№ 100, 2008/3

# Promotio Iustitiae

**100 Issues of *Promotio Iustitiae*:**
**Francisco Ivern, Michael Campbell-Johnston, Henry Volken, Michael Czerny**

**Culture and Faith in a Postmodern World**
**Amaladoss, Lo Biondo - Bisson, Mossa, Orobator, Polanco**

**Assistancy Coordinators' Annual Meeting 2008**
**Sievers, Arancibia, Franco**

**Insertion Communities**
**Riggio, Barthe-Dejean, D'Lima, Herwartz, Hipskind, L. Michaelraj, Quintal**

**Documents**
***Social Catholicism* in Chile, GC35 and Reconciliation, An Example of Jesuit Networking: JRS, The Food Crisis**

**Experiences**

**Social Justice Secretariat**

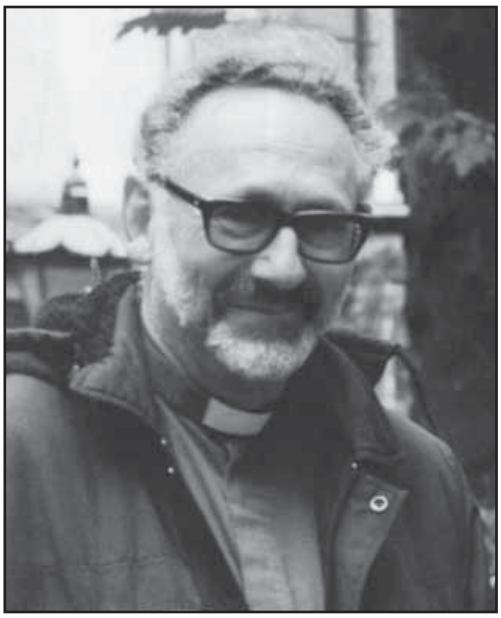
**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,**
**because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.**
**He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives**
**and recovery of sight to the blind,**
**to let the oppressed go free,**
**and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”**

**Lk 4, 18-19**

# *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2009*

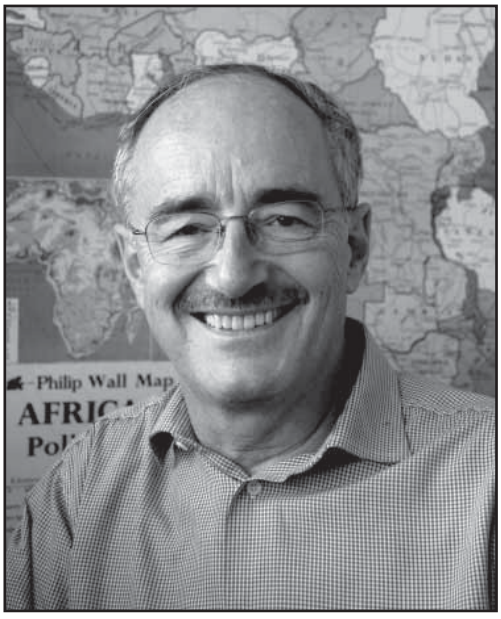
# The First Four Secretaries of SJS

**Fr. Francisco Ivern SJ**
**(1969 -1975)**
**Editor of JESEDES Bulletin**



**Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ**
**(1975 - 1984)**
**First Editor of PJ (nn. 1-30)**

**Fr. Henry Volken SJ**
**(1984 - 1992)**
**Second Editor of PJ (nn. 31-48)**




**Fr. Michael Czerny SJ**
**(1992 - 2002)**
**Third Editor of PJ (nn. 49-76)**

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

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

If you are struck by an idea in this issue, your brief comment is very welcome. To send a letter to *Promotio Iustitiae* for inclusion in a future issue, please write to the address, fax or email address shown on the back cover.

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# EDITORIAL

Writing the editorial of the 100th issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* is a wholly unmerited gift. It is a gift because, by bringing out this memorial issue, one becomes part of a very long and distinguished history; the history of the social apostolate recorded by this journal over the last 40 years. It is unmerited because I did not choose to be here at this point of time. I just happened to be here by the grace of God.

The first section of this issue tells the story of *Promotio* through the eyes and the pens of the past editors who were also directors of the Social Justice Secretariat. There seems to be no better way of celebrating a hundred issues than by becoming aware of the long history of the journal, with the moments of joy and sorrow, consolation and desolation that have marked this Ignatian endeavour. I would like to thank all the past editors for contributing their reflections to this issue.

The echoes of General Congregation 35 have not died away. In the previous issue we presented a brief analysis of three decrees and collected thematically the impressions of many participants. One of the significant and perhaps unfinished themes touched on by the Congregation and the Holy Father is the issue of postmodern culture, or rather, the new cultural ethos that has swept young people all over the world. We asked a few Jesuits to write on this topic and provided them with some questions. Which core values and attitudes constitute the foundations of postmodern culture? What is the nature of the relationship between the characteristics of postmodern culture and the 'culture' promoted by a neo-liberal conception of the market? How would you identify the 'cultural frontiers' where the Society of Jesus needs to be present today? How does postmodern culture affect our commitment to a faith that does justice? In what way are young Jesuits affected by these postmodern cultural changes? Do these changes also affect their attitude towards the social apostolate and justice issues? I believe that the excellent contributions we have gathered in this issue have initiated a serious and important debate for the future of our apostolic engagement.

Almost on the heels of GC35, the Social Justice Secretariat hosted the meeting of Assistancy coordinators of the social apostolate in Rome. The meeting had two distinct parts. During the first two days we analysed and discussed various aspects of the International Jesuit Workshop on Advocacy to be held at the Escorial, Madrid, in November 2008. The four days following were spent in prayerful reflections on the decrees of GC35 and the impact it was likely to have on the social apostolate. Articles in this section reflect the two major themes of the meeting. Of great significance is the document entitled 'Conclusions,' which represents a simple, agreed-upon statement of

the strategic vision of the social apostolate for the coming years. We recommend this document to our readers and eagerly await your comments and suggestions.

At a preliminary brain-storming session we had planned to dedicate an entire issue of *Promotio* to the theme of 'communities of insertion'. We invited many Jesuits to write on their experiences and understanding of communities of this type. The response however was rather limited. One possible reason is that the term 'communities of insertion' has had a chequered history and is not understood by all in the same manner. We live our apostolates in a great diversity of contexts. Living in a poor parish is, for some, an example of an inserted community. Others may be reminded by the term of the type of small communities that were set up in poor urban suburbs. The fact is that some coordinators were not sure whom to ask for a contribution. It may also be that at present they have unfortunately become a relic of the past. In any case, the contributions we present in this issue may inspire others to send us their own contributions.

The section on 'Documents' has a number of interesting articles and deals specifically with an issue that is agitating the minds of many: the recent threats to food security around the globe. We have approached the problem from many angles: the voice of the Church, and the experience of those working in the field.

The anniversary we celebrate is a good occasion to remember all the writers and many whose experiences of struggling for the justice of the Kingdom have enlivened the pages of *Promotio*. We recall with gratitude all those who have worked behind the scenes to make sure that the issue was edited, formatted, translated, and dispatched. And the readers finally who have responded warmly to the journal and kept it alive.

At the risk of being biased in favour of the present generation, I would like to mention Liliana Carvajal, the four language editors (Suguna Ramanathan, Maria Rodriguez, Simonetta Russo and Elisabeth Frolet), Uta Sievers, Giuseppe Riggio, Stefano Maero and Felipe Carvajal. With their dedicated work and commitment they have been responsible for getting *Promotio* to this 100th issue.

Fernando Franco SJ

# 100 Issues of *Promotio Iustitiae*

## Remembering our History

The history of the Social Justice Secretariat spans nearly 40 long and turbulent years in the history of the Society of Jesus (see box below). Fr. Arrupe was elected General of the Society in 1965, four years before establishing the Jesuit Secretariat for Socio-Economic Development (JESEDES). Like the Jesuit Refugee Service, JESEDES was another example of Arrupe's vision and capacity to strengthen the international apostolic dimension of the Society.

***Promotio Iustitiae*: Historical Landmarks**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1969-1975 | Fr. Francisco Ivern (Central Brazil) established JESEDES (Jesuit Secretariat for Socio-Economic Development). |
| 1975-1984 | Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston (Britain), who turned the JESEDES bulletin into *Promotio Iustitiae*, lived through GC32 (December 1974-March 1975). He published the first 30 issues of *Promotio* in a span of nine years; the 29th issue of March 1983 salutes Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach as the new General of the Society elected by GC33. |
| 1985-1991 | Fr. Henry Volken (Goa-Pune) edited the 31st issue of *Promotio* (February 1985) and kept going till the 48th issue (October 1991) – that is, 18 issues in six years. He lived through the first eight years of Fr. Kolvenbach´s generalate, left the Secretariat in 1991 and died in Geneva in the year 2000. |
| 1992-2002 | Fr. Michael Czerny (English Canada) edited *Promotio* from the 49th issue (March 1992) to the 76th issue (2002/1) – that is, 27 issues in ten years. He prepared the tabloids, especially the justice theme, before GC34, was actively involved in GC34, and launched the "Social Apostolate Initiative" 1995-2005. |
| 2002... | Fr. Fernando Franco has edited *Promotio* from the 77th issue (2003/1) to the present 100th issue (2008/3) – that is, 23 issues so far. |

The first issue of *Promotio*, a 7-page cyclostyled bulletin providing exchanges and communication among Jesuits working in the social apostolate, appeared in 1977. Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston acknowledges that it was the result of a brave person's effort to launch a new bulletin "in this day and age of saturation by printed and spoken word" (*Promotio Iustitiae* 1, January 1977, 2). Today we voice similar complaints about being saturated by the electronic media!

The name *Promotio Iustitiae*[1], a phrase taken directly from GC32 (D. 4, n. 2), was chosen to indicate that it would be "concerned with issues relating to justice, as understood in that decree, and with concrete efforts to promote it" (*ibid*, 2). This first issue also communicates to its readers another change of name: the 'office' changes from JESEDES to 'Social Secretariat S.J.' The reason is clearly stated:

> *"We now feel that [JESEDES] no longer corresponds with what should be our primary concern. This is an indication of how fast things move in this field ... the ongoing work of the Secretariat continues and is intended to be a service agency and the test of its usefulness will be the help it provides to individuals and institutions engaged in social work of any kind"* (*ibid.*, 3)

The generalate of Fr. Arrupe extending from 1965 to 1983 provides the background for the genesis of the Secretariat and the bulletin, covering practically the entire tenure of Frs. Ivern and Campbell-Johnston.

Fr. Henry Volken inaugurates the generalate of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. The only Secretary who is no longer with us, he is also the one who had the shortest tenure. He was succeeded by Fr. Michael Czerny who led the Secretariat through the waves of GC34, from preparation to implementation.

I am delighted that all the Secretaries accepted the invitation to write articles about the period they lived in and the challenges they faced. In the absence of Fr. Henry I have tried humbly to fill in the gap by recounting his life and quoting from some of the editorials he wrote during that period. The last years corresponding to my tenure have been left blank. Histories are better written when the actors have disappeared from the scene.

## The Birth of the Social Secretariat

**Francisco Ivern SJ**

At the end of 1948, when I was still a youthful 19 years of age, my superiors sent me to India to do my studies in philosophy. In 1952 I left India and didn't return there till ten years later, in 1962, after I had obtained my licentiate in social sciences at the Gregorian University in Rome, completed my master's and doctoral degrees in Social and Political Sciences in the University of Louvain, Belgium, and also finished my theological studies in Toronto, Canada. In 1962, upon returning to India, I joined the Indian Social Institute in New Delhi, which was the Socie-

[1] With issue no. 66 the name of the journal was changed from *Promotio Justitiae* to *Promotio Iustitiae*. Both forms are used by the authors of the articles that follow. The acronym of the journal however still remains PJ.

ty's inter-provincial social centre in that country. From 1966 to 1968 I carried out a study on Church activities in the social and health fields in the region of Chotanagpur, Bihar. In 1968 we received the visit of Fr. Arrupe in Ranchi, at the heart of Chotanagpur. I say "we received" because he came to visit the office where I was working, along with a team of ten other researchers. On that occasion Fr. Arrupe, whom I already knew personally since I had met him in Rome in 1965 shortly before his election as general, invited me to go to Rome and set up in our General Curia a secretariat for promoting the social apostolate in the whole Society. The next year, 1969, I moved to Rome. Since the offices on the Via dei Penitenzieri were under construction, I set up the Secretariat in two empty rooms on the first floor of the main building of Borgo Santo Spirito, beside the library and almost directly above the Jesuit Guest Bureau. The two rooms were literally empty, having no furniture or equipment of any kind. I had to buy everything with a $10,000 donation I received. Later on we moved to the new offices on the Via dei Penitenzieri, where the Secretariat is now located.

The decade of the 60s was still the decade of "development". In the Church, however, and above all within the Society, there was already some talk of the promotion of justice as a requirement of faith, but such language was still not common. As a result, the Secretariat was born with the name JESEDES, an acronym for Jesuit Secretariat for Social and Economic Development. The bulletin we published at that time also bore the same name. Naturally we were concerned with the kind of development that gave priority to the most needy persons and that was "integral" at both the individual and collective levels. That is to say, it was development that developed "the whole man and all men", as Paul VI proposed in his encyclical of March, 1967, *Populorum Progressio*. That concept of integral development, which would later be called sustainable development, began to expand and take on substance.

At the end of the 60s, however, and above all in Latin America, the influence of liberation theology, which was gaining ground, and the growth of the "Christians for Socialism" movement, which included several Jesuits, opened up new perspectives. There began to be open discussion of the need for structural changes to eliminate the oppressive conditions that were affecting the poor majorities of that continent. Some were advocating an at least limited use of a Marxist analysis of reality. Years later Fr. Arrupe sent a later to all Jesuits on this topic. Others were speaking of the need for a revolution, but for a revolution "in freedom". These words appeared on the cover of one of our journals, and even though the discussion was about a revolution "in freedom", such expressions did not fail to provoke strong reactions in the more conservative strata of the Church – and also of the Society, though to a lesser degree. They were difficult times, with many tensions.

Immediately prior to GC32, in 1975, there were about a dozen social centres in Latin America, known as CIAS (Spanish acronym for Center of Social

Research and Action). They were all actively flourishing, with more than a hundred people, Jesuit and lay, working in them. Another hundred Jesuits were being trained in the field of economic, political and social sciences in order to reinforce those centres. The well-known Decree 4 of that Congregation defined "Our Mission Today" in terms of "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement". That decree opened up new horizons and buttressed the hope and the commitment of the many Jesuits involved in the struggle for a better world; at the same time the decree aggravated the already existing tensions, both within the Society and outside it. In some countries those tensions produced open conflicts within the Society itself, among Jesuits and Jesuit institutions, especially between the social and the educational sectors.

Decree 4 had solid theological foundations and could cite in its favour the Church's magisterium of the years preceding GC32: not only the magisterium of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), but also that of the Episcopal Synods of 1971 (on justice in the world) and of 1975 (on evangelization of the contemporary world). The language of the decree, however, was still not very nuanced, and in some ways even a little one-sided. Furthermore, there was lacking a gradual, pastoral "translation" or "application" of the decree, which would enable its teachings to be integrated into the concrete, heterogeneous reality of the Society on the different continents. We had to wait for GC33 and GC34 to clear up some of the misunderstandings and correct some of the erroneous interpretations which Decree 4 inadvertently provoked.

The years that followed GC32 were dynamic and hopeful, and at the same time very painful. We lost many brothers, especially in our social centres (CIAS) in Latin America. A fair number of Jesuits were discouraged when they realized that, both within the Society and outside, the social changes for which they were striving were not coming about as quickly or as effectively as they had hoped. There were numerous conflicts with the hierarchy, provoked at times by our own impulsiveness and imprudence, but deriving also very often from a lack of understanding on the part of members of the hierarchy who had still not assimilated either the spirit or the letter of Vatican II, nor that of the Synods that followed.

In any case, the name we gave the Secretariat in 1969, JESEDES, no longer corresponded to this new reality, which could not be expressed purely in terms of development, not even "integral" development. We had to speak now of social justice and the structural changes necessary to make justice ever more a reality. The Secretariat began to be known simply as the Social Secretariat of the Society, and its bulletin was no longer called JESEDES, but *Promotio Iustitiae*.

That change of name and orientation became effective at the end of GC32, when Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston was appointed to head the Secretariat. A few months after GC32 I was named by Fr. Arrupe as one of his six Gen-

eral Counsellors. Although as a General Counsellor I continued still to be responsible for the Social Secretariat, I could not attend fully to the growing number of requests for aid that were reaching us. It was necessary that someone else assume the responsibility of administering the Secretariat. In July 1975 I went to British Guyana to interview Fr. Michael in order to get to know him better and to see if he would be willing to go to Rome and assume that responsibility. He seemed to me to be the ideal person for the job. Some years before that he had founded in Georgetown a social centre called GISRA (Guyana Institute for Social Research and Action). It was not easy for him to leave Guyana and move to Rome, but his arrival in Rome was a blessing for the social apostolate of the Society.

As General Counsellor I continued to be Father General's advisor regarding social questions, among other responsibilities, and I still had the ultimate responsibility for the Social Secretariat. In fact, my office and Fr. Michael's were practically side by side, separated only by our secretary's office, but he was the person who was really running the Secretariat. He was a great communicator and gave new life to the bulletin *Promotio Iustitiae*; he contributed much to promote the social apostolate in the Society during the years when he headed up the Secretariat.

I spent eleven years in our Curia in Rome, six of them directing the Social Secretariat which Fr. Arrupe had asked me to set up. They were enriching years, full of challenges. They were years of change both within the Church and without. Despite the inevitable misunderstandings and tensions, the social dimension permeated ever more deeply the works and institutions of the Society. The Social Secretariat constituted a point of reference for the Society, and it provided a forum where Jesuits working in the social area could share their ideas and experiences. During those years we created an international commission that was composed of Jesuits of all the continents and met periodically. Its aim was to advise Father General regarding the social apostolate and to provide us with guidelines to orient our work in the Secretariat.

As Director of the Secretariat and also as General Counsellor, I had a chance to learn about the activities of the Society in the different continents; above all, I had the opportunity to know personally so many of the marvellous Jesuits who dedicated themselves heart and soul to the social apostolate. For some of them their commitment to social causes cost them their lives. During all these years it was Pedro Arrupe who inspired us all, and he inspired me personally and gave me strength to continue forward. He too, however, ended up paying a price for his daring decisions and his prophetic vision – there were many people who were still not prepared for them. Like every person, like all of us, Arrupe could not help but have his limitations, and we who worked closely with him could not help but be aware of them. Thinking about those years, though, such limitations vanish from sight. Today Pedro Arrupe appears as the prophetic figure he always was, a man who

inspired so many people, both inside the Society and beyond it. The idea of the Social Secretariat arose out of his initiative, just as some years later he would decide to create the Jesuit Refugee Service. It is impossible to think of the social apostolate in the Society without thinking of Pedro Arrupe.

Francisco Ivern SJ
Pontifícia Universidade Católica
Rua Marquês de S. Vicente, 225
22453-900 Rio de Janeiro, RJ – BRAZIL
<fivern@puc-rio.br>

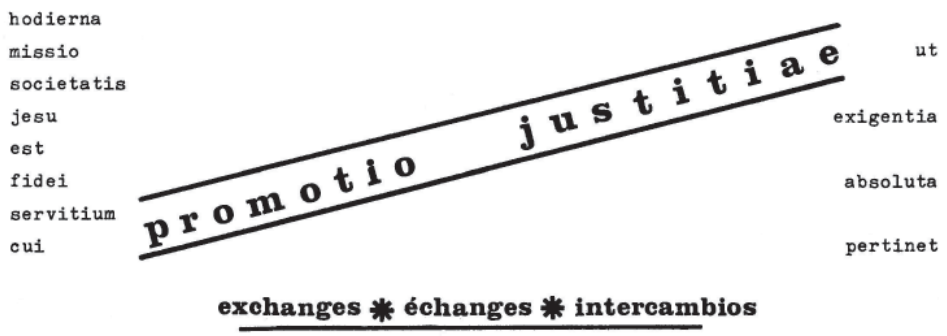
*Original Spanish*
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

## The First Thirty Issues

**Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ**

Congratulations to the editors, past and present, of *Promotio Justitiae* (*PJ*) on reaching one hundred issues! As the person responsible for the first thirty issues, I am delighted and humbled to welcome the "century".

The first issue of *PJ* appeared in January 1977. Its title was taken from the Latin version of GC32, Decree 4, n. 2, which used to appear on the cover in the following manner:




This, being interpreted, means: "The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the **promotion of justice** is an absolute requirement". The subtitle was "**exchanges**", emphasising the fact that, while

articles, documents and book lists were published, its main concern from the outset was to promote an exchange of ideas and experiences among Jesuits working in the social field.

The decision to start the journal was strongly influenced by the "tempo forte" in Villa Cavalletti in June 1976 under the chairmanship of Father Pedro Arrupe. Its aim was to draw up plans for the work of the Curia in the year ahead. As far as the Social Secretariat was concerned, besides encouraging an exchange of ideas and experiences on the promotion of justice throughout the Society, special emphasis was given to three points:

(1) What does it mean to promote justice in a faith context? How does faith, lived and experienced within the framework of our specific religious vocation, qualify and condition our commitment to the promotion of justice, as regards the motivation, the means and the strategy used, and the objectives pursued?

(2) What are the spiritual demands or requirements placed on us, both individual and communitarian, by our commitment to the promotion of justice. For example, what aspects of our spirituality should be emphasised or developed?

(3) Today, in different parts of the world, some Jesuits have opted for a "socialist" model of society; others declare themselves "socialists" or even "Marxists"; others make use of Marxist methods of social analysis or praxis. In what sense, and to what degree, can we do this? What are the conditions, from the point of view of our faith and spirituality, for dialogue and collaboration with systems or parties of Marxist inspiration?

It is not correct to say that *PJ* was intended to replace the JESEDES Bulletin, which had never been a regular publication and had ceased to appear several years earlier. It set out to be a new venture and, when first mooted, was opposed by the then Secretary of the Society, Fr. Louis Laurendeau, who told me that, in his opinion, the Curia already had enough publications. To do him justice, however, he soon reversed his opinion when he saw how much those in the field welcomed it and how it promoted debate on many of the crucial issues facing them.

Between the first issue and the tenth issue, which came out in December 1979, *PJ* published a survey showing that 355 written reactions had come in from some 48 countries where roughly 90% of the 27,639 Jesuits in the world were at work. Admittedly, many were little more than requests to be put on the regular mailing list – though even these were indications of interest. But many were also genuine contributions to the sort of reflection *PJ* sought to

stimulate: what does it mean to promote justice within the context of faith? Should a Jesuit's work for justice be any different from that of a non-Jesuit, a lay Christian, an atheist? What influence should our call to be apostles, priests and religious have on our motives, long-term objectives, the strategies and tactics we employ?

The topics treated in these early issues included Christian-Marxist dialogue; Development and/or Liberation; the National Security State, and Christian Social Teaching. And there were two special issues: the first tried to evaluate actual experiences of Catholics working with extreme left-wing groups in the southern Philippines; the second looked at GC32's call to show "solidarity with the poor" and what was being done to implement it.

My years in the Social Secretariat coincided with a number of crises in several parts of the world where "social" Jesuits were in open disagreement and sometimes even in conflict with "non-social" Jesuits. A fairly typical example was the standoff between CINEP and the Universidad Xaveriana in Colombia which required delicate handling, more than one visit and outside help. Such a situation was very tense and even dangerous in countries ruled by dictatorships, especially in the National Security States of the Cono Sur in Latin America, the apartheid regime in South Africa or the iron-curtain countries of Eastern Europe, where a genuine social apostolate was often out of the question.

Two special issues of *PJ* were devoted to what were perhaps the two most important meetings the Secretariat organised in the Curia during my time there. In 1980 there took place the first ever meeting in Rome of the priest-worker movement, which brought together 16 Jesuits representing over 150 in the six countries that participated. Father Arrupe attended throughout and gave a moving address at the end, explaining the special reasons why he was so happy to have been present.

The second meeting, also in 1980, was a carefully prepared four-day seminar on the social apostolate in the Society today, attended by 23 regional coordinators and directors of social institutes from 17 countries. The seminar tackled four main themes. These were: What is the social apostolate today? What is the role of a social institute? How are integration and coordination of the social apostolate with other activities and sectors to be improved; how is international cooperation to be promoted and on which issues? Perhaps its most valuable contribution was the attempt to describe the essential characteristics of a Jesuit social institute. These were seen to lie in any group of Jesuits who:

1. are radically committed to the promotion of justice in solidarity with the poor;
2. seek structural change in society and not merely the conversion of individuals;

3. aim at contributing to the building of a new and more just society based on participation;
4. are clear about determining priorities and deciding on action through the use of a scientific analysis of reality, an analysis not only of structures but also current events and trends; and with an outlook of Christian faith;
5. are ready to associate themselves in various ways with those who share the same ideal of transforming society;
6. are engaged in critical dialogue with groups that seek change in a different way from us;
7. and who pursue the goal of communion with the Church and the whole Society.

In his important talk at the end of the seminar Father Arrupe stressed the fact that a genuine social apostolate must integrate faith and justice and that such integration will find its deepest expression in Christian love. "In this way, our social apostolate, our struggle for justice is something quite different from, and much superior to, any type of merely human promotion or purely philanthropic social or political work. What moves us is the love of God in himself and the love of God in men. Thus our work is apostolic in every sense and, as such, fully Jesuit and in accordance with our charism".

Clearly, many of the issues mentioned above are still preoccupations for today's Social Secretariat and will continue to fill the pages of *PJ*. They represent ongoing problems that are never likely to find a definitive solution owing to changing conditions and situations. And to them must be added new ones, often no less demanding. Among them are certainly the crises being experienced by some social institutes, not to mention those that have disappeared; the lack of young Jesuits who wish to be part of the social sector, perhaps because of a reluctance to embark on the professional studies required to be effective in the social field. Recent issues of *PJ* have not only dealt with some of these concerns but also made courageous efforts to update the Society's vision of its social apostolate as it deals with contemporary problems such as globalization, Jesuit-lay partnership in the social apostolate, and the challenges of our 35th General Congregation.

But in an attempt to determine *PJ*'s future role and discern where the Spirit is guiding us, I propose to devote the remainder of this article to a specific challenge I believe the Social Sector is facing, together with other sectors, if not the Society as a whole. Put briefly, it can be described as making our work more available and relevant to countless millions of people who are not Catholic or even Christian, and who often profess no religion at all.

The urgency of this task arises from two considerations. The first consideration is the crisis facing the Catholic Church in several parts of the world, but especially Europe and the Americas. It is described in the latest Cristian-

isme i Justícia Booklet from Barcelona: "What is happening in the Church" (No 129). The authors start by saying: "For years now our society is becoming increasingly conscious of a deep crisis in the Catholic Church. For some, this represents a confirmation of the end of Christianity. For others it represents something that could be described as a regression or a 'winter-time' of the Church (K. Rahner)".

Quoting a famous work by Rosmini that Pius IX placed on the Index, the authors point to "Five Wounds" of the Church, calling for immediate attention. These are: (1) forgetting the importance of the poor, (2) the focus on hierarchy, (3) "ecclesiocentrism", (4) the division of Christians, (5) the Hellenization of Christianity.

Whether effective attention to these will reverse current trends is an open question but there can be no doubt that many, especially among the young, no longer identify with, and still less frequent, a particular church. A recent study in the UK claimed that church attendance is falling so rapidly that, by 2050, most of the churches in the country, including RC, will no longer be financially viable and therefore face closure. Yet, at the same time, there is growing interest among many, including the young, in religious issues and even prayer. An indication of this is the astounding success of the "pray as you go" initiative started by the British Jesuits, which in a short time has already notched up its five-millionth "hit", reaching multitudes that no established church could ever hope to contact.

The second consideration is that the centre of gravity of the Catholic Church, and other denominations too, has changed dramatically in recent years and is likely to change even more in years to come. In a recent address, Fr. Thomas Ryan, rector of the now defunct Missionary Institute in London, said: "When we speak of a crisis of faith in today's world, much depends on where in the globe we are standing". And he explained this with the following figures: "In 1900 there were 459 million Catholics in the world, 392 million of whom lived in Europe or North America. Christianity a hundred years ago was an overwhelmingly white, first-world phenomenon. By 2000 there were 1.1 billion Catholics, with just 380 million in Europe and North America, and the rest, 720 million, in the Global South".

Fr. Ryan went on to give some details of this extraordinary growth: "Africa alone went from 1.9 million Catholics in 1900 to 130 million in 2000. That is a growth rate of 7,000 per cent. This is the most rapid and sweeping transformation of Catholicism in its 2,000-year history. São Paulo, Jakarta and Nairobi will become what Louvain, Milan and Paris were in the Counter-Reformation period, meaning major centres of pastoral and intellectual energy. Different experiences and priorities will set the church agenda as church leaders from Africa, Asia and Latin America rise through the system".

Linked with this is population growth in the world as a whole. It is estimated that, by 2050, well over half the world's population will live in Asia.

India and China are not only the economic giants of the future, but the demographic ones as well. The question so often asked by Fr. Arrupe, especially with regard to the refugee problem, imposes itself: What would Ignatius do in the face of such a situation?

There can be little doubt that he would respond immediately by identifying what we still call the 'Third World', especially the East, as a priority for our Jesuit apostolate. In the past, starting with St. Francis Xavier, the Society responded generously to this challenge. But we now have to ask to what extent this response reaches out to the millions of non-Christians or those who have no religion at all. Thus, much of our preaching is to the already converted!

There seems to be no a priori reason why Ignatian spirituality, and in particular the Spiritual Exercises, should not be adapted for non-Christians, as well as made easily available to them. Father Arrupe described the Exercises as "a fundamental means to bring the human heart to God". There is nothing in this description or in the better known Ignatian one of a means for "the overcoming of self and the ordering of one's life on the basis of a decision made in freedom from any ill-ordered attachments" that would necessarily rule out their use by non-Christians. If they are usually conceived and given in a Catholic, or at least Christian, context it is because it was in this way that Ignatius himself experienced them and lived them out.

But this does not mean they should be limited to such a context as if imprisoned within it. The basic truths they expound and the methodology used are applicable to any religious creed or none at all. I feel the challenge facing the Society today is to exploit this to the full and thus benefit countless millions of people who would otherwise have no contact with or knowledge of Ignatian spirituality. This will call for bold experimentation, the allocation of men and resources, and much determination.

I further believe that what is true for the Spiritual Exercises also applies in a special way to the work of the Social Secretariat and its publication *Promotio Justitiae*. Neither needs to be restricted to a specifically Christian context. The promotion of justice is a universal need which should be pursued in every culture and faith. My hope and prayer is that this challenge will be taken up by the Secretariat and reflected in the publication of *PJ* over its next hundred issues.

Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ
St. Francis of Assisi
Mount Standfast
St James – BARBADOS
<sjbar@caribsurf.com>

# A Time of Transition (1985-1991) Henry Volken SJ

**Fernando Franco SJ**

I am not the best person to write about Fr. Henry and the seven years he spent in the Curia as Secretary of the Social Justice Secretariat and editor of *Promotio Iustitiae*. I lived out those years far away from Rome and the concerns of the Secretariat. I seem to lack the most essential of credentials: I was not a regular reader of the bulletin!

In spite of these obvious drawbacks I have decided to write this article on Henry because I feel deep down a certain affinity with him. He spent some of the most active years of his life in rural India and worked at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi. I happen to share these two features; and the thought that he may have gone, as I so often did, for a walk in the Lodhi Gardens to lighten his mind and rekindle his heart was motivation strong enough to make me sit down and compose these lines! They are written with affection for someone I never met but one who is not difficult to understand across distance and time. Let me admit that I unexpectedly derived enormous satisfaction from reading through the 18 issues of *Promotio* edited by him.

I do not intend to sketch an elaborate analysis of his work, much less evaluate his contribution. I simply attempt to paint a broad canvas of the interests that moved him inasmuch as one can glean them from the articles he selected and the themes he chose to emphasize. Reading these past issues I have been moved by the persistence of certain themes and by his perspicacity in foreseeing the future. I hope to lure the reader to go back and read the original articles and think of the past as something that continues to unfold in the present.

## A time of transition

Let me start with his first editorial. Embedded in his simple and straightforward style I sense the diffidence of a newcomer to the Curia. With a little hindsight I can imagine the sparse facilities of his office and the humble manner in which he took up the job of editing *PJ*, as he frequently called the bulletin.

> *"The readers of* Promotio Justitiae *will have to be indulgent in a special way with this issue, and understand the 'limit situation' of a new editor. This number of P.J., apart from being smaller than those of the past, is unduly selective and partial. Unfortunately I had to start walking on more familiar ground in using the material at hand. With your collaboration I hope to do better in the future"* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 31, February 1985, 2).

It is not surprising that in the same editorial, and just before he starts his work, he describes with some hesitation the difficult position faced by the bulletin. He acknowledges the contradictory reports he has received regarding the continuation of *PJ*, a concern, I suppose, not unfamiliar to any of the editors who have had to face epochal transitions and changes. We may recall that Fr. Henry takes up the responsibility of the Secretariat after Fr. Kolvenbach was appointed General of the Society. One era, Fr. Arrupe's era, was gone, and a new one was beginning.

Though some referred to *PJ* as the "most read bulletin coming from the Curia", others doubted its impact, thought its readership was limited to the already 'converted', and challenged its cultural and political sensibilities regarding new countries, for example, Africa. In spite of these negative opinions Fr. Henry was finally moved by arguments defending the continuation of the publication.

In that first editorial he outlined his most profound convictions and the guidelines that would frame the future development of *Promotio*. In the context of the painful transition described above, he draws attention to three inter-related issues: a lack of corporate solidarity and union among Jesuits, the opening of the Society to global issues and a more conciliatory approach shown by the social activists.

> *"Among us Jesuits the most notable feature of this period of transition seems to be the new search for a corporate witness, integrating the core insights of the past three General Congregations. It is becoming evident that solidarity with the poor, if it is to be adequate in the sense of the Gospel, also requires solidarity and unity among us sharing a sense of direction.*
>
> *Another positive change in the life of the Society is the fast increasing commitment of Jesuit groups, institutions and provinces to global justice issues and peace. The international character of the Society makes possible significant new initiatives of collaboration with other organisations and Episcopal conferences.*
>
> *There is a new development also among Jesuits in the justice ministry. In the past P.J. has rightly aimed at supporting in a special way these front-liners who had helped other Jesuits become more aware of the massive violation of basic human rights and the depth of human suffering resulting from it. Among them there are signs of transcending feelings of anger and aggressivity normal in such situations, yet blocking at the same time communication with other Jesuits, especially those in institution-based apostolates."* (*Ibid*., 3).

In this same editorial Volken raises the question that serves as the title of this article: "are we in a period of transition?" – clearly a reference to the changes that were taking place in the world outside and to our way of understanding

them. His sense of the main changes within the Society is indeed made up of elements that characterise the social apostolate in this period of transition: a search for greater union among Jesuits and an example of corporate unity.

**The preferential option for the poor**

Among the issues dealt with in the pages of *Promotio*, the preferential option for the poor promoted by GC32 has been, and probably remains, a critical issue in the Society's understanding of its mission. The theme attracted much forceful debate and was brought into focus by a meeting of Moderators of Provincial Conferences in Rome from 30 September to 4 October 1985. Many of those who attended GC35 may find the following lines familiar. Let us remember they were written 23 years before the last Congregation. For some participants,

> *"the language of Decree 4 and of [the] preferential option for the poor has emerged from a Latin American experience and it does not mean much in our situation ... Jesuits in Europe and some East-European provinces perceive the key problem in terms of 'spiritual malnutrition' and of the obstacles a secularised culture creates for evangelisation...*
>
> *Reference was made to a tendency among some to rest content with a mere charity approach to poverty in the 'Quart Monde' and the Third World ... Some Jesuits proceed to decision on the basis of analysis without discernment, others practice discernment without analysis...*
>
> *That social analysis is a necessary condition for valid discernment is not accepted everywhere..."* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 32, December 1985, 9-12).

Voices at that meeting called for a more professional and scientific approach to the manner in which provinces analysed their situation. A long section of the document called for the use of the Spiritual Exercises to achieve a personal conversion and to participate in the struggles of our time. The article ends with a call for unity and notes that one of the Moderators, referring to his provinces, said:

> *"Faith-Justice and preferential option have caused great suffering in our efforts to live up to this ideal. Now there is greater acceptance in the hearts of the Jesuits, but we still do not know what to do to really to give genuine service in a country full of injustices"* (*Ibid.*, 12).

**Conscientising the non-poor**

Many argued that the preferential option for the poor was being interpreted to mean that Jesuits had to work exclusively with the poor. Jesuits, the ar-

gument runs, are called also to conscientise the non-poor, and to influence the centres of decision-making. Proponents of this view argued that the insistence of social activists on the preferential option might have helped to promote a one-sided interpretation of our mission. The argument was forcefully put forward by Johnny Müller SJ, director then of the Institute of Social Sciences at the Jesuit Faculty of Philosophy in Munich.

> *"I think it is very important for us to reflect on the issue of 'conscientising the non-poor'. First of all, this compels us to acquire the proper knowledge that enables us to enter into a real dialogue with experts which goes beyond a mere moral appeal. Secondly, there are many 'persons of good will' whom we can win over for the option of the poor if we meet them with a positive attitude instead of judging them.*
>
> *It would indeed be very questionable if we as Jesuits would choose to withdraw entirely from addressing important and controversial issues of intellectual and political relevance. It is all the more important that we as Jesuits render this specific service at the moment when we observe trends in the Church which insist on moral demands without providing proper arguments and enlightening motivation. I guess there is also a temptation to avoid this challenge by finding meaning only in direct social action at the grass roots, which quite often gives more emotional satisfaction, even though with us in Germany the bigger temptation probably is in the opposite direction.*
>
> *Regarding higher education at the university level, Jesuits in German-speaking countries, and perhaps in the whole of Europe, still are facing a lot of difficulties in integrating social issues in their academic work"* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 47, June 1991, 3)

Reading the GC35 decree on mission today in the light of this quotation I experience two strong movements: the first is the joyful realisation that we have moved forward in looking for an integration between social research and action; the second is the disturbing recognition that the response from Jesuit institutions of higher learning continues to be cautious and half-hearted.

**Non-violence and social justice**

The post-Arrupean years seem also to consolidate the opinion that the struggle for justice and peace go together. In an interesting interview to Bishop Francisco Claver SJ of the Philippines regarding the accusation that they took too 'cautious' a position *vis-à-vis* the Marxist left he had this to say:

> *"There is no question of the Jesuit tradition of dedication to justice in the Philippines. But there is no question either that is a tradition of real*

> *discernment. As a consequence the Jesuits have not been touched by the deep polarisation that marks many a religious order in the Philippines ... Right or wrong, successful or not, we have been aware for some years now that in the work for justice we are not in a popularity contest ... The non-violent approach to the struggle for justice, I guess for the simple reason that one cannot espouse it without a big dose of faith, makes us most conscious of the space we must give the action of God"* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 33, June 1986, 5).

The movement linking justice and peace has advanced steadily over the last twenty years. The separation of violence from the struggles of justice seems to me one of the most fundamental achievements in our understanding of the justice of the gospel. It finds a central place in the mission decree of General Congregation 35.

**Emerging or recurrent issues**

The articles collected in *Promotio* by Fr. Henry during these years cover many areas. Worth mentioning are his illuminating report on his visit to the US (*Promotio Iustitiae* 34, October 1986, 9-14), the analysis and reflections on the publication of the new encyclical '*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*' (*Promotio Iustitiae* 37, April 1988, 3-4; *Promotio Iustitiae* 41, June 1989, 2-5), a moving report on the visit of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach to San Salvador after the death of our martyrs (*Promotio Iustitiae* 43, February 1990, 2-5), and a few lines on the death of Fr. Arrupe (*Promotio Iustitiae* 46, February 1991, 2-4). Keeping in mind the present interests and preoccupations of the social apostolate I have chosen to mention in greater detail a few themes appearing in the pages of *Promotio*.

The article on AIDS by Fr. E. W. Rogers is probably the first one of its kind in *Promotio*. He writes from Zimbabwe about a meeting of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance on AIDS in Rome (13-15 November 1989) attended by six Jesuits. It is interesting to note the words of an expert: "the problem of AIDS is reaching pandemic proportions in USA, the Caribbean and Africa" (*Promotio Iustitiae* 43, February 1990, 12-14).

The issue of environmental justice finds place in an article written by Peter W. Walpole SJ on 'A basic commitment to environmental justice' (*Ibid.*, 6-8). I find illuminating these prophetic words that already lay the foundation for linking ecological deterioration with its effects on the poor.

> *"Since moving around the country [Philippines] I now concentrate on a few locations and issues ... To the amusement of my fellow Jesuits I spend much time searching the mountains for the forest, only to look down eroded valleys to the coast. When talking with communities along the way the is-*

*sue is generally logging, erosion or sedimentation, but always the concern is a less diverse, fertile and stable environment"* (*Ibid.*, 6).

The question of the relationship between justice and culture emerges forcefully during a meeting of 35 Jesuits representing Jesuit Social Centres held in Rome from 12 to 16 May 1987. The controversy originates in an introductory paper read at the conference by Fr. Francisco Ivern, at that time director of *Centro João XXIII* in Rio de Janeiro. The misinterpretation, as Fr. Ivern argues, is caused by a communication sent to the social centres of Latin America by Fr. Juan Hernandez Pico, at that time director of CIASCA, Managua. In defence of his position Ivern writes:

*"Referring to my paper Juan seems to think that I had affirmed that the problems of today's world are more of a cultural than of a socio-economic and socio-political nature, and that hence our analysis should be focussed more on the cultural than on the economic and political. In reality I had simply affirmed that the present world crisis requires that socio-economic and socio-political analysis be complemented by an analysis of a cultural nature.*

*Underneath socio-economic and socio-political structures there are some values which can be adequately analysed and explained only by a study or analysis that is of a historical, philosophical religious and cultural in nature ... I simply wanted to stress that it is imperative for the Social Centres in their analysis also to allocate space to the socio-cultural dimension of reality."* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 37, April 1988, 10).

It is interesting to see that culture, so important an issue in GC34, is already being discussed at a meeting of social centres in 1988! We are aware that the theme of 'culture', mainly under the guise of inculturation, will become an important dimension of our Jesuit charism.

The lukewarm response from the Eastern European provinces to Decree 4 was an important focus of discussion. I was particularly moved by an article written as early as 1991 by Adam Żak SJ in the last issue published by Fr. Henry. This issue came up both in GC34 and 35. I would recommend that all who are interested in this topic, young and old, read again this short piece and especially the section entitled 'Renewal through faith and the renewal of faith'. It starts with a solemn affirmation:

*"I do not think that there are in the Society today serious doubts about the importance of Decree Four. This does not mean that we have fully accepted it. In fact, much suggests that we are only at the beginning. In a special way this applies to the Provinces of Eastern Europe."* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 48, October 1991, 6-9).

**Henry Volken: the man**

Henry Volken is the only Secretary of the social apostolate who has departed from this world. It seems appropriate therefore to end this article with a brief note on his life. In sketching it I have borrowed freely from the excellent 'Dedication' written by Fr. Michael Czerny (*Promotio Iustitiae* 73, May 2000, 3-5).

Henry was born in 1925 in Zermatt, Switzerland where he entered the novitiate in 1946. Wanting to start his process of inculturation in India as early as possible, he left for India at the end of his novitiate. After studying Marathi (the language spoken in Maharashtra and Mumbai) and doing philosophy and theology in Pune, he was ordained in the same city in 1956.

After completing sociology studies in Paris we find him in 1962 at the Indian Social Institute, Delhi. He pioneered the creation of a sister institution, the Indian Social Institute of Bangalore. After 13 years at the Institute in Bangalore he created a 'Mobile Training Team' (known all over as MOTT) that was present in many emergency situations. I remember hearing about this team, especially during the 1978 floods in Orissa. He derived great satisfaction from this type of work because it brought him closer to the poor.

During his years at the Secretariat, Fr. Henry showed the same disposition to reach generously to all those in need. According to Liliana Carvajal, who joined as secretary of the Social Justice Secretariat during Fr. Henry's time, he was a person who had overcome all types of discrimination, and who never subordinated the interests of the poor to other interests.

After completing his spell at the Secretariat in 1992 Fr. Henry returned to his native Switzerland to serve as a pastor in St. Boniface, the German-speaking parish in Geneva. He was decisively involved in advocacy, pre-figuring the importance that this apostolate would take much later. At Geneva he played an important role at the United Nations as president of the NGO committee and as the representative of the Christian Life Communities.

I heard of his poor health at the Indian Social Institute in New Delhi through messages sent by Stan D'Souza SJ from Brussels. On 3rd May 2000, before lunch, I received a message saying he had expired. Before sitting at table I went to the chapel adjoining the dining room and said a prayer for the great missionary and dedicated social activist I had never met but about whom I had heard so much

Henry thought that the international meeting at Loyola with Father General in 1990 was the most important event in his years as Secretary of the social apostolate. There was a direct interaction there among provincials and members of the Curia on burning issues of the social apostolate. He wrote the following memorable lines about the issues that remained unresolved at the meeting:

> *"Frustration is expressed because seemingly we have so little impact on the global situation of injustice. In the face of resisting structures and the dominant mentality, the burden put on us by decree 4 seems overwhelming. How to turn this call from a burden to something we do joyfully and peacefully? How to address with competence and serenity the hard questions emerging from global analysis? How can the Society of Jesus develop its international potential in the context of globalisation of the world economy, of increasing cultural interlinking, and continue to eliminate growing world poverty and victimisation of the powerless?"* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 45, October 1990, 8).

He ended his work as editor of *Promotio* in the same humble manner and spirit with which he had begun.

> *"With this issue of Promotio Justitiae I take leave from you the readers. I thank all those who during the past seven years have given me support, and even much of their time to write for the bulletin."* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 48, October 1991, 2)

A humble, generous and dedicated man with a sense of the future – Fr. Henry Volken, sometime secretary at the Social Justice Secretariat.

Fernando Franco SJ
Social Justice Secretariat
Rome – ITALY
<sjs@sjcuria.org>

## *Promotio Iustitiae* 49-76

**Michael Czerny SJ**

In 1992 I came to Rome from El Salvador where, for two years after the Jesuit assassinations at the University of Central America, I served as director of its Human Rights Institute. Fr. Henry Volken handed me a well-organised office with Liliana Carvajal as Secretary. In the catalogue it was called JESEDES, which I changed to *Social Justice Secretariat*, which seemed to name the purpose better and whose acronym SJS functions in English, French and Spanish.

In 1984, the year that Volken took over, *Promotio Justitiae* (*PJ*) seemed conceived primarily for the mutual encouragement of "Decree 4" Jesuits. Volken

was frankly discouraged with the lack of feed-back and participation. "Was *PJ* really worth all the effort and expense?" he wondered. During my eleven-year tenure, several big developments would convince me that *PJ* was well worth publishing.

**Dimension**

Within weeks of arriving in Rome, I joined Fr. John O'Callaghan's team for the preparation of GC34; for three years my energies went into planning, meetings and the tabloids of 1993 – two 8-page publications in a journalistic format on challenges of our mission and on our *minima Societas* facing those challenges.

Was the future of "the service of faith and promotion of justice" clear? I didn't think so. But as the tabloids sketched Jesuit vision, mission, work and life, they provided – perhaps for the first time since Vatican II and GC32 – an inclusive, organic picture of what we are doing and why, and so of who we are (mission, vocation, identity).

The tabloids gave Jesuits the opportunity to consider all this and prepared everyone (better than we realized at the time) for the 1995 GC. The key formula became both more rounded and deeply grounded: *the service of faith and the promotion in society of that justice of the Gospel which is the embodiment of God's love and saving mercy*. As the years after GC34 showed, the promotion of justice was really being assimilated as a defining dimension of Jesuit identity and mission. The prophetic teaching of the 1971 Synod on Justice in the World, the pleas and promises of GC32, the visionary hopes of Father Arrupe, were generously fulfilled and, it is fair to say, SJS and *PJ* helped.

Accompanying this undoubted achievement, however, came a disturbing development. Let me tell a little story: "After Vatican II, the so-called retreat apostolate – an apostolic sector – thoroughly renewed itself. While doing so, it contributed enormously to the renewal of the whole Society of Jesus, and became a dimension of every Jesuit's life and work. This is a great achievement! Today there is hardly any Jesuit who says, *I'm not interested in the Exercises* or *No, I don't do retreats and spiritual direction.* Inculcating the spirituality of St Ignatius into everything Jesuits are and do, never seemed to lead to a crisis within the Exercises sector."

The parable illuminates an enigmatic darkness in our own story: while the justice-dimension was finally becoming integrated into Jesuit identity and mission, the social sector was not flourishing, as the parable suggests it should have been. Instead of being the strong, prophetic and even revolutionary apostolate it was often seen as, it began to show signs of crumbling. Father General's letter *On the Social Apostolate* (2000) says:

> *"At the same time and paradoxically, this awareness of the social dimension of our mission does not always find concrete expression in a vital social apostolate. On the contrary, the latter manifests some* ***troubling weaknesses*** *... Thus the social apostolate risks losing its vigour and momentum, its orientation and impact" (Promotio Iustitiae* 73, May 2000, 21).

Leading Jesuits in the social apostolate would be asked to take up important responsibilities in their Provinces, but other companions of similar stature were hardly ever missioned to the social apostolate. Why was availability largely one-way? How could a successful assimilation of the justice dimension go hand in hand with a crisis of the social sector? There was no reason to think the one caused the other, and there were probably many causes much bigger than us and totally outside our control.

Still, was it possible that the social apostolate was itself inadvertently contributing to the crisis? On the hunch that we were, the SJS proposed a rigorous examen, the fruits of which found their way into *PJ* and changed the publication.

**Form**

The examen was launched and mapped by the *Social Apostolate Initiative 1995-2005* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 64 and 67). Key milestones were the Naples Congress in June 1997 (*Promotio Iustitiae* 68), and the video *Social Apostolate – Why?* in 6 languages, which should count as a very special issue of *PJ*.

An inspiration came from the education sector. *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* (1986) was successfully guiding Jesuit-related schools to appropriate Ignatian pedagogy and thus assuring their authenticity as *Jesuit*. Could the social apostolate draw up characteristics of its own to help revive itself?

One huge problem lay in a basic difference: St. Ignatius himself simultaneously invented the educational apostolate and its corresponding structure called "Jesuit school". Whereas the relatively young social apostolate (only about a century since *Rerum Novarum*) was born *formless* and remains so even now, each Jesuit social ministry inventing its own structure. Dimly grasping this problem of *formlessness*, the "Initiative" would seek, somewhat *thomistically*, the proper form and *ratio* for the social apostolate.

One angle from which to come at the problem is to think functionally. Any genuine Jesuit apostolate needs to have a richly developed *praxis*, namely a combination and integration of analytic and experiential, of intellectual and practical, of reflective and active, big words better summed up in a simple image: **both** *head* **and** *feet*. Thus, tensions and even dysfunctionality may be seen in:

- a dominance of head to the detriment of feet (research without much reality), or the other way round (activism without much reflection);

- a disconnect from the real mission of the Province, whereby each social apostle seems to be doing his own thing;

- an impoverished theology, with little connection discernible between social efforts and Christ's salvation (let alone the Church's mission).

While we accepted the enormous pluralism in the social apostolate and refused to canonise certain forms, this flexible rationale was combined with a common spirituality (*mística*) and put forward with the conviction that together they would help re-vitalize the sector. In 1998, *PJ* published the *Characteristics*.

Another part of the "Initiative" was writing up our history: *The Social Apostolate in the Twentieth Century* (*Promotio Iustitiae* 73, May 2000, 7-18). Not knowing where we come from weakens our identity and makes it impossible to pass the legacy on to the next generation. Talking of which, 1996 saw the arrival of the first of three excellent Italian regents – Giacomo Costa, Paolo Foglizzo and Sergio Sala – to work in SJS. They helped very much to bridge a generational divide that was exacerbating the social apostolate's crisis.

SJS's quest for *ratio* culminated in 2000 on the 50th anniversary of Father General Janssens' *Instruction on the Social Apostolate*, with Father General Kolvenbach underlining that the goal of the social apostolate "is to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common. This **social apostolate** incarnates the social dimension of our mission, concretely embodies it in real commitments and renders it visible" (*Ibid.*, 20).

**Governance**

The sub-title of *PJ* used to be EXCHANGES ÉCHANGES INTERCAMBIOS SCAMBI, but Volken had already found that we did not seem much interested. This ambition often ceded to communication from SJS towards the sector, the whole Society and, increasingly, colleagues and friends.

So during my years, *PJ* really served the SJS in trying to animate the sector. *PJ* gave full coverage of the "Initiative" and all its essays, meetings, working-groups. At the same time, the coverage widened: while articles from western Europe and Latin America had prevailed earlier (with the *mission ouvrière* and liberation theology setting the tone), now there was growing interest in eastern Europe and more articles about Africa and Asia.

An example of an initiative emanating from the centre is GC34's Decree 20 calling for a treatment of the ecological crisis. *We live in a broken world*

(1999) now looks somehow prophetic. It presents ecology clearly as challenging Christian faith, spirituality and justice, besides being a public and scientific movement. Congruently, the same *PJ* 70 switched to eco-friendly chlorine-free paper!

So *PJ* shows that SJS is *for* the social apostolate. Both SJS and *PJ* take it as their role to push. Nevertheless, SJS is *not* a social centre – much less *the global* Social Centre. The Society's social apostolate is quite unlike JRS (just down the hall) whose curial HQ has a role of leadership regarding refugees, and which is itself the hub of a worldwide operation. I ask myself whether it would have helped to structure the social apostolate similarly.

However one answers that question, Jesuits and many others will still seek guidance on emerging global justice issues, often clustered under the ambiguous rubric of "globalization". To respond, the Curia and SJS will have to step out into the limelight as coordinators, facilitators, leaders, spokesmen.

**Web**

The 1990s saw the explosive advent of powerful electronic media which, already at GC34, were distributing news and promoting discussion, albeit on a scale which now looks modest. In 2000, SJS introduced two electronic journals with Francesco Pistocchini as editor: *POINTS: Bulletin for the Coordinators of the Jesuit Social Apostolate*, and *HEADLINES* (*HL*) for everyone: *to exchange news, stimulate contacts, share spirituality and promote networking* ... Maybe Volken had been trying to do on paper what could only work well by e-mail? The monthly *HEADLINES* is now in its ninth volume.

Using new electronic media (and being re-shaped by them) does not necessarily mean abandoning the former print media (although they inevitably must change, too, and not all survive). Scanning a screen can never take the place of reading hard copy. But an entirely new medium entails a different logic and opens exciting possibilities, so *PJ* has had to reinvent itself.

As conventional support for networking, the SJS gathered the data and published the first Social Apostolate Catalogue in four fascicles: America, Africa and Asia, Europe and Social Centres (1997). And *PJ* kept harping on the need to network – you'll even find an unpublished "Guidelines on Jesuit Networking in the Social Area" (2002) on the website – because it is something which needs to be nourished and promoted, rather than left to happen on its own.

Electronic communication remains a challenge: the SJS website, whose construction goes back nearly a decade, still remains to be accomplished. Once it is running dynamically, then its collaboration needs to be worked out with publications on paper like *PJ*, electronic ones like *HL*, and the many Jesuit social reviews and websites.

**Social Faith**

*PJ* has proven more than worthwhile to produce; where might the Holy Spirit be moving it now?

A great achievement of GC34 was its completing the expression "service of faith and promotion of justice". In retrospect, we now see that the unqualified formulation, which had been so fruitful in galvanising and inspiring a generation of social Jesuits, also posited unreflectively a juxtaposition of two contrasting epistemologies which soon plunged us into division and polemic. Put simply, it left open a massive misunderstanding, namely that the content of "justice" could be intended in purely secular terms. And until the fall of the Berlin Wall, more often than not, the content was construed in a "progressive" or "socialist" sense. GC34 spotted the misunderstanding and foreclosed it. Perhaps a growing postmodern awareness of the pervasiveness of ideology and a concomitant mistrust of passing fads and 'correctness' led the Congregation to qualify the justice for which Jesuits struggle as being rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Yet now, 13 years later, are we more articulate about what this justice means and entails and how it is linked to our religious lives? I think there is work to be done here. The safe, secular assumptions of the Cold War era have fallen apart, yet not a few of us still carry on as if practically anything overtly Catholic were anathema. Secularization, both covert and explicit, it seems to me, has made the social apostolate less effective and today continues to leech our practice of its evangelical faith-substance; what's left is an atrophied, all-too-human optimism, supposed to motivate the struggle for social justice, but without Christ and certainly without Church.

Can we become theologically, morally, spiritually and ecclesiologically articulate once again? Ignatian spirituality is Christian faith at work in the world, impelling some Jesuits headlong into education, others into pastoral labour and spirituality, and us social apostles out into the agora, markets and (virtual) public squares. Christian faith at work in the world is infinitely more valuable, not to say powerful, than a faithless social activism. The promotion of justice can only thrive on genuine religious nourishment: faith, community, worship, and morality, both social and personal – this last being especially counter-cultural. So, post-GC35, what might be the key orientations for a relevant *PJ*-on-paper?

- *PJ* is where a stronger Christian-Ignatian framework can be built on the soundest-possible bases: faith in Christ; loyalty to the Church; orientation by Catholic personal and social teaching.

- GC34's tantalising intuition is that our work for justice can only be achieved in dialogue with other religious traditions. We are definitely

not about refurbishing western Christendom or battening down the sectarian hatches. *PJ* should help flesh out what that dialogue can bring us, not in beautiful platitudes but in concrete reality.

- *PJ* should foster deep spiritual fraternity amongst social apostles throughout the Jesuit world. This is not an extra luxury, it is crucial; without it the social apostolate will not survive. Faith, both articulate and shared, is far more urgent than yet more social analysis, of which plenty gets published elsewhere and about which we do not (contrary to ideas of the last century) need to agree.

As a parting provocation: going back over this article, you will find that each of the Curia's secretariats makes an appearance: Communications, Education, Ignatian Spirituality, Inter-religious Dialogue, Refugees (JRS) as well as Social Justice (SJS). Here on paper they fit neatly together but in reality it has been nearly impossible for the six secretariats to collaborate. Now, isn't the Holy Spirit gently nudging them together? And if so, does each one really need its own dedicated review? Or could they envision cohabiting in one publication? If so, this would be the kernel of SJS's contribution:

> *"The cry of God's people expresses their most painful sufferings and needs. Our social apostolate's mission in response is to work tirelessly and in collaboration at transforming terribly unjust sinful structures – economic, political, social, cultural and religious – into fuller expressions of justice and charity, and to share with everyone the real hope we feel in Christ for all human beings and creation"* (*Ibid.*, 31).

*Promotio Iustitiae* 100 is a thought-provoking sign of God's enduring fidelity to a brave apostolate still seeking its way of being faithful, definitely a milestone and a wonderful occasion for thanksgiving.

Michael Czerny SJ
African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN)
P.O. Box 571 Sarit
00606 Nairobi – KENYA
<aids@jesuits.ca>

## Faith and Justice in a Postmodern World

**Michael Amaladoss SJ**

The 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus realized that the promotion of justice is an integral dimension of the profession of faith. Faith is not merely belief but commitment to love God in the Other, that is, all others. In a context of injustice and inequality, loving others, especially the poor, demands that we ensure that they receive what is their due as humans in the world. This calls for a transformation of the economic and political structures that make people poor. Faith is therefore not merely fidelity to religious ritual or to an otherworldly spirituality. It has to do justice through the transformation of socio-economic structures. (cf. Decree 4)

The 34th General Congregation realized that the transformation of socio-economic structures is not possible without cultural and religious transformation. In a situation of cultural and religious pluralism this can happen only through dialogue between cultures and religions in the context of an awareness of God's presence and action in that dialogue. The Congregation also mentioned areas besides poverty that needed attention: human rights, globalization, the defence of human life, environment, human solidarity, Dalits and indigenous peoples, the excluded, refugees and displaced persons. It also spoke of a need for our own personal conversion. (cf. Decree 3)

The 35th General Congregation, while recommitting the Society to this mission, highlights two elements of the contemporary world that need special attention, namely, globalization and postmodernism. Let me look at them from an Indian point of view.

### Globalization

GC34 had already spoken about globalization in the context of "a growing consciousness of the interdependence of all peoples in one common heritage."

> *"While this phenomenon can produce many benefits, it can also result in injustices on a massive scale: economic adjustment programmes and market forces unfettered by concern for their social impact, especially on the poor; the homogenous 'modernization' of cultures in ways that destroy traditional cultures and values; a growing inequality among nations and – within nations – between rich and poor, between the powerful and marginalized."* (D. 3, 7)

It is a pity that the document does not spell out the "many benefits" but focuses only on the negative factors. GC35 does make a positive remark about globalization of the network of communications and how this can be used advantageously. This is an indication that globalization itself is a neutral phenomenon. It can be abused for economic, political and cultural domination. But it can also be used for building the global solidarity of people, especially those who are struggling to promote justice in various ways. I am afraid that, in talking about globalization, GC35 is 'globalizing' a particular western attitude to the phenomenon. Colonial capitalism was the dominant force in the world from the 16th century onwards. The communist revolution created an alternative model of state-centred 'socialist' capitalism, however contradictory this may sound. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, this alternative disappeared and liberal capitalism seeks to dominate the world. But for a person living in a Third World country like India there is nothing very new about all this. The colonizing countries dominated and exploited the rest of the world for nearly four centuries. Though political colonialism disappeared in the middle of the 20th century, economic, commercial and military domination and exploitation continue. The global domination of Euro-America, though it may take new forms, is thus nothing new for the Third World.

There is, however, a new element in the contemporary picture. At the political level (and also at the cultural and religious level,) the now politically independent Third World countries are resisting such globalization. India and China are modernizing without 'westernizing'. They are not in the process of becoming secularized in the same way as Europe was. The Muslims are even resorting to violence to defend their religious-cultural identity, though they may be branded fundamentalists for this. The Third World countries stand their ground today in international bodies like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO), though they are dominated in other international entities like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, both of which are controlled by the richer countries. The picture of the Doha round of WTO negotiations is instructive. The USA, the European Union and the Third World countries, led by Brazil, India and South Africa, pulled in different directions, making agreement impossible. It is obvious that the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries offer a counterbalancing force to the Europe and America. The OPEC countries exploit the others in their own way. So globalization is not as smooth as one might pretend. We live in a multi-polar world. There are many international NGOs networking today to resist globalizing tendencies. The post-colonial situation has empowered the poorer countries politically and many of these countries do experiment with mixed economies.

In India, for instance, there is a Public Distribution System to provide the essentials of life to poorer people at subsidized rates. There are affirmative action programmes for Dalits and Tribals, as well as religious and cultural

minorities. Employment generation programmes have also been launched. Indian industries are protected against global takeovers; global monopolies are resisted. While it is true that corruption and mismanagement vitiate these programmes, the fact is that they are there and are proving useful to many people. In a democratic country like India, the poor also have the power of the vote and cannot be ignored. Local and even national governments have been chosen or thrown out for economic reasons during elections. On the other hand, a certain globalization of the knowledge and service industries is bringing jobs and economic progress to the emerging middle class in India. There are still many poor people, but the solution does not lie in sharing poverty through a distributive justice of available resources. We have to create riches that can be shared and these cannot be created today without integration into the global processes of production and the market. India had a protected, mixed economy for decades after independence and it led us nowhere. Progress is being made now only after India has opened up to the world, though in a controlled way. It is true that India has to be careful not to play into the hands of the multi-nationals. But the experience of China, and later India, not to speak of other Asian economies like Thailand and Korea, has shown that opening up to the globe carefully need not always be detrimental. It is significant that Europe and America, after preaching the virtue of open economies to the rest of the world, are now playing protectionism in the WTO with regard to agricultural subsidies, for example.

I think that the phenomenon of globalization has, therefore, to be approached not ideologically and abstractly, but practically and sensitively. Globalization, thanks to the facility of communications, is a fact. The poorer countries should not close themselves in or shut themselves off, but organize themselves and fight for their rightful place and share in the world economically and politically, even while defending their cultural identities. It is also surprising that, while people talk about abstract forces like globalization, no one dares to challenge prophetically the rich and the powerful, and the multi-nationals of the world, who are out to exploit the poor. The problem is that our documents are often strong on ideology, but weak on praxis. The fact that they are also 'global' documents cannot be an excuse.

If I may be permitted an aside, I suggest that the church itself seems to seek global domination without respecting the identity and autonomy of the different local churches and their cultures. At times it seems that a claim is made that we cannot be Christians without being culturally Greco-Roman.

**Postmodernity**

Postmodernity is another global phenomenon that people like to evoke. Europe was 'religious', but with the Enlightenment and scientific progress, became 'rational' (modern). Now that the claims of 'reason' have weakened, it

is said to have become postmodern. There are sociologists who would speak rather of late modernity than of postmodernity. One could discuss whether America is postmodern in the same way as Europe. Science and technology do not seem to have had the same secularizing influence in America as in Europe. The Asian experience has also shown that one can become scientific and 'modern' without becoming secular. So I doubt whether postmodernity is really a global phenomenon as some claim. As a matter of fact, many of the Third World countries may still be negotiating the tensions between tradition and modernity. Some of the middle class elites in these countries with pre-modern roots in the villages but with technical and service jobs in the cities, may be passing directly from pre-modernity to a situation which some may call postmodern. But they integrate this passage in ways very different from young people in Europe. It is perhaps too early to analyze this, since it is happening just now and we do not know how it will develop.

Postmodernity is often linked to relativism. The pre-moderns had faith-based absolutes. The moderns had reason-based absolutes. The postmoderns are said to reject both types of absolutes and believe only in personal experiences, perceptions and affirmations; hence they are considered to be relativists. Obviously, if truth is what I say without any reference to an objective order, then it is relativism. But such a discourse does not recognize legitimate pluralism, which it brands as relative. This may be true in a monocultural or mono-religious society. But in India with its rich pluralism of cultures and religions absolute affirmations are not possible and pluralism need not be relative.

God alone is absolute. But God is beyond whatever we can say about God. As the Scholastics used to say, we can say that God is, not what God is. God as an absolute is perceived and affirmed by each one of us in different ways conditioned by our personality, culture, history and conditions of perception and the language of affirmation. The God I affirm is absolute, not my affirmation of God. The young today are not interested in my abstract absolute statements about God. They are rather interested in what I can share of my experience of God. But my experience is always conditioned by various factors. The experience of each person (even one's own at various times) is bound to be different. In so far as my experience is of God, it is true. But it is not the whole truth about God. It is limited, related to God on the one hand, and to my various conditionings on the other. In that sense it is relative and pluralistic, while true. It is in and through the many limited affirmations that I reach out to the absolute God without ever really grasping God fully. St. Thomas Aquinas said that even the incarnate manifestation of the infinite God is limited. (cf. ST III, 3, 7). Such a pluralism of affirmations is therefore legitimate and is not relativistic in the postmodern sense. Moral principles sound absolute in the abstract: "Thou shalt not kill". But what constitutes killing in the concrete is subject to many conditioning factors.

The young today affirm their freedom and refuse total loyalty to any system or institution. I do not see anything wrong with this; it seems to me an element of human growth. This is the tension between 'law' and 'freedom' that Paul explored in his letters to the Romans and the Galatians. Personal freedom has to be educated and guided, not subordinated to a group or an institution. Our only option then is dialogue with, and persuasion of, individuals. It is sometimes said that the young today prefer spirituality to religion. What they question is not God or God-experience, but institutions presuming to capture God in their formulae and ritual. In the name of God, institutions, and the people who represent them, tend to absolutize themselves. This is fundamentalism. The Indian tradition affirms the Absolute "One-without-a-second". But it also experiences this Absolute's manifestation to us in a thousand different ways. Such manifestations are not 'relative' in any pejorative sense, but legitimate and pluralistic.

I am not saying that there is no relativism in the world today. There are 'New Age' groups that pick and choose elements from various religions to make up their own, but with no basis in authentic religious experience. On the other hand, there are many religions and they have different ways of living and sharing their experience of God. We cannot absolutize our own experience and relativize the experience of others. There is a pluralism here that calls for dialogue. Between absolutism and relativism there is authentic and legitimate pluralism. Some 'postmoderns' may be discovering this and I find nothing wrong in it. Their attempt to personalize the praxis of faith is also welcome, though it should not be privatized.

**Personal Transformation**

In promoting justice we speak of transforming social, economic, political, religious and cultural structures. But one hears hardly anything about converting the agents – the persons – who create and maintain these structures and who alone can change them. GC34 speaks of converting ourselves. GC35 speaks of using the Spiritual Exercises to convert others. I think that we have to be more practical than this. I shall make my point by quoting Fr. Arrupe:

> "*Clearly, the present world order is based neither on justice nor love, but almost always on personal and national interest. The balance of power is a balance of terror ... One hears the candid statement that only two possibilities exist: either a striking personal conversion of those who have most influence to bring about the needed changes, or the violent tearing down of unjust structures. My own conviction is that violence is not the right way to get positive results. If that is true, the only thinkable alternative is the other: namely, the personal conversion of those who have power and influence.*" (Pedro Arrupe, *A Planet to Heal*, Ignatian Centre of Spirituality 1975, pp. 25-26)

> *"According to St. Ignatius, we must give preference to people and places capable of multiplying our work for others. He gives these examples: "princes and rulers, magistrates and administrators of justice, people who are outstanding in literature or authority." My question is: who are these multipliers, these influential people, these "magistrates and princes" of today? Are they, for example, politicians, trade union leaders, youth leaders, influential thinkers, scientists affecting the course of history, those who control the mass media? Today we are aware of the tremendous impact of ideologies, structures, and public opinion. It is crucial that we be active in these fields where we can best spread the truth or remove obstacles impeding evangelization."* (Final Address to the Congregation of Procurators, Oct. 5 1978, 12)

This insight of Fr. Arrupe throws before us an important challenge. Our option for the poor leads us to serve the poor as they organize and empower themselves and struggle to promote justice. But it should also lead us to work with the 'non-poor' – not the rich, but the people who have power and influence and who can bring about social change. The people whom we have to convert are more likely to be in the First (Christian?) World than in the Third. It is at this level that our universities, journals, intellectual and spiritual apostolate are relevant today.

**Conclusion**

Our task in India will focus on our service for the liberation of Dalits, Tribals, women and nature. Being a small minority (just 2.3 per cent), we Christians cannot bring about any social transformation unless we collaborate with people of good will of all religions and ideologies. As a matter of fact, our contemporary experience is one of inter-religious conflict. Religious fundamentalism and communalism are vitiating relations between people and leading to violence. For this reason, even before promoting justice, we will have to engage in conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Michael Amaladoss SJ
Institute of Dialogue with Cultures and Religions
Loyola College, Nungambakkam
Chennai – 600 034 – INDIA
<mamaladoss@hotmail.com>

# GC35: A Postmodern Faith-Justice Mission?

**Gasper Lo Biondo SJ [1] and Peter Bisson SJ [2]**

## Introduction

Postmodernity's emphasis on the human subject, one of the cultural frontiers where the Society of Jesus needs to be present today, gives the promotion of justice in the service of faith a better opportunity to enchant the world with God's presence than was possible under modernity. For the same reason, postmodernity also gives religious faith many new kinds of public presence and action in the world. Religion under modernity had an undifferentiated and controlling public presence of the kind prevalent in pre-modern and pre-secular times; by contrast, postmodernity allows a new form of post-secular public presence, one which Paul Ricœur, the famous philosopher of religion, might call "second naiveté".

Given many of the religious critiques of postmodernity, this hypothesis seems counter-intuitive. We acknowledge and agree with many of the theological critiques made of postmodernity, such as the questions raised in this journal by Etienne Grieu SJ, and elsewhere by Carlo Cardinal Martini SJ. Nevertheless, we see new and exciting possibilities for faith and justice in postmodernity. What does this hypothesis mean, and on what grounds does it stand? What should the faith-justice commitment look like in a postmodern cultural context?

Let us begin by looking briefly at what postmodernity reacts to, that is, its dialectical partner and "opposite", modernity.

## Modernity

Modernity[3] relegated religious faith and moral values to the private realms of family life, personal conscience, and other realms that did not participate directly in public life. In this way, the realm of public, shared life could be governed by more "objective" forms of reason. Based on a narrow view of empirical science and its successes, modernity effectively modeled reason on instrumentality. This meant, among other things, that "objective" reason was objective because it was "technical" and ostensibly free of values. But value-free reason also reduces persons to objects to be manipulated and

[1] Director of Woodstock Theological Center, Washington, DC, USA.

[2] Director of Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice, Toronto, ON, Canada.

[3] The modern cultural period is seen by scholars as beginning with the Enlightenment or with the scientific revolution in European cultures. One of its principal characteristics is confidence in reason's ability to ensure human progress. The postmodern cultural period can be seen as beginning after the First or Second World War, with the loss of such confidence.

calculated, or to instruments to help with such objectification. In this understanding of objectivity, faith is subjective, as are all values, including justice, because they are "of the subject". Modern understandings and uses of reason seek an objectivity that does not know how to deal with and judge the things of human subjectivity. So if modernity cannot eliminate the things of subjectivity, like faith and values, then it prefers to marginalize them or, more politely, to confine them to private life. The resistance of the liberal and neo-liberal market mentality to justice considerations is an example of such marginalization.

Modernity has not been entirely bad for religion. It has contributed at least two things: the differentiation of religion from other areas of life, and greater, more systematic skill in the use of reason in religion. The need for various forms of Christianity to learn to live with each other in peace led not only to the privatization of religion, but first to the differentiation of religion from other areas of life. This differentiation has challenged religion to discover what its specific contribution to the good life is. Religion has had to learn how it is distinct from the contributions of other disciplines such as politics, economics or science. Differentiation has also freed religion from seeking to dominate all aspects of life. While this has been a challenge for religion, it has also been a maturing experience. Secondly, greater skill in the use of reason, inspired by the achievements of modern science, has also helped religion to mature. Looking at how things are related to each other, not only to us, has helped to give us a more critical, intelligent and responsible approach to religion, and has helped to strengthen the confidence that faith is not irrational but intelligible and intelligent.

In the light of postmodern challenges to reductionistic modern uses of reason, religious people who appreciate the achievements of modernity and of scientific approaches are beginning to recognize that the differentiation of religion from other dimensions of human social life need not mean its privatization and marginalization. Differentiation and marginalization need not go together. Post-secular religion, as the contemporary Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor suggests[4], accepts differentiation but not the marginalization of religion.

Modernity's privatization of religion has not been helpful to religion, especially when people assume that rationality and the privatization of religion are connected. Postmodern philosophy often criticizes modern uses of reason for its tendencies to reductionism and objectification. But if postmodernity criticizes modernity for such things, then is it religion's friend? Not necessarily. The enemy of my enemy is not necessarily my friend.

[4] See James L. Heft (Ed), *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*, Oxford University Press 1999, and Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Belknap Press 2007.

## Postmodernity and Globalization as Threat

Perhaps the defining characteristic of postmodernity is the loss of confidence in reason's ability to ensure human progress, accompanied by criticism of anything that seems to assert such confidence. Furthermore, the narrow forms of reason asserted by modernity have been criticized by postmodernity for reducing people to objects and therefore being unjust. The postmodern critique of the modern centrality of reason has had consequences: a loss of confidence in "grand narratives", stories or theories that seem to explain or give meaning to the whole of life; a presupposition that truth is relative to the perceiver; and the fragmentation in cultural, social and personal lives that can come with such changes. While loss of confidence in reason was caused mainly by the shock of the bloody wars of the twentieth century even while science continued to progress, the more recent phenomenon of globalization has amplified many cultural characteristics of postmodernity. Globalization reinforces the view that the dominant culture is normative, that there is only one culture that is universal and permanent. However, it creates at the same time the conditions for local cultures to be able to experience themselves and other cultures as empirical, that is, as a set of meanings and values that informs a legitimate way of life.

As the world becomes more and more interconnected into one unit, cultures with their identities, values and truths also interact more intensely with each other than before. This puts them all into question by making them seem relative to each other. Identity, meaning and values are no longer "givens" to be lived unconsciously; instead they are becoming more intentional human choices. What does this mean for identity and truth? Is a shared judgment of truth and identity arbitrary and "subjective"? Postmodern culture does not explicitly say so, but the suggestion is implicit. Even though reason is part of the structure of the human subject – no matter how narrowly reason is understood – postmodernity often seems to replace confidence in reason with an emphasis on subjectivity. Communities of people become fragmented in a postmodern world. Fragmented human subjectivity, and loss of confidence in reason, truth, value and meaning, threaten the ability of religion and justice to contribute to human life.

Yet, in all this there is an opportunity for the Society of Jesus to carry out its faith and justice mission. Postmodernity and globalization open up new ways in which God is present in our post-secular world.

## Postmodernity and Globalization as Opportunity

Just as the reason upheld by modernity and rightly criticized by postmodernity was too narrow, so too the subjectivity embraced by postmodernity is too narrow. Nevertheless, postmodernity has drawn attention to the human

subject and appreciates what goes on in the interior of the subject. A narrow emphasis on instrumental forms of reason governed by seemingly external or objective criteria offered little ground for faith or for values, offering, as it did, little ground for taking the human subject seriously as a subject. But attention to experience and to what goes on within the human subject does offer a ground for taking faith and values seriously, and is therefore a ground for the link between faith and justice. Furthermore, attention to human interiority offers a new ground for a use of reason that is broader than understood by modernity. For example: How can there be justice without taking seriously the human subject as subject? How can there be faith without treating consolations and desolations as essential data for making all decisions, in addition to the data that come from the rest of the world, all of which needs to be evaluated and judged in a critical and responsible fashion? Finally, how can there be justice without seeking and attending to the data of consolations and desolations, that is, without treating seriously the interiority of human subjects?

Postmodernity's shift to the subject need not replace modernity's focus on reason. Instead, the shift to the subject can broaden and contextualize the use of reason. In the *Spiritual Exercises* we treat human subjectivity critically but seriously, and the *Exercises* provide guidelines for doing so. Why can we not do the same in all other disciplines? If we exclude the data of human interiority from our serious considerations, then we similarly exclude both faith and justice, and we secularize reason.

How can we take advantage of these postmodern opportunities in order better to serve faith and promote justice? GC35 points the way.

## GC35 and the Faith-Justice Mission

All the General Congregations since GC32 in 1975 have stressed that the promotion of justice is not simply one ministry among others but rather an essential dimension of the Jesuit mission. At the same time, they have also carefully asserted that within the inseparable link that must always bind the service of faith and the promotion of justice together in one integrated mission, the service of faith has priority over the promotion of justice. For example, GC32 in its famous Decree 4, "Our Mission Today", carefully speaks of " ... the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement"[5]. This statement asserts the inseparable link between the two elements, which was GC32's achievement, but within that link it also asserts an order. As GC34 in "Servants of Christ's Mission"[6] and GC35 in "Challenges to Our Mission Today"[7] assert with more precision, the service of faith is

[5] GC32, D. 2, n. 2.
[6] GC34, D. 2, n. 14.
[7] GC35, D. 3, n. 2.

the aim of our mission, and the link between faith and justice integrates our ministries into one mission. This order within the relationship between faith and justice does not weaken their relationship. While one cannot and should not exist without the other, the promotion of justice should be understood from a basis in the service of faith. It is as though there were a scale of values, with the service of faith or the ultimate aim of our mission at the very top, and at the level just below it, the promotion of justice, of fidelity to covenant relationships with God, one another, and creation, where the promotion of justice is an essential component of the service of faith above but the service of faith depends on and completes the promotion of justice below and helps to solve problems that might be raised by the promotion of justice, but which cannot be solved at that level alone.

In Decree 3, "Challenges to Our Mission Today", GC35 explicitly reiterates that the aim of our mission is the service of faith[8]. But GC35 also makes this point in a different, postmodern way. It models what it means by placing the identity decree, "A Fire that Kindles Other Fires", before the mission decree, suggesting perhaps that the latter be read in the light of the former. In fact both decrees deal with mission, but Decree 2 deals with mission from an inspirational and spiritual point of view, while Decree 3 deals with it from the more typical explanatory point of view that we are used to reading in post-conciliar general congregation decrees about mission. Furthermore, Decree 2 is written in spiritual language, the language of interiority, and is meant not to be read in a discursive fashion, but rather to be prayed with. "A Fire that Kindles Other Fires" basically directs Jesuits to their experience of Christ, and to what is Ignatian and Jesuitical about that experience. The decree's content, form, and its placement among the other decrees reminds Jesuits that everything we do, all elements of our service of faith and promotion of justice, are motivated by our encounter with Christ, and are directed toward helping others have and interpret their own experience of Christ, whether or not that experience is Ignatian in character. In this way, by getting Jesuits to focus on and use their religious experience, GC35's Decree 2 tries to get Jesuits to look at our mission in general and each of our specific activities from the point of view of the aim of Jesuit mission, that is, the service of faith. This is the first time that a General Congregation has written an entire decree that tries to get Jesuits to focus on and to engage explicitly their religious experience. While this attention to Jesuit subjectivity is not entirely new in a General Congregation[9], it is the first time that an entire decree has

[8] GC35, D. 3, nn. 2-3.

[9] GC33's Decree 1 had a section devoted to our religious experience. In GC34, each of the mission decrees (Decrees 2, 3, 4 and 5) began with a summary of the Society's corporate religious experience as relevant to our whole mission (D. 2, "Servants of Christ's Mission"), to the justice dimension of our mission (D. 3, "Our Mission and Justice"), to the cultural dimension of our mission (D. 4, "Our Mission and Culture"), or to the interreligious dimension of our mission (D. 5, "Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue"). In each case, the chief discussions of the decree were based on the meaning of our experience of Christ active in the world.

been devoted to such a purpose. Such a focus is very postmodern. It profoundly affects the way we carry out our mission in the postmodern world.

Attention to Jesuit interiority is not only present in GC35's "A Fire that Kindles Other Fires". The first decree, "With Renewed Fervour and Dynamism", while full of clear explanation, is also written in the language of the heart. Since it is designed to respond to the Holy Father affectively as well as intellectually, and designed to evoke fervour and dynamism in the Jesuit reader, it appeals to religious experience. In other words, it appeals to the Jesuit as subject. Finally, the third decree, "Challenges to Our Mission Today", frames its discussion of the service of faith and promotion of justice in terms of relationships, that is, our covenant relationships with God, with one another, with creation. Thus the relationships with creation and with one another are presented as aspects of our relationship with God. While this decree is not written in affective or experiential language, it is nevertheless written to get Jesuits to think about mission in terms of relationships. Thus, in many ways GC35 seeks to get Jesuits to turn to, and to use their religious experience, and to do so, we must also turn to and engage our interiorities (our subjectivities).

If our religious experience is to be transformed into practice in a more explicit and deliberate way than before, then not only our justice but also our faith must, in some way, become public. To do so, we must become intentionally aware of our interiority or subjectivity, of how it works authentically, and then we must use it deliberately as data that we treat as seriously and as critically as other data that we can measure more quantitatively. As our feminist theologians and philosophers have taught us, "the personal is political". To put this in the more philosophical terms of the twentieth century Jesuit philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan – objectivity is the free operation of authentic subjectivity. Objectivity makes things public because then they can be shared. The *Exercises* seek to make our subjectivity authentic by freeing us from disordered desires, that is, from biases, prejudices and other kinds of 'unfreedom'. Such developments will help us appropriate more deeply the distinctive character of Ignatian spirituality, which is to be concerned and engaged in an intentional manner, not only with the fact of our engagement in the divine activity in the world, but also with the quality of that engagement.

The promotion of justice in the service of faith has already made our faith public, and done so in a way that is open to difference and dialogue, and to partnering with people of good will who are of different faiths and ideologies. The intentionality about religious experience to which GC35 seems to invite us takes us a step further. This might be the "second naiveté" of religion in the world that Paul Ricœur spoke about. Such intentionality will enable a post-secular presence and action of religious people in the world in a way that accepts the differentiation of religion from other areas of life, that

is aware of what faith has to offer the world, that is open to difference, but that refuses to be marginalized or privatized because it believes that faith is necessary for the life of the world. When religion has such a new public presence, the sense of God's active and loving presence in the world might once again become vivid, consoling people with hope.

## Conclusion

What skills or practices can help us use our religious experience more explicitly in our service of faith and promotion of justice? Three come to mind. Firstly, we must simply become aware of our experience, including our religious experience of God, of others, especially the marginalized, and of creation, and use it as data for our theological reflection. For example, for some years now, *Promotio Iustitiae* has included narratives of experience as part of its theological discussion and analysis of major social questions. We need however, to go one step further and be present to others' experiences in new ways. The data will include not only our consolations and desolations, but also those of other actors in the narratives. From these we might be able to infer how God is inviting us to participate in the Spirit's work in the world, and what God is trying to do there. The *Examen* is a key spiritual exercise for this purpose. Secondly, we must appropriate our Ignatian and Jesuit identities in a consciously aware manner. In today's globalized and postmodern world, it is no longer good enough simply to receive a culture or identity passively and unconsciously if we are to respond to "The Challenges to Our Mission Today". Indeed GC35's decree on governance, "Governance at the Service of Universal Mission", makes as one of its three basic principles the need to become more explicit about our Ignatian values: "Changing circumstances require a better articulation of Ignatian values and ways of proceeding in our contemporary life and work."[10] Thirdly, communal apostolic discernment provides a way of becoming aware of our own religious experience, of making it public at least among ourselves, and of discussing and deciding from a position in faith. With a regular practice of communal apostolic discernment, or at least of spiritual conversation in groups, we will not ask first "What is the problem and what should we do about it?" but rather "What is the Spirit of Christ doing in our world, and how are we being invited to participate in that activity?" Then the question about problems can be raised.

Postmodernity, together with the encounter of, and challenge to, identities provoked by globalization, makes it clearer than before that we live in a human world of meaning and values. In such a world, it is more important than before to be able to engage meaning and value critically as we reflect on our selves and all the other actors in the narratives of our lives. To do so

[10] GC35, D. 5, n. 1c.

requires awareness of our interiority and using the operations and content of our subjectivity with intention and skill. The *Exercises* demand this for our personal, inner life, so that we can discern what God is 'up to'. The post-modern, globalized context now demands this for our communal, social and public lives.

Gasper F. Lo Biondo SJ
Woodstock Theological Center
Georgetown University
Box 571137
Washington, D.C. 20057-1137 – USA
<lobiondg@georgetown.edu>

Peter Bisson SJ
Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice
70 St. Mary St.
Toronto, ON M5S 1J3 – CANADA
<pbisson@jesuits.ca>

# Engaging the Frontiers of Youth Culture, Religious Indifference and a Divided Church

**Mark Mossa SJ**

I once taught a course which included a section on postmodern literature. Despite the fact that we used a "postmodern" reader, one of our greatest challenges was to sort out what "postmodern" meant. Like trying to define the nature of God, we found it was a lot easier to say what postmodernism *isn't* rather than what it is. I couldn't help but remember that class when reading GC35's "Challenges to Our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers", which seems to presume that we know what is meant when it says: "In the midst of this upheaval, postmodernism, mentioned also by GC34, has continued to shape the way the contemporary world and we Jesuits think and behave."[1] What exactly is shaping our thought and behaviour, and what is so postmodern about it?

Indeed, as religious, isn't part of what shapes our mission refusing to be swayed by certain more contemporary ways of thinking and behaving, but instead being, in a way, perennially "behind the times"? Yet, perhaps this is precisely where the "postmodern" nature of our mission lies. We are, at once, witness to long-held values and to the constancy of God while at the same time being attentive to, and engaging the rapid changes in the world, the "signs of the times."

In addressing GC35, both Cardinal Rodé and Pope Benedict emphasized the need for Jesuits to continue to work at the frontiers of faith and culture.

[1] GC35, D. 3, n. 10.

As we reaffirm that essential connection between faith and justice, we must reflect on that work. Doing so, as Etienne Grieu affirms, "requires making explicit the deepest link between faith and justice," going beyond simply an understanding of justice "spontaneously interpreted in terms of moral obligation"[2]. That deepest link lies within that "unity-in-multiplicity" spoken of in the Decree on Identity, i.e. Jesus Christ, with whom we all, like Ignatius, have been "placed"[3]. Like Francis Xavier, so often portrayed with crucifix in hand, Jesus must be clearly seen to be with us on the frontiers. But, what are those "frontiers"?

There are certainly many. I propose a few which I consider among the most urgent. But, first, I must recognize, like Marcos Recolons has in his reflections on the Decree on Mission, that I also write from a limited set of experiences. I am an American Jesuit, recently ordained, who was not even a member of the Society of Jesus at the time of the 34th General Congregation. My time spent in other countries during my formation has only affirmed for me how particular my conceptions of the Church can be. Nevertheless, Recolons' own articulation of a new understanding of "frontier" (a postmodern one?) seems to affirm that such particularities are not the barrier to speaking to each other they once were: "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"[4]. This does not mean our experiences are no longer different; rather, that they are more likely to forge common ground despite those differences. To see things this way is a great grace, as it allows us to reconsider things we once thought barriers to effective ministry both individually and collectively.

## The Frontier of Youth Culture

Both the Decree on Mission and the Decree on Identity make explicit a concern for youth. Indeed, there is no more pressing frontier than the evangelization of young people. The Society of Jesus as it exists today consists largely of older men, and even the "young" among us tend to be well advanced into adulthood (at 40, I'm called a "young" Jesuit priest). So, we could easily overlook our obligation to young people, supposing that ministry be left to people much younger than us. This may have been true of a more "modern" Church, the Church, perhaps, of half a century ago. Then there was an abundance of young priests to do the work. But in these postmodern times, this is no longer the case. There is a deeper "vocation" crisis than simply

[2] Etienne Grieu SJ, "Remembering GC35", *Promotio Iustitiae* 98-99 (2008/1), 40.

[3] GC35, D. 2, nn. 2-3.

[4] Marcos Recolons, "What's New in the Decree on Mission?", *Promotio Iustitiae* 98-99 (2008/1), 18.

the decrease in those answering the call to priesthood and religious life. An increasing number of young people are not even realizing their vocation to a life of faith in Christ and participation in the Church. None of us can afford to ignore the call to this frontier.

There are many borderlines along this frontier where we can engage young people, inviting them to share our life with Christ. Some have become adept at speaking to young people in a language many recognize – the language of popular culture. This can be precarious, as popular culture sometimes promotes things contrary to what we believe. But when we use popular music, television, film and the internet as a means of communicating Christ, young people themselves begin to realize the tension between what Christ preached and what popular culture frequently communicates. Other Jesuits are exploring the possibilities of that less-than-two-decades-old frontier of the worldwide web which, though not exclusive to youth, is a part of their lives they have come to take for granted in a way most do not. The Irish and British Jesuits have successfully established the on-line prayer ministries "Sacred Space"[5] and "Pray-as-you-go."[6] Jesuits of all ages are exploring the potentialities of this medium for evangelization. In such a venue, one's age, attractiveness or experience becomes less important than whether or not one has something interesting or compelling to say.

This is not true just on the internet. Jesuits of all ages can aid and inspire young people by offering liturgy for them, by directing them on retreats or by accompanying them on mission trips working amongst the poor. Though each of us has a different "literacy" when it comes to youth culture, each of us has the capability to invite them to faith in Christ because passion, though sometimes misdirected, is so much a part of their life, and we have made our passion our life – Jesus Christ. By our love and example, we can give young people license to take the passion which they bring to so many other things to their lives with Christ and participation in the Church. The recent World Youth Days have offered hope in this regard. With our worldwide network of educational institutions, we have a privileged place at this frontier, which others do not.

**The Frontier of Indifference**

When I was a novice I learned that Pope Paul VI had given the Jesuits a special mission to combat atheism. In my years as a Jesuit I'm not sure I've encountered any explicit way in which Jesuits were doing that. Perhaps with the recent rise of certain "neo-atheists," this merits some reconsideration. But in my experience, what is of greater concern is the amount of indifference to religion that I find outside the typical confines of Jesuit life. For the

[5] http://www.sacredspace.ie/

[6] http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/

second summer in a row, I find myself spending much of my time in a non-Catholic/Jesuit context, and I am struck by the number of people I encounter who are not hostile to faith, but simply religiously illiterate and indifferent. Faith in God is just not a deep concern of their daily life. They ask questions that show their ignorance of what to us are obvious things like, "Are Jesuits Christian?" These questions, however, are easy enough to answer. What is more troubling is that they don't seem to be asking the most important question, "Should God be a part of my life?"

Many *are* prompted to ask such questions simply by meeting Jesuits. They see that we are somehow different from the people they typically meet. First, they might think it strange. In a language class, some of my fellow students were surprised by my answers in the practice dialogues. Could I really prefer not to have a lot of money? This is a frontier where the ways in which our being "behind the times" can be particularly important. It gets people's attention. At the same time, our engagement with contemporary culture is also especially important. Because of that deep connection between faith and justice we are aware of and concerned with the joys and hopes, and the griefs and anxieties of the world. Thus, we cannot be dismissed as backward or held up as an oddity, because we share similar anxieties and because many are also devoted with passion to justice.

However, we cannot do this if we are not present. The need to be present at this frontier will not be so apparent to many of us. There is plenty of work to be done in the parishes, retreat houses, and other Jesuit institutions in which we work. In these contexts, people are not indifferent to religious faith. Often we find ourselves just waiting for people to come to us when they have questions. Moving beyond our institutions to engage the indifferent has its perils. The alcoholic Jesuit setting off to the bar to evangelize those there is inviting temptation, not engaging a frontier. But he could offer an alternative to religious indifference as part-time chaplain to a drug or alcohol rehabilitation centre.

Our schools are another matter, as they have very much come to reflect the multi-religious and multi-cultural nature of our new frontier. Engaging indifference there can be precarious too. One can be tempted to limit oneself to a more comfortable ministry, to those who choose to come to mass, or who choose to attend a retreat. But these are only a portion of our student body. There are plenty more students who, despite their presence at a Jesuit school, suffer from the indifference I describe. We must find ways to be present to a wide variety of students so that we may challenge their indifference and help them to see an alternative in Christ.

We must be creative also in reaching beyond the confines of our typical institutions and ministries to meet people who are unlikely to come to us. We have a unique qualification as men whose lives have been formed and shaped by *The Spiritual Exercises*. The *Exercises*, insights of a young man try-

ing to come to an understanding of his own transformation from religious indifference to a new kind of indifference, guide us as we try to find ways to help others ask questions of the kind Ignatius asked: "Could I possibly be a saint too?" What might be, for us, the postmodern equivalent of the pilgrim Ignatius' journey through the city and the countryside, engaging people in spiritual conversation, and leading them through the *Exercises*? Perhaps it might be just that – bands of Jesuits travelling from place to place, preaching in public places, helping to bring reconciliation where it is needed, visiting the sick and engaging in other works of mercy. The early Jesuits often did such things. Is it such a crazy idea now?

**The Frontier of a Divided Church**

My first two frontiers took us beyond the confines of the Church. This one, however, is closer to home. Recolons sees as "new" to GC35 a greater emphasis on reconciliation. Not that it was not a part of previous congregations' decrees, but, as he says, "In our collective consciousness, however, the theme of reconciliation at that time was obscured by the vigorous affirmation of the struggle for justice."[7] Indeed, our struggle for justice has perhaps not always been attentive enough to reconciliation. In our certainty about our mission, we have sometimes alienated people needlessly by not being attentive enough to their questions and concerns. Recolons' words might inspire us, as we reaffirm our commitment to the faith that does justice, to be more considerate of the questions and cautions of others, especially those who might disagree with us.

In a way that perhaps reflects less obvious divisions in other parts of the world, the Catholic Church in the United States is divided along a number of different lines. One need only spend a little bit of time probing the Catholic "blogosphere," i.e. those Catholics engaged in the weblog phenomenon, to discover where those lines are drawn. One of those is typically described as the liberal-progressive/conservative-traditional divide.[8] Catholics strongly identifying themselves with one camp or another are quick to point out which priests, which bishops, which religious orders are also in their camp, or not. It is no secret that Jesuits tend to be considered firmly grounded in the "liberal" camp. This is equated with, at least in the minds of many "conservatives" (and, unfortunately, also many "liberals"), being at odds with the Church regarding Church teaching, morality and other issues. Our efforts in the struggle for justice since the 1970s certainly contributed to this impression. Pope John Paul II's brief intervention into our governance highlights the fact that some were concerned that the Jesuits had lost their way. But also

[7] Marcos Recolons, *ibid.*, 18.

[8] This is for simplicity's sake. These adjectives may, in actuality, describe several separate divides.

what fuels this impression is that the majority of Jesuits experienced, as Jesuits, the changes inspired by the Second Vatican Council. They have a strong emotional investment in the future they believe it promised for the Church. This, at times, has been at odds with the perspectives of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Yet, still there are many other Jesuits – some younger, but not all – who question some of the changes that followed upon the Council and are among those rediscovering some things that were put aside in its wake, like the promotion of certain devotions and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

A characterization of anything as wholly "liberal," is, of course, inaccurate and shortsighted. The truth is that "unity-in-diversity," which the decree on identity speaks of, is very real. Indeed, my attraction to the Society of Jesus was not because I found them to be a heroic band of liberals, but because I saw the many different "frontiers" on which Jesuits of various talents and opinions were engaged. This is why Jesuits have a lot to offer in terms of bringing about reconciliation of divisions within the Church. Not because we are on the right side, or know the right answer, but because we are able to live together, amidst and despite such divisions ourselves, as companions with Christ. If we can avoid perpetuating those divisions – a grave temptation, as people on both sides of the divide will be eager to hold us up as *their* Jesuit – we can let our experience of our common life together, and the reconciliation which it sometimes requires, help us to be agents of reconciliation in the broader life of the Church. One way to begin is to reflect, in the light of GC35, on the reconciliation which we need to seek from those we may have needlessly alienated in the past in our zeal for our mission.

## Conclusion

I expect this may not have brought us any closer to certainty about what postmodern culture means. I think however that it can be found to be there in the "soup" of our engagement with the "frontiers" I have described. As to how it shapes our thought and behaviour, there is some indication both as to how it does so, and how it might still continue to do so, in our life and work as Jesuits. In this postmodern context, the faith that does justice calls us to be there for others who might otherwise be lost, and to help bring healing and reconciliation to that life of faith in Christ and the Church which we invite them to. The call is not new. The context is. In this new context, we rely on the Holy Spirit to help us to be creative witnesses to the struggle for faith and the justice which it includes.

Mark Mossa SJ
42 Kirkland St.
Cambridge, MA 02138 – USA
<mossam@bc.edu>

# Faith Doing Justice in the Context of Postmodernism

**Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator SJ**

Let me state my position clearly. I write this essay as a Jesuit theologian sympathetic to the perspectives and claims of postmodernism. I argue the position that a postmodernist approach expands our understanding and stimulates a fresh and radical interpretation of the service of faith and the promotion of justice, the twin foundations of the contemporary apostolic edifice of the Society of Jesus.

Attempts to define the constitutive elements of postmodernism court the wrath of a deconstructionist critique. Postmodernism defies and mocks "essence," perforce rendering pretentious the philosophical quest to define its core values. To the average man or woman, the language of postmodernism might sound like an arcane discourse among eccentric thinkers gyrating within a nebulous space of neologism, deconstruction and impenetrability. "Understood" as such, the quest for what constitutes postmodern culture is best left to those who actually care or have the time to care about such things. Decree 2 of GC35, "A Fire that Kindles other Fires: Rediscovering our Charism," and Decree 3, "Challenges to our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers," leave Jesuits no such option. To quote Decree 26 of GC34, postmodernism, it seems, manifests a critical discontent "with the status quo, the known, the tried, the already existing" universal orthodoxies of morality, society, history, religion and politics.

The difficulty of defining postmodernism does not eliminate entirely the possibility of tracing its characteristic contours. Such a sketch would help to situate this reflection on its relevance for the mission of faith and justice in a clear context. Paul writing to the Corinthians makes a laconic declaration that the world as we have known it is passing away (1 Cor 7, 31). This Pauline declaration is music to the ears of postmoderns, for whom the world of knowledge as we have known it is crumbling under the scrutiny of a deconstructionist hermeneutics. The essential categories of truth, goodness, knowledge... are in constant flux, and subject to a limitless exercise of deconstruction. Postmodernism rebels against the inherited Cartesian criterion of rationality and being – cogito ergo sum. The immutability and universality of traditional categories, which form the bedrock of venerable essentialist metaphysics that stretch back to Aristotelian science, now stand perilously on the quicksands of feelings, emotions, conditions, difference, particularities, stories, contexts, discontinuities and circumstances. Nothing is fixed or absolute; no one thing, no one person is like the other. To Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini's salutary warning that "to teach the faith in this (postmod-

ern) world is nonetheless a challenge,"[1] I would add that to promote justice in a postmodern world constitutes no less of a challenge.

The orthodox understanding of Christian faith appears to gravitate to a direction opposite to the one taken by postmodernism. While the latter celebrates the concreteness and limitedness of knowledge and the fall of past certainties, doctrinal and magisterial statements insist on faith in a definitive and universal revelation capable of redeeming humanity from its state of fallenness. In a similar manner, the Society of Jesus continues to insist on the imperative of justice as its preferred expression of faith. Briefly stated: Jesuits profess a faith that does justice. The keyword is "does"; it resists any attempt to understand faith outside a particular context that demands practical engagement in a personal and absolute manner. At the risk of sounding unduly polemical, I believe that faith doing justice lends itself to a postmodernist interpretation. This is a difficult thesis to substantiate against the backdrop of the history of the Society's mission. In the past, Jesuits have received specific missions from the Supreme Pontiff in response to a specific pressing contemporary issue. An example is the mission to counter the advances of atheism is recent history. More recently, Pope Benedict XVI has invited Jesuits to combat, among other things, relativism as a specific threat to the Christian message (see "Address of His Holiness Benedict the Sixteenth to the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus," n. 6). Some commentators would insert the postmodernist agenda at the interstices between atheism and relativism. Yet this construal of postmodernism, albeit partial, locates it as a new frontier, beckoning Jesuits who tenaciously maintain the inseparability of the service of faith and the promotion of justice as the core mission of the Society of Jesus.

In dealing with the questions raised by postmodernism for our mission, it is important not to locate them outside the ambit of the apostolic end of the Society of Jesus. Jesuits are men of their times and products of diverse cultures, including postmodernism. Rather than focus on the apparent incompatibility of purposes, we might recognise that postmodernist perspectives deserve a more intensive consideration because they confront us with a new set of conditions and possibilities for preaching faith that does justice. I will demonstrate how these conditions and possibilities function with regard to the history, context and meaning of faith doing justice.

The development of Jesuit mission from GC32 to GC35 clearly demonstrates that the context of the service of faith and the promotion of justice is anything but fixed (see GC35, D. 2, n. 24). Nor does it trace a linear trajectory. Deep changes and discontinuities (GC35, D. 3, nn. 8-11) exist in the personal and collective Jesuit story that stretches back over five hundred years. Within this story the promotion of justice as integral to our service of faith consti-

[1] "Teaching the Faith in a postmodern World", talk given at the 44th General Chapter of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rome on May 3, 2007 (Editor's Note).

tutes the subject of an ongoing interpretation. Changing contexts determine the focus, nature and means of this mission. This is good news, precisely because it confirms the inseparability of discernment and the mission of faith and justice, provided we understand discernment as a contemplative and critical gaze on the signs of our times. In the context of GC35, this form of discernment is the gift of "understanding that the world could be seen in another way" in the light of "an ordered loving of God and of all things in God" (GC35, D. 2, n. 4; see also n. 6). Like St. Ignatius, it means knowing how to look at, appreciate and embrace "difference and new horizons" (see GC35, D. 2, n. 10 and n. 12).

The mission of faith doing justice adapts itself to diverse particular and local situations. Its meaning is neither fixed nor unchanging. Wherever humanity is threatened by socio-economic, political and religious ills, experiences of Jesuits portray the service of faith and the promotion of justice as an unfinished story. The adaptability – and perhaps, unpredictability – of this mission points to plural conceptions and experiences of what constitutes faith doing justice. Diverse apostolic initiatives embody the multiple meanings of faith doing justice. The plurality of options means that the scope of our apostolic actions is no longer confined to familiar models. I allude here to a certain decentralization of the meaning of faith doing justice, a decentralization informed by the experiences of Jesuits in various parts of the world. The key point is that, as Jesuits, diversity characterizes our ways of believing and living out the consequences of this belief in our apostolates.

The amplification of the mission of faith and justice in GC34 offers a useful example of the changing contexts and the decentralization of meaning inherent in this mission. General Congregation 34 effected an apostolic "turn" towards the other, construed as other cultures, other religions. In this turn faith not only does justice, but it also dialogues with diverse religious traditions and cultures in today's world (GC34, D. 2, nn. 19-21). Dialogue with the personal or collective other represented in a plurality of cultures and religions is integral to our communal praxis of faith and justice. The "difference" embodied in the "other" becomes the condition of possibility for mutuality, communication and interaction. In the mission of faith doing justice other religions and other cultures are recognized and respected in their uniqueness, rather than ignored or excluded. This apostolic "turn" departs significantly from Eurocentric missionary meta-narratives that propagated and justified the violent conversion and assimilation of other religions and other cultures based on a narrow conception of the universality of the Christian message. Today the expanded mission of faith doing justice and dialogue allows us to hear genuine echoes and stories of faith from African, Asian and other contexts. This understanding of the Jesuit mission of faith doing justice demands that these stories be unfettered by colonialist impositions of the so-called universal Christian culture.

Talking about faith doing justice, postmodernism is often caricatured as a relativisation or loss of faith. This statement may not represent adequately the intent of postmodern thinking. I contend that postmodern culture represents not so much a relativisation of faith as a re-location of faith. Where I speak of re-location, postmodern thinkers may prefer "deconstruction." Their claim manifests an intention to liberate faith from the sphere of dominant orthodoxies and dogmatically proclaimed discourses in order to "situate" it in the midst of present-day realities strewn with multiple forms of injustice. Before dismissing postmodernism as simply iconoclastic and nihilistic, it may help to see in it an undefined longing for something more than what contents us in our fallible, limited and flawed social systems and political regimes. It is a striving for a frontier, albeit risky, inchoate and undetermined (for such is the nature of a frontier!) – "for difference and new horizons."

The loss of faith that is often attributed to postmodernist thinking applies primarily to totalizing and absolutist forms of knowledge and power. A cardinal tenet of postmodern culture is the refusal to put faith in meta-narratives. The distrust of totalitarian frameworks generates a turn to the local and the contextualized. Viewed from the perspective of faith doing justice, this approach redirects our apostolic focus on the marginalized and unstable worlds of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. Postmodern culture's loss of faith delineates the contours of "faith" expressed in the peripheries and margins inhabited by people ignored by standard narratives of knowledge, power, religion and politics. I perceive some resonances and echoes here of the Society's option for the poor, which encourages Jesuits to enter into the concrete, localized and fragmented spaces of the poor, "the dry and lifeless areas of the world" (GC35, D. 2, n. 8) and challenges us to be "aware of God's actions in places and peoples ... (we are) inclined to avoid" (GC35, D. 2, n. 12). To befriend the poor, in the sense of the Society's preferential option, is to offer "a living narrative" capable of giving, not only "bread and water," but meaning and focus to those excluded on account of their marginal status, fragmented existence and uncomfortable difference (cf. GC35, D. 2, n. 1). Faith doing justice in a postmodern culture means a personal and corporate re-location to spaces or "'nations' that today include those who are poor and displaced, those who are profoundly lonely, those who ignore God's existence and those who use God as an instrument for political purposes" (GC35, D. 2, n. 22; D. 3, nn. 27-28).

In light of the foregoing, I hesitate to subscribe to the position that "the postmodern context considerably weakens the perspective"[2] that insists on the inseparable link between faith and justice. The opposite may be true. This fear of postmodernism is perhaps the result of a particular understanding of faith that does not satisfy the criteria of truth in postmodernist thought. In a postmodern milieu, far from being an assent to a set of revealed, timeless

[2] Etienne Grieu, "Remembering GC35", *Promotio Iustitiae* 98-99 (2008/1), 39.

and immutable truths, faith unfolds as an ongoing quest, fraught with risks and surprises, but never detached from concrete engagements. In this understanding a postmodernist reading of faith would confirm a core tenet of the Jesuit commitment to faith doing justice. The postmodern man or woman may cringe from options offered by institutional religions, but he or she is not averse to modes of spiritual enlightenment adapted to his or her specific situation in life. This attitude opens a door to our oldest apostolic ministry – the Spiritual Exercises. The diverse ways of exercising this ministry today provide concrete evidence of how faith continues to be relevant in a postmodern culture. In this context, rather than practising this ministry as purveyors of an institutionalized spirituality, we serve the postmodern culture best as facilitators of a contextualized spirituality which, to paraphrase St. Ignatius, allows a free and liberating encounter between God as creator and the postmodern man or woman in search of a personally fulfilling, incarnate spiritual experience. Seeing our ministry of the Spiritual Exercises in this way implies a level of trust that should allow Jesuits to accept a simple truth that we no longer programme the outcomes of our service of the faith and the promotion of justice. The Spiritual Exercises offer tools and means to an end whose nature we can only hope would represent something of the desire for faith and justice (GC35, D. 3, n. 21). Consequently, other Jesuit ministries gain little from erecting barricades against postmodernism perceived as an external enemy. In particular, our intellectual apostolates need to face the challenges of postmodern culture through in-depth research and the practice of open dialogue. We cannot pretend to possess all the answers to the questions posed by the postmodern man or woman; the illusion of a tranquil possession of eternal truths will only drive a wedge between what we represent as Jesuits and what postmodernists seek.

Finally, postmodernism resolutely opposes conceptions of justice that allowed dictatorship to thrive. This opposition resonates with the Jesuit mission of faith doing justice. Far from merely seeking to satisfy the dictates of a disincarnate and disinterested reason, justice in a postmodern context means opposition to social systems and organizations that appeal to unchanging universal principles to foist "law and order" on the weak and the vulnerable of this world. The witness of many Jesuit martyrs since GC32 echoes the same opposition.

I began this essay with a disclaimer that as a 21st century Jesuit, postmodernism appeals to me, not just as an interlocutor, but as a condition that shapes how I "think and behave" (GC35, D. 3, n. 10). Jesuits need not settle for a sombre view of the postmodern culture. This culture serves as the context for the Jesuit commitment to faith and justice in a fragmented and unstable world. I perceive an encouraging affinity of interests here. My reading of GC35 inspires me to appreciate how postmodernist thinking may serve the Society's fundamental apostolic project of faith doing justice. This view does not, as might be feared, amount to overlooking the differences. In

a postmodern world, knowledge, like faith, is not a disembodied theoretical discourse. It is embodied in context. According to the "living narrative" of Jesuits, faith is embodied, incarnated in justice and in dialogue with the other, here and now. Postmodernists understand this language.

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ
Hekima College
School of Theology and Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations
P. O. Box 21215 Ngong Road
00505 Nairobi – KENYA
<wadoghe@yahoo.co.uk>

## Faith and Justice in an Individualized World

**Fernando Polanco SJ**

Does there exist some passion in our present-day culture that positively enlivens our hearts? Does there exist some cultural flame that can compete today with that faith which inflamed our passion for justice in past decades? One group of persons engaged in cultural analysis[1] is taking note of a passion that nowadays permeates our whole reality. It is a passion that presents itself with such force that it elbows its way into our midst and competes with everything that up till now has motivated our lives. It is something that questions our more communitarian values and is even capable of questioning a life dedicated to justice and selfless commitment. We are talking about a passion that "consigns to chaos" whatever is institutional and deep-rooted. In his work, *The Normal Chaos of Love*, Ulrich Beck says of matrimonial crises:

> *"When the youthful enthusiasm is gone, when there are no longer any visible goals or objectives, the old question arises: 'Who am I?'. Then another passion enters the scene: the passion for autonomy, for self-affirmation, for one's own life ... And that produces the totally normal, everyday chaos of love."* [2]

[1] Most noteworthy among these are Ulrich and Elizabeth Beck (*Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, Sage 1992; *Un nuevo mundo feliz*, Paidós, 2000; *The Normal Chaos of Love*, Polity Press 1995; *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences*, Sage 2002); Alain Touraine (*¿Podremos vivir juntos?*, FCE, 1997; *A la búsqueda de sí mismo*, Paidós, 2002); Anthony Giddens (*Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge Polity 1991); Manuel Castells (*The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Blackwell Publishers). Studying this also from the perspective of psychology are: Toni Anatrella (*La sociedad depresiva*, Sígueme, 1999); Carlos Domínguez Morano (*Los registros del deseo*, Desclée de Brouwer, Bilbao, 2004), among others.

[2] Ulrich Beck y Elizabeth Beck-Gernshein, *The Normal Chaos of Love*, op. cit., back cover.

We cannot deny the absence of common objectives in our world, nor can we deny that such absence seems closely related to a disquiet *about oneself*, that is, to a passionate living of one's own life or an earnest seeking of one's own identity. Sociologists speak of paradigm changes.[3] Until now the world has lived by other great passions, and our own western culture has passed through several great paradigms of passion: passion for the cosmos, passion for history, and passion for the social. Today we are experiencing a passion for individuality.[4] From the "socio-historical subject" we pass now to the "personal subject". From the social utopias we pass now to emphasis on individuality. The individual today, more than at other times, exercises her autonomy by defining her own values and making her own decisions. Tradition and other people's opinions matter less, and the exercise of one's personal liberty is what counts.[5] In a way, we are in an epoch of personal conviction rather than of social custom. The subject seeks, selects, chooses and organizes her horizon of meanings in order to bestow an orientation on her own biography.[6] This is the process we call "individualization".

We live today face-to-face with globalizing forces, inhabiting a market-driven pluralised world ridden with insecurity and risk. In this world where many people are excluded and savage competition constantly devalues human labour, we find ourselves, as it were, "forced"[7] to be concerned about ourselves as individuals. It is not that we are more self-centred than before; rather, the supports that in former times bolstered our identity and shored up the construction of our "ego" now assume more "liquid" forms, to use the metaphor of Zygmunt Bauman.[8] Tribes, peoples, nationalities, along with their political, social, economic and cultural institutions, shift from "stable forms" to "liquid forms", that is, forms that are highly malleable and fluid. There appears to be no solid institutions on which to seize or to support oneself.

In a global, plural world our horizons and possibilities become broadened, and we must learn to decide among many different options: there is need for an ever greater number of individually realized actions. Life, death, gender, corporality, identity, religion, matrimony, relatives, social bonds – everything is becoming the object of decisions. Once everything is fragmented, then everything becomes individualized, and everything must be decided. In order to avoid failure, individuals struggle constantly to plan ahead; they

[3] Alain Touraine, *Un Nuevo Paradigma: para comprender el mundo hoy*, Paidós, 2005.

[4] Alain Touraine, Farhad Khosrokhavar, *A la búsqueda de sí mismo*, op. cit.

[5] PNUD [UN Development Program] 2002, p. 189. Cited by Jorge Costadoat, *El Catolicismo frente a la individualización, in Teología y Vida*, XLV (2004), 605-610.

[6] Tony Mifsud SJ, *La gran ciudad: interrogantes y propuestas éticas*. Available at: http://www.iglesia.cl/iglesiachile/especiales/megapolis/mifsud.html

[7] Ulrich Beck, *World Risk Society*, Polity Press 1999.

[8] Zigmunt Bauman, *Liquid Life*, Polity Press, 2005.

have to adapt themselves to frequent changes, recognize obstacles, accept defeats and try new solutions. The opportunities, dangers, errors and successes that before were experienced in a more social or communal setting are now processed individually. The consequences, as regards both opportunities and liabilities, now fall upon individual persons, who naturally, in the face of life's complexity, experience anguish.[9]

How curious. Our passion for individuality is often frustrated because our daily existence is pressured by the constant demands we make on ourselves and so becomes ever more wounded, disordered, and embittered. And when children and young people succeed in adapting to the new forms of our "individualized" ambience, it is because they have had to learn how to be constantly on the move, how to cut short relationships, how to judge the father's or the mother's distance; they have realized that love does not last forever and that all that is "pretty normal". The "children of freedom" repudiate what is organizational and institutional; they abhor all that smacks of formalism; they are guided by sensitivity as their relational pattern – they are the so-called "me-generation".[10] They practise a morality that explores and experiments and that manages to unite things that appear to be mutually exclusive: concern for oneself and altruism, personal realization and active compassion.[11]

For its part, individualization changes the face of social injustice: exclusion become profoundly individualized, and ever greater numbers of persons are "individually" affected. Isolated individuals find themselves suffering unemployment to the same degree that others are accumulating private wealth. Social psychologists are already writing about one decisive consequence of this process: the individualized society is also become a depressed society. The last decade has witnessed the appearance of a "depressive" society that is on the verge of implosion; it is a society where individuals, for lack of any project or dimension that relates them to other people, find themselves confined to their solitary subjectivity and forced to make their solipsism the be-all and end-all of their lives.[12] However, we cannot really exist except as ethical and communal beings. If a person does not take care in "constructing" himself, he will end up living from the offerings of the consumer society and the welfare culture.

How, then, are we to educate this passion which either exalts us or depresses us, and how can we to relate it to ethical and communal values? How can we to learn to contend with the passion for individualization in a way faithful to the gospel?

[9] Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck, *Individualization*, op cit.

[10] Ulrich Beck, *Los hijos de la libertad*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997.

[11] Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernshein, *Individualization*, op. cit.

[12] Tony Anatrella, *Contra la sociedad depresiva*, Sal Terrae, 1994, back cover.

## The Paschal Gospel in an individualized world

Western culture, which has extended itself in varying degrees to most corners of the planet, has evolved from its passion for the cosmos to a passion for history, and from the passion for history to a passion for the social. Today we are witnessing a new passion: the passion for leading one's own life, for individuality, for identity.[13] In the light of this rapid description of the changing paradigms, we can see clearly that as Christians we deal with challenges by engaging them in dialogue with our faith. And it has been characteristic of our faith, it seems to me, that it has always acted as an "interlocutor paradigm" with any emerging cultural paradigm. Following, therefore, the way of the Spirit, which over the centuries has guided us in the way of the Son, we may discover that our faith shows signs of being an "interlocutor paradigm" also with respect to individuality.

In ancient times the Church knew how to engage the human passion for the cosmos in dialogue with the doctrine of creation in Jesus Christ. St. Augustine went so far as to say, *You made us for yourself*, and St. Thomas was able to view human creation as a presupposition for the uncreated grace of the incarnate Son. We realized that "we are God's handiwork, created in Jesus Christ to devote ourselves to the good deeds for which God has designed us" (Ephesians 2,10).

We know that modern times opened the way for our human passion for history – history which Hegelian philosophy explained as a *dialectic of passion* that carried human reality towards its ultimate realization. That passion for history was made to dialogue above all with the Christian doctrine of the incarnation: the incarnation of the Word as "fully realized anthropology" acted as the central interlocutor, confirming the value of history. We learned to speak of the "history of salvation" and of "God's revelation in history", and we affirmed that it is not a *dialectic* that will bring history to its fullness; rather, "the incarnation of God is the supreme and unique case of the essential realization of human reality."[14] Later, new conceptions of society unveiled the "struggle of classes" in history. The passion for social liberation extended to every corner of the globe, and the Church was also challenged to engage in dialogue. And just as one day the incarnate Son manifested his great desire to free captives and bring liberation for the poor, so in the Church there flourished a new passion for a faith that was wedded to justice. The 60s, 70s and 80s of the last century were for many Christians three decades that were very like those three years of Jesus' public life, as he announced throughout the land the coming of God's kingdom among the poor. This passion in the Church produced an extremely enriching dialogue

[13] Alain Touraine, *Un Nuevo Paradigma: para comprender el mundo hoy*, Paidós, 2005.

[14] Karl Rahner, *Escritos de Teología IV*, Taurus, pp. 139ff.

between faith and politics, faith and society, faith and justice, from all this dialogue there flowed what we now call Political Theology and Liberation Theology.

Today the Church fears that it is reaching the end of its public life. We are very fearful of becoming irrelevant, of losing our flame. But as we experience the Spirit's urgings, which bond us to creation, to incarnation and to the proclamation of the Kingdom, we may now feel ourselves invited into dialogue with the next stage of Jesus' life: the Pasch. The paschal dimension of Christianity offers itself as a paradigm for the dialogue that is needed with the great challenges presented by our desires for personal self-realization. We need to narrate and rediscover our "paschal existence" in order to resituate ourselves coherently with relation to the great many exclusions and possibilities that today's world presents to us. In such a context, individuality does not necessarily have to be considered an enemy. The Pasch allows us to transform the demand for individualization into a way of following Christ. If we "pay attention" to our individuality, dedicating time to what groans within it, our most holy longings for justice can be easily redirected by the world's proposals. Today, more than ever, the joy and the ardour of working for a just world require that we recognize that we have within us personal desires for meaning and for fullness that must participate in the Pasch in order to be reordered toward the good of creation, of history and of society.

With his life, death and resurrection, Jesus brought into being an individuality that was related to his own mystery, to other people and to community; it was an individuality united to the whole of creation by means of history and in expectation of the definitive revelation. Since ancient times an individual's desire for meaning and fulfillment has been "educated" by traditions and environments that favoured an ever greater bonding with all of creation, history and society. Today, however, we are "unconnected"; there is no current that carries us along. And if today we as individuals, with the help of prayer, discernment, dialogue, and service networks, do not place importance on these communitarian values, then the world will not do so either. Doing this will require that we create anew the paschal sense, which is what gave birth to Christianity.

The Pasch was a time in which Jesus experienced that the conditions of the Kingdom were passing more than ever before through the mystery of his very own person, "through his way of proceeding," which heard his inner identity utter a profound unity with the Father, whence flowed the Spirit as the force of the Kingdom. This was the road the led him to absolute fulfillment within himself, so that "all his life was *kenosis*, and he faced life forgetting himself, not seeking to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."[15] Through this *kenosis*, God established his definitive

[15] GC35, D. 2, n. 14.

Reign. Jesus recognized that what was most individual in him is bread that is shared; he acknowledged himself as eucharist, as the mystery of donation. Today individuality needs to be experienced most urgently in the mystery of donation. We are being swept toward a type of individualization that leads only to a desperate seeking of self, but we never arrive at what we really are without passing through a death and resurrection that come inevitably by way of prayer, community life, and an ethical and evangelical commitment to a better world.

In rising, Jesus disappears, uniting us to that Mystery of God which arouses us to be concerned about the whole of this world that surrounds us. If the world would make us indifferent, the Pasch gives us a new sensibility. Today Christ joins us to his paschal sentiments and sensitivity. Asking for the sentiments[16] of the Crucified and Risen One gives us the sensibility that makes it possible for us to be truly human. Then we can be fully and completely ourselves, and therefore at the same time we can be totally open to the network of relationships by which we become true persons. This is a new way of founding ourselves in hope before the forces, the enthusiasms and the failings of individualization. If the world has the strength to make us concerned about ourselves, the Pasch of God embraces us so that our encounter with ourselves becomes an opening beyond ourselves, toward society, toward history, toward all of creation. God raises us up and gives us a hope that is capable of making of our own life a gift for others. The Good Shepherd comes to each of us, searching for something he has chosen from all eternity, since every human being has the eternal value of his Body and his Blood. The Lord has the strength to love us personally, to the point of our feeling proud that we are each something unique for him. Thus this love does not foster our narcissism, but makes of us dedicated persons, impassioned to love with God, for the sake of his justice in the world. Today God gives us the gift of his passionate loving.

Fernando Polanco SJ
Correa y Cidrón, 28
Zona Universitaria
Apartado 76
Santo Domingo – DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
<nano@jesuits.net>

*Original Spanish*
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

[16] *Spiritual Exercises*, nn. 193 and 221.

## Some Impressions of Father General's informal Talk with the Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate

**Uta Sievers**

It was the morning of the last day of the annual meeting of Assistancy coordinators, and Father General Adolfo Nicolás had joined the group for an hour. His wish was not to tell but to be told – how the social apostolate was developing in the different Assistancies, what the challenges and opportunities were. After the situation in each Assistancy had been presented to him, Father General, rather than commenting on what he had heard, started to ask questions. I will try to give you my personal impressions of some of those questions, the way I heard and understood them.

The first question – and therefore, one would imagine, the most important one – was about communication. How do we communicate today in the way that Jesus would want us to, so that we are moved, our whole being is moved, by what we are saying and by what others are telling us? How can we present the reality of the social apostolate, of people on the margins, so that we are moved from within, so that people are moved to change? Communication is complex, but if it comes from the heart rather than from theories, there is a chance that it will reach other hearts – and then people will have no choice but to respond. The main question for the social apostolate therefore is this: how do we ensure that a reality people avoid looking at is communicated truthfully so that hearts are moved? Everything else follows.

Father Nicolás continued by acknowledging that the work done in the social apostolate is, by definition, exhausting, mentally, spiritually and often physically. Many of the problems of people at the margins have no solution. The one who voluntarily gets involved in these problems will eventually face fatigue. His question then was: how, in such situations, can we be full of joy, energy, hope, with open hearts and minds, fully human? Maybe by being aware that more than solutions, people want accompaniment, a brotherly or sisterly human face in a desperate situation.

But much more importantly, the question for the social apostolate here is about how to pray, how to relax, so that energy sources are replenished again and again. Linked to that is the question of exterior sources that give us strength for our work. One of the outside sources to draw on is celebration. Here, we can learn from migrants and poor people around the world: they celebrate often and with great joy in the midst of desperate situations. It keeps them alive and human, and in the same way, we can be alive and

human, in community with the people we care for. Therefore: how can the social apostolate become better at celebrating, at communicating joy and hope in a physical way?

The final question that Father General raised was about the pastoral-religious dimension of the work of the social apostolate. The 'service of faith' is at the core of the Jesuit charism, but 'service' in which direction? There are many who are serving the 'Catholic faith', but Jesuits have been asked by the Pope to go to the frontiers, where faith is simply the ability to be human before God. How can the Ignatian tradition be shared with non-Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, with other people who have hope, with other people who consider life worth living? Faith can be shared with all of them, and the challenge, and therefore our direction, lies in moving closer to that frontier.

Uta Sievers
Communications Officer
Social Justice Secretariat
<uta@sjcuria.org>

## Ignatian Spirituality and Advocacy: Moving forward as a Universal Body

**Luis Arancibia**[1]

The promotion of justice that sprouts from faith leads us simultaneously to accompany and serve marginalised persons even as we try to transform the complex causes of their exclusion. Seen from inside the struggle, the underlying causes of injustice are found, in the end, in two major areas: culture or the ensemble of values, personal and social behaviours (currently, globalisation tends to make postmodern culture more universal); and political, economic and social structures at the national and global level. Finally, according to the accepted understanding of the Social Doctrine of the Church, the causes of injustice can be found in the apathy and lack of solidarity among people (our hearts of stone) and in the "structures of sin." Work in this last field, trying to influence policies that affect marginalized people, seeking to promote human development and eradicate poverty, is what we call "advocacy."

Advocacy is not a new area of work. Many social institutions, including works of the Society of Jesus, have been working in this field for some time. The context and manner in which it is carried out however has changed no-

[1] Assistant Director of Entreculturas, Madrid

tably in recent years, particularly in two ways. Firstly, the accelerated process of globalisation has increased the importance of the international sphere, as many of the decisions taken for people with whom we work are taken outside their national borders. Even when decision-making and political action remain within the local and national arena, the influence of free market economic and political thinking as it multiplies and spreads throughout the world is overwhelming. Secondly, this new international arena is facilitating the arrival of much needed new global actors. These new actors – global social movements, more or less informal international networks, large international non-governmental organisations – are all related to old and new inter-governmental institutions, large multinational corporations and informal spaces in which the global power centres are situated.

Within this context, the Society has over the last few years launched a number of diverse initiatives to promote and strengthen its capacity for advocacy at an international level. Taking advantage of its existing potential, it is developing its own way of undertaking advocacy based on the fundamentals of Ignatian spirituality. The organisation of these initiatives[2] is evidence of the interest in working together in this approach and identifying areas of common interest. General Congregation 35 has given new meaning and impetus to these initiatives, inviting us to intensify international and inter-provincial cooperation so as to strengthen our advocacy in this new global context, and thereby respond faithfully to the mission of the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

Consequently, a group of social organisations,[3] inspired and supported by the Secretariat for Social Justice, took the initiative to promote a process that would drive the development of the Society's international advocacy. At the last meeting of the Coordinators of the Social Apostolate, time was dedicated to reflection on the task of advocacy in the social sector, and the central elements of this process were defined.

The central moment of this process will be a workshop to be held in Spain next November, which will generate collective work of both a preparatory and follow-up nature. The process is a long one and currently we are trying to identify solid foundations for the first steps.

The point of departure is our understanding of the present situation, including our weaknesses and strengths. Although we have not carried out an exhaustive analysis, the coordinators' meetings enabled us to take the pulse

[2] Among these, we may emphasise the meetings organised in recent years by the social sector to mark the World Social Forum, and in particular the Nairobi meeting in 2007; the Jesuit-inspired meeting, held in the Belgian city of Drongen, on common apostolic discernment, and various initiatives between organisations and networks, particularly Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Fe y Alegría.

[3] The organisations which implemented this initiative are: the Social Justice Secretariat, the JRS, the Catholic Office for Information and Initiatives for Europe (OCIPE), the Coordination of the Social Apostolate of the Provinces of the USA, the Centre for Liberation Theologies (Leuven), Alboan and Entreculturas – Fe y Alegría Spain.

of advocacy work in the Society's Assistancies at the present time. Briefly, we underlined the following common features:

- There is an enormous wealth and diversity of experiences available in the area. The issue is not about creating a new area of work so much as focusing in a new way on something that is already being done.
- There is an increasing interest in advocacy and a growing impatience to incorporate this facet into the work developed by the social sector.
- We have a certain amount of experience of local advocacy since the majority of the social centres operate at this level. Although modest, some of the activities carried out nationally have been important; those carried out at international and inter-provincial level have been small and innovative.
- The relationship with other apostolic sectors, especially higher education and the intellectual apostolate, are central to the "Ignatian style" of advocacy work. Nevertheless, in practice, a number of barriers hindering inter-sectoral cooperation have been observed.
- In general, within the Society and its works, carrying out quality advocacy requires a lot of resources: the presence of, and relationship with, groups of persons who suffer in modern society and whose life we would like to transform; the capacity for analysis and reflection on the causes of the latter; networks of relationships able to articulate proposals with others; a certain prestige. However, there is a clear awareness that a major development of advocacy work must be accompanied by an improvement in the specific capacities which this task requires, and particularly by a renewal and regeneration of our ways of cooperating at inter-sectoral and inter-provincial level.

This was the point of departure, and the coordinators, in cooperation with other institutions promoting advocacy, defined and polished the current objectives. A process which drives Ignatian advocacy in two distinct ways is needed: first, to contribute to creating and sharing a common understanding of advocacy and how to undertake it, nourished and informed by Ignatian spirituality; and, second, to support identification of the fundamentals of an action plan which allows us to make real and effective progress in international advocacy.

The workshop and process leading to it have been developed based on these two objectives. In order to create a common understanding of Ignatian advocacy, its characteristics, methodology and criteria, a dynamic piece of work has been proposed, drawn equally from theoretical reflection as from considered practice. From this discussion of reflection and practice, it is useful to develop a common language, a shared conceptual framework, which subsequently allows us to go forward in a harmonious manner. For this, two significant contributions will be relied upon:

- The reflection "A Model of Ignatian Advocacy", prepared by Frank Turner[4], broadly identifies the characteristics of advocacy drawn from Ignatian spirituality: a critical and constructive relationship with centres of power; led in an open spirit from the perspective of the poor and oppressed; understood as a community process; inclusive of contemplation, awareness-raising, study, research and analysis; integrated into a framework of spirituality and Ignatian tradition; implicit discernment. Based on these elements, a shared understanding and a common theoretical framework are developed, facilitating its practical implementation.
- The selection of four significant experiences of international advocacy: The campaign to ban the use of landmines, in which JRS actively participated, obtained a noteworthy outcome and international recognition, including the Nobel Peace Prize; the initiative promoted by various provinces of South Asia, a particularly valuable example of the participation and mobilisation of people under the acronym SAPI (*South Asian Peoples' Initiatives*); RPAN (*Relational Peace and Advocacy Network*) promoted by CEPAS (Democratic Republic of Congo); OCIPE (Brussels) and the *Office for Social and International Ministries* of the US Jesuit Conference (Washington) on the responsibility of mining companies in the war in eastern Congo; and, lastly, the work developed by CINEP (*Centre for Investigation and Popular Education*) on reconciliation, peace and respect for human rights in Colombia, particularly the advanced cooperation with the Jesuits in the United States. From the considered and structured experiences of these four initiatives (and of the persons and institutions participating in this reflection process) one hopes to select some significant elements that characterise Ignatian advocacy.

This process, nonetheless, should not remain a mere exchange of information and shared reflection even though, in all likelihood, this would be very positive in itself. At the meeting of social apostolate coordinators, the participants agreed to try to take a step forward and draw up an international advocacy action plan. This is not only about carrying out a technical exercise of planning. We hope that this process will be in itself an exercise in discernment, of listening attentively to the call of the Spirit. This profound view, capable of piercing reality, recognises the paths to travel together, the uncharted roads we desire to travel along, the shared dreams we wish to turn into modest realities. We desire to go forward not only supporting each other's strengths and abilities, but as motivated and sustained by the Lord who invites us to move in this direction of undertaking advocacy.

[4] Frank Turner SJ, is the director of OCIPE, the Brussels office representing the Jesuits at EU level. The first version of this reflection was prepared to mark the meeting of the Ignatian Family held in Nairobi in January 2007 within the framework of the World Social Forum. Subsequently, as it incorporated new material the reflection was modified and improved.

In this spirit, this process (before, during and after the workshop) should be the occasion to continue sharing, discussing and reflecting on this issue in our works, provinces and assistancies – focusing, in particular, on certain questions. What agenda of issues would be most significant and useful if the Society were to speak publicly? What structures should we develop? How should we best develop our potential as a universal or inter-sectoral network? What resources do we need to continue developing this work to the highest standard?

In the second week of November, some 40 individuals from around the world[5] will meet in a small municipality of El Escorial, situated approximately 50 kilometres from Madrid. This small group of men and women, motivated by the experience of God, will commit themselves to doing justice that grows from faith in the social centres and works. We all feel summoned to contribute to the transformation of the causes of injustice and suffering of so many people in our globalised world. In particular, we are called as a universal body in the service of the poor and excluded and urged to walk together in advocating to the world powers. We are invited to travel a path that will be long and not free of complications and difficulties. We wish to be directed by the people with and for whom we work; we are motivated to travel this path together, forming a single body, building a community of solidarity, sustained by the God of life.

Luis Arancibia
Entreculturas – Fe y Alegría
C/ Pablo Aranda 3
28006 Madrid – SPAIN
<l.arancibia@entreculturas.org>

*Original Spanish*
*Translation by James Stapleton*

## Reflections on GC35[1]

The international group of Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate spent three days reflecting on the decrees of General Congregation 35 (GC35) and sharing the movements of thought and feeling experienced within. The background to this meeting was the social

[5] Persons from different Assistancies proposed by the respective Coordinators of the Social Apostolate, international networks of the Society (JRS and Fe y Alegría), the Curia and other invitees, will participate in the workshop.

[1] This article was prepared by the Editor using the presentation material of the participants and the notes on the interventions made at plenary sessions. It has been read and revised by the participants.

apostolate and our lives with the poor. The decrees were first presented to the group by one of the coordinators; thereafter, two or three members of the group shared their responses to both the content of the decree and to the presentation made by one of the coordinators. These responses attempted to situate the reaction to the decree in a regional context, to consider the challenges and obstacles, as well as any strategic steps that might be suggested. We then divided ourselves into two linguistic groups to share our insights in more depth. Finally, these group reflections were presented to the whole group.

This paper attempts to put together some of the themes that dominated our reflections. The remarks here are not intended to be read as commentaries on the decrees of the Congregation, but as an account of the movements experienced in common, which may inspire further reflections. It serves as a summary of the impact on us of the decrees we reflected upon: identity, mission and governance. We also reflected for some time on the decree treating themes of ordinary government.

## Our identity

Presenting the decree on identity, Higinio Pi SJ noted that we are confronted with a new style of writing a Jesuit decree, reflecting the cultural change that has taken place: the Society has felt the need to talk about identity first and complement this with a later decree on mission. We sense, he added, the importance of understanding the cultural milieu we live in if we want to speak of discovering our identity. We live in a liquid, broken and fragmented society. Each fragment is individually autonomous, and generates various types of change resulting in great social instability. Images occupy centre-stage; our desires are aroused by images, our interactions and relations are expressed in instantaneous images. The decree invites us to keep on returning to these images and thus connect with the source of our vocation and identity.

Brendan MacPartlin SJ underlined that the decree links mission and community and hence we need to understood them in relation to each other. Our desires and decisions are soaked, as it were, in the images of a contemporary fragmented culture. We need happy communities to nourish our passion for our mission, and to give testimony to it. Denis Kim SJ started his response by noting the initial comment of some Korean Jesuits to the decree: "Do we need another poetic identity document like this?" In the call to live the Ignatian tensions and polarities, Denis saw a call to Jesuit to be mystics. His final comment, quoting a UN staff-member and former Jesuit, underlines the fact that the Society is one of the oldest and best-established global institutions, so that we Jesuits need to make more active use of our traditions, networks, and resources.

From the perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean, Luis Herrera SJ formulated the vision as follows. By 2015 the Society of Jesus would have responded to the call 'I want you to serve me in Latin America,' following Jesus

carrying his cross, in fidelity to the Church and living as friends in the Lord (GC35, D. 2, n. 11). Luis noted the favourable ecclesial context after the Episcopal Conference meeting at Aparecida (Brazil), but acknowledged that the Society is somewhat weakened, has diminished capacities and a deficit of flexibility and creativity. He favours placing the Society at the frontiers generated by globalisation: the social frontiers of marginalisation and exclusion, as well as at the cultural frontiers where new identities are configured and shaped.

The sharing in groups was rich. There were comments about the significance of finally producing **two** decrees. It seems intriguing that in this new way of describing who we are, we find it difficult to explain what we **do**, and the nature of our mission; hence the need for another document and another type of discourse! Some argued that this style, so full of images, appeals to our modern sense of contemplation but may foster myriad interpretations, and leave us undecided as to how to deal with the real differences that separate us. Some even reminded us of the words of an army captain who, seeing that the enemy had entered the fort he was defending, exclaimed: "Shoot inside, because the enemy is already among us!" Are the metaphors and images used in the decrees analogous to the 'narrative' of the temporal king used by Ignatius (*Spiritual Exercises*, nn. 91-100)? Let us be honest--Ignatius ends asking each person to make a self-offering, to accept poverty and humiliation!

There was agreement that the three moments (are they images?) of Ignatius at Manresa, El Cardoner, and La Storta form the triptych, describing his and our identity. Manresa, a city close to Barcelona, reflects the struggle of Ignatius with his ego (a 'Buddhist' thematic that would remain a constant in his life). The vision of Ignatius at El Cardoner, a small village also near Barcelona, opens to him a new way of looking at and being inside the world. The vision at La Storta, a small chapel close to Rome, represents the apostolic call of the eternal King, the call to follow Jesus carrying his cross and the crosses of those innumerable victims of injustice and violence.

We did not dwell on the tensions of which the decree speaks: being and doing; contemplation and action; prayer and prophetic life (GC35, D. 2, n. 9). We vibrated, however, with the emphasis on our being a universal body, of plunging into the world, of looking at the world from the perspective of the poor, a point of view that brings hope. We were happy that the decree makes clear the connection between identity, community and mission. We need to be coherent and consistent: our preaching of faith and justice must also be lived personally and in our communities. We are not sure whether we are passionate about our identity, and whether we transmit fire, or rather a sense of confusion and uncertainty. To transmit fire a person has to allow himself be consumed by it. We noted the dangers we face: the emphasis on identity may lead us to self-centredness, to greater individualism, to a forgetfulness of our mission. One in the group expressed his doubts through a pertinent question: does identity grow stronger in the measure in which we become more self-conscious about it?

**Our Mission**

At the end of his presentation, Xavier Jeyaraj SJ highlighted some themes that indicate the dominant perspectives of the decree on mission.

First, the decree not only clearly re-affirms our commitment to the inseparable link between faith and justice within the dimensions of culture and inter-religious dialogue, but it also grounds the core of our mission in the Pope's reassuring words: following your charism "the Church needs you, counts on you ... and turns to you" (GC35, D. 3, n. 6).

Second, we live this mission in the new context of globalisation, in a new cultural, postmodern world that provides enormous opportunities, but also generates exclusion and profound tensions. Third, the decree provides a new understanding of our mission in terms of a triple reconciliation with God, people and the environment. Fourth, it calls us forcefully to a new way of proceeding: to look at the world from the perspective of the poor; to build bridges between the poor and the powerful, and among our apostolic sectors; and to go to the frontiers.

Fifth, the spiritual foundation of our mission is the person of Jesus, crucified and risen, carrying the world to his Father. Finally, the decree ends with a call to be personally and corporately authentic; to realise that our Jesuit apostolic communities are not only for mission but need to be considered as part of our mission.

The responses to this presentation examined the document critically from various regional perspectives. Elias Omondi SJ stressed the profound satisfaction he and others in Africa felt at finding reconciliation placed at the heart of our mission. The African continent, he argued, needs healing, and this emphasis on reconciliation prepares us to play an important role in the coming Synod of Africa, which will be dedicated to the theme of 'Reconciliation, Justice and Peace'. He was also glad that the apostolic preference for Africa and Madagascar was clearly stated in the decree, but added that greater clarity is required to articulate the two priorities of China and Africa and to dispel certain ambiguities.

In his response Andreas Gösele SJ raised a number of critical questions that force us to relate the decree to many aspects of our life. Do we sufficiently take into account the new context for mission (GC35, D. 3, nn. 8-11, 25, 26)? Is it helpful, as the document on mission does, to understand our mission in the social apostolate as one aspect of a broader mission of reconciliation (*Ibid.*, nn. 12-36)? Where are we called to build bridges (*Ibid.*, nn. 17, 22, 28)? Where are we doing advocacy work for "those who find it difficult to voice their interests" (*Ibid.*, n. 28)? Which role could we play in international networks of advocacy (*Ibid.*, nn. 28, 29, 35)? Are we able "to see the world from the perspective of the poor and marginalised, learning from them, acting with and for them" (*Ibid.*, nn. 25, 27)?

James Stormes SJ, in talking about the decree, made several brief, incisive remarks, of which we underline a few. He appreciated the re-affirmation of our mission, which could dispel any misconceived ideal about turning Jesuits into a new order of discalced friars; he wondered at the fact that 'culture' was still a problem with us; regretted the negative emphasis of the decree in describing the world; and noted the opportunity open to the US Jesuit Conference to emphasize reflection on external apostolic challenges in the new planning process.

The sharing of reflection from the two groups divided along linguistic lines brought out many critical issues. Some felt that the section on the apostolic preferences looked like an artificial addition, and did not flow logically from the preceding sections. Others noted that the decree replaces the term 'liberation' with 'reconciliation' and thereby seems to abandon more radical attitudes and soften our critique of the structures. It was also remarked that one discovers in the decree a strong difference of opinion among those at the Congregation who may have felt that the real challenge facing us was the loss of God as a meaningful referent, and those who identified the challenge with exclusion as the new form of injustice and poverty.

There was appreciation for the manner in which the decree insists on solidarity with 'the other', understood as the establishment of a right relationship. This reconciliation is far from the cheap version of reconciliation, understood as patching things up at all costs. Representatives of Asia and Africa agreed that traditional cultures must not be romanticised. Some participants stressed forcefully the need to provide a more human vision of Africa to the world; the danger, pervasive and deep-rooted, is to emphasize the problems, the injustices, and the conflicts, without mentioning the richness, the humanity and the sustaining joy and hope of the people in Africa. Some common representations of Africa alienate Africa and Africans from the rest of the world. Frank Turner SJ pointed out that Europe, rather than Africa, could aptly be described as the 'dark' continent: from 1900 to 1950, 60 million people died as a result of violence.

**Governance**

In concluding his comprehensive presentation of the decree on governance Alfredo Ferro SJ outlined a few significant conclusions. The decree makes it very clear that governance in the Society is always a function of our apostolic mission; concrete steps have been taken to make government at all levels (local, provincial and international) directed to our **universal** mission; and finally, important changes have been mandated both at the 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' (provincial and general congregations) levels of government. He also emphasized the decisive way in which the Congregation seeks planning and accountability at various levels, re-affirms the direct relationship

between the General and Provincials, and finally defines Conferences as "structures oriented for mission" (GC35, D. 5, n. 18 a) and not "instruments" for coordinating activities.

Responding to the presentation, Frank Turner SJ felt that the decree was strong and encouraging; in the face of globalisation and international structures of injustice, the social apostolate is a privileged locus to work out the dynamic of universal mission. In the context of Europe, the notion of 'common works' needs to be seen in the overall perspective of shared mission and resources; hence they become strategically important (GC35, D. 5, n. 20a), but strengthening them may also require their reshaping.

The decree of governance raises a number of challenges for the Eastern European Assistancy. Robin Schweiger SJ argued that provinces in this region face various challenges. A certain unwillingness to confront the rapidly changing reality of an increasingly secular world with its devastating impact on the vocation of young Jesuits is one such challenge. The heavy heritage of the old mentality ('fear of the regime') and a conception of the Church as focused primarily on sacramental life is another. To these one may add the fear of entering into dialogue with civil society and a lack of financial and human resources. Training and forming Jesuits and lay people must be considered a priority. The future collaboration between central and eastern European Assistancies may prove crucial.

The discussion brought alive a variety of regional perspectives. It was again emphasized that no 'European mission' can be carried out independently of the rest of the world. Our social concern within the European Union (EU) will necessarily lead us to examine critically the relationship of the EU countries, not least the relationship of EU-based international corporations with African and Latin American countries. In East Asia and Oceania decolonisation and other factors have given rise to strong nationalistic identities. The international character of Jesuit governance adds a much-needed dimension to the way we plan our mission.

**Issues for Ordinary Government**

Since the final document was not available to the participants, the presentation by Marianus Kujur SJ of the Congregation's final recommendations on Africa and Madagascar, Ecology, Migration, and Indigenous peoples, and the ensuing discussion within the group, were not easy to assimilate. Alfredo Ferro SJ proposed the need to articulate these realities in an integrated way and avoid responding to them in a fragmented manner. He also stressed the need to develop a strong ethical critique of the global model seemingly being imposed, and the importance of developing a sound advocacy strategy in response. Denis Kim SJ raised the question of potential conflict between the five apostolic preferences and the themes of ordinary government. After

reflecting on the diverse meaning of mission and strategy, he encouraged a way of avoiding potential 'paternalism' by progressively handing over new missions to indigenous Jesuits.

## Strategic Thrusts for the Social Apostolate

**Uta Sievers**

After listening to the insights from the relevant Decrees of GC35 and praying over them, some of the social apostolate Assistancy coordinators who were present in Rome in May 2008 were given the following brief: "Each Assistancy/Conference coordinator makes a presentation of the areas, programmes, interventions they would consider strategically important at the level of the universal Society." These 'strategic thrusts' for the social apostolate were then fed into the wider vision statement that became the 'Conclusions' of the meeting (see page 78).

Alfredo Ferro SJ, representative of the Jesuit Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CPAL), identified common challenges for **Latin America**. Among them were: the need to respond to the apostolic preferences of the whole Society; the contents of the document published by CELAM (the Latin American Bishops' Conference) after their meeting at Aparecida, Brazil in May 2007; the need for better coordination with non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries (Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica); commitment to a special preference for the Amazonian region and Cuba, and to increasing exchange with the provinces of the United States, Spain and Portugal. The main desire for the future (expressed by the heading "Seeking to respond better in times of globalization") was a common apostolic plan for all Latin American provinces to be undertaken conjointly and efficiently, and identifying common priorities and available resources. Other goals included joint responsibility in mission and governance and a re-configuration of the province structures in the face of new challenges posed by globalization.

The situation prevalent in the Jesuit provinces in **Africa and Madagascar** is especially relevant to the whole Society since, with Africa as one of the Society's priorities, all Jesuits around the world are called to support the continent in facing its challenges. Peace and reconciliation (especially in countries torn by conflicts or enduring their aftermath), advocacy and networking, and formation and training were the three major strategic thrusts for Africa defined by Elias Omondi SJ in his presentation. International collaboration within the Society is desirable especially in

- strengthening the apostolic commitment to peace and reconciliation in Africa, including an Ignatian spirituality that is centred around these issues;
- becoming involved in continental and international advocacy; and
- measuring the impact of globalisation, especially with regard to food sovereignty.

Elias Omondi SJ also encouraged networking with the Jesuit intellectual apostolate on specific issues of concern.

In **Europe**, at the top of the list of challenges is the new situation created by the unification of two Assistancies and the evolving structures of governance. As part of this re-ordering, Brendan Mac Partlin SJ has just been appointed the new social apostolate coordinator for the Conference of European Provincials (CEP). He presented the strategic thrusts for the social apostolate: EU public policy, solidarity with Africa, advocacy, Jesuit NGOs, Roma/Sinti ("Gypsies"), Islam, ecology and reconciliation. Jesuits are involved in all these issues but in a disconnected, scattered way; more cooperation across provinces therefore would be beneficial. As a global organisation, the Society, according to Fr. Mac Partlin SJ, should focus on globalisation and the movement of people, with Jesuits directing their energies towards those who suffer most.

Xavier Jeyaraj SJ presented the strategic thrusts for the South Asian Assistancy. He mentioned a number of **South Asia**-specific challenges, for example the movement from a development approach to a human rights approach within organisations linked to the social apostolate, and the involvement of more lay people, especially in the South Asian Peoples' Initiatives (SAPI). Challenges within the Society include limited collaboration with other sectors, especially with the educational apostolate, and limited resources and personnel available from the provinces. Outlining the strategic thrusts relevant to the whole Society, he stressed the need for greater linkages especially in the areas of displacement, migration and culture. He also emphasised Ignatian spirituality for social action in the light of the impact that globalisation has on Jesuits; inter-ministerial collaboration with a focus on the option for the poor, and the building of an advocacy network.

The new social apostolate coordinator for the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania, Denis Kim SJ, presented his Assistancy as one of the most diverse and dynamic within the Society. He said that a common vision, let alone strategy or planning, would be almost impossible due to the huge differences between the three parts of the Assistancy: **East Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania**. Common areas of interest that several provinces share

are Ignatian spirituality for the social apostolate, transnational migration, networking and China. In many parts of the Assistancy, the capacity of the social apostolate and inter-sectoral/provincial collaboration need strengthening before any further serious efforts can be undertaken. The Church as a whole can do a lot, however, especially in the areas of migration and social integration, being present in the 'sending' as well as the 'receiving' countries in the region. In order to make full use of this potential, it would be desirable for Jesuits to cooperate closely with other religious orders (e.g. the Scalabrinians). With regard to China, Fr. Kim SJ proposed sending more young Jesuits there from around the world so that they can become familiar with the specific challenges, for example, the rapid urbanisation and industrialisation which leaves poorer parts of the population in both urban and rural areas far behind. According to Fr. Kim SJ, Jesuit social and pastoral activities should target the urban middle class and working class as well as the urban poor.

Jim Stormes SJ of the US Conference was concerned that the Society in the **United States** had focused so much on 'ad intra' issues in the recent past. The focus needs to shift to an 'ad extra' apostolic planning, e.g. by re-affirming the commitment to Africa throughout all apostolates. For the international Society of Jesus, he recommended the following priorities. Firstly, an international advocacy process as an activity of solidarity, which the Society is particularly well-structured to carry out. Secondly, a deeper study of culture. The meaning and power of culture and cultures, including but not limited to the "dominant world culture", should be studied more deeply, so that Jesuits can have a better sense of what "evangelization of culture" might mean. And thirdly, seeing the world through the eyes of the poor. On this point, Fr. Stormes SJ reflected that, as compassionate social ministers, our temptation could sometimes be to focus too much on suffering and injustice. We may forget to ask our brothers "What would you have me do for you?" and listen carefully to their answer without making assumptions. For example, our tendency is to see Africa as mired in its problems and suffering, while most African Jesuits would rather we see the positive activities that our brothers and their companions there are engaged in.

Uta Sievers
Communications Officer
Social Justice Secretariat
<uta@sjcuria.org>

# The Apostolic Mission of the Society of Jesus: Faith Doing Justice

## Conclusions of the Assistancy Coordinators' Meeting

### 1. Elements of a Shared Vision

On the basis of the fundamental re-confirmation issued by GC35 of Jesuit mission as service of faith and promotion of justice, we the coordinators of the Social Apostolate and other Jesuits gathered in Rome,

- Wish to work for reconciliation in its full authentic sense as the establishment or restoration of right relationships: with God, with other people, and with the created order. Often such 'restoration' needs 'restitution'.

- Commit ourselves to common apostolic discernment, so as to deepen the Ignatian element of our mission, and find concrete ways to integrate our socio-economic, political and cultural analysis with a spiritual and prophetic discernment of God's call today. We are called to live our faith and our being rooted in the charism and spirituality of the Society of Jesus in a more explicit and visible way.

- Wish to "reach the geographical and spiritual places others do not reach or find difficult to reach". Above all, we experience the call to move towards those who are poor and excluded; the term 'frontiers' refers also to places where political and economic decisions are taken.

- Wish to continue to be firmly with the people, at the same time not allowing ourselves to be like the proverbial 'frogs in the well'; that is, we recognise the importance of being actively alive to international issues (at the level of research-analysis) and to the structures of power (at the level of serious dialogue, which can include confrontation). We wish to express in this way both the universality of the Society's mission and our way of proceeding, aspects underlined by GC35.

- We believe that, at the level of the worldwide Society of Jesus, there remains a need to clarify the 'priority for Africa' so that it can truly become a priority on the operational level for all Provinces and Conferences.

**2. Elements of Common Strategy**
(This strategy is emergent and experimental, rather than fully planned)

***Focus***

- We wish to retain the Society's commitment to see the world through the eyes of God who hears the "cry of the poor." While responding to the demands and needs of the poor and excluded, we seek to respond also to the deepest needs of each person and of the community. As GC35 puts it:

  > *Following Jesus, we feel ourselves called not only to bring direct help to people in distress but also to restore entire human persons in their integrity, reintegrating them in community and reconciling them with God.*[1]

  We note, however, that such a response to the needs of the poor is not identical with an exclusive emphasis on people's suffering. A social ministry must also look for good things (joy and hope-giving moments) with which we can be in solidarity.

- We wish to respond critically to the dominant, and imposed, neo-liberal model of globalisation, especially its threatening impact on political agency and decision, cultural vitality and diversity. If we are to make an adequate critical response, it is important to strengthen civil society and work for the promotion and defence of human rights.

- We wish to focus on environmental destruction and its social impact. In the course of this meeting we did not arrive at a specific definition of this focus.

- With regard to China, we think it crucial to agree on the appropriate parameters of the Jesuit social apostolate. We suggest that, following the model of JRS, we can continue our efforts at accompaniment and service, and also consider when and how advocacy can be done.

- With such a vast issue as 'migration' we believe it is important to focus strategically on those who suffer most – e.g. forced migrants, and Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

- We emphasise the Society's commitment to indigenous peoples, including Roma and Sinti ("gypsies") and travellers.

[1] GC35, D. 2, n. 13.

- We recognise the need to develop a preferential focus on certain territories: not only China and Africa, but also Afghanistan and Amazonia, among other regions.

*Reflection/Analysis*

- We will strive truthfully to acknowledge historical injustices, especially their manifestations that endure to the present day, thus discovering our present responsibilities to rectify them.

- We reaffirm the need for political and economic analysis to challenge ideological fundamentalisms (economic, political, religious) and to propose more humane alternatives.

- We emphasise the importance of cultural analysis: trying to penetrate the values and motivations that are most powerful today, especially among young people.

- During these days we have affirmed the crucial nature of international advocacy and its development. We believe this is the key to a more effective social apostolate.

**Instruments**

- We wish to enhance our networking: defining our networks, prioritising them and strengthening them, both those internal to the Society, and those external to it. Among the crucial networks of the social apostolate are the ones that link us to other Jesuit apostolic sectors.

- We acknowledge the need for coordinated fundraising as a much-needed activity for the social apostolate. This is one key element of a **broader** need for the social sector, i.e. improved management in an Ignatian way.

- We assert the continued need for capacity building, formation and training: we need to attract and inspire 'younger Jesuits' as well as lay people.

- We strongly support and seek to take part in the various efforts that have been undertaken everywhere in the Society to deepen the spiritual source from which our collaborators and we can draw the strength and inspiration to sustain our apostolic engagement at the frontiers.

## Insertion Communities: a Brief Introduction

**Giuseppe Riggio SJ** [1]

"All Jesuits must work for the poor; some (and they should not be a small crowd) must work with the poor and some must be inserted and live like the poor".[2]

The decision to begin this section of *Promotio Iustitiae* with this quotation from a speech by Fr. Kolvenbach was not accidental. With his usual precision and brevity, the then Father General of the Society of Jesus not only reminded his interlocutors that to be with the poor is an essential aspect of Jesuit vocation, but went much further: he highlighted the various degrees of involvement with the poor that a Jesuit may face as he lives out his service, citing as the deepest that which reminds you "to live like the poor." This last aspect can be arduous and difficult to do. Given its value in terms of evangelical proclamation, however, I believe it is impossible to neglect or disregard precisely this last aspect. It is to this that we turn our attention in this section, focusing particularly on insertion communities.

First of all, it is useful to make an observation: Fr. Kolvenbach's invitation to Jesuits to live as the poor live, to share their daily lives, is certainly not anything new. As a matter of fact, following General Congregation 32 and the wave of renewal in religious life after the Second Vatican Council, Jesuits opened various communities in the most marginalised and problematic districts in large cities and forgotten rural areas. Before long, they were labelled insertion communities because the expression underlined this dimension of a life shared with the poorest. At the same time, Fr. Kolvenbach's invitation is neither old nor outdated. Confirmation of this can be found in the continued interest shown by Jesuits in this style of community life, as well as in some sections of the decrees of the last General Congregation. The latter may not expressly deal with insertion communities, but when community life is linked to the development of the mission of the Society, it underlines that a Jesuit community is not for the mission but is the fulfilment of the mission.[3] From this perspective, community dimension and the Jesuit mission may be seen as linked more particularly in insertion communities.

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[1] The author, a scholastic from the Italian Province, in the Regency stage of his formation, is with the Social Justice Secretariat (Editor's note).

[2] Fr. P-H. Kolvenbach, "Meeting of the Father General with the coordinators of the Social Apostolate," *Promotio Iustitiae* 80 (2003/4), 7.

[3] GC35, D. 3, n. 41.

These brief signs help us see that insertion communities have a long and consolidated history right down to the present day. Nevertheless, the evangelical meaning and extent of this community experience has not yet been fully examined, above all, in relation to the reality of modern life. In fact, seen from one perspective, the motives that pushed the first Jesuits to make this choice seem somewhat outdated in the light of rapid social and political changes in the last few years (I am thinking particularly of their presence in working class districts). From another perspective, the same changes have led to the emergence of new reasons and needs for which an insertion community can be called to make its own contribution. It is thus useful to reflect anew on this model of community life and on the elements that characterise it.

The reflection by the staff of the Social Justice Secretariat on these issues led to the emergence of some fundamental questions about insertion communities. In particular, we have asked ourselves: does it still make sense to speak of an insertion community? In what way can a Jesuit community, which in every way enjoys more stability and security than the average family, share the life of the poor? Which social contexts today require a presence of this type? In what sense does this presence represent a movement towards the frontiers? What kind of evangelical service can be carried out by the Jesuits engaged there?[4]

These are the questions that have guided the preparation of these articles. With the articles in this section of *Promotio Iustitiae*, rather than giving answers, we hope to stimulate reflection by offering a few suggestions drawn from the testimonies of many who live (or have lived) this experience. These contributions can help the development of a deeper understanding of this apostolic experience and we hope that they will stimulate an exchange of opinions and experiences that can give us a deeper and shared understanding of this issue. We invite you to add to this pool of knowledge by providing information on other insertion communities of which you may be aware.

A few words on how we proceeded. To select the contributions on the experiences of insertion communities, we consulted with the Regional Assistants of the Father General and the Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate. These are Jesuits who have a broader and deeper knowledge of the situation prevailing in each Assistancy because of their kind of service. Their suggestions and the availability of the authors when contacted have made it possible to present these accounts of lived experiences. These published articles present experiences realised in Europe, India, the United States and Latin America, and we are aware that we lack contributions from other parts of the world that are very important to the Society, such as Africa and Southeast Asia. This is not the result of oversight, but a significant indicator

[4] This only deals with some possible questions. We are well aware that many other questions deserve to be examined, and that it would have been extremely useful to have undertaken a deeper study of the experiences of insertion communities down to the present day.

of the peculiarity of certain contexts. The fact is that while in certain situations, particularly in Europe[5] and Latin America, the experiences of insertion communities are many and relatively uniform, in other continents the situation is very different. One of the African Jesuits consulted spontaneously told us that the expression "insertion community" was not used in Africa; neither was there a distinction made between communities on the basis of location. This does not mean that Jesuit communities in Africa do not live or work in the poorest areas, offering what they can to improve the lives of their neighbours (parishes, schools, hospitals). It means that this community does perceive itself or its ministry as being inserted. The perception of the Jesuits in Southeast Asia in the countries of early evangelisation, such as East Timor, Vietnam or Malaysia, is not very different. These brief remarks on the geographical areas of our contributors and on their reactions to the use of the expression "insertion communities" are an indication of how much research is needed to understand this dimension today.

Moving on, I shall emphasise some aspects of the testimonies which struck me, and briefly appraise the present role of insertion communities, offering ideas for reflection, rather than strong assertions.

The first most obvious aspect is the heterogeneity of places and cultures in the experiences presented by the Jesuits who live side-by-side with their peoples. Some are immigrants, particularly Maghrebines and Africans, in European cities, and Afro-Americans and Latinos in the United States. Others are the former "untouchables" in India and indigenous people in Latin America. Each group lives in a particular social context, expresses distinct cultural values, and has a diverse set of needs. There are a large variety of circumstances, each one requiring a specific response appropriate to their concrete situation. Closer examination however of the approaches and lifestyles adopted by the Jesuits presented in these very heterogeneous experiences reveals certain recurring elements, specific local circumstances notwithstanding.

Above all, two aspects strike me. Initially, a Jesuit community establishes a discreet presence in a locality and observes its surroundings. The first step always is to be in tune with the local community, to be available and welcoming. This implies that we must first undertake the task of inculturation and cultivate our understanding of the needs and desires of those nearest to us. I believe this is necessary to be able to share progressively not only the environment in which communities live, but also their hopes, fears, joys and sufferings. One learns to live alongside the other, walking together and learning from him or her. This first step is best summed up, I believe, by the verb "to accompany."

[5] On the European continent, Eastern Europe is an exception as there were no insertion communities. This has to do with the recent historical events of the ex-communist bloc countries. With the fall of communism, Jesuits initially devoted their attention to the education and spirituality apostolates above all. Subsequently, they also undertook works connected with the social apostolate.

The next step – to be taken only after the inculturation process – is to put oneself at their disposal, to help communities discover and learn instruments that can improve their daily lives, assisting them to live in a more dignified manner.

And now, happy reading!

Giuseppe Riggio SJ
Social Justice Secretariat
<giuseppe@sjcuria.org>

*Original Italian*
*Translation by James Stapleton*

# A French Insertion Community: Living in a Popular Neighbourhood

**Michel Barthe-Dejean SJ**

## From Toulouse to Saint Étienne

Originally from the city of Toulouse along the banks of the River Garonne, I joined the Society of Jesus in 1965, entering the Jesuit Novitiate situated close to the beautiful affluent city of Aix-en-Provence in southern France. I was at university during the events of May 1968 with the students who changed the world ... !

After completing my studies in Sèvres Centre in Paris I was ordained as a priest upon my return home in 1978. My mission was then to work in the Jesuit College as a teacher and head of Catechesis. From there, I was sent to Paris as permanent member of the national team of the Youth Eucharist Movement, the MEJ. Social issues interested me almost as much as relations with the Muslim population in France, but there was no mission dealing precisely with these issues.

In 1992, Father Provincial asked me to join the Jesuit team living in the working class district of Bordeaux. This was when I discovered the world of working class districts and social associations, and relations between Christians and Muslims. This was my first contact with working class environments to which I have remained dedicated during my subsequent missions in Toulouse and Saint Étienne. My primary mission has continued to be education; my place of residence however gives me an insight into the daily lives of families.

**The community of Saint Étienne**

The Jesuits have long been present in this middle-sized French city characterised by coal mining and heavy manufacturing industries, and consequently a large working class. Since the last century, Jesuits have been working on social issues through the establishment of:

- "workers gardens" which allowed families to cultivate their plots after a hard day in the mine or the steelworks;
- a technical and vocational school, "Marais-Sainte Thérèse" secondary school specialised in mechanical engineering,
- an innovative training area, a "Production" school for young people who have dropped out of the traditional education system.

In the 1970s, a new estate of high-rise concrete apartment blocks was built to house the new population of workers in the industrial region. This coincided with the arrival of the first petrol crisis. The inhabitants then faced both unemployment and the limitations of the housing project: difficulty accessing the city centre, and lack of commercial centres and meeting places. Very quickly the ghetto phenomenon sprang up, regrouping families with social difficulties, and people with immigrant backgrounds, particularly from the Maghreb: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. In addition, were the more recent arrivals from Eastern Europe, Kosovars and Romanians, and sub-Saharan Africans.

In the 1990s, the Jesuits, then living in the city centre, decided to move also to "Montreynard" district in the north of the city. I am one of four Jesuits living on the eighth floor of a 10-storey apartment block, on the hill overlooking the city of Saint Étienne. We were not far from the football stadium where the "green" team has had its hours of glory ... On match night, we do not need to listen to the radio or watch TV to know who has won: the screams easily reach us!

The surroundings (scenic, green, mountainous) would be idyllic if it were not were for the unsafe environment. This is caused by many factors, in particular, groups of young adults involved in anti-social activities ... Cars are regularly burned regularly in our district; our apartments have been "visited" – by which I mean robbed – five times; dreadful threats are dropped in our letter boxes ... This situation provokes feelings of spiritual desolation in our Jesuit team, a sense of powerlessness in the face of this insecurity. But discovering the cultural richness of our neighbours helps us to struggle against this desolation, as does being active together with them.

Our missions do not call us to mobilise the local population as a whole; we work in education, as technical teachers. Yet of one of us is well inserted into the local community through an association he established. ASIM, the Association for Solidarity and Insertion in Montreynaud, provides assistance

to persons in the most vulnerable circumstances: delivering meals at midday and offering them casual employment. The latter keeps them active, preventing them from getting depressed. We also accompany a team of Young European Volunteers from various countries throughout the continent, including Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, and France. These young volunteers work with various charitable associations in the district. We help them benefit from the experience that the Jesuits have acquired through long years of living here ... Personally, I help facilitate the activities in "District House" and accompany children with their schoolwork.

**Narrative of the neighbour**

The specific cultural practices of our neighbours in this working class district also leave us a little surprised. One Wednesday, unusually, I went back to the apartment at 12 o'clock. Very soon the doorbell rang; I opened the door: an adolescent stood there with a plate full of burning hot couscous which he offered me. I thanked him and asked:

– Are you offering this to me because you are celebrating a wedding?

– No!

– Then is there a birth or a religious holiday? (In fact, it is not unusual to receive presents of this sort during religious holidays, such as the Muslim holiday Eïd El Kebir).

– No!

I didn't insist; I thanked him and asked myself what the motivation behind this present today could be. I was just getting ready to eat the couscous when I heard deafening bangs above my head from the floors above. What were these neighbours doing in the middle of the day? At that moment I realised that the noise was coming from none other than the family that just offered me lunch ... I understood that this meal was a crafty and pleasant way for the family to plead an excuse for the nuisance caused – food for noise! It also sheds light on a Mediterranean cultural practice where one tries to create a concrete bond between people. *Is there a more important bond than food – to avoid resentment or criticism?*

This conviviality, however, is fragile in the face of violence and insecurity. Initiatives which promote collective action are necessary.

**Citizen mobilisation**

After a discussion in the Jesuit community, and with the support of some household heads, I prepare the text of a petition addressed to the Saint Éti-

enne office of the agency for rented social housing (HLM) requesting urgent repairs to our building with its damaged front door and the appointment of a night watch surveillance to prevent vandalism. Equipped with the petition, I begin my visits to the residents in our tower block. I ring the doorbell of the first family:

"Yes, of course, I'll sign your petition and I'll come with you to meet the next neighbour". The two of us then call to the next tenant:

"Come with us to tell the other residents"

By the time we arrive at the last floor of the building there are over twenty of us discussing, arguing, making plans on the stairs and the landing!

I said to myself "I am learning the art of conversation and debate from the Maghreb world, to which the overwhelming majority of tenants belong; my petition had been nothing more than a catalyst to promote this gathering!"

Following this mobilisation, the person in charge at the "HLM" invited the residents of the tower block to a meeting to discuss solutions to the problems presented. In this way, our presence as members of the Church found meaning. As humans, our needs are complementary to those of the residents. We approach families of immigrant origin, whose rich Mediterranean culture is based on sociability and generosity, but who are without the means to express themselves, and are thus unable to integrate with mainstream French society. Their knowledge of French is insufficient; the administrative and educational procedures are stumbling blocks. Starting with this exchange of "competences", a life-giving dialogue can develop.

**Emulation in the Faith**

However, our presence in working class districts in France would lack a dimension if it had no religious sphere. Some years ago an imam, a member of a group promoting dialogue and reflection between Muslims and Christians, told us: "For such a long time, we have discussed social problems, for such a long time, we known each other and we have never mentioned what is closest to our hearts: our faith!" Our meetings based on our relationship with God can take on diverse features. We could simply greet each other during our respective religious holidays, or participate in a joint team which seeks to improve the mutual awareness of our respective faiths. Meetings are organised between Christians and Muslims beyond the confines of the districts. The topics addressed include the person Abraham; justice and mercy; how can our faith be transmitted to our children? what is our relationship to our religious founders?

With respect to the Christian community, we participate in the life of the local parish without being directly responsible for it. Many members of this

community are very involved in the reception of those seeking political asylum from the French government, in particular Sub-Saharan Africans. Our contact with asylum seekers has brought us to propose the organisation of a spiritual retreat during the summer, addressing especially their needs. Indeed, these men and women from Congo-Kinshasa and Angola have a Christian formation and they have expressed their desire to receive support strengthening their faith.

**"He planted his tent among us" (John 1, 14)**

Through our communities integrated in working class districts – "insertion communities" – we wanted to be closer in our way to the lives of marginalised families: French families as well as families of immigrants.

For Jesuits this implies a minimum degree of availability for the encounter and, better, a genuine mission dedicated to this or that companion. We could be mediators of knowledge and of mutual acceptance between populations who without our assistance could continue to be estranged from one another. Our communities are also places of learning, privileged by encounters between persons of different cultures and religion. This allows us to live openly as the "Galilee of the Nations."

Michel Barthe-Dejean SJ
11 Clément Janequin street
42000 Saint Étienne – FRANCE
<michel.barthe-dejean@jesuites.com>

*Original French*
*Translation by James Stapleton*

## Jesuits in Nandurbar Mission

**Godfrey D'Lima SJ**

### My Personal Pilgrimage

My Jesuit life, if by that we mean a life characterised by its concern with Jesus, began very early at home in Mumbai in a lower middle class Catholic family, natives of the island of Mumbai long before the commercial invasion. Our spirituality was not pious. We hotly debated life, the Church, and the times we lived through. Individuality was seldom sacrificed for convenient agreement. Religion and

the Church were the milieu to know Jesus, to be guided and healed by Him, to work out life as we imagined His inspiration prompted us. Joining the Society seemed paradoxical and risky. But the Society, bearing the name of Jesus, might help me live Christ's inspiration better: with religious-material security, a definite priestly ministry which had status implications, and freedom from worldly cares, as part of the deal. It is a struggle to align with the Jesus of the Gospels. I accept the fact that my human and spiritual capacities may not sustain a greater degree of radical living. The Society supports my struggle. Thus have passed 26 years in rural effort.

**The Adivasi's Socio-Economic-Cultural Context**

Our Jesuit community in Nandurbar has focussed on the particular Bhil adivasi (tribal) community populating the northwest corner of the Indian State of Maharashtra. This is the region where the once internationalised 'Save the Narmada (River) Movement' was spearheaded by an intrepid activist, Medha Patkar. Medha has been a visitor to the Nandurbar Jesuits. She is an inspiration for my mission service.

The Bhil adivasi inherits a land of hills and vanishing forest, rivers and streams, plains and undulating farms. Along with a Jesuit companion Sanjay I undertook the adventure of trekking deep into this Satpura Range, until we reached the Narmada riverbanks. On the invitation of the Narmada Movement I have travelled by boat across the swollen Narmada on which the Gujarat State has built a dam through hectares of submerged and dead forest from which hundreds of adivasis have been forcibly removed.

I observe a wide range of adivasi life styles depending on the topography. The plainsmen tend to live in bigger village clusters. The hill adivasis have smaller settlements and are often strung out in single hut dwellings far from one another. Most of the settlements are entirely populated by the same tribal group, though there is an occasional sprinkling of mixed community villages.

The adivasis here usually live an ecologically consonant life. Most houses are built of mud and thatch, furniture is sparse, and so are utensils and other crockery. They cook frugally and waste very little. Indeed it is difficult to find refuse in their villages for everything seems to be absorbed into nature. But slowly sundried bricks now yield to firebricks. Mud bindings and plastering is giving way to cement. As wood for construction becomes scarce one sees the ascent of asbestos or tin roofing on concrete beams and columns. The invasion of TV and deafening sound systems worked on erratic electric supply or on rechargeable batteries marks the decline of traditional piped musical instruments and the resonant beating of drums accompanying native dances. Hindi pop gyrations may attract youth more than earlier rhythms. Modern transport and the urgency of modern commerce mean

that the habit of walking long distances or using the bullock cart is being gradually displaced. In short, ecological living is not so much by choice as by constraint.

The adivasi community is politically active. Adivasis are present in all political configurations. Their leaders are in government ministries and run large-scale social services. A few are well placed in administration. In the evangelical Churches they qualify as religious ministers. They are leaders in indigenous religious movements.

This calls for a mature partnership between the Jesuit community and the people of this area. The Jesuits are challenged to identify the real needs of the adivasi peoples and to strengthen their choices for a better future. But this they must achieve without playing the old trump of cajoling the community with eco-development packages and then expecting adherence to faith, ideology or strategy. To imagine the adivasi as abjectly dependent on the Jesuit or other outside agencies is an illusion. In a Jesuit Mission School which I, among others, thought to be the "best" in the area, we soon found that neighbouring adivasis did not restrict their choice of institutions to what was on offer from us. Our Jesuit community in Nandurbar dialogues with the adivasis through all we propose in human and spiritual development: village education, sustainable agriculture, self-help savings groups, and the boys' boarding. In times gone by the Jesuit community here tried to link closely with peoples' movements. Such protest movements have increasingly focussed on development works.

The economy of the adivasis, besides farming, is dependent on wage-labour in neighbouring Gujarat. I have asked why they migrate. They say: agriculture is risky; wages in Gujarat are higher; work in the fields doesn't bring in enough for all. Nandurbar's Jesuits once attempted to secure just labour contracts for wage labourers in Gujarat. Today, adivasis make their own deals with employers, hardly heeding outside mediation. Adivasis aspire to professional jobs in reserved Government services. The type of education they receive and their very poor command of English make it difficult for them to find competitive, commercial employment.

Adivasi religiosity is linked to heritage shrines like Mata Devmogra or smaller holy places. They have no large temples or churches. Theirs is a nature-based, culturally-customised-faith. Evangelical Christians along with Hindu Sects make a bid to get adivasis to join their particular Church or Sect. Diet habits are then affected; religious practices are changed or mutated. But so far, religious movements that offer adivasis plural faith options have not split the community radically. None of these movements attempts a dialogue based on human need or convergence for the common good. Development is left to political leadership and Non Government Organisations, one of which is the Jesuit Mission.

**Jesuit Response to the Context**

We present Jesuits in Janseva Mandal, Nandurbar, did not start the Mission. It was started by a Spaniard, Bernard Massot SJ, some 40 years ago. This pioneering, rugged missionary set up a schoolboys' boarding, initiated grain and seed banks, and organised the then widespread food-for-work strategy supported by surplus US wheat and oil. He had the intention of starting a formal school, but it was never realised in his lifetime. It is said to Massot's credit that he never bribed adivasis to come his way.

Indian Jesuits and collaborators, among them a lady doctor who succeeded Massot, introduced nonformal education programmes, legal education, herbal medicine research and propagation. These Jesuits kept up a dialogue with human rights groups and positioned the Mission as partner with those who agitated for, or assisted the development of adivasi society. They gave expression to the Kingdom of God rooted in a just order where every human being has decent living standards free from fear and discrimination of any kind. Their symbolic stand affected the way Province rural missions evolved.

But while the theological vision and ideology of our Nandurbar Jesuit community seemed progressive, what was our impact on the adivasi community? It was a classical debate among Mumbai Province Jesuits in rural service whether progressive ideology would have as much positive impact as formal schools, heavily (foreign) funded development packages or nursing a baptised community of adivasis. How could we assess our effectiveness?

One desists from opposing development strategies to those of social awakening. The legacy of development and conscientising efforts gained the respect of both the adivasis and sections of the local administration for Janseva Mandal. In some respects Janseva Mandal has been a resource centre for other mission groups. Janseva boys' boarding, our network of village learning centres, small scale sustainable agricultural campaigns, support to the women's movement and herbal medicine, animation of savings' groups, are all means to bond with the adivasi community. This bonding makes for horizontal relationships rather than vertical benefactor-to-beneficiary relationships. Responsible and self-respecting adivasi participation in our programmes is most valued. This does not preclude inclusion of bigger funded projects, or formal educational ventures, or building a genuine faith community, not necessarily a baptised church.

Closeness to the adivasi people is our way of incarnation. And from that closeness programmes of development take shape, hoping to enhance the freedom that helps an adivasi in deciding her or his destiny.

Institutionalised growth and improvement in our service to the adivasi peoples in and around Nandurbar could take place at a faster pace. Lack of "vocations", of Jesuits opting for the rural mission, for the marginalised,

for less secure ministries than retreats and rituals, our inability to engage professional laypersons and inadequate funding, may all be reasons. Or is it a matter of God's Will that slows the pace of our efforts?

**Agonies and Ecstasies of the Apostolate**

The subheading, taken from a book on Michelangelo, matches Ignatian desolations and consolations – descriptions of pain and joy, despair and hope. We have mixed experiences. We know that we cannot make any conclusive change in adivasi life. We try to offer a vision, a strategy; but the people make varying decisions. Works acquire relevance at some time but lose their appeal later. We constantly search for ideas and methods of implementing them.

Our teamwork is often tenuous. Sometimes we Jesuits may not agree on our strategies in the Community, Province or as a Society. We need to take lonely initiatives, at the same time accepting the support of Jesuits and others as and when it comes.

Linking one's experience to the story of Jesus Christ provides an intellectual and faith anchorage in service. That Gospel Story expresses the idiom of work for the marginalised. Jesus cautions us about the easy road; foresees the cross; declares that life must be lost to be gained, and assures us: 'what you do to the least you do to Me', whether or not we knew it was Him that we served, or had or did not have piety. Contemplating the Crucified and taking one's cue from that abandoned death helps. I am also challenged to be open to the Resurrection: when human solidarity affirms my steps and provides the means to carry out mission.

The tasks of adivasi development are fascinating as is all work for the marginalised of the earth. Bitter setbacks come together with precious advances. Every burst of energy, every strategy is thrown into this mission. One is often burnt out. Then suddenly, upon the weary horizon, hovers the Spirit, giving wings to dreams, new energies, to shape the Kingdom again.

Godfrey D'Lima SJ
St. Xavier Social Centre and Boarding
Janaseva Mandal
Korit Road
Nandurbar 425 412 – INDIA
<dimagodfrey@gmail.com>

# Community by the Wayside

**Christian Herwartz SJ**

The 32nd General Congregation declarations on the combined negotiation of faith and justice opened the way for the founding of our community. In the fall of 1975, after having finished my studies in Germany, I was sent to a Jesuit community of blue-collar worker-priests in France. I worked for various firms, as a driver, on pressed metals, and, after specific training, as a lathe operator. Later, Michael Waltz, another German brother, followed in my footsteps. He worked in a leather warehouse. It was with him, three years later, that I founded our small community in West Berlin, and both of us found work in the electricity business.

## A double integration

As blue-collar workers we wished to be integrated with the culture of our work environment, and at the same time, we wanted to support people with serious material needs. For this reason we moved to the Kreuzberg district in West Berlin, a neighbourhood where many residents from Turkey and many unemployed people live. Other residents of the neighbourhood include senior citizens marginalized in society because they are old and others in unlucky life circumstances. The neighbourhood is also home to artists and left-wing political activists from grassroots movements.

Our community grew. The first year we were joined by a Hungarian Jesuit who was a member of our community for many years before moving to Columbia to live with street children in that country. Later, more people from our own neighbourhood came to stay with us. When our community was in its third year, our order sent us a Swiss Jesuit, Franz Keller who at the age of 55 was still able to find a job in an electrical company. He is now 83; for many years he and I were the only Jesuits in the community. Michael Waltzer died of brain cancer in 1987. At one time, when we had opened the doors of the community to the outside world, there were five of us Jesuits in the community. Over the following 30 years, approximately 400 people from 61 countries lived with us in a pretty reduced space. Coming from very different conditions, they would knock on our door, and each time, we laid out a new mattress so that all could find room to sleep in our midst. They were homeless for a variety of reasons: some were sick; others were refugees, some were adventurers, some unemployed, a few were former convicts, or folks just out of hospital. Thus the community gradually became like a pilgrim's refuge, in which some people stayed for over 10 years, until such time as they knew what next step to take in life. Others left earlier. Our rented apartment turned into a place providing hospitality in an international context. We were living

close to the wall that divided the city into east and west. The contacts with people from the other side of this divide were very important to us.

**The inner wealth in us all**

In 1987, I was invited to an international Jesuit conference in France dealing with an issue called "Living with Muslims". A few things were clear in my mind there: not only do I live with people who deeply miss something (native country, health, language skills, a job, personal relationships), but, far more important, I live with people who carry an inner wealth within themselves. I knew I could and can live with people who speak different languages, follow different religions and have different perspectives on life. In the community, just like at the workplace, the welfare service aspect we provide has lost centre stage to the discovery of dignity in each and every one of our guests. To sum up, my life at work and in the neighborhood has been a road leading to an experience of incarnation. I have felt great joy in that and many changes have been possible.

**The world community**

International contacts are an important aspect of the community, as are links with other Jesuits across the whole world. This is made clear by the 34th General Congregation texts, which frequently both confirm where we stand and what our search consists of, and at the same time encourage us to move to further developments. It explains why the orientation towards inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, the statement on the condition of women, and the special attention to be paid to Africans living amongst us. Living, as we do, with racism in our country, these orientations are a great gift.

**Political prayers**

Fourteen years ago, in conjunction with the group "Religious people against exclusion", we started holding prayers in front of the prison where people with no criminal charge were being held, arrested solely because they were bound to be expelled to other countries. As Berliners we have suffered the experiences of separation and walls. We are outraged at this denial of freedom. That is why we regularly stand in front of the prison wall, which is a symbol to us of the wall that surrounds Europe or other countries like the United States. During the prayer we overcome borders and our lives can expand.

Six years ago, together with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, lay non-believers and occasionally people of other faiths, we started an inter-religious prayer for peace for which we meet once a month in a large square in the city centre.

**Exercises on the street**

Personal prayers at work and the community prayer in front of the prison wall have set the stage for seeing the Ignatian exercises in a new light. Surprisingly, in 2000 we were asked to provide "exercises on the street". This request changed our lives. The experiences we lived through during the first series of exercises were showcased in the 2002 yearly report of the Society of Jesus under the heading "The search for places to encounter God". Other series of exercises occurred in other cities, and our experiences seemed to us to be similar to the ones Ignatius had in Manresa. During these exercises that take place in the middle of a city, not isolated in a silent house, we focus on a single prayer: we tell the story of Moses who takes a herd of sheep in his care to graze among the bushes, and discovers a bramble that burns without wasting away. Drawn by curiosity, Moses comes closer and understands that the bramble bush is on hallowed ground and that he must therefore take off his sandals. The fire of love that burns without wasting away makes Moses discover for the first time his people's despair, something that he may have felt inside but to which he never really gave a second thought. The voice from the bush calls Moses by his name and asks him to free the people from slavery (Ex 3).

The participants in the exercises let their own "bramble" be shown to them, and with it their own hallowed ground on which they have to take off, in the most realistic way possible, the sandals representing a know-it-all attitude, the possibility of a quick escape and the need to rid themselves of feelings of low self-esteem. Such hallowed ground can be found in casual and modest places; people on the road; controversial social and historical topics; the pain in one's own history ... In many of these places God's voice lets itself be heard. The participants and those who accompany them are often surprised by the places of contemplation they discover and by the inner and external dialogues they have. The word "road" in the title emphasizes the focus on an open search for personal encounter. Ignatius' basic experience consists of looking for, and finding God in all places and encounters.

These encounters are the central drive to start an inner spiritual process, whether it be in a series lasting 10 days, or in just a few hours of exercises. It is the direct experience of Christ resurrected in our context and a direct experience of the Holy Spirit within us. This external and inner experience enables healing processes and decision-making. After such experiences, participants tell us their own biblical stories as authorized witnesses. They come from different conditions in life and various religious groups, or they may have no connection with the Church at all.

Some participants stay in our apartment. To others we offer a series of exercises in humble places. Information on this in various languages is available at http://www.con-spiration.de/exerzitien

**The community life rhythm**

Today, an average of 16 people as of now, four of them Jesuits, sleep in our apartment. I do not know how many of them actually consider that their vital centre is with us, that "they live with us". I am always surprised to see with whom I can live and how many people actually feel, in one way or the other, a part of the community.

Every Tuesday we offer the residents supper and give a talk on the week's events. Each person speaks about what he considers the week's most important events. After listening to each other for a couple of hours, we celebrate mass at the same table. Our daily biblical texts enable us to understand weekly events in new ways. Over and above this kind of "liturgy" – which lasts approximately four hours, including supper, exchange of views and the Eucharist – we have, every Saturday, an equally long breakfast to which about 40 people usually come. Each participant speaks about the themes and issues we have previously discussed. The community lives to the rhythm of these two meals we share with all the residents we can host, just as we would on a road.

**A spontaneous lifestyle**

There is no stated plan for chores and cleaning, no plan for reception and consulting; there is, however, great faith in God's guidance and the hope of perceiving his will in painful situations. We have anarchist-type experiences, based on the value of each individual. After the people of Israel roamed in the desert, the prophets refused to name a king (Jc 9). Jesus also opposed the power structures that daily exclude so many people. "Kings dominate over their peoples and the powerful let themselves be called donors and philanthropists. Let it not be like that among you!" (Lk 22, 25-26). We rediscover the freedom of hope, a common trait to all human beings. The conditions especially of the so-called people "without papers", folks who live in our society, some 100,000 souls in Berlin and up to a million in Germany, urge us to embrace this kind of freedom. The total absence of security in their lives challenges us. The trust of these people is a light we have to discover over and over again. They are like God's envoys to us from all over the world and we sometimes visit them. When that happens it is like a day of celebration in the very heart of the global migrations happening in our world today. To observe this day of celebration in one way or another, and not skip it is a step on the road of life together with those who bring witness of their misery. The unifying strength of our community is rooted in the spontaneous link with these people and, through them, with the God-made man.

**No professional support**

From a political, inter-religious and ecumenical perspective, the community lives in a challenging context. We have not specialized in any area in which we can boast of a particular social competence. Professional help has to be sought elsewhere. We have very different kinds of people with whom we discover community and friendship. In this process we find different kinds of dependency and addiction. Not turning into a friendship-addict or a relationship-addict is another great challenge. We do not want the eyeshades of addiction to bar the sight of reality; we want to find our own answers, a "yes" or a "no"; we want to know what we give up and what we believe in, like in the liturgy of baptism. We are all hooked to addictions: with many others we are addicted to capitalism and to making more money. There is also a clerical addiction in some religious communities – whatever their outlook on the world – and that is a legalistic obsessions which blocks the sight of reality. In the field of sexual morality, principles become more important than the merciful understanding of the people involved, leading some to fall into situations of anguish. We feel that we are invited to take a step forward on the road to union with God and the freedom he has given us as a gift. The joy that surges when the evil spirits are weakened and reconciliation occurs is immeasurable.

**Summing up**

To conclude, I should attempt to define our "insertion community", which bears the name of our street: Naunynstrasse 60. I believe the community has become a pilgrim's refuge, full to spilling point, but peaceful, a place in which we offer hospitality within a broader society that continually introduces new techniques of control and surveillance, in which traditional religious communities do not make much sense anymore. Our community is rooted in the encounter with people in a small setting and, in a universal context, in the reality of God who wants to surprise us in all and everything.

Christian Herwartz SJ
Naunynstr. 60
D-10997 Berlin – GERMANY
<christian.herwartz@jesuiten.org>

*Original in German, translated from the Spanish version*
*Translation by Roberto Scarcia*

# Experimenting with Different Approaches to Solidarity

**J. Timothy Hipskind SJ**

In a letter dated June 1, 2000, Fr. Richard Baumann, the Provincial at the time, formally established the Claver Jesuit Community as an apostolic work of the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus in Cincinnati, Ohio. He said the community would "live among the poor, serving them and sharing something of their experience," citing Complementary Norm #180. The phrase "insertion community" was never mentioned in the letter, but that was clearly the intent. The letter also indicates that the Claver Community would be established in a predominantly African-American neighbourhood in accord with the expressed "corporate desire [of the Province] ... to enhance our ministry with the African-American community."

There were five members in the original community. We did not have any parish or other institutional home, but rather, we took various jobs to "listen and learn." Dave DeMarco, a medical doctor, worked in a local health centre. Tim Hipskind worked in a community organization; Lou Lipps in the juvenile detention centre. Jim Hasse worked as an artist, portraying neighbourhood people in Biblical scenes; Mike O'Grady worked in the community service office of the local Jesuit high school. The priests in the community all served as sacramental ministers in the Black Catholic churches in Cincinnati.

Besides the work we did in our jobs, we also endeavoured, as one community member said, to be "good neighbours". Therefore, we participated (and still do) in pastoral council meetings, parties and picnics in the parish we call home (though none of us are on staff); and we attend community council meetings and "stakeholder" meetings in the communities where we live and work.

## Four Approaches to Solidarity

One of the things that emerged from reflections on our experience was the notion that we are a kind of "laboratory" where we can, on the part of the province, "experiment" with some of the theories articulated by our recent General Congregations. One theme that comes from the Decrees of GC34 has been especially helpful in guiding our actions: Solidarity. The fact is, we have discovered several different approaches to solidarity. Four of these will form the basis for relating some of our experience.

### *1. Presence*

We did not use the language of "solidarity" immediately; rather, the provincial articulated the founding philosophy as one of "presence," in the letter quoted above.

> *Our overall hope is that this small, apostolic community can little by little make a difference in our lives and the lives of our neighbors – not because we go with a grandiose plan but because we go wanting to be present, to listen and to learn, and then to serve whatever needs we can with integrity.*

Thus, the original jobs mentioned above were chosen because they afforded privileged opportunities "to be present ..." and to let the apostolic effort that emerged evolve naturally out of our presence.

"Presence" came more naturally for some members of the community than others, and so we raised a question regarding the importance of this element with some African-American neighbours, co-workers, and members of our parish who offered to help us with some feedback at the end of our third year. Their response was a clear affirmation of our presence. As one participant put it, "Your presences is not 'presence period.' Your presence is witness. Your presence is evangelizing."

Thus, presence continues to be one of the defining characteristics of our apostolic efforts. As Joe Folzenlogen, the director of Claver Jesuit Ministry puts it, "Presence is not something we just did at the beginning to get established. Presence is the ongoing and central element of all we do." Probably the community member who is best at presence is Lou Lipps. The young people in the neighbourhood, and many who are especially down and out, have learned to recognize when "Fr. Louie" is home, and have literally worn out a doorbell with their steady stream of visits. This regular contact is a great help to the whole Claver Community. It helps us stay in touch with what is going on.

The cumulative effect of many years of presence can perhaps best be seen in the artwork of Fr. Jim Hasse, who has worked in the Black community for over forty years. Jim's art helped us gain almost immediate credibility because when African-Americans look at Jim's portrayals of neighbours and church members they seem to say, "He understands us."

### *2. Work Towards Structural Change*

Early in the life of the Claver project, Fr. Tim Hipskind spent some time discussing the project with Sr. Dr. Jamie Phelps, now director of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies in Louisiana. After hearing very little, Dr. Phelps interjected, "It has to be about social justice." Indeed, if presence did not lead to work for structural change within these communities one could rightly question what we had been listening to and learning about.

In our case, the cry of injustice went up loud and clear soon after we arrived. During Holy Week in the first year of our presence in Cincinnati, Timothy Thomas, a young Black man, was killed by police under questionable circumstances. As a result, Tim Hipskind and Mike O'Grady got

involved with the "Concerned Clergy," a group that supported the Black Community's protests and boycott of the City and demanded specific action to address racial injustice. This resulted in a "Collaborative Agreement," and Joe Folzenlogen worked to get that Agreement extended when it expired five years later.

Tim also worked as a community organizer helping to stop Waste Management, Inc. from opening a garbage transfer station in our community. This action later led to more comprehensive action on behalf of environmental justice in the City. Tim and Joe also worked to restructure the "pastoral regions" in the Catholic Archdiocese so that African-American parishes would be able to work together and thus have a stronger voice.

### *3. Respectful Accompaniment*

One of the most interesting discoveries in the Claver Project "laboratory" was the fact that even groups that otherwise value social justice can, when working in the African American community, fall into patterns of injustice. Tim Hipskind noticed this during the community organizing effort previously mentioned; the members of an environmental advocacy group began little by little to displace the African-American participants from the neighbourhood. This seemed to be the result of the fact that the European-American members of the environmental group prepared high-powered videos, presentations, and legal arguments such that the neighbourhood people began to feel that they really did not have anything to contribute. Similarly, in other interactions between Blacks and Whites, Whites often quickly take charge of mutual endeavours, unaware that they are marginalizing Blacks.

Information gained outside the neighbourhood confirmed that these were not isolated incidents. Several national organizations have begun to grapple with the fact that marginalization is occurring in their organizations. These included Pax Christi, School of the Americas Watch, and Network. Tim and Mike gained a theoretical understanding of this process at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies. There they learned how "White presumptions of superiority and dominance" tend to marginalize Blacks in many settings.

As a result, we began to make a conscious effort to work with neighbours in their initiatives rather than start a "Jesuit" ministry that would do something "for" our neighbours. This has been the area of the greatest learning for us. We have gained a lot from our different "experiments" covering an interesting spectrum in terms of neighbourhood leadership. At one end of the spectrum are works in which we serve as participants and simply follow the leadership of neighbourhood leaders. Joe Folzenlogen and Lou Lipps participate in initiatives of the Community Council, Joe assisted in the after school programme when he first arrived, and Tim Hipskind participated in an Outreach Programme that was the initiative of a neighbourhood church.

Efforts that involve a little more of their own initiative constitute another point further along the spectrum. Joe works with a reading programme that he helped to initiate, and similarly, Tim helped to initiate a project to try to bring the youth and elders together. Neighbourhood people still basically run both, but Tim and Joe have had more input into how the efforts have evolved.

Another interesting "experiment" is the work to develop a neighbourhood computer lab. In terms of the spectrum of accompaniment, this effort lies between the other two. It was clearly a neighbourhood initiative, but there were not enough neighbourhood leaders who could work without pay to staff it. Because the board of directors is made up primarily of residents, the big decisions are still made by neighbourhood leaders, but at this point, the entire volunteer "staff" comes from outside the neighbourhood. Fundraising is underway to give us more flexibility.

Joe describes the ongoing challenge of respectful accompaniment as walking a tight-rope between trying to learn from the perspective of those who have lived here all their lives and know the culture from the inside on the one hand, and contributing our own perspective on the other. One advantage in thinking about our work as "experiments" is that even when we lose our "balance," we still learn something.

### *4. Service*

The final approach to solidarity that we find ourselves following is one of service. Whether as a result of the consequences of individuals' own bad judgements or of structural injustice, many people in these neighbourhoods find themselves with inadequate resources to deal with the problems that they face. Several times a week someone will come to the door or call, needing help with some financial crisis, or a ride, or a letter, or an advocate. Technically, we could be "present" to these needs without offering assistance, and frankly a real tension develops when we do. It takes time and energy away from more constructive engagements, and it raises questions as to whether we are "enabling" bad behaviour. We resolve these tensions as best we can by discussing dilemmas in community, asking our neighbours how they deal with them, by our own prayerful discernment, and in the end, in true Jesuit fashion, by each doing what he feels best, sometimes in tension with each other. The result is more data for our laboratory.

## Definition of Insertion Community

If we were to define a community of insertion based on our experience, it would simply flow from our experience of solidarity: A community of insertion is one that is present in marginalized communities, engages in respect-

ful accompaniment that leads to efforts toward structural change, and seeks to serve those in need as the Spirit calls.

J. Timothy Hipskind SJ
Claver Jesuit Community
3731 Borden Street
Cincinnati, OH 45223 – USA
<hipsj@hotmail.com>

# Taking Sides with the Poor. An Experience of Insertion Communities in Madurai Province

**Michaelraj Lourdu Ratinam SJ**

## Brief Biography

In 1973 I joined the Jesuits of Madurai Province. Music was my favourite subject but I was directed by my superiors to study for a B.A. degree in economics instead of music. In 1981 I volunteered to join an insertion community for two years of regency. This community was PALMERA, the first social action Jesuit community in Madurai Province. Later, I joined the same community in 1987 and worked there till 1993. In 1993 I was one of five Jesuits instrumental in forming a new insertion community called KARISAL at Alangulam, a remote village in Virudhunagar district, to work among the most affected Dalits in the district, and I have been there since that time. Meanwhile, I graduated in Political Science at Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai in 1988, and Mass Communication at Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA in 2003.

## Social, cultural, and economical context

Indian social caste hierarchy is perpetuated and maintained by the ideology of "pollution by birth," that is, people belonging to certain castes are considered "untouchables" by others. Today these "untouchables" call themselves Dalits (a broken people). In our state of Tamil Nadu (home of the Madurai province), three major castes (Pallan, Parayan, and Sakkilian) and a number of smaller caste groups comprise the so-called "untouchables" or Dalits. For many years Jesuits were involved in empowering the Dalits in those areas where the Pallars and Parayars are a majority. One such Jesuit venture was PALMERA (People's Action and Liberation Movement in East Ramnad), an

insertion community to serve among the Dalits of what was then East Ramnad district. In the year 1992 Fr. Mark Stephen SJ, province coordinator for social action, was looking for volunteers to start a new mission among the Arunthathiyars, the most disadvantaged people among Dalits. I was one of four Jesuits who volunteered to start a mission for Arunthathiyars in 1993 in the small village-town called Alangulam in Virudhunagar district.

Houses and streets in all traditional villages of India are constructed based on the caste structure of the particular village. It is easy to find out the Arunthathiyar street or settlement because it will always be away from the houses of the so-called high caste, usually at the eastern side which is traditionally used as a space for open toilets or to dump filth and waste. Usually, no one enters these settlements except the high caste men who hire Arunthathiyars as daily labourers, and moneylenders who come, especially on Saturday which is pay-day, to collect interest as high as 200 per cent per annum.

Just by being with them and visiting them often I came to know that Arunthathiyars are very hospitable, and at the same time, very poor. They have just one square meal a day. The other two meals are not, properly speaking, full meals. A study undertaken in 1998 shows that 95 per cent of these people are affected by malnutrition. With practically no land of their own, Arunthathiyars are mostly engaged as manual labour in agriculture farms, in building construction and as scavengers on a day-to-day basis. Though the state prohibits compulsory "caste-based works", some Arunthathiyars are still engaged in their traditional occupations such as skinning the carcasses of dead animals for leather, making and repairing shoes, cremating the dead, scavenging for the whole village, manually cleaning the toilets, and all work related to dead animals, leather, and filth. In modern times many Aruthathiyars work in matchbox and fireworks industries. These industries employ child labourers and expose the workers to fatal risks and fire accidents, which occur regularly. On the social level they are still considered "untouchables" and are prohibited from participating in social and religious functions celebrated by other castes. Forbidden to educate themselves for thousands of years, their literacy rates are very low. Most Arunthathiyar students today are the first generation to go to school or college.

**Nature and Types of Activities undertaken**

At the time I joined PALMERA the problems faced by the Dalits of East Ramnad district were basically related to untouchability and social discrimination. In some places it was also a matter of unequal distribution of both private and public wealth. The PALMERA team was earlier deeply involved in creating political and social awareness by organizing each village as a *Sangam* (Union). Taking proper and prompt action along with the people in any human rights violation that might happen all on a sudden was the Jesuit

team's greatest contribution. In 1989, nearly after ten years of PALMERA insertion, the people overwhelmingly expressed the need to give priority to the welfare conditions of Dalits. They wanted support for formal education, technical education for the uneducated, and state-owned government jobs. The Dalits' struggle for freedom and human rights almost cost them their traditional jobs, as many landlords would not hire them, purposely making them starve. The team changed the activities accordingly. Without compromising with the socio-political dimension of the work the PALMERA team began to take up educational and developmental activities as well.

In KARISAL the Jesuit team decided to tutor school students in the evenings for the following two reasons: teaching the children seemed to be an easy entry into Arunthathiyar settlements; secondly, the children badly need education, and evening study is likely to reduce school dropouts and child labour. The KARISAL Jesuit team decided to plan activities in consultation with the people themselves. After a number of meetings and consultations with the Arunthathiyar people themselves, KARISAL came into legal existence as a registered society in 1997. The activities recommended by the committee were: supporting formal education for students through evening studies and hostel facilities; providing basic technical training for the uneducated, poorly educated and girl drop outs; providing basic health facilities and training to overcome malnutrition in the target area, and imparting social and political awareness among youth and women through workshops and seminars.

The KARISAL Jesuit team decided to take up the needs expressed by the committee and, with the help of a few donors and the Madurai province administration, put up two buildings: one to provide boarding and lodging for the school students, and the other to accommodate the technical training girls as well as a small health centre to provide basic medicine and treatment. While supporting infrastructures were constructed at KARISAL centre, the Jesuit residence remained in the same rented house and the simple lifestyle continued. Regular village visits and organisational meetings were planned to empower the Arunthathiyars socially and politically. Contacts were built with other social groups in support of the Arunthathiyar cause. We also introduced other activities, such as use of folk arts and street theatre, audio-video technology, and learning and writing skills for social justice, to support the basic plan.

**Reflections on insertion community experience**

All my insertion community experiences are part of a simple way of life: simple but nutritious food, sharing rooms, walking or cycling to villages along with the villagers, eating the evening meal in whichever village we were visiting, wearing simple dress so as not stand out from the rest. Once, when I visited Masillamani and Arockiaraj in the village they were staying, a boy

came rushing to me and said, "Sir, the other sirs who are living here have four spoons for serving food: one for rice, one for curry, one for vegetable, and one I do not know for what. You must be really rich". I asked him how many he had at home. He replied, "In most of our houses we have only one big spoon to serve every thing at mealtime". I understood the meaning of poverty that day.

I feel that promotion of justice starts from taking sides with the poor as Jesus did. Taking sides to me means a close friendship with the poor. Such a friendship is realised only in our availability to the poor. We have our own schedules and timetables. The poor may need us at any moment because their troubles shoot from anywhere and at any time. This availability is very essential to creating the relationships, friendships and confidence so crucial for a meaningful ministry.

Once, when I had been visiting in the village and teaching the students only two months, I was given a night meal. As we ate a young girl in the family asked me,

"Which branch of our caste do you belong to?"
(There are two branches – Jaana and Thaasari – among Arunthathiyars).

"How do you know that I belong to your caste?"

"You must be from our caste because nobody else would eat any food, especially beef, cooked in our houses. Since you eat it, you must be from our caste."

She continued to believe that I was an Arunthathiyar until she came to know about my origin later. Identifying with the poor is basically partaking of their meals with them. That is why our Lord chose the last supper. Eating with them means a lot to Arunthathiyars. They never let a guest go without a meal. I realised that I had not only to receive them in the place where I live but also visit them with care and concern.

It was during my regency that I realised that I needed to listen to them rather than preach. I know very well that formal education would help Arunthathiyars in the long run. But how do I handle a person who convinces me, saying that the economic benefit from child labour is very vital for the child's existence? Do I wait for a change in the political or economic system that would take care of child labour? Or should I do something for these children? Or should I make the parents work for a solution to this problem? I realised that I needed to know more about what to do in such circumstances and that I had to suspend some of my convictions, conclusions, and certainties. I needed the humility to accept the voice of God in the people and wait for His will to act.

Community or group decision-making process has helped me understand other team members. Moreover the collective decision-making puts on me a moral pressure to be involved in the ministry in the way agreed upon at the group meeting. Certainly there will be areas where an individual can give room to his originality and subjectivity without altering the vision and the goal of the mission. I was part of many heated discussions in the team's decision-making process, full of challenges regarding strategies, clarifications on methodologies, pointing out of mistakes and omissions, and finally a fitting action plan at the end.

Just seven months after our insertion at Alangulam the new Provincial made his visitation to KARISAL and practically requested us to abandon the insertion process. The reason was that there were no compelling answers to the questions asked by the new consult members of the province: Why should four priests waste their time in such useless work and 'irreligious' circumstances? It was the Holy Spirit who spoke through us to the Provincial that day. At the end, Fr. Provincial said that he would let us go on for a year as we were all collectively convinced and united in the insertion. A narrow understanding of Jesuit priesthood and social reality is the reason behind such objections. Of course the results in the social transformation ministry are not revealed like mark sheets in universities and colleges. The social action ministry is full of activity, tension, process, and action. But the change is very slow and you need special social skills to measure the change that takes place. Both in PALMERA and KARISAL there were changes for the better. The political and social balance in PALMERA area now is wholly different from what it was before PALMERA came into existence. People who have themselves changed vouchsafe that PALMERA played a key role in the changes. Two research studies made on KARISAL activities reveal that there has been a rapid rise in the literacy rate among Arunthathiyars in the target area. I was convinced that once I knew, after group discernment, that I was doing the right thing, I would go ahead without counting the cost and waiting for a reward. The same Fr. Provincial after four years declared in a regional Jesuit gathering that the KARISAL Jesuit community was really doing something closer to what Ignatius wanted us to do than any of our other communities.

**The future of insertion communities**

There is a big question in my mind: are insertion communities relevant today? Were they dropped because there were no volunteers? Or were they dropped because they were not relevant to modern times? I do understand that insertion communities may not become a permanent structure as they need to change according to the needs of the poor. I see in KARISAL and PALMERA, a total change has taken place with the communities in response

to the type of activities undertaken. At the same time, one cannot underestimate the role of PALMERA or KARISAL as insertion communities in the process of empowering the poor. Indeed, every new social action ministry has started with, or been supported by, an insertion community. I still feel the insertion community definitely has a role to play in a country like India under the following conditions.

The choice of the target people and the area is very important for starting an insertion community. Are our target people the poorest among the poor? Is the area of operation our choice or the choice of the people who suffer? Have we made any study identifying the poorest among the poor? Are we interested in the poor who do not even have access to reach us, or the poor who come to us? Have we ever searched for the people who suffer the most? Have we ever visited the people who are most oppressed? Answering these questions will guide us in determining the type of social action ministry we need to do. Reaching out to the least should be the basic guideline in selecting the target people and the area of operation. While Indians find places among the richest in the world, it is also a fact that the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming very wide. The number of poor people who are marginalised and oppressed because of caste, unequal distribution of wealth, power, and money, and globalisation, is continually on the rise. An insertion community where no one has yet gone is the best way of starting the social action ministry in India.

For maximum effectiveness the insertion community should be composed of volunteers. The volunteers should believe in Jesus, the poor, and God speaking through the poor. They should also believe that all of us are equal before God, and yet God will take only side with the oppressed poor and the sick. These volunteers should plan and evolve their vision, goal, strategy, and the target people much ahead of living as a community.

The success of an insertion community depends mainly on the "Action-Critical Evaluation-Reflection-Planning-Action" cycle. Each element in the cycle is to be taken very seriously and all our activities should follow this procedure. It is likely that we often miss this exercise with our target people because it is very difficult to do physically and calls for a strong will. Openness to evolving strategies with the target group must be an important criterion to start any social action mission.

The lifestyle of an insertion community should be the one that supports the social action ministry undertaken. It was a revelation to me that many among the target people see lifestyle not simply as a means for living but as a value expressing our social reality. The lifestyle of an insertion community should therefore be such as enables the poor to reach us without any difficulty.

After all these years of living in insertion communities I feel very happy and peaceful deep inside. I feel satisfied because I have had the chance of

participating in the life of Jesus through poverty, humility, hard work, and detachment. I thank the Society for allowing me to experience this. Not once has the fact of being in an insertion community left me rejected or dejected. Instead, I have found in it a strength to share with others whatever I have and to empty myself for the sake of the poor.

Michaelraj Lourdu Ratinam SJ
Karisal Centre
Vembakkottai Road
Alangulam 626144
Virudhunagar District
Thamizhnaadu – INDIA
<michelrajsj@jesuits.net>

# Dance and Expression of Life: My Experience in the World of the Rarámuri

**Eduardo Quintal SJ** [1]

Among the *Tarahumar-Rarámuri*, dancing is a vital cultural experience, a way of relating to the *Onorúame-Eyerúame* – God the Father and Mother. During Holy Week and in winter these indigenous people have two rounds of dance sessions. In the first round they dance the *Pharisees* and *Soldiers* dance, and in the second the *matachines* dance. At different times of the year they also dance *pascol*. In this article in which I to share my experience of the dance and its intercultural elements, I will refer only to the dance I most participated in, the *matachines*.

Almost a decade ago when I was first invited to dance, I limited myself to understanding what scholars of Rarámuri culture have said: the indigenous people dance to sustain their world, and dancing is their procedure to pray and beg for God's forgiveness. Despite days and nights spent dancing with them, bearing the sting of long nights in the cold and the weariness brought on by many hours on the move and sleeping with the rhythmic monotone of a guitar or a violin constantly cruising my mind, I don't think I understood much, I could feel very little in my heart. I took part in two dancing cycles then, over two winters, but now I can see that this first encounter prepared

[1] Eduardo Quintal is the Vice-Superior of Tarahumara Misión in the Northern Mexico and Pastor of Jesuit Parish in Samakachi.

me for what I have experienced now, coming back to Tarahumara for the second time, two and a half years ago.

I went back to dancing matachines for three winters in two communities. The cold and the exhaustion continue to affect me, and maybe I have not advanced much in terms of understanding the deepest meaning of the dance, but from the perspective of my own experience of the faith, I share my understanding of what it is that makes me want to accompany this indigenous people from within their own culture, by placing myself as just one of them and by feeling a part of the community. This is something that I believe is essential not only for the Rarámuri, but for all the ethnic groups of the country.

The dance is part of the festive celebration. And this festivity constitutes the moment when the community comes together to celebrate, to make an offer of an animal sacrifice, to dance and to sing the glory of God in the Yúmari, to eat and drink in abundance. More than once I have stated that the celebration is for me an authentic Eucharistic experience. In this context, in addition to attending to my duty as a priest when I have to pray and baptize, I do consider that as a matachín, I belong to the celebration and the community, and what essentially I have to do is to dance and, as a compromise to the community, follow those who direct the dance.

I have often asked myself why I dance, what my motivation is, since I can clearly see that I will never be able to touch the depth of the fibres that move the bodies and set the paces, let alone what happens in the hearts and souls. But I have found out that as I dance, I establish a deep communication with the Creator, I feel alive and a part of this world. I then understand that this concept of sustaining the world – we would say 'saving' it – is, from the perspective of this people's vision, no different from maintaining the very life as it is expressed in the community. I also found that the dance shows up in their faces, in their traditions, their life style, their forests, their starry nights and their wait for sunrise to offer food and drink to God an the community.

In dancing one establishes silent, wordless relationships. It is the gesture and the symbol, the unity harmoniously constructed as one turns, over and over, up to the point of feeling sweat dripping even in below zero temperatures. It is the music that hammers body and mind till it penetrates heart and bones to lead us into other ways of being, and of being a part of life, a place where we accompany each other and we are one people, united and happy, where we tire our bodies and fulfill our commitment because that is what God has been asking of us ever since. It is body language, ones' gaze that filters through the cloth to discover others doing the same, the feeling of togetherness that crossing one another so often produces, the smells that scream out that we are a people of the corn.

To dance matachines one needs to make a complicated dress, though not in the material sense, since anything can be improvised, but one needs to

be open to experimenting a different way of accompanying the community as one enters an unknown atmosphere. One needs enough courage to bear the effort and to find enjoyment more than suffering. In other words, one has to be open to the novelty of a different culture and to find a meaning in what these peoples have been doing for hundreds of years, a culture of resistance.

This is the trait that struck me the most in all these years. Not the army's guns patrolling in the sierra, but the peaceful resistance of a people that comes together to share their life and defend it in their own way by dancing and recreating harmony in their community. The Rarámuri are strong but peaceful, they can bear any kind of bad weather, they dance and do not lose their joy in the cold, the snow or the rain, and they do this not because they are ordered to, but because that is what God appreciates receiving from them; all that they will subsequently share, they offer to God first. They resist by including others, by being the same, and by respecting those who are different from them. Carrying their poverty on their backs, they resist through the rhythm of a violin, a guitar, a drum or a flute. They resist because our culture, often a real invader, is killing their roots.

When I prepare to dance I am overwhelmed by fear and doubts, I think of how tired and cold I will be, I wonder if I should eat something to hold out, I am afraid they will tell me to direct the dance. I also consider if such an effort is really worthwhile, and I find my resolution in thinking that this is the way to be with them in their world and in their lives. As I dance I look around, I watch nature, I see the people, I do my offering at every round in front of the cross, I fill myself with the harmony the dance itself exudes and I discover the presence of God. It is clear to me that something changes, that something moves within me, something changes and picks up meaning. The other me ends, different from the new me that begins, and, it is certainly, even though in a smaller way, a simpler, more brotherly and humane me.

As I dance my faith grows, I feel invited to recreate life, to protect nature, to be community, to establish equality based relationships, to position myself from below, from within and from the periphery. I am learning that the people's poverty can mean abundance for all, that their resistance invites me to act and proceed in a new way and that their spirituality is well rooted in the earth.

They will continue to dance in the mountains, despite everything and against everything. God will be in this land, accompanying this people dressed in matachín, Pharisee or pascolero attire. The proud voice of Candelario, while taking care of his newborn son, will resonate in the voices and the echo of every corner of this sierra: "my son will learn the pure version of tarahumar, and when he is an adult I want him to dance matachín, like me and his grandparents." As time goes by, with globalization and communications, more traditions and cultural traits may be lost, but the Rarámuri

will not stop dancing. I am sure of that because I have done it, I have lived through it, and now I know it in my heart.

I understand their words in the dark of the night: "don't break up", with a double meaning, not let my life break up existence as if it were a set of isolated moments rather than one whole, and not to hesitate because we dance as a commitment to God and the community.

I feel a part of this wholeness and I share these very same dreams with my Jesuit brothers, a priest and two schoolteachers, who also dance with the peoples they are serving, who also live integrated in this world of poverty, who dedicate entire days of their life to share faith in a God who, dressed in matachín or pascolero clothes, dances in the mountains and finds expression in the joy of the celebration and in sharing with solidarity. That is how we wanted our lives and commitment to be ever since we came here three years ago, not because we were ordered to, but because of our certainty and love for these people who teach us, day after day, how to become more human, more of a community and how to give more of ourselves.

Our life amongst them is like the dance, we try to establish relations that show us ways to answer their vital needs; we want to join them in their struggle to defend their land and their forests; we are interested in living the values of their culture without losing our own, in building the community and the life of the people by being a part of it, not apart from it. Let this world be reconciled with itself, let fraternity and joy be lived to the full, let nature continue to be a home for the people. This is what goes with the experience of being with them, not only in the dance but also in life.

I am grateful to my indigenous friends for their courage and their smiles, for the blood of the offering at sunrise, for the teswino – a beverage of fermented corn – that we drink during the festivity, for their jokes, for the food they put out for us as we dance, for their stories full of suffering and joy, for opening their world to us and for the celebration. I pray for the strength and faith we need to keep on learning from this culture, to keep on dancing, and avoid hurting each other as we do so, to continue shoulder to shoulder with the Rarámuri, taking care of this world which God has entrusted to our care.

Eduardo Quintal Pinelo SJ
Wawachike Community
Calle parroquia 5,
C.P. 33200 Creel, Chih. – MEXICO
<laloq@sjsocial.org>

*Original Spanish*
*Translation by Roberto Scarcia*

# "So What Became of the *Social Catholicism* of Father Hurtado?"

**Jorge Costadoat SJ**

What has happened? It seems that the world that Father Hurtado tried to change has moved in ways quite different from the new direction he thought it would take. Chilean society, now celebrating its bicentennial, is so very different from the Chile he knew. Sociologists tell us that Chile's recent transformations are not due to Catholic Action, or to labour unions or to politics. Rather, they are due to globalisation, the market, and the genie of self-regulation. Who now ever talks about "the universal destiny of goods"? Is there anyone who makes demands of the bourgeoisie like those Hurtado made? It is true that the country has become more conscious of the reality of poor people, in large part because of the influence of our saint, but Hurtado himself would remind us that poor people are still the victims of an immoral society – they are not just deserving objects of our charity.

The Manuel Larraín Theological Center[1] has recently focused on *Social Catholicism* in Chile. Last April eighteen experts set down their opinions on the history of this movement, its most representative expressions and figures, its crisis and its future. This study has served to help us make a more precise distinction between the progress made towards the society Hurtado dreamed of and progress as understood by people like Francisco de Borja Echeverría, Fernando Vives, Juan Francisco González, Jorge Fernández Pradel, Martin Rücker, Guillermo Viviani, Manuel Larraín and others.

## A response to the "social question"

In 1891 Pope Leo XIII promulgated the encyclical *Rerum novarum*, a classic document of the church's Magisterium on social matters. Echoing the thought of the broad and influential *social Catholicism* movement which had spread to several European countries during the 19th century, Pope Leo undertook, on behalf of the whole Church, to discuss the dramatic "social question", made urgent by the processes of industrial capitalism and the dreadful working and living conditions of the labourers. While expressing profound pastoral concern for the difficult situation of the working class, the new social doctrine of the Church also reflected a growing consciousness of the consequences of the "fantasy of socialism" (so named in *Rerum novarum*, 11). The encycli-

[1] The Centro Teológico Manuel Larraín is affiliated with the theological faculty of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and the philosophy and humanities faculty of Alberto Hurtado University.

cal saw the propaganda efforts of the socialists as having consequences for both the Church and the people's faith. The Pope was not just fearful about defections from the ranks of Catholicism; his anxiety ran deeper. He realized that the Church had to become more aware of the social question and had to contribute actively, from its own vision of faith, to a social order more in keeping with the teachings of the Gospel. Charity needed to be expressed concretely, through a commitment to social and political justice. The Church could no longer be content with performing charitable actions for the benefit of the poor. It had to think about how to restore to the poor their dignity as children of God, a dignity based on recognition of their rights.

The *social Catholicism* movement was in existence in Latin America prior to Leo XIII's encyclical. At first it had to respond to the peculiar characteristics of the local situation, which was historically closer to a patriarchal, agrarian model than was the case in Europe. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, the Latin American social framework would undergo variations. In Chile *social Catholicism* responded to the great migrations from the rural areas to the cities, and thereafter to the migrations provoked by the collapse of the saltpeter industry in the north. Internally, *social Catholicism* experienced the rupture of the Conservative Party. It broke up into several currents, some more political and others more social; some linked to ideological orientations and others linked to the practice of solidarity and to different types of associations. This rupture was especially significant since the rise of Catholic pluralism in political matters represented one more step, though not the final one, in our attempt to overcome the mentality of Christendom.

In the sixties, seventies and eighties, however, social Catholicism in Chile was sharply criticized and in a state of crisis. Three factors contributed to its being called into question. First, some Christians were inspired and motivated by Liberation Theology in which they found a more radical path of social change. Reformed Catholicism was not enough: what was needed was a revolutionary Christianity. Second, in reaction to this revolutionary path, the dominant classes forcibly imposed the neoliberal revolution, which effectively negated the social ideals of Catholicism. Finally, the present generation has tended to believe that it is not possible to transform reality since it is so enormously complex. They claim that the social sciences portray present-day society as organised into subsystems that regulate themselves autonomously; as a result, it is hard to conceive how politics or other human interventions can change the course of history.

## The legacy

So what remains of Hurtado and his generation of "social Catholics"? What remains is the Church's stubborn insistence on God's option for the poor. From the Conference of Medellín (1968) to that of Aparecida (2007), the bishops have

consistently maintained that we cannot be Christian without opting for God's favoured people, the poor. In Aparecida the Pope himself reminded the Latin American Church of the Christological nature of this option. The conference documents state clearly that we find Christ in the face of the poor, and we find the face of the poor in the face of Christ. And who are the poor? The last bishops' conference reminds us that the poor today are those who are excluded, rejected, discarded. Moreover, the document does not content itself with advocating mere charity for the poor; it is not satisfied with contributions, volunteer work or other ways of showing pity. The Latin American bishops summon Christians to take action against the most negative aspects of globalisation and to struggle against the misery that is recycled in all parts of the world.

A lot thus still remains of Hurtado's *social Catholicism*, at least in the documents. We cannot really know if the bold wager of our Chilean saint, which is the same as the one made by the Latin American bishops and Benedict XVI (in *Spe salvi* and *Deus caritas est*), will be able to straighten history out. For the immediate future, however, hope is still strong. Moreover, this version of Catholicism reinforces the solidarity that is nourished by compassion (passion with the poor) and mercy (action for the poor), qualities that have inspired Christians since the very beginning of the Church.

"The poor person is Christ." This conviction is the legacy of Alberto Hurtado, and it is a legacy expressed in three ways. First, Hurtado's *social Catholicism* presupposes that society can truly be reformed by agents who work for its transformation; that is to say, a given society is not something imposed on human freedom as an inescapable reality; it is not something decreed by nature or by fate. A second expression of Hurtado's legacy is the Catholic demand for "the social", for solidarity in the Body of Christ, as against individualism, especially capitalist individualism, which devours our contemporaries as well as the communities which take them in and give them identity. Finally, there remains the practice of discerning the "signs of the times", which has obliged the Church to dialogue with modernity in its efforts to evangelize the coming generations. In this sense "social Catholics," like Alberto Hurtado, have bequeathed to us nothing less than the very task which the Second Vatican Council commended to the whole Church: obeying the God who acts in history, the God who is recognizable in those human actions which anticipate the coming of His Kingdom.

Jorge Costadoat Carrasco SJ
Centro Teológico Manuel Larraín
Cienfuegos 17 Casilla 10445
Santiago 834-0578 – CHILE

*Original Spanish*
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

# GC35 and Reconciliation
# Forgiveness Forgotten?

**Michael Hurley SJ**

"For me it would be a consummation devoutly to be wished that GC34 put an emphasis on reconciliation." This wish of mine was expressed in the Christmas 1993 issue of *Interfuse*, an Irish Province in-house magazine. It was not granted by GC34 but it has now been granted by GC35. A reflection seems in order.

1993 was the year I returned to Dublin. For the previous decade I had been living in Belfast in the Columbanus[1] Community of Reconciliation, a residential, ecumenical community of Catholics and Protestants, of women and men, which I had helped to start in 1983, and which continued until 2002. Our motto in Columbanus was an attempt to unpack our vision of reconciliation. It read "unity in the Church, justice in society, peace on earth so that the world may believe". Reconciliation for us meant an ecumenical apostolate for Christian unity, a justice apostolate for the promotion of human rights and a peace apostolate for the ending of war and violence including violence against mother earth. But a main aim of our prayer and work for reconciliation was to neutralize somewhat the scandal caused by the evils of disunity, injustice and violence and to make it less difficult for people to believe.

During my last two years in Belfast I had been conducting, on behalf of the School of Ecumenics, a research project on Reconciliation. The nine topics chosen included Justice and Reconciliation, Ecology and Reconciliation, Gender and Reconciliation and Eucharist and Reconciliation. The findings of the project had been presented at a residential seminar in the early summer of 1993 and published the following year by the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University, Belfast, under the title *Reconciliation in Religion and Society*.

This background explains to some extent my Christmas 1993 contribution to *Interfuse*. The article opened with a reference to the inclusion of 'reconciling the estranged' as one of our ministries in the 1550 version of the Formula of the Institute and to John O'Malley's commentary in his just published *The First Jesuits*. I had to admit that this was a discovery for me and I expressed surprise that, granted the importance of the document, spiritually as well as juridically, the word 'reconciliation' had not become part of Jesuit discourse as it was of much secular and theological discourse at that time. I went on to examine the preparatory materials for GC34, noting the use made of the term and of the idea of reconciliation in the reports of four of the preparatory Working Groups; and then outlined what I saw as the weaknesses and

[1] Columbanus was the Irish monk of Bangor, Co Down, who founded monasteries in France at Luxeuil and elsewhere, and in Italy in Bobbio and who died in 615.

strengths of a spirituality of reconciliation.

In stating that the promotion of justice was an absolute requirement of the service of faith, Decree Four of GC32 had added as an argument: "for reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another". But after GC32 the emphasis in Jesuit circles on the promotion of justice was so overwhelming that reconciliation tended to fade into the background. Fr. Marcos Recolons says as much in his article in *Promotio Iustitiae* 98-99 (2008/1). "In our collective consciousness, however," he writes on page 18, "the theme of reconciliation was at that time obscured by the vigorous affirmation of the struggle for justice".

But perhaps what I recognized as the "weaknesses of a spirituality of reconciliation" may be an additional factor in helping to explain why GC34 did not answer my request and emphasize the topic. The main weakness, I suggested, was the stigma attached to it as sitting too lightly compared with the demands of justice. A second was that it left itself open to this misinterpretation insofar as, concerned though it was with both people and problems, it tended to put people first, a change of heart before a change of mind and of structure. A third weakness I saw was that Jews generally found it unacceptable because, for them, to forgive an offender who had not repented was to condone the offence.

These weaknesses were well-known. They were best known in this part of the world because of the *Kairos* document published first in 1985 by a group of South African theologians living under the apartheid regime; and they were highly influential. In the '90s, the movements for 'national reconciliation' in South and Central American countries aroused similar negative reactions. The El Salvadorean Truth Commission, established "to assist in the transition to national reconciliation", published its report in 1993, but a few days afterwards the Government, ignoring the findings, passed an amnesty law, with little regard for the demands of justice. In 1995 one Irish commentator on the role of the Churches in Northern Ireland could write disparagingly of "the more anodyne and less fearsome project of reconciliation".

It comes therefore as no surprise that these weaknesses found an echo in some of the preparatory materials for GC34. According to Working Group 4 on 'Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue',

> *Dialogue [between religions] has sometimes been employed to conceal basic problems of poverty and injustice and to reinforce the status quo--evidence for the claim that it is a luxury which distracts Christians from more pressing apostolates ... We must prayerfully seek reconciliation and search for ways to heal collective memories.*

GC34 however was not as a result altogether silent about reconciliation. The idea and the term itself are prominent in Decree Twelve on "Ecumenism"

and in Decree Fourteen on "Jesuits and the Situation of Women". Decree Five on "Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue" also speaks significantly of a "dialogue and reconciliation which would demand from us the willingness to acknowledge our past intolerant attitudes and injustices towards others" (n. 16). Otherwise however, the references to reconciliation, though quite a few, are largely incidental.

What then of significance happened in the Church and in the world between GC34 and GC35 which might explain the latter's references to the topic of reconciliation? On the one hand, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission received a mixed reception, and in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda recourse was had to international justice tribunals instead of to Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. On the other hand, the celebrations in the mid '90s to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, and above all the various celebrations on the occasion of the New Millennium and the Jubilee Year, gave considerable prominence to the topic of forgiveness.

During these years apologies from political and church leaders became common. The work entitled *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, by Professor Donald W.Shriver, Jr. of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, published in 1995 by the Oxford University Press, came to exert considerable influence. But the leading figure in all these years was Pope John Paul II. Already in 1997 an Italian journalist had published a volume entitled *When a Pope Asks Forgiveness: The Mea Culpas of John Paul II*. His 1994 Apostolic Letter on Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000 stressed the need "to make amends" for "the sins of the past" and "to beseech Christ's forgiveness". His Jubilee visits to the Holy Land, to Greece and to the Ukraine and his addresses on these occasions highlighted in deed and word his commitment to a theology and spirituality of reconciliation. But the real highlight was of course The Day of Pardon in Rome on 12 March 2000. After the Pope's homily there was a seven-fold confession of sin by a leading member of the Curia followed in each case by a prayer for forgiveness by the Pope himself. The third confession was for "sins that have harmed the unity of the Body of Christ" after which the Pope prayed:

> *We urgently implore your forgiveness and we beseech the gift of a repentant heart, so that all Christians, reconciled with you and with one another, will be able, in one body and in one spirit, to experience anew the joy of full communion.*[2]

Readers will of course recall how all this Jubilee activity of the Pope aroused much controversy. To forestall it the Pope had invited the International Theo-

[2] See: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/documents/ns_lit_doc_20000312_prayer-day-pardon_en.html

logical Commission to appoint a sub-commission to consider the objections. Their report is entitled Memory and Reconciliation. It ended by expressing the hope that not only Church leaders but

> *political leaders and peoples, especially those involved in tragic conflicts fuelled by hatred and the memory of often ancient wounds, will be guided by the spirit of forgiveness exemplified by the Church and will make every effort to resolve their differences through open and honest dialogue.*[3]

Sadly, nothing like a Day of Pardon was held by the Irish Catholic Church: "another opportunity lost," commented one Catholic journalist. The Irish Jesuit Province did arrange a Jubilee Service of Reconciliation, a special Penance Service held at Milltown Park but, ni fallor, our Curia in Rome seems to have overlooked the Pope's appeals. In my disappointment I took the liberty of stating, in a paper read at the 2002 meeting of the International Congress of Jesuit Ecumenics in Velehrad, "The Jesuits haven't so far been asking for forgiveness," adding in a footnote: "not even for our anti-semitism, especially that of La Civiltà Cattolica which, according to our own Yearbook [2000, p. 156] was 'notorious for its anti-semitic sentiments'."[4]

Perhaps this Jesuit silence at the time of the Jubilee may explain to some extent the silence of GC35 on the topic of forgiveness in its treatment of reconciliation in Decree 3. If I go on to dwell on this, I do so in the hope that our understanding of reconciliation will evolve, perhaps in somewhat the same way as our understanding of justice has evolved. Father General referred very positively to this latter evolution in the interview he gave on 7 March to some Jesuit editors.[5] And, as we have been reminded by participants, a General Congregation never intends to say everything in its documents. It is left to the rest of us to suggest what we may find wanting in them. That is the spirit in which I continue with a critique of Decree 3.

Decree 3 on Mission is a very welcome addition to our Jesuit spirituality. It is memorable, among other reasons, because of the statement in the conclusion: "Jesuit community is not just for mission, it is itself mission." It is memorable also because of its emphasis, for the first time, on reconciliation. For me personally, because of my request in 1993, I am particularly pleased with the conception of reconciliation in paragraph 12 as an overarching ideal and aim: "to establish right relationships with God, with one another, and with creation." The provenance of this tripartite division of reconciliation in-

[3] See: http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0035/_INDEX.HTM

[4] This paper went into print in *Jesuits in Dialogue* published by the Secretariat for Interreligous Dialogue at the Jesuit Curia in Rome as part of the Acta of the Velehrad consultation on "The Role of Jesuits in Catholic-Orthodox Relations in Europe: Past, Present, Future".

[5] Made available in English by the British Jesuit on-line journal 'Thinking Faith'. I refer in particular to the section of the interview which appeared on 25 June 2008: *www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20080625*

terests me and I have wondered whose insight and inspiration it might be.[6]

But still, for me, the Decree makes disconcerting reading. It is a different world from that of the Preface of the second Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation which dates back to 1975:

> *Your Spirit changes our hearts ... and nations seek the way to peace together. Your Spirit is at work when understanding puts an end to strife, when hatred is quenched by mercy and vengeance gives way to forgiveness.*

The Decree does state that "there are powerful negative forces in the world", that "the world where we work is one of sin and of grace" (n. 18), but the radical change which reconciliation implies from sin, social and personal, from estrangement with God and God's world, to the grace of unity, communion, *shalom* is not emphasized. Indeed the emphasis is on the establishment (nn. 12, 13, 27, 30) of right relationships, though the more usual terms, "re-establish" (n. 24), "restore" (n. 16), "setting right" (n. 14) are also used.

Above all 'forgiveness' is conspicuous by its absence: the word appears nowhere. Neither therefore does the Decree refer, even by way of allusion, to the delicate process which reconciliation involves: a dialogue between the estranged, between the offended and the offenders: between those on the one hand who want and have a right to justice for the wrong they have suffered but who magnanimously forgo this right, and those on the other who say "sorry" and in repentance make the amends which the offended forgo.[7] But how could there be reconciliation, corporate or personal, without the involvement of both parties, without repentance *and* forgiveness? It is, of course, possible to have forgiveness from one party without a response of repentance from the other, and also a repentant making of amends from one party without a response of forgiveness from the other. Reconciliation however requires both, but perhaps forgiveness above all. As Gerry O'Hanlon wrote in his contribution to our 1993 seminar:

> *In the necessary struggle and conflict to bring about justice the unconditionally loving offer of forgiveness at the heart of Christian reconciliation*

[6] The reference in footnote 12 to paragraph 575 of *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (CSDC)* is not helpful and seemingly a mistake. My initial questions about the Decree focused on this section III and to paragraph 12 in particular. I shared them with Fr. Jan van de Poll, one of the Directors of our European English-Speaking Tertianship here in Dublin and a Dutch Province representative at the Congregation. He relayed them to Rome in April and the Secretary of the Society replied notifying him of two mistakes at this point in the unofficial text. However, only one of these has been corrected. The other is the CSDC reference in footnote 12. It should, apparently, be to paragraph 454, which is certainly more relevant.

[7] There is some attempt to discuss this in my "Reconciliation and Forgiveness", *The Jurist 56 (1996)*, 465-486; also *Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Second Spring?*, Dublin 1998, pp 54-77, especially footnote 24, p. 357. This paper considers some of the difficulties associated with a theology/spirituality of reconciliation, e.g. the relation between forgiveness and repentance and the relation between inter-personal and inter-group reconciliation.

*is precisely that most vital part of the process which gives the oppressor the space to change and convert.*[8]

It remains of course that, though the ideal of reconciliation requires both components, either without the other is a gift and a blessing. So establishing right relations, working, for instance, to undo a wrong, accompanying victims in their pursuit of truth and justice would be such a blessing, even without any attempt to help them to reach towards the ideal of forgiveness, to manage, to exorcise their feelings of bitterness and anger and resentment. But without such an attempt can this work of establishing right relations be seen as the expression of a desire for the reconciliation of both parties, the victims and their oppressors? Can it be understood as such, can it be meant as such? On reflection therefore would it be unfair, if sad, to suggest that much work for justice, for instance refugee work, may now tend to be inspired not so much by a spirituality of reconciliation but perhaps more by something like a human rights philosophy?[9] If so, Decree 3 of GC35 with its emphasis on reconciliation is a welcome, if challenging enrichment of our Jesuit spirituality. The faith that does justice will be complemented by, if not already inspired by, a faith that offers forgiveness.

Michael Hurley SJ
Jesuit Community
Milltown Park
Dublin 6 – IRELAND
<mhurley@jesuit.ie>

## The Jesuit Way of Going Global[1]

**Daniel Villanueva SJ**

The universal vocation of the Society of Jesus should be actualized today by renewing the sense of global mission and by using the strength of its transnational structure. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an example of this new type of agency for a public presence of the Society in a globalised world. These pages are about JRS as a challenge

[8] Michael Hurley SJ (Ed), "Justice and Reconciliation", in *Reconciliation in Religion and Society*, Belfast 1994, p. 56.

[9] Cf. *The Mustard Seed*, JRS/USA Spring 1996, pp. 2, 16-17.

[1] This document contains the conclusions (pp. 120-125) of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the S.T.L. degree of Weston Jesuit School of Theology in May 2008 (supervisor: David Hollenbach SJ). The full thesis, "*The Jesuit Way of Going Global: Outlines for a Public Presence of the Society of Jesus in a Globalized World in the Light of Lessons Learned from the Jesuit Refugee Service*", can be downloaded here: http://www.pastoralsj.org/goingglobal.pdf

to the Jesuit apostolic structures so that the structures may embody their intrinsic universal vocation, actualize their public mission, and do their best in our global context. This thesis emphasizes the current potentiality of the Society to make this happen. I started the thesis by talking about the impression that my JRS experience made on me. During the development of these pages, I finally understood that what impresses me, and many others, about JRS is its radical orientation towards mission. As a Jesuit I find myself delighted with a mission-oriented institution with flexibility, mobility, and real apostolic dynamism. In JRS, the strength of the "mystic" and the centrality of the mission are translated into real apostolic discernments and a corporate sense of body, lived as an open community on mission.

Everyone related to the Society of Jesus would recognize in these JRS features a sense of genuine Jesuit mission. This is probably the source of my enthusiasm and why I have focused not on JRS's aspects as a refugee initiative but on its dimension as a new way of actualizing the Society of Jesus. This thesis has been focused on the structural dimensions of JRS, as an institution trying to express, according to the signs of the times, what I think is Arrupe's inheritance from the universal and global vision of Ignatius and the first companions. The originality of the research lies in the focus on the structures. I contend that the global vision and universal scope of the mission of the Society make the structural dimension a key criterion to discern the apostolic mission.

The research led me toward the groundbreaking institutional dimension of the JRS initiative. I have demonstrated that Arrupe's intuition to launch JRS was not just motivated by the refugee crisis but remarkably by the complexity and broad dimensions of the problem and the suitability of the Jesuit vision and infrastructure to offer a global and adequate response. The refugee crisis deeply moved Arrupe's heart and it aroused his awareness of the need for a new level of concerted action for which the Society of Jesus was particularly well fitted.

These pages have shown how the creation of JRS is part of a larger framework started by GC31 and animated by Arrupe's charismatic leadership. The formulation of global priorities and the creation of the apostolic secretariats are also part of the same plan: the renewal of the apostolic dynamism of the Society of Jesus through a revitalization of the universal dimension of the Jesuit mission. JRS is more than a work of mercy; it is an innovative global apostolic response from the whole Society.

In this sense, I have framed the case study as part of a wider trend toward new ways of Jesuit agency in which three interrelated variables come into play: (a) the challenges and opportunities of the global context which trigger the undeniable potential of transnational institutions; (b) the evolution of the concept of mission in the Church and the Society which led to a new concept of public mission grounded in an integrative principle of justice; and (c) the original vocation of the Society of Jesus that bears intrinsic universal tendencies.

Within this framework, JRS becomes a pioneer initiative that merges the integrative principle of justice proper to the modern Jesuit mission and the progressive awareness of the universal scope of that mission. In this context, the study of the institutional progression of JRS becomes an example of an evolution of the structural adjustment of a Society of Jesus that has rediscovered its vocation to universality. Some consequences of the research are:

(1) There is an intrinsic link between mission and apostolic structures, especially in a Society of Jesus essentially oriented to the mission. The studied evolution of the apostolic structures is an effect of the Society's adjustment to a new comprehensive understanding of mission.

(2) Already present in the foundational documents of JRS, the argument of the "structural suitability" of the Society has been largely ignored. However my study shows how it was an important part of the argumentation used by Arrupe to launch JRS.

(3) The focus and the scope of the mission are key dimensions for defining apostolic structures. JRS's evolution is a perfect example of focus which requires a global approach, and mission that needs wider structures. What I have called the JRS's dilemmas point toward the need for Jesuit structures to adapt to supra-provincial missions.

(4) The differences between JRS and the regular structures of the Society are a consequence of the process of the adaptation of the Jesuits to a renewed sense of global mission. The study of the governance dilemma has highlighted the importance of the authority of the Father General and the intermediary governance structures regarding the universality of the mission.

My intention has been to show that JRS is just the first example of how the Jesuits are modernizing and globalizing their public mission, trying to deploy their agency through global networks of solidarity. JRS's conviction as a global apostolic work called to act through the Jesuit body allows me to extrapolate some of its features as a model for universal apostolic structures. Comparing JRS to the younger networked initiative African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN), experience shows that these new structures are (1) supra-provincial institutions answering global problems with clear mandates; (2) tapping into existing resources and building on continuing initiatives; (3) built over the official structure of the Society and linked to central government; (4) using the Jesuit interdisciplinary body and expertise; (5) relying on the mission of the Society of Jesus of faith that does justice; (6) working within a clear ethical framework; (7) networking with civil society organizations, and (8) working with Church structures.

The use of the model of transnational religious institutions has helped me to highlight three main potentialities of these new transnational structures:

(1) the strong orientation towards a common mission; (2) the powerful structural capacities in terms of wide scope and interdisciplinary body, and (3) the possibilities of these structures regarding advocacy and public impact. These theoretical highlights perfectly match with JRS's strengths and confirm that it is a successful institution because (a) it is built over the potentialities of its transnational structure, while (b) it is actualizing the most pure dimensions of a genuine Jesuit mission. All this is to say that the vision of Arrupe worked so well, not just because of the Jesuit orientation, but also because its structure makes it a capable agent in our globalized world and its way of proceeding takes advantage of its transnational strengths.

A quick glimpse at the Society is enough to show that the Jesuits do not lack resources or vision, but do have probably a problem of implementation. Given the current worldwide network of institutions sharing vision, mission, and vast expertise, my proposal is that the Jesuits should go further in the embodiment of their universal vocation by developing global apostolic solutions as a unified body. For this, they must (a) renew their sense of global mission and (b) maximize the effects of their apostolic structures using the strengths of transnational networks. The thesis shows how both objectives are parts of the same movement; that is to say, in renewing their original calling the Jesuits will activate the remarkable potential of their apostolic body with tremendous implications in their ability to act in a global context. For the Jesuits to be loyal to their vocation they should not just organize and coordinate their widespread network of institutions, but also generate new higher levels of mission; to actualize the universal vocation in our context necessarily means to act on a level of complexity only reachable through global synergies. The *Jesuit Mission Transnational Network* [which the author suggests on page 95 of the thesis] is a theoretical approach to the universal apostolic body of the Society that follows this perspective of a common global mission and its transnational potentialities:

(1) This Jesuit way of "going global" should be implemented through synergic networking, beyond a symbiotic relationship among institutions. It should propose, channel, and coordinate wider scopes of agency beyond the usual reach and influence of existing institutions. This implies the involvement of Father General's authority and the middle structures of governance.

(2) These goals require the development of networks radically oriented towards the common mission of Faith and Justice and linked with the Jesuit governance structures endorsed by the authority of Father General. They should be led by small hub-institutions, acting as "worthy parasites,"[2] using the multiple and varied existing resources within the Jesuit apostolic body.

[2] Expression used by Mark Raper SJ referring to the fact that JRS is not so much a separate organization as "a kind of worthy parasite." Danielle Vella (Ed) *Everybody's Challenge: Essential Documents of Jesuit Refugee Service 1980-2000*, JRS 2000, p. 117.

(3) In so far as these new networks are light apostolic bodies which allow fluid temporary configurations and multiple belongings for the current institutions, the Society would recover its internal dynamic freedom and its radical orientation toward mission without unrealistic changes in its traditional institutional weights.

(4) Through these concerted apostolic actions towards the common mission, the Jesuits will be able to act at the global level, as they were created to do, as their infrastructure allows them and as the challenges of the times require.

In summary, these pages seek to encourage the creation of global and regional networks based on a genuine Jesuit networking, enabling the Society of Jesus to address global concerns which are out of the hands of individual works and province structures. The Society of Jesus can make a unique contribution to the global stage if it looks for different points of focus regarding global social justice problems capable of generating constructive synergies within its body. I have described the ongoing developments within the Society in terms of global cooperation and networking, as well as demonstrating how after GC35 the Society is better equipped to embody these kinds of structures. The Jesuits are called to "glocalize"[3] their mission through this type of organizational challenge. The direction indicated by these developments allows the Jesuit global vocation to affect, transform, and raise up local apostolic planning. The tension between insertion and mobility (particularities and universality), intrinsically part of the Jesuit vocation, is the apostolic tension of today's Jesuit creative fidelity. That means that at present the traditional Jesuit apostolic boldness should be directed toward the current frontiers between the global mission and the local work. This thesis is a reminder of the importance of not losing sight of the structural effects of these new formulations of the Jesuit mission. Today, more than ever, the Jesuits are required to work locally but keeping "always in view the greater service of God and the universal good,"[4] acting "as a universal body with a universal mission, realising at the same time the radical diversity of [their] situations."[5] The *Jesuit Mission Transnational Network* is an example of what this horizon could look like. It follows the insights of Arrupe and the JRS experience as the first institutional attempt at the modern embodiment of the global vocation of the Society of Jesus.

Daniel Villanueva SJ
Mártires de la Ventilla, 103 – 1º
28029 Madrid – SPAIN
<danivillanueva@gmail.com>

[3] This term is used in business to express how a global product is adapted to fit the local particularities of each region. In social sciences it describes an active process of negotiation between the local and the global.

[4] *Constitutions*, nn. 623 and 650.

[5] GC35, D. 2, n. 20.

# The Food Crisis

## Introduction

The documents in this section are the outcome of discussions surrounding the Statement by Christian-inspired and other faith-based organisations at the Jesuit Curia. We wanted to present our readers with a range of views on the current food crisis, hoping that this discussion will continue in the Letters section of the next issues of *Promotio*.

The first "view" is a speech by Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See in Geneva, who strongly states that the right to food is a human right, and outlines some possible solutions to the crisis. Peter Henriot SJ of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection in Zambia offers a local perspective on the crisis, while Frank Turner SJ, the director of the Jesuit European Office in Brussels, explores different views of the European Union and its institutions. To conclude, Uta Sievers's article examines the issue of banks encouraging investment in agriculture.

# Statement by Christian-Inspired and other Faith-Based Organisations to the FAO[1]

*This is an edited version of a statement that was signed by over 270 organisations within a month of its publication, and presented thereafter to the FAO conference held in June 2008. The inclusive wording of the title has been chosen so as not to exclude any faith-based organisation from signing. Most of the signatories however are religious orders and institutes. A number of Jesuit works and non-governmental organisations have signed as well. The full statement as well as the list of all signatories can be downloaded at http://www.jpicpassionist.org*

## Foreword

1. In the light of climate change, concern about future energy supplies, an unprecedented rise in the price of cereals and the ensuing food riots in several parts of the world, the 'signs of the times' indicate the need for the international community to act with urgency.

[1] To the high-level conference on world food security and the challenges of climate change and bioenergy of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Rome 3-5 June 2008. This edited version has been prepared by Uta Sievers (Editor's Note).

Every faith tradition invites us both to feed the hungry and care for our environment and its myriad life forms. As people of faith, we recognize, without exception, the moral imperative to change our lifestyle in keeping with the carrying capacity of the earth and to protect its climate. We also recognize the need to ensure that policies enacted by elected representatives and relevant international organizations contribute to an improved quality of life for every human person, each made in the image and likeness of God, and to the sustainability of ecosystems on which every living creature depends ...

**Human Rights**

... 4. The International Community, particularly those suffering the consequences of food shortages, will not only want to see greater solidarity through programmes to alleviate the immediate effects of hunger, but will be anxious for the underlying causes (unfair world trade system, social and environmental problems caused by the 'green revolution', climate change, unsustainable farming practices, agro-fuel policies, speculation, waste, etc) to be effectively tackled, thus ensuring the availability of sufficient sustainably grown food for everyone's basic needs into the future – a future where the continuing impact of climate change on agro-ecosystems will present an unprecedented and enduring long-term challenge. We share the concerns of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in his call to implement the human right to food and we agree that only a 'normative approach' can gradually eliminate hunger.

**Climate Change**

5. The undersigned strongly endorse the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) IV Assessment Report, notably that climate change is predominantly induced by human activity, and principally caused by the unsustainable consumption patterns of wealthy countries, now ever more extensively imitated by upper income groups across the developing world.

**Transgenics**

6. Local communities must be fully involved in choices and decisions regarding fishing, food and land policies. We advocate a combination of traditional knowledge systems and the insights of modern science, and a fully precautionary approach to transgenic plant and animal breeding techniques so as to safeguard the integrity of creation, and the wellbeing of present and future generations of the human family. There is a moral imperative to feed the

hungry, but none to use transgenic biotechnology when well-tested alternatives can deliver comparable results in the medium and long-term. All that is technically possible is not necessarily good for the person or society. Under no circumstances should patents, as they have been called in the agreement on 'Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights' (TRIPS), restrict farmers' free exchange of seeds or constrain their innovativeness. Plants, seeds and genes are part of creation and cannot be claimed by intellectual property rights.

**Right to Food, Empowerment of local communities and of Women**

7. We support proactive approaches inspired by 'food sovereignty' and the 'primary right to food', question current conventional or mainstream agriculture, and believe in empowering small country farmers and encouraging local and regional markets with a greater focus on bioregions. In the face of new challenges posed by climate change, the FAO can greatly enhance its work by bringing traditional and scientific knowledge together ... We reiterate our deepest conviction that policies to overcome climate change and hunger must respect and promote the well-being of the rural family, especially of women, and recognize the irreplaceable role of rural people in conserving soil and rural ecosystems, species and related traditional knowledge.

**Biofuels**

8. We support the United Nations Secretary-General's on-going review of the sustainability aspects of biofuels production. Rather than searching for ways to replenish diminishing fossil fuel energy supplies at all costs, we must work towards restructuring our society to use less energy and resources, an approach equally applicable to food production techniques.

**Transport**

9. As an alternative to large-scale biofuels development, we advise visionary policies to reduce transportation demands, and shift freight/passenger traffic to non-fossil fuel based systems. FAO needs to continue to examine the economic, social and environmental impacts of first and second generation biofuels. The negative implications of large-scale biofuels production on food security and biodiversity give rise to deep concern.

**Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development**

10. We advise caution against 'short-term' solutions. A clear focus, respecting the integrity of creation, must be kept on eliminating poverty and unjust

social structures (which are the root causes of hunger), through a multiple options approach. We encourage a model of sustainable agriculture and rural development; raising public awareness of the importance of family agriculture; studying the impact of biofuels on the environment, and concern regarding the indiscriminate and wasteful use of resources of extractive industries that have a high negative impact on environmental and local conditions ...

**Education**

11. Information alone will not bring about the paradigm shift needed if the climate change challenge is to be successfully tackled. Both farmers and consumers need to be educated to value Nature's intrinsic worth as a gift of God rather than consider her a 'resource to be exploited'. Special attention should be paid to the information and education of women as they are not only responsible for household nutrition and management of local ecosystems but are also the next generation's teachers. Informed consumer choices in favour of small-scale farming and local food production need to be part of the solution. Educational syllabi at every level, but particularly for youth, must include values that promote a simple lifestyle and principles of sustainability, stressing the fact that the human economy is absolutely dependent on nature's economy ...

## The Right to Food

*Intervention by H.E. Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva, Human Rights Council, Special Session on the Right to Food. Geneva, 22 May 2008.*

Mr. President,

1. The Delegation of the Holy See fully supports the priority attention accorded to the current food crisis by means of this special session of the Human Rights Council. The primary tasks before the global community are to develop a coherent response within the context of the multiple initiatives under way, and to "mainstream" this crisis within the framework of human rights. We are faced with an overwhelming challenge – to adequately feed the world's population at a time when there has been a surge in global food prices that threatens the stability of many developing countries. This calls

for urgent concerted international action. The crisis shines the "red light" of alarm on the negative consequences affecting the long-neglected agriculture sector while more than half of the world's population struggle to make their livelihood through such work. It calls attention to the dysfunction of the global trade system when four million people annually join the ranks of the 854 million plagued by chronic hunger. Hopefully, this session will make public opinion aware of the worldwide cost of hunger, which often leads to poor health and education, conflicts, uncontrolled migrations, degradation of the environment, epidemics, and even terrorism.

2. The international community has long recognized the right to food in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (art. 25) and in the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights of 1966 (art. 25), just to mention some juridical instruments that proclaim the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and malnutrition. Conferences and Declarations of intergovernmental agencies have rightly concluded that hunger is not due to lack of food, but rather is caused by the lack of access, both physical and financial, to agricultural resources. The first Millennium Development Goal aims to reduce by one-half the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015. Society must confront the hard fact that stated goals are very often not matched by consistent policies. As a result, many millions of men, women and children face hunger everyday. Higher prices may cause some inconvenience to families in developed countries since they find it necessary to spend 20 per cent of their income on food. Such prices are life-threatening however for the one billion people living in poor countries since they are forced to spend nearly the whole of their income of $1 per day in search of food. The grave task before us is to design and implement effective policies, strategies, and actions that will result in food sufficiency for all.

3. The problem of adequate food production is more than a temporary emergency. It is structural in nature and should be addressed in the context of economic growth that is just and sustainable. It requires measures dealing not only with agriculture and rural development but also with health, education, good governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The impact of international trade on the right to food and the liberalization of trade in agricultural products tend to favour multinational enterprises and thereby harm production on small local farms, which represent the base of food security in developing countries. A renewed commitment to agriculture, especially in Africa, appears necessary. To this end, investments in agriculture and rural development are important. Moreover, solidarity with the most vulnerable members of society must be recognized as a duty. When seen through this ethical perspective, hoarding and price speculation are un-

acceptable, and individual property rights, including those of women, must be respected. The priority in food production should be to benefit people. Unfair subsidies in agriculture need to be eliminated. To remedy the limitations faced by small farms, cooperative structures can be organized. The utilization of land for food production and for the production for other resources eventually has to be balanced, not by the market, but by mechanisms that respond to the common good.

4. This complex and urgent debate on the right to food calls for a new mentality. It should place the human person at the centre and not focus simply on economic profit. Too many poor people die each day due to lack of food while immense resources are allocated for arms. The international community must be galvanized into action. The right to food takes into account the future of the human family as well as peace in the global community.

## Is there a Zambia Food Crisis?[1]

**Peter Henriot SJ**

There is a lot of talk these days about the "World Food Crisis." Prices of basic foods like rice and wheat doubling, riots in many countries, collapse of governments in some places, and projections of even more difficult times to come.

Is it correct to talk also about a "Zambia Food Crisis"? Well, let us just take a quick look at some facts and analysis that I believe we should all be paying closer attention to these days.

### Rising Prices

First, a story that one of my colleagues told me last week that gives some real life to the topic. It seems that he had torn a bad rip in one of his trousers and his wife took the trousers to a near-by tuntemba to have them repaired by an entrepeneuring seamstress. "Zingati?" she asked. "15 pin!" came the reply. And when the wife expressed surprise and asked why such a high price for such a very small job, the answer came back quickly: "Mapackets a sugar – 15 pin!"

Well, it does seem true that prices really have gone up all around, whether to repair rips or to sweeten tea! And everyone is experiencing that, with a ripple effect touching everything. The Basic Needs Basket (BNB) of Jesuit

[1] First published in *The Post*, Lusaka, 3 June 2008.

Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) for April showed the cost of basic food items for a family of six in Lusaka to be K742,700 – up from K654,750 in February, and K514,600 a year ago, in April 2007. The soon to be released May BNB will surely show another significant increase.

The sources of the increase in food prices include the basics for Zambian families: mealie meal, beans, kapenta, dry fish, meat, tomatoes and onions.

These JCTR figures that show dramatic rises are backed up by the official Central Statistics Office (CSO) acknowledgement that the much touted "single digit inflation" figure for Zambia may at least temporarily be a passing phenomenon.

Why the increases in food prices in Zambia? Surely the heavy rains and consequent floods have affected crop production. Steep rises in fuel prices affect transport costs that affect local market prices. And global costs of wheat – largely impacted by the switch from growing grains to feed people to growing bio-fuels to run automobiles – push bread prices here to higher and higher figures.

**Future Outlook**

What does the future look like for Zambia? Not so very favourable, according to a major report being released today in Rome during a summit of a number of world leaders (I am not sure whether Zambia will be represented). The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report lists Zambia among twenty-two nations that are particularly threatened by the global food crisis that has seen soaring prices

According to a news release about the FAO report, "High oil prices, growing demand, flawed trade policies, panic buying and speculation have sent food prices soaring worldwide." And the FAO director-general, Jacques Diouf, has said that the crisis underlines "the fragility of the balance between global food prices and the needs of the world's inhabitants."

When I read about this report, I thought of a comment made a few weeks ago during an evening conference sponsored by the Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ). One rather radical member of the audience had argued that Zambia suffers from a socio-economic situation of "the obesity of the minority and the malnourishment of the majority." Not very polite language, but is it a true description?

A not-so-radical economist, Amartya Sen (winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics a few years ago) wrote an article in The New York Times last week that seems to me to give a similar description that, when applied to Zambia, might be more polite but still all-too-true! According to Sen:

> *"It is a tale of two peoples. In one version of the story, a country with a lot of poor people suddenly experiences fast economic expansion, but only half*

*of the people share in the new prosperity. The favoured ones spend a lot of their new income on food, and unless supply expands very quickly, prices shoot up. The rest of the poor now face higher food prices but no greater income, and begin to starve. Tragedies like this happen repeatedly in the world."*[2]

**Urban-Rural Situation**

In releasing the April BNB figures, the JCTR commented that the much acclaimed improved national economy, while paying attention to keeping economic fundamentals right, should ultimately be seen in terms of people's ability to afford food and other basic essentials. After all, "the economy is the people"!

In Zambia the argument is frequently made that increasing prices of food will be for the benefit of the rural population, that is, for those involved in agricultural production. But surely that argument needs closer analytical examination. Miniva Chibuye of the Social Conditions Programme of the JCTR observes that high urban food prices could indeed be seen as a way for changing the long-time development lopsidedness that has favoured urban populations and therefore driven rural-urban migration.

But Chibuye notes that "one needs to recognise that there are preconditions to be met before rural populations benefit from increased urban food prices. Such preconditions would include improved productive capacities for rural populations, through, among others, irrigation schemes that would facilitate off-season crop production of these populations."

**Possible Policies**

So whether or not Zambia has a serious and extended food crisis will ultimately depend on some wise national policies. Discussion of these policies might not make such dramatic or entertaining headlines as the shouting matches between politicians but would definitely contribute more to the well being of the citizens of this very rich country that has very impoverished people.

What might some of those policies be? More space than this short column affords is required for a full answer, but some obvious suggestions include greater emphasis in the national budget on agriculture (not, as in the 2008 budget, a significant cut in expenditure), removal of food from strictly market considerations (a central human right should not be subject to market manipulations), perhaps some careful luring of foreign investors into the agricultural sector (and not simply into the mining sector), rural development

[2] See: http://tinyurl.com/5yvu42

that includes better infrastructure (e.g., roads, markets, health and education facilities), and some caution on the rush to bio-fuels at the possible expense of food production (prudent use of land).

On the last point about bio-fuels, Amartya Sen makes a trenchant observation about the danger that "the stomachs of the hungry must also compete with fuel tanks"!

What I am suggesting here is that we need to take seriously the mounting food crisis in Zambia and move it into moral considerations, intelligent debates and effective policies. Which political party is willing to take this up seriously?

Peter Henriot SJ
Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)
P.O. Box 37774
10101 Lusaka – ZAMBIA
<phenriot@jesuits.org.zm>

## The World Food Crisis and the EU[1]

**Frank Turner SJ**

*High food prices menace poor families. In the same countries, low food prices formerly penalised poor farmers. The EU is challenged to promote both sufficiency and sustainability.*

There is no more crucial economic indicator than the capacity of poor people to buy or grow basic foods. There is perhaps no more crucial macro-economic influence than the price of energy. When food and energy prices rise sharply together, we must speak of an economic, political – and spiritual – crisis. This twin crisis has recently troubled the EU, and also animated the recent international conference of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on 'world food security.'

Addressing the European Parliament in May, Professor Jeffrey Sachs said simply, "World demand for food has outstripped world supply." The fall in supply has various causes: poor harvests of wheat and barley in Australia, Ukraine and elsewhere have depleted reserve stocks. A lack of investment in improved farming methods can ironically be attributed to years of ***falling*** food prices. As so often, as the FAO pointed out, special factors affect Africa: as much as 93% of arable land depends on unpredictable rainfall, with a

[1] First published in *Europe Infos* (COMECE-OCIPE), July-August 2008.

correspondingly high risk of drought; just 4% of available water reserves is used for irrigation (as against 14% in Asia); and only 14% of Africa's arable land is cultivated at all, as vast tracts of land lie degraded.

Yet world demand has risen, mainly in the emerging economies such as China and India, in terms of changing preferences. Sachs repeated the famous statistic that eight kilos of grain produce one kilo of red meat: the world cannot afford to let other peoples enjoy the diet of Europeans and North Americans. But unsurprisingly, both the EU and the FAO rely not on curbing demand but on increasing supply.

Both agree that the principle objective is not to increase food aid but to assist small farmers in developing countries: by enhancing the quality of seeds and irrigation, and by encouraging local and regional markets, for example through better infrastructure. There lies here a tacit criticism of the dominant agribusiness model of the single-crop system for export, which undermines local self-sufficiency. This criticism is salutary, even if Pascal Lamy, Head of the World Trade Organisation, later warned against oversimplification, noting that if the Egyptians produce all the cereals they eat there will soon not be a drop of water in the Nile! He proposed "a bit more trade rather than a bit less". But the question is, **what type** of trade will support local development, rather than damage it?

The urgent debate about the food crisis has become interlaced with the biofuels / agrofuels dispute in a way that can become confusing. (The word 'biofuels', with its overtones of being healthily 'close to nature', seems to me best avoided.). The massive investment in agrofuels has been stimulated by fossil fuel scarcity, and reflects our insatiable demand for energy. But does it seriously exacerbate food scarcity? The EU has defended its current agrofuels programmes (heavily subsidised) as insignificant in terms of global food prices, amounting to 2% of cereal production. The Commission sticks to its plan to raise this figure to 10% by 2020, by using 'second and third-generation generation' agrofuels which will allegedly not compete with food. Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has sought to deflect criticism onto the larger subsidies of US industries such as maize. Coming specifically from him, this charge, even if not unfair, smacks of defensiveness, of 'trade war' language.

The EU should not be complacent. 'Targets' are always open to revision. But a target which relies on unproven second and third-generation products (not yet known to be effective or without side-effects), should be explicitly identified as conditional.

The agrofuels debate is so heated because it accurately implies that basic goods can, at some level, conflict. How the conflict is resolved will be significant: for the poor of the world, but also for the EU's belief in the solidarity it proclaims with them. Almost invariably, macro-economic decisions are made by the powerful, for profit. Then, in a genuinely humanitarian but **sec-**

**ondary** moment, unintended human consequences are mitigated by some form of aid. We must do better than that.

Frank Turner SJ
Jesuit European Office (OCIPE)
51 rue du Cornet, B – 1040
Bruxelles – BELGIUM
<turner@ocipe.info>

## Invest all your Money in Agriculture?

**Uta Sievers**

The commodities markets (especially metal) continue to boom, but in view of the rising food prices, a number of banks[1] are now promoting investment in the agricultural sector among their clients. For the same reasons that are of concern to the FAO, civil society organisations and religious institutes (see the Statement on page 125), investment banks reckon that the right moment has come to buy shares in agriculture.

For example, the website of the Global Agri Cap fund (http://www.globalagricap.com) – which openly states what other banks send "confidentially" only to customers with the right amount of money to invest – lists the positive effects on investments that some of the most worrying trends will have.[2] "Higher demand" is the obvious economic factor that offers an almost guaranteed return for investors in the agricultural sector. This higher demand is caused by increase in population and life expectancy, increase in wealth that generates demand for more meat,[3] and for more energy (leading to greater use of biofuels as oil resources dwindle). In addition, there is "Supply Disruption", since "Global Warming will have a negative impact on food supplies", resulting in further strain on food prices, a situation that is set to 'improve' in the future: "Greenhouse gases, pollution and lack of clear global policy will mean that the problem of climate change and global warming is going to continue"[4]. Other "disruptions" are likely to result from limited oil and water resources and the fact that urbanisation is leading to a decrease in arable land – which is being bought up by global companies with an interest in obtaining maximum gain from it.

[1] Hedge funds, private equity funds, investment funds and others are here subsumed under the generic term "banks."

[2] http://www.globalagricap.com/agriculture.html

[3] http://www.globalagricap.com/rising-income.html

[4] http://www.globalagricap.com/global-warming.html

Two observations: While some people are still wondering if Global Warming is actually happening, others are already trying to make money from it. And secondly, within the "shadow banking system"[5] of hedge funds and other commercial activities, people have used small scale action to circumvent national and international regulations of the banking sector, spreading financial risk through the worldwide banking system. The answer might be, according to a paper by an NGO activist,[6] the development, support and defence of networks that share risk consensually and transparently, like community-supported farms, rather than lobbying individual companies and international organisations like the World Bank.[7]

Uta Sievers
Communications Officer
Social Justice Secretariat
<uta@sjcuria.org>

[5] Gillian Tett and Paul J Davies, "Out of the shadows: How banking's secret system broke down", *Financial Times*, 16 December 2007, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/42827c50-abfd-11dc-82f0-0000779fd2ac.html

[6] The final version of the paper is available at http://tinyurl.com/3w6wwc

[7] This principle was expressed in *Populorum Progressio* (1967): "Individual initiative alone and the mere free play of competition could never assure successful development. One must avoid the risk of increasing still more the wealth of the rich and the dominion of the strong, whilst leaving the poor in their misery and adding to the servitude of the oppressed. Hence programs are necessary in order to encourage, stimulate, coordinate, supplement and integrate (MM, n. 44) the activity of individuals and of intermediary bodies."

# The Indigenous University of Venezuela

**Rodrigo Aguayo SJ**

The "itinerant team" is a group of lay people and religious working in different states of the Amazon basin on behalf of marginalized groups who inhabit the jungle, the riverbanks and the city. The team accompanies river communities, urban groups and indigenous peoples who want to make the Church present in places where there is nobody else. The team members invited me to join a pilgrimage northward, to Venezuela, to learn about what they called the Indigenous University of Venezuela (UIV, its Spanish acronym). The journey from Manaus was long, almost two days. Although the team works principally in Brazil, the indigenous peoples pay little attention to national borders. I was invited to undertake the journey by Fernando López SJ,[1] who told me repeatedly to erase any model of a university I might have stored up in my mind and to open myself up to a different concept. When I arrived there I understood what he was talking about.

Fernando was right: one had to forget the usual ideas one has of a university, whatever they might be. The UIV occupies an extended area comparable with the campuses of the world's most prestigious universities, except that, instead of buildings there are mango trees as well as many other varieties of trees. The only roads on the campus are paths traced out by frequent traffic by foot, and I warn you: it's easy to get lost on them! The UIV does not display that prestigious atmosphere that other universities try to create; here another type of reputation is sought.

What does make it similar to other universities however is that the UIV takes in young people. The main requirement for admission is that they be sent there by their community and their elders. Thus the young people who arrive are Yekuanas, Eñepás, Pumés, Waraos, Sanemas, Pemones and Piaroas. At the UIV each indigenous community has its own space where the students' life is organized according to their own customs and traditions. The idea is that each community should be able to develop its culture, and for that to be done properly, ample space is needed. It is possible to walk for several minutes through the campus without finding a single building, and then suddenly one sees a cluster of cabins where the young people live together in a style that accords with their history and culture.

[1] Spanish Jesuit from the Canary Islands, member of the Paraguay Province, one of the founders of the itinerant team.

Inside one cabin, which is larger than most, you find murals featuring the faces of different indigenous peoples; the faces observe you, as if summoning you to go somewhere. This is the place where the different groups of students meet to do their "discernment" or to reflect on what has happened in the course of the day. We were able to witness an evaluation meeting that was taking place there – or rather, it was a moment when the young people shared their experiences with one another, their impressions, histories, dreams, critiques. To examine all the aspects of the UIV they used the famous SWOT method (analyzing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), which facilitates and orients dialogue. More than the results of this method, what I understood was that the young people are clear about what they want: they want to know one another better, to protect their communities, to be sound in body and mind, to listen to their elders, to protect their children. I was left with the sensation that all those goals, which appear so simple and normal, just part of their trying to live authentically as indigenous people, are nonetheless tasks that we might well call "titanic". Defending their identity and their life is a tremendously difficult undertaking for them, and they need special training to help them achieve it.

The written word is very important here, since it allows them to preserve the narratives that express and explain their lives. That is the principal labour of the students of the UIV: they dedicate themselves to setting down in writing the ancient narratives of their peoples, and they do so in their own language, working with others from the same community. These documents are so important that every measure is taken to assure that they are preserved; for that reason the university's computer system is one of the best to be found. There they record the narratives and the histories of their elders so that they can be published later. Their work requires much discussion with the elders and other persons in the community.

At the university the students also dedicate time to learning about new areas of production and self-management such as will benefit their community and assist dialogue and cooperation with the non-indigenous community. They studies include, indigenous legislation, computer science, apiculture, fish-farming, ceramic arts and the Spanish language.

For the students the university has been a huge, oversized mirror: not one of those that shows you just your face, but the kind of mirror where you can see your whole body, along with the people around you. That is the only way they can perceive and appreciate the fullness of their own beauty. I have witnessed in the UIV the most countercultural gesture that may be seen: students recognizing themselves as indigenous and feeling proud of it. Their pride becomes evident when they speak of the university and their ties to it, since it is clear that the school belongs to them, and they recognize that its future depends on this sense of affiliation. For that reason some of them make a commitment not only to help in its construction, but also to show their

elders and their communities the opportunities offered by that grand space and to convince other youngsters from their community to take advantage of these opportunities. In this way they make concrete their resolve to dedicate themselves to the defence of their ancestral culture.

There I had the chance to hear Brother Korta SJ, who has given his whole life in defence of the indigenous peoples. They claim he was the one who gave birth to the idea of the UIV. The person I observed was an old man with a strange accent, whom the indigenous youngsters treated with a mixture of profound respect, affection and humour, and with a confidence born of great familiarity. They recognised his leadership, his vision, and his concerns, but at the same time they were aware that he had to leave space for others to continue to measure up to the challenges of the UIV. You can learn a lot from Brother Korta, or simply Korta, as everybody called him, but what you learn is not a type of reflective knowledge. Rather, it is the practical wisdom of someone who has seen and heard much from the native peoples, and has also done much for them. He speaks with a certainty that inspires confidence, especially about how the communities need, for their own good, to defend their cultures and grow as a people. He is the kind of person who knows that they only way to be effective is to disappear gradually oneself. I was able also to hear the words of Adedukawa, who was an excellent leader while studying at the UIV and then served as coordinator of the school for several years. It was he who welcomed us to the UIV, which is truly his home, and he was constantly asking us if we needed anything. He is now finishing his term as coordinator of the university and feels a need to return to his community in order, as he puts it, "to keep working for my own people, but now not in the university, but there among them." Huisiyuma has taken over the leadership role, convinced of the project's value and conscious of the new responsibility.

I also listened to Ana, who has a western name, but that really is her name. In the university they asked her to adopt an indigenous name. She asked the elders who know about such things, and they gave her one that would identify her. She had gone to a non-indigenous school and had done well there, but as she realizes herself, it is in the UIV where she feels she has really learned things, especially to love herself as an indigenous woman. She is a strong woman with a good sense of humour, and she will, for that reason, be adept in a context where the leadership is mainly male. She is a woman who demands respect and clearly gets it.

Listening to the indigenous youth as they spoke about themselves, I was able to connect with what I am in my own depths: a mestizo who doesn't know where he comes from, but who wants to know. They recognize that the "discovery" they need for themselves will buttress their own identity, so that they can properly value their own culture and protect it. They have been steadily developing their visions of life, analyzing what they really want, and confronting the culture that besieges them. They do this by living in

community, but they do not avoid dialogue with the external world. I was won over by them, though in no way did I feel any pressure on my freedom. I discovered that our western culture really does not exist as such, but is more a jumbled bunch of elements – our way of explaining the distress that comes from not cultivating ourselves and our own origins. In the end, that particular reality which is the UIV was a universal call for us all to return to our own roots and from thence to build up a global vision. Finally I understood what it really means to create a university.

Rodrigo Aguayo Beroiz SJ
15 Avon Street
Cambridge, MA 02138 – USA
<aguayosj@gmail.com>

*Original Spanish*
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

## Stemming the Tide

**Jörg Alt SJ**

Education and electricity are good, no doubt about that. But as with every good thing, there can be side effects. Chocolate can fatten, too much dancing kills your joints, medication against pain can cause stomach problems. It is the same with electricity and education; good on the one hand, and alienating people from their cultural context on the other.

I write this from Toledo District, the southernmost District in Belize, a cultural mix of Q'eqchi and Mopan Maya, Garifuna, Kreol, Mestizo, East Indians, Chinese and others. The largest town is Punta Gorda with a population of about 5000-8000; the villages have between 150 and 2500 inhabitants. The parish serves 36 villages and runs 30 Primary Schools. Almost all the villages are connected by dirt roads, and an increasing number of villages are getting electrified – just this year four villages received solar panels. We note with pride the quality of the Belizean School system which is, compared to other countries in Central America, good, and gets better: the passing standards of the Primary School Examinations and the number of High School Graduates are continually on the rise.

At the same time it is obvious that the problems of the young are undoubtedly increasingly. This is not so obvious in the town, since youngsters in towns tend towards delinquency more than those in the rural villages with their hallowed traditional social order. But now, even in the remote

Maya villages of the district, young people no longer respect parents, elders and local authorities; they form gangs, lounge around and commit crimes. And the awareness grows that all this has to do with electricity and education, especially at High School Level.

It is obvious that this development runs parallel with the progress of roads (essential for buses to get children to High School) and electrification. When they begin High School, students spend more time on the school bus and in school than they do in their villages. They leave as early as 3.30 am and return at 6 pm, after which they still have to do their homework. This means that they spend most of their time with peers. Here they are introduced to videos, movies, music and the internet. And it shows. Action movies with Bruce Lee and Arnold Schwarzenegger, CDs with Convict and Hip Hop music are easy to get. With the coming of electricity, pirated DVDs and CDs appear, which are then multiplied through copies made by burning CDs. These are followed by baggy pants and bandannas in the colours of the Cribs and Bloods, famous Los Angeles gangs. All these elements pop up in a setting whose life pattern has been basically unchanged for centuries. It is a curious experience to take an evening walk through these villages and see thatched houses with dirt floor and open fire in one corner, and, in the other corner – thanks to Solar Energy – teenagers glued to a brand-new TV set which shows Dirty Harry chasing bad guys in New York. Parents are excluded from these 'pleasures' owing to their poor command of the English language.

If you ask the teenagers why they find all this fascinating they have a universal answer: "It's cool!" or "It's what my friends like and talk about!" Friends, as mentioned earlier, are the ones with whom they spend most of their daily life after returning from High School! If you ask them about the background depicted in these movies, namely societies with a crime rate and degree of materialism unknown in Toledo, about individuals resolving fights with guns or knives, or about the limits of material wealth, you receive a blank stare. These kids just copy what their peers do and see without understanding anything of the context underlying these images that pour in from the United States of America.

High School itself offers little to help them by way of intellectual understanding, to deal with all this that comes from outside. If you look at the curriculum, you might as well be in an American or English school. The educational programme of the High Schools focuses on language, the arts, mathematics, and business. A lot of time is devoted to learning things by heart and reproducing them for examinations. Group work in small groups and role-play are rare perhaps because the size of the classes requires the teacher to focus on discipline rather than attending to individual needs for personal development.

As far as the preservation and promotion of local culture are concerned, the school limits its task to imparting some superficial knowledge in the portion of the curriculum devoted to universal cultures, and to having annual

"Cultural Days" and "Cultural Festivals". Here members of the different ethnic groups perform traditional dances and offer ethnic food. But it is getting increasingly difficult to persuade young people to do their bit in these areas; their performances seem odd beside the endless flow of images and values made available by DVDs, CDs and the Internet.

There is another problem. The young Maya are, of course, aware that their ancestors built beautiful towns and temples and that they are the heirs to a wonderful culture deeply admired by scholars and tourists. But all these are dead ruins; their underlying culture and tradition are not tangibly alive and visible. (Of course, as we found out, there was a lot going on in hidden corners, but this was not known to their own people). Thus it is not, for the purpose of orientation, as real and close as what they find elsewhere on a daily basis.

Families, elders and leaders of the various ethnic groups do not offer a convincing integrated understanding of their own culture, which could serve as an attractive alternative. Cultural world-views and various kinds of activities stand juxtaposed in a loosely connected fashion. For example, the people are Christians but they also hold traditional mythological Maya or Garifuna beliefs. They are Catholics while receiving Sacraments, but otherwise go to the Methodists and Baptists for their weekly worship. They all believe in One Supreme Creator God, but this term is filled with a different content, depending on whether you talk to a Christian or a Maya. For the Christians, God is absolutely in command, and Angels and Saints just execute his orders and fulfill his divine will. For the Maya, the Supreme God is a *primus inter pares*, with other gods besides him often pursuing their own agenda. And these gods again are flanked by numerous regional and local spirits and finally dead ancestors who may lead a life of their own. While you cannot manipulate spiritual forces within the Christian religion, you can do so in the Maya cosmos – to both good and bad effect. If you point out the problems and contradictions in what they are doing, they merely shrug their shoulders. At a superficial level, everything works for them in their practical conduct of life.

Not much was done over the past decades to address these problems. The (usually) American priests were busy building schools and churches and dispensing sacraments. The people, sometimes with, sometimes without, the active support of the local catechists, still adhered to practices which they hid from the priests in their homes, or carried out in the village churches when the priests were not around, especially at night. There was no question of dialogue with the priests for the people knew that they would resent certain practices such as blood sacrifices, which are required for traditional prayers while planting, or while appeasing the ancestors.

One event however changed all that. In the spring of 2007, an increasing number of children in our school at Big Falls showed signs of possession. They were affected by a mysterious presence in the school compound, which led to fits and breakdowns; it took several adults to hold down an affected

child and prevent self-inflicted injury. They would talk of messages from dead persons and spirits. Eventually, after 21 children and 1 teacher became affected, the school had to be closed down. This occurrence sent shockwaves not only through our parish and district, but the entire country. Even those without vivid religious convictions were suddenly interested and engaged in discussing these questions; many things hidden in backrooms were suddenly shouted from the rooftops. Soon it was obvious that

a. there are similar, though individual, cases in almost all villages, shyly referred to by the people as "the sickness";

b. traditional western medication (pharmaceuticals, psychotherapy) and traditional Christian prayers alone cannot solve the problem; and

c. there is need of a constructive dialogue between teachers, doctors, priests and traditional wise people of the Maya and Garifuna Culture on how to address the situation.

Bringing experts from these groups together led to a number of insights:

1. This kind of spells and voodoo flourishes in an atmosphere of fear. What is needed is to educate our people in the truths of our Catholic faith in an all-powerful God of Love.

2. This requires a discussion of the context: in the Christian and the Maya religions, which symbols are compatible and which are not?

3. A critical scrutiny is needed of practices among our people as well as an open dialogue on what should, and could be done with, so-to-speak, the blessing of the church, and what should be discouraged or banned.

4. Complex crisis situations like the one in Big Falls require an open and trustful "inter-cultural" dialogue between affected groups in order to find a solution.

At long last, two results came out of this crisis. Locally, we could heal the children and teachers and could reopen the school, even though the healing process for some of the most severely affected children lasted several months. Beyond that, the results of the Big Falls event and the meaning for our Catholic and Maya people had an impact for the entire district. In all villages people met and openly discussed their beliefs and spiritual practices. Contradictions and incompatibilities were addressed, explained and clarified, some traditional practices were 'purified' and re-introduced into the Catholic services, most importantly the nightlong offering/prayer vigil, the so-called Mayejak. The role of 'wise people' came under scrutiny, their influence over the people

and the extent to which their practice was acceptable were examined. Where these are unacceptable we all have to resist them as much as we can.

In this way, a broad educational initiative took place, increasing the understanding of the people in Christian and Maya beliefs and practices. At the same time, more order, coherence and structure were introduced in the world-view of our people, and it was interesting to see that young people too were attracted to this process. High School students were heard saying with astonishment, "That's something I was never aware of".

Parallel to this process of bringing the traditional Maya and Christian religions closer together and working towards a more unified world-view, our parish pushed hard to promote a youth ministry, aimed at young people in High School.

Until then, our parish had reached out to youngsters in Primary School, then lost contact and hoped that they would come back when they needed the sacrament of marriage or baptism for their children. There was no plan for taking into account the specific needs of young people approaching adulthood and the age where they are expected to assume responsibility within their community.

The youth ministry tries to fill in where Primary and High School fail to advance individual personal development, due to their stress on academic achievement as well as lack of resources. We focus on

- an individual, reasonable and defendable world-view
- an independent, reflective, self-confident personality
- leadership skills
- understanding one's own culture and appreciation of other cultures.

With our Youth Leadership Training programme we try to enable young people to take charge of groups in their villages and run them, ideally with the support and supervision of a teacher of the local school or the local catechist. Central are skills in communication, problem solving, interpersonal conflict resolution and cooperation.

We urge the local groups to develop their own programme. Based on the interest of its members and needs of their community, we assist the group leaders in planning group sessions and supervise each village through monthly visits by members of the youth ministry.

Beyond that it is important to bring together the individual youth groups from the various villages for meetings at the regional or district level. Here we organize workshops to which we bring in speakers from outside the district, skilled animators and trainers who are able to overcome the innate shyness of our youths and build self-confidence, helping them hold their ground against other groups or positions. Two welcome side effects of these meetings are, first, the young people's discovery that they are a sizeable group with the potential

to induce change in their local communities; and second, the encounter with peers coming from another cultural background outside the school context.

As far as culture is concerned, workshops on spiritual and cultural issues are surprisingly popular. Our young people continually ask for workshops to help them understand the Bible, to perform their traditional dances, songs and instruments, or to acquire more knowledge about their traditional myths, the truths they contain, and their relationship with the Catholic tradition. It is a similar case with spiritual practices like those of the Mayejak, or its Garifuna equivalent, the Dugu. Since we have now a good team of skilled and knowledgeable presenters, we can be sure that the instruction given is in accordance with both, the teaching of the church, and the beliefs of the respective ethnic traditions.

The young people continue to pursue these interests at the local level. In many villages young people look for elders who can teach them to read and write their own language, or their own songs. They put all that into practice by volunteering for readings during mass or forming a church choir with its own musical accompaniment.

Slowly but surely, we are succeeding in creating a village level alternative at which the young people like to spend their time. And here it took me a while to understand the importance that our youths give to uniform T-Shirts. This is not just vanity or the desire to show off something new, but the public profession of a separate identity against the blue and red colours of the local gangs.

More importantly, I have the feeling that our young people find themselves again at home in their culture and their church, and that this can stop the drain of young people away from our church. The numbers are still small, but the direction seems to be the right one.

Perhaps we are now approaching a point where we can even try to reverse the tide. By this I mean that from this new self-confidence we can now start to work at a better understanding of the (positive and negative) influences coming from Western culture, following the advice of St. Paul: “Examine everything and keep only the good”.

The task is enormous and urgent. In the words of one member on our ad-hoc committee on inculturation, “The church has to fight on three fronts: We have to rediscover the good in our own culture. We have to educate our people in the basics of our faith, and we have to defend our young people against influences of neo-liberalism and secularism. And we have to do it fast and vigorously.”

Jörg Alt SJ
St. Peter Claver Parish
Punta Gorda Town
Toledo District – BELIZE (Central America)
<j-alt@web.de>

# My Regency Experience in Chad

**Renato Colizzi SJ** [1]

When I arrived in Chad, the first thing I saw were the Jesuit missionaries, sisters and lay people who competently and devotedly administer a rural hospital in the south of the country. I was asked to join them in this work as a doctor. The shock was powerful. The health conditions the local people were living in was the strongest spur, especially at the start, to galvanise me. Understanding how to diagnose and treat the most common illnesses was my primary commitment during my first few months in Chad. The yawning gap between resources and problems calling for solutions, the mortality rates and the aggressiveness of the illnesses I faced every day made this time very difficult and intense. My motivation was put to the test: why had I asked to come to Chad as a Jesuit doctor? Day after day, thanks to the conversations I had with other religious, parish priests and lay workers, I gradually began to grasp the reality around me.

I realised how much the Church was involved not only in widespread rural pastoral work, but also in sustainable development for the well being of the people, particularly in the areas of health and education. It is very common to find that parishes in southern Chad support a network of dispensaries, primary schools and agricultural cooperatives. Often these efforts originate in the capacity for finding assistance and funding elsewhere, outside the country, in view of the lack of state care to cover the population's basic needs. I have met many missionaries who, over the years, have managed to build up a network of friendships that are well disposed to sustaining the parish structures, and which send economic and human resources in a true spirit of disinterested collaboration. On the other hand, one of the concerns expressed by local clergy is exactly how to ensure the continuity and vitality of these support networks, making them independent of the individual missionary. In the way these are handed on will be played out much of the credibility of the Church with regard to the poor. Will you be true to what you have started? Or was it a dream, a stroke of genius, or the generosity of a man come from afar?

Several months after I started working in Chad I was invited to take part in a forum on different African realities, including the struggle against HIV/AIDS, for Jesuits and lay partners. As the meeting took place in Nairobi, I had the chance to visit AJAN House. Sharing ideas with co-brothers working in other parts of Africa and reflection and prayer on the challenges facing the Church and the Society in Africa opened my eyes to many things, but above

[1] In this article the author, a scholastic of Italian Province, gives a short account of his Regency time in Chad (Editor's note).

all to myself. I returned to Chad apparently without many answers, but one thing was now clear to me – as a religious, the priority is to become capable of love. If in the Western world the struggle against HIV/AIDS in Africa is seen as an issue of sexual mores revolving around the use of the condom, in Chad I learnt that justice also plays an important role in view of the lack of Antiretroviral drug (ARV) and available infrastructure. However, in Nairobi I understood that in reality everything revolves around love. Would I be capable of making patients feel truly loved? The more this question grew in me, the less important the disparity between resources and problems became, and I began to understand that love is played out in the field of the possibilities one has at a specific moment and in relationship to a specific person. Nothing else counts, the thought of what "one could do if" is merely a useless thought hindering the most important thing – transforming oneself into an action for another person, because to love is to act.

At this stage it was clear to me that the highly acclaimed holistic treatment in the struggle against HIV/AIDS means considering stigmatisation the number one enemy to be defeated, the most fearful enemy enclosing the sufferers in a circle of abandonment and solitude, withholding the route to treatment and keeping them hidden at home or in their villages, until the progression of the disease reaches its natural result – death. I understood the urgent need to create networks of solidarity and care between patients living in the same area so as to witness a different way of living with the disease, a way in which the other is important exactly because he or she can no longer walk or eat. I have seen people get back on their feet after a few months only because they found friends and relatives who motivated them and helped them leave the house and go to hospital or the nearest dispensary, telling them the truth about the disease, well beyond the many rumours circulating on the street.

As time passed I began to grow more and more familiar with tropical diseases, but the isolation of the hospital from the parish and the life of the people made me feel cramped in my medical practice. And just when it seemed it was there I was to continue my learning experience, another path was made open to me, a position in the new hospital in Ndjamena. This was my second chance for me to open my life to Chad, as a man and as a religious. Of course there too my role was that of doctor, but in a context where parish life was much more accessible, and where community life made a broader and perhaps more multi-faceted view of Chadian reality possible for me. My time in the capital was marked by tension between work in a hospital starting from scratch, with all the difficulties that this entails, and a new, more open, more welcoming way of meeting and being with people, beginning with my work colleagues, neighbours and parishioners. Consulting room and ward examinations, the continuous lack of drugs, organisational and management problems, staff training, attention to the quality of medical and nursing procedures in the wards, all these aspects were my daily bread, but

above everything else I paid attention to the quality of relations with others. I vowed to smile, and even though those who worked alongside me know how many times I didn't manage this, the intention was steadfast – would I smile, now? The more critical the patients, the more valuable was the smile of welcome and solidarity ... valuable beyond measure.

In conclusion, I would like to say that everywhere I have gone I have heard the silent call of patients who lack drugs, young people without study grants, communities with neither priests nor churches, schools with no walls nor textbooks. I willingly accepted the invitation to write these words because I believe there is an enormous need not so much to spread information as to spread memories – in the sense of information lived by people in their uniqueness. And memory becomes compassion when with each successive passage onwards, this experience, in us, is ready for action: "Lord, when did we see you hungry or as a stranger or naked?"

Renato Colizzi SJ
<colizzi.r@gesuiti.it>

*Original Italian*
*Translation by Judy Reeves*

## "Seven Days – Short and Sweet"

**Anthony Mifsud SJ** [1]

This is the title I gave to the week I spent doing relief work with the Sisters of Mother Theresa in the village of Eddo in Ethiopia, amongst the poorest of the twenty-first century poor. Although it had to end quite abruptly, it was an experience which left me with peace and gratitude (as well as some undesired stomach pains!). I jotted down notes during my recovery about all that I experienced, spiritually, socially, and as a fellow human being. It was a great opportunity to accompany other people who do not have my chances, and who indeed have to live a wretched life for a very long time. Their daily plight has been made worse after the failure rains ruined the yield of the basic crops; famine has struck these areas.

It all started with my desire for a longer experience of this country and its people, after my time in Addis Ababa five years ago.[2] Till the very end (I

[1] The author is a Jesuit scholastic of Maltese Province (Editor's note).

[2] The richness of experience with Fr. Joe Cassar's group in the *House of the Dying* was fully revealed in the years that followed, and has been a point of reference for my life.

should say till the last hours), everything was undecided because the situation was an 'emergency', and one had to respond quickly. I left one Tuesday afternoon, accompanied by a CLC member and friend, Abraham, whom I had got to know a couple of days earlier upon my arrival in the 'capital of Africa'. We left in a 4WD pick-up with a driver, 3 sisters and a doctor. Nothing was planned or organised,[3] just our things (as the only European, I had the most stuff), and a desire to help these people in need.

Our five-hour drive brought us to Eddo after a comfortable journey, and the road going south was already giving us a faint idea of what we were going to see. Nature here is simply fabulous; green[4] and varied vegetation colours this country of 'mountains and valleys'. The spectacle also offered us its share of wild animals; I saw my first pair of hyenas ... one of the many surprises of Nature that Ethiopia has to offer. The birds that come caged to Europe are here free. In large numbers and varied colours, they are scattered through the landscape of trees, grass and houses. There are also the irritating ones, for example, the black *kafuas*[5] which disturbed me every night by landing disrespectfully on the metal roof of my room.

The late afternoon is the best time to see the village in motion, as almost the entire village moves towards the market *en masse*. All those who can move leave their homes late in the afternoon to reach the large square in the centre of the village, where all can meet, to buy or sell (grass, fruit, clothes, gas, batteries),[6] to play (volleyball, football), get their hair cut, spend time gossiping, catch up with the news, and, well, spend their time with all that the evening offers. Here everything is an event, seeing a foreigner is an event! Zooming in on the people's faces from my position in the car, I realised I was slowly entering a world that looked like one of the documentaries we see on Television, full of the images that are evoked when we think of Third World countries.

Small children left their houses and came to greet and beg as they saw the 4WD passing by, and as they approached, their big swollen bellies proclaimed malnutrition. This went on for kilometres on end! "We are leaving all this behind," I was saying, and we'll meet yet others in need! It was indeed just the trailer of the film which we were about to see and live out.

[3] It was quite nice getting to know each other as the trip started; the sisters who had been called from other centres or countries for the emergency had to help for just a short period. The doctor, who was a voluntary physician and who usually helped the sisters during the weekend at Addis Ababa, proved to be a very humble, silent but intelligent person. He had to deal with the hundreds referred to him and he did this with professionalism, practicality and warmth. The driver proved to be our tourist guide through Ethiopia as we passed villages with Orthodox, Muslim, Sectarian and Catholic traditions (Simple mosques built for villages are quite spectacular!)

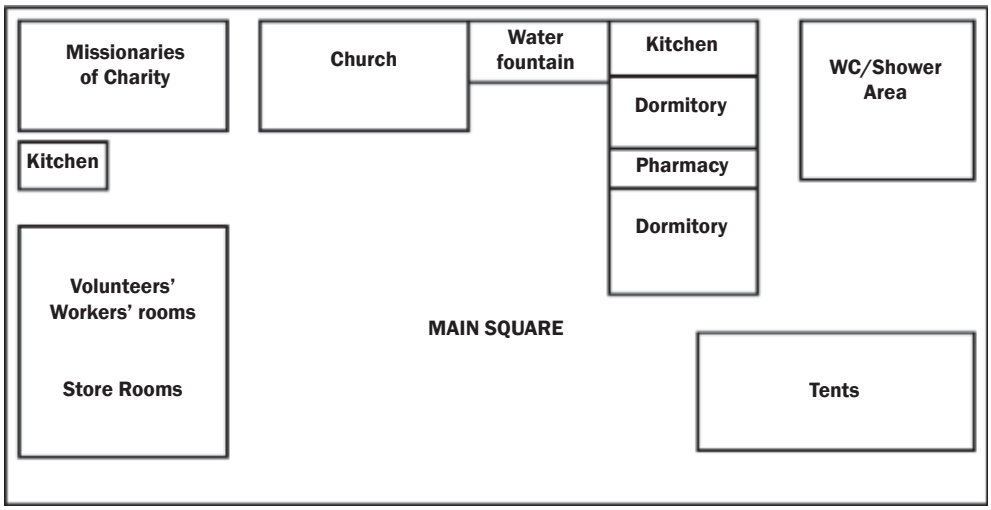
[4] This was quite surprising, for we knew there was no fruit in the villages and that this same landscape had suffered months of drought.

[5] I thank the children I met in the Mother Theresa compound for most of the translations of English words into the local *Waleyta* language.

[6] Each stall was a cloth the size of an A3 paper!

We were warmly welcomed to the diocese by the Archbishop himself, Bishop Rodrigo Mejia SJ, a former provincial, highly respected here in Eastern Africa. It was he himself who had asked the Mother General, Sr. Nirmala, to send these great missionaries to his big diocese.[7] Some other sisters were already there and expecting us, and they gave us a simple but loving welcome to their 'temporary home' in the heart of the Eddo village. The latter covers kilometres of land, and is quite densely populated compared with other areas of the countryside in Ethiopia.

The parish compound had been transformed temporarily into an emergency station:




The main activities during the day, that is food and medicine distribution, an improvised 'doctor's clinic', and even the recreation or *kwas* game (football), were held in the main square, which was like the market for our small compound. At the gate there were always lots of people, hoping to enter, to get food or medication, to get ... What do they really hope for? Survival? Can they hope for something else? I was thinking to myself on the lines of C. Castellaneta "They dream of a banana, I want a living!" The *zebenja* (guard) had a tough job keeping people out, and maintaining order when it came to choosing who could enter.

This compound was our home for this week ... 'our' has a wide connotation as I will try to explain, and 'home' as well, very different from our western understand of a 'proper house.'

As I went around looking randomly at the faces around me, I realised that the most impressive of all were, without doubt, the faces of the sisters. They

[7] The diocese is one of the largest in Ethiopia and has the highest percentage of Catholics. It was explained to us that area authorities had given permission for two stations to be created by the diocese, no more. Apparently political interests want to control even how many of these poor people survive.

are a mirror image of the spouse in the description given by the bride: "*Behold, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills*" (Son 2, 8), or Mary, who joyfully leaves her house to go and serve her cousin Elisabeth. All this, the misery notwithstanding, we could see from house to house. They were fountains of hope, even though all we were giving the families was just some extra food. Their pace, reminding me of the marathon runner Gebrselassie, was accompanied by an authority emanating from the conviction that they were looking for justice. Children, women and men followed them, and the village doctor and authorities bowed their heads to the sister's insistence on a free ambulance to run once a week from the sisters' home to the local hospital.

The day-to-day running of the compound meant helping most of all in food and medicine distribution (in our terms, a 'pharmacy'). Here everybody has to improvise and act for it is really a do or die situation!! The bodies beg for survival as their first priority, bellies speak of malnutrition as well as contaminated water and food.

People were flocking to our compound that Wednesday morning when we had to distribute the flour. The sisters had judged in a first assessment those who should receive such help. As I did the distribution, I found that the women were shy of the *ferenji* (foreigner). Coming up, opening their recycled sacks, using their precious plastic bag, or taking off their only shawl, they tried to convince me with their penetrating eyes and mumbled words to give some more flour. It was really tough keeping an equal measure as I imagined what that little weekly ration would mean to a wrinkled face, a worn-out hand, or a sick-looking baby on the back of his adolescent mother. The word '*Ba*' (go) was difficult to say!

I devoted most of my attention during meals to the babies' section where milk was being distributed. Although mother's milk was a first preference, clearly it could not sustain these babies, who were finding it difficult to take in the quantities of milk that were provided. This caused some frustration for the mothers, who tried to force the babies to drink, but to no avail. So we had to inject milk through small tubes. This was a delicate procedure that had to be monitored ... but by and by some progress could be seen, and the sisters' faces glowed with joy when they compared the situation with what it had been two months before and saw the difference. I had my preferred client, a very thin two-year old boy who, after finishing his share of milk, would thank me with a thumbs-up sign!!! With others, I seemed to be more of a father figure. Once, as I looked and smiled at each child in my usual way, a small girl picked up her cup with haste and drank her share till the last drop to bursts of laughter from her mother and her friends.

On the other hand, we shared our meals with the other volunteers. There were no Europeans to my surprise; they were all either from Eddo, or Ethiopian workers helping the sisters at Ababa. I will remember these meals for a long time, with all of us sitting on the floor mat, and everyone except myself

speaking Amharic, sharing their views on a million subjects from the current situation, to food, to European football, to life stories. With the little English they knew, and with some of my freshly acquired Amharic words, we used to joke together, and all this made the atmosphere a very welcoming one. Once, as every hand was taking its share of the same *injera*, from the same dish, the theme of our 'religion' came up. It was beautiful as each one declared his or her faith – one Catholic, two orthodox and a Muslim; it enlightened me far more than any conference I have ever attended about inter-religious dialogue!

As I look back I treasure this improvised situation because they were all making it possible. The sisters were charismatic in the way they coordinated it with their presence; the helping hands were mainly local people. It is a very practical example of what development work on a small scale in such countries should be all about. They were all helping each other: the volunteers and workers from the North who came down-under, the locals who came to help those who could not make it, and the poorest of the poor who, despite the grave situation they were in, did not complicate matters when the numbers of the needy were really too many to handle.

I could identify the individuals from far away by their only set of clothes, dirty, ragged and inadequate for the wintry temperatures. As a matter of fact, their clothing was an indication of how these people lived in their homes. A typical house of the area, with a diameter of 4-5 metres, was inhabited by a family of 6 members, generally including an old or sick, bedridden person (sometimes covered by goat skin), as well as a cow and a couple of goats or sheep. The dinner for the day would be on the plate affluent people use to place *injera* on. I remember one in particular, where the fire had already been lit and the dinner ready to be cooked: 3 leaves (of an unidentified plant similar to cabbage), 7 to 8 bean pods, and a handful of other seeds ... that was all for the day, for the whole family. The "well-off" youths of the village could speak just a bit of *inglasaita*, as they call the English-tongue ... I remember a discussion with the brightest of them; he was making calculations about visiting the capital city, Addis Ababa ... he simply couldn't imagine it!!! Will his brightness, intelligence, and generosity (he helped me a lot with the translations) ... help him overcome the financial situation? Will he ever reach Addis in his life?

All this provoked a lot of questions in my mind – reflections, consolations and sometimes frustrations. A final personal note that I would like to add is about the joy, and the feeling of 'at homeness' I felt during that week. Contact with the outside world, my world, was very difficult!! I had to do without a lot of basic things!! I was with people whom I had got to know that very day. I had no friends, no relatives ... I couldn't speak their language!! And yet, solitude and homesickness were not, as one would expect, the feelings I lived with. Well, it may be because, although so many things were lacking in this community of the sisters and the poor, their poverty showed that ... 'Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I shall be in the midst of them.'

Anthony Mifsud SJ
St. Aloysius College,
70, Triq l-Ferrovija l-Qadima,
Birkirkara BKR1610 – MALTA
<tonimifsud@yahoo.com>

# The Baby Girl Who Couldn't Smile

**Pa'i Oliva SJ**

Hardly had she been born when someone killed her – and then threw her, in a plastic bag, into a rubbish bin. That is what we supposed. The truth became clearer the next day.

A 15-year old boy, who was scavenging for rubbish in the Cateura dump, found the little body of a baby girl in a plastic bag, with its tiny arms wrapped around its neck. The boy decided to take it home to give it a proper burial.

That afternoon, after the proper arrangements had been made, the boy's family received the lifeless child and gave her a name, María de Luján. They washed her up and put a pretty dress on her. They placed her in a little wooden box painted white and kept vigil over her all during the night, as if she were their own daughter. The next day we held a prayer service for her. They had already prepared the spot where she would be laid to rest.

All this made me think. About the human madness that can commit such a murder. But also about the generosity of this poor family, with so many children, that wanted to adopt her. I insist on all this because the horrible murder took place in the prosperous suburb Asunción, and the gesture of love transpired in Bañado Sur, a place feared and despised by many people, but abounding in virtues found nowhere else.

María de Luján could not smile during her short time on earth, but she now smiles on us from heaven. There have been another 25 dead babies like her, aborted or newly born, sent to us from the rubbish at the Cateura dump.

Francisco de Paula Oliva SJ
PARAGUAY
<oliva@rieder.net.py>

*Original Spanish*
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

## † Fr. Claudio Perani SJ (1932-2008)


### Memories of my First and my Last Meetings with Claudio

I am in Iquitos (capital of Loreta, in the Peruvian Amazon region), along with Raimunda, lay worker of the CIMI and member of the Itinerant Team. We are sailing up the Amazon River on our way to Alto Marañon for a meeting of the Latin American chapter of the Jesuit Network for Indigenous Solidarity and Apostolate.

I have just received by e-mail the news that early this morning, 8 August 2008, Claudio Perani made his **final**, **full**, and **definitive journey** to the Father.

I want to express the memories and feelings that overcome me in these moments. Claudio has been, in my experience, one of the Jesuits with the greatest "liberality" that I have ever known, and I feel privileged to have lived and worked with him during my 22 years in America. He was a prophet

radically committed to justice and the welfare of poor people in the Amazon basin. Possessed of critical vision and a broad perspective, he had his feet firmly rooted in Amazonia. He was the source of the fundamental insights that we have been implementing in the region during these years: the itinerant team, the simple structures for listening to, and serving the humble folk, the participation in people's daily lives, the mobility required to encounter the other and be present where life is most threatened, the inevitable inter-institutional character of our mission in the face of enormous challenges that cannot be faced in isolation, being at the frontiers of our horizon, and the geopolitical vision of Amazonia as a strategic area inviting us to work at frontiers that touch one another. We must unite our forces so that the Kingdom and its justice become a presence in these historically oppressed and exploited regions. Claudio was always a man of "frontiers", whether geographic or symbolic, those places where the wounds of humanity, history and the planet are most vulnerable.

My first conversations with Claudio took place when I first arrived at the new Amazon mission.

I had travelled from Paraguay on a long, three-month pilgrimage over dirt roads and rivers flowing from the fertile depths of our America. After sailing on the Chaco River from Paraguay to Bolivia, then going up the Bolivian Amazon to the Brazilian border, then down the Madeira River, and then back up the Amazon at the majestic meeting of waters, I arrived at last in Manaus, the seat of the new Jesuit Amazon district. It was the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, 10 April 1998.

In Manaus I was met by Fr.Claudio Perani, the first Jesuit entrusted with organizing the new Amazon region. Claudio had written letters inviting me to begin working with the indigenous peoples in the new mission. He had proposed that I work in the upper reaches of the Solimöes River, on the triple border separating Brazil from Peru and Colombia. However, since there were no other companions to join me in this work, Claudio proposed that I be part of the Itinerant Team that had been formed in January 1998 with two Jesuit companions, Fr. Albano and Fr. Pablo Sergio. With great simplicity and depth Claudio explained his vision of how we might begin our journeys and our searches. I still have within me a recording of those words that I reproduce here verbatim:

> *"Dedicate yourselves to moving about the Amazon territory. Visit the communities, the local churches, the organizations. Observe everything carefully, and listen attentively to what the people say: their demands and hopes, their problems and solutions, their visions and dreams. Take part in the daily life of the people. Observe and note down everything that the people say, using their own words. Don't be concerned about results. The Spirit will keep showing the way."*

He then opened up a map of the Amazon territory where we were to begin the work, some 3.3 million square kilometers, and with a huge smile he concluded:

*"Courage! Begin wherever you can..."*

My stomach felt as if it was caving in. I was frightened. I kept looking at the map, and I saw two thousand kilometers of river in one direction, a thousand in the other... "Begin wherever you can" – the words resounded in my ears, and I said to myself, "He must be joking." There I was, having left with so much effort and pain a tiny country, my beloved Paraguay (a little smaller than Spain).

Faced with that proposal, which simply overwhelmed me, I asked Claudio to give me a month to discern and to decide whether the proposal was from God or not, and whether I had the strength needed to take on such a huge challenge, something so wholly unknown to me. Claudio, as always, was extremely considerate; he saw my fear and encouraged me, giving me all the time I needed.

During that month I prayed every morning on the terrace of the community, which provides a panoramic view of the city. I asked the Lord to give me strength and courage simply to open the map of the Amazon territory, to contemplate it, and to embrace it with affection and peace. The first few days my prayers went unanswered. My innards still fluttered at the sight of such a formidable challenge. Many times I was surprised to find myself saying, "This man is crazy!" But little by little, with the help of the Lord and with the encouragement that Claudio provided me daily in his warm, supportive, respectful way, I came to feel that the Lord was inviting me to have confidence and to immerse myself in that mission, which was so new for me and overwhelmed me in every sense.

My final conversations with Claudio took place on the night of 1-2 August 2008, when I was with him in the small hospital where he had been admitted suddenly because his chemotherapy had left him very weak.

I had just returned from the middle reaches of the Amazon. I stayed that night with Claudio. During the night, in the moments when he was awake, we had some intense moments of sharing.

First I discussed with him the possibility of having the three bishops of the triple border (Brazil-Peru-Colombia) write a letter to the CPAL [Latin American Jesuit Provincials Conference], requesting that an inter-provincial Jesuit community be formed on that border; it would consist of three Jesuits: a Peruvian, a Colombian and a Brazilian. The idea was that this inter-provincial community would be able to help the three churches on the borders respond jointly to the great problems and challenges that are found there: drug trafficking, lumber mafias, bio-piracy, people displaced by armed conflicts,

those migrating because of poverty, and Indians separated by the borders. Claudio had already made that proposal when he was the regional coordinator, and he had invited representatives of the different Jesuit provinces touching the Amazon territory to our regional meetings. When I reminded Claudio of this, he looked at me serenely and told me in a low voice:

> *"Fernando, take heart, we are going to be confident. I'm going to pray and offer all this so that CPAL accepts the proposal and we can all move forward in this mutual aid project on the Amazon frontiers, for the good of the poor people who live there."*

Another very intense moment came near midnight, at 11.30 PM, when they moved us from the emergency hospital to the central hospital of Unimed. After we had arrived there and gone through the routine controls, Claudio took my hand and asked me if I knew the prayer of Saint Ignatius. He then asked me to pray it slowly, phrase by phrase: "Take, Lord, and receive..." At every phrase he pressed my hand so that I would stop, and in a low voice he repeated the same phrase several times. He would then press my hand to indicate that I should continue with the following phrase... He prayed devoutly, with emotion, his eyes filled with tears. I was crying like a child... After praying he fell asleep for a good while.

The last moments I shared with him were at dawn. I told him that I would be travelling the next day to Peru. I reminded him again that during the trip we would speak with the three bishops of the triple border about the proposal for the inter-provincial community there. I told him that I would be going to the meeting of the Jesuit network that worked jointly on behalf of the indigenous peoples of Latin America, that the meeting would be in Alto Marañon, in Santa Maria de Nievas, and that we would try to travel by river, going through San Borja and the Pongo de Manceriche. He listened to me attentively and told me firmly:

> *"Tell them that I am praying and offering this so that the native peoples will have life and their rights will be respected."*

We looked intensely at one another, and clasped hands firmly. I said to him: "Old man, hold on till I get back, for we still have many things to talk about." He smiled calmly, full of emotion. Both of us knew that our future meetings and conversations would now be on another plane...

Now Claudio is fully **"itinerant"** with us throughout the Amazon region, through all its forests and rivers. He now accompanies us and animates us more vigorously in our task of weaving together our apostolic body on the frontiers of this immense Amazon basin.

Claudio, like Ignatius, continues to invite us with his spirit to "devote ourselves exclusively to the service of the Eternal Father" (Sp. Ex. N. 135).

Many thanks, Claudio, for showing us *devotion* and for continuing to *devote yourself* alongside us!

Fernando López SJ

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We invite you to read on our web page an article by Fr. Perani which we published in PJ 51 and the message we received from the regional superior, Fr. Roberto Jaramillo, part of which we quote here:

"Our brother Claudio died in the Lord on 8 August 2008 in the poverty of the Luis Figueira residence in Manaus, accompanied by his community brothers, his sister and several friends, after three months of suffering cancer. He never complained about his situation, his destiny, or his pains. He was an example for all of us, a man who loved the poor, who lived like the poor, who died like the poor. His body now rests in the municipal cemetery of Manaus, among the poor with whom he lived and celebrated life. Blessed be God!"

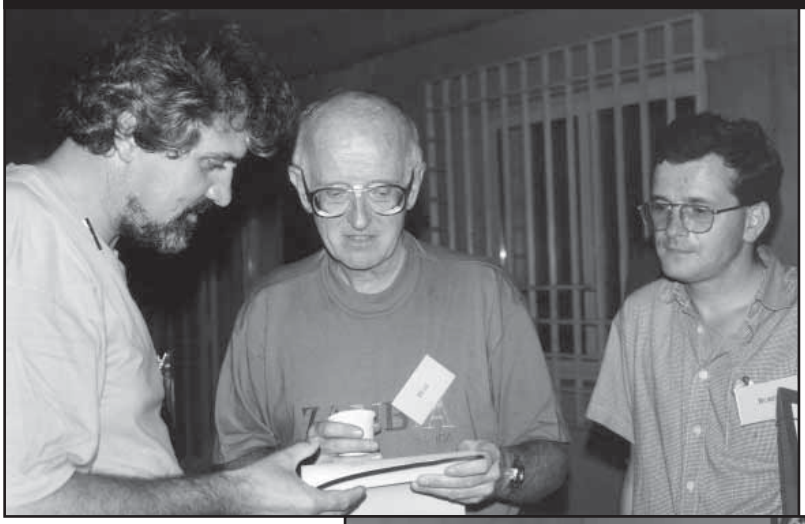
## Meeting of Directors of Social Institutes/Centres (Rome, May 1987)

Group Shot of
the Participants.

L-R: G. Tesfaye,
P. Dubin,
P-H. Kolvenbach,
A. Renard,
M. Schultheis.

Back Row L-R:
M. v.d.Bogaert,
W. Fernandez,
K. Matsumoto,
P-H. Kolvenbach,
A. Irudayam,
J. Ellacuría,
F. Claver.
Front Row L-R:
I. Manickam,
H. Volken,
M. Kelly,
N. Vasquez.

## Jesuit Social Apostolate Congress (Naples, June 1997)



Group Shot of the Participants with Fr. P-H. Kolvenbach.

L-R:
P. Balleis,
P. Henriot,
R. Schweiger.


L-R:
M. Czerny,
H. Carmeliet,
R. Toppo,
J. Cela,
H. Toussaint,
A. Karekezi,
M. Rodrigues,
F. Lízna.

Members of the Task Force on Globalisation and Marginalisation (L-R): G. Lo Biondo, P. Louis, F. Franco, P-H. Kolvenbach, A. Sosa, F. Muhigirwa, J. Haers, P. Foglizzo, F. Brennan.

Assistancy Coordinators' Meeting 2007: Group Shot of the Partecipants with Fr. P-H. Kolvenbach.

Assistancy Coordinators' Meeting 2008: Group Shot of the Partecipants with Fr. A. Nicolás.

promotio justitiae

exchanges ● échanges ● intercambios

No. 1
January, 1977

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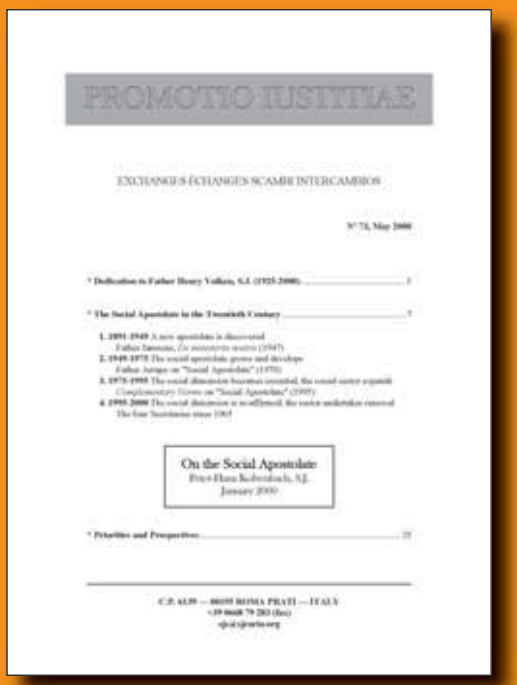
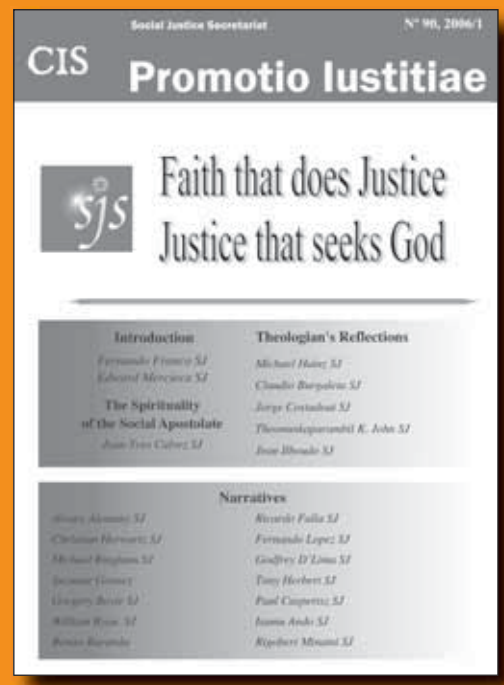


PROMOTIO IUSTITIAE

EXCHANGES ECHANGES SCAMBI INTERCAMBIOS

N° 73, May 2000

On the Social Apostolate
Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
January 2000



Social Justice Secretariat N° 90, 2006/1

CIS Promotio Iustitiae

Faith that does Justice
Justice that seeks God

Introduction

The Spirituality of the Social Apostolate

Theologian's Reflections

Narratives


**Social Justice Secretariat**

**C.P. 6139 – 00195 ROMA PRATI – ITALY**
**+39 06689 77380 (fax)**
**sjs@sjcuria.org**