

Promotio Iustitiae

**The New Superior General of the Society of Jesus
Father Nicolás's Last Years in Japan: Isamu**

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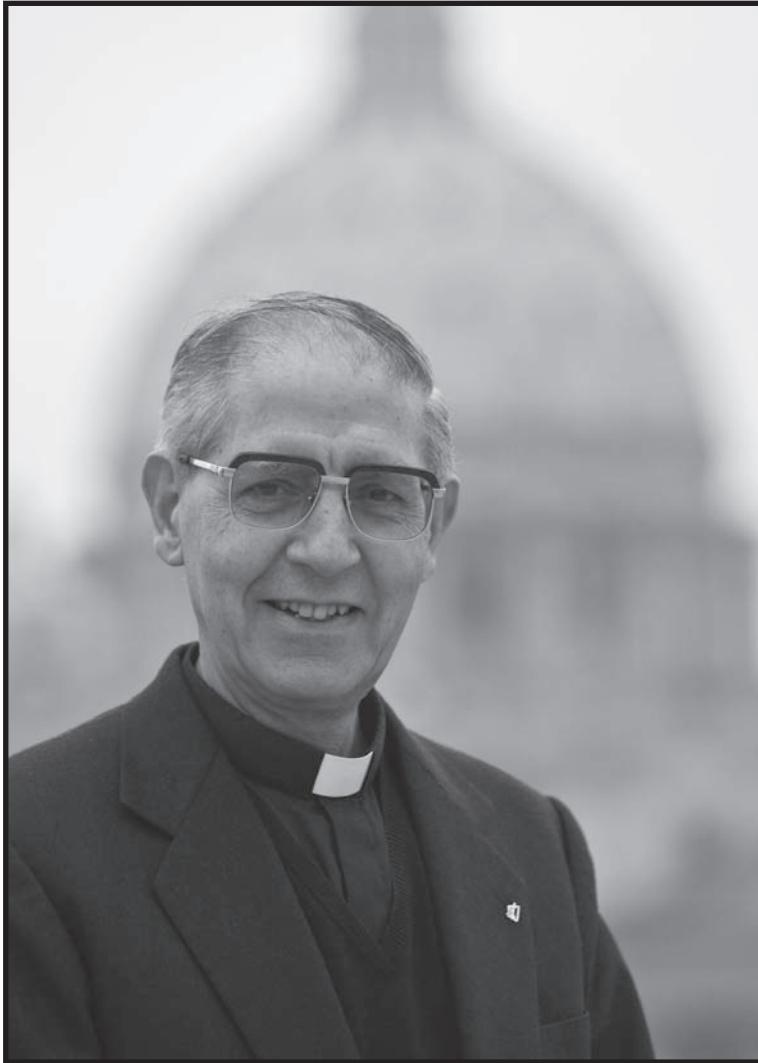
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Experiences and Letters



**Warm Greetings
to the New Superior General
of the Society of Jesus**



Fr. Adolfo Nicolás SJ

Editor: **Fernando Franco SJ**
Consultant Editor: **Suguna Ramanathan**
Associate Editor: **Uta Sievers**
Publishing Coordinator: **Liliana Carvajal**
Production: **Stefano Maero**

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Father Nicolás's Last Years in Japan

Ando Isamu SJ

When Fr. Nicolás was elected new Superior General last January mass media from the West hailed him as a Jesuit of the poor and the marginalised. That came as a surprise. I would like nevertheless to present the factual background for such a statement. In 1997, when Fr. Nicolás was at the end of his term as Provincial of Japan, he had the opportunity to move out of the provincial's house while a new residence was being built in the centre of Tokyo City, next to two big Jesuit institutions, Sophia University and St Ignatius Church. He approached me then and asked whether there was any space where he and I could stay together in a small rented apartment on the outskirts of Tokyo where I lived, so that we could serve marginalised communities, most of them foreign workers living and working in that region. Later on, I understood that many Jesuits were surprised by that move of the Provincial.

Tokyo as a big, affluent city has everything one can imagine, and the fact is that the most visible presence of Jesuits happens to be in the very centre of such affluence, living, as we do, next to the Imperial Palace. But Tokyo also has 'poverty pockets' and regions far from the centre where ordinary workers' families live in difficult circumstances. The most noticeable is probably the Adachi ward, home to about 640,000 people. This is a workers' region and has many small-scale enterprises and shops. By far the highest number of families under social welfare in the whole of Tokyo City live here; over 40 per cent of all children attending middle high school here receive special public financial assistance to continue their compulsory education. There are only nine ordinary High Schools in the ward for children graduating from over 30 Middle High Schools, and while Tokyo has 127 universities and 58 two-year colleges, there is not a single university in the whole of Adachi ward, and maybe 2 colleges, at most. Traditionally, foreigners from the Korean Peninsula have lived in the region, and for the past 10 years Adachi has been home to thousands of workers predominantly from the Philippines. Hundreds of them fill a diocesan Church where Fr. Nicolás and I were accustomed to helping out on weekends.

Fr. Nicolás realised that to live in that region had a particular meaning for us Jesuits, enabling us to experience, from the bottom up and at first hand, the fast changes overtaking Japan. While ordinary Japanese are facing drastic changes in job contracts, young Filipino workers are often abused in inhuman ways. It is quite painful to meet the concrete victims of such abuses. We listen to them but what can be done? On the other hand, while we all know that the large majority (over 450,000?) of the Japanese Church comprises for-

eign workers trying to make a living in Japan, it makes a difference to live close to them, to provide pastoral and other services for them, helping out in a diocesan parish with a local Japanese community of about 90 people who attend Sunday morning masses and over 400 Filipino worshippers. While Fr. Nicolás was living in this region of Tokyo we often discussed the peculiarities of such a new phenomenon and the challenges for the Japanese Church, as well as the pastoral needs of a different type of community.

As soon as Fr. Nicolás completed his term as Provincial he offered to work full time in a special centre (CTIC) established by the Tokyo diocese for the pastoral and social care of foreign migrant workers. This centre, staffed mainly with lay people, serves foreign workers, providing them with support and legal advice. While working there, Fr. Nicolás took care of various pastoral programmes, largely for Filipino Catholics. He continued his pastoral services for them at the Umeda diocesan Church, making family visits and visiting immigration jails. In particular, he became a kind of a chaplain to El Shaddai, a flourishing charismatic Filipino community that brought hundreds of its members to the Umeda Church. This community was large and could find no other church in Tokyo diocese that would accept it. Fr. Nicolás tried hard to negotiate different sites around Tokyo for Sunday services when the Umeda parish, where the community was used to meeting every Sunday, limited the use of its facilities to just once a month.

While he was Provincial in Japan, Fr. Nicolás worked behind the scenes with other Catholic Congregations to stimulate a broader involvement of Church institutions with “migrant workers” living and working in Japan. He has always invited Jesuits to be available for an apostolic involvement with the migrant population, regarding this as a much-needed service in Japan today.

Ando Isamu SJ
Jesuit Social Center
Kawada-cho 7-14, Shinjuku-ku
Tokyo 162-0054 - JAPAN
<selasj@kiwi.ne.jp>

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This double issue of *Promotio* is a consequence of the work done by General Congregation 35 during the months of January and February 2008. An important related reason for the delay and for bringing out two issues together was the need to include in the volume a preliminary reflection on what transpired at the Congregation.

The issue opens with a photograph of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás and a brief contribution from Ando Isamu SJ offering us a simple account of the new General's pastoral ministry among the refugees in Japan. This is an occasion for us to offer our prayers for Fr. Nicolás and express our desire to be of help to him in fulfilling the mission that the Lord and the Society have entrusted to him.

This double number has three major themes: a series of articles on the recently concluded General Congregation 35; a section on the 'fund-raising workshop' promoted by the Social Justice Secretariat and held in November 2007 at the Curia; and the usual 'documentation' section comprising a set of articles that reflect urgent international issues confronting the Society and the whole Church.

The section on the recently concluded congregation contains four articles. Three members of the Congregation, two of whom are also members of the General Council, have analysed in brief the main elements and newness of the decrees on identity, mission and governance, the decrees most closely connected with our mission. The fourth article is a more personal reflection on the key moments lived at GC35. There is also a presentation of responses obtained from some participants at GC35 who answered a short questionnaire.

The section on fund-raising contains the speech of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach to the participants, a summary of the proceedings and the final set of recommendations. We fervently hope that it may serve, in a non-partisan manner, to heighten Jesuits' consciousness of the need to establish fund-raising procedures if we are to be successful in carrying out our mission.

The section on 'documentation' is of special relevance. We have published the statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief made on 20 March 2008 in Delhi at the end of her visit to India. The document is crucial to understanding the urgency of dealing with religious political fundamentalism. We also have two significant contributions from Africa. One looks at the issue of 'religious poverty' from an African perspective, and the other offers an example of Jesuit advocacy on the burning problem of regulating the contracts of transnational companies with the DRC government. In addition, the section carries an analysis of the famous

letter on neoliberalism written by the Provincials of Latin America. Though highly contested at the time of its publication, the stand taken at that time, the author argues, has proved correct.

The section also contains, as usual, some experiences from the field and a few letters. Following our usual custom, with the coming of a new year, we have changed the colour of the cover page and introduced other stylistic changes.

Fernando Franco SJ

Identity – A Glance at the New Decree

James Corkery SJ

Growing up in a small city in the south-west of Ireland in the 1960s, it never struck me to ask who I was, or who we were. In a society largely without (evident) diversity, in a community of shared values and close ties (too close at times), it did not dawn on many of us to question our identity. Forty years later, the opposite is the case. Ours is an age of multiple images and stimuli; of re-makes and makeovers; of diverse communities, religions and languages; of widespread air travel; and of a sense that we possess endless possibilities for choice (so that choosing itself becomes our main problem). This context of the manifold and the multiple raises questions of identity for everyone today: who am I and who are we? Jesuits, who are not sheltered from the winds of the age in which we live, have therefore had to speak anew about our identity and to reach into the depths of Jesuit life and tradition in order to present, in an utterly changed, global context, what Jesuit identity is today.

Furthermore, as readers of *Promotio Iustitiae* will be aware, the three General Congregations prior to GC35 devoted great attention to describing and clarifying the *mission* of the Society in the contemporary world. But a concern had grown in recent times that we should speak not just about what we do and how we do it, but also about why we pursue our mission as outlined in Congregations 32 to 34. Who are Jesuits, that we act in this way, that, together with our many companions in a wide Ignatian family, we work to make God's dream for the world, God's reign, come closer? Before ever GC35 began it was already noted that we had good documents, but that we needed a fresh impetus to implement them more fully. In a secularising and religiously-eclectic context, many voices were calling for a spelling out of what it is that *motivates* our mission. Jesuits had reported that people often say: you can do lots of what you do – work for justice, education, intellectual inquiry, the ministry of the *Spiritual Exercises* – without being Jesuits; so what is the specifically Jesuit thing, your identity? In the final issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* prior to the opening of GC35, the editor wrote that “one senses all over the world the desire to root our social engagement in our faith; to foreground our commitment to justice in our identity as people who believe in the presence of our Lord active in the midst of our world.”¹ There is the word *identity*, already before the Congregation! A similar concern with the linking

¹ Fernando Franco SJ, “Editorial”, *Promotio Iustitiae* 97 (2007/4), p. 5.

of our work for justice with faith is found in the same issue of *Promotio* where Irish Jesuit theologian, Gerry O'Hanlon, remarks that "we lose perspective if our work together for justice is not permeated and nourished by its roots in faith."² So, the desire to express more vividly the link between the mission we undertake and the faith in which it is rooted was already in the air before GC35. This link is the key to Jesuit Identity and the decree on identity seeks to give inspiring expression to it for our own times.

To the Decree itself: What is new about it?

The Identity decree attempts to spell out the story, the experience of God, the Ignatian faith-vision that lies at the heart of Jesuit mission. What is new *vis à vis* the decrees of Congregations immediately preceding this one is that Jesuits themselves are described and a light is shone, so to speak, on what it is that makes Jesuits 'tick.' The engine, the motor, the fire that makes us move and sends us out is what the decree is concerned, above all, to highlight. Mission, of course, is not absent – indeed there is a section towards the end of the decree that opens out to today's mission and that leans towards the mission document following this decree in the Congregation's texts.³ However, the main concern in the identity decree remains this issue of what it is that makes the mission specifically Jesuit, Ignatian and centred on the call of Christ, the Lord, to which we wish not to be deaf, but enthusiastically responsive.⁴

Saint Ignatius's experience of God and manner of proceeding (arising out of this experience) are at the heart of the text, which argues that, as it was in his life, so will it be in ours – although our context is different. Thus the story that began with Ignatius and the first companions and that led to the founding of the Society of Jesus is what may be called the larger narrative, or collective story, into which the stories of those who meet it subsequently can be inserted and can find meaning and direction. It is a matter of individual histories finding, without losing their particularity, a 'home' in what has become the Society's history; and this 'home' sends them out, offering them wider possibilities and participation in an ongoing adventure, in companionship, of finding God in Christ active at the heart of the world.⁵ It is to be expected that those called into this adventure will be shaped by God as Ignatius was. And so the text recalls God's gentle, but thorough, moulding of Ignatius on his sick bed, at Manresa and especially on the banks of the Cardoner, and at La Storta on his way to Rome. Then it highlights the developments that occurred in the wake of the La Storta vision, in which the first

² Gerard O'Hanlon SJ, "Hope", in *ibid.*, pp. 33-41, at p. 41.

³ See "A Fire That Kindles Other Fires": *Rediscovering Our Charism* (hereafter "A Fire"), paragraphs 20-24.

⁴ See *Spiritual Exercises*, n. 91, and "A Fire", paragraph 2.

⁵ See "A Fire", paragraphs 3 and 4.

companions centred their lives on following the Lord bearing his cross, and on doing so in the Church and for the world as a single apostolic body. Thus the moulding of Ignatius's person for the mission that was to be the founding of the Society for the 'good of souls' is recalled so that those reading the text will become attuned anew to their own moulding by God for mission – for becoming, as we say since GC34, servants of Christ's mission.

Here it is already clear that identity and mission are inseparable. The decree seeks to highlight this in a vivid way by showing that it will not be enough to go on mission – to observe even generously all that GCs 32 to 34 have put before us – unless we go on mission as Ignatius did: on fire with the love of God that sent him into the world, to love it with that same love. At a time when people frequently admire what Jesuits do, although without knowing why we do it, it is important to indicate that none of our Jesuit schools and universities, nor any of our pastoral, social or spirituality centres, nor even the Jesuit Refugee Service, is understandable unless the 'polarity' of being with Christ and at the same time being active in the world is expressed and made visible in them. Living 'polarities' is central to Jesuit identity. The decree highlights a number of these that are rooted in the experience of Saint Ignatius.⁶

The Challenge of the Identity Decree

The call to be creatively faithful to 'Ignatian polarities' is the central challenge put before us by this new decree. It is very difficult to be contemplative and active at the same time, without favouring one side over the other. Yet herein, insists the decree, is the heart of Jesuit identity: to be at all times both completely rooted in God and simultaneously inserted in the world. Ideally, Jesuits live out of an awesome grace that tilts us towards seeing the world with the eyes of Christ, loving it with his heart and serving it with his compassion. It is not a matter of meeting needs, doing good, acting justly, *alone*. Nor is it a matter of having faith, praying, living contemplatively, *alone*. Rather it is a matter of doing both *together*. As well as in the decree's paragraphs on the Ignatian polarities, so also in the paragraphs that deal explicitly with the following of Christ, it is shown that when we are with him we are active in the world and that when we are active in the world we are with him.⁷ The challenge is to never let this creative tension between prayer and service dissolve. The decree offers an encouraging reminder of the fruitfulness of this tension by noting how, since the Society's explicit option for the poor in GC32, our service among the poor has deepened our faith both individually and corporately.⁸ The challenge of

⁶ *Ibid.*, see paragraphs 8-10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, see paragraphs 12-15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, see paragraph 15.

the Ignatian polarities is realised here: in the poor, we find God; with God, we find the poor. Here are faith and justice together: prayer and action, God and world, mysticism and service. The core of Jesuit identity is found in creatively maintaining the fruitful tension between these 'doubles.'

The decree on identity embodies other challenges – these are also polarities – that cannot be examined in detail here. There is the challenge to go to the frontiers, while remaining at the heart of the Church. Jesuit mission is received in the Church, carried out in obedience to the Pope and in creative fidelity to the Magisterium. This demands a fruitful living of the tensions that arise between tradition and innovation, between living from what is received and communicating it in new places and ways.⁹ Reflecting on this, we see that it is more than mere words! Just think – as recent experience at GC35 made us do – of the challenge to speak of Christ in cultures in which his presence has deep roots, although his face goes unrecognized today, and *also* the challenge to speak of him where the Christian religion is a tiny minority and he cannot be introduced in a way that overlooks the deep religious faith that is all around. Or think of how our option for the poor means opposing poverty in many places, but neither in a reductionist, materialist sense, as if we thought bread alone sufficed, nor in a reductionist, spiritualising sense, as if the obligation to share the goods of the world could somehow be ignored. The decree on identity highlights all these polarities at the heart of our Jesuit vocation not to make them easier to live, but to make them easier to face. For if we do not face them, we compromise our mission to be with God in his Church and, at the same time, sent out to the whole world.

The Decree and the Future: How can it bring us forward?

Today there are many marks of identity, sported by people in countless ways. In order to state who we are, we use signs, symbols and logos in this image-drenched world. The specifics of an identity require expression in this kind of context in ways that were not necessary in earlier times. The decree on identity puts a face on Jesuits, a face at once traditional and contemporary. It focuses both on being and on doing, whereas the latter is the more usual focus of the literature of our institutions and of what we usually say about ourselves. Rightly so; our focus should be on mission, not on ourselves. However, we want to attract others to the mission – as Jesuits, and also as men and women drawn to the Ignatian way – and we hope to do this better by having spelt out what is stamped on our hearts and is at the core of our being: the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus, God's unique image.¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid.*, see paragraph 18; also 16-17 and 23-24.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, see paragraphs 2, 3 and 26.

The sub-title of the decree is “Rediscovering Our Charism.” It does not mean to imply that this charism has been lost in the living of Jesuit life, but it can be taken as signifying awareness that aspects of it were less well articulated from time to time. Jesuits do a lot of praying, but we are not monks; Jesuits do a lot of social work, but we are not social workers; what will truly bring us forward – in fidelity to our rich heritage as flames from that first flame¹¹ – is prayer *and* service: complete devotion to God *and* complete devotion to God’s world. We – and our cherished companions on mission – cannot do this alone, but only by divine gift. It is not we who will set the world on fire, but rather the warmth of God’s love, always preferentially expressed for those who are marginalized and rejected. In their faces, we shall find God’s; in God’s face, we shall find theirs; and *that* is the way forward.

James Corkery SJ
27 Leinster Road
Rathmines
Dublin 6, IRELAND
<jcorkery@jesuit.ie>

What's New in the Decree on Mission

Marcos Recolons SJ

Introduction

The Social Justice Secretariat has asked me to comment in the light of my own apostolic experience on the decree of GC35, “Challenges to our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers”, especially as regards what is new in the decree.

I do so with enthusiasm and fear. There is enthusiasm because I want to convey my conviction that the last three General Congregations, one in each decade, have discerned well the signs of the times and updated the formulation of the mission of the universal Society. There is also fear because my apostolic experience is very specific and very local, and I do not know how relevant it will be for contemplating the universal in the particular and for comparing the mission decree of GC35 with those of the earlier GCs. This article will attempt to do that nonetheless, and will also attempt to explain the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, see title of decree (a phrase from Chilean Jesuit saint, Alberto Hurtado, canonized in 2005).

reasons why I have the conviction I have already mentioned. I begin by stating that my own apostolic experience has consisted mostly of work among the indigenous subsistence farmers of Bolivia and has been carried out in collaboration with fellow Jesuits as well as other religious and lay people.

The decree begins by giving thanks to the Lord for “the ongoing process of renewal and adaptation of our mission and way of proceeding”, a process that has taken form in the GCs subsequent to the Second Vatican Council.

The gratitude expressed here is not a formality. As we view this process over the last four decades, we cannot doubt that “the Spirit has led the whole Society”, despite all our faults, helping us to understand, at each historical moment, the mission that Ignatius expressed in the Formula of the Institute. The discernment through which the GCs have renewed and adapted our mission has not begun from zero. Rather, it has brought together everything that the Holy Spirit has been stimulating in the apostolic work of the whole Society. This has reached the GC through diverse paths, the main path being the personal experience and knowledge of all those assembled, but also important are what was contributed through the postulates and the work of the preparatory commissions.

Confirmation of the earlier General Congregations

The decree on which we are commenting here confirms the options made by GC32 and GC34 for our mission.

GC32: Faith and Justice

In the decade of the seventies, GC32 established that “the mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. For reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another.”¹

In Latin America this option reached us at an opportune moment. On the one hand, it reflected the intense experience of church that we had starting from the time of the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), which took place in Medellín in 1968. The Conference’s first commitment was “to inspire, encourage and promote a new order of justice, one that incorporates all people in the development of their own communities”.² The papal encyclicals have also moved in the same direction.³

¹ GC32, Decree 4, n. 2.

² Second General Conference of the Latin American Bishops, *Message to the Peoples of Latin America*.

³ See *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December 1975), n. 31. “Between evangelization and human advancement – development and liberation – there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the

On the other hand, in the years that followed, military dictatorships multiplied in Latin America. Adhering to the doctrine of “national security”, they imposed repressive anti-democratic regimes that denied people their inalienable human rights, weighed our countries down with onerous debts and squandered our natural resources through corruption and incompetence.

In the small ambit of our Jesuit community, the declarations of GC32 arrived at a moment when two of us, in our fourth year of priesthood, were working as rural teachers; both of us were in tiny one-teacher state schools in very isolated Guarani-Chiriguano communities. We were living in great poverty in the midst of the people, and we had a lot of work. Most of the men of the zone would leave to work in the sugar cane harvest for eight months, living in a sort of debt slavery from which they could never escape. Meanwhile they left their lands to the mercy of greedy cattle ranchers, who kept fencing in more and more of their fields.

Our Jesuit community slowly became aware that our “inserted” style of life and work, the fruit of long discernment, was a way of accompanying the people in their agony, but it was not helping them to get out of it. Along with the authorities of the Guarani people of that zone (Isoso), we began a process of seeking alternatives. Communities of other zones asked for our aid in recovering their lands that had been usurped by neighbouring cattle ranchers. The option for justice of GC32 gave us the impetus to make painful changes in the way we lived and worked. The result was the creation of a social centre to support the Guarani people, a centre that would function in collaboration with the pastoral work of the parish. This option made life much more complicated for us, but viewing that discernment now, 33 years later, we have no doubt that it was the Spirit who was leading us, since, despite all our faults, that social centre has played a significant role in the remarkable recent history of the Guarani people of Bolivia.

We were not alone in our process of change. All the apostolic sectors of the Society were undergoing a great evolution in the direction pointed out by GC32, both before and after the Congregation was held. Not all the works or all the apostolic sectors evolved at the same rate, or with the same implicit or explicit political options. Sometimes the differences provoked strong tensions, but what is certain is that all the sectors were creating new ways of concretizing their mission for the service of the Church and the Society.

GC33: Confirmation

In the decade of the eighties, GC33 confirmed the mission of the Society as expressed in the earlier GCs with these words: “We confirm the Society’s

plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored.”

mission expressed by the 31st and 32nd General Congregations, particularly in the latter's Decrees 2 and 4, which are the application today of the Formula of the Institute and of our Ignatian charism. They express our mission today in profound terms offering insights which serve as guidelines for our future responses" (GC33, Decree 1, n. 38).

During this decade the world saw the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and in Europe. In Latin America there were major political advances with the re-establishment of democracy in most of the countries, but a very high cost was paid in terms of the victims of armed conflicts and institutionalized violence. The Society of Jesus also paid a high price for the promotion of justice: twelve Jesuits were killed in Latin America between 1976 and 1989. As regards the economy, this was called the "lost decade" because of the general stagnation and the "structural adjustments" imposed by the International Monetary Fund. The social consequences of all this were tragic.

But change was evident also in the small world of our apostolic team. Our social centre, now constituted as the regional office of a major social institution of the province, accompanied the birth of the dynamic Assembly of the Guarani People (APG, for its initials in Spanish), which for the first time in history succeeded in integrating and organizing the different groups of the Guarani-Chiriguano. Along with the APG, the Apostolic Vicariate and other private and public institutions participated actively in an ambitious social development programme for the Guarani communities. Our centre published studies on the language, anthropology, sociology and history of the Guarani-Chiriguano. The words of GC33, which reaffirmed the service of faith and promotion of justice as a clear, profound expression of our mission, captured effectively our apostolic experience and stimulated us to continue along the same path.

GC34: Dialogue and Culture

GC34, in the decade of the nineties, stressed two vital dimensions in our service of faith and promotion of justice: "dialogue with members of other religious traditions and the engagement with culture, which is essential for an effective presentation of the Gospel." (GC34, Decree 2, n. 15)

There is no need to insist on how judicious and farsighted GC34 was in highlighting for us these two dimensions of our mission, so evident in much of what we see in today's world: the clash of civilizations, globalization, de-Christianization of the West, and the wholesale loss of identity among cultural minorities.

In Latin America neoliberalism reigned, and people were beginning to feel disillusioned about the representative democracy for which so many had struggled. It was unable to resolve the situation of dire poverty, and

stood discredited by scandalous corruption, leaving the politicians without any credibility. Thus the breeding ground was prepared for the more or less populist alternatives which would emerge in the following decade.

But let us return to our local experience. On the one hand, during this decade we developed an intense dialogue concerning indigenous religious traditions. Our team organized seven seminars on Guarani theology, which brought the *ipayes* (shamans) together. We discovered such a wealth of theology that we cried out in amazement: "In the Guarani religious tradition we cannot speak only of 'seeds of the Word', because these seeds have germinated, and they form plants, trees, forests..." In the Andean part of Bolivia a rich dialogue had been developing for some time between Christian theology and the Aymara religious tradition. On the other hand, working side by side with persons and institutions authentically living a humanism of solidarity, however agnostic or atheistic their convictions, challenged us to think about how best to present our faith in this cultural context. At another level, we incorporated political pressure or advocacy into our institutional programmes, presenting ever-broader proposals about the changes necessary if the indigenous majorities of Bolivia (62 per cent of the population) were to be actively integrated into the life of the nation.

Once again we felt a great spiritual and apostolic alignment or affinity with these two dimensions which GC34 had presented to us while formulating our mission.

What is New in GC35

Given that GC35 reaffirms the formulation of the Society's mission as enunciated in GC32 and GC34, we may ask ourselves what this GC offers by way of new elements for the first decade of the millennium. I will express my own viewpoint with regard to four specific aspects: a new focus on reconciliation, a new concept of frontier, a new way of relating with nature, and apostolic planning at all levels of governance.

A New Focus: Reconciliation

First of all, GC35 brings a new focus that does much to give a sense of unity to our mission. The service of faith, promotion of justice and dialogue with culture and other religious traditions should all be done from the perspective of reconciliation. Men and women's relationship with God, among themselves and with creation should be oriented toward reconciliation; we Jesuits are called to be "instruments of God, who in Christ reconciled the world to Himself".⁴ The union of faith, justice and reconciliation has been present since the first formulation of these components of our mission. As

⁴ GC35, *Challenges to our Mission today: Sent to the Frontiers*, n. 16.

indicated earlier, some 33 years ago, GC32 formulated our mission as “the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement, for reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another.”⁵ In our collective consciousness, however, the theme of reconciliation was at that time obscured by the vigorous affirmation of the struggle for justice.

A New Concept of Frontier

Secondly, the decree on which we are now commenting has produced a new concept: the frontier. Ever since I have been a Jesuit I have heard that we Jesuits are called to go out to the frontiers and to pursue frontier issues, but this decree offers a new vision of what our frontiers are. The term “frontier” is a geographic term often used metaphorically to speak of intellectual and scientific advances, ideological visions, and so on. Now, however, in our global village, frontier as a geographic term of reference has undergone a change. In a globalized world, ideas, information, merchandise, technology and capital circulate freely; persons also circulate, though with many more restrictions. Frontiers have become porous, and in many cases they have disappeared. The world has become multi-religious and multi-cultural. There is no longer a notion of Christendom with delimited frontiers beyond which lies mission territory.

The new frontiers exist everywhere, and we are sent to the frontiers with the very concrete mission of opening up passes and of “building bridges” between those who live on one side of the frontier and those who live on the other. What is more, we are asked to be ourselves “bridges in a fragmented world”.⁶ This image for me is quite suggestive: in a world that is broken, cracked, full of gaps, our mission is to be bridges so that these cracks no longer continue to isolate social groups and persons, so that everybody can enter into communion with God, with others and with creation.

What are these gaps? The decree points to some that separate us from God, such as the gaps between faith and reason, between culture and religion, between culture and morality, between faith and society. Explicit mention is made of subjectivism, moral relativism, hedonism, practical materialism, as well as religious fundamentalism which manipulates faith in God in order to divide peoples and communities. Mindful of the Pope’s allocution, we are called to build a bridge between “a mistaken or superficial vision of God and of man” and knowledge of the “true face of the Lord”, which for so many people “remains even today hidden or unrecognizable.”⁷

⁵ GC32, Decree 4, n. 2.

⁶ GC35, *Challenges to our Mission today: Sent to the Frontiers*, n. 17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 20.

The decree also points out the gaps that have opened up among human groups, emphasizing the growing chasm between rich and poor, both within countries and on the international plane.⁸ We are invited to view the world from the perspective of the poor and the marginalized and to reaffirm, with the Pope, the preferential option for the poor. Other gaps that hinder just relations among human beings derive from violence, war, arms trafficking, the pillaging of natural resources, and loss of sovereignty for many nation-states, resulting in a form of global marginalization.

A New Way of Relating to Creation

Provincial Congregations from all the continents submitted some 41 postulates regarding ecology, the theme that provoked the greatest number of postulates, an indication that the Society should quite rightly be concerned about it. As one member of the GC said, unless we are concerned about preserving the environment, we may be arranging chairs on the deck of the Titanic while the ship itself is sinking. This decree in a very natural and harmonious way succeeds in integrating concern for the environment into the formulation of our mission. It does so by rooting it deeply in our spirituality and insisting on the perspective of the poor, who frequently are the most immediately affected by the degradation of the environment and by climatic change.

Apostolic Planning at All Levels of Governance

Although this is not a formulation of the Society's mission but rather a means for realizing it, it seems to me important that the Congregation has "emphasized the importance of structures of apostolic planning, implementation and accountability at all levels of government that are appropriate to carry out our mission today."⁹ Furthermore, the five global preferences defined by Fr. Kolvenbach are maintained: Africa, China, the intellectual apostolate, the interprovincial institutions in Rome, and migrants and refugees. Father General is encouraged to "continue to discern the preferences for the Society, to review the above preferences, to update their specific content, and develop plans and programmes that can be monitored and evaluated."¹⁰

The New Formulation Viewed from the Local Perspective

Within our Latin American apostolic horizon new forms of political action have arisen; in challenging the older forms they have created a situation of

⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 40.

stress, tension and polarization. Furthermore, the continued degradation of the environment and the contamination of water, land, and air are now having verifiably serious effects on the health of the population, especially the poorest sectors.¹¹ Deforestation of extensive wooded areas of Latin America, especially in the Amazon basin, has already become a problem with planetary impact.

In Bolivia the indigenous peoples have been gaining increasing electoral power, and they are desirous of establishing new rules of coexistence, which are strongly opposed by other groups seeking to establish their own rules. Our apostolic team sees clearly that we can no longer work only for the indigenous population, on the weaker bank of the bridge. We must also reach out to the other bank, the stronghold of those who have held power until now, so as to call both sides to reconciliation. We must build bridges of dialogue that allow for the creation of a new form of respectful, just, harmonious and constructive coexistence. Furthermore, we have for some time now been working on creating models of sustainable rural development that preserve the environment and offer the indigenous population the opportunity to lead a dignified life without having to leave the countryside.

Once again, the GC interprets our apostolic concerns and guides us with lucidity along the paths that the Spirit indicates for our mission.

Conclusion

My conclusion is that GC35 has reflected on our mission with humility, sincerity and farsightedness. It has accepted in a spirit of renewal the Pope's orientations and has let itself be guided by the Spirit. As a result it has given us a way of understanding at this historical moment the mission that was framed in the 16th century in the Formula of the Institute.

Marcos Recolons SJ
Curia Generalizia
C.P. 6139
00195 Roma-Prati – ITALY
<recolons@sjcuria.org>

*Original Spanish
Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

¹¹ See the study undertaken by the Saint Louis University School of Public Health, *Environmental Contamination in the Homes of La Oroya and Concepcion and its Effects in the Health of Community Residents*, at <<http://tinyurl.com/6hc8gd>>.

Governance in a New Key?

Lisbert D'Souza SJ

This title, presented as a question, merits an affirmative as response, though identifying the new elements in the GC35 Decree on *Governance at the Service of Universal Mission* is not altogether easy. The newness lies, perhaps, more in a call pervading the text for freshness in thinking and acting than in directives that are totally new; more an invitation and encouragement to the Society to move beyond what GC34 had already requested than in clearly new legislation.

GC35, particularly in this decree, strove as best it could to navigate between the Scylla of minute prescription and the Charybdis of vague generalizations and exhortations. The Congregation wanted to insist on certain aspects of governance to meet what it felt was the dynamic reality of a fast-changing, globalised world, but it acknowledged that the Congregation had neither the time nor sufficient expertise to provide concrete legislation. Hence there are mandates to the General as regards revision of legislation and review of structures of governance, but how this is to be effected has been left to his best judgment.

A New Key

The Congregation presents three perspectives, which it calls *principles*, underlying the decree: *governance* that will facilitate a response that is *universal in scope and impact*, essential in a globalised world; secondly, *structures* that are *simple and flexible* and which allow for quick but well informed decisions, taking advantage of *modern modes of communication and collaborative action*; and third, *clarifications* so our way of governance in changing situations remains truly Ignatian.

Governance at the Centre

Starting from the top, as it were, the Congregation has mandated a **revision**, not merely a review, of the legislation on **how General Congregations, the Congregation of Procurators and the Province Congregations will be constituted, organised and conducted**. This opens up the possibility of new, even radically new, ways in which these bodies are formed, the business taken up, how it is prepared and how treated. There could be more effective ways to develop the agenda of these meetings through greater involvement and input from the grassroots; Province Congregations could undertake serious review of the Province response to mission; the Congregation of Procu-

rators, which is made up of elected representatives, could impact Jesuit life and mission more significantly. Intelligent and creative revision could result in such meetings being better prepared, better focused, briefer, and more productive of the time, energy and finance invested.

Already before the election of the Superior General, and much more subsequently, the desire of the Congregation was to elect not just a General **but a team** that would offer him the support he would need to guide and govern the Society in these complex times. This desire found expression in the directive that the General, to receive “the most effective support for carrying out his responsibilities, ... undertake a comprehensive review of the **central governance** of the Society, with a view to **reorganisation** for the service of mission.” (n. 09). The General is encouraged to use the “**best professional assistance** that is available within and outside the Society,” in undertaking this review (n. 14)

Some wondered whether the existing structure of central governance, which was constituted by GC34 and comprised a General Council of about 12 members, of whom 10 were General Councillors and also Regional Assistants, each responsible to oversee one of the 10 Assistancies of the Society, was well adapted to focus adequately on the broader issues of mission that go beyond Assistancy boundaries. There was a sense that what the structure gained in depth through close contact at the level of the Assistancy, it lost at the level of global issues. The Congregation confirmed GC34 on this point but wanted to emphasize that the General and his Council should profit as fully as possible from interacting with the Apostolic Secretariats, the Presidents of Conferences, and *ad hoc* bodies that the General could establish as and when needed. Once again the Congregation did not create a new structure or give specific directives about how central governance should be modified. The newness lies in the **clear call for a comprehensive study** to make central governance more responsive to the needs of mission, in the hope that such a study would throw up new and increasingly relevant processes, systems and structures of governance. In this context, the decree urges, “a professional and comprehensive strategy ... be developed to improve internal and external communications, so as to facilitate governance, foster cooperation, and enhance the effectiveness of universal mission.” (n. 13)

Conferences of Major Superiors

In dealing with the **Conferences of Major Superiors**, however, the Congregation does give concrete directives, which it had so far not done. Here we have more than a map or sign posts on how governance could be conceived and developed. The Conference of Major Superiors is not to be regarded as a “new level of government between the General and the Provincials,” (n.

18 b.) but as a **structure of facilitation** that may enable Provincials better to involve themselves in, and care for, aspects of mission that go beyond Province or even Assistancy, while also affording the Superior General an effective means of identifying global issues, and accessing personnel and financial resources through the mediation of the Conference President.

Conferences of Major Superiors had been recommended by GC31 as a structural means to promote inter and supra Provincial cooperation. GC34 emphatically reaffirmed these Conferences and offered guidelines to clarify their nature, scope and way of proceeding. GC34 also insisted that the Moderator of the Conference should have the necessary authority to help the Conference fulfil its objectives, especially its responsibilities for institutions and programmes common to all units of the Assistancy. GC35, like GC34, observes that the functioning of the Conference and the authority of the President of the Conference are to be clearly spelt out in its Statutes approved by the Superior General. Like GC34, GC35 notes that the Statutes will not be uniform but will reflect regional and cultural differences. The major step forward, however, is that GC35 has directed that “each Conference should adapt its Statutes in accordance with the orientations of GC35” (n. 18.c.2). Hence, while there will be differences due to many factors, **certain orientations must be basic** to all Conferences. These include apostolic planning at the Conference level, to ensure that, other things being equal, **Conference needs take priority** over the needs of a Province; in the areas of his responsibility the **President**, after appropriate consultation, **makes the decisions**; this also holds for assigning men to **common works**. If there is no agreement between the President and a Major Superior about missioning someone to a common work, the matter is to be referred to Fr. General. The President should also be involved, as appropriate, in the apostolic discernment of Provinces and Regions. Through such orientations the decree seeks to shed a clearer light on the fact that “Provincials and Regional Superiors are involved in a **new way of interconnection and interdependency, and are oriented toward cooperation**,” (n. 20. c.1) and “are accountable to the President in the strict area of his competence,” (n. 20. c.2).

The Provincial Level

An oft-repeated dictum is that we join the Society of Jesus, not a Province. Despite this dictum, in the minds and actions of most Jesuits, the Province remains the principal unit. This Congregation, as may be expected from the strong universal dimension of mission that underlies the Governance Decree, **relativizes the place of the Province**. The Province is central as regards insertion and formation and in building bonds of Jesuit companionship. Yet, today's globalised context requires us to think and act across Province and

even Conference boundaries (n. 25). There is even a request that the General **establish a commission** to reflect on Provinces and Province structures and organizations; its task would include “a **comprehensive review** of the criteria for the establishment, reconfiguration and suppression of Provinces and Regions” (n. 26).

Nevertheless, since there are Provinces and since these will remain as a significant unit of Jesuit life and mission, the decree locates in Province governance certain very important matters: the account of conscience as a tool for missioning, and the need to pursue good relations with the local bishops and clergy. It stresses the importance of “a **participatory and discerning approach** to decision-making at all levels” (n. 28), while insisting at the same time that Jesuit governance is not democratic. It is the Superior who finally decides, but through a proper process of discernment, which also means that the Consult and other structures of facilitation such as commissions function as they should and are permitted to play their proper role. Perhaps a new element in the decree is that it gives specific place to **Leadership Training**, not only affirming the need for this in the complex world in which we live and serve, and the expectations of competent leadership which our collaborators rightly have, but also **sketching out the elements** such leadership training should include.

Local Governance

The final section concerns itself with local governance, emphasising the role of the Local Superior. There was a widespread feeling that local superiors are hesitant to take up their leadership mission in all its dimensions because of the lack of clarity surrounding the office, lack of ability or confidence in themselves, lack of support or even interference from the Major Superior, the complex nature of several communities where the old model of community with apostolic works of the community no longer obtains, and problematic relations with directors who increasingly are lay persons. The decree tries to show an understanding of the complexities and challenges involved. The recommendations remind all concerned that for superiors, “their governance of our members, both as community and as individuals, (is) **more important than any other task**,” (NC 351), a reminder which gains special relevance from a theme that emerged powerfully at the Congregation that “Indeed Jesuit community is not just for mission: it is itself mission” (GC35, Mission Decree n. 41).

Conclusion

The Decree says little that was not said by earlier Congregations, yet it ushers in a new spirit as it mandates serious studies that should result in major

changes in the our structures of governance at various levels, laying down for each level of governance tasks with regard to apostolic planning, implementation and evaluation procedures, and training for governance. As one of the presenters observed, "it is very likely that most Jesuits will not read this decree. But it is without doubt that every Jesuit will be touched by it." That they be touched in ways that truly promote God's greater glory and the good of his people is our fervent hope and prayer.

Lisbert D'Souza SJ

Curia Generalizia

C.P. 6139

00195 Roma-Prati - ITALY

<indiadesk@sjcuria.org>

Led by Him into the Unknown

Fernando Franco SJ

The title of these reflections, 'Led by Him into the unknown', describes accurately the backdrop of my experiences, - internal movements Ignatius would call them - of the recently concluded General Congregation 35 (GC35). There have been many unforgettable moments in the course of this congregation. I realise some may fall into the label of personal and subjective, not easily shared by others. Other happenings, however, seem to have been experienced by many: they grew unabashedly from a shared emotion; they surged forward from the hotbed of commonly lived moments in the congregation hall.

These common experiences I refer to are like hidden tsunamis shaking the shores of our consciousness and driving the whole body of the Society ahead to chart a new course towards an unknown destiny. In true Ignatian tradition they were collective moments not entirely devoid of pathos, suffering and resistance. The movement into the unknown has always been accompanied by self-doubt, fear of being manipulated and by a certain apprehension about entering a complex world lying beyond our control. These moments always produced some exhilaration at the end, but they were also fashioned all along through struggle and opacity. One felt with others that something new was being created, that we were already committing ourselves to changing the course, but we could neither fathom clearly all the details nor imagine all the implications.

Recollecting these moments and putting them into words is a way, however imperfect and subjective, of describing the new steps, and direction taken by GC35. I have chosen four; I could have settled for three or five. While the number is arbitrary, each one indicates forcefully a definite choice, a decisive step taken by GC35. I hope that many of those who lived these moments will remember the powerful waves of energy that seized the entire assembly. To those who were not present I am happy to transmit part of that energy that was both moving and challenging.

1. The election of Adolfo Nicolás

I have heard Fr. Adolfo Nicolás saying that he came to the Congregation not expecting to be elected. Things turned out to be different. He was elected on a Saturday morning, close to midday. The moment is very clearly etched in my memory. I was sitting in the congregation hall just in front of him across the relatively short space between the rows that flank the long central corridor of the hall. There are five rows of chairs at each side of the central corridor. The gradient between the rows is relatively small and hence it is not easy to have a clear view of all those sitting on the opposite side. I was lucky. Fr Nicolás was sitting in the last row just opposite to where I was. His seat was close to the empty steps descending into the central corridor. From where I sat the view of him was unimpeded.

As the counting for the election of the future General came to a close, I noticed he became more recollected and circumspect. When the moment finally arrived and his name was announced, the house broke into spontaneous applause. He had been elected the new General of the Society of Jesus. He remained motionless for a few seconds and then an extraordinary thing happened. He rose quietly in his seat and bowed, Japanese style, to all of us and, I thought, also to God. There is no way in which I can describe the effect of that gentle bow with both hands stuck to his sides and the body bending slowly until it was parallel to the ground. In a recent interview,¹ he has explained how Asian, more particularly Japanese, culture had changed him completely, but he emphasized that the change was slow, gentle and respectful, like his bow to all of us.

At that precise moment I felt we were being led by Him into unknown territory. In more ways than one his election was neither a foregone conclusion nor the result of a well-planned political strategy. The preceding four-day period of one-to-one consultations, the famous '*murmuratio*', convinced me that all of us were being taken by the hand and led in a process we could not control. I must confess I was not prepared for that unique experience. On

¹ Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, *The Jesuits Today*. Missionaries over all frontiers, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 March, 2008.

an average each member of GC35 might have talked daily to at least 10 persons. Assuming we were around 220, then there must have been 2,220 daily one-to-one meetings and approximately 8,000 during the four-day period! Going by my experience, the information exchanged was relevant, to the point and in some cases confidential. No one refused to give me information and I never felt any hesitation in offering what I knew.

The experience of electing a new General strengthened the whole group and confirmed us that the Lord was leading us.

2. Being placed at the heart of the Church

Relations between Jesuits and the Holy See, like relations among members of an extended family, have seen good and not so good days. Accepting the resignation of Fr. Kolvenbach, the Holy Father sent a warm letter to the Congregation in which he clearly pinpointed some areas of concern. Discerning how to respond to the Holy Father's letter deeply affected and moved, in an Ignatian sense, the entire congregation. We were confronted by fundamental questions regarding the nature of the fourth vow and the correct interpretation of Ignatius' principle of '*sentire cum ecclesia*'; a sentence always difficult to translate and which GC34 broadly interpreted as "having a proper attitude to the Church."² In the end, the congregation took a stand, a historic step, again led by Him.

The process of examining our relationship with the Holy Father and searching for a response to his letter was as dramatic as the election of a new General. It also had a peak moment, the audience with the Holy Father inside the Vatican Palace.

The event started with the long queue of Jesuits before the X-ray machine screening all visitors to St Peter's. The morning was slightly cold and grey. The crowd was large and the slow process of getting past the machine was tempered by our eagerness to see the Pope. Conversation in small groups continued to be very animated as we mounted the steps that took us inside the Vatican Palace. Situated on the eastern sides of the Vatican Hill, the palace is approached by the road leading around St Peter's and by the Scala Pia, which extends from the Portone di Bronzo to the Court of St Damasus. The long line of Jesuits crossed the famous court, surrounded by an imposing three-winged edifice with the open part of the court looking towards the city of Rome. I spotted the car of some Ambassador waiting quietly for the return of its master.

As we moved towards the Sala Clementina where the audience was to take place, the voices became more subdued. We finally entered the Sala and took our places in rows of chairs with the old and the new members of Fr.

² GC34, Decree 11.

General's Council occupying the front. I remember the Pope's brisk entry, the applause, the short greeting by Fr. General and then his address to all of us in Italian. The Pope's discourse, I profoundly believe, marks a historical departure from past papal exhortations. For the first time, the Pope explicitly emphasized the core elements of our vocation: our commitment to a faith that does justice lived at the frontiers of cultures and religions. There were two highly significant passages. He started the long paragraph dedicated to our 'social commitment' with these words:

*I encourage you to continue and renew your mission among the poor and for the poor.*³

Quoting his intervention at the gathering of Latin American Bishops in the Shrine of Aparecida (Brazil) he ended:

*'the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in a God that has made himself poor for us, so as to make us rich by his poverty' (2 Cor 8,9). It is therefore natural that whoever wishes to make himself a companion of Jesus, will really share the love of the poor. For us the choice of the poor is not ideological but is born of the Gospel.*⁴

You may understand the tears in my eyes when I heard this sentence. Many of those sitting in the audience who could not follow the Italian of the Holy Father may be absolved from not sharing the same feeling. The address of the Holy Father created an atmosphere of dialogue and affection between him and the Society, an atmosphere demanding mutual trust. It is in this unique context of affection and trust that the Holy Father unambiguously asked the Society to "renew our interest in the promotion and defence of the Catholic doctrine, particularly in the neuralgic points" cited by him in his previous letter.

We listened and took seriously the task of framing a response to his request. I felt again that we were led by Him. The congregation spent time discussing the issue and considering various alternatives. The exchanges were respectful, open and free. While to some, giving an honest and humble response seemed a bitter pill to swallow, to others it represented a historic breakthrough and a sign of reconciliation.

Let me say it again: we were led by Him in full consciousness. We took a step, and we placed ourselves with creative fidelity at the heart of the Church. Fr. General put it thus:

³ Benedict XVI, *Address to the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, Rome, 21 February 2008.

⁴ *Ibid.*

*We are neither a parallel Church nor a church within the Church; we are part of the Church, a small group searching how to serve the Church. We have willed to re-affirm this truth. It is essential to our own vocation.*⁵

3. Difference and identity: one universal body

As the committee elected to draft the state of the Society worked to prepare its report, we had the first experience of meeting Jesuits from very different parts of the world in small linguistic groups. I was struck by how often the words 'one body' and 'universal' were mentioned.

Differences, however, were quite strong. I do remember, for example, the way we discussed in our first group the phenomenon of 'secularisation'. For many it was evident that secularisation was the scourge of Europe. By that was meant Europe's slow process of de-Christianization. The term 'secular' was associated with something negative. I noted quickly that in South Asia the term 'secular' had a positive connotation, especially in the light of religious fundamentalism. Some even remarked that in other cultural and religious contexts, what was necessary was to have 'less,' not 'more,' religion in public life.

That is an example of a rather harmless difference. More serious discrepancies came to the fore in discussing, for example, the effects of globalization, the type of decentralising government structure we wanted, the tone that the document on obedience should have. Differences were not merely expressions of an intellectual disagreement; they were articulations of different faith responses emerging in greatly varying cultural and religious contexts. Understanding our mission today necessarily depends on the concrete socio-cultural and religious contexts in which Jesuits live. If this is so, one may ask this question: in what way can we speak of one mission? Behind the façade of polite words, do we share one vision? GC35 has responded to these questions in the affirmative. The document on identity is a clear example of where we have placed our bets.

We were not only confronted with difference; we had to face our ingrained provincialism. We needed to acknowledge that, by and large, we have been educated in a provincial culture. For many years, and in many parts of the world, the province has been the only geographical space we have inhabited physically and culturally. Sometimes this has been the result of the inculturation approach that has marked missionary experiences all over the world. Often a certain isolationism has been promoted to buttress local cultures, certain forms of nationalism and self-respect. Lack of economic resources and difficulties of travel were added obstacles to the free mobility of Jesuits.

⁵ Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, *op. cit.*

We were and are 'provincial' men and so far we have been quite happy and proud of it.

Having said that, I must say also that GC35 has decidedly taken a turn. The local will always remain important: identities need rooting. Today's world, however, calls for cosmopolitanism and not for provincialism. The capacity to interact with Jesuits from other cultures and languages has been more and more acknowledged not as the trait of a heroic missionary vocation, but as a necessary element of our formation.

We were also aware that an effective apostolic response needs to take into account rising levels of engagement: from provincial, to national, regional and international. Though many were tired of hearing the word 'universal' I have no lingering doubts that GC35 has taken a momentous step ahead in asking us to live our vocation and our mission as one body entrusted with a universal vocation.

4. Sent to the frontiers

This is another expression that runs the risk of becoming stale. It has come to prominence because the Holy Father used it liberally to describe our vocation in his letters and address to GC35. In addition, the decree on mission kept it in its title. Not all agree that the word 'frontier' is an apt expression of our life. I heard in one meeting that by keeping this word in the mission decree we run the risk of sounding somewhat pompous! 'Let us be honest', the Jesuit argued; 'the majority of our Jesuit brethren are not living in any kind of frontier; they are spending their lives in relatively comfortable urban communities!'

We are again in contested terrain, a terrain where the congregation decided to step in and walk ahead. It was evident from the start that the term 'frontier' was not to be understood exclusively in physical terms. It is, in fact, in the cultural and religious realms that we live often at the frontier of conflict and debate. There are questions and issues that deal with life and death, with the role of religion in public life, and the possibility of a meaningful dialogue between faith, science and reason. We were also aware that many of our 'problems' are caused by the fact that intellectually, culturally and religiously we have chosen to engage these worlds.

I am convinced that by choosing 'frontier' as the title of the decree on mission, GC35 was led by Him into the unknown. I am also aware that the path ahead is risky: our discourse may be misinterpreted, our life misconstrued and our faithfulness doubted. We went ahead in a way reminiscent of the boldness of GC32.

Living at the frontiers became also an explicit way of expressing the efforts of the Society to understand the post-modern cultural milieu where

young people live and from where many young Jesuits come. An honest and sustained effort to face this challenge has enormous implications for our understanding today of a faith doing justice. Blaming young people, including Jesuits, for their lack of social consciousness can at best be interpreted as a middle-age tantrum. The congregation was led to walk ahead on this road not knowing what the end result will be.

In conclusion

In a simple talk to the Curia community after GC35 was over, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach shared his wisdom before departing for Beirut. His parting words may well serve to end this reflection. At the end of his talk he picked up the theme of the Jesuit *magis* and used it in the context of discernment – another crucial topic of the congregation. Our life must be a constant effort, guided and supported by the Lord’s grace, to know better and better what he wants from us. This graced effort, he added, this *magis* sums up our individual and collective life. I looked up at him and felt that it also described fully his own life.

Fernando Franco SJ

Remembering GC35¹

This article offers some testimonies collected from those who lived through General Congregation 35. The criterion of geographical and cultural representativeness was in our minds while selecting the respondents. A fair number of those interviewed, however, share a certain familiarity and affinity with social issues.

The urgent need to bring out this issue of *Promotio* as soon as possible after the close of GC35 has meant that we have not been able to prepare the list of respondents with sufficient care and leisure. The majority of our respondents were members of GC35; one participated as a translator and another helped with the information services. A list of all those who generously responded to our simple questionnaire has been placed at the end of the article. We asked all of them three questions:

¹ This article has been put together by Fernando F. Franco SJ and Uta Sievers from the responses received.

- (1) Which were your consolations and desolations during GC35?
- (2) What have you learnt about the Society?
- (3) Where do you think God is calling us?

This article has been envisaged as a framework to present the answers to these questions in three sections, each section devoted to one question and dealing with the answers to that question. The constraints of length meant that only certain significant parts of each contributor's response could be used. We have avoided repetition, privileged new perspectives, and tried to respect the main thrust of each contributor. We trust that our editorial choices will not displease anyone.

The quotations in italics are all excerpts from the respondents' contribution. Though no 'statistical conclusion' in terms of percentages, is intended, we believe that the responses presented below paint a rich canvas, depicting the 'motions' and experiences of an average participant at GC35. Remembering the spirit of Foucault, we stress once more that the 'classifying' and 'ordering' process followed in preparing this summary of responses may represent a particular set of ideas and approaches. With this caveat we proceed.

1. CONSOLATIONS AND DESOLATIONS

Though we have separated the experiences of consolation and desolation, we are aware that in real life they are often intertwined. Common elements emerging from many respondents have been chosen as section titles. An analysis of the responses reveals that consolations were greater in number and intensity than desolations. We have grouped the responses around certain causes.

Consolations

(1) *The election of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás*

The process has been an experience of an honest search for God's will regarding the man most suitable at this moment to guide the Society. The peace that pervaded the deliberations and the joy that followed them have been a clear sign. I also believe that the GC has, with the election, given an important sign to the Society and the Church: we have chosen a man who is capable of dialoguing with other cultures, a man with an open mind, one who is profoundly human and therefore profoundly religious. He is a frank person, committed to the mission and removed from Vatican intrigues. This has been a sign of freedom and a profession of faith in what we Jesuits feel we are called to be: men of God in the world, in dialogue, as men of the Church, but not, for that reason, obsequious. (Rafael Velasco)

*It was very moving to see the tears of all the delegates as they embraced Father Nicolás after he was elected General. It was a clear confirmation that, despite diverse sensibilities and cultural differences, the Society can be and wants to be a **single body** attentive to the Spirit. (Daniel Villanueva)*

*Without candidates, without political campaigns, without the mediations present in many democratic organizations, we joined together to listen to one another, in the light of what we knew about the present situation of the Society of Jesus and in view of the profile of the General that we needed. **Little by little, a census was created** around a particular name; this filled us all with much joy and consolation, visible signs that the Lord had guided us. (Geraldo De Mori)*

*Each us certainly lived this journey with confidence, but also with astonishment, knowing that across us average human beings, **God was working with us**. The choice of Fr. Nicolás seemed to us at that time to be the choice of the electors and of God. This choice filled us with joy and hope and has had the further effect of knitting closely together the links that were beginning to be formed between the members of the Congregation. (Jean Marie Biron)*

Father Adolfo Nicolás's name was making the rounds during the murmuration. He was the only one I had not seen until the day before the election. "He is a saintly man", someone had told me earlier, and when I saw Adolfo, I said to myself, "He is God's chosen one". (Joseph Marianus Kujur)

*Finally, I guard as a treasure the opportunity we had to have a first conversation with Fr. Nicolás, lasting almost two hours on a sunny Sunday morning. I will never forget how he opened his heart to us and told us his personal history in detail, so as to reveal himself to the many companions who wished to know more about the life and the dreams of the new Father General. **He was expressive, radiant and enthusiastic**, like one who knows the Society well and sees its hopeful possibilities. (Daniel Villanueva)*

(2) The resignation of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach

It must be admitted at once that Father Kolvenbach's resignation left us with a feeling of blood freezing in our veins. The offer of resignation in simple and short words, its consideration by the members of the GC, its unanimous and rapid acceptance, the communication of this decision to those concerned and the reaction mixed with humour amidst the applause of the members of the congregation, left me with inner feelings difficult to express. We were losing a precious jewel with the departure of Kolvenbach who had marked the Society's life and mission in a very positive manner, and at the same time we felt the need for a fresh wind to blow through this life and mission after his tenure of more than 24 years as General. (Augustin Kalubi)

*A second vivid moment belonged to Fr. Kolvenbach. The acceptance of his resignation, and later, the farewell given to him by the GC was a testimony to the **inner spirit and dynamism of the Society**. As Karl Rahner said: the strength of the Society lies*

in the unseen and invisible labours of many unknown, old and sick Jesuits spending their time quietly, and not in the most notable and the most visible. Fr. Kolvenbach exemplifies the inner strength of the Society. (George Pattery)

(3) *The Papal audience*

*One consolation was being part of a papal audience in which Pope Benedict XVI extended a warm hand of friendship to the Society of Jesus, **inviting us to work with him "at the frontiers"** of theological research and writing, especially on certain critical issues such as inter-religious dialogue, the role of Christ in the salvation of all persons, and ethical questions regarding sexuality, homosexuality, marriage, and family. (David Schultenover)*

*Another great consolation was to hear directly from the Pope that **the Church needs us** and is counting on us, even as he confirmed us in our call to the frontiers, using the example of the work with refugees as a prophetic intuition of Arrupe. (Daniel Villanueva)*

*In this atmosphere of inner freedom we discovered in ourselves the **strong desire not only to serve the Church, but also to grow in our love for her in the true Ignatian spirit**. In this we were helped by the explicitly encouraging yet challenging tone of the letter the Pope sent to the Congregation during its first week, later confirmed beyond my expectations at the Papal audience granted to the members of the Congregation. I joined the Society in the late 70s, just after the turmoil of GC32, and lived the Dezza affair as a scholastic in Rome, so that I had perhaps become used to Papal invitations to be prudent in our initiatives. Yet this time I was deeply moved by the challenge in the Pope's words: the Holy Father warmly encouraged us to follow 'with a profound motivation of faith and... with passion' in the footsteps of Ricci, de Nobili and the founders of the Reduccionnes, and venture into those geographical and spiritual places where others cannot go. I am convinced that the Congregation's generous response to this invitation will be a source of blessing for the whole Society in the years to come. (Paul Pace)*

(4) *Experience of oneness and universality*

*This congregation has been **the most intense and universal experience of the Society** that I have ever had. I entered the novitiate after GC34, so I am not able to compare this with previous congregations, but in these two months I have had the certainty of witnessing a historic moment. It has been an enormously consoling experience to live together with two hundred Jesuits of high calibre; it is exceptional proof of a Society that desires to meet the challenges and respond creatively to the critical junctures of our time. It is difficult not to be motivated and excited about the future when one plans and dreams with a group like this. (Daniel Villanueva)*

*During our reflections and deliberations we **affirmed the richness of our tradition** with great pride; we partook of the patrimony of our forefathers; we expressed our appreciation and support for our companions labouring in the Lord's mission. With*

one heart and one mind we sought the will of God for the Society during those days, with a deep desire to anchor ourselves in the mission of our Lord. We are ignited by the fire handed on to us and our hearts are yearning to kindle more fires. (Henry Pattarumadathil)

*I have never travelled to Africa, Asia, or India. **All these continents came to me.** During our prayer each morning I would look out at so many different faces from these continents. As I gazed from my place at the back of the aula, the richness of sharing stories with Chepe, with Isaac, with Pat, and with Jerry pumped joy through my heart. To have felt so closely connected to this universal body of the Society gave me so much consolation that I felt I could do anything for the One who called us together for these two months. (Michael Kennedy)*

*I think that my principal consolations during GC35 have come from seeing **a body that is diverse and plural, but united in the same spirituality** – that is, being able to find unity in diversity. This is very important since I come from a country with much diversity, one in which people of many cultures and religions live together. Thus, experiencing the possibility of feeling the same spirit even in great diversity has filled me with much consolation. (René Cardozo)*

*But aside from all these key events, the most consoling experience was the **interaction with so many Jesuits** from different parts of the world. It was particularly important for me to witness how intelligent men from such varied cultures can also be humble listeners, each in his own special way. (Jose Magadia)*

(5) Our attitude of discernment

*In a way, it has been **the attitude of discernment** that has given rise to most of the consolations I have experienced. We lived with this interior disposition through all the nine weeks, well beyond the time of the election, and during all the elaboration of the decrees. We have seen a great ability to yield to others; we have seen great confidence in the body of the Congregation, that is, in its ability to sense accurately and judge well; we have seen a desire to hear and to follow the Spirit. But all good discernment also presupposes the ability to leave behind false expectations and accepting our limitations. And we have all had to experience something of this, which means personal renunciations. (Patxi Alvarez)*

(6) Re-affirmation of our mission

*Another major source of consolation was reiteration of **the staunch faith in our mission** to promote faith and struggle for justice. This clarion call given at GC32 remains the guiding principle, the overarching principle, the integrating principle of our mission. We may be engaged in various ministries but this is our mission. Along with faith and justice, the stress given by GC34 to dialogue with cultures and religion was a welcome sign. Moving further, GC35 focused on our mission towards the global world and environmental awareness. (Prakash Louis)*

Desolations

(1) *Our way of proceeding*

There were moments of tension and nervousness in me but no real desolation. The recurring flu and cold was a nuisance. More seriously: perhaps the GC35 was not able to make the best of all of the intuitions collected during its preparation. But realistically: there is not time for everything. In the future non-European languages could and should find their place in the prayers and liturgies. (Frantisek Hylmar)

A desolation would be to wish for more time for all these graces to bear fruit. (Dominic Robinson)

*Desolations? Honestly, I did not have many. However, some of the **unfocussed interventions** in the aula did not give me much inner peace. (Henry Pattarumadathil)*

*Sitting at the back of the aula, and listening to the endless commentaries, I also realized that communal discernment with two hundred and twenty Jesuits can lead to a **certain level of passivity**. With this large number people any kind of conversation is limited to those most comfortable in speaking before such a daunting group. Many practised the asceticism of listening. (Michael Kennedy)*

*Of course, there were experiences of desolation also. The first was seeing at firsthand that the Society lacked youthfulness, certainly as regards the age of those attending the Congregation, but also in a **certain lack of bold creativity** while addressing frontier issues or undertaking frontier work. There was no conflict in the assembly hall. ... The method prescribed by the Formula of the Congregation left me disconsolate. It seemed to me obsolete, and in many ways too formal. It is not longer useful in this cybernetic age. It ignores the weight of the regions and fails to achieve greater agility in elaborating the decrees; it fails to generate more participative procedures in the elections and livelier ways of conducting such a large assembly. It seemed to me that in handling above all topics of ordinary governance the Society needs a new formula of procedures. (Jesús M. Sariego)*

(2) *Jesuits, the poor and community*

*My desolation came from seeing that we Jesuits still have **serious reluctance about going back to the poor** and we make excuses for not going back to the brothers. That is to say, we have difficulties in placing ourselves before the real face of God. Not all of us agree that the service of Faith and the promotion of Justice is the integrating principle of our Mission. With the excuse (and ideological vision) that this is something "sociological," attempts have been made to remove the radical dimension of this option. Also, the refusal of the GC to elaborate a decree on our community life reveals that there are still many who do not believe that Community itself is mission, and not only something "for" mission. The excuse given, that this topic has already been much discussed, is just an excuse. The last document that was issued was a letter of Fr. Kol-*

venbach ten years ago, and the one prior to that was a decree of GC32. On other topics we have talked excessively and even written decrees (on, for example, obedience). Our temptation, I think, is to distance ourselves from the poor and from the brothers, that is, to distance ourselves from God. (Rafael Velasco)

I didn't have any desolations. I think that the only thing that could have caused a great desolation was contemplating so many millions of persons throughout the world who suffer marginalization, poverty and abandonment. For that reason I think that the petition that one of the members made to Fr. General, "**Don't forget the poor!**" touched all of us deeply. We have left the Congregation conscious that we have a great task to accomplish. But we are also conscious that, despite all our possible efforts and activities, the most important thing is being close to those who are especially beloved of God, accompanying them, listening to them, serving them. (René Cardozo)

Some moments of desolation came when faith and justice were occasionally parts of a dichotomy, but they were later drawn into an integrated whole. Another disturbing moment for me was the over-emphasis on the universal at the cost of the local, although a respect for 'diversity' had been reiterated time and again. (Joseph Marianus Kujur)

There was an attempt to minimize the importance of the faith and justice mission. My desolation increased when I found again misinterpretation of mission and ministries. The attempt to play down the transparency and accountability structures so as not to be made responsible to individual and corporate life and mission was also a point of desolation. Lack of sound preparedness at both the individual and collective level on matters to be taken up for discussion was also a disappointing aspect of GC35. (Prakash Louis)

I could see our fragilities more clearly: while we confirmed Africa as an apostolic preference of the whole Society, our weakness in facing the huge challenges in the continent was evident to all. (Paul Pace)

(3) *Different viewpoints*

Desolations were few. They revolved around a **lack of union of minds** concerning a variety of ecclesiologies around the world. Having multiple ecclesiologies is to be expected and even encouraged – to a point. The difficulty arises in articulating what we hold in common when we have multiple ecclesiologies. (David Schultenover)

As regards desolation, this came especially from the **difficulties we had with some parts** of our response to the Pope's letter and from the way we organized certain aspects of the decree on the challenges for our mission today. (Geraldo De Mori)

Did the geographical vicinity and temporal closeness of the papal letter and audience influence our thinking too much at the cost of the actual demands of our mission and the real challenges of the frontiers, reflected in the Ordinary Governance topics? Did we lean so much to the centre that the frontiers were distanced in our mental maps? (George Pattery)

2. LEARNING ABOUT THE SOCIETY

(1) *An overall perspective*

*My point of view is that of a small province from post-communist Europe, which was for forty years "out of the game". GC35 has certainly been a great occasion for me to **experience the Society as one religious international body** made up of a variety of committed persons deeply united by a common call of the Lord and by bonds of common spirituality, friendship, apostolic intuition, experience and works. I got to know personally many Jesuits and their experience, and I could make myself known to them. The GC35 was a great school of what the Society of Jesus means, of our way of proceeding, of human wisdom, theology, ecclesiology, spiritual discernment, governing skills and diplomacy. My knowledge, love and trust in the Society and its charism have grown immensely. I was able to perceive and to understand different sensitivities and different "languages" conditioned by different contexts in which Jesuits live and work. GC35 was a school of a global citizenship. Last but not least, I became aware of my many personal limitations too. (Frantisek Hylmar)*

(2) *Ignatian Spirituality*

*Perhaps the most important thing is seeing **Ignatian spirituality become manifest in a concrete body in mission**. We have been able to carry out the Ignatian election, discernment, the movements of spirits, the two standards, thinking with the church, etc. It has truly been a privilege to be able to have this experience which brings us close to the Ignatius of the Exercises, and also to the Ignatius of the Constitutions. (René Cardozo)*

*I have learned that **the Society is a work of the Spirit** and that either it allows itself to be moved by the Spirit or it serves no purpose at all. It has become crystal clear to me that that which unites us with God is more important than anything else for carrying our mission forward. I have also learned that **the Society is made of love, affection, appreciation and mutual esteem**. (Patxi Alvarez)*

*What I learned about the Society can be told through an image that a Director of Novices, Isaac from Africa, shared with me the last day of our time in Rome. In his tribe if you are an outsider and a family wants to bring you into the family and tribe, they have a blood ceremony. The outsider cuts his wrist, draws blood, and puts some drops within a coffee bean. Then each of the family members does the same. **After this mixing of blood, this bond can never be broken**; you become part of the family. What did I learn? How powerful an experience of brotherhood is when we as Jesuits also put our blood in the coffee bean, connecting us together at deep levels to do great things for God. (Michael Kennedy)*

*More than a learning process, what we experienced in these days was a vital discovery: we are called today to live out and to enhance in the Society the mystique that is born of mission. **The Society is fervour...** (Jesús M. Sariego)*

I learned how central is the desire for mission in the Society's life. How would this or that decision affect our mission, how would it help us to serve the Lord better? In all our reflections and discernments this was the primary concern. (Henry Pattarumadathil)

More generally, it goes without saying that with respect to the richness and content of the GC, I found myself in a new "school of the heart", a sort of "tertianship" which, in 60 days, refreshed me on our Jesuit identity and our way of proceeding. (Augustin Kalubi)

(3) An emerging non-European Society of Jesus

*I could also see that for the first time in its history, **the Society is becoming more Asian** and much less European and North American. I also learned that with God's grace and the self-sacrifices of so many faithful Jesuits, the poor are now more at the centre of our mission than ever before. We are really moving towards a more universal understanding of our mission, and we could see JRS as a very localized service, which is really borne by the whole Society. (Paul Pace)*

*The lesson from this GC is to accept and live with both the unity and the differences. Another lesson about the Society is that its **Euro-Centric nature is changing**, and Jesuits from South and East Asia, Africa and Latin America need to prepare themselves not only to play leadership roles but be missionaries in Europe and the US. (Prakash Louis)*

*What impressed me above all was seeing how **Jesuit strength has been displaced** from Europe and the USA towards India and Africa. This demographic change affects the whole of the Society, but does not lessen its creativity, either in the countries with decreased numbers or in those with increased numbers. We are therefore always hopeful. (Gerardo De Mori)*

*I am struck by the need to create and **define 'internationality'** in and through active collaboration among the various conferences at different levels. (George Pattery)*

(4) A Concern: our charism in the post-modern context

One of my consolations during this 35th General Congregation was witnessing the confirmation of GC32's orientation (the intrinsic link between the service of faith and the promotion of justice), later completed by the thrust of GC33 (the option for the poor) and GC34 (the importance given to dialogue with cultures and religions). Indeed, I am deeply convinced that these orientations are a faithful reformulation today of the Ignatian manner of living the Gospel.

To this I add, not a moment of desolation, but a question or a concern: the fact that the post-modern context considerably weakens the perspective I have just mentioned. Indeed, that perspective indicates that faith is to be deployed so as to touch all the dimensions of existence, including that of public action. Now this precisely becomes

increasingly untenable in cultural settings which favour the short term and personal experience, and which, in an anxiety to respect the specificity of all points of view, espouses a certain relativism.

In the area of religion, this change of context is borne out in the proliferation of small churches that allow for strong spiritual experiences that highlight the subjectivity of the believer but care very little for the relevance of faith in the social and cultural realms. It is also borne out in the development of numerous personal spiritual quests, conducted far from the great faith institutions. A final manifestation of these changes is that the major traditional churches arouse more and more suspicions; people tend to see in them only hypersensitive, authoritarian structures that are neither welcoming nor respectful.

The different elements that I have just laid out place before us a challenge: to communicate, joyfully and in an appealing way, our own way of serving the mission of Christ today. This requires making explicit the deepest link between faith and justice (justice understood as Gospel justice, unfolded in its different dimensions as mentioned by GC34). If we do not do this, this link will be spontaneously interpreted in terms of moral obligation: 'we must commit ourselves to justice, because the values of our faith oblige us to do so'. This is not false, but it seems to me to impoverish considerably the perspective we carry.

We are therefore invited to do the serious work of giving an account of our way of proceeding: how does the spiritual experience in the school of Ignatius, which has worked in our inmost being, develop into a different way of being in the world, of seeing it and of acting? The acting, then, is understood not as a consequence of faith, a secondary effect of it, but as a way to bear differently the gift we have received, of echoing it, finding thus in exteriority what has unfolded in interiority. Here is a manner of thinking about the commitment which is faithful to the dynamics of the Exercises, and which at the same time, can address the present cultural atmosphere (and thereby also contest it).

Certain texts that we wrote carry this sense, about which I am happy. But we have not had enough time to ask truly the question I have just formulated, nor to work on it appropriately. Now we cannot remain thus impoverished for long without endangering our capacity for sharing our vision with others.

This therefore would be for me on the side of desolation. But at the same time I tell myself that the Society no doubt needs time for such questions to stand out clearly and for us to respond to them. In any case I believe that we are called to be vigilant on this point. Indeed what is at stake is at once the revitalisation of the Church through genuine spiritual traditions that are deeply rooted and able to unfold widely in the lives of the faithful; equally important is the maintenance and development among Catholics of a dynamic openness to the world, at once joyful and courageous. (Etienne Grieu)

3. THE PATH AHEAD

The attempt to classify the responses under certain themes has been only partially successful. Some of the responses touch more than one theme at a time in just a few lines. We have preferred not to break the respondent's voice and placed the excerpt under one section.

(1) *A closer bond with the Holy Father*

*For me this movement towards a **closer meeting of minds and hearts between the Society and Pope Benedict** gives much hope. It can be the catalyst of much new energy for the next generation, if our work on the frontiers is to be nurtured as a truly powerful expression of our being anchored at the centre of the Church in responding to the Holy Father's call. (Dominic Robinson)*

*I cannot resist the feeling that the difficult period of the feverish transition after GC31 may have slowly come to its end and that a **new rather quiet and constructive period in the life of the Society may have begun** [...] We are called to realism; to closer cooperation within the Society, within the Church and with all people of good will; to prudent governance and to some difficult decisions concerning our apostolates and structures. We are called to profound reflection of the contemporary world that brings about (in spite of many anxieties) trust, strength and courage. (Frantisek Hylmar)*

(2) *A return to the poor*

*God is inviting us **to go back to the poor**, to learn from them and to be witnesses of God's Kingdom with them. The Spirit is inviting us to be witnesses as community – not as lone wolves, but as Companions and brothers in Mission, in Jesus, with Jesus and like Jesus. (Rafael Velasco)*

The service of faith and promotion of justice, as well as dialogue with other religions and the process of inculturation, needs to be deepened today in the midst of the new forms of poverty, injustice, intolerance and isolation that are present in our globalized world, on our threatened planet, in our pluralized culture. Individual affirmations in search of meaning and the assertion of ethnic, gender and religious differences characterise our time and our culture. (Geraldo De Mori)

I think that in this sense the Church is asking us to collaborate seriously in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, and also to be on the ideological frontiers on the side of the poor. There are many challenges in a world that is changing rapidly. (René Cardozo)

The call to be prophetic in our mission is an inseparable part of the Jesuit identity. God is challenging the Society not to shed crocodile tears about the forces of globalization and climate change but to do something substantial about them, to preserve humanity as well as the planet. (Joseph Marianus Kujur)

*He is asking us to love the Church and show this through our generous service even in dangerous places, and not to look for immediate results. He is **inviting us to listen even more to the poor**, and to put their service more and more at the centre of our mission, yet to be always discerning of new forms of poverty and of the most effective means to achieve this. (Paul Pace)*

(3) A call to live our spirituality and charism

*Across all the conclusions to the documents which will be guiding us, God wishes to confirm to Jesuits that **community discernment** is really possible and suitable for the working of a more efficient apostolate. (Augustin Kalubi)*

What is new is the context. The GC recognizes the 'global' context of the world with its 'growing tensions and paradoxes' as the new challenge to which the Lord is calling the Society to respond. (Henry Pattarumadathil)

*God is calling this company at this critical juncture to adhere to its original charism of **being a religious apostolic body** and not fall into the temptation of becoming a monastic order. [...] God is calling us at this critical moment to follow the pastoral cycle of reflection-action-reflection, or, to state it in today's terms, to assess our life and mission, to plan, to implement, to evaluate and to commit. (Prakash Louis)*

(4) A universal response to global challenges

*I hope that the Society of Jesus may be able to provide some guidance on **how to respond to globalization**, perhaps providing advocacy for those most exploited by it. The proper Jesuit response to such a phenomenon would be based on the Spiritual Exercises and the method of discernment to be learned there. I believe that God is calling us to exercise the Society's charism (bequeathed by St Ignatius for the good of others) regarding the phenomenon of globalization, as well as other phenomena. I believe that part of this call is to collaborate with others by inviting them to learn "our way of proceeding," so that together we can better address the needs of our world, especially of the poor and marginalized. (David Schultenover)*

*This Congregation is an invitation to **revitalize the global vocation of the Society**, to renew our call to be at the frontiers and to think of new ways of being present in a globalized world. Now is the time for new global apostolic structures that make use of the potential of our transnational reach, as well as of the diversity of concerns of our universal body. I like to think that each decree, in its own way, is giving us tools for this. (Daniel Villanueva)*

*A phrase that surfaced many times during the Congregation was "**new frontiers**". [...] These are not just a few romantic words, but rather a challenge to go to places where the territory is new and uncharted. During the Congregation, a group of thirty of us gathered to speak of how ministering to those who are incarcerated changed our lives. This work with prisoners is one way of going concretely to those new frontiers. Sharing our experiences and our commitment to deal with those who have been de-*

prived of their freedom gave me hope for our future direction as the Society of Jesus, as we try to walk in and through the freedom of the Spirit. (Michael Kennedy)

God is calling us to break out of our provinces and begin moving in a more concerted way, as a multinational and global institution. God is challenging us to greater efficiency in the use of technology and meagre resources, while at the same time maintaining an authentic witness to our poverty, chastity and obedience. God is calling Jesuits, and those closely identified with them, to talk and work with each other more, across countries and continents, in order to respond more adequately to the cries of so many of the poor and marginalized. God is asking that we stay at the frontiers, and do the work that many others cannot do or will not do – working with scientists, political leaders, social development workers, artists, atheists, and whoever else is interested in bringing about a more peaceful and sustainable world. (Joe Magadia)

*I have the impression that the Lord is asking us **to be today a true universal body** at the service of a single mission. And for that purpose we are invited to become better coordinated and articulated, ... and to detach ourselves from our short-sighted views about our works and provinces. The world needs us as a body at the service of faith and justice, and in dialogue with other cultures and religions. (Patxi Alvarez)*

*To reach beyond the Christianity of the first millennium (strong in doctrinal formulations), beyond the Christendom of the second millennium (powerful in temporal ways), to the Christian-ness in the third millennium, **living the paschal way of gentle, humble and kenotic love**. At this level, religions, cultures and peoples can recognize one another as children of one family / Father / Mother. (George Pattery)*

(5) There is new life in new regions

*It seems to me that today we are called to advance in that identity on the basis of a new leadership and new organization of the body of the Society, along with the great wealth of lay people and collaborators, and within a Church which refuses to let the identity of the human person be diluted in a world without horizons. **In this new path, this is a time for passing on the baton:** many regions which for centuries made up the Society's periphery have now become central regions – the East, in a very special way. There we find new leadership, new epicenters, and new life with the general renewal that the leadership of the Society has experienced in the General Congregation. (Jesús M. Sariego)*

List of Contributors

- Patxi Álvarez** (LOY) works for Alboan, the Jesuit development NGO of the Loyola province (Spain). Alboan, Padre Lojendio 2, 2º, 48008 Bilbao, Spain; <patxialvarez@sjloyola.org>
- Kalubi Augustin** (ACE) is the Rector of Collège Alfajiri. Collège Alfajiri, 259, Avenue P.E. Lumumba, B.P. 1612 Bukavu, Sud-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo; <c.stella@jesuits.net>
- Jean-Marc Biron** (GLC) is the Master of Novices. Villa St-Martin, 9451 boul. Gouin Ouest, Pierrefonds (Québec), Canada H8Y 1T2; <jmbiron@colba.net>
- René Cardozo** (BOL) is the newly appointed provincial of Bolivia. Curia Provincial de Bolivia, Casilla 283, La Paz, Bolivia; <renecardozo@hotmail.com>
- Geraldo Luiz De Mori** (BNE) teaches Theology at Faculdade Jesuíta de Filosofia e Teologia (FAJE - Belo Horizonte). Residência S. Roberto Bellarmino, Av. Doutor Cristiano Guimarães, 2127 - Planalto, Belo Horizonte, MG 31720-300 Brazil; <geraldodemori@faculdadejesuita.edu.br>
- Etienne Grieu** (GAL) teaches Theology at Centre Sèvres. Communauté Alberto Hurtado, 39 rue Emile Zola, Appt 501, 93400 Saint Ouen, France; <etienne.grieu@jesuites.com>
- Frantisek Hylmar** (BOH) is the Provincial of Bohemia. Provincial Office, Jecná 2, 120 00 Praha 2, Czech Republic; <provincie.boh@jesuit.cz>
- Michael Kennedy** (CFN) works in prison ministry in California. Ignatius House, PO Box 5166, Culver City, CA 90231-5166 USA; <mkennedy@calprov.org>
- Joseph Marianus Kujur** (RAN) works at the Indian Social Institute in Delhi on tribal issues. Indian Social Institute, 10 Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Dehli 110 003, India; <marianus@isidelhi.org.in>
- Prakash Louis** (PAT) is senior researcher at Bihar Social Institute. Bihar Social Institute, Digha Ghat P.O., Patna 800 011, India; <prakashlouis@gmail.com>
- Jose Cecilio J. Magadia** (PHI) is the Rector of Ateneo de Davao University. Ateneo de Davao University, P.O. Box 80113, 8000 Davao City, Philippines; <jcm30@admu.edu.ph>
- Paul Pace** (MAL) is the newly appointed provincial of Malta. Jesuit Provincial Offices, 78 Triq il-Markiz Scicluna, Naxxar NXR 2067, Malta; <paul.pace@um.edu.mt>
- Henry Pattarumadathil** (KER) is teaching Biblical Studies at the Regional Theologate; Sameeksha/RTC, Kalady 683 574, Ernakulam Dt. (Kerala), India.
- George Pattery** (CCU) is the Provincial of Calcutta. Xavier Sadan, Jesuit Provincial's Residence, 9/3 Middleton Row, Kolkata 700 071, India; <gpattery@gmail.com>

Dominic Robinson (BRI) was a translator at GC35 and is doing his Tertianship in Ireland. Manresa House, Dollymount, Dublin 3, Ireland; <dtrs@hotmai.com>

Jésus Manuel Sariago Rodríguez (CAM) is the newly appointed provincial of Central America. Curia Provincial, Apartado (01)-34, San Salvador, El Salvador; <jmsariago@gmail.com>

David G. Schultenover (WIS) teaches Historical Theology at Marquette University. Marquette University, 615 N. 11th St., Milwaukee, WI 53233-2305, USA; <dschultenover@jesuitswisprov.org>

Luis Rafael Velasco (ARG) is the Rector of the Universidad Católica de Córdoba. Obispo Trejo 323, X5000IYG Córdoba, Argentina; <rafavelascos@yahoo.com.ar>

Daniel Villanueva (CAS) was Communications Officer for GC35 and is currently finishing his thesis at Weston School of Theology (Boston). Arrupe House, 6 Manassas Avenue, Cambridge MA 02138 USA; <danivillanueva@gmail.com>

SHARING BEST PRACTICES IN FUND RAISING INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP Rome, 28-30 November 2007

Salutation

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ

Introduction

I would like to start these brief words of salutation by thanking you for coming to Rome to attend this workshop. I am aware how busy Jesuits all over the world are! I am sure you have left important responsibilities to be here in Rome for only three days. Let me express my gratitude to all of you.

At a time when electronic networking has become so popular and useful, we need to acknowledge that meeting each other face to face becomes very important. The impersonality of electronic communication is changed into a meeting where real faces matter. It is only on the basis of these face-to-face encounters that real relationships can be established.

Objectives of the Workshop

According to the document explaining the workshop, the main objective of the workshop is to provide a critical space so that you can

- (i) share freely a great variety of fund-raising experiences,
- (ii) reflect on the strengths and limitations of these experiences, and finally
- (iii) discern and propose together some practical steps which may guide the Society in the future.

The workshop is eminently practical: it looks simultaneously at present practices of fund-raising and at the apostolic priorities of the Society. I am glad that you will be reflecting on what is being done and looking at the challenges we face in the future.

Apostolic Fund-Raising Today

Fund-raising has become an important activity of any organisation, especially of those engaged in non-profit activities. While new techniques and skills have been developed, the art of raising funds to carry out apostolic activities was something that Ignatius and the Society practised very successfully. To give just one example: the quantity and quality of donations received by the Society to establish a network of schools and colleges all over the world were very significant.

As you know, the Society has become more and more aware of its universal character. FACSI has been playing an important, though limited, role in raising funds from Jesuit sources to help projects. In situations of emergency, responses to appeals for financial help have always found a good response.

Fund-raising, however, has acquired in today's globalised world an added significance. Without being in any way exhaustive, let me outline a few characteristics:

- Information technology and the consequent development of various instruments of communication have meant that campaigns to raise money are world-wide affairs. These mega-events reach a hitherto unimaginably large number of likely donors all over the world.
- Competition for a limited amount of funds by an increasing number of fund-raisers has made the business of fund-raising a very professional occupation. Good intentions and causes do not guarantee that the needed funds will be available.
- In the light of various administrative scandals in which NGOs have been implicated, many ordinary citizens wonder whether their money is reaching the intended target. Distrust of NGOs has increased.
- Globalization has also forced governments to sub-contract welfare activities, that is, to let other institutions and organisations carry out many welfare activities that were previously considered the responsibility of the government. Consequently, there are available today large government funds for social work inside the country (for example, work with mentally retarded and street children), as well as for external aid (what is usually called 'cooperation for development'). This has enabled many NGOs to access large funds from local, national and international governments.

I am glad that you will be reflecting on fund-raising in this new context.

Looking at the Future

The various experiences to be presented during the workshop are also a good example of how the practices of Jesuit fund-raising have been changing. Let me outline some of the main changes.

- (i) There is an ongoing transformation of mission offices in Europe, the USA and Canada.
- (ii) The direction and flows of international funding agencies have changed. For example, many of our works in Latin America have ceased to receive funds from European funding agencies.
- (iii) Some provinces have started new funding organisations and institutions.
- (iv) We are achieving a better management of our investment portfolio and hence generating more funds.

In the light of GC35, and a greater awareness of the Society's universal mission, I would encourage you to reflect on some of the challenges we may face.

- (i) How do we maintain personal relations with our old benefactors and keep up the good name we had gained through our missionary effort?
- (ii) How can we utilise modern information technology to make the greatest universal need better known to the whole Society? How do we ensure the establishment of an effective and fair system of allocation of resources?
- (iii) How do we balance the financial autonomy of each province with a more universal system of allocation?

I would like to express again my gratitude to all of you and I will be glad to receive a report of your final conclusions or proposals.

Thank you

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ

Sharing Best Practices in Fund Raising

Uta Sievers

Introduction

In some of the assistancies and conferences of the Society of Jesus the financial situation of the social apostolate appears, to put it mildly, dire. Social apostolate coordinators coming to Rome for their annual meeting have remarked on this time and time again.¹ Two other factors have strengthened the resolve of the Social Justice Secretariat to call a meeting on the issue of fundraising: the appointment of Mr Chuck Duffy as Development Officer within the Curia *Economato* office, and the initiative shown by the provinces of Mexico and Colombia (and possibly others) who have taken matters into their own hands and started foundations to raise funds for the works of their respective social apostolates.

Throughout the meeting convened from 28 to 30 November 2007 to look afresh at the situation at the Jesuit Curia offices in Rome, however, it became clear that the social apostolate is not alone in its need for raising funds. The dire financial situation is, in many instances, reproduced in provinces and assistancies, and this in turn leads to a competition for funds.

Participants had been invited to look at current fundraising practices and the Society's apostolic priorities simultaneously. This was done in an atmosphere of openness and "exploration", creatively trying to open up the situation and find solutions that might be applicable across provinces and assistancies. The four main aims of the meeting were communicated to participants beforehand: to share experiences regarding best practices; to reflect together on the difficulties that hinder fund-raising activities; to devise ways to increase fundraising skills and facilities useful for all apostolic activities; and to establish an ongoing relationship between the Development Office, networks of the Society and local fundraising efforts.

The success of the meeting in not only establishing a catalogue of ideas and recommendations but also in linking up participants and their diverse work contexts may be attributed to the methodology developed by Chuck Duffy and the Social Justice Secretariat. While the main part of each day was taken up with presentations made by participants addressing issues such as competition in fundraising, building capacity and skills, building funds in their home assistancies, and meeting challenges they encountered, a sizeable

¹ "Another reason for concern in some of the Assistancies of the Society is the lack of adequate financial resources of the Social Apostolate to develop its mission." ACTS of the Meeting of Assistency Coordinators of the Social Sector, "The Social Apostolate in the Society of Jesus: Challenges and Situation", *Promotio Iustitiae* 80 (2003/4), p. 22.

chunk of time every day was also dedicated to sharing and discerning. This tended to be the last session of the day, and on one occasion was included in the celebration of the Eucharist, which yielded even greater fruit.

Presentations

Gerardo Aste SJ, the *Economista* of the Society, opened the meeting with a presentation on Poverty and Funding in the Society of Jesus. His points offered interesting insights and a basic understanding of these issues, especially for the lay collaborators present. An important difference was pointed out between the relative poverty in which Jesuit communities are required to live, and apostolic works of the Society that can own property and are allowed to invest and save. Apostolic works are therefore encouraged to raise funds so as to sustain and expand their work. The same applies also to provinces, with the province treasurer responsible for the financial health of the province, and to the General Curia of the Society, which is also allowed to raise funds for its needs, an activity that in the past was called "begging".

Chuck Duffy, the newly appointed Development Officer at the Curia, gave an overview titled "Elements of Fundraising" with a special focus on Ignatian principles in fundraising. He encouraged participants to develop good relationships with donors and involve the province leadership in their efforts and coordination. Jesuits are still sometimes shy to acknowledge the value of their apostolic works; Mr Duffy emphasised that just stressing the needs of beneficiaries is not enough, one must clearly define the value that the donors get for their donations, for example, recognition. Encouraging those who feel they lack the "right" skills, he said that passion and enthusiasm are certainly more important than expertise when it comes to raising funds. The good news is that in the US a huge of wealth has accumulated over the last generation, people are eager to donate to organisations they trust, and the Society of Jesus is known and respected for its work. So, "use the name!" Mr Duffy concluded.

Agustín Alonso SJ, the director of the Jesuit NGO *Entreculturas* in Spain, presented the situation prevalent in Europe, reporting on the findings of a survey of a number of mission *procuras* and Jesuit NGOs. The results were encouraging: a great number of individuals and organisations in Europe support Jesuit works financially. The projects that are financed with these donations are spread over 50 countries, mainly in the global South. Despite this wealth of activity, there is ample room for better collaboration among the different national *procuras* and NGOs. Significant steps in the right direction have been taken since the inception in 2004 of the Xavier Network, which unites the biggest Jesuit NGOs in Europe: ALBOAN (Spain), Entreculturas (Spain), Gonçalo da Silveira (Portugal), Jesuitenmission (Germany), Leigos

para o Desenvolvimento (Portugal) and MAGIS (Italy). These organisations already collaborate in a number of areas, among them education and training, income generation, peace and human rights, and pastoral activities. Presenting his own organisation, *Entreculturas*, Agustín Alonso showed examples of corporate fundraising and awareness raising in schools that have contributed to the success of *Entreculturas'* efforts to support the large *Fe y Alegria* network in Latin America, and Jesuit Refugee Service in Africa, to name but two of the many beneficiaries.

The second day started with a presentation by Jorge Eduardo Ordoñez Serrano SJ on the *Fundación Amar y Servir* in Colombia. The organisation raises funds for six Colombian Jesuit social centres, and, since 2007, also for projects of Jesuit parishes in Colombia. Their donors are individuals and organisations in Colombia, while a number of partner organisations in the Jesuit world are involved in building the capacity of the *Fundación*. Fr. Serrano listed a number of "best practices" that the *Fundación Amar y Servir* has developed over the years. These include encouragement of monthly donations, regular acknowledgements to all donors and volunteers, accountability, a website and annual report for information and transparency, and campaigns in churches. One obstacle to good fundraising that Fr. Serrano mentioned was familiar to other participants as well: difficulties with accountability. "We are very good at doing things, but not so much at rendering account as to how we spent what we received", as Fr. Serrano put it.

Sergio Cobo SJ, director of the Jesuit NGO *Fomento Cultural y Educativo* (FCE) in Mexico, presented the ongoing fundraising efforts to keep the social apostolate afloat in Mexico. When European donor agencies reduced their support to Mexican NGOs from 95 per cent in 1999 to 45 per cent in 2007, FCE and other social work projects entered a state of financial crisis, leading to the closure of thirty projects. The remaining two Social Centres, two Indigenous Missions and three parishes are staffed by 80 lay people and 32 Jesuits. They serve about 250 communities with 320,000 individual beneficiaries in all. His answer to the problem of reduced funding from Europe – which is experienced also in other parts of Latin America as Africa comes more into focus with the funders – is to "diversify", by finding funds within other Jesuit institutions and through national rather than international support agencies. However, the more radical answer, according to Fr. Cobo, would be a spiritual renewal of the faith-justice dimension within the Society of Jesus; the resulting synergies would re-energize people within and outside the social apostolate.

In his presentation on the situation in South Asia, Xavier Jeyaraj SJ first pointed to the historical development of the Assistency that led from "easy" finances to "difficult" fundraising in terms of foreign and local sources. Historically, provinces in South Asia could count on the support of "mother

provinces” as well as Jesuits who came as missionaries and would be able to raise funds from their sources back home. With these sources of income drying up and donor agencies changing their priorities, the financial situation of provinces and their respective social apostolates can be highly constrained. A major new source of income are institutions of the Society and communities. These are encouraged (or sometimes forced) to open up, through twinning with social apostolate works for example, or through common projects with Social Centres. Some of the challenges in this process are: proper training of the Jesuits and lay people involved in fundraising; fundraising locally instead of nationally or internationally; moving from an institution-centred to beneficiary-centred approach, and from a missionary approach to a more “social justice” approach.

After briefly outlining the historical situation of fundraising in the East Asia assistantcy since the 1980s, Roberto Yap SJ spoke about new sources of funding. He took the example of the *Institute on Church and Social Issues* in his province, the Philippines, to show how this Social Centre is supporting itself through consultancy, commissioned projects, bidding for competitive grants and social entrepreneurship. However, the funds obtained in this way are mostly project-specific, and funding for overhead costs (salaries, utilities, equipment) is hard to come by. Clearly, other sources need to be tapped. Roberto Yap suggests that raising funds for social projects from Filipinos locally, and especially from abroad, could be fruitful, as might be corporate fundraising through the Jesuit “brand name” which is well known and respected. Inter-provincial cooperation can help gaining the right skills and getting support in this enterprise.

The situation in Africa is peculiar in that it is a very “young” continent where, as Elias Omondi SJ reported, the oldest Jesuit province is only 100 years old. Historically, Jesuit Missions Offices took the responsibility of supporting provinces and regions financially. For example, Zimbabwe was supported by the British and German provinces, the Central Africa province (Congo, Rwanda and Burundi) by the Belgian province, and the West Africa and Madagascar provinces by the French province. Every province in Africa thus had a “mother province” and missionaries from those provinces as well as province treasurers were raising funds through mission *procuras* abroad. There seemed to be plenty of funds available in the past, and African Jesuits as a result rarely got involved in fundraising. The situation in the last 10 years has been quite different: the “mother provinces” are experiencing donor fatigue and the missionaries are fewer in comparison with Jesuits born in Africa. These have taken over projects that are directly dependent on outside funding; they are finding it hard since competition for funding is high and the sustainability of the projects is in question. Steps have been taken since January 2008 to face these challenges by establishing a coordinating office for

the whole African social apostolate in Nairobi; hiring a programme officer to give technical support to the social apostolate, including fundraising; hiring an advocacy officer to coordinate social justice activities and make national, regional and international links; establishing a development office for the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM).

Some final thoughts

The conclusions that participants drew from their presentations and interaction can be found on page 54. In addition, the sharing sessions provided further insights into the differences, and even more, the similarities (which one participant called “frightening”) between assistancies. One insight was that the Society on all levels needs to act as a body to face the future of fundraising, especially when it comes to cooperation between universities and the social apostolate. A move in the right direction has been made by employing a Development Officer at the Curia. New links have to be forged and existing ones rediscovered. Christian Life Communities (CLC), which is already doing excellent local fundraising in Kenya, is an example. In regions where donor agencies have “moved away” by changing their priorities, the search for new ways of fundraising is fully underway with encouraging results. Another important insight from Latin America is that if we do not internalise the fact that we are all “beggars” like St Ignatius, we will not succeed. A “spirituality of fundraising” (Henri Nouwen) includes acknowledging the fact that we are all in need of something, donors and beneficiaries alike. This is also true of the people who do the fundraising – they need to work for something that they believe in.

The general feeling at the end of the meeting was that there is light at the end of the tunnel, that things are difficult, and may be more so in the future, and that the Society has been late in approaching the problem of funds, but that the cooperation and mutual trust building generated by the meeting will go a long way towards a “better organised” future.

Uta Sievers
Communications Officer
Social Justice Secretariat
C.P. 6139
00195 Roma-Prati – ITALY
<uta@sjcuria.org>

Conclusions of the Fundraising Meeting

After the presentations on the situation in the Conferences, the discussions in big and small groups, and reflections by the participants also in groups, the following conclusions emerged from the meeting:

This is a special moment in the life of the Society, a moment of financial concerns, coming at the conclusion of an era in which the global North supported the global South. It is also a moment for ordering things, planning, and setting new apostolic priorities. If we do not use this moment, we will lose the opportunity to help build the local church, which makes it not only a financial but also a theological issue. Some issues for the whole Society:

1. Reinforce solidarity and planning in the whole Society, especially in the assistancies, conferences;
2. Reduce funding inequality among Jesuits/provinces/works;
3. Rationalise use of Jesuit trademark (brand), not only in fundraising but also in our work;
4. Ensure transparency and accountability;
5. Planning of regional/provincial fundraising – shift from traditional fundraising to modern fundraising;
6. Jesuit-run foundations (Entreculturas, Alboan, Amar y Servir etc.) should give priority to the needs of Jesuit centres/provinces/assistancies and go beyond the previously set priority geographical areas.
7. The provincials should be strongly encouraged to support any fundraising initiatives

Some ideas for the Development Office at the Curia

1. Function as a think-tank in a globalised world to help the whole Society have a globalised vision;
2. Help organise apostolic priorities (planning), especially at assistancy/conference level;
3. Examine how to integrate our traditional missions into the current development planning; priorities are different in the northern and southern hemispheres;
4. Discern whether a new development office is necessary in every province;
5. Ensure that the province development office is linked to the treasurer in each province; we need strong communication and cooperation;

6. Find ways to reduce the gap between rich institutions and poor institutions, not competing but sharing;
7. Hold training programmes for fundraising at Assistancy level;
8. Reinforce local fundraising and foster it by studying and learning from the methods of others; we need to learn and understand the proper, most effective use of mass media, electronic media and internet in fundraising;
9. Train a team of young Jesuits who work towards empowerment and common planning. It would be sensible to begin with Africa, India, East Asia;
10. The Development Office needs to have good communication with the rest of the Curia; they need to know what the local offices are planning to do.
11. The Development Officer should map which provinces and institutions are raising funds for which works. This would help ensure that the provinces most in need are supported first and foremost.

Jesuits in Haiti: Declaration

We are Jesuits working in Haiti in a variety of occupations and are witnesses of the daily tragedy experienced by millions of our Haitian brothers and sisters. Like Yahweh in the desert, we see the misery of our people and hear their cries:

I have seen the miserable state of my people. I have heard their appeal. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. I want life for them, not death. But who will free them? In the past, Moses was my messenger to free my people and lead them out of slavery to Egypt. In his name, he led them to a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus, 3,7-12).

The misery of our people today is this:

- Millions of Haitians who are victims of the soaring and never-ending increase in the price of primary products and who cannot meet their most essential needs, even for food.
- The drop in national production in all the sectors of the economy, which leads to famine and absolute destitution.
- The shameful and insupportable impoverishment of our urban and rural populations.
- The increase of insecurity, especially the notable reappearance of kidnapping and the despair of the young.
- Our country plunged in shame and despair with its sovereignty trodden under foot and the majority of its population living in subhuman conditions.

The misery of our people today is also this:

- The total incapacity of most of our governments to face up to the basic problems of society.
- The complete absence of a constructive political opposition, capable of controlling and stimulating government action for the nation's benefit.
- The total annihilation of the political role of Parliament to benefit dishonest practices such as bribery and corruption
- The irresponsibility of the international community, especially of countries called friends of Haiti and of the international financial institutions

(the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank, etc.) who have not kept their promises to Haiti and cynically look on while Haitian society slips into hell.

The Haitian people, courageous as they are, this time can take no more. Racked by misery, they cry out. And their cry becomes an appeal.

The people's cry today comes from:

- Those thousands of young who roam the streets saying they can't take any more and who call upon responsible politicians to assume their responsibility.
- Those millions of unemployed, racked by hunger, who vent their anger in the streets of Port-au-Prince and in provincial towns.
- Those fathers and mothers who spend several days without being able to eat and now express their misery in street demonstrations.
- Those emaciated children from the slums and rural villages who cry each day because they find nothing to eat and have no future.

Call, cry out, never drop your arms, you courageous people, strength. It is for you to help me to help you. With you I can do much. Without you I will not succeed. You need me, I know. I am your irreplaceable Ally. But I also need you, your cries, your unity, your experience as a suffering people, your courage. Come, let us work together. Victory will be ours if we are struggling for a just cause. You know my name: I AM THE GOD OF LIFE AND NOT DEATH. You know my plan. Jesus of Nazareth expressed it well in the Fourth Gospel: "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10,10).

We are strongly challenged by this repulsive and intolerable situation that threatens to throw our country into new crises; we feel ourselves deeply united to this suffering people and in sincere solidarity with those who are its worst victims. This is why, in the name of our Christian faith and our commitment as Jesuit religious, we strongly exhort those politically responsible:

- The President of the Republic to take rapidly the necessary political decisions to re-establish confidence and peace; to undertake an in-depth reform of public institutions, to put the country finally on the path to development
- The high authorities of the State (Prime Minister, Ministers, State Secretaries and general Directors, Senators, Deputies etc.) in the short term, to draw up and inaugurate, in the shortest possible time, an emergency programme (real and effective) to relieve the sufferings of the people, and in the long term to use the intellectual resources and experience, both national and foreign, to draw up and inaugurate a true plan for national development.

- The political parties and organisations to take up their responsibility criticising and controlling government action, to help look for solutions adapted to the crisis our society is living, and to share effectively in reforming the State so that our country can finally emerge from disgrace and stagnation.
- The merchants, industrialists, importers, bankers and other active forces in the country to make their contribution to relieve the sufferings of our citizens, and to become aware of the need to work together to help Haiti to its feet.
- All those who make up civil society: religious groups, teachers, students, members and heads of associations, trade unions, workers, craftsmen, shop keepers, farmers etc. to help us stand up and search together for the solutions of our people's problems.
- The international community, especially those countries that call themselves friends of Haiti, the international financial institutions etc. to respect their commitments to Haiti, especially their many promises of cooperation and effective help for the country to emerge from this quagmire.

People of Haiti! Continue to call, to cry out and to summon those you have chosen to serve you. Your strength will be organised and sustained non-violence. Violence is never effective. You call me. Yes, I will be with you and in you through the power of my Spirit.

The Jesuits of Haiti:

Fr. Pérard Monestime SJ
 Fr. Kawas François SJ
 Fr. Miller Lamothe SJ
 Fr. Ramiro Pampols SJ
 Fr. Gilles Beauchemin SJ
 Br. Mathurin Charlot SJ
 Fr. Godefroy Midi SJ

Fr. Derino Sainfariste SJ
 Fr. André Charbonneau SJ
 Fr. Claude Souffrant SJ
 Fr. Kénel Sénatus SJ
 Fr. Gontrand Décoste SJ
 Thomas Dabady SJ

To send:

- To the media of the Capital and Provinces (radio, newspapers, electronic press)
- To the main agencies of the international press (AFP, Reuters, etc.)
- To NGOs and human rights organisations
- To Church agencies (CEH, CHR, etc.)
- To the Dominican media
- To CPAL (Conference of Latin American Provincials)

Neoliberalism in Latin America: Ten Years On

Michael J. Gent¹

In November 1996 the Latin American Jesuit provincials sounded a continent-wide alarm: an ideologically driven set of economic policies was riding the wave of globalization, inundating the region. International financial institutions, like the World Bank, IMF, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), representing the world's most powerful and wealthiest interests – both governmental and corporate – were imposing neoliberal structural adjustment policies on the developing countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Neoliberalism mandates the radical dismantling of barriers to economic activity in order to foster growth; apologists promised that trickle down effects of economic growth would benefit all segments of society. In a letter and study Reflection, the Jesuit provincials framed their objections to the neoliberal regime in theological terms: the ideology was idolatrous.² It placed the market above the human person, and made it more than “a useful and even necessary instrument to improve and increase supply and reduce prices.” The provincials claimed that the ideology, in condemning millions of Latin Americans to poverty as the inevitable price for economic growth, reflected a “culture founded on a conception of the human person and society incompatible with the values of the Gospel.” In their critique, however, they focused on the real-world consequences of the application of the ideology – the actual economic impact structural adjustment has on the region's population, and especially on the poorest segments.

In the years since the letter was published, the neoliberal regime has maintained its hold on Latin America. Its success as an economic system has, however, been mixed at best. As the provincials reported in 1996, economies have grown (but erratically), inflation has apparently been tamed and the current account for many countries has begun to show a surplus. The latter is due partly to reductions in government spending – necessary as well as wasteful. The cost associated with the positive economic indicators has been high.

Poverty is still staggering in Latin America. Latest U.N. figures indicate over 200 million living in poverty, and nearly 80 million living in extreme

¹ Department of Management and Marketing, Canisius College, Buffalo, New York. The present article is an abstract of a longer article which is available in the Social Justice Secretariat's website <http://www.sjweb.info/documents/sjs/docs/Gent_PJ98.pdf>

² “Letter and study document on neoliberalism in Latin America”, *Promotio Iustitiae* 67, May 1997, pp. 43-60.

poverty.³ The good news is that the percentages living in poverty have moderated somewhat (39.8 per cent and 15.4 per cent respectively in 2006). The bad news is that, using a measure of relational poverty (wealth distribution), nothing has changed. For example, using a common cut-off of 60 per cent of median income, the percentage of Latin Americans living below the poverty line has remained constant for almost two decades. A recent region-wide poll confirms the observation that neoliberalism has failed to alleviate poverty. Over 50 per cent of Latin Americans indicated their monthly family income was insufficient to cover the basic necessities.

In their letter and Reflection, the Latin American provincials described and critiqued a menu of “neoliberal measures” that had been imposed on their countries. The Third-World debt crisis in the early 1980s exposed Latin American governments to neoliberal discipline at the hands of international financial institutions (e.g., IMF, World Bank, IDB). The discipline came in the form of “structural adjustment,” a term used first by Robert McNamara, World Bank president in the late 1970s. It refers to “a set of lending practices whereby governments would receive loans if they agreed to implement specific economic reforms.”

In the decade that followed their letter, these measures and their consequences have continued, albeit with wide variation from region to region. The situation in Central America has been the most severe, that in South America the least. The following is a brief look at the continuing impact of structural adjustment in Latin America.

State intervention in the economy restricted. The provincials reported that in some cases the state was being stripped of the responsibility to provide basic goods. This phenomenon has proceeded unremittingly during the last decade. One manifestation is the movement by national governments to decentralize. Since 1996 decentralizing activities have concentrated on urban and regional transport, water, health-related services, and education. The burden of decentralization on local governments has led to increased privatization and public/private partnerships. In many cases such services as continue to be provided at the national level are narrowly targeted towards the very poor. In health care there has been an impulse to replace public with private, for-profit insurance plans, along with user fees.

³ Most of the data in this article are taken from two reports of the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC): *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2006-2007*, and *Social Panorama of Latin America 2006*. Poll results are from surveys conducted by the non-profit Chilean Corporación Latinobarómetro, especially *Informe Latinobarómetro 2005 and 2006*. Another particularly useful source is an article by Sarah Babb, “The social consequences of structural adjustment: Recent evidence and current debates.”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, No. 31, 2005. A more complete listing of sources can be found in the complete article. Additional information on resistance to neoliberalism in Latin America can be found in the article, “Undoing the Damage: The Growing Backlash to Neoliberalism in Latin America,” in submission, *Delaware Review of Latin American Studies*.

Privatization of State enterprises. Latin America has been the world leader in this linchpin neoliberal practice. In the 1990s economic activity in state-owned companies in Latin America dropped by half, while the region accounted for over half of the total privatization revenues in the world. Countries sold out holdings both in the competitive sector (e.g., manufacturing and finance) and in the monopoly and utilities sector. In Latin America there have been many instances of a perversion of intent regarding privatization. The end result is a non-competitive concentration of ownership. In addition, the privatization of state-owned firms often leads to downsizing and worker layoffs. Many displaced workers end up working in the informal sector, in jobs that are precarious, poorly paid, and less productive. In a recent poll only 30 per cent of respondents were at all satisfied with the price and quality of privatized utilities; and large majorities remain opposed to the privatization of extraction industries (oil and gas, mining).

Removal of restrictions across national borders on merchandise, capital and financial flows. Tariffs are a good example. Tariff rates in Latin America fell from an average of roughly 50 per cent before neoliberal reforms to barely 10 per cent by the 2000s. Restrictions on foreign investment, direct and portfolio were abolished, and taxes on foreign earnings from dividends, interest, and royalties were reduced or eliminated in the 1990s. The provincials witnessed the Mexican peso crisis where “hot money” due to deregulation of capital markets led to alarming and precipitous devaluation. Five years later, in 2001, an even more spectacular failure of neoliberal trade liberalization occurred in Argentina where over half the population tumbled below the poverty line. In 2005-2006 the U.S. and five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which eliminates barriers to trade. Already there are clear signs of the U.S. “crowding out” local producers, especially in agriculture.

Neoliberal agenda silent on problems of foreign debt. In 2005, Latin American foreign debt amounted to \$720 billion, roughly equivalent to 38 per cent of the region’s GDP. Between 1982 and 1996, Latin America paid creditors \$730-billion dollars, mainly in interest. The Jesuit provincials pointed out that servicing foreign debt requires cutbacks in social spending. Especially when the debt is in foreign currencies, countries are forced to emphasize spending on export activities and not on social institutions.

Latin America has not been left out of the international debt relief movement. Several countries have been targeted for debt cancellations from the World Bank and the IDB. They are among those designated as “heavily indebted poor countries” (HIPC) by the G-8 powers in 2005. The amount of debt relief, however, is likely to be on average only of 20-30 per cent of the

Latin American countries' indebtedness! In addition, to qualify they have to demonstrate performance on even stricter structural adjustment programmes determined by the IMF, including more privatization and increased trade liberalization.

State fiscal, economic activities subordinated to macroeconomic concerns. Strict neoliberal orthodoxy requires national governments to balance fiscal budgets, reduce inflation, and maintain a stable balance of payments. Along with privatization and deregulation, these measures comprise the essential features of neoliberal structural adjustment. For most of Latin America, it is "mission accomplished" in this area. And there seems to be no backing off by IFIs regarding the necessity for Third World borrowers to adopt such a macroeconomic focus. Speculative investors, especially "portfolio" investors, continue to require Latin American governments to provide a climate of "extreme market friendliness" or face the prospect of capital flight.

Elimination of legislative barriers designed to protect workers. This is another structural adjustment designed to offer incentives for private investment. Latin American countries generally follow in theory legislation that is exactly what the ILO would recommend or hope to have; but the perception is that enforcement is practically non-existent. A public opinion poll for 2005 shows that only 18 per cent of Latin Americans believe that workers are adequately protected by labour laws in their countries. Structural reforms pertaining to workplace issues have involved new labour legislation that makes labour more "flexible" and is ostensibly "designed to make it easier for labour markets to adjust to the changing structure of production." Typical provisions, however, include expanding reasons for legally firing workers, reducing severance pay, allowing temporary and contingent workers, and curtailing the right to strike!

Related to worker protection is the spectre of unemployment in Latin America. In most countries, unemployment is rated as the "most important problem." Poll results show 59 per cent of households reported that at least one adult person was unemployed during the past year. Furthermore, 75 per cent of survey respondents expressed concern about being unemployed during the following 12 months.

Reduction of taxes for powerful groups. Intended to stimulate the economy, this measure, according to the Jesuit provincials, leads to greater concentration of wealth and power. Cutting taxes on the powerful has not led developing countries to eschew taxation, however. An IDB working paper has reported that "to offset the revenues lost ... they have reformed their

taxation systems to more effectively extract resources, commonly replacing taxes on income and wealth with more easily administered (but more regressive) value-added taxes."

Summary

The provincial superiors of the Latin American Jesuit provinces in 1996 summed up their appraisal of the neoliberal economic regime as a "growing repudiation of the general direction of the economy which, far from improving the common good, is deepening the traditional causes of public discontent: inequality, misery, and corruption." Latin Americans appear to be reaffirming the provincials' observations by registering their discontent with the system. In a recent poll, almost three quarters of the respondents think their countries are governed, not for the good of all, but rather for a few powerful groups. In the same vein, only 27 per cent are satisfied with the functioning of the market economy in their countries.

Earlier in this paper it was pointed out that relational poverty, an indicator of income inequality, has not changed in the region over the past quarter century. U.N. data suggest that several countries in Latin America have achieved improvements in distribution in recent years, "although small." But they also indicate that "Latin America's highly inequitable and inflexible income distribution has been ... greater than that seen in other world regions." Echoing this assessment, the 2007 United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report states that among all developing areas income inequality remains highest in Latin America "where the poorest fifth of the people account for only about 3% of national consumption." Structural adjustments, along with technological advances, have increased the returns to assets that are most productive (e.g., education and capital) – assets that the poor lack.

In sum, **the record shows that much of what alarmed the Jesuit provincials in 1996 has continued well into the first decade of the new century.** But since they wrote, multiple forces in Latin America have emerged or strengthened to challenge neoliberal hegemony, or at least to modify its extreme market orientation in favour of an approach that recognises the importance of social criteria.

Resistance on the rise

In the last decade a raft of new political leaders has swept to power in the region. They have a mandate to adopt economic policies which, while supporting growth, give equal or greater attention to the social agenda. The engines of neoliberal structural adjustment, World Bank and IMF, are losing their

punch. More borrowers are pre-paying and/or defying obligations to avoid the IFI's "jurisdiction." For example Uruguay, the Fund's third-largest borrower, announced in 2006 that it was pre-paying its outstanding obligations to the IMF, while Venezuela continues to buy up Argentina's debt.

The South American common market, Mercosur, under the leadership of Brazil, effectively 'killed' the Free Trade Association of the Americas (FTAA) - a NAFTA/CAFTA-like attempt by the U.S. to make the hemisphere one market with neoliberal rules that would clearly benefit the North. And in December 2007 seven South American governments inaugurated the Bank of the South, an institution designed to compete with, or replace the World Bank, IMF, IDB.

Grassroots movements and civil society organizations have also ratcheted up criticism of the neoliberal regime with its structural adjustment conditionalities. Protests have punctuated Latin America over privatization, environmental threats from multi-national corporations, and treatment of workers. Indigenous movements have tended to be staunchly opposed to neoliberalism, and the major global pushback gathering, the World Social Forum, has its home base in Latin America

Another institutional force resisting neoliberal economic globalization is organized labour. Labour's key demand is that in the world-wide trading system, the rights of workers be given equal weight with the rights of private property. In the U.S. trade union advocates have successfully lobbied for language in trade laws that makes respect for workers' rights a condition for duty-free access to American markets and for developmental assistance. In May 2007, buckling under pressure from labour and from public opinion, the Bush administration and Congress announced that labour and environmental standards would be a substantive component of all future trade agreements. These provisions helped tipped the balance in Congress, leading to approval of the recent bilateral trade deal with Peru.

Finally, a growing number of respected economists are rejecting blind faith in free trade and the doctrinaire opposition to government intervention in markets. Nobel laureates George Akerlof and Joseph Stiglitz have commented on the failings of the unbridled market fundamentalism embedded in neoliberalism. Stiglitz, President Clinton's top economic adviser and past chief economist for the World Bank, insists that neoliberal structural adjustments can tear the delicate social fabric of developing countries. He argues that unfettered free markets often break down and that targeted government action will improve the functioning of state economies.

The world economic order is in turmoil at present, and it is unlikely that the neoliberal regime will continue its quarter-century stranglehold over the thinking and practice of economic globalization. Latin America is extricating itself from the clutches of harmful structural adjustment. Hopefully, economic

arrangements that emerge in the region will incarnate the call of Latin American bishops at their meeting last year for a globalization of solidarity in which “justice in commerce must be promoted” along with “the preferential option for the poor.” A globalization that genuinely works “for the common good.”

Michael J. Gent, Ph.D.
 Professor of Organization Studies
 Canisius College
 Buffalo, NY 14208 - USA
 <gent@canisius.edu>

Religious Poverty in the African context

Michel Kamanzi SJ

“**B**rother, are you about to take the vow of poverty or saying goodbye to poverty?” That was the rather ironic question that Clemence put to me on the eve of my first vows in the Society of Jesus. It was at Cyanguu, in the South of Rwanda. Clemence, a young orphan who survived the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, lived for nearly ten years in the Centre (CENA) for unaccompanied children after the Genocide set up by the Society of Jesus on its novitiate premises in Rwanda. Clemence’s question was not a mere play on words in Kinyarwanda,¹ not a jesting pun; it said something about the material wellbeing that comes with joining a religious order in Africa after the precariousness and poverty in which most of our neighbours live.

For many of our brothers and sisters, poverty is not an ideal; it is the harsh reality they struggle with every day without always managing to find their daily bread. When we say we are taking the vow of poverty they find it hard to understand, especially when many aspects of our lifestyle seem to show the contrary. How often did I not hear: “Brother, maybe you take the vow of poverty but we are the ones who live it out!” Material comfort, our apostolic means (houses, vehicles, etc.), and the many opportunities we enjoy, such as the opportunity to travel abroad for studies... all these lead people to count us among the rich. Can we still say we are poor?

We have to admit that in the face of poverty, sometimes even misery, in which most of our fellow citizens live, our lifestyle, however modest it

¹ In Kinyarwanda, the language spoken in Rwanda, ‘taking a vow’ and ‘saying goodbye’ are two similar sounding words: “*gusezerana*” (taking a vow) and “*gusezera*” (saying goodbye).

may be, makes us privileged people, the society's affluent ones. We are then surely called to make an effort to convert to a simpler or, if we prefer, more evangelical lifestyle. Does that mean that we should give up the different means at our disposal, means that are undoubtedly crucial to our apostolic efficiency? How can we live in a modest way while keeping an acceptable and dignified standard of life? The solution does not lie in simulating misery, for that would sound false, very false indeed.

It is also true that the vow of poverty cannot be reduced to its material aspect, and as St Ignatius Loyola's worthy disciples, we also know that there is a spiritual poverty besides the effective poverty which we have chosen in following Christ the poor. How then are we to live the vow of poverty in its full meaning, and love poverty "as a mother and, in accordance with holy discernment, experience at certain moments some of its effects"²?

Some of us African religious men and women come from modest families and have known dire poverty during childhood or youth. Our countries' wars and conflicts also leave scars. Furthermore, we are often besieged with calls for material help by our families and friends. Is it possible to remain indifferent to the call from parents, brothers, sisters or friends who have not had the daily soup and bread that we consume three times a day? The point here is not to raise guilt, which, in any case, would be paralysing. Our lifestyle is often really simple. But I think that we cannot simply talk of our simple lifestyle without exercising some solidarity with our relatives and with those around us.

In my opinion, one possible way to live out the vow of poverty in the current African context is sharing. It is, besides, a value that is found in our African culture of communal solidarity and help. I would call this a solidarity imperative, a requirement of our vow of poverty, which expresses itself through the practice of sharing. In many of our families we have already learned from childhood to share our meal, our clothes, our books, etc. with our brothers, our sisters, our cousins, our friends and our neighbours. Why not rekindle, cultivate, improve and promote that culture of sharing as African religious men and women? Sharing, I believe, as is the case with love according to Saint Ignatius "*consists in interchange between the two parties; that is to say in the lover's giving and communicating to the beloved what he has or out of what he has or can; and so, on the contrary, the beloved to the lover. So that if the one has knowledge, he give to the one who has it not. The same of honours, of riches; and so the one to the other*"³.

Sharing could be practised in our apostolates as well as in daily life when such and such person or family calls upon us for aid. In that solidarity with

² *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, n. 287.

³ *Spiritual Exercises*, n. 231.

our neighbours, which is a personal and communal expression of our vow of poverty, a special place must, I believe, be given to our respective families. I have always thought that we should some day manage to set up family solidarity funds in each religious community in Africa. After all, we remain members of our families, and as such we must assume some responsibility for our relatives. Not being able to help one's family in need often causes great pain; one then wonders if one's religious commitment still has any meaning if it is not even possible to help the closest of neighbours, that is, the family!

So does taking the vow of poverty in Africa in the current context still have some meaning? It does, provided that it puts us in a position of solidarity with our neighbours. Otherwise, we stand the risk of living an unauthentic life, or one which, in our context, would be farthest from the incarnation of what we wish to be. For me, in our contemporary African context, living as a poor religious person means living a life that is at once modest and dignified, sharing what we are, what we have or can with our neighbours, especially the closest and the poorest. In other words, it is about following Christ the poor and committing myself so that there may be more and more of us who "say goodbye" to dire poverty, leaving precariousness and misery to live a life that is worth living, a life that gives us the "power to share". I believe that one example, however limited, of that "power to share" has precisely been the hosting on the Jesuit novitiate's premises in Cyangugu some 220 orphans after the 1994 Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda. We were thereby able to share something of what we had and of what we are; we were able to live our religious poverty in solidarity with our neighbours more in deeds than in words. Does it take extreme situations like the Genocide or war to make us committed and express our solidarity with our distressed neighbours, or is there a way to live that "poverty-sharing" on a daily basis? *"The poor will receive as much as they want to eat. Those who seek Yahweh will praise him. Long life to their hearts!"*⁴.

Michel Segatagara Kamanzi SJ
 Hekima College - Jesuit School of Theology
 Catholic University of Eastern Africa
 P.O. Box 21215
 00505 Nairobi - KENYA
 <michkasega@yahoo.fr>

*Original French
 Translation by Christian Uwe*

⁴ Ps. 22: 27.

Mining and the Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Muhigirwa R. Ferdinand SJ

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a “geological scandal” with a surface area of 2.3 million sq km containing more than 1100 different mineral substances.¹ The DRC has immense natural resources, including forests (145 million hectares, equivalent to 56 percent of African forests, putting the country in second place after Amazonia, 46 percent), hydro-electric power sources (including the Inga dam with a potential output estimated at 44.000 MW), crude oil (271,000 barrels a day), gas (in Lake Kivu) and mines. With regard to mineral resources, it is currently estimated that DRC is the source of 12 percent of world copper reserves and almost half of the world’s cobalt reserves (56 million tonnes of copper out of a total 480 million and 3.4 million tonnes of cobalt out of a total seven million). Former Gécamines CEO Robert Crem has estimated at US \$330 billion the current value of known mineral reserves in Katanga.

DRC is scandalously poor – according to the HDI in the UNDP Human Development Report, DRC is classified in 167th place. One third of children under five suffer from malnutrition and life expectancy is only 40 years. The Congolese survive on less than a dollar a day. The basic infrastructure needed to re-launch the country will have to be almost entirely rebuilt. The country’s economic weight is almost nothing because Africa as a whole represents approximately one percent of world trade.

1. A bitter assessment

The Catholic Bishops of Congo-Kinshasa, examining the extraction of natural resources in their country, have issued the following statement: “Instead of contributing to the development of our country and benefiting our people, our rich mineral resources, oil reserves and extensive forests have become the cause of our misery”.² This statement indicates the greatest **challenge** of all, “the well organised and monitored extraction of our natural resources.”³

¹ World Bank document, *Democratic Republic of Congo. Good governance in the mining sector as a growth factor*, (October 2007), p. 20. In Katanga, the main mining province in DRC, there are in all 325 mining companies, including ten quoted on international stock markets.

² *Message from the Congolese National Bishops Conference, (CENCO)*, 7 July 2007, n. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, n. 1. See also Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 110.

2. The consequences of mismanagement

Mismanagement in the mining sector has caused countless political, legal, economic, security and socio-cultural consequences.

From a political and legal perspective. Following democratic elections in 2006 in the DRC, the extraction of mineral resources has become a major national economic issue with a Government Commission set up to review 63 mining contracts, a permanent Commission for Environment and Natural Resources in Parliament and the Senate, a Bishops Commission for Natural Resources within CENCO and civil society organisation natural resources networks. The new Mining Code and Mining Regulations were published in July 2005. The recently held *États Généraux des Mines* (12 - 14 March 2008) has proceeded to evaluate this Code and its application measures. It is believed that some of the measures in the Mining Code are the basis for the plundering of the country's mineral substances. Consequently it does not favour transparent and fair management of mineral resources in DRC.

From a security perspective. Resolution 1756 of the UN Security Council on 15 May 2007 states that "the extraction of natural resources continues to raise serious problems of sovereignty, equality and respect for local people and the environment"⁴ and establishes a direct link between the illegal extraction of natural resources and war and insecurity. These facts were made clear back in 2002 in the 2002-2003 Group Report prepared by UN experts and the Lutundula Report in July 2005. In DRC, the "first African world war" in 1998 is intrinsically linked to the illegal extraction and systematic plundering of natural resources in our country. This world war involved nine African countries – DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Angola, Zimbabwe, Chad, Namibia and Eritrea. Wars of aggression instigated by Rwanda and civil wars between different armed groups have caused 5.4 million deaths according to recent statistics (January 2008) issued by the International Rescue Committee. Quite rightly Jean Migabo has raised the issue of Congolese genocide⁵. Wars and insecurity continue in North and South Kivu and in the Province Orientale owing to the presence of gold, diamonds and coltan. Tensions are perceptible between DRC and Uganda in view of the start of oil production in Lake Albert by the Heritage Oil Company.

From an economic perspective. While current prices of precious metals have risen steeply⁶, the Congolese socio-economic situation continues to deteriorate. Since colonial times, the mining sector has been the keystone of the economy in DRC, accounting for between 70 and 80 percent of export receipts and approximately eight percent of GDP. Revenue in terms of mining taxes

⁴ *Message from the Permanent Committee of the National Bishops Conference*, 9 February 2007, n. 8.

⁵ Jean Migabo Kalere, *Genocide in Congo. An analysis of civilian massacres*, Brussels: Broederlijk Delen, 2002 (216 pages).

⁶ For example, a ton of copper cost US\$2,300 in 2003. It now costs approximately US\$8,200. A ton of cobalt costs approximately US\$115,000.

received from mining companies has dropped from US\$26.7 million in 2005 to US\$11.7 million in 2006⁷. The drop in revenue from the mining sector is mainly linked to illegal trafficking in precious metals, fraud and corruption practices in private enterprise and public services, the lack of transparency in negotiating and granting markets, the absence of feasibility studies for ore deposits, the under-evaluation of documented ore deposits, the non-application of the mining code and regulations and an imbalance in the allocation of allotments between the Congolese state and private companies. It must be noted that from an ecological viewpoint, new mining plants cause environmental pollution and massive deforestation, thus contributing to soil impoverishment, the pollution of waterways and rivers and increased air pollution.

From a socio-cultural perspective. Companies are not fulfilling their social responsibilities. This is because mining activity causes the exploitation of one man by another, family breakdown, immorality, the relocation of villages and cemeteries⁸ and the destruction of existing infrastructure. The mining code and its measures are not respected. In conformity with article 452 of the mining Code, mining companies are obliged "to improve the well-being of local people by setting up economic and social development programmes and providing compensation for those obliged to leave their homes." They must, in consultation with local communities, "present an environmental impact study and an integrated environmental project management plan" (article 204), "monitor security, hygiene and protection provisions" (article 207), "public health and the conservation of ore reserves, wellheads and public roads", (articles 208 and 209). They are also required "to construct and maintain all the infrastructure necessary for mining activities" (article 212) and "open to the public" (article 213).

3. Civil society contribution

There are networks and NGOs in DRC working in favour of fair and transparent management of forestry and mineral resources. CEPAS (Centre d'études pour l'action sociale) is an observer on the inter-ministerial commission responsible for the review of mining contracts in DRC. Proposed by Congolese civil society in Congo, CEPAS was nominated a member of the pilot committee of EITI (an initiative for strategic orientation and supervision of the transparency process in DRC) and also a member of the *ad hoc* Bishops Commission for Natural Resources (CERN).

On 15-16 December 2006, CEPAS organised a national civil society workshop on good governance in the extraction of natural and mineral resources

⁷ World Bank document, *Democratic Republic of Congo. Good governance in the mining sector as a growth factor*, (October 2007), p. 32. According to the same source, the gross value of mining production will vary between US\$2 billion and US\$2.7 billion per year and revenue between US\$186 million and US\$388 million per year, from 2008 to 2017.

⁸ Mgr Gaston Ruvezi, Bishop of Sakania-Kipushi, *Lenten pastoral note* (February 2008).

in DRC. This workshop led to the foundation of the Forum of Congolese civil society involving 53 NGOs coordinated by CEPAS. CEPAS have published a report on the findings of this workshop. We have also set up a website <www.forumDRC.org> to mirror activities carried out by Congolese civil society. On 13 March 2007 CEPAS participated in a conference on public and private partners in the DRC mining sector, organised in Brussels by the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the World Bank. We have also co-signed an international appeal called A fair share for Congo.

On 15-16 June 2007, CEPAS organised social days based on the theme "The Lutundula Commission report and the good governance contract from the DRC government programme." The lectures and exchanges from these two days were published in a special issue of the review Congo-Afrique in September 2007. With the support of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, we have set up four thematic civil society working groups on copper, diamonds and gold. We also asked experts in the mining sector to examine legal, economic, financial, social and environmental aspects of twelve of the 63 contracts under revision by the Inter-ministerial Commission. Two months later, on 1 September 2007, the experts produced their report on the twelve contracts. This report constitutes a precious contribution to the governmental process of reviewing the mining contracts and has been given to the authorities concerned.

On 16-17 October 2007 CEPAS organised a consolidation workshop for the twelve contracts for members of international and national NGOs, representatives of public institutions (Presidency of the Republic, Senate, National Assembly, government), representatives of mining companies and media directors. On 9 November 2007, we delivered the consolidated report on the twelve contracts to the Presidents of the Assembly and the Senate, members of government, national and international NGOs and the twelve private companies. This report was then published by CEPAS in November 2007. In December 2007, the Peace and Justice Commission of the Congolese Bishops Conference together with CEPAS published a bulletin entitled "The Review of mining contracts - is hope allowed?" distributed to the 47 dioceses in Congo.

4. Contribution of the Congolese National Bishops Conference (CENCO)

Highly concerned about mismanagement in the mining sector, Catholic Bishops have played a prophetic role through their messages and commitment. In March 2007, a *Message from the Bishops of Katanga*, stated, "It is clear that our mineral resources do not benefit our people. While investor profits have soared, the workers themselves have become even poorer. Our local economy seems to reap no benefits at all. People are wondering who is actually benefiting from mineral extraction in Katanga."

In July 2007, another *Message from the CENCO Bishops* added, "How is it pos-

sible that our fellow citizens find themselves, without compensation or damages, stripped of their land because it has been transferred or sold to mining or forestry extraction companies? How is it acceptable that Congolese workers⁹ are treated with no regard for their rights and human dignity? CENCO, through its organisational structures, has pledged its commitment to monitor carefully the process of 'reviewing' existing mining and forestry contracts and ensure this is done with the greatest possible transparency for the benefit of the Congolese people ... CENCO is creating an internal *ad hoc* Bishops Commission responsible for pursuing the issue of the extraction of natural resources" (n. 11).

In January 2008, a *Message from the CENCO permanent Committee* stated: "The extraction of natural resources continues to raise serious problems of sovereignty, equality and respect for local people and the environment. We appeal to our government to provide renegotiation conditions and the necessary measures to ensure that the legal framework governing the signing of mining and forestry contracts is made clear and transparent. Mining and forestry companies must respect their social and environmental obligations" (n. 9).

In February 2008, in a *Lenten Pastoral Note* entitled *Our wealth is in our dignity and not in mining*, Mgr Gaston Ruvezi wrote: "What is happening in our diocese is unacceptable. Catholic Christians and every citizen must reflect on this phenomenon (*mining*). They must *see*, that is, observe what is happening around them, *judge*, in the sense of taking into consideration what is worthy of man, and *act*, that is express themselves and consequently take action. For us Christians, human beings have inestimable value, he is worthy in the eyes of God". The *Justice and Peace Commission of the Congolese National Bishops* has carried out three inquiries demonstrating the direct link between mineral extraction and the resurgence of war.

5. A way forward

- Initiate research, investigate, form and inform (www.forumDRC.org), and publish and distribute the results of research on the mining sector.
- Provide formation seminars with and for Congolese NGO actors, members of national and provincial governments and deputies and senators on the Environment and Natural Resources Commission.
- In partnership with civil society, through information and awareness-building, raise consciousness among citizens concerning the "social responsibilities" of public and private companies engaged in mineral extraction in the DRC.
- Develop and reinforce an advocacy and promotion network to guarantee good governance in the mining sector, by means of the Congolese

⁹ There are about 10 million workers in the mining sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They earn on average 30\$ per month.

mining code and EITI and OECD regulations. This promotion will be carried out *at national level* with CERN as part of CENCO, civil society/Kinshasa, and Publish what you pay/DRC, EITI/DRC. *At the level of the continent* the work will be with the Jesuit social centres Hakimani Centre and Hekima Peace Studies and International Relations (Nairobi), Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR/Lusaka), the Centre for formation and development, (CEFOD/Djamena), Centre for peace (CERAP/Abidjan), Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA/Johannesburg) and South Africa Resource Watch (SARW/Johannesburg). *At international level* it will be carried out with the Social Justice Secretariat (Rome), Jesuit European Office (OCIPE/Brussels), US Jesuit Conference (Washington), International Jesuit Network for Development (IJND) and Entraide Missionnaire (Montreal).

Fair and transparent management of mineral resources is a determining factor in the promotion of peace, reduction of poverty and struggle against corruption and impunity, and thus contributes to the integral development of the human being. We reiterate the position of Pope Benedict XVI who asked the G8 nations “to put in place procedures for the rapid, complete and unconditional cancellation of the external debt of those countries most heavily in debt;... to set up and promote in a reliable and long term way favourable commercial conditions which include ample and unconditional access to markets and to pursue efforts to reduce sale of arms, both legal and not, as well as illegal trafficking in precious materials and the flight of capital from poor countries.”¹⁰

As Jesuits engaged in a social work of the Society of Jesus in the DRC, we believe that good governance in the mining sector reflects the second proposition¹¹ made by JESAM at the meeting of Provincials in Loyola in September 2005 and constitutes an ongoing expression of our mission, that of service in the faith and the promotion of justice in the DRC.

Professor Muhigirwa R. Ferdinand SJ
 Director of Centre d’Etudes pour l’Action Sociale (CEPAS) - Kinshasa
 a/s Procure des Missions SJ
 141, Koninginnelaan
 1030 Bruxelles - BELGIUM
 <muhigirwafsj@yahoo.fr>

*Original French
 Translation by Judy Reeves*

¹⁰ See Letter from His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany *L’Osservatore Romano*, 1st May 2007, p. 2.

¹¹ The second proposition invites us to work for social and economic justice while continuing to “press for debt relief, for the abandonment of manufacture and export of arms, and for more just commercial exchanges between developing countries and developed countries.”

Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief Concludes Visit to India

United Nations Press Release¹
20 March 2008

Asma Jahangir, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief of the United Nations Human Rights Council, made the following statement on 20 March 2008 in Delhi at the end of her visit to India:

“I wish to thank the Government of India for inviting me here and for giving me this unique opportunity to study the situation with regard to freedom of religion or belief. India is a diverse country, where religions and beliefs are abundant and find respect in a secular framework. My mission started on 3 March 2008 in Amritsar and subsequently I visited Delhi, Jammu, Srinagar, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Thiruvananthapuram, Bhubaneswar and Lucknow. Now I am again in Delhi and with this press conference I am concluding my mission to India.

During my country visit, I had the opportunity to meet with several Government officials, including the Ministers of External Affairs, Minority Affairs and Culture as well as with the Chief Ministers of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Kerala and Orissa. In addition, I met with the Solicitor General, several Supreme Court Justices and High Court Judges as well as with members of various Human Rights and Minority Commissions. Further meetings with the civil society included leaders and members of the religious communities in India, academics, journalists, human rights activists, lawyers and professionals of the visual arts industry. I would like to acknowledge the high level of cooperation I received both from the Government and from the citizens of India.

Indeed, due to the religious diversity of India, this country visit has been an enriching experience for the mandate I hold since 2004. I will be submitting a detailed report with conclusions and recommendations to the United Nations Human Rights Council, therefore this press statement will only cover some preliminary impressions that I have formed during the past 2½ weeks. In this press statement it would be impossible to make a general assessment of the current state of freedom of religion or belief in the whole of India. In fact, this was not the first visit of the mandate, as my predecessor undertook a mission to India in 1996 (see UN Doc. E/CN.4/1997/91/Add.1). Consequently, my

¹ This release by Asma Jahangir, well-known human rights activist and UN rapporteur, appeared in *The Hindu*, a national daily published from Chennai, Delhi and Bangalore. The text is available at www.hindu.com/nic/asmajahangir.pdf.

forthcoming report will also be a follow-up on developments during the past twelve years, in order to analyse what has changed and why.

Concerning the legal framework, I am well aware of the fact that the political system of India is of a federal nature and that the States have wide powers, including in the field of law and order. Thus the level of action of the Government to protect its citizens in terms of freedom of religion or belief varies according to the States concerned. I also acknowledge that there are democratic safeguards within the system and that the institutions have accumulated a vast experience in protecting human rights.

Many of my interlocutors have pointed to the positive impact of Indian secularism as embodied in the Constitution. By and large, Indians do value secular principles and I was told time and again that the term “secularism” does not necessarily mean the same as in other countries. Historically, there have been believers of a whole range of religions and beliefs living in India. The central Government has developed a comprehensive policy pertaining to minorities, including religious ones. In this context, I would like to compliment various recent reports on religious minorities, for example drafted by the Committees headed by Justice Rajender Sachar in 2006 and by Justice Renganath Misra in 2007. Such Committees mandated by the Government are a good example of mechanisms put in place to analyse the situation and put forward recommendations for the Government to take action upon.

The National Commission for Minorities, too, has taken up several challenges. Their members took prompt action and issued independent reports on incidents of communal violence with concrete recommendations. However, the performance of various Human Rights Commissions depends very much on the selection of its members and the importance various Governments attach to their mandates. It is vital that members of such commissions have acute sensitivity to human rights issues and must reflect the diversity – particularly in terms of gender – as women are one of the worst sufferers of religious intolerance. At the same time, I noticed that women’s groups across religious lines were the most active and effective human rights advocates in situations of communal tensions.

All individuals I met recognised that a comprehensive legal framework to protect their rights exists, yet many of them – especially from religious minorities – remained dissatisfied with its implementation. By and large, the Indians respect the diversity of religions and beliefs. At the same time, organised groups based on religious ideologies have unleashed the fear of mob violence in many parts of the country. Law enforcement is often reluctant to take any action against individuals or groups that perpetuate violence in the name of religion or belief. This institutionalised impunity for those who exploit religion and impose their religious intolerance on others has made peaceful citizens, particularly the minorities, vulnerable and fearful.

I have received numerous reports of attacks on religious minorities and their places of worship as well as discrimination of disempowered sections of the Hindu community. The following are only a few examples that are well publicised.

In Uttar Pradesh, I received concrete reports of violence and rapes as a reaction to cases of intermarriage between believers of different religions or castes. Acts of violence continue to occur while perpetrators are dealt with some sympathy by the law enforcement agents. This bias is deep-rooted in society which makes the protection of the victims even more difficult. Some of the cases I was informed about are still under investigation and I hope that justice will prevail.

Less than three months ago, there was widespread violence in the Kandhamal district of Orissa, targeting primarily Christians in Dalit and tribal communities. I received credible reports that members of the Christian community alerted the authorities in advance of the planned attacks of 24-27 December 2007. The police, too, had warned Christian leaders about anticipated violence. The National Commission for Minorities stated in a recent report: "Destruction on such a large scale in places which are difficult to access could not have taken place without advance preparation and planning." Even today, the tensions are prevalent and the anti-conversion legislation is being used to vilify Christians in general.

Concerning the 2002 Gujarat massacre, I have read numerous reports, both of official bodies and civil society organisations and I met a large number of eyewitnesses and people who visited Gujarat during the trouble. The State Government reported that, prior to the Godhra incident, Gujarat had witnessed 443 major communal incidents between 1970 and 2002. As such, the warning was there. However, the massacre that took place after the tragic deaths at Godhra in 2002 is all the more horrifying since by all accounts at least a thousand people were systematically killed. Even worse, there are credible reports that inaction by the authorities was evident and most interlocutors alleged complicity by the State Government. In my discussions with victims I could see their continuing fear which is exacerbated by the distress that justice continues to evade most victims and survivors. Even today there is increasing ghettoization and isolation of Muslims in certain areas. The assertion of the State Government that development by itself will heal the wounds does not seem to be realistic. It is crucial to recognise that development without a policy of inclusiveness of all communities will only add to aggravate resentments.

Furthermore, I am disturbed that at various meetings with members of the civil society during my visit in Gujarat, plain-clothed Government agents took names of all my NGO interlocutors and also made their presence felt afterwards. On several occasions, I had to insist that police officers leave the

room during my NGO meetings. The terms of reference of fact-finding missions by Special Rapporteurs (see UN Doc. E/CN.4/1998/45, Appendix V) are very clear in this regard. These terms of reference guarantee confidential and unsupervised contact with witnesses and other private persons as well as assurance by the Government that no persons, official or private individuals who have been in contact with the Special Rapporteur in relation to the mandate will for this reason suffer threats, harassment or punishment or be subjected to judicial proceedings.

I am also concerned at the extended timeframe of investigations in cases involving communal riots, violence and massacres such as those which occurred in 1984, 1992 and 2002. All of these incidents continue to haunt the people affected by them and impunity emboldens forces of intolerance. It is important to draw lessons learnt from these events in order to prevent communal violence in the future. While an inquiry into large-scale communal violence should not be done in indecent haste, it should be accorded the highest priority both by the investigation, the judiciary and any Commission appointed to study the situation. Unreasonable protraction of the inquiry only keeps tensions simmering and devalues justice. I was astonished to learn that just before I arrived in India, the Liberhan Commission – probing the circumstances leading to the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya – got the 44th extension to conclude its inquiry.

International Meeting of Priest Workers

Ramiro Pampols SJ¹

Introduction

I am writing to draw to your attention the document prepared by the German priest-workers for the International Meeting of Priest-Workers to be celebrated in France this year during Pentecost. Other groups, French, Spanish or Italian, wrote similar documents.

I do so with the clear intention of making known the voice and concerns of these brothers of ours, some of whom are Jesuits, for instance, Christian Herwartz.

I worry at the sight of intense spiritual efforts and experiences being reduced to silence, or rather, left to one side at a time when this type of church is in the process of disappearing. They have great evangelizing force in spite of misunderstandings and weaknesses typical in both human and church groups.

Furthermore, and this is more serious, I feel that the Society itself tends to ignore large groups of workers, among whom are many young people, not only in Europe, but also in Asia and America, struggling for a more just world. It is as if we are set on helping only the two extremes in our societies: the poorest and most marginalized, and the secularised middle classes in our countries. Nowhere is there mention, not even in our Social Week in Bratislava, of the working class.

As a man of hope, I have a firm conviction that one day "justice will be done" to this situation that has both a human and a church dimension. I think it is this that has led me to work here in Haiti, this drive which took hold of me during my 30 years of work in a factory. With the frankness that distinguishes genuine trade unionists, I will affirm that what I have written for you is worth knowing.

Your brother,

Ramiro Pampols SJ
a/s Solidarite Fwontalye / SJRM
38, Rue Espagnole
Ouanaminthe - HAITI
<ramiropampols@gmail.com>

¹ A Spanish priest-worker who works today in Haiti [Editor's Note].

2008 Pentecost Meeting in Lyon

Contribution of the German-speaking delegation

The world is in a state of full and rapid change – an irreversible situation

We see the global evolution of humanity as a process of rapid changes, not always occurring simultaneously, but touching everything for the worse. Are we moving towards total decadence? Is the world again in the process of being born?

The accumulation of money as the dominant factor. Some examples.

1. All areas of society – and not just the economic – are subordinated to this principle.
2. University and hospital services are judged according to laws of profit just like the production and transport of products.
3. The economy of energy fills its coffers thanks to black gold (petrol), to which today must be added green gold (agricultural fuel).
4. Speculation in stocks and shares moves the economy forward but are already themselves privileged sources to make money.
5. Growing militarisation offers enormous possibilities to earn huge sums through the production of weapons.
6. The destructive principle of “growth” is in the process of destroying nature and the social life of human beings.

This principle of accumulating money is managed like a drug in constant growth or a cancerous ulcer that feeds insatiably on the whole body and then itself dies.

Consequences of this dramatic change

1. **Regulating mechanisms no longer work**, at neither local nor regional nor national nor international levels, and certainly not at factory level. Relations at work become more and more precarious, characterised by slavery, privatisation of rights, appropriation by the bosses of workers’ time, strength and social life.
2. **A sense of the collective as a whole is in the process of disappearing**, being gradually replaced by individualism, which is seen as the dominant philosophy. “Not wishing to share” is encouraged as a basic attitude. There are hardly any democratic majority decisions any more. Collective resistance in factories becomes increasingly difficult. Representatives of workers’ interests speak more and more of heart-rending tensions. As Albert, once elected chief delegate, says: *“This is precisely the change in per-*

spective: now I have this miserable feeling of being responsible for 255 colleagues. I can no longer simply say: 'we are facing ruin'. This you can only do once. And then it is perhaps too late. But in spite of this, the feeling of having slipped to the other side without having wished it, causes much pain".

3. **Confidence in big organisations diminishes.** This is true for parties, trade unions, parliaments and governments, the church. It can be seen in the rapid fall in the numbers of those voting, and the turning away from big organisations such as Churches, Trade Unions, Political Parties.
4. **The impoverishment** of large regions of the globe grows through the extraction of primary resources and energy in, for example, Africa and Brazil. Groups of the population of industrialised countries are also becoming increasingly impoverished.
5. This leads to **huge flows of refugees** and restrictive measures on the part of countries to which they seek entry (Fortress Europe), resulting in numerous deaths.
6. **"To be without a place"** is a characteristic of much of the world's population. Where is "our home"? Consider the problem of migrant workers in, for example, Europe or China. Consider also the recent debate in Germany on "Integration and Assimilation".
7. Human beings are **divided and kept in a state of anguish.** Fears about the future, of no real prospects haunt many, especially the young.
8. **Crime and corruption have** become customary in society. Everything is allowed, as long as it goes unnoticed and there is no one to accuse. Witness the present fiscal scandal in Germany (Money of the rich sent to Liechtenstein). In this one can see a **life of conquest** deprived of values, a trend which could put a stop to the conquest itself.
9. **The structural exclusion** of great numbers of people throughout the world. Here in Europe this exclusion is backed up by government measures under the pretence of economising.

Interpretation - Comparison: The end and/or a new beginning

Among the interpretations of these great processes of change, one can find points of view which are wholly tragic, and others which see, on the contrary, hope for a new beginning. Three examples:

The text of Wuck

*I can see that capitalism, with its destructive principle of "growth", is in the process of ruining nature and men in their life together. It is almost a hope: This monster/colossus with feet of clay is collapsing, spreading fear, terror, wars... Nature repels/retaliates. **Finiteness rejects unlimited excess.** ' I am convinced that capitalism cannot perish through an "endogenous" decline, but only through a blow from without of extreme violence linked with a **credible alternative** which could*

bring about its collapse' (Fernand Braudel, French historian). The outside blows can be felt: nature is reaching its limits; a lack of energy and at the same time homage to growth; the sharing of food at the expense of the poor and in favour of the rich.

The text of Christian:

Basically my concern is to continue hoping in life in an irreversible situation of shattered lives and loss. The world situation, especially our European and North American situation, seems similar to the personal situation of Jesus when he said he could no longer avoid death on the cross. In his solitude, he joined his friends and the one who was to betray him and shared with them. He is thrown on to himself in his prayer when he can no longer avoid his mock trial and death, the time being ripe. For a long time he was able to put off this moment. Even from his first sermon at Nazareth, there were many who wanted to kill him. Because his view of life with all those who were hungry, sick, prisoners and those excluded from sharing (Memory of the year of grace), he seemed to them too dangerous. They were already disturbed within themselves and accused him of sacrilege/blasphemy.

Christian also compares these events to the resistance movement of the Third Reich and says: *With death and capitulation before them, the **Kreisauer Kreis** (resistance group) raised the question of the consequences of capitulation. They created the ground, the human soil, in which life could begin to prosper.*

And he quotes **Martin Luther**: *"Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree".*

The text of Georg:

"Resignation as a prior condition for resistance". It is an old idea that I defend and which goes back to the ethics of Albert Schweitzer "Respect before life".

Transition towards newness, yes. But how ?

Here are a few ideas elaborated in the different texts:

1. "In the apparent decline the new often emerges" (Berlin Priest-worker group)
2. Overcome isolation.
3. Learn to share life – Become similar in love
4. Bring together the rejects of humanity – Living persons worthy of being remembered.
5. Commemorate times when dignity has been, and is, respected.
6. Processes in which newness emerges should be sufficiently visible so that they can escape from general evolution.
7. At the heart of this situation, Christian hope should be found and proclaimed. In an "irreversible" situation, the mystery of the incarnation calls us to conversion.

8. Wuck speaks in his text of “creatio ex vetere”. The new world can only be born from the old world. Willibald emphasises another basic truth of our faith: “creatio ex nihilo”. God knows how to create things from nothing.

Only to hope – or already visible ?

We do not wish to be satisfied by merely recalling Christian truths, ideas, wishes. For this new world is already in the process of being born. It can be seen in the new faces of human beings: everywhere in the world where an **incarnation of solidarity** is taking place. Here are a few examples:

1. In the many forms of cooperatives which produce and distribute goods following the ideas of a sharing economy.
2. In the millions of groups and initiatives where those concerned take their fate into their own hands and create new things. See the book of David Bornstein, “Die Welt verändern,” where he describes a large number of “Social Businessmen” and the strength of new ideas.
3. The house of the Jesuits in Berlin and the hospitality it offers.
4. Wuck gives a recently experienced example, where they received young people taking part in a manifestation in Munich. *“What types of people turned up? Young people from different towns. Four people of the “Erzgebirge” (ex-RDA) impressed us greatly with what they told us of their town, and their determination to stay there, to set up training, to play music, and to create a group from the left. Their words did not sound like those who speak of work to be done in big organisations; they rather gave the impression of pioneers. This has to do with my ecclesial socialism, said one of them, with the sermon on the mount and with solidarity with those who have stumbled and been placed outside the law. The four visitors were quickly at home with us, during meals, the work of installation, laughing, telling stories and listening... **The rejects of humanity**, as Christian puts it. The kingdom is powerful among the weak. I am convinced that the building of a different world is possible (or impossible ?), a world we are going talk about in Lyons, about the strength which lives in weak people. What types of people will emerge there? That is the central question. And how will they discover themselves and come together?”*

To live like disciples of Jesus

Many things have been said in the preceding paragraphs. To sum up:

With Jesus, to discover the life of the God of Jesus, to welcome it and pass it on and then to give thanks for this.

*Original French
Translation by Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ*

Viewing the conflict through the eyes of the vulnerable

Mauricio Burbano A. SJ

I have been closely following the news about the conflict generated by the incursion of the Colombian military into Ecuadorian territory. I have read both the Ecuadorian newspapers and the daily *El Tiempo* of Bogotá, which offers space for readers to express their opinion.

After four years living in Colombia, I am not surprised by the reactions of the Colombian readers who support the military invasion of Ecuadorian territory that President Uribe undertook. How should we understand these reactions? On the one hand, we Ecuadorians have no idea of what it is like to travel by land with the fear that suddenly we will come upon a “roadblock” and end up being kidnapped. We have no idea of what it means to have a family member kidnapped, and to lose, day by day, all hope and even family ties. We have no idea what it means to lose family members to death and not be able even to mourn them properly or know where their bodies are buried. Unfortunately, such a situation means that a sector of Colombian society is willing to justify any type of military action.

On the other hand, Colombia has a government that is so geared up to undertake military operations that it has provoked a movement of “violent retaliation”. Such is the judgment of Colombian politician and intellectual Antanas Mockus. This preference for violence means that little heed is paid to the harm that is caused by the conflict in matters of human rights and territorial sovereignty.

Most certainly, recent events are a reflection of a complicated conflict which for decades has brought grief to Colombia. Instead of continually fueling the reciprocal accusations between Ecuador and Colombia, we should opt rather to protect the interests of those who are most vulnerable.

In Colombia doubts arise about the possibility of a peaceful outcome of the armed conflict and about the fate of the people who have been kidnapped and those who have been displaced, while in Ecuador questions arise about the situation of the refugees and those who have been newly displaced.

Mauricio Burbano A. SJ
Faculdade Jesuíta de Filosofia e Teologia
Av. Dr. Cristiano Guimaraes, 2127 - Planalto.
Belo Horizonte, MG
CEP: 31720-300 - BRAZIL
<mburbano@jesuits.net>

*Original Spanish
Translation by Joseph Owen SJ*

This Sunday morning I paused over page 65 in *Promotio Iustitiae* 96 (2007/3), the article “Bética (Spain)” by J. J. Romero SJ, and once again I appreciate the direct and intelligent manner in which you treat such crucial topics, which no doubt will offend the sensibilities of many persons. It is clear that contemporary society has not only lost its way in several spheres, but also that this is seen as normal by most people. It seems that more and more people are losing their ability to be amazed at such extraordinary happenings. The theory of “individual anarchism” is growing at an accelerated pace, and nobody is concerned about violations of human rights, hunger on the African continent, massive consumption of drugs and the increasing problem of alcoholism in vast sections of our society.

Articles such as this one, and others that follow the editorial line of *Promotio Iustitiae*, should be discussed within political, professional and business organizations and in the world of artistic and cultural expression, as well as in the so-called Summits of Ibero-American Countries, which offer shameful spectacles resembling circuses rather than dignified conferences on international politics.

I am consoled to know that there are still Christians who are committed to the teaching of Jesus and are capable of recognising (here I cite

from page 67) that “our communities run the risk of becoming ‘bourgeois’, of settling into a lifestyle in accordance with their surroundings, with high levels of consumption, comfortable living quarters and (with a few exceptions) far removed from the more precarious neighbourhoods”. Such self-criticism should be carried out not only by Christian churches and communities, whatever their orientation, but also by the many politicians and bureaucrats who proclaim themselves to be defenders of the poor, but who, once installed in office, turn out to be more bourgeois than the bourgeois themselves.

Even though I am not a church member, I am a Christian by calling, and I find in the Order of Saint Ignatius Loyola a clear, categorical answer to many of my spiritual concerns. Thank you for this “spiritual catharsis” which I have experienced this Sunday morning. Let us hope that there are many others who take an interest in understanding the genesis of the problems which trouble our society.

A cordial greeting of friendship.

Pablo Cassi
Editor and director of the
Gaceta Municipal of San Felipe (Chile)
<cassibardo@yahoo.com>
www.pablocassi.cl

*Original Spanish
Translation by Joseph Owen SJ*

Dear Fathers,
 It has been a while since I got to know about your periodical and I must say it has been for me an important discovery. Let me introduce myself briefly. I am a social worker at the local council of Palermo where I have worked for the past 10 years. My job there is to accompany minors and poor families who lead difficult lives. Reading the article by Fr. Mollà issued last month, I could not resist writing to you about feelings I share with him. I judge it appropriate to communicate such similar thoughts.

The theme that struck me most was the one about contemplation in action. I like very much Luke's Gospel passage recounting the meeting of Jesus with Martha and Maria. Hosting Jesus at their house, one is busily setting the table for lunch while the other is attentively listening to His words. The active one protests and asks why she should be burdened with all the housework. Jesus answers her complaints by telling her that her sister has opted for the better part. It is common knowledge that this passage favours contemplation over activity. Writing from experience I can say that we have here a methodological discourse prior to an ethical or spiritual one. I think that the proper way to relate with the Other is, first and foremost, to give heed to the person, rather than to try to give what you think she might need, and thereby risk invading her life. While deciding to act upon a situation, one must consider and value the contemplation of the per-

son's mystery, her beauty and her uniqueness. Only in this way does one avoid being a mere, unwelcome existential director, or the policeman of others' souls. It is at times tempting, especially in my job, to feel an intense urge to do something for the other, or to love him forcibly.

As regards this beauty of others that we encounter, at times tough to perceive, I find the Hebrew mystic myth recalling the exile in Shekinah very inspiring. The presence of God is shattered in seventy thousand shards, poured into raindrops, as a result of the intrusion of evil. The mission of the just is to re-integrate all the fragments identifying them; then, at the end of time, all the parts will be reunited together to complete their beauty.

Thus our task is to retrieve and re-contemplate the beauty within every person we meet. This implies a trained attitude towards contemplation, coupled with sufficient energy not to give up in creating the best conditions to make contemplation possible.

So it is Maria and Martha together. I should like to refer also to the lengthy quote by Fr. Gonzales Buelta on the surviving vigour of the poor. They wake up every morning with a renewed energy, with an ability to live that which is unknown to us "intellectuals". We have forgotten how to cope with the harsh realities of life. On many occasions they manage to solve their problems in spite of our ambitious interventions. These persons whom I meet very regularly

are my teachers, they are people who are used to living on the edge and their experiences teach me some basic resistance techniques. They are masters of resistance (the resistance referred to in the article); they received this gift, which in turn they willingly offer to others. Our actions should therefore be gratuitous, not expecting anything in return, even though we often receive it overabundantly (not declared, implicit, perhaps not looked for). I recall the etymological roots of the word 'community' which, I have read, refers to being 'a pool of debts'. I think that it is what it is all about. We lend a hand to each other bearing in mind the context of the bureaucratic institutions in which we live.

When I was a child, I often dreamt of transforming the world and changing humanity, adjusting problems by perfect technological interventions. Now, even though I am not yet a grown up, I envisage the need to be with the people, to know them personally and closely and become their friend. As a kid I believed that to love someone meant doing incredible things or intervening massively in the world. Now I am sure that love implies being with the person and staying with her. I have realised this not really as a result of the formation I received, or from other knowledge I gained through the years but rather through God's Grace. I find it very alluring to consider oneself beyond and in control of others. Thanks to the Lord's grace we are unworthy servants.

I would like to thank you for your precious service, which is important for us who are anonymous and who stand at the periphery.

Yours truly,

Antonio Coccia
via Ungaretti 18
Torretta (PA) - ITALY
<cocciant@hotmail.it>

*Original Italian
Translation by Karl Vella SJ*

I have just read the article in *Promotio Iustitiae* 94 on "Jesuit and Lay Collaboration: by Design or Default?"

Before I comment on the article I want to congratulate the author on his openness and honesty in expressing so sincerely what the situation is like in Jesuit institutes when it comes to trusting and inviting lay collaboration.

In your article you have voiced a situation that is common in most Catholic institutions and I could identify perfectly with what you say. I see our inability to work with the laity as springing from our lack of formation in working with our own companions in our own institutions. Teamwork is not our forte, and secondly, excessive and sometimes false confidence in one's all round competence not only blows up our self-importance out of all proportion but automatically classifies others as incompetent and lacking initiative, if not completely useless. Our lay soci-

ety in this sense has gone far ahead of us in collaborative teamwork.

Unconsciously this model of being sole, all-round leaders is being handed down as the role model to our younger generation of religious who have not developed the qualities their elders were forced to develop because of the challenges of their times, and perhaps because the laity of their times were kept ignorant and unprepared. This scenario is changing and the laity are definitely more prepared and competent in many fields.

Thank you for expressing with such clarity what is a problem in most of our institutions.

Mary DePenha MSCJ
General
Compañía Misionera del
Sagrado Corazón de Jesús
c/Estoclomo 9, Las Rosas
Madrid 28022 - SPAIN
<depenhamary@yahoo.com>

**Democratic Republic of Congo:
beyond hope, the need for
ignatian pragmatism.**

Response to the article "Democratic Republic of Congo, Time of Hope" by Frank Turner SJ and Tanya Ziegler, in *Promotio Iustitiae* 95 (2007/2).

Tanya Ziegler and Frank Turner have written a beautiful, comprehensible and edifying account of their travels in the Democratic

Republic of Congo. Their mere presence is a consolation for the Church and for the Congolese Jesuits who are daily engaged in the struggle for faith and for justice. A consolation, because we are convinced that from now on we are not alone in the struggle against the forms of injustice that dehumanise the Congolese people, crucifying through them, Christ.

I am convinced that the Jesuit Social Apostolate Centre of Kinshasa (CEPAS) has a genuine need of partnership with not only the Catholic Information and Initiative Office for Europe (OCIPE) and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), but also the universal Society so that the capacity for lobbying and the search for solutions to Congolese problems may be strengthened, particularly in the area of mining. Multinational corporations exploit the DRC, and do so with the connivance of certain key political figures. Local action can only be effective if it is echoed and amplified through international lobbying. The negative local consequences are, to a large extent, rooted in mafia-like international structures.

It is clear that contact with Congolese reality has convinced Frank Turner SJ and Tanya Ziegler of the economic stakes in the conflicts within the DRC, so that they could say, "...we, who feel ourselves outsiders, can also feel that we are naïve". While acknowledging the undeniable responsibility of the Congolese for their apparently incurable disease of under-development, we need to denounce also the vectors

and causes that find their home in a mafia-like globalization.

Historically the DRC has been considered through the ages to be a kind of 'Far West frontier'. Even the origin of the city of Lubumbashi, described on page 78 of Turner and Ziegler's article, is largely linked to the exploitation of primary materials, namely copper and cobalt, by foreign companies.

The city of Lubumbashi, where I am at the university studying political and administrative sciences, has presented a 'Far West' image from the colonial era to our day: that is, the opulence of a few and the misery of many, though all are oriented toward the extraction of minerals. In colonial times they even transplanted entire populations from Rwanda to Katanga.

If the Democratic Republic of Congo is democratic today, that is the fruit of combined internal efforts (of the civil society led by the political dynamic of the Catholic Church of Congo, as well as the armed rebellion), and, above all, the international contribution. Congolese Jesuits played an active part in this event. Contemplatives in action, each one in his own particular apostolate took part in the political struggle. For example, before the first presidential election campaign, Jesuit scholastics belonging to the Faith and Justice Group (of which I was secretary) criss-crossed the area, going to nearby secondary schools and animating conference-debates on democracy and the elections.

At the same time the CEPAS organized Social Days outlining the profile of the president to be elected, gathering together Jesuits working in different regions of the Republic. Father Minani, in charge of socio-political animation in CEPAS, was a key player in every one of these steps, notably in popularizing brochures about the elections and the procedures to follow through RODHECIC.

I would place pragmatism above hope in our struggle for Faith and Justice. Dying in defence of the weak is a characteristic of our spirituality. Not that we seek out martyrdom, but if it is necessary, one gives one's life for our true companion, Christ crucified in our people. Monsignor Munzihirwa has shown us the way. It is up to us to commit ourselves with one goal in mind: to save humankind, the image of Christ crucified daily.

Jean-Luc Malango Kitungano SJ
University of Lubumbashi
Department of Political and
Administrative Science
Democratic Republic of the Congo
<malangojeanluc@yahoo.fr>

*Original French
Translation by Joseph Newman SJ*

Social Justice Secretariat

C.P. 6139 – 00195 ROMA PRATI – ITALY

+39 06689 77380 (fax)

sjs@sjcuria.org