community in an effort to promote human, integrated and sustainable development. These MDGs have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress. These eight goals are essentially centred on national targets for poverty, education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability, but also include targets for establishing an international trade and finance policy framework that favours development. Numerical targets have been set for each goal, which are to be achieved by 2015.

DEBATE

PRESENT RELIGIOUS AND IDEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES THAT ARE AN OBSTACLE TO THE COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE¹

José María Mardones²

Introduction

It seems proper to clarify at the start that I am dealing here only with the theme of “obstacles,” and that I am therefore leaving out other aspects like possible available opportunities. In this brief note I first develop the socio-political and religious factors that act as an obstacle to a commitment to justice, and thereafter raise some questions that could help us re-define our commitment to it.

SOCIO-POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Of the many relevant socio-political and religious factors I would like to mention the following.

(1) The fundamentalist climate

The fundamentalist climate or position revolves more around the issue of a ‘cultural’ or ‘moral’ war, a perspective blind to the bond that exists between neo-liberal capitalism and moral decay. This “blindness” is conceptually and theoretically defended in the following manner.

(a) Huntington’s thesis as an ideological/theological justification

I am obviously referring to the well known thesis of Harvard professor Samuel Huntington,³ who speaks about the clash of civilisations in its widest sense, to explain the preponderance today of religious fundamentalism and weak critical and prophetic tendencies. Even if we do not agree with this thesis it gives us food for thought.

Huntington maintains that after the end of the bipolar world which characterised the cold war years, we have entered a new situation where culture –and concretely, religion– will play a dominant role in future conflicts. His thesis highlights the fact that conflicts have shifted from the economic and political to the cultural and religious sphere. The reason for this shift may be sought in the apparent lack of structural problems in the important spheres of economics and politics. The fundamental pillars on which the economic system rests may suffer certain re-adjustments but today it is no longer possible to launch a critique against, or fundamentally change, the market economy. A structural critique would amount to

acknowledging the existence of an alternative to the existing market economic system, when, as a matter of fact, argues Huntington, it does not exist. In the sphere of politics it is also not possible to make a frontal critique of the ‘democratic system’ or of political democracy. Attempting such a critique is tantamount to advancing an alternative that does not exist today. It may be feasible to propose some changes and adjustments, but democracy as a system is something desirable to all, and hence cannot

become a space of tensions and important conflicts. As systems, today’s economic and political set-ups lack an alternative. Strong conflicts, therefore, have shifted to the cultural-religious sphere. We need not forget that *de facto* the ‘clash of civilisations’ does indeed exist or, at least, that Islam has a bloody frontier: passing from the Balkans, through Pakistan and Indonesia and returning to North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

(b) The justification of fundamentalist religions

We may ask ourselves the reason for the seeming preponderance of a fundamentalist sensitivity in all religions and not merely Islam. One possible explanation is that the present economic and political systems jointly generate a series of traumas that society, as a whole, must assume and manage. Religious fundamentalism is precisely an answer to these traumas (“traumas of modernity”) because, in some way, it lightens them and makes them more bearable. A reading of Faith from the perspective of justice would provoke more tension, or what we might call an ‘over-tension’. A more traditional and fundamentalist religion guides and balances; instead of generating more fear and anxiety, it offers help and solace. This kind of religion works because it distends the social fabric and

¹This article in its present version is a modest fleshing out of the set of points distributed and presented by the author at the annual conference of Fomento Social in Madrid on the 27 December 2004. It retains, therefore, its original character of jottings or notes. Its schematic character notwithstanding, we believe that it will be of interest to our readers. It was submitted to the author in its present form for a final revision before publication. [Editor’s Note]

²The author is a member of the ‘Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas’, CSIC [Higher Council for Scientific Research], Madrid. [Editor’s Note]

³Born in 1927 in the United States, Samuel Huntington is a political scientist of international renown; he is at present Professor of Political Science at Harvard University where he is the Director of the John M. Olin Institute of Strategic Studies, and founder-director of the journal “*Foreign Policy*”. With the publication in 1993 of his article ‘The Clash of Civilizations’ in the journal *Foreign Affairs* [Summer 1993, v. 72, n. 3, p. 22(28)], he acquired a worldwide reputation, and later published the polemic book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1996). [Editor’s Note]

produces a feeling of peacefulness and reassurance.

This idea may be expressed with the help of the following equation

$$E = D + Ec + Rf$$

Where,

E = equilibrium state of the social system

D = democratic system (political sphere)

Ec = economic system (fundamentally neo-liberal)

Rf = fundamentalist religion

In the proposed equation **D** and **Ec** supposedly generate a series of traumas and uprootings that bring instability to the system. To counteract these disturbing forces we need to add **Rf** to strengthen roots, produce interior peace and assuage the effects of the traumas. It is evident that in such a view, religion plays basically an ameliorating and equilibrating role.

In Huntington's proposed scheme, equilibrium is more important than conflict; and this equilibrium cannot be generated through fundamental changes or adjustments in **D** or **Ec**. A religion with a fundamentalist touch seems to be a religion consistent with the existing neo-liberal system.

*A religion with a
fundamentalist
touch seems to be
a religion
consistent with the
existing neo-
liberal system*

(2) The fall of the Berlin wall and the end of political passion

After the fall of the Berlin wall we witnessed the end of messianism in politics (and in religion?). It has been substituted by an obsessive and abusive political pragmatism, resulting in a loss of moral tension in politics and the entrenching of a Manichean perspective (Guillebaud⁴).

Levinas speaks of the end of political passion. It is also like speaking of the end of a religion which is critical of injustice, sensitive to social and cultural phenomena that generate inequality, and exploitation. We find instead a religion that defends pragmatism and engages in the cultural struggle against the immoral consequences of modernity.

From this perspective, some, Huntington among them, would like to conclude that Vatican II made a mistake when it tried to reconcile the Church with enlightened modernity. The grave mistake was that the Church chose the wrong modernity; the same thing happened earlier to Lutheran reform. Instead of talking about economic modernity, they preferred to talk about critical and enlightened modernity.

We may also refer here to the establishment of a Manichean element in politics. We have in mind a situation in which political differences are not great, they are certainly not 'significantly' important, because today everybody searches for a position in the 'centre', what some have called the 'extreme centre'. In this sense, the

political discourse, uses a language that is grandiloquent on the one hand, and dramatically empty on the other. In most instances, the political discourse thrives on magnifying minor differences and keeps silent vis-à-vis the really important problems. Political discourse today tends to gloss over fundamental questions.

Some object to this thesis and ask whether we have not still been left with some messianic 'positivist' remains (J. Gray⁵).

The Western (religious-political) myth points to the concrete fulfilment, in a near future, of a utopia – be it liberal, Marxist, now Islamic fundamentalist. History is seen as a prelude to a new world. Might not the present fundamentalist war between Islamic and market fundamentalism (Bush) be one of its manifestations? Are we not faced with the vestiges of a demented messianism that channels the wrath and the disquiet through 'cultural and moral wars' without seriously questioning the existing bond with the techno-economic world?

(3) 'Moral war' as a hiding mechanism

We may then talk about today's moral war as a hiding mechanism; talking about today's moral war shifts the discourse and the issue from the more fundamental and controversial one of power-sharing among nations. The most glaring example is the last US election: those who voted for Bush had the **most** serious socio-economic justice reasons not to have done so. Bush has been voted to power by the rural geographical centre, by those less educated and poorer. Why? We may interpret the vote as a shifting of social problems (at bottom, a concealing process) to the cultural-moral-religious sphere. Is this a remnant of class antagonism projected on to the more 'horizontal' questions of culture and diversity? (S.Zizek⁶).

We are confronting, therefore, the legitimising function of a 'fundamentalism' that reads the Apocalypse literally. (Approximately 36-40 per cent of the population of the United States believe in some apocalyptic form of fundamentalism). Tim LaHaye, one of the leaders of the Christian Right, has sold 62 million copies of a series of books that apocalyptically interpret the end of time.⁷ J. Gray points to these ideas as the motivating force of the interventions in Iraq by Bush and the neo-conservatives.

*Talking about
today's moral war
shifts the
discourse from
the more
fundamental one
of power-sharing
among nations*

⁴For a brief note on the thought of Jean-Claude Guillebaud, see Annexure. [Editor's Note]

⁵For a note on the thought of John Gray, see Annexure. [Editor's Note]

⁶For a note on the thought of Slavoj Zizek, see Annexure. [Editor's Note]

⁷Dr. Tim LaHaye, a pastor in the USA, is a well-known author and speaker on biblical prophecy. LaHaye is founder and president of 'Tim LaHaye Ministries' and co-founder of 'Pre-Trib Research Center', which he established to promote research, teaching, propagation and the defence of pre-tribulation rapture and the biblical prophecies related to this prophetic doctrine. (<http://www.timlahaye.com/index2.php3>). [Editor's Note]

(4) The ‘cultural industry’ of neo-liberal capitalism

The media industry of neo-liberal capitalism is creating a cultural globalisation—the *Macdonaldisation* of culture, characterised by the trivia, youth, rapidity, a fast-changing culture with an inconsequential touch. It produces a type of society, a “society of sensations” (G. Schulze⁸), which represents an anthropological turnaround (K. Lehmann⁹). This type of society evades facing fundamental questions by consuming sensations. It is the “market of sensations”, of the immediate where no transcendental visions of life are possible. There is no room even for some sort of transcendental humanism.

We find ourselves, therefore, facing the pseudo-religion of consumerism that questions any transcendental gaze. This is **pure individualism** as a depoliticizing ideology (M. Gauchet¹⁰).

We need to worry about the process of de-linking cultural and moral issues from economic problems

live, we run the risk of using a fragmenting viewpoint that may become a masking ideological device: a religion related and focussed on particular moral issues that has no relation with the traditional problems of justice. The most worrisome aspect is that this attitude conditions our conscience not to see the structure, the system. We should ask ourselves, why this deliberate malformation of our consciences?

We cannot forget the already existing manifestations of discontent with this situation. J. Stiglitz has strongly criticised the “fundamentalism of the market”; the critique of the non-sustainability of the neo-liberal model is growing; anti-globalisation movements, the World Social Forum and many others are examples of a search for alternatives. We cannot, finally, belittle the critical-constructive participation of the churches in raising the general moral tone and the conscience of citizens.

Original Spanish

José M. Mardones
 Instituto Filosofía (CSIC)
 Pinar 25
 28006 Madrid - SPAIN
 <flvmm22@ifs.csic.es>

RE-DEFINITION OF THE COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE

It is evident that in this new cultural atmosphere the burning issues in the promotion of justice, or struggle for justice are –without forgetting large objective differences and the social exclusion of neo-liberal capitalism at national and international levels– cultural and ethic: life, death, diversity (cultural, religious, ethnic), ecology, peace, gender and tolerance. We need to worry about the process of de-linking cultural and moral issues from economic problems effected by the neo-liberal ideology. A ‘new policy’ or way of dealing with justice needs to be very sensitive so as to uncover this link that the culture industry as well as fundamentalist religion is so keen to hide.

In today’s post-ideological situation:

Can these cultural and moral themes be treated without a total vision, without a systemic vision of all the problems? Is it possible to do justice without ideology?

We also need to confront the New Social Movements that define ‘justice’ as a change in relationships at three mutually separated levels:

- Person-nature
- Person-person (from the perspective of conflict or peace)
- Man-woman (feminism)

Undoubtedly problems are defined today in a new way. The new policy needs to take into consideration also the politicization of other questions (pacifism, ecology, feminism, multiculturalism). This may be all right, but is there not often a danger of de-linking these issues from ‘material conditions’? Do they not present a partial view of reality?

Let me take an example. If we talk about gender without relating this issue to the material conditions in which we

⁸The author has developed this idea of a “society of sensations” in his talk ‘*La Cultura Actual y la Gran Ciudad*’ [Today’s culture and the Great City]. G. Schulze has called today’s society a “‘society of sensations’, that is, a space where individuals live in the midst of tasting a variety of sensations that constantly attack their living palate.” [Editor’s Note]

(<http://www.iglesia.cl/iglesiachile/especiales/megapolis/mardones.html>)

⁹Cardinal Karl Lehmann, Bishop of Mainz (Germany), has worked to develop the application of Rahner’s ‘practical theology’ to pastoral issues. (Fernando Berríos, “Teología Trascendental y Praxis: Una Reflexión desde el legado de Karl Rahner”, *Teología y Vida*, Vol. XLIII (2002), pp. 467-502. [Editor’s Note]

¹⁰In his book *La démocratie contre elle-même* [Democracy against Itself], Marcel Gauchet raises this question: “Can democracy survive its own victory?” and explores the contradictions of contemporary democracy. This is a collection of his articles published in *Debat*, a journal he directs with Pierre Nora and published by Gallimard. The common thread holding these articles written over the last 20 years is the will to “unravel and understand the disconcerting faces of democracy which installs itself with a triumphant, exclusivist, doctrinaire and self-destructive air” (p. i). Gauchet’s thesis maintains that the heart of democracy’s illness lies in the concept of ‘human rights’. The attractive force of the human rights discourse lies in the fact that it joins political critique to a protectionist principle that “points towards a political action without political parties” (p. v). The democracy of human rights is fed by an alliance between individualism and an interpretation of democracy that suits the interests of the subject of rights. The problem is that the politics of human rights does not allow the collectivity to act on itself. This leads Gauchet finally to affirm that human rights is not ‘politics’.

www.erudit.org/revue/ps/2002/v21/n3/000504ar.pdf [Editor’s Note]

ANNEXURE

JEAN-CLAUDE GUILLEBAUD AND THE 'POLITICAL PROJECT'¹

Jean-Claude Guillebaud was born in Algeria in 1944 and is one of France's most distinguished journalists. His political leanings are evinced by the fact that he was, for a while, the president of 'Journalists without frontiers'. His large and varied list of publications includes *La Refondation du monde*.² On the occasion of the publication of his book, *Le goût de l'avenir*,³ *Le Web de l'Humanité* (September 2003) published an interview of Guillebaud with Jérôme-Alexandre Nielsberg. In the course of the interview he, as both writer and journalist, attacks those who abandon the political perspective. We have thought it convenient to complement the textual notes with a review of some of his comments.

In response to the question about why our societies do not appear more worried about the future as a political project, Guillebaud says: "For about the last ten years we have deserted history. Under the pretext that the totalitarianisms of the 20th century had instrumentalised hope, progress, we have abandoned the project altogether. And renouncing the project is to renounce politics. To renounce politics is, and I like the traditional Jewish expression, 'to accept that the world has been abandoned to evil'. Liberalism already carried within itself the seed of this renunciation of politics. We are at the point of rediscovering that. To be in agreement with the world is to live in the present. It has not occurred to anyone that this neo-stoic morality accompanies liberal development. We must today, perhaps more than ever before, take into account the fact that we have reduced our time to a perpetual present, and that, by doing this, we have totally closed our future perspective. We have finally renounced being human. Because "man is the only animal that can say 'no' to the apparent order of things"

The opposite of evil, according to Guillebaud, is not good but sense ("*sens*"), significance. His comments on this theme follow.

"The attitude of George W. Bush towards his opponents is to fight 'evil' with 'good'. The two adversaries use the same weapons and produce the same devastation. 'Sense' (*sens*) removes us from this infernal spiral. And it is this 'sense'—the lowest common denominator of our collective representations — that gives us the capacity to share and that constitutes the foundation of our human community.

We face what the author calls the 'manicheism' of public debate. This, Guillebaud points out, is due to the fact that "we do not yet have the concepts to talk about this new world." We get roped into partisan and manichean disputes that finally result in inconsistencies and absurdities. Some examples follow.

The contradiction between autonomy and bonding.

"Bonding (to be linked to someone) is not opposed to autonomy of the subject. For the last three centuries we have been dedicated in the West to the path of individual autonomy. This autonomy has been theoretically constructed by turning upside down the way our society has

worked until now: breaking the hold of tradition whether it be religious, social, or of the family. We have constructed an anthropology unknown to all the societies that have preceded us based on the sovereignty of the individual. This is a formidable conquest. Autonomy, however, has in recent years been accompanied by a sense of grief, exclusion and solitude. We are about to learn that the individualism, emerging from our recent autonomy, has been dogmatised and elevated to the status of becoming the organising principle against individuals."

"It is a little as if an individual, driven by his rage to win, were to continue battling against himself, destroying what has made him capable of being himself. The lack of solidarity manifested for the old people who died in the heat wave in France takes us towards a situation of 'de-bonding'. The sovereign individual that helped us to emerge has been left orphaned. In this way we understand that social bonding, human culture, relations between individuals and institutional phenomena are the foundations of human existence. We must therefore go beyond this constitutive opposition of the modern individual: autonomy and bonding. We need both. In this sense we note well the words of Levinas: 'every individualist is an usurper.'"

The Contradiction between transparency and intimacy.

"We are witnessing today a generalised competition among all to be more transparent. We have, voluntarily or involuntarily, submitted to the requirement to become more transparent. Confession has become an obsession, televised and broadcast on radio. It might be interesting to speculate on how upsetting it is to the principle of privacy. Privacy was until recently — until very recently — a conquest that came with democracy, a conquest over the way the old regime functioned. Only totalitarian societies dared to violate this privacy. Today, our democratic societies and their institutions can follow our tracks. They know more about us than can be imagined. The information revolution allows all excesses. If there is something Orwellian in this new world it is the rediscovery that a minimum of interiority is necessary for human beings."

"I would like to go deeper into this theme. Thanks to the work of a young sociologist from Québec, Céline Lafontaine, I have understood that the tyranny of transparency is the last after-effect of so-called cybernetic theories developed after the war in the U.S.A. They postulated a man devoid of all interiority, defined only as the hub of a communication network and thus determined from the outside. It is an anthropological model that carries within itself the renunciation to the 'political' because it favours avoidance of commitment and the individual's responsibility for his own meaning or 'sense'. The tyranny of transparency has as its objective not making individuals more responsible, but rather, making them translucent, perfectly foreseeable."

¹<http://www.humanite.fr/journal/2003-09-3/2003-09-3-378137>

²Editions Le Seuil, 1999. In English: *Re-Founding the World: A Western Testament*, New York: Algora Publishing, 2001.

³Editions Le Seuil, 2003.

Contradiction between knowing and belief. When asked if he agreed with the position that, in such a technological society as ours, “to relativise knowledge and rehabilitate belief” is to play the game of those fomenting religious conflicts, his answer is extremely lucid.

“I do not speak only of religious beliefs. All political choice rests on a belief. Liberalism rests on a belief, for example, in ‘the invisible hand’, although it tries to use this scientific aspect of the economy to impose itself. Nevertheless, under the pretext that the masses cannot understand economics, they have deprived this discipline of democratic reflection. The economy is a subject meant for wise experts; we leave it therefore to technocrats to manage. This is meant to intimidate the democratic belief that assumes that all can understand the fundamentals of the economy; the intended result is that this discourse benefits only a few who pretend to understand the economy. One understands the challenge. This contradiction between knowing and belief is unfounded. The Greek inventors of reason knew how to conjugate belief and reason perfectly. We have lost this skill and must find it. We must rehabilitate belief without renouncing, of course, the critique of reason. What is of value and can help us is dialectics, the dialogue between these two ways of understanding the world. The re-founding of politics must travel this path.”

The interview concluded with this question. “In the absence of any secular messianic view whatsoever, on what can we construct a project, a will to influence the course of history, a refutation of the fatalistic mechanisms of destiny?” Guillebaud’s answer touches the theme of hope.

“I am tempted to respond that I also resolutely still believe in progress and its messianism—the messianism that has appeared in the history of the western world from the mouth of the great Jewish prophets. It broke with circular thought and it introduced the idea of ‘a time that goes somewhere’, according to the beautiful expression of Levinas. To say, for example, that ‘there is no destiny for Israel’ means that the future of Israel would not be based on what men would want to make of it. Christians re-appropriated this theme under the name of hope, which was later secularised in the Eighteenth century. We encounter it in the writings of a Marxist philosopher like Ernst Bloch. I believe in the concept of human responsibility for the future of the world. If we really want it, other worlds are possible beyond these worlds imposed on us as if they were fatalistically determined. This is only possible if we have the vocation, the taste, to project ourselves politically into the future.”

In another context and in an attempt to ensure that right and duty do not lose their *raison d’être*, Guillebaud invites us “to reinvent the articulation between Christian faith and democratic hope, as liberation theologians had tried earlier. ‘To choose the future’ is equivalent to ‘bewitching the present’. Bidding farewell to utopias makes sense if one builds on a well-founded act of hope.”⁴

JOHN GRAY AND HIS INTERPETATION OF GLOBALISATION

John Gray is Professor of European Thought in the London School of Economics, and the author of more than a dozen of books, one of which is *False Dawn*.⁵ In a new prologue to the most recent edition he indicates three new developments of his thesis on the instability of Capitalism developed more widely in the first edition of the book in 1998.

Globalisation and the new face of war. The disintegration of the Soviet Union through what was veritable “*shock therapy*” has left huge amounts of armaments and a great number of scientists who may be bought by any group ready to pay for them. This has resulted in a situation that leaves many states of the old Soviet Union with the power of effectively becoming weapons bazaars.

Add to this the progressive corrosion of the state and the process gives rise to a new far-reaching political phenomenon: the state’s loss of the monopoly over war. The great paradox is that “the terrorist network that instigated the attacks on New York and Washington is a by-product of the weakness of the state, promoted actively by the West during the neo-liberal period” (p. xv)

Globalisation and the return of geopolitics. “Neither globalisation nor collapsed states are anything new. What is new is the fact that today they coexist together” (p. xvi). This argument deals with the shortage of natural resources that leads the strongest states to engage in political actions to secure their control. “The idea that a combination of new technology and the forces of the market can help humanity avoid scarcity of natural resources is an illusion.” (p. xvi). In some sense we are returning to ‘real politik,’ which means to a policy that is based not on ideological argument or principles but on the need to acquire and defend the control of natural resources.

The goal of global ‘laissez faire’. John Gray takes account of a series of economic events like the announcement of the end of Globalised Capitalism, and speaks of a new “globalisation” after the end of the “free trade” era. “The growth of scientific knowledge and technological skill has not produced a convergence of values or a world-wide civilization.” (p. xxii). More clearly, Gray favours a diversity that remains blurred:

“The idea in itself of a unique economic system should have produced suspicion because it entails submerging or trivialising the differences between cultures that throughout history have shaped economic diversity and differences among political regimes.”

“We ought to greet the end of the global laissez faire as an opportunity to rethink our positions fundamentally. It is possible to imagine a world in which globalisation does not mean homogenisation or intractable conflict, but the use of science and technology to develop different varieties of life.” (pp. xxii-xxiii).

⁴*Le goût de l’avenir*, Paris : Éditions Le Seuil, 2003.

⁵London: Granta Books, 2002. Another title is *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*, London: Granta Books, 2003.

SLAVOJ ZIZEK DISCIPLE OF LACAN

Named “the brother of Marx” by the *New York Times*, Slavoj Zizek, virulent anticapitalist and subtle disciple of Lacan, was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1949. Zizek was the son of devoted Communists who grew to be disillusioned with Communism. Considering the context in which his name is mentioned in the text of the article it seems useful to deal with some points of his eclectic and varied thought.⁶

The depoliticization of our politics. In the same way that Zizek, some years ago, considered Yugoslavia (of which present-day Slovenia was a state) to be a country that had been cynically depoliticised by its leaders, he firmly believes that today the conservatives, liberals and the radicals have eliminated genuine politics in the West. The modern era is decidedly “post-political.” Instead of politics we have a “collaboration, free of conflicts, between informed technocrats (economists, specialists of public opinion) and liberal multiculturalists” who negotiate a series of compromises, pretending to sell them as “universal consensus”. In the end they fail in their purpose.

The new Labour Party members led by Blair and the new Democrats of Clinton are the last political parties to engage in the “art of the possible”, their modest mantra. Zizek denounces the fact that the policy of sexual and ethnic identity “adjusts perfectly with the depoliticized notion of society where each particular group has a specific status of victim recognized through affirmative action or other measures destined to guarantee social justice. By satisfying the complaints through programmes targeted at specific groups (affirmative action), the tolerant liberal “establishment” does not allow a genuine universal political impulse to emerge.” “Authentic politics,” affirms Zizek, “is the art of the impossible; authentic politics is able to change the parameters of what is considered to be possible within an existing constellation of forces.”

This political vision is based on three sources that are not easily compatible: Lacan’s notion of the subject as “pure emptiness”; the political economy of Marx, and the conviction of Saint Paul that the universal truth is the only force capable of recognising the needs of the individual. Zizek likes to call himself a “Pauline materialist.” He is convinced that we can only break this impasse of politics with the help of a gesture that undermines the foundation of “capitalist globalisation from the point of view of the universal truth, in the same way that Pauline Christianity ruined the Roman empire.”

For Zizek multiculturalism suffers from a desire to depoliticize society. The theme of multiculturalist tolerance does not deal with many problems that have to be resolved. What it does is to change the questions imperceptibly, depoliticize them, and transform the political struggle into a problem of cultural tolerance. To put it in more succinctly: we are racist because we are not able to tolerate the diversity of the other, and we hate because we do not know how to confront the diversity that exists within us. The multiculturalist solution proposes to undertake a trip of personal discovery and this is de-politicization. Tolerance

today is equivalent to the right to tell your story. It is a kind of social darwinism. Each minority – gay, lesbian – has the right to tell its own history but the question about truth is suppressed. If we demand the right to tell the truth we are accused being ‘logocentric’.

On the capitalist economy. Peculiarly in this case, without having much idea of the economy, Zizek states that small changes in the existing economic system cannot help us solve the problems, for this attitude leaves no space open to imagine the radical exit of Capitalism. For example, in France they currently talk of a Capitalism controlled by the republican spirit. We ask ourselves how we are to humanise Capitalism with a little solidarity, granting more rights to the minorities. Or still worse, we ask ourselves, how do we keep our national identity in a globalised world? The ultimate and fundamental question nevertheless is to know if Capitalism is or is not the last horizon of humanity.

The new gnostics. The exponents of the New Age proclaim the necessity to know oneself, to find oneself, and to analyse themselves in depth. Zizek thinks that the inheritance of Christianity is a kind of prophetic messianism, proclaiming that the truth is discovered in a traumatic encounter with God, something that changes completely what we hoped to find. Gnosticism always makes reference to a community of chosen ones, an elite that knows the truth. Of crucial importance in the future is the battle between the Christian testament of prophetic messianism and this new Gnosticism that offers a path to the elitist communities of the initiated.

Collective Solipsism. Zizek thinks that the eclipse of the father’s authority is exerting a great influence in creating narcissistic personalities. Seated alone in front of our computers we form part of the world of the www (World Wide Web). It is a type of “collective solipsism” – a solipsism that, with the excuse of creating an “instantaneous transparency,” introduces the camera as a witness to people’s intimate moments. It is a privacy shared in a new and obscene way that is neither entirely public nor private. Today we live in a fragile balance. We are forced to live more and more in isolation, and yet remain more exposed to the glance of the other. This phenomenon explains the show of the “Great Brother” on television. Something is changing in a radical way, and above everything else, we need to understand it.

Original Spanish
Translation by Timothy Byron SJ

⁶Sito Web Italiano per *la Filosofia-Il manifesto*, 10 Aprile 2001, *Rassegna Stampa*, Elisabetta D’Erme, L’underground della politica.

CURRENT RELIGIOUS AND IDEOLOGICAL TRENDS AS OBSTACLES TO THE FAITH-JUSTICE MISSION

From the perspective of the Society of Jesus¹
Patxi Alvarez SJ

I would like to begin by thanking you for the invitation to take part in this meeting. Ildefonso Camacho has asked me to share some of my thoughts on the faith-justice mission, especially on its obstacles from the point of view of the Society of Jesus. The allotted time of one hour has meant a certain thoroughness that I did not originally intend. I only hope this moment of sharing will help all of us to reflect together and that our subsequent dialogue will enrich and qualify what I have to say to you.

I begin by quoting from an article published some months ago in the review *Promotio Iustitiae* for this year. “Thirty years is a sufficient time for a body of men who presumably take life seriously and are sincere (as is the case with Jesuits) to gauge if such a strong decision with such grave consequences as that undertaken by GC 32 has been internalised and really put into practice in our own times.”² A little further on, the author concludes:

there are sufficient grounds for affirming with complete objectivity that the Society of Jesus is not being faithful to the mission to which it committed itself in GC 32, and which was then confirmed in GC 33 and 34. Clearly, in the last forty years there have been Jesuits who, to defend justice, human rights and the cause of the poor, have renounced their own interests, their security, their dignity and even their own lives. But it has been specific, individual Jesuits who have done this. The Society as a whole has not.

The text is signed by José María Castillo who has a long knowledge of the Society and is, in addition, an acute observer of reality. His statement is emphatic, clear and admits of no qualifications. But this is a position that I do not share, nor do many other Jesuit companions, because there is evidence to think differently, but also possibly because of my personal disposition and character. I do not believe that the Society is not being faithful to the mission it adopted in GC 32 because there are always degrees in real life. To my way of seeing, faithfulness does exist, as does also a sincere and mature desire for greater commitment. It is another question whether we have identified this option and put it into practice to its farthest limits. The reply here might be different according to each one’s expectations, and these do normally affect our judgements. In any case, my starting point is a much more positive evaluation of our real commitment to the faith-justice mission. I am convinced this mission has transformed – even if only in part – the Society, our dreams and illusions, our hopes, our options, our

spirituality and theology, including the awareness of our own sinfulness. The Society of today has little in common with that of thirty years ago. And in the change experienced over these years, the faith-justice option has left an indelible mark for good.

Why do I begin on this note? Because I have been asked to speak of the obstacles to this mission, and if we only note the difficulties, we will conclude the morning with the impression that the present is very black and the future overshadowed with clouds. The clouds are there, they do exist, but the lights are also very many. In fact, I am one of those who sincerely believes that, as GC 34 puts it, this mission has been a wonderful gift from God because it has placed us in the good company of the Lord and of so many of his friends among the poor and all those committed to justice.³ If everything had been bad, very bad, then this gift of God would have been a poisoned gift, a stumbling block, a source of confusion and despair. But this is not the case; it has not been like this.

In this sense, the view I am presenting is in no way complete, but rather, because of the instructions given to me, I emphasize only the negative points and deliberately pass over the many positive ones. I ask pardon at the outset if this causes offence to anyone. I speak sincerely on a topic in which my judgement could well be at fault.

After this brief introduction, I pass on to consider the obstacles to this faith-justice mission from the point of view of the Society of Jesus. I have grouped them in six different areas: structural obstacles, understanding the pairing faith-justice, obstacles arising from our formation, obstacles rooted in our apostolic practices, obstacles linked more to our spirituality and, finally, obstacles that come from the period of the Church in which we are living.

A warning: there is much criticism in what follows. I understand it as an exercise in self-criticism – that is, for my part I do it from within, which allows me to be more blunt – and this would only be meaningful if it helps us look at ourselves with greater realism, to feel more deeply that we are members of this humble (*minima*) Society, and therefore a Society which is closer, and more on the same footing as the least, the most human and reconciled. I feel I have been asked to do an exercise of the First Week. As can happen in that week, we may lose ourselves if, led on by the desire of perfectionism, we look only at our own limitations and split ever finer hairs, rather than letting ourselves be led along these paths by the loving hand of God. The first way leads to despair. The second allows us to continue asking ourselves – after self-examination and an inner peace and challenge – what we are going to do for Christ.

In what follows, I shall limit myself to the Society in Spain which is the only one I know, and even that not too much. I understand that a lot of what I say may be quite differently experienced in other places.

¹This is the text of a talk given by the author to a meeting of the group Fomento Social in Madrid, 27 November, 2004.

²*PJ* 82 (2004/1), pp. 17-18.

³GC 34, D.3, n.1.

1 Difficulties from History and the common life style in the Society

Some of the obstacles to our faith-justice mission come from our history and common life style, and it is to these that I refer in the following sections.

a. From history⁴

Decree 4 of GC 32 (1975) can only be explained in the light of activities and changes in the Society during the preceding years. By then it had already undergone many changes in the process of adapting to new times. The awareness of social issues had grown slowly during the 70s, encouraged both by the social and cultural modernization process taking place in the Spanish state, and by the influence of Vatican II. It is during these years that the Workers' Mission began to be recognised as a legitimate expression of the Society's social awareness. In 1969 teams from the Workers' Mission appeared for the first time in the catalogues and so received an official recognition of their existence. The existence of a social awareness concerned especially with working class rights was already a fact. There was also a growing concern for national minorities, equally excluded during the dictatorship. In this period the poor were identified with workers and national minorities.

Formation experienced the force of these changes and the crises that accompanied them with greater violence than any other sector. They were times of a huge bloodletting among the younger generation, to the extent that in one year alone – 1968 – after the dismissal of eight scholastics in the “conflict of Loyola,” 35 students, left through frustration and disillusionment with the Society, having lost the determination to run the race.

In addition, from 1969 onwards there came into being a counter-reformist movement, which became public and turned into a formal proposal for separation. This is when a group of professed drew up an “account of the harms” done to the Body of the Society. In January of the same year and after a Congress on the Exercises which took place in Loyola, they mentioned the following complaints among others: Jesuits directors of workers' associations use patently Marxist language and incite to revolution; Jesuit directors of Sodalities of Our Lady create a political and Marxist climate and outlook; spiritual guidance in the schools has been reduced to a minimum; Jesuit journals generate confusion and their editors refuse articles calling for faithfulness to the Church hierarchy; the role of the Roman Pontiff, as well as *Humanae Vitae*, is played down, without superiors forbidding public declarations on such issues.

This “True Society” had many close contacts with the hierarchy and was encouraged in the Vatican Curia as a movement of censure against the changes in the Society. The target of their accusations was Father Arrupe. They were convinced that under him the Society was betraying its nature. Priests should devote themselves to spiritual and not social tasks, which are for the laity.

The crisis and division within the Society were undeniable facts, arising from huge differences in outlook. And the social question – the struggle for justice we might say – was at the centre of the conflict. The cost was to be very high, especially in the Workers' Mission itself. The clearest example is that of the Loyola Province. While in 1969 it accounted for 38% of the Jesuits assigned to the Workers' Mission, the emptying later was almost complete through numerous departures. Unlike in other Provinces, there remained only a few survivors.

When decree 4 of GC 32 appeared in 1975, the largest number of departures had already taken place; precautionary measures for those dedicated to social ministries were widespread and the government of the Society had to face the suspicions of successive Popes about political indoctrination in the Society and the interference of priests in secular areas that did not concern them. The following years would be times for the prudence which has characterised so well the generalate of Father Kolvenbach.

Later, other social and cultural changes, and those at a Church level – which I won't treat here – explain the greater emptying that took place in the Social Apostolate, the sector that suffered the highest departure rate. Those Jesuits who remained were still viewed with suspicion: they don't pray sufficiently, they don't take on pastoral work, don't take care of piety in their life and their religious communities do not live, as they should, a genuine religious life, which is always at risk.

So Decree 4 can be understood in some way as a posthumous victory. The battles which took place over the questions it treats had already led to the departure of many Jesuits and suspicion directed at the social ministries. This weakening of the Social Apostolate from the outset inevitably affected the faith-justice mission we try to follow today because it was through the Social Apostolate that this ‘newness’ of our charism accepted by GC 32 would be strongly lived out.

***So Decree 4 can
be understood in
some way as a
posthumous
victory***

b. Jesuit models existing in the Society

It would not be hard to track the triumphalist tradition we belong to and which possibly comes from the earliest days of the Society: the massive vocations it obtained, its rapid presence in the evangelisation of almost all the continents, its spiritual guidance of princes and kings, its outstanding training, its position as guardian of orthodoxy and its numerous saints are some examples of success the Society can point to.

⁴I rely on an article of Alfonso Alvarez Bolado, *Crisis de la Compañía de Jesús en el Generalato del P. Arrupe*, published in Memoria 2003 of the Institute “Ignacio de Loyola” of the University of Deusto, in San Sebastián.

This same glorious tradition was taken up by the restored Society and lasts until our day. The Jesuit is a man who makes a mark, who has an impact, who innovates. The Society wants to be recognised and be relevant. In our days when so many Jesuits (including myself) have been trained to a religious life that is liberal and effective, this translates into the determination to forge a career that seduces many and the desire to be the best in some field of social or church life. The models proposed and offered as examples are directed towards Jesuits who succeed. There is a wish to emulate them through long studies in the best universities on the planet with gilded doctorates. In general, a Jesuit works, takes life seriously, dedicates himself and seeks recognition. Even judging the suitability of a scholastic can be based on these criteria. It is recounted that not so long ago, when a Jesuit in formation left, his Superior said in public: “We have got rid of a true mule,” referring to his poor intellectual potential. It is very sad to see someone’s religious life valued more for its intellectual capacity than its spiritual or human qualities.

To my way of thinking, this model based on success and efficiency which affects all our apostolic activity whatever sector we take, has had two consequences for the faith-justice option we can identify.

The first consists in the fact that Jesuits tend generally to take on this mission in a very voluntaristic manner. Jesuits tend to be Pelagians. They believe God acts in the world – something they know well from theology and the contemplation to obtain love – but basically through secondary causes, and, more concretely, through our own hands. We are great workers, but we take things with little sportsmanship. The social apostolate, close to the poor, and for that reason needing fiesta, hope, celebration and faith, has been on the contrary very serious, very militant. I quote the farsighted words of Carlos Cabarrús which have a tone of confession:

Those of us who live in these latitudes have seen in the not too distant past many of our dreams dashed: projects have collapsed, visions have been frustrated, many people have been lost – from among the best of them – on the altars of all those utopias we wanted to bring about. We made errors in much of our analysis, which we believed correct. We have to admit it was closed, based often, not on scientific data, but on mere wishful thinking. In many situations we demonized those who ‘were not with us’; and in the same way we also idealized the people, we ideologised them, we also set aside sinners as the main recipients of the message of Jesus and the Kingdom. All this led us to generate a spirituality concentrated only on this: to change structures, but neglecting the complicated personal task of changing the human heart. In some way we relived a certain pelagianism: we overcame everything with our will, with organization, with strength. We didn’t admit any autonomous areas between faith and justice; we lived an apparent synthesis between these two elements as something to be conquered rather than

something to be received and celebrated. In all this we forgot the fiesta, joy, knowing how to relax. We created a spartan mood which tended to burn us out; we didn’t allow vital space for serious and personal prayer. In practice we forgot discernment; we didn’t learn to take care of our personal life, we never took up the task of learning how to live in a caravan. And we didn’t always carry out the exercise of discovering our mistakes and lies.⁵

In a word, the faith-justice mission pre-supposes a joyous dimension of celebration and “waste of time” for which we are not prepared.

The faith-justice mission pre-supposes a joyous dimension of celebration and “waste of time” for which we are not prepared

In fact, many of the most socially active Jesuits went their own way and did their own thing. They drank from the same individualistic sources as all of us in a religious life geared to efficiency and liberalism. In many cases they did not set up institutions that other Jesuits could easily join. On the contrary, they were counted among the charismatics whom nobody knows how to control well and whose superiors were happy as long as they did not get involved in problems that affected them.

Basically they did what they wanted and their impact within the Society was small. Many of them ended up without successors. Their work was praiseworthy, but their spirit of belonging to a body was hardly important. In this sense, community was absent, as in so many other sectors. But perhaps in the social apostolate it was more necessary than in any other. In fact, the most relevant social apostolates in Spain today are those where a community of Jesuits supported them and the Jesuits who took part in them are today counted as those companions having the deepest spirituality.

The second consequence arises from the fact that the social apostolate is not very attractive for building a career. The poor, because they are poor, are not relevant, don’t become well-known, don’t appear in the media. A social apostolate which basically seeks to identify with them meets the same reality: among the poor irrelevance is our lot. This is of little concern to an “authentic Jesuit.” So often, those who achieved greater social recognition in these apostolates have been those who – in the words of a companion with many years in Central America – played “Father Christmas” and hoped to buy their nearness to the poor with the gifts of their benefactors. These also were building a career at the expense of the poor... and in the meantime the gifts continue to arrive. Paradoxically, several Jesuits elected by their Provinces to take part in General Congregations have been involved in the Social Apostolate; this is, in all likelihood, a recognition of their deep spirituality forged during their involvement in ‘irrelevant’ and ‘unsuccessful’ apostolic activities.

⁵Cabarrús, C, *Cuaderno de bitácora para acompañar caminantes*, Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2000, p.21.

I sincerely believe this underlying model of a Jesuit, which we have all absorbed in our formation and perhaps even more once in the Society, makes the Social Apostolate not altogether attractive since it receives little recognition. Is it not partly due to this that few young vocations seek to be assigned to this apostolate?

c. Physical separation from the poor

What to say about our communities? Most of them are retreats facilitating an ordered religious life. In fact, since we are not conventuals, the houses become rest-houses for the warrior, setting up a distance from the ordinary life of the people. Frequently situated physically at an elevation, above our works, they allow us to view everything from above, a valuable observation point which runs the enormous risk of separation and absence of contact. We believe we know it all, but there are many Jesuits who do not know (beyond their own families and friends) how ordinary people live, let alone simple people and still less, the poor. We don't know their worries, their fears, their ways of thinking. Thus it is that we are able to complain about shortages in our community, the food we get, and a thousand other things that would not occur to us if we lived a different life style.

The faith-justice option needs this contact with simple people, with the marginalised which our communities make difficult or prevent because of the way they are structured. I personally believe this way of life is one of the things that has most affected our awareness, our dispositions.

So it happens that whenever we speak in our communities of the vow of poverty, there are those who don't understand that it goes much farther than a prudent austerity and that it necessarily requires a solidarity with the poor so that it can be seen as liberating poverty. Our poverty is blessed when it contains a thirst for justice, changes into pity, works for peace and so brings joy to those who weep and suffer. If not, it remains mere self-control and personal devotion, doubtless praiseworthy but disconnected from the mission of Jesus who, curiously enough, was held to be a glutton and a drunkard.

This distance from, and ignorance of, the poor, the lack of friends from among them, strikes me as an insuperable obstacle to advancing as a body in the faith-justice option. There are no studies or Spiritual Exercises which can substitute for this experience so blocked by our communities.

d. The difficulty of taking on the institutional costs of the faith-justice mission

To opt for the poor, to defend the marginalised, the irrelevant, in a world which oppresses and exploits them is to expose oneself to losing what one has. We are rich in many ways. And if this is not so clear at a personal level, it is at an institutional one. The Society possesses large

works, well-endowed, prestigious and of quality. I believe we are not disposed to lose any of them for just causes. We are more apt to be prudent. We don't gamble much in our bets. We share the logic of our world and know how to profit from it. But it is this same logic that excludes many human beings. There is a certain incompatibility we don't like seeing and always try to overlook. At times we justify the existence of certain works with the argument that they give visibility to the Society and the Church without noticing that more important than being visible are the sort of things by which we are identified. Without doubt that causes enormous problems for the faith-justice mission, because it is no longer a question of how more or how less we promote it but rather one of not even living it fully. This upsets us. For it has its costs.

I must confess I enjoy hearing Jon Sobrino say from time to time that Ignacio Ellacuría never worked for the UCA, but for the poor through the UCA. This is to take the Kingdom seriously, to work for the *magis*, and not excellence as it is usually understood, which tends to be a way of seeking prestige and a good name in the same way as those who don't claim to be Christians. Hopefully we will have many men like Ignacio Ellacuría.

The faith-justice option needs this contact with simple people, which our communities make difficult or prevent because of the way they are structured

2 Difficulties in understanding the formula faith-justice

I think we have tended to consider the faith-justice formula as the juxtaposition of two different things. On one side faith, and on the other, justice. In addition, we have understood faith as belonging to a higher reality. And justice as something like a result subordinated to it. Furthermore, we know faith well, we can read and study it, it can be understood, it is taught in the faculties. Justice... is more complicated, needs analysis, leads to much discussion and different opinions... Justice is something different. To faith the majority of Jesuits should be commissioned. To justice... also all, but in practice just a few. Better that these few take up the commission for all. In this way the formula leads us to an exaggerated concern for faith and a negligible one for justice. Thus both lose out because each should enrich the other with its content. It is better to say, as the Society claims today, that they are both inseparable.

In my opinion, this way of understanding things has been, and still is very common. It does enormous harm. To dissociate faith and justice is to separate Christ from his Kingdom, the problem of unbelief from its corollary of injustice, the priestly from the lay... Today it is surprising to hear again from the mouth of our companions that the real problem is unbelief. As if unbelief in itself is the whole explanation, as if we didn't know it is linked with the lack of care in a society of abundance, its forgetfulness of the suffering of other peoples, the deadening of its conscience – which is what would allow it to hear God's cry. Unbelief is linked to

injustice and vice versa. This is precisely the great discovery of the Society in recent years. Father Arrupe already invited us to question both a spiritual life that produced no fruits of justice and an apostolic life that transmitted no spiritual experience. In every apostolate – he used to say – the two things must be integrated, the service of faith and the promotion of justice.⁶

I borrow from Aloysius Pieris a small outline⁷: we tend to think that there exists a higher order of the supernatural, a gift of God, which we can access through contemplation, allowing us to receive the faith, and finally, salvation. At the same time there exists, we think, another lower order of the natural, of human effort, a sphere open to human action where one can work for justice and perhaps achieve liberation. Perhaps all our tradition from Chalcedon and our neo-platonic inheritance weighs upon us to consider things in this way, so that it doesn't coincide with the more Jewish tradition, present in the Gospels, especially in the synoptics.

And yet, the faith-justice mission connects better with other Christian traditions which have emphasised the transcendency of grace in the midst of what is human, the value of contemplation in action, the mysticism of service. It allows us to work for a liberating salvation, or in the language of our congregations, for a total liberation which the magisterium calls integral liberation.

To separate the formula is easiest and most common, but to unite it is the only way that can give meaning to faith and justice. In fact, it makes faith authentic and completes justice. When faith is separated from justice it degenerates into the current reawakening of the liturgy as something separate from life, as if it belonged to another legalistic and ritual order where the priest who fulfills all the rules is the one who guarantees union with the divine. It is also true that with this the priest's role takes on new life and becomes more attractive. When justice is separated from faith it drifts easily towards ideologies and politicization. It loses strength through actual failures and despairs when utopias are delayed, instead of increasing hope. This was already pointed out in Decree 4 n.27 of GC 32, now 30 years ago: "There can be no promotion of justice in the full and Christian sense unless we also preach Jesus Christ and the mystery of reconciliation... Conversely, it will not be possible to bring Christ to people or to proclaim His Gospel effectively unless a firm decision is taken to devote ourselves to the promotion of justice."

On the other hand, the union of both allows them to enrich each other, so that faith is liberating and justice a mystical gift. We understand better how humanity is impregnated by the mystery of the divine and is the occasion for discernment, and that there is no individual salvation from sin without a collective liberation from

injustice.

As Jon Sobrino says:

*the practice of justice makes the sense of faith more specific, makes possible the appearance of God's mystery in historical reality, and discovers important aspects of this mystery in history which would be more difficult to identify in other channels of practical love. In the practice of justice God's transcendent character appears in a different and more radical way. Partiality for the poor and solidarity with them supposes a process of self impoverishment and, in this way, a sharing in God's nature.*⁸

**To dissociate faith
and justice is to
separate Christ
from his Kingdom.**

**Unbelief is linked
to injustice and
vice versa**

Related to this theme, I believe that German theology, so exalted and so favoured in our faculties, though it has helped in preparing the way, basically through the contributions of Rahner, should now make way for political

theologies which permit a better approach to the integrity of the duality.

We are fortunate that our last General Congregation 34 insisted strongly on the value of this unique faith-justice reality in several of its decrees, from decree 2 n. 14 (Servants of Christ's Mission) to decree 3 n. 4 (Our Mission and Justice), perhaps one of the most inspired texts of the whole Congregation. This means we have gained in understanding little by little, very slowly. Today we understand better than ever that the more effective our apostolates, the more present at the same time both faith and justice

A final clarification. I believe the social apostolate is fortunate in providing the best means to live the integration of both dimensions because it works for justice, but seeks to live it in the faith that inspires Jesuits destined to this apostolate from the outset. Those in the social apostolate know that the secret of their perseverance is in the mystique that inspires them and not in the results they achieve. It is not by chance that in General Congregation 34 the document that served as a lens – *Servants of Christ's Mission* – interpreting and introducing the three documents on mission, arose from separating the more theological and spiritual introduction of the decree *Our Mission and Justice*. Jesuits working in the social apostolate have made an enormous effort in recent years to ensure that their struggle for justice emerges from their faith, since this is the only thing that gives it meaning. For those working in other apostolates it is more difficult to integrate the justice dimension and requires a greater act of will. There clearly exist privileged places to live out this mission, and others not so privileged.

⁶Calvez, Jean-Yves, *Fe y justicia. La dimensión social de la evangelización*, Santander: Sal Terrae, 1988, p.72.

⁷Pieris, Aloysius, *God's Reign for God's Poor*, Tulana Research Centre, Tulana Jubilee Publications, 1998, p.49.

⁸Quoted by Calvez, *op. cit.*, p.145.

3 Difficulties that come from our formation

Our formation also possesses certain characteristics that weaken the Society's faith-justice option. I will mention three of them:

In the *first place* very few Jesuits are destined to study the social sciences. It is generally considered more urgent to know our faith in depth rather than the complexity of our world. But today the world is more complicated than ever before. We need to know how it is organised, who benefits from it, who suffers and what consequences they experience... To this I believe unfortunately little attention is paid. There are Provinces in which all the younger trained Jesuits have special studies in the areas of their work, with the exception of those dedicated to the social area. Perhaps this is no more than chance. But I think it also reflects a lack in our training.

Secondly, we lack real formation experiences in this field. There are many "exposures" as they are called in the Anglo-Saxon world, some days or weeks of insertion in a poor situation in the Third or Fourth world, which run the risk of becoming social tourism, but are experiences that leave a mark on our hearts and leave our sight touched by God's passion for justice. We spend much time letting ourselves be touched by God's mercy: retreats, prayers, examination of conscience... But little in letting ourselves become penetrated by Him in the eyes of his preferred. There are Jesuits who have never lived a radical experience, so decisive to the way of looking at the world of the poor. Some formed Jesuits, when they need to look at the picture of injustice in the world, have to fall back on a 15-day experiment in the novitiate. I do not think this is right. We need studies, yes, but in general a little less of them, and more of contact with life and its suffering. A radical experience in justice and solidarity doesn't solve everything, but without it much holiness and abundant grace would be needed to work for the faith-justice mission. We don't have the right to make things so difficult for the Lord. Our life styles and the people we normally meet draw us away daily from this mission, not making it easy for the Lord during formation.

Thirdly, the best people have not been destined for the social apostolate, which in the long run can achieve a balance between faith and justice, but which today in the Society leans towards faith-culture. The most capable are destined for the intellectual apostolate (praiseworthy, necessary, bursting with a laudable generosity from those Jesuits assigned to it), an apostolate that contains numerous demons better left unmentioned, and one needing much greater care in discernment and a considerable practice of abnegation.

*We need studies,
yes, but in general
a little less of them,
and more of
contact with life
and its suffering.*

It would seem that for the social apostolate all that is needed is good will and an open heart. This is not true.

4 Our apostolic practice

At present there is a high degree of assistentialism in the social ministries of the Church. Possibly this is because two complementary needs meet: on the one hand, many church agents have a desire to serve and, on the other, the same church organisations look on them as a cheap way of enabling them to meet needs (through sub-contracting or out-sourcing) that otherwise would be far more costly and complicated to satisfy. Many of these organisations with programmes of social intervention little by little lose their freedom to their own administrations. The work relationship with paid employees also leaves much to be desired. In fact extra work is often demanded on a voluntary basis. It is a situation that ends by being somewhat schizophrenic. Motives for the work are worthwhile, but the means are not the best.

On the other hand, the relationship of assistance between those aided and the providers of aid is usually an asymmetric unequal one. It is a relationship of help. The faith-justice mission strives for a relationship of brotherhood, which supposes greater equality, closer contact, a higher degree of vulnerability. Assistance places me above the other, while faith-justice tends towards mutual recognition and sharing. I do not know to what extent we take care of this in our Fourth world projects. What I do believe is that our specific contribution as Jesuits should be geared more towards an integrating mutual meeting than palliative care.

The Society has a great variety of institutions in very different areas: academic, educational, social communication, NGOs and contacts with very different types of people. It is a rich resource for anyone who wishes to tackle justice problems in

*Assistance places
me above the
other, while faith-
justice tends
towards mutual
recognition and
sharing.*

our world because we are in touch with people who suffer, with situations where we can reflect on the causes of exclusion, with the capability to influence public opinion and access to channels of political decision. In addition, a wealth of international contacts allows us to take part in networks formed by institutions working for the same causes in other places. In the globalised world in which we live, such collaboration is essential to tackle complicated international social problems. The life of the poor is at stake on the streets, but no less in the big centres of decision in international organisations. Few human groups can count with a similar capital in persons and institutions to reply to the challenges offered today by global injustice. Unfortunately, our institutions in general tend towards inbreeding, and relations between them turn out to be more complicated than might have been expected. This is another of the elements that cause difficulties to the faith-justice option. The underlying

problem is a mistaken orientation in these institutions: they are so focussed on their own small problems that they forget the bigger ones, which is where they should find their replies to the former.

To my way of seeing, the universities are the institutions with the best human and institutional capabilities to become involved in this mission. However, it is also they who today find it more complicated to orientate their work in the direction of the faith-justice mission. Both, from the aspect of faith, which in the autonomous world of the university and challenged by sciences that leave no room for other considerations, remains sidetracked; and from the aspect of justice, which transcends the preoccupations of most of teachers concerned with culture or merely an academic career, and for whom espousing the justice dimension might make things awkward for them with the administration.

Lastly, in this section I wish to note that the present time, confused, fragmented, a little hostile towards the struggle for justice and even more towards the defence of faith, encourages Jesuits to seek a small corner for personal meaning. It doesn't matter that it is not very relevant, as long as it is for me; nor does it matter that it doesn't involve me with other companions, nor that it be an option discerned along with others, as long as it has value for me. The less a Province is mobilised by a global initiative, the more readily such a situation occurs. One ends up in a position where it is impossible to motivate anyone for a common cause, which is also a serious impediment for the faith-justice option.

5 The living of our spirituality

A first consideration. In recent decades, spiritual experience in society has become more gnostic, ever more centred on the individual and on the manifestation of mystery in the individual's interior life, the presence of inner mystery. This drift, probably connected with the complexity of our world already mentioned, and our smallness before it – complexity and smallness which bewilder and frighten us – is also affecting us as Christians. We too are more concerned with personal experience, intimate, inner, in our own self-realisation. We tend rather to look at God within me, than in historical events, than what happens in life... The St Paul bookshops could survive only from the sale of self-help texts. We look at ourselves a lot. We believe we can only really be useful for the Kingdom if we are so fashioned that we are already part of it. I don't believe it is like this. We all have value in the Kingdom as long as our disposition remains free and resolute. We cannot wait to change ourselves in order to serve the Kingdom. Both things go together.

This is certainly a very widespread spiritual tendency which contaminates our relationship with the Lord and lets the steam out of the faith-justice mission; a tendency that has much more to do with the world and its causes, that

calls for much contemplation of the incarnation, of the hidden divinity and that speaks of a God working in all human events, leaving in them signs to interpret our times and discern our role in them.

A second consideration. Once Gustavo Gutiérrez was asked which spirituality could be considered a spirituality of liberation. He answered without hesitation: Ignatian spirituality. The reply is not surprising since it is a spirituality with eyes wide open, of openness to the world, of discovering in it the God of life working for the good of his creatures in a broken and upset reality, of following sinners along the paths of their Friend.

But at the same time we know that Ignatian spirituality itself can be lived perfectly well on the margin of this meeting point with the liberating dimension of the divine. Many proposals of spirituality from the Society today do not contain the savour of a God partial to the poorest and inviting us to act on their behalf. The preferential option for the poor is often silenced, stifled, and so it happens that Ignatian spirituality does not seem challenging. As Pieris puts it, it becomes an instrument of salvation for personal sin and ignores the other aspect of a call to liberate people. The option for the poor is basic to our present faith-justice mission, but it is not a merely logical step. An asymmetrical, tilting God appears scandalous even to Christians but often either we don't proclaim it or we don't live it.

A third and final consideration. In our time, within the Society, a negative global judgement of the world is being formed which leaves no opportunity for the action of the Spirit. It gives the impression that all is bad. It is bound up with the lucidity of an acute judgement and brilliant expression, without allowing that anything good could lighten a reality that degenerates from bad to worse. There is no place for faith, nor for the Church, nor for the progress of justice, nor hope for the excluded, nor future for the included... In our Society today there are some "professional complainers." As Robert Hughes puts it:

complaint is a defeated version of rebellion. It is the hideout of the person who, dissatisfied with the solution given to life, sets out to hunt. To complain is to make the most of one's own disgust, serving up plates cooked with the meat of the defeats of others. It is to believe one lives through affirming a refusal to allow oneself to be tricked. To live is a common exchange of nightmares, groans, slanders and deceits.⁹

Such a way of acting imprisons, depresses, paralyses and embitters us. In many of our communities this immobilizing complaint often does the rounds. I suppose bitterness has many sources: age, failure, a growing feeling of irrelevancy, the fall in vocations, the viscosity of our modern times that permits no treatment because it is shapeless and prevents all our movements, the lack of a clear external enemy and the growth of the other we carry within...

*We cannot wait
to change
ourselves in
order to serve the
Kingdom. Both
things go
together*

I sincerely believe there is an element of this sourness in many of our companions. It is melancholy, apathy. In theological language it is called the absence of hope, and in spiritual terms desolation, when more emphasis must be given to prayer and some way of doing penance. This apathy and bitter judgement on the world has made an impression on Jesuits who have dedicated themselves to structural change, perhaps because it turned out to be difficult and very complicated.

The social apostolate sometimes errs in this negative, bitter and destructive analysis. It is a debilitating contribution to the faith-justice mission which should cultivate hope, point to ways of participation, give life to points of inclusion and rejoicing. One cannot be a spoilsport always. The God we believe in, the friend of life, is not like this.

6 Current church trends

After the Second Vatican Council we have witnessed a strong ecclesiastical retreat, the true motto of this pontificate. The faith is lived more from ritual, the sacraments, the weight of priesthood and hierarchy. Control within the Church has increased, the desire for all to remain tied up and immobile. The dialogue on personal morality is strengthened and, at least in our country, opposition between Church and Government is limited to those moral questions that seem to be the last bastion of defence of the faith. It is possible that what exists today in church structures is a fear of the disappearance of an order that will not return and that the control itself is exercised with this same instrument of fear.

These trends give the impression of an overpreoccupation of the Church with itself and, in this sense, of greater attention to the symbol of the Kingdom rather than the real Kingdom. An unbending attitude in defending the Church doesn't help the faith-justice mission. It distorts faith and forgets justice, except in relation to the place of church structures in laicised, or non-confessional (according to your preference) States. Today there are many Christians confused by the distance between the proclaimed message and the witness offered by the Church. In fact, awareness is growing that justice within the Church itself leaves much to be desired in the form of inequality, and a lack of sharing and internal democracy.

These trends have also affected us Jesuits in so far as we belong to the Church and work within it. Among us too there is a retreat into our own structures and an enormous prudence in most of our manifestations. In this sense we lack the freedom that many of our companions had in the past.

This is as far as I wish to go with this exercise. One hour: the time taken in meditating on our own sins according to the suggestion of St Ignatius himself. One can repeat oneself in order to increase the inner knowledge of one's

own disorder, but one cannot remain gloating over it all of one's life. This is to deny divine mercy which helps us gain in understanding so as to return to our lives with new eyes, full of humanity and reconciliation rather than anger and despair. I don't want us to finish this morning with the impression that all is bad, because this is simply not true. On the contrary, as I said at the beginning, the faith-justice mission continues to blaze trails in the Society: each day we feel ourselves more called to it, we realise that greater apostolic fruit comes from the interplay of faith and justice, and we know it is a great gift God has given us in our times, sealed with the suffering of many companions and with the glorious blood – this is truly glorious – of the martyrs. But I was only asked to reflect on the obstacles and the truth is that these do exist.

***There is a retreat
into our own
structures and an
enormous
prudence in most
of our
manifestations***

Original Spanish
Translation by Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ

Patxi Alvarez SJ
Pedro San Martín 1, 1º y 2º izq.
48920 Portugalete
SPAIN
<p.alvarez@alboan.org>

⁹Robert Hughes, *The culture of complaint*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993, quoted by José María Fdz-Martos, *Toda vida verdadera es encuentro*, Rev. Manresa, n.300, 2004, pp. 259-274.

REFLECTION

JESUITS, INTELLECTUAL LIFE AND MISSION IN INDIA¹

Ambrose Pinto SJ

I am a Jesuit from India, heading a University college. Just a month ago, a fellow Jesuit from the Province of Mumbai who completed his doctoral studies at the National Law School, Bangalore, was felicitated by the community, and at this function he made a presentation on intellectual life in the Society of Jesus. The reflections in this paper were provoked by that presentation. What struck me most was that the institutions of the Society in India – our schools and colleges – have produced more intellectuals in different spheres than the Society of Jesus from its members. And yet it is important to ask, “What kind of intellectuals has the Society of Jesus produced both from within and through its institutions? Are they really the people who belong to the intellectual class in the Jesuit sense?”

In India, we have names like Frs. Heras, the famous historian from Mumbai, Cecil Saldanha, the Botanist from Bangalore, Yeddandalli, the Chemist from Chennai, Bulke, the Hindi Scholar from Ranchi, and a host of others who are no more but have left a mark as scholars in their respective fields. A few are still making a contribution through their laboratories and research publications in some of the colleges and institutes. And the products of our institutions are more numerous and far more renowned than the Jesuits of the past or present. While Dr. Abdul Kalam, the man behind India’s nuclear programme and the present President of the country was a product of St. Joseph’s College, Trichy, Raja Ramanna, his co-worker in the nuclear programme studied in St. Joseph’s, Bangalore. These two josphites were behind India’s nuclear programme. The founder of the hotmail is a product of St. Joseph’s Boys High School, Bangalore; the same is true of the founder of Google. The Society of Jesus in India can be proud, no doubt, of its institutions’ contribution to the field of sciences, social sciences, information and governance.

But this pride when examined in the light of the options of the Society may put us to shame. Let us first take the case of Dr. Abdul Kalam, the President of the country. In spite of being a Muslim, the Bharatiya Janata Party, a party committed to exterminate the minorities from the country, was not against his elevation to the highest post of the land after the genocide of Muslims in the state of Gujarat. Abdul Kalam is a pure intellectual who has pursued Physics for the sake of Physics without any ideology, and is perhaps not conscious of being used by the politicians to serve their purpose. A concerned intellectual would have declined the offer of Presidency, given the fascist nature and ideology of the party.

As a political party committed to the establishment of a theocratic state, the BJP has attacked intellectual life at every step. Like all fascist groups, it is anti-intellectual, and continues to be suspicious of independent academicians and all those in intellectual circles committed to enhance the quality of life of citizens.²

The subaltern consciousness can be either indoctrinated or autonomous. Too often, indoctrination of that consciousness, and repression of its autonomous side is engaged in by groups with power and vested interests in retaining that power. The overall result is an impoverished intellectual class, an indoctrinated middle class and subaltern groups that keep the social status quo intact.

The success of the BJP in India can be attributed to the de-intellectualized and de-culturised middle class in the country. Its members are increasingly being indoctrinated by the discourse of the state and the party in power, and the autonomous dimension of the intellect is not allowed free play by authoritarian groups. The Dalits, Tribals and backward classes regard themselves as inferior only because they have been indoctrinated to think in that way by hegemonic powers. Behind the nationalism of the BJP is a cynical power game to keep the society unequal. To destroy fascism, the country needs an intellectual response firmly rooted in the notions of the Preamble of the Indian constitution – equality, fraternity and justice.

But this is not easy since the fascist project in the country has succeeded in exploiting and using the very principles of liberal democracy. While the framers of the constitution and the governments that followed spoke of gender justice, the BJP has lent “sati” (the cruel practice of burning women on the funeral pyre of their husbands) a kind of sanction by glorifying an instance when it did in fact occur. Members of the party explained it as the selflessness of the woman, as a part of the country’s heritage, and even erected a temple there, turning the helpless young woman who was compelled to jump into the funeral fire by relatives into a goddess. When five untouchables were burnt for skinning cows, a sacred animal for the caste Hindus, the then Prime Minister, instead of condemning the act, legitimized it by saying that cows are sacred to caste Hindus, and this despite the fact that over 75 per cent of Indians consume beef. Why do these heinous acts take place? The answer is simple. It is

*What kind of
intellectuals has the
Society of Jesus
produced both from
within and through
its institutions?*

¹Though the article was written at the time when the fundamentalist party BJP was in power, we feel that some of the questions raised need to be answered even during a different political dispensation which appears to favour a secular political agenda [Editor’s Note].

²The party refused to permit publication of the work of two eminent scholars - Sumit Sarkar and K.N.Panikar, on India’s freedom struggle, a work sponsored by the previous Congress government, since the line adopted by the two globally well-known historians did not favour their party.

the power of indoctrination. As long as education remains indoctrination, the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger will continue. To establish a fascist culture one has to reconstruct the past by manufacturing facts. When the autonomous element of the intellect is promoted, the poor will raise questions about their inequality and exploitation. They will be able to confront and respond to the forces of unjust power and privilege. Democracy is inimical to cultural nationalists. The culture the BJP speaks of is the culture of caste and privilege, the perpetuation of which will further their interests.

***As long as
education remains
indoctrination, the
subjugation of the
weaker by the
stronger will
continue***

The role of the intellectual is to locate himself/herself in the midst of the social, economic and political reality and respond to the issue of marginalisation and exploitation of the masses. An Indian Jesuit, therefore, has to be essentially different from Jesuits in other countries. His mission though universal is specific; he needs to define his identity in terms of his milieu. He is expected to be a voice of the voiceless instead of staying aloof or becoming a part of the establishment. There can be no neutral intellectuals. Neutrality in reality means providing support to the establishment. Can we loudly proclaim that the Society in India has produced concerned intellectuals to speak on behalf of the masses? To respond to the fascist nature of the polity and society, what is needed is an ideological agenda – something that the Society of Jesus has lacked in India. Our formation programmes are cut-off from the realities of the lives of the subalterns. The involvement programmes in formation houses lack ideology and tend to be activities scholastics take on to relax from the routine of academics, which themselves lack focus. The formators and educators in formation houses, colleges and schools have been forming students and Jesuits in ivory towers where what takes place is indoctrination and not education, preparing people to merge with the establishment instead of critically resisting its structures. We need a culture of dissent to work for transformation. Unfortunately, Jesuits in India for the most part do not have it. We are not prepared to think; perhaps we are even afraid to think differently.

The country has a history of intellectuals who have refused to be a part of the establishment.³ During the BJP regime several intellectuals refused to give in to the agenda of the party, willing to pay a price for their convictions. It is true that in the Sciences, we have several who have opposed India's nuclear programme and others who have taken Science to the villages but the tragedy is that the intellectual class on the whole, both within and outside the Society of Jesus in the country, has not been able to tie up with the aspirations of the marginalised in Indian society. Ours is an isolated existence. What is perhaps saddening is that through our institutions we have defended power, privilege and prestige and have failed to

be gripped by issues of marginalisation, impoverishment and exclusion.

To respond to the communal and capitalist project in the country, the Indian Jesuits need an intellectual project that is committed to the preamble of the constitution. This project must necessarily fall back on the legacy of Ambedkar, Phule, Periyar and a host of others who struggled for equality, fraternity and justice in the land. People like Ambedkar, Phule and Periyar knew that only an intellectual response premised on the empowerment of the poor could transform the country. There was a counter cultural agenda. They rightly perceived the root causes of marginalisation and poverty in the country and fought against it ideologically. They knew that the project needs the alliance of all people and they were able to draw people of good will from across social constituencies.

We cannot talk of intellectuals without an emancipatory agenda. One of the obstacles for the emancipatory agenda is our formation. You can't make intellectuals out of conformists. And there is work to be done in terms of forming an autonomous consciousness to counter the widespread indoctrination that prevails. In one of the recent meetings of the Province Social Action Commission, several Jesuits from the field complained that while they have been intervening in the lives of the dalits through economic programmes, the forces of hindutva provide the ideological dimension even in the remotest villages to the very groups they serve. When these bodies call for meetings or gatherings all the people rush to the gatherings in the name of religion. What is taught there is once again indoctrination – the dalits and the tribals are asked to be aware of the designs of the missionaries. They are told that the missionaries would convert them and attack their Hindu identity. In spite of being termed as outcasts, untouchables and impure, they are told that they are Hindus.

***What is perhaps
saddening is that
through our
institutions we
have defended
power, privilege
and prestige***

Since we lack an ideology, we have not been able to respond to the allegations through a counter ideology and add our mite to the transformative process. The Jesuits as a result still remain as outsiders to the entire empowerment programme of the impoverished in the country for the reason that the ideology in our social centres and missions is still provided by the forces of hindutva to keep the subaltern groups under control.

All this means that one cannot speak of intellectual life in India without the ideological dimension. Ideologies are always political since they are related to building consciousness and providing power. Ideology raises

³The names of Ambedkar, an untouchable who spearheaded the empowerment of the community and fought against the caste order, Nehru, who along with Gandhi who resisted the British rule in the country, Arundhati Roy, who is a powerful voice against capitalism and nuclearisation of the Indian state, Medha Patkar who has globalised the local struggles of the tribals against eviction and a host of others, are known all over the world.

questions about who has power and why one group has so much power as to control the majority, and about how the powerless are to be empowered. If our mission is empowerment of the poor, we cannot do that without an ideological dimension. It is time that the Society of Jesus in India situates itself in the social, economic and political context. Intellectual life cannot be discussed in abstraction; it can be discussed only in relation to the poor in state and society.

That raises the final question. Is the Society of Jesus in India devoid of intellectual life? Not at all. But the intellectual life fostered by the Society both within and outside has remained a part of the establishment. The challenge is to form the “organic intellectuals” that Gramsci talks about. It is sad to note that we have produced so few concerned intellectuals. Barring a few exceptions, Jesuit education has not contributed to building subaltern consciousness or adding to the quality of life of the people. And without that intellectual life, we cannot be commissioned by the Lord to do the “magis” for him. Lisbert⁴ in his farewell interview to *JIVAN*⁵ spoke of the lack of professionalism in the Assistancy but it is not professionalism that the Assistancy lacks. We do not need managers and professionals for the establishment. What we need are agents of change in society.

Our communities and formation houses are too inward looking and more concerned about “self” than others. A complacent life cannot produce dissent. It is this lack of dissent that has kept the Assistancy from raising critical questions pertaining to the life and livelihoods of our people in the country and working towards an egalitarian social order. We need to work out alternatives to the present unjust social order since the Lord sends us on a mission, and that needs serious thought, reflection and action evolved from the lives of the people. There cannot be any intellectual life apart from the people whom the Lord has sent us to serve.

Ambrose Pinto SJ
 St. Joseph’s College
 P.B. 27094, Lal Bagh Road
 Bangalore 560027
 INDIA
 <p_ambrose@hotmail.com>

⁴Fr. Lisbert D’Souza, former Provincial of the South Asian Assistancy is now Assistant at the Curia in Rome [Editor’s Note].

⁵*JIVAN* is a monthly journal published by the South Asian Assistancy [Editor’s note]

A RESPONSE

Lisbert D’Souza SJ

I have read with interest Fr Ambrose Pinto’s article Jesuits, Intellectual Life and Mission in India. I write not to refute or take issue but to nuance and thereby, hopefully, complement his stirring call to Jesuits to be intellectuals who are agents of change.

In recent years we Jesuits have learnt to distinguish the promotion of justice as both, a dimension integral to all our ministries, and as a sector, a form of ministry. Similarly, we may helpfully distinguish between the intellectual dimension of all our work and the intellectual apostolate as a form of ministry.

The first is emphasised in GC 34 (D.16, n.3) where we are exhorted to develop the ability to analyze and evaluate the importance of solid socio-economic-cultural analyses. Fr Ambrose rightly highlights this intellectual dimension of all Jesuit ministries when he urges the importance of autonomous, critical thinking and this in the context of the social reality that constitutes India. However, Fr Ambrose brands formation houses as culprits in that they indoctrinate rather than foster critical and autonomous thinking.

In my many years of association with formation houses of philosophy and theology in India, I have met very few staff who could be described as conformists and who promote conformism. In fact, one of the allegations against our staff is precisely the opposite, that they do not sufficiently ground the students in the tradition and the received wisdom. However, there is another strand to Fr Ambrose’s criticism to which I believe our staff should plead guilty. Our teaching is insufficiently informed by, and addresses only in passing, the social reality and the social problems that affect our people. Somehow, even though we keep abreast of what is going on in the social, cultural and political arena, we seem unable to integrate this with what and how we teach. No doubt there are several other factors here: the large numbers in the class that militate against the kind of tutoring so necessary to cultivate a searching mind, the syllabus, the exam systems etc. But one predominant factor, I think, is the lack of personal involvement in and personal commitment to the lives of the poor. While words like indoctrination and conformism sit poorly on what we do in houses of formation, I believe that as formators we fail to communicate a passionate commitment to the cause of the poor.

With apologies to Kant I would say that, without proper social analyses passionate commitment is blind. Yet, without such passion, social analysis is sterile. I believe our formation, at least up to a point, provides the social, cultural analyses our students need, but I doubt whether our students are motivated to passionate concern by the conduct

We do not need managers and professionals for the establishment. What we need are agents of change in society

I have met very few staff who could be described as conformists and who promote conformism

of us who are their intellectual mentors. Where then can they gain this passionate concern? I believe we are well served here by the words of Ignatius quoted in GC 34: “friendship with the poor makes us friends of the eternal King” (D.2, n.9). A passionate concern is akin to falling in love, and we know from personal experience or from the example of others, how such love changes our world: our priorities, our assessments, our value system. The apostolic involvements, which Fr Ambrose writes off somewhat disparagingly as recreational, have their place here – and more so at the time of regency. I know of several young Jesuits, now deeply committed to a social group or community, who discovered their apostolic orientation and were imbued with such passionate concern through contact with the poor. This led to the friendship Ignatius speaks of – and, like true love and friendship, burgeoned into something that grew to embrace all disadvantaged, everywhere.

A word now about the Intellectual Apostolate, a ministry strongly recommended by GC 34 as typical of the Society of Jesus. In recent years, the most emphatic assertion of the Jesuit way of engaging in this ministry was given us by the Jesuits martyred in El Salvador. A few years ago it was heart-warming to see how, at the South Asia Assistancy Assembly, the Assembly held together our commitment to the dalits, tribals and women as our priorities, and serious study and research as crucial if our service to these was to be relevant. However, with the exception of isolated individuals, we can hardly claim that we have Jesuits whose research is a significant expression of our concern for social change. Is this, as Fr Ambrose claims, because our men in the intellectual apostolate lack an ideology?

I am somewhat wary of talk about ideology. The term smacks of rigidity and even brain-washing and is often the antithesis of the creative and critical spirit Fr Ambrose espouses. I fully concur with the view that no research is value-independent. Hence, as

 Jesuits, our research must be related to our option for the poor. This option calls for much more than offering services to our priority groups. It means looking at the world from the viewpoint of the disadvantaged and asking how what we do, including the intellectual ministry we engage in,

 contributes to a more truly just and humane world, makes the world a better place for the poor.

This brings us back to the Ignatian insistence on friendship with the poor. It is not for nothing that he insisted that Lainez and Salmeron, our men at Trent, should live in a hospice. He saw, what we often fail to realize, that such contact with and solidarity with the poor colours how we think and act. If, as Fr Ambrose observes, we cannot “loudly proclaim that the Society in India has produced concerned intellectuals to speak on behalf of the

masses,” it is because our intellectually gifted do not love the poor enough, or have not realized how their love for the poor can find and must find powerful expression in their intellectual endeavours.

Committed social activists, passionate and with the right “ideology,” fail because they lack skills proper for team work and inter-personal collaboration

Finally, I suspect that the Editor has approached me to respond to Fr Ambrose’s article, partly at least, because of the reference to the interview I gave in JIVAN. I wonder why Fr Ambrose translates my plea for the professional training of Superiors in leadership skills as a plea to have Superiors who are managers. Management and leadership are far from synonymous. Let me make a further plea, in the context of Fr Ambrose’s article. Just as there are Superiors who, despite being imbued by the spirit of the Exercises, fail because they lack leadership skills, so also committed social activists, passionate and with the right “ideology,” fail because they lack skills proper for team work and inter-personal collaboration, the ability to organise and animate a people’s movement. So a social activist, no less than a superior, needs professional skills to be truly effective in his mission.

Lisbert D’Souza SJ
 General Curia
 C.P. 6139
 00195 Roma-Prati
 ITALY
 <lisbert@sjcuria.org>

I believe that as formators we fail to communicate a passionate commitment to the cause of the poor

THE SOCIAL APOSTOLATE IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN ASSISTANCY

Robin Schweiger SJ

1. The European continent: from division to union

There was a time when most of the Eastern European Assistancy (EOR)¹ – which stretches from Poland to America² – shared the experience of a *communist regime*. The years under communism – which for many of our countries began after the second world war – spelt suffering for Christians who could not occupy the highest positions in their places of work, in different associations or in society. The reason of course was the incompatibility of religious faith and communism; the latter requires the person to be not only a member of the communist party but also an atheist. The times were hard, both for the Catholic Church and for Jesuits. Some Jesuits did not know the identity of other Jesuits in their own Province, a safety measure so as not to be discovered by the state's secret service for this would bring further problems: humiliating interrogations, prison, or other degrading punishments. The communist governments tried to divide the priests into pro and anti government factions and to separate the local Churches from the Church of Rome, that is from the Pope.³

The simple account above helps us understand that it was not easy to 'survive' in times of communism, and that Jesuits suffered much: some more, others less.⁴ Many bore various sufferings heroically, enduring humiliations with great sacrifices up till the time of the fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989.⁵ This event marked the beginning of a new epoch that in time revealed all the consequences of communism among people and institutions – including the Church. It was a time of *transition* to a new way of being and thinking, to a market economy, to the creation of (almost) democratic institutions, in a word, to a new political system. In this new system the Church also had to find its role and mission in a new and different way. This period of transition – of great expectations, hopes and also frustrations – came to an end on the 1st of May 2004 with the entrance for the first time into the European Community of some countries with backgrounds of communist regimes.. One can imagine the enormous joy of reuniting with the continent after 60 years of division imposed by history, when the representatives of then great 'powers' – Stalin and Roosevelt at the conference of Yalta – divided the European continent into two 'spheres' of influence towards the end of the second world war.

*To take a
'quantum leap'
is a valid goal for
the social
apostolate in our
Assistancy*

2 Development of the social apostolate in the 'new times'

This brief introduction helps us understand how important it was after the fall of the Berlin wall to meet with the Jesuits already involved, or planning to become involved, in the social apostolate in our Assistancy. The meeting was held in January 1996 in Prague,⁶ the capital of the Czech Republic. For the first time in the Assistancy's history, no one had any difficulty in moving freely; no one was afraid of being observed and/or controlled. At that time there were no coordinators of the social apostolate in our Provinces. The aim of the meeting was to prepare for the world meeting on the social apostolate in Naples in 1997. This world meeting was very important not only to share different experiences but also to understand the lights and shadows of the social apostolate in different parts of the world. For our Assistancy, it was especially important to know and understand how the social apostolate had developed in other parts of the world and also to ensure *the setting up of a small commission* for the social apostolate. From 1997 till date,⁷ this commission, with the help of the Social Secretariat in the Curia, has organised annual meetings for Jesuits in various places.

This 'pilgrimage' through the several Provinces in our Assistancy was an opportunity to know different Provinces and to stimulate the social question within it. Groups were set up to prepare the annual meeting to which scholastics, fathers and Provincials of all the Provinces were invited. At each meeting – lasting 3-4 days – we had time to share our experiences, to reflect on how to promote and 'build' a social sector in each Province; in addition

¹The name of our Assistancy is the 'fruit' of the cold war, when our continent was divided between western Europe (capitalist) and eastern Europe (communist). Today it is necessary to 'update' this name to reflect the new geopolitical situation. It is necessary to find a new name for our Assistancy, or better, to reorganise the Provinces in Europe since many of the countries of the ex-Soviet Union are part of Asia and not 'eastern Europe,' as Jesuits call this part of the world since the Russian region is part of the Assistancy. To make it clearer: countries like Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic are part of Central Europe from a geographic point of view and no longer feel they should be considered part of eastern Europe. Time and wisdom will be needed to find a just solution.

²Our Assistancy is composed of the following Provinces: Bohemia, Croatia, Rumania, Slovakia, Poland (two Provinces), and the Russian Region. The Baltic countries of Hungary and Albania which also experienced communism belong to other European Assistancies.

³The first to be frightened of the 'impact' of a Polish Pope were, in different ways, the communist governments themselves. 1981 was the year of the assassination attempt against the Pope and one can understand where such an 'idea' came from and why. A very personal and typical memory of the regime's fear was when I was doing military service in the Yugoslav army. Sunday 13 December 1981, when General Jaruzelski - at that time Polish President - declared martial law, we were kept up throughout the night to be persuaded his decision was justified because the 'enemy' wished to 'strike at' Poland. As a result, it was necessary to be alert for the 'inner enemy' in Yugoslavia as well. The ideology of an 'inner enemy' who was 'active' was always very strong. In our countries the most 'dangerous enemy' was thought to be the Catholic Church which, in consequence, was under special surveillance.

there was always some special theme of general interest. Some of these special themes with invited experts – Jesuit or lay – were: Europe, Father General’s letter on the social apostolate, sustainable development, migration, to mention only a few.

As coordinator of the social apostolate in our Assistancy, I requested a reflection and planning meeting with our Assistancy Provincials in Poland (Falenica, 2002). As we are the only (!) group in our Assistancy, we wanted to hear how the ‘authorities’ in the different Provinces felt about the social apostolate. It was a very profitable meeting and also an opportunity to share different experiences and information on the social apostolate. It was very important to think about how the somewhat ‘young’ social apostolate in our Assistancy could move ahead and make progress, to take, in the words of Fr Adam Zak (at that time Provincial and today EOR Assistant), a ‘quantum leap’ – a valid goal for all of us involved in the social apostolate in our Assistancy.

3 Some practical considerations

(1) Owing to our historical context of communism it was difficult for us to understand decree 4 of GC 32, and it is still not easy to speak in our Assistancy of the Society’s mission, namely of faith which includes justice. The various ‘wounds received from the earlier system in different areas of work and at different levels ‘prevent’ us from looking at the positive things in communism, at current socio-economic challenges and especially today’s injustices with equanimity. They also inhibit us from responding to them with the ‘creative fidelity’ of our founder St Ignatius. The idea of social justice is still too ‘bound up in ideology’ and looked on with a certain degree of suspicion. We still lack systematic reflection on these two pillars of our mission for a new reply for ‘today’. The special situation under communism notwithstanding, Jesuits have helped, and continue to help, the poor and marginalised through the structures of our parishes.

(2) In our Assistancy there is only one social centre, OCIPE in Poland, but there are Jesuits involved on their own in various social works. Some Provinces have started the JRS as a way to face the drama of the war in the Balkans that began in 1991 in Slovenia and Croatia and then spread to Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. Many Jesuits from several European Provinces spent brief spells, and sometimes longer periods, in Sarajevo where there was an international community of Jesuits helping all the peoples struck down by the war.

(3) Few Jesuits in the Assistancy have studied social sciences. Still too few Jesuits are sent by their respective Provincials to pursue higher study in this field, which holds so many challenges for us today. Not only the development of a social sector born with great difficulty in recent years, but the social sector itself is at risk; there is a danger of “the social sector disappearing,”⁸ and with it perhaps, the social dimension of our work as Jesuits.

(4) In our Provinces too little work is done on our social problems in collaboration with lay people. Sometimes there is too great a fear of dialogue with civil society,⁹ but dialogue could be the right way to consider together the common good of our countries, to strengthen our religion’s public role in the search for solutions to current social problems.

(5) I am happy that in recent years several Provincials have named social coordinators in the Provinces. Some young Jesuits in our Assistancy are beginning to reflect together on how to build a better organised and more solid social apostolate so that we can face handle today’s challenges more effectively. One avenue we certainly need to explore is collaboration with Jesuits involved in social issues in other Assistancies in Europe and elsewhere.

Original Italian
Translation by Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ

Robin Schweiger SJ
Vodnikova 279
1000 Ljubljana
SLOVENIA
<schweiger@unigre.it>

⁴Many Jesuits were in prison because, during the homily in church, they had spoken ‘erroneous’ words or because the interpretation of their words was ‘contrary’ to the good ‘fruits’ of the revolution. One Father of our Slovenian Province spent 9 (!) years in prison, simply because he had said ‘too much’. There are many examples like this.

A recent film which illustrates excellently the theme of communism is: Goodbye Lenin.

⁵A recent film which illustrates excellently the theme of communism is: Goodbye Lenin.

⁶Because of the special experience of our Assistancy, Fr Michael Czerny (at that time head of the Social Secretariat in the Curia) planned to initiate a series of regional meetings, especially for this part of Europe.

⁷The first meeting after the world meeting in Naples was in Croatia. Annual meetings took place in November in Croatia (’98), Poland (PMA ’99, 2000), Slovenia (2001), Croatia (2002), Slovakia (2003), Poland (PME 2004). The first European meeting between the three ‘pillars’ of the social apostolate – JRS, Mission Ouvrière and Eurojess – was in Slovenia in August 2004.

⁸These words were pronounced by Father General in the meeting of coordinators of the social apostolate of our Assistancy in 2003 and 2004.

⁹A good example of collaboration between ‘Church’ and ‘State’ which other countries might find useful is in Slovenia between JRS and the Slovenian police. Out of the initial collaboration in 1999 in reply to the great number of ‘people on the move’ was born a recent written agreement between JRS and the forced of order for a closer collaboration on this issue.

EXPERIENCES

CHRIST IN A LOWLY PLACE

Jean-François Thomas SJ

Jesuits throughout the world generally don't have a reputation for a Franciscan life-style of poverty and humility. Nevertheless, Saint Ignatius does indeed invite us to an effective poverty and humility in following the humble Christ. In the Meditation on the Two Standards in the Spiritual Exercises, he invites us to consider the words of the Lord addressed to those who desire to follow Him. Taking on material and spiritual poverty and desiring humiliation so as to acquire humility seem to be ways through which to grow in all the virtues. The example left by the founder and by so many other Jesuits over the centuries can – in an age bogged down in materialism – only disturb clergymen unable to escape the common rule.

The zeal of the novice, so marked by idealism and purity, offers poor resistance at times to the external pressure and mediocre habits that steer our communities. When I entered the novitiate twenty-three years ago, I undoubtedly dreamed of a religious life, but soon discovered the harshness of it and the difficulty of remaining faithful to it. Instead of considering and judging the specks of my neighbours, I had to shoulder my own beams, a crushing burden. Little by little, through chances that came during formation, through occasions for service (pompously called apostolate), different assigned tasks, and relationships sometimes fraternal, sometime tense, with certain superiors and certain confreres, a purified image of what my mission should be in obedience, appeared. And many times that made me shiver.

Afraid of being a worldly religious, it seemed to me I should take an extra step toward a more radical self-emptying, even if I still remained far from the demands of the Gospel. Brought into contact with extreme poverty, notably during my work in Romania and tertianship in the Philippines, and knowing that I was not very useful in my country of origin, I decided to turn myself more resolutely towards the service of the poorest. Till that point I had been assigned to teaching. The strong words of St. Francis Xavier to the Parisian teachers often echoed in my ears; I had to lower my guard and accept the risks of following, in a manner different from what it had been up to that moment, the Poor One.

Meditating on the writings of Charles de Foucault and the astonishing example of his life were determining elements in this choice for “something else”. His spiritual director, Dom Huvelin, pointed out that “Jesus so firmly took the last place that no one could seize it from him.” I knew I was incapable – through cowardice, laziness, fear – of an absolute, radical detachment. But at least I needed

to try to be a little more at the service of the poor, of the Poor One, and among them, the poorest of the poor.

The opportunity was given to me when I met the children of the streets, the children of the shantytowns, and the child rag-pickers of Manila. Alas, I am not in a humbler place than before, but my place is with the humble. One's world-view, one's view of things, is thus necessarily transformed. Things which had earlier seemed essential now take the last place or disappear from one's preoccupations and interests. Western debates appear indeed vain and puerile in the face of the directly visible misery of the rest of the world. To be sure, I am convinced that it is not necessary to go to the other end of the world to encounter misery, but in my case I fail to see how else I could have passed from theory (at which the French are so brilliant!) to the concrete practice

of serving the poorest. I distrust formulas and slogans that result in nothing more than beautiful and pious words; nor do I look for salvation in a maniacal activism or a ‘humanitarian’ service. To be a priest, a religious, with my limitations, in the world of the poor is a mission of evangelisation, so that the poor may discover the love of the Poor One. It is not a matter of idealising poverty, but of discovering how, so long as it does not plunge the person into misery and despair, it can be lived by some people as a beatitude.

I thank heaven for having opened my eyes a little, even if my blindness is still considerable. Is that perhaps the way to salvation? In any case, up until now it has been the path of a deep joy that tribulations cannot snuff out. In the Constitutions Saint Ignatius insists that the Jesuit must give his goods to the poor. I do not know what I am capable of giving; but I do know all that I have received, and receive unceasingly, from contact with the poor who, despite themselves, are the teachers of humanity.

The Gospel cannot be interpreted in different ways with respect to love of the poor and of poverty. It makes one tremble. With all my heart I want to learn how to love Christ in a lowly place, to learn who is the one who is hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, in prison, a stranger.... The learning is rough but it brings unadulterated consolations. To take the livery of the Poor One is not very glorious, but in this world glory rarely comes from God. With all my strength I hope to continue forward, becoming a more loving priest in contact with the poorest.

*The Gospel
cannot be
interpreted in
different ways
with respect to
love of the poor
and of poverty*

Original French
Translation by Joseph P. Newman SJ

Jean-François Thomas SJ
Tulay Ng Kabataan Foundation
108 Kalayaan Avenue
Quezon City—PHILIPPINES
<tnk@pacific.net.ph>

DOCUMENT

IN QUEST OF AN ASIAN JESUIT IDENTITY

A SOUTH ASIAN STATEMENT, NEW DELHI 2004

I. Introduction

Two years ago the provincials of the East-Asia – Oceania and South-Asia Assistancies met in Bangkok to reflect on the Jesuit mission in Asia. In this context Fr. General posed the question, “Are we Jesuits in Asia or Asian Jesuits?” challenging the provincials to reflect on the underlying elements of the Asian Jesuit identity. In response we, eighty Jesuits of South Asia, together with nine Jesuits of East Asia – Oceania, gathered together in the historic city of New Delhi to listen to each other and reflect on the nature of the Asian Jesuit’s calling, its colours and nuances. We recall the search reflected in the Katmandu Statement, “Walking with the poor” and the S.A.A.A.¹ statement, “Living and Sharing the Good News in South Asia”. This journey of discovering the unifying threads of our Asian-Jesuit identity, symbolically parallels Xavier’s mission journeys across south and east Asia – a fitting preparation for the Xaverian jubilee.

II. The Process

The path of unraveling our identity involved encountering our Asianness and our Jesuitness. Ours has been an unhurried search of sitting with each other in conversation. We have listened to each other as authentic progeny of a multi-layered Asian reality, sometimes consciously, at other times unconsciously moulded by it. We have heard testimonies from the perspectives of our earliest cultural moorings, apostolates and spirituality that have moved and touched us, we have reflected and shared our own encounters with our roots and with our identities. We have enjoyed the glow of the illuminating aspects of the discovery and have also experienced the pain of its shadows and limitations.

III. The Asian - Jesuit Interface.

Our Jesuit heritage often found echoes in our Asianness. We recognized the different features of this interface in dialogue with the realities of Asia today.

1. The Sense of the Sacred:

As an Asian people we are steeped in a sense of the sacred, a sense of wonder and awe, openness and surrender before the mystery of the Divine which permeates the whole of creation. This finds expression in the many mystical traditions of various religious affiliations, in the plethora of deities, in reverence for nature and in the in-

terdependence between the world of spirits, and the secular.

We recognize in our Ignatian heritage a similar awareness of the all-pervading presence of God, who “dwells, and labours for me” in all creatures (Sp. Ex. 235-36). We recognize that the Ignatian practice of the Examen, discernment and indifference are effective means to progress on this path. And we acknowledge that in our busy itineraries we do not make enough time for silence, wonder, and the mystery of the Divine.

2. A Cosmic World View:

We sense a cosmic world view in the holistic approach to life of our Asian people, in the openness to multiple, even seemingly opposing perspectives, in their relatedness to the earth and the world of spirits. We are impressed that the Asian outlook favours the sensory, the symbolic, the narrative and the intuitive approach to reality. We appreciate our rich cultural diversity expressed in the art, architecture, music, dance and the rich folk, classical and subaltern traditions. We recognize that the uncritical use of modern media and information technology can result in the homogenization and hegemonization of cultures and poses a threat to our cosmic world-view.

In the Spiritual Exercises great importance is given to memory, imagination, experience, emotion and vision. The tasting and feeling – sentir y gustar – is essential to the exercise on the application of the senses. Unfortunately our Jesuit formation stresses western modes of rationalization, leaving little room for developing the creative arts and a critique of modern media...

3. A spirit of Religiosity:

We are nourished by the great living religions of Asia, with the numerous indigenous forms of prayer, meditation and spirituality, popular devotions, celebrations of rituals and festivals of numerous gods and goddesses and the many social and religious movements. We recognize a tendency towards excessive ritualism and pietism, other-worldliness and abuse of popular religiosity for political and other vested interests. We acknowledge the dichotomy between the deification of women in the religious sphere and their subjugation and marginalization in our patriarchal society.

In the Spiritual Exercises we have been moulded in a school of prayer that calls us to be contemplative in action. We have been introduced to many of these Asian forms of prayer and meditation in our formative years, often to be neglected in later life.

4. Strong Community Ties:

We encounter the strong familial ties of our people, the strongly communitarian nature of our indigenous peoples, the emphasis on fidelity and respect for the community’s elders as cherished values. We acknowledge that these self-same community bonds can be oppressive in as much as

¹S.A.A.A. South Asian Assistancy Assembly.

they stifle personal initiative and creativity and lead to a ‘crab’ mentality, where individuals on the path to progress are pulled down to the lowest common denominator. We perceive that this community bonding is under threat from the pressures of modern living, caste and ethnic ideologies.

We recognize this strong community bonding as one of our own Jesuit characteristics expressed in our “union of minds and hearts,” “companions on Mission,” “friends in the Lord” ... yet we are only too aware of the strong individualism that characterizes our various works. We acknowledge the loss of apostolic freedom in some provinces due to excessive, inordinate ethnic, caste or political affinities. Our encounter of Asian community bonding challenges us to live more fully our Jesuit ideal as “Companions on Mission”, strengthening teamwork and collective ownership of the apostolate without sacrificing personal initiative and creativity.

5. The Many Poor:

The glaring reality of the vast multitude of poor, the varied deprivation and dehumanization, rampant corruption and injustice and the inevitable exclusion of the displaced and migrant groups, women, dalit and indigenous people confronts us. The exploitation of our ecosystems further aggravates the plight of the poor. One the other hand one cannot but be edified by the simplicity of life-style of the Asian people, their contentment with the bare necessities (under attack from growing consumerism brought about by uncontrolled neo-liberalism) and by the deep joy and overflowing generosity of the poor. We are also challenged by the age-old traditions of asceticism and renunciation of Asia, and by indigenous societies that have singled out individual greed and pride as cardinal sins.

Our Jesuit commitment to be “poor with Jesus poor,” to choose “poverty rather than riches,” the challenge to live lives of a “middle class family of slender means,” to separate community funds from apostolic funds and to budget for the same are all expressions of a Jesuit identity rooted in poverty. The Christian God, and the God of the Spiritual Exercises is the God of the poor. We are committed to a faith that does justice and a preferential option for the poor. We regret that often times our Jesuit set up is not conducive to a life of simplicity, solidarity with and immersion among the poor, even as we struggle to hold in creative tension the need for institutional structures and a life of poverty.

6. Suffering:

We acknowledge our colonial past with its scarred memories, even as the pain continues to live in our nations torn by communal and ethnic violence, wars, terrorism, natural calamities, which inflict untold suffering on our people, especially the women, children and youth.

The third week of the Exercises disposes us to enter into communion with those in pain and suffering, to respond in compassion and solidarity and calls us to redemptive action. However, often times we too find ourselves sucked into a culture of silence together with the suffering poor. Other times we are unable to free ourselves

from the negative forces within thus leading to acts of aggression that hinder reconciliation.

7. Hospitality:

We experience the hospitality of our Asian brothers and sisters in their welcoming smiles and the generosity with which the poorest share all that they have.

And we acknowledge that we as Jesuits, partly because of our individualism, have often not been models of hospitality. Our hospitality is sometimes selective, restricted to the middle class clientele we serve. We recognize that the heavily institutionalized nature of our works is intimidating to the poor with whom we work.

8. Communal Harmony:

We affirm the marked sensitivity of ordinary people to their multicultural and pluri-religious neighbourhoods, a characteristic that has come under increasing threat from the forces of fundamentalism, communalism and separatism.

The story of our Jesuit beginnings bears testimony to the friendship of the first companions that were drawn from diverse cultures, countries at war with each other. This is reaffirmed in the universal character of the Society. Our own Asian Jesuits strive for communal harmony through their commitment to inter-religious / cultural dialogue in all its forms.

9. The Celebration of Life and Diversity:

We resonate with our Asian people in celebrating life in its abundance and diversity, expressed in their dance, song and myths at significant moments in the seasonal cycles, at the high points of life, in the memories of their ancestors, folk heroes and heroines. We are concerned however, that there is a tendency towards extravagance that is irresponsible and competitive.

Ignatius too was imbued with a sense of gratitude to the divine for the abundance of life. Anecdotes that illustrate his exuberance for life abound. We see Ignatius’ fascination with the divinity at play as it comes out of “hiding” to “console” and “comfort” people.

IV. A Pen-portrait of an Asian Jesuit.

Following upon these discoveries the pen-portrait of the Asian Jesuit emerges with the following traits and characteristics:

1. One who is a man of God, nurtured by the Spiritual Exercises, who takes his place in the cosmic web of life, one that mother earth can count on.
2. One who as a companion of Jesus looks afresh at the Good News with Asian eyes and heart to rediscover the Asian Jesus, and proclaim Him in an integrated Asian philosophy, theology and spirituality, leading up to commitment.
3. One who creates space in his life for silence and wonder thus breaking down the boundaries between the sacred and the secular.

4. One who joins hands across religious and cultural boundaries to establish a space where all will feel welcome and none will feel threatened and is at home in a multi-religious /cultural context.
5. One who accepts dialogue as a way of life, thus countering all shades of fundamentalism to build communities of harmony and “civilizations of love.”
6. One whose living is imbued by asceticism and frugality, in solidarity with the poor, with whom he is actively engaged in the eradication of the structures of injustice and poverty.
7. One who, entering into the experience of ‘brokenness’ of the oppressed, discerns the movements of the Spirit transforming it into counter-cultural tools of emancipation and solidarity.
8. One who, rooted in the indigenous systems of our people, creatively and courageously pursues alternate models of sustainable living and apostolic interventions.
9. One who through a participative paradigm, through leadership that inspires and animates, through teamwork and networking strives towards collective ownership of the apostolate.
10. One who is at home with our art, music, stories through which he learns to celebrate the dance of life. himself/herself His

V. Conclusion.

We set out on a journey of self-discovery, in search of our identity. Our first steps in the Society of Jesus challenged us to look beyond our original identities and to identify ourselves with the people we were sent to serve. Over the years in the Society we have journeyed on, ever deeper into our Asian world and deeper still into our Jesuit heritage. But has our journey left footprints on separate shores? This meeting was an invitation to the Jesuits of South Asia, individually and collectively, to look back over this journey and discover the common threads of our Asian-Jesuit identity. For the Jesuits of East Asia-Oceania, “It was a window to the vibrant witness and mission of our companions in South Asia and a challenge to our Assistancy to explore more deeply that Asian dimension of our Jesuit life.” The process of discovery has just begun. It will enable us as Asian Jesuits to walk with the Asian Church, spiritually, culturally and apostolically, to be truly incarnate.

A. M. D. G.

BOOK REVIEWS

DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS

Joseph Joblin SJ

Peccoud, Dominique, *Philosophical and Spiritual Perspectives of DECENT WORK*, Genève: International Labour Office, World Council of Churches, ILO International Institute for Labour Studies, 2004, 174 pages.

While industrialisation is often regarded as a necessity the laws of which must be accepted, the injustices that come in its wake may be redressed by those who are moved by a social conscience. In this spirit a number of social laws have been adopted, such as those that limit working hours, establish minimum wages, and prohibit forced labour. These limited measures are not adequate in a globalised world. Dissent is expressed in huge events like the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Genoa or Mumbai; but while they have an advantage inasmuch as they help to form a general awareness, they lack operational efficiency; their participants want another world and they want it at once; but they do not envisage furthering their actions through existing institutions and they neglect the processes by which changes – economic, social and political – come about in society. But now the efforts undertaken by the international community to change the unjust relations prevalent in today’s worlds have entered a new phase, especially since the UN Summit in Copenhagen in 1995. The president of the preparatory commission, Mr. Juan Somavia, who has since become the Director General of the International Labour Organisation, has tried to give to the economic aspect of politics a social content by taking into account the new situation arising from globalisation. To this end, he made the member states of the OIT adopt a declaration of principles assuring decent working conditions to all human beings; this is not simply a general declaration but the pursuit, throughout the world, to overcome some of the major obstacles that stand in the way, such as the lack of freedom to form associations and engage in collective negotiations on working conditions, the abolition of forced labour, the abolition of child labour and of all forms of discrimination. And because mental apathy cannot be overcome unless there is a renewed engagement with the “power of ideals” (to quote the Albert Thomas, ILO’s first director, at the promulgation of *Quadragesimo Anno* in St. Peter’s Square, Rome), the colloquium, whose acts are recorded in this book, invited religions to fulfil their responsibility by participating actively in the promotion of decent work. Sixteen religious figures, representing different monotheistic currents and the principal Asian religions, were invited to present the views of their religious tradition on work and propose measures to promote it. Among the conclusions drawn from this meeting, it is worth noting that all the religious (and humanist) traditions have a positive

evaluation of work, seeing in it the means by which an individual finds his place in society; this shared conviction allows them to declare “indecent” all work which breaks up the human community such as forced work, or the manufacture of antipersonnel mines. Thus, a policy of “decent work” re-unites members of society on the issue of what constitutes human dignity and its belief in humanity at a given moment. This pragmatic approach modifies the position of religions in society; they find themselves on an equal footing with other social movements. They do not have to renounce the universality of their doctrine but to find a means, other than the authoritative one, of making it prevail. It is important that they enter a new perspective, a revised tradition purified of history’s unhelpful encrustations, as Pius XII said in his Christmas message of 1956.

This involves entering into dialogue with the human experience of other social traditions in order to deepen the specificity of their own roots. To sum up, this book seems important because it provides religious leaders (and others) ample material for reflection on the best way to be in the world today.

Original French
Translation by Dushan Croos SJ

Joseph Joblin SJ
Pontificia Università Gregoriana
Piazza della Pilotta 4
00187 Roma, ITALY
<joblin@unigre.it>

MANAGING HIV/AIDS

Alan Peter SJ

Paterne-Auxence Mombe, *Rays of Hope: Managing HIV and AIDS in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2004, 175 pages.

This slim paperback volume of 175 pages offers a comprehensive approach to the subject, including a useful and substantial chapter on nutrition, a section on medical treatment for opportunistic infections, and another devoted to Highly Active Anteretroviral Therapy (HAART).

Despite the author’s indication in his preface that his book is directed not at professionals but patients, care-givers, volunteers and relatives, he covers medical details so accurately and provides such useful summaries with common abbreviations of drugs that I believe young doctors and nurses and others working in HIV clinics will benefit most from reading this book. It is a valuable resource for understanding treatment regimens and opportunistic infections with their concurrent therapies. The Glossary is superb.

There are, however, some serious shortcomings. To begin with, the English used could have been much simpler, and the details for presenting common illnesses could have been fuller. For example, the symptoms recorded for cryptococcal meningitis include the possible symptoms, but clinical experience has shown us that, more often than not, stiffness of the neck is not found in patients who have this fungal meningitis. Further, the signs and symptoms of opportunistic infections could have been presented in text form rather than through the tables used here. A prioritised list of the presenting illnesses would have let caregivers learn what they should look for. The recipe for oral rehydration, which is accurately recorded, needs to be highlighted in a prominent position since this is crucial in the management of diarrhoea. If, as the author claims, the book is meant for non-professionals, colour photographs of some of the presenting illnesses, and a graphic visual of commonly used tablet regimens detailing morning and evening doses would have added to the usefulness of the book. Understandably, this would raise its cost, but perhaps less space need have been given to the highly detailed (though admittedly informative) section on virology and spent instead on the visuals mentioned. Some information on the way HIV causes degeneration of the central and peripheral nervous systems would help caregivers understand the paraplegia and parasthesias (paralysis and tingling burning sensation in legs and feet) experienced in the late presentation of HIV. Finally, despite the excellent glossary, an index is called for in a book that is likely to be used as a reference guide.

All said and done, the volume is well worth having as a teaching and reference material for those treating HIV.

Dr. Alan Peter SJ
493 Marshall Street
Belgravia
Johannesburg, 2094 SOUTH AFRICA
<doctorfather@yahoo.com.au>

An Excerpt

GENESIS OF THE DHRRAs

The History of CENDHRA

Antonio L. Ledesma

The Seed, the Spring, the Stone

A mighty river starts from a trickling mountain spring. A massive tree starts from a tiny seed. A great edifice starts from a single cornerstone. What forces reside in the tiny streamlet that it should lead into a mighty river? What generative abilities hide in the tiny seed that it should become a towering tree? What creative patterns were chiseled out of the cornerstone that would hold together a temple?

Today as we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of a mighty river, a sturdy tree, a shining edifice that is the DHRRAs family, we pause to look back to its beginnings when it was but a fragile stream, a vulnerable seed, a rough-hewn stone.

The world of thirty years ago found Asians acting out their lives in theatres of conflict and struggle. Brothers fought brothers in the divided countries of Vietnam and Korea. Freedom for Filipinos was a bird trapped in the cage of martial law. The narrow strait between mainland China and Taiwan bristled with weaponry. Authoritarian governments in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia kept watch over what their citizens read, whom they met, what they wrote. And into this landscape of tension and uncertainties, the men and women of the DHRRAs dared to dream of a better world where freedom and justice would prevail and where Asians would recover their lost brotherhood.

Planners of the First Blueprint

The embryonic phase of the DHRRAs started with a circle of Jesuit priests who left their countries in order to work with Asians in promoting social justice. In 1961, they formed the core group of the Socio-Economic Life of Asia (SELA), a committee under the Bureau of Asian Affairs whose president was the Filipino **Jaime Bulatao**, head of the Psychology Department of the Ateneo de Manila University. Its treasurer was **Walter Hogan** known as the American Labor Priest.

They were a multinational group. From America came **Basil Price** to set up a labor school for Koreans while **Joe Cavanagh** and **Richard Becker** worked in the small atolls of the Pacific. **John Daly**, working among Korea's shelter-less, was to win the Ramon Magsaysay award. The New Yorker **Patrick Shaules** went to Taiwan to work among migrant workers and aborigines. From Germany came **Karl Albrecht** who promoted cooperatives among Indonesian fishermen. Some twenty years later, he was killed during the riots in East Timor. From Argentina came **Jorge Anzorena**, an architect who became the second DHRRAs partner to win the Ramon Magsaysay

Award for his creative low cost housing work. From Spain came **Juan Andres** who set up a social action center in Japan which sent groups of students to work with Vietnamese peasants. From Austria came **Augustine Moling** who set up a study center for Buddhist students in Bangkok. From Canada came **Jean Desautels** who was engaged in an adult education program in South Vietnam. From Italy came **Antonino de Gennaro**, connected with a worldwide network of social action centers in Rome. He was to die tragically in a plane that exploded in mid-air on his return trip to Rome from the DHRRAs workshop. From England came **Joseph Garland** to work with trade unions in Malaysia. There were also Irish among the SELA members: **John Collins** who set up the credit union league of Hongkong; the eloquent **Gerard Keane's** work in media made him suspect in the eyes of a watchful government that did not tolerate critics. Down under in Papua New Guinea, Australian **Phillip Kurts** worked with university students while **Mark Raper** specialized in working with aborigines and migrants. And from the dikes of Holland by way of Indonesia there came **John Dijkstra** – the beloved and irreplaceable father of the DHRRAs.

It was from this group of men with their brilliant array of talents and experiences, men who thought nothing of giving up country and security, men who loved and respected Asia and its culture, its mores, its struggling poor – that the DHRRAs received their initiatory identity, their inaugural energy and direction.

*DO NOT BE OVERCOME BY EVIL
BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD*

From the beginning, humanity has known the tragedy of evil and has struggled to grasp its roots and to explain its causes. Evil is not some impersonal, deterministic force at work in the world. It is the result of human freedom. (...) Evil always has a name and a face: the name and face of those men and women who freely choose it (2).

Fostering peace by overcoming evil with good requires careful reflection on the common good and on its social and political implications (5).

Since the good of peace is closely linked to the development of all peoples, the ethical requirements for the use of the earth's goods must always be taken into account (6). The good of peace will be better ensured if the international community takes on greater responsibility for what are commonly called public goods (7).

The principle of the universal destination of goods can also make possible a more effective approach to the challenge of poverty. The international community, at the beginning of the new millennium, set the priority of halving their number by the year 2015. The Church supports and encourages this commitment and invites all who believe in Christ to show, practically and in every sector, a preferential love for the poor. The tragedy of poverty remains closely linked to the issue of the foreign debt of poor countries. (8)

What is urgently needed is a moral and economic mobilization, one which respects agreements already made in favour of poor countries, and is at the same time prepared to review those agreements which have proved excessively burdensome for some countries. (9)

[There is need] for a new creativity in charity, in order to spread the Gospel of hope in the world. This need is clearly seen when we consider the many difficult problems standing in the way of development in Africa (...) Once again I wish to state that failure to honour the repeated promises of Public Aid for Development, the still unresolved question of the heavy foreign debt of African countries and the failure to give those countries special consideration in international commercial relations, represent grave obstacles to peace which urgently need to be addressed and resolved (10)

No man or woman of good will can renounce the struggle to overcome evil with good. This fight can be fought effectively only with the weapons of love (12)