

# Promotio Iustitiae

## **ASSISTANCY/CONFERENCE COORDINATORS' MEETING 2009: A new apostolic model**

### **Module I: Interlarity in Action**

A. Kerhuel, U. Sievers, A. Ferro, E. Mercieca

### **Module II: International Advocacy Networks (IAN) Review**

G. Riggio, F. Franco

### **Module III: 'Sent to the Frontiers': Ongoing Apostolic Discernment**

G. Riggio, U. Sievers

## **Documents**

**Development as Global Standardization? An intentional fallacy**

**Social Apostolate: Place of spiritual experience**

**Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853)**

## **Experiences, Book Review**







# Promotio Iustitiae

At the service of Faith that does Justice



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**L**iving in times of transition, change or, to use a fashionable word, re-structuring, is a complex experience. *Promotio Iustitiae* has experienced on its own pulse the forces of change. This is the first time that the journal appears only in electronic format, and we are glad to report that, in spite of serious problems during the last phase, its birth was normal if somewhat delayed. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to this happy event.

We have also lived out these times of change within the various organs of the Jesuit Curia in our effort to respond to the apostolic needs of good governance. We participated in a long process of reflection aimed at proposing major strategic actions to ensure the fulfilment of the five goals set by Fr. General: renewing the spiritual source of our apostolic life; promoting apostolic discernment and planning (going to the frontiers); strengthening formation; re-structuring the Curia; and supporting collaboration with others.

One may explain the context of the meeting of Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate held in May in terms of the creativity that innovation and change can bring about. The Coordinators spent a very fruitful day and a half of sharing on the way in which, both personally and institutionally, the engagement in social action has become the ground to experience a sense of interiority and to follow the Crucified and Risen Lord. This was a way to direct our reflection to the first goal of spiritual renewal proposed by Fr. General. We also spent another day reflecting on the manner in which our Assistancies and Conferences have geared themselves to respond to the second goal proposed by Fr. General: the need for ongoing apostolic discernment and planning. In short, we analysed the 'frontiers' we have chosen in the geographical contexts in which we live our apostolic call, and we discerned our institutional willingness to make choices and leave the familiar for territory less known.

The longest part of the meeting was devoted to reviewing the decisions taken at the Ignatian Advocacy Workshop held at El Escorial in November 2008 and to approve a tentative working plan for the next year. This issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* offers the results of this meeting. We worked hard to build on the message and inspiration of the Workshop and to assess our modest strength realistically. As these pages demonstrate, we are engaging in a model of advocacy based on our

Ignatian experience, and have tentatively adopted a decentralised model of networking as a platform of networks.

Besides the articles appearing online we hope to include in our website important documents that clarify our endeavour and serve as guiding posts in our movement forward. We recommend to our readers a long article on the Ignatian principles underlining our model of advocacy, an extended document explaining in greater detail the decisions that were taken at the meeting, and a 'Manual' that could help us in facilitating the process ahead. These will be available at our website.

Writing these lines from Beijing emphasizes more dramatically the times of rapid change we face. It is impossible to imagine or conceive the profound changes that have taken place in this vast country before one has actually set foot in it. It is only from within the actual terrain that one begins to comprehend slowly the colossal growth and the profound social change visible everywhere. This change will deeply affect the way the whole world moves in the next hundred years. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the process of globalisation and the rise of China as a global power are intertwined and likely to remain so in the coming years. Understanding this change and grasping the new world role of Asia calls for an honest determination to look at reality without preconceived ideas or prejudices.

Rapid change brings uncertainty but also heralds the beginning of a new heaven and a new earth. We are committed to make this new electronic journal a friendly and critical companion as we respond to this constant call to move to new frontiers, to travel across unknown lands and to kindle new fires. This journal is committed to continue telling the story of God's love for his people, and the narrative of God's justice and peace in today's world.

Fernando Franco SJ



# COORDINATORS MEETING 2009

## Assistancy/Conference Coordinators' Meeting 2009: A new apostolic model

### A Commitment to Visibility Some impressions from Father General's talk to the Social Apostolate Coordinators Uta Sievers

**T**he core of Father General's talk to the coordinators this year was the question "Is the Society of Jesus moving away from the poor?" This had come up as an observation during our discussions and was a source of concern for our group.

Father General pointed out how a circle of invisibility has led to fewer and fewer young Jesuits wanting to live and work with and among the poor. The starting point is that there are now fewer Jesuits in all apostolates, not just in the social apostolate. This overall scarcity is one reason why Insertion Communities, which represent the closest way of "being with" the poor and marginalised and are often small, are sometimes the first ones to be closed when a province decides to consolidate its communities; and the closure of an Insertion Community means a story that will go untold to the next generation of Jesuits<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, there are fewer Jesuits who volunteer to live in Insertion Communities and provincials are aware that they cannot force people into this 'difficult' way of living. Why do the provincials perceive it as difficult? A possible reason is that however great the initial motivation based on the Gospel message to be with the poor, there is also a wish not to disturb other processes such as formation and university studies. Secondly (and this is the main reason for the small number of new faces in Insertion Communities), as we ourselves grow older in the social apostolate, we have lost contact with the Scholastics while focussing on the poor. Not all is lost, however. In places where the social apostolate has made visible a way to live as religious among the poor, where we have kept in touch with the Scholasticates, young Jesuits have in fact opted for this way of life.

Father General then shared some ideas with us as to what we, as persons active in the social apostolate, can do. One of his main concerns is the need to guard ourselves against the virus of success; working with the poor will never be 'a success' or make us successful in a secular sense. We need to discard the idea of success in our thinking, our mentality, our values – this is true for the whole Society of Jesus, but especially for the social apostolate.

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<sup>1</sup>For the stories of active insertion communities, see *Promotio Iustitiae* 100: <http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/pj/>.

According to Father Nicolás' vision of the Society, it is important to live in simplicity with the people whatever our field, pastoral or academic, or any other. This broad experience of commitment will inspire young people more than all-exclusive social justice work, which may send out the message that when you work with the poor, you cannot serve in any other way. In the same vein, he also warns against an "all or nothing" mentality in the social apostolate, since a purist's vision of social justice will produce admirers but not followers. Instead, we need to plan this form of work with care; we need to plan our free time, our study, and our service in an interrelated and meaningful way. And last but not least, if we manage to make friends among the poor, we will never feel we are "moving away" even if we change assignments.

Father Nicolás also raised the issue of the way in which we deal with our institutions, especially those that have a long Jesuit tradition. He was quite clear in his analysis that attachment was one of the weakest points of our traditional ministries. We become attached to our 'creations' and are very reluctant to let go of the good works we are running. In the process, we are literally killing Jesuits, overloading them with up to five different jobs, infecting them with the virus of success. Mobility is essential to our charism; thus we need to learn a new way of discernment, to let go and move on. For example, when starting a school, we should immediately prepare our lay successors so that we can hand the work over to them after no more than 15 to 30 years. He also stressed the fact that the shrinking number of Jesuits is being compensated for by the growing number of competent lay people who wish to work in our institutions. This gives us the freedom to dream again, to be creative, flexible and mobile. He encouraged us to see our institutions as our children: let them go off, get married and go their own ways.

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## Module I: Interiority in Action

### Social apostolate as an action-oriented spiritual experience

Antoine Kerhuel SJ

The 2009 meeting of social apostolate coordinators was held May 17 to 23 in Rome. I had been asked to open the reflection with a talk on the link between “spiritual experience” and “social commitment”, but the talk seemed more like a synthesis of the submissions made prior to the Rome meeting. Indeed, in the weeks leading to the meeting, participants had sent written answers to a double question:

- Indicate the Scripture passages and the biblical figures that have shaped (and shape) your commitment as Jesuits to the social apostolate;
- Identify strong experiences that have marked your mission.

A very rich set of texts had thus been sent to the participants before their stay in Rome. On the basis of their submissions, it was possible to give an inaugural talk on “Interiority in Action”.

The exercise helped me realize that commitment in the social apostolate is deeply shaped (1) by the biblical images that mould one’s spiritual experience; (2) by the spiritual motions stemming from one’s activities, and (3) that both 1 and 2 are further assumed in the Society’s spirit: being sent in mission. I will discuss these three aspects before establishing a link between them and the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation.

**A brief preliminary note may, however, be useful.**

The word “imaginary” is sometimes understood in a negative way: “imaginary” as that which is not “real”, that which adds up to nothing, that which is useless. It is not in that sense that the word will be used here. The “imaginary” is also the “set of images that live in us” and which come from our personal history, with all its components: encounters, readings, experiences, whether happy or painful, immediate or complex, in whatever realm (it may be our spiritual life, our commitment in such and such mission). Thus understood, the “imaginary” is that which explains and nourishes our way of being in the world. If we reduce that imaginary to a narrow trick of interpretation we obviously take the risk of falling into a trap. If we recognize the presence of that “imaginary” and allow it to live, and therefore, to move, then we assume our past in a way that affords us a future. In that perspective, we are led to acknowledge that we all develop an “imaginary” ... and that it is great. As men and women committed to following Christ, we can, at any given moment of our life, access that imaginary which stimulates our commitment.

## A sharing for the mission

(1) Familiarity with the Scriptures – found in study or personal prayer, but also in the way the men and women point to this or that Bible passage – shapes an imaginary. When social apostolate coordinators gathered in Rome make an effort, each person spent some time alone in preparation, and the results were afterwards shared with the others. The harvest thus gathered, when shared, proves plentiful as the memory brings to mind the biblical images (persons, gestures, words) that matter to them. To be sure, each component stems from very personal experiences, yet all share a common reference: the story of God and humans, as well as the story of humans with God in the relationships that appear in the biblical narrative (creation, alliance, leaving Egypt, the person of Jesus, the passion and the resurrection). That reference also has, by its very nature, a social dimension: if the Bible teaches everyone to recognize the dignity of God's children, it teaches them, at the same time, the brotherly links that bind them together. Now the Bible amply shows how brotherly relationships are difficult to live at an interpersonal level, but also – beyond the face-to-face between two people – at a social level.

(2) Recalling the experiences that everyone lived during their social activities and acknowledging on that occasion the spiritual motions that they felt help us realize how a life with multiple activities opens itself to an encounter with the other (therefore with God), and to an encounter with God (and therefore with others). Here too the situations recalled by the social apostolate coordinators gathered in Rome during such a sharing reveal a great diversity. Social issues differ from one country to another and, while it is possible to identify strong common elements (for instance, the cry of indignation that leads to action), the diversity of environments in the works of the social apostolate is clear for all to see. It is probably more difficult to engage in sharing on the basis of such lived experiences: beyond the testimony (whose importance I certainly do not minimize in any way), there is the need for analysis, which leads to dialogue. In a context like that of the meeting in Rome last May, it proved fruitful to share the spiritual motions that arise from each one's activities. The sharing also invites us, I think, not to give up the reflection on globalization already under way.

(3) For the Jesuit, being sent in mission is a continuation of something that has already been acknowledged and stated in (1) and (2). The discernment which leads to mission feeds on the sharing lived through community life, but also takes place during personal exchanges with the local superior and the account of conscience with the major superior; in each of those encounters elements identified in (1) and (2) can be expressed. To be sure, the elements which touch each one in his Jesuit life are not the only factors of the sending in mission: apostolic needs of the Church and the Society are taken into account during the

meeting with the superior whose mission consists precisely in sending his brother in mission! Such an exercise can only take place through a personal and trusting relationship in which elements identified in (1) and (2) will be expressed and given their right place in the process of discernment. Such an exchange, which Jesuits want to live, helps them fully enter the dynamic of the vow of obedience. It shows the difference between the sending in mission as practised in the Society of Jesus and the processes resorted to in human resource management.

### **An adventure in the footsteps of Jesus, with others, and for mission**

Observations that have been made so far can help understand how *"identity, community and mission"* (the kind of triptych discussed by the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation [D 2, n° 19]) define life as a companion of Jesus. Do those three poles, taken together, express a particularity? Before attaining to such an expression, members of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation tried to describe what life in the Society of Jesus is like, emphasizing less what Jesuits do than the way Jesuits live what they do.

From the time it was founded the Society of Jesus has been driven by a *"living narrative"* (D 2, n°1). There is no set of actions to undertake or theses to develop in defence of some owned truth, but an adventure lived in the footsteps of Christ, an adventure with others and for the mission. Nearly five centuries ago, the first companions asked themselves if the diversity of their commitments and the difficulty of carrying out a common project were not reason enough to go their separate ways. The *Deliberation of the First Fathers* led to a discernment whose outcome was clear: we are called to remain united. On that basis, *"they began a narrative; they lit a fire which was handed on by subsequent generations whenever people encountered the Society, enabling the personal histories of generations to become embedded in the Society's history as a whole"* (D 2 n° 2).

The exercise we lived during this year's meeting of social apostolate coordinator can be likened to that *"living narrative"* or that *"fire"* handed on from generation to generation. Discovering the way God works in every one of us, through the motions felt both with the scriptures and the actions carried out, is an essential part of the process that spells out an identity in mission. Expressing what one has thus discovered to lay collaborators and to fellow Jesuits (as was the case last May) and also – in a different setting and under different circumstances – to those who do the sending in mission, is another moment of the process: identity in mission is indeed lived within a body.

The *"living narrative"* on which the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation dwells is fundamentally the story of a relationship: a personal relationship with Christ and a deep relationship with others who share the same call. *"We Jesuits, then, find our identity not alone but in companionship with the Lord who calls, and in*

*companionship with others who share this call" (D 2 n° 3). The spiritual renewal to which we are called at the end of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation is to be understood from that perspective. What will that adventure be, lived in the footsteps of Christ with others and for the mission? This question, transmitted from one Jesuit generation to another, is like the baton that runners pass on to one another in a relay race. Carrying that question with a large and generous heart; providing an answer to that question that is at once personal and received; acting accordingly... such is indeed the way we craft that "living narrative". On that road, we know that we will face the inevitable tensions which, since the birth of the Society, have accompanied the Jesuits: tension between "being and doing", "contemplation and action", "prayer and prophetic living", "being completely united with Christ and completely inserted into the world with him as an apostolic body" (D 2 n° 2). In his speech to the delegates at the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI used a different language to convey the same tensions: "As I was able to reaffirm to the Latin American Bishops gathered at the Shrine of Aparecida, "the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty (cf. II Cor 8: 9)". It is therefore natural that those who truly want to be a companion of Jesus really share in his love for the poor. For us, the option for the poor is not ideological but is born from the Gospel. Situations of injustice and poverty in today's world are numerous and tragic, and if it is necessary to seek to understand them and fight their structural causes, it is also necessary to penetrate to the very heart of man, to extirpate the deep roots of evil and sin that cut him off from God, without forgetting to meet people's most urgent needs in the spirit of Christ's charity."*

Finally, I will recall the spiritual exercise lived in Rome last May and the importance of sharing an imaginary which underlies the commitment to mission. It is not always easy to speak clearly of the spiritual joy encountered in mission. That effort of expression takes place in a specific environment (for instance, with friends, or with a religious community, and with a specific goal: sharing in order to support each other, or to prepare a sending in mission. Such a look backwards is not an imprisonment, but rather the acknowledgement of the One who, day by day in the unfolding of the received mission, comes to meet us and walk with each one of us.

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*Original French  
Translation by Christian Uwe*

## **'Interiority in Action' for a social apostolate in search of renewal**

**Uta Sievers**

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'<sup>1</sup>

**T**he first module of the meeting of Social Apostolate Coordinators in May 2009 had been prepared well in advance by submissions in written form (on average 5 pages), which were then circulated among the participants of the meeting. The quotation at the head of this article comes from one of the submissions, which its author titled "Jesus' social apostolate strategy". Indeed, one of the aims of asking for written submissions before the actual meeting, done this year for the first time, was to encourage the Coordinators to reflect on their spiritual roots, by which was meant the Gospel passages and the personal experiences that have shaped their commitment to social justice. Apart from being a moving testimony, the submissions also helped participants recognise themselves in each other's experiences and strengthened the feeling of connectedness within the group.

The module on Interiority had four steps: an initial input by Antoine Kerhuel SJ,<sup>2</sup> Father General's Assistant for Western Europe, followed by short presentations by each Conference coordinator<sup>3</sup> and comments on the presentation, then prayerful reflection, and lastly, sharing in small groups (including feedback to the larger group). It was concluded the next day with feedback from Antoine Kerhuel and a final input by Eddie Mercieca SJ,<sup>4</sup> the Secretary for Spirituality. This article attempts to trace the movements of the Spirit as perceived by the author and does not follow strictly the order of items on the agenda.

### **Identity**

The question of identity came up forcefully in the sharing on interiority. It was perceived both as a consolation (a healthy sign of 'going deeper'), and as a desolation (confusion, "we should know").

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<sup>1</sup>Luke 4, 18-19.

<sup>2</sup>See Antoine Kerhuel's article here [\[link\]](#).

<sup>3</sup>Alfredo Ferro, Denis Kim, Ghislain Tshikendwa, John Kleiderer, Brendan Mac Partlin and Xavier Jeyaraj.

<sup>4</sup>See Eddie Mercieca's article here, including a list of tasks for the social apostolate [\[link\]](#).

Antoine Kerhuel in his initial input raised the first question when he challenged us to reflect on how free we are in our actions and whether we fall into the trap of defining ourselves through our actions, a special danger in the social apostolate. He also asked if there was anything specific in the way we work with others, something that would set us apart – a question to which some of the participants objected, wondering if this was the right question. Do we *need* to define ourselves ‘over against’ others?

The important step in building our identity according to Father Kerhuel is not *what* we do but *how we live* what we do. This is not something that can be explained, it does not work as a theory, but the story can be told, as shown by the personal experiences of participants written down before the meeting. This way, we become part of the bigger narrative that is the Society of Jesus, a narrative that started with the concrete biography of Saint Ignatius.

Narratives are relational and woven into the larger narrative: Jesuits know who they are by looking to Christ who calls us, and to our companions who share this call. The action flows from the ‘interiority’, from experiences, prayer, from reactions to specific events, narratives which can then be analysed. Such was the experience of GC 35: reflected in Decree 2, which is a narrative, and Decree 3 which shows analysis moving into action.

Talking of the works in their Conferences and Assistancies, people spoke of their puzzlement regarding Jesuit identity. What makes a social institution “Jesuit”? An important point that came up in several presentations was that being Jesuit was “not simply to be an NGO” (or non-governmental organisation); it would have to be something more. Although ambiguity about our identity persisted in the group, one participant was convinced that “when we go to the poor, we work with Jesus, and that marks the difference from other good works that we could do but decide not to.” In the same vein, our identity might be defined by our answer to the question “Whom do you stand with?,” where identity is seen as a position that can change over time.

Another point was the issue of Jesuit identity while working with lay people. In many works of the Society there seems to be a certain tension between recruiting highly qualified professional staff as against recruiting people who share our spirituality, identity, and charism. Whereas everybody agrees that ideally, a staff member should have both characteristics, there are great differences among provinces and works regarding where the emphasis should fall.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that “spirituality is a foundational element of our identity”, together with other non-technical elements that are forever incomplete, such as greater fidelity to the Gospel, was seen as a consolation by one participant. This tied in with what others had noted – that it was proper for the issue of identity to emerge during the module on ‘Interiority in Action.’ There was agreement

<sup>5</sup>Interestingly, in the United States, lay presidents of Jesuit universities are often more interested in cultivating a Jesuit identity than were their Jesuit predecessors.



that the search for a common identity is a dynamic process, closely linked to each person's own search for identity.

### **Moving away from the poor<sup>6</sup>**

The second issue that came up strongly was the perception that the Society is moving away from direct involvement with the poor, and this was a desolation to many. The insight, agreed upon by all, that only direct contact with the poor ("with our feet in the mud") leads to transformation, to an encounter with God, was a consolation.

The separation of personal and institutional spirituality, leading to "disincarnated" spirituality, was pointed out as an obstacle. The questions raised were these: how can we understand our spirituality today without detaching ourselves from the theology of the incarnation? How can we live a spirituality of "descent", of the way down towards the poor, and towards being poor ourselves? Three answers given by participants point in different directions. First, our perspective needs to be shaped by the poor, come from their point of view, even while happily working in a middle class parish or at a university. Second, we need to be more rooted in our own parishes, to recognise that these parishes, often in poor areas, *are* part of the social apostolate. And third, we need to cross boundaries and become bridges by bringing our young people to the poor to experience their reality, and by asking social centres to remind the provinces of the plight of the poor.

### **Body**

The image of the Society as a body came up several times, where different members have different roles, and where, when one member suffers, all suffer. Yet, forging unity is not very easy. Jesuits in the social apostolate have many common needs and problems, but walking together seems to be difficult.

The need to foster a sense of connectedness and community in the social apostolate grows increasingly urgent even as more and more lay people replace Jesuits. The group found that there is a great deal of spirituality that others can live, but we as a body have a problem expressing our common mission, that is, the universal potential that can discern for the greater glory of God. This is one reason why we need networks in the world today; our spirituality needs to be lived in community, it cannot be lived alone. The open question is, how can networking be nourishing and achieve concrete results at the same time? Being with the people, individually and collectively, through advocacy and networking seems to be a step in the right direction. Nourishment is a fruit of face-to-face interaction, and without it we may move away from the poor and lose spiritual nourishment as a consequence.

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<sup>6</sup>See the article on Father General's talk to the Coordinators [\[link\]](#)

In this context, the World Social Forum 2009 in Belém, Brazil, was remembered by many as a key moment for the social apostolate, a moment when south-south bonds were formed. It was a chance for us to get to know each other. It was also possible for the people whom we serve to get to know each other, as was memorably shown by the encounter of the tribals from India with the indigenous people from Brazil.<sup>7</sup> A number of participants felt that the Belém experience also expressed the universal mission of the Society in a new way.

People agreed that more reflection was needed, that we can and should learn from each other, and together learn how to follow our call to achieving universality and becoming a real body.

### **Need for formation**

Many thought Formation in Ignatian spirituality for lay people and Jesuits to be a pressing concern. Although Common Apostolic Discernment (CAD) is starting to be used more by Jesuit communities, it is yet to be “discovered” as a tool for the social apostolate. Jesuits seem to be interested and desire to know more, but since few have any lived experience with it, it is hard to get started.

One participant raised a concern that different levels of the Society might not be ready to implement decisions arrived at through Common Apostolic Discernment. Traditionally, and this is true of the social apostolate as well, decisions have been taken by those “higher up”, superiors, provinces, or the Jesuit director of a work. A change in the way decisions are made may necessitate a change in the culture of the Society.

Another way of formation for lay people working in the social apostolate is to make the Spiritual Exercises together with Jesuits, a practice already on offer in some provinces. One participant said that his experience showed that lay collaborators see the Exercises as part of their personal development rather than as a professional tool of formation and would therefore not come forward.

The richness of sharing within the group was mentioned again and again as a consolation to be taken away from the meeting. Listening to, and learning from Jesuits and lay persons, together with authentic formation in spirituality, seemed to be fundamental to our response as a body.

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<sup>7</sup>[See the article by Xavier Jeyaraj](#)

## Turning to the poor out of our identity

### Alfredo Ferro SJ

*"By experience we have learned that the path has many and great difficulties connected with it."  
(Formula of the Society)*

#### A cause on which we stake our lives (the origin of our vocation)

**T**o begin with, I think that we might well combine several questions: what is it that moves us, what has moved us, and what keeps moving us to do what we do? That is, what is it that inspires us, what is the ultimate reason for our work, the well from which we drink? And above all, what is it that encourages us to continue on this path and in this vocation to which we have felt ourselves called? If I were to put it succinctly, I would say that it is the person and the cause of Jesus, and at the same time, the poor and their cause. The two come down to one and the same thing, enriched with Ignatian spirituality which continues to captivate us.

My vocation to the Society of Jesus was born out of contact with poor communities of subsistence farmers and was nourished by them for more than 30 years. Without idealizing those communities, I must affirm that they sharpened my sensitivity and made me conscious of the reality of injustice and exclusion. From them I learned the meaning of the dignity of the person, and the importance of our relationship with the earth and with nature. I recognized in them true gospel values, and I felt the presence of God in their lives. They helped me make sense of all that I do as a man, as a religious, and as a Jesuit.

If we could create a synthesis of the gospel, the word that would resound ever more strongly in my heart is *compassion*. What most inspires me is the practice of Jesus as he identifies himself with and stands alongside the poor, the excluded, and the marginalized. I feel deeply what Jon Sobrino has said so forcefully: "Outside the poor there is no salvation," though for some people this expression may sound somewhat radical.

I am encouraged by the testimonies of church people like Archbishop Romero, as well as of lay people, religious, priests, and bishops who are committed to the defence of life and the cause of the poor. But I am especially moved by the ordinary, struggling men and women we meet day after day; they are forgotten, unknown, and invisible, but they continue resisting with deep faith, and without losing heart or hope.

#### Turning away from the challenges

While I recognize the values that exist in many ecclesial spaces, I am in general discouraged by the institutional Church and sometimes by the Society of

Jesus. I feel that they are at times too timid in their commitment to justice and have too little of the prophetic strain. They appear to be more interested in maintaining themselves as institutions and safeguarding the established order. I am disheartened by the bourgeois lifestyle of our Jesuit communities, the tendency to identify with the consumer society, the loss of insertion communities, the physical and spiritual distance from the very poor, and the lack of commitment on our part to a just and fraternal society. I am disturbed by the positions taken by many Jesuit brothers and also by our institutions, which, despite the power they have to bring about profound transformations, are allied with the dominant classes and wedded to the prevailing systems. I feel that many of our works do not face up to the realities of the world's misery, poverty, hunger, injustice, and human rights violations; they have no response to these problem areas.

### **Reviewing the past**

Personally, I feel the frustration of a whole generation that dreamed of revolutions and fought to bring about genuine social, political, economic and structural changes. Despite all the revolutionary processes, those changes never happened; neither are they taking place now as we might wish, even though certain ventures on our continent are considered to be alternatives.

I recognize that our generation was perhaps overly involved in social matters and not concerned enough about integrating it with the whole of our religious experience. Though we cultivated Ignatian spirituality, we did not know how to communicate that spiritual experience to others; we hesitated to do so. We gave our works a "lay" or "secular" character, and we were not greatly concerned with acknowledging or assuming the meaning of our Jesuit identity. We lived in a secularized fashion, for which we have been chastised by both earlier and later generations. Only now are we beginning to discover the need to integrate our identity and to make it visible in our work.

I give thanks to the God of life for what my life has been, for the experience I have had, and for the opportunities which my family, my college, my friends, my Jesuit companions, and especially the Society of Jesus have given me.

### **The search for identity**

The question of identity – who and what we are – is a pressing one today; indeed it is a very vital question of our time. Identity is what makes us different, and in that recognition of who and what we are, we possess a great wealth of tradition. This tradition is to be found in our spirituality and our Ignatian charism, which we are progressively rediscovering and putting into practice in our own way of proceeding.

Our mission will be nourished from Jesus, but not from just any Jesus. It will be nourished from the loving, compassionate Jesus who hands himself over in

solidarity with the weakest brethren. The path to follow is the path of those who want to look at the world as he does – with eyes of mercy, eyes of the heart. That means following Jesus as contemplatives in action, practising discernment, and dedicating ourselves to loving service.

### **And what is our mission?**

We reaffirm what was expressed by the recent 35<sup>th</sup> GC: the heart of the Society's mission is the service of faith and the promotion of justice, with the added provision: "in dialogue with other religions and immersed in diverse cultures." Without slighting the importance of this new accent, especially for countries or regions where interreligious and intercultural concerns are central, I have the impression that a new formulation of GC 32's Decree 4 is trying to make its way into the universal Society. Little by little the idea seems to be gaining ground that the question of Justice, or of Faith that does Justice, as some of us have understood those two terms, are notions of the past and that now we have to stress other things.

We exist to carry out a universal mission and to be entirely available for the service of the vocation to which we have been called.<sup>1</sup> We should put aside all shades of provincialism and free ourselves of disordered attachments related to our own works and specific projects. We should try not to become bogged down in particular communities and institutions so that we can experience ourselves as truly free to undertake the mission which the Church and the Society entrust to us, permeated by an esprit de corps which clearly discerns the mission's priorities. And certainly, any mission which requires of us new endeavours requires also a vision of the world and of our society that will sustain it.

### **Returning to the "Option for the poor"**

This ecclesial option made by the universal and the Latin American Church and defined in Medellín in 1968 constitutes an important part of our mission and continues to have more relevance than ever,<sup>2</sup> though possibly with new shades of meaning. The category is now a broader one, encompassing not just the economically poor, but also all people who are weak, excluded, and marginalized, and all who suffer violence.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, it also encompasses all creatures of the natural world whose life is threatened.

<sup>1</sup>Letter of Fr. General on the Universality of the Society of Jesus.

<sup>2</sup>Pope Benedict XVI, in his discourse to those gathered in Aparecida, encourages us to renew and revitalize our mission among the poor and with the poor: "The preferential option for the poor is implicit in our christological faith in that God who has made himself poor for us, so as to make us rich by his poverty (cf. 2 Cor 8,9) and to place the poor in first place."

<sup>3</sup>It is now not just the phenomenon of the exploited and oppressed, but also of those who are socially excluded: "The excluded include not only the exploited, but also those who are superfluous and disposable." (Document of Aparecida, 2007, No. 65)

Unfortunately, despite our moral indignation over the realities of injustice and inequality that we experience, we continue to turn a deaf ear to the cry of the poor and, what is worse, we have grown accustomed to hearing their cries. Our sensitivity needs to be heightened so that the tragic circumstances of so many of our brothers and sisters impel us to uproot ourselves and become engaged in more creative projects. The poor are without a doubt the source of our spirituality. As noted in *The Characteristics of the Social Apostolate*, "Contact with the poor gives a special colouring to our spirituality, and our spirituality makes our action more radical."<sup>4</sup> In the same document we also read: "The poor have a knack for bringing us back to what is essential in life." All this we have felt and experienced to be quite true, especially when what is needed most by those who suffer worst is simply our solidarity: "Even when we seem to be doing no visible good, we stay."<sup>5</sup>

In the effective carrying out of this mission and this commitment, inserting ourselves among the poor and sharing our lives with them is a tremendous help. It is not so much a matter of defining whether our actions should be "for," "with," "from," or "among" the poor. Rather, what is important is that, within each of those possibilities, some of them more radical than others, we "stoop" so as to be able to see things from below: from the gutter, from the anguish, from the tragedy, from the suffering, from the pain, from the oppression, from the sadness, from the exclusion. Only thus will we be actively contemplating the world from the Trinitarian viewpoint that Ignatius proposes to us.

### **Communities of the Society at the service of the poor**

We should undertake a reconsideration of our Jesuit communities, which are in themselves a "mission" (GC 35). It is not enough for us simply to make the Exercises together, which may produce little or no change in us; nor is it enough for us to perform minor alterations or external transformations. We are in need of profound transformations that are both interior/personal and collective/communal. We need to let ourselves be touched and moved by the gospel and by the person of Jesus.

We are all, every Jesuit and every community, profoundly conditioned by our place of residence and our place of work – being determines consciousness, Marx used to say. Thus, closeness to the "poor" will help us to see things with the eyes of him whom we have identified as Lord.

### **Institutions at the service of a sustainable world**

Our institutions should help us become conscious of the mission we have been given. We are different, and therefore we should ask what our "proper way of proceeding" is, and we must encourage and help others to do the same.

<sup>4</sup>*The Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus.*

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

The whole planet, all societies and cultures everywhere are today undergoing processes of continuous change, and they are asking us to help solve the countless challenges that present themselves, especially now when the whole world system is in a state of crisis that is not just financial. We will be able to respond in relevant ways to those challenges only by adopting a global, structural viewpoint that is imbued with a vision of sustainability.

Personal and communal discernment attuned to the subtle spiritual motions of the God who moves in the world and reveals himself to us should sharpen our judgment. Viewing things in the spirit of the incarnate God will help us to sift our feelings, discover the motions, be attentive to the signs of the times, and above all to the realization of the “magis” as the most universal good. Thus will we find God’s will in the here and now.

To conclude, greater insertion will certainly help us get closer to people’s real, actual problems. We need to continue carrying out analysis and research from a Latin American perspective. We cannot stop championing apparently “lost causes,” such as the cause of the indigenous peoples, to whom we need to make an even more radical commitment.<sup>6</sup> Reality requires us to fine-tune our work with refugees and displaced persons – a crucial area of concern and a priority for the Society at this time.

We need to consolidate and expand the projects we have in common, thinking always of the impact and influence of our activities, especially as regards public policies. We cannot flag in our search for alternative resources and efficient management of these resources in the face of diminished external support. Making proposals for sustainable regional and territorial development will help our mission. Finally, we need to strive earnestly to think of ourselves as a universal body based on the networks and proposals we are developing at the interprovincial and international level. For those of us from the countries of the south, action in areas directly related to natural resources are of great interest and concern.

Alfredo Ferro SJ  
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*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Owen SJ*

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<sup>6</sup>See Fr. General’s recent letter (March 27) to Fr. Roberto Jaramillo, superior of the Amazon region, after the message sent out to friends of the Society of Jesus on the occasion of the World Social Forum.

## ‘Interiority in Action’: Some insights for a later discussion

Edward Mercieca SJ<sup>1</sup>

I am impressed with what I have read in your submissions before the meeting and with what I have just listened to here this morning. *‘The struggle for justice is the place where we can discover and live our faith’*. It seems to me that from this experiential discovery of the social apostolate, the whole Society receives spiritual renewal.

You have called this module ‘Interiority in Action’. For us Christians, *interiority* – or spirituality, as it is traditionally called – *is a concrete way of living the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to follow Christ in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; it is a mission and a project.*

The mystery of Jesus is incomprehensible in all its richness and far-reaching grace. A particular spirituality is one way of looking at the whole mystery from one specific vision and experience. In this sense, and fortunately so, no particular spirituality in the church will ever embrace and touch the full mystery of Jesus Christ. Thus I invite you to live the Christian way of life helped by Ignatius’ spiritual inheritance with passion but in a humble way.

Ignatian spirituality as a concrete way of living the Gospel cannot be reduced to one or two characteristics, nor even to a long list of notes. It is *how one proceeds, the vision and the way one lives the whole mystery of the Lord*; it is the person-mission-project in one’s daily life that makes a spirituality meaningful to others. This has to do with charism, transmitted from one generation to the next as part of a tradition. It is transmitted through life, contagiously, rather than through concepts and ideas. That is why, behind a theory, there is always a biography. Without knowing and taking seriously the fact that the experience of Ignatius and the first companions was lived within the framework of history, it is not possible to seize, to understand in its core dynamism, even less to feel and taste, what is *Ignatian*. Being aware of this historic framework and of *how God accompanied Ignatius* as narrated in his autobiography is basic to approaching and understanding Ignatian spirituality.

The foundational experience of *Ignatian Spirituality*, this particular way of living the Gospel today, are the *Spiritual Exercises*. The experience of re-living the Exercises in their dynamism and process, even if in different and varied ways according to needs and circumstances, gives us *a common language to express our vision and mission*. That is why the Spiritual Exercises – the notes Ignatius left us – were never meant just to be read but to serve as a guide to be re-lived in one’s history and life.

<sup>1</sup>This is an edited version of Fr. Mercieca’s talk to the Coordinators, which ended the ‘Interiority in Action’ module. Eddie Mercieca SJ is the Secretary for Spirituality at the Curia.



From the Exercises, we can take three elements or visions that are relevant for our reflection about interiority in the social apostolate: the Contemplation of the Incarnation (102-109), the Call of the Temporal King, as an aid toward contemplating the Life of the Eternal King (91-98), and the many references to poverty and the poor Christ.<sup>2</sup> To this I would like to add the Formula of the Institute (no. 1) and the Complementary Norms, especially the conditions for mission where the concept of justice is mentioned explicitly.

*Collaboration in mission is the future not only of the Society of Jesus in all its apostolic endeavours but of the whole church.* There are three ways of implementing this Collaboration of all of us as Companions in Mission:

- Lay persons or/and Religious of other congregations working with Jesuits;
- Jesuits working and helping in projects of lay persons or of other religious
- Joint ventures.

If we are honest we will affirm that we Jesuits started to collaborate out of need, out of the lack of Jesuits in our works. It is now that *we are discovering collaboration as a grace*. It is now that we are doing it as a reality we ought to work towards. What began as a need we discovered later to be a norm, something that should be, a principle.<sup>3</sup> Lay persons – men and women – bring to our works professionalism, a sense of reality, the meaning of daily life with its hard work and thanksgiving. We Jesuits contribute a sense of mission, a way of doing things, our deep motivation, our vision, perseverance and faithfulness in difficult moments – and our lives.

We cannot take *our way of proceeding* for granted in the persons who are collaborating with us in our mission, in some concrete project or work. By 'our way' I mean interiorising criteria for decisions, implementing little efforts and works within a wider vision, seeking the universal good and discerning. *This Ignatian way of proceeding is not just the fruit of habit or of pure goodwill; it is the fruit of a profound religious experience (the Spiritual Exercises). Unfortunately, many times we practise self-censorship when it comes to being explicit in sharing the interior experience that inspires us.* Very often we justify ourselves by referring to the cultural or religious pluralism surrounding us, to the presence of non-believers in our group, or those of other faiths. *The truth is that we do not know how to do it, and for that reason it seems easier not to do it...*

<sup>2</sup>Principle and Foundation 23; indifference 23; Contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ: Poverty of spirit and things as well 98; Nativity: born in absolute deprivation 116; The two Standards: spiritual poverty and total deprivation of things 147; Three different kinds of men: attachment opposed to perfect poverty 157; Modes of humility: for a better imitation of Christ one would choose poverty & a reputation of foolishness with Him poor 167.

<sup>3</sup>In different Assistancies of the Society of Jesus, we find different rhythms regarding the conception and implementation of Collaboration in Mission, depending on the number of Jesuits, the typology of the works we are committed to and the culture of the local church.

I am not suggesting here that you should impose your faith on others. I am just saying that you dare to invite others to share with passion something of your faith, your interiority, your motivation. The reaction of the persons you work with will surprise you. I know this from my own experience. Lay persons are much freer to share their deep interior motivations and less shy to talk about the spirituality that inspires them. We have wonderful examples of this in many of the lay rectors and teachers of our universities and colleges. My impression is that people, including those who do not share our faith, are grateful when we talk and invite them to have a closer look at our deep identity and way of living and doing things. After all, this is the most honest approach, for us and for them. It is *sharing our secret treasure, our interiority. It is this that guarantees our social commitment to the poor and to justice; it is this that gives us our perseverance.*

Collaboration in mission moves and grows in concentric circles: from the one who is just looking for a job and stays on because he or she feels good about it, to the one who shares the foundational experience, the language, the vision and mission, and is perhaps even able to be explicit about all this in his or her language.

I want to conclude my sharing by proposing a few practical tasks for the social apostolate and more specifically, for you, the Assistancy and Conference coordinators gathered here in Rome:

First, to revise, or better, to *re-read the Characteristics of the Social Apostolate (1998)*<sup>4</sup> – *ten years today is a long time. Re-read them in the light of GC 35, in the light of the current crisis and of what we have learned about collaboration in mission*

Second, to carry out more joint ventures (studies, formation and action) with our parishes: there are about 2,000 of them,<sup>5</sup> with more than 2,000 full-time Jesuits. Ninety per cent of the parishes we serve in the whole Society are located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, among poor people and mission stations.<sup>6</sup>

Third, there is a *mutual challenge between our social centres and our spirituality centres*. Spirituality centres have to walk on two legs: one foot is planted in their service to professionals and male and female religious; the other in concrete programmes among, and in favour of, the poor and marginalised. Both missions need to be done with serious preparation and adequately thought-out methodology. It is possible that this is already being done but

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.jezuici.pl/iss/soapsj/index.htm>

<sup>5</sup> More than 90 in the United States, 27 in Spain, about 200 in Latin America and many in South Asia – 230 in India alone.

<sup>6</sup> Without the parishes, we would lose our insertion in the day-to-day reality of poor people, and our insertion in the local church.

it has to grow more.<sup>7</sup> Social centres on their part can and should help spirituality centres by sharing and talking about what inspires their commitment and suggesting joint ventures.

Fourth, be more daring and creative in offering the 18th, 19th and, for some of your collaborators, the 20th Annotation retreats. Many of our teams will be interested. It is not a question of transforming our social centres into pious places but of committing ourselves to doing work with 'interiority,' according to our way of proceeding. Thus we will be serving those in need and fighting for justice in a deeper way and with greater strength.

Fifth, a great challenge is how to accompany our young Jesuits so that after the first years of novitiate and studies they may continue to commit themselves to the poor. Insertion among the poor in their early years of formation often inspires a great desire to accompany the needy by working for justice. Unfortunately, many give up their social commitment during theology and specialised studies, a fact that will determine the direction of future missions.

In some parts of the Society where the majority of our young people come from poor parishes, we find that that they want to leave their past behind when they enter the Society, and follow a "different" lifestyle: studies, travels, and a different apostolate. Those who commit themselves to social justice or to spirituality are not always regarded favourably by their own companions. This difficult task needs to be properly tackled in time.

Finally, may I add that if we devote ourselves to the spiritual renewal of our social apostolate – which does not mean weakening but strengthening the commitment to social justice – this will have forceful repercussions on the whole body of the Society, its members and its structures. I would think and desire that there is no more fruitful and efficient way to re-energise our social apostolate. *It is Faith that does Justice and it is Justice that seeks God.*

Edward Mercieca SJ  
Curia Generalizia  
Rome, Italy

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<sup>7</sup>Father Sparough in Chicago (USA) is giving the Spiritual Exercises for the homeless ([www.frmichaelsparough.org](http://www.frmichaelsparough.org)); there are retreats for people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Chile and other parts of the world; the week of guided prayer and experience of God for pastoral leaders is widespread in Zambia. These are just some examples in different cultures.

## Module II: Ignatian Advocacy Network Review

### First steps for the Ignatian Advocacy Network (IAN)

Giuseppe Riggio SJ

**F**rom 18 – 22 May, at their yearly meeting in Rome, the Social Apostolate coordinators focused their attention on the Ignatian Advocacy Network (IAN), an interlinked association of groups set up at the Workshop on Ignatian Advocacy held at the Escorial meeting in Madrid at the end of 2008.

This initiative is a response to Decree n°3 of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation requesting the use advocacy as an instrument to foster the Society of Jesus' mission in the service of faith and justice. At the Escorial meeting the participants decided the most effective organisational model to achieve the mission's objective was the establishment of a set of different theme-based networks within the broader framework of the main advocacy network. For more information on IAN and its founding process you can consult *Promotio Iustitiae* 101, 2009/1.

Six months after the IAN launch, the coordinators used the meeting in Rome as an occasion to monitor this project by analysing the various issues of Migration, Peace and Human Rights, Education, International Aid for Development, Alternative Development Methods, Natural Resources Management, Ecology and Religious Fundamentalism. These are the eight different theme-based networks established earlier at El Escorial.

Thanks to information on the individual themes provided by the Operations Group (OG), the coordinators were able to evaluate IAN progress in the context of two previously established, main objectives:

1. Identifying the Jesuit institution responsible for each network and other participating institutions;
2. Setting up a two-year work plan 2009-2010.

Presented below is a report on the situation evolving within each one of the theme-based networks, together with a few conclusive notes to be updated within the broader advocacy network system.

### Migrations

The theme on migration – one of great relevance for very many countries – has immediately captured the interest of several of the Society's institutions, so

much so, that all the Conferences wanted to participate in this specific theme-based network. Note that the participant selection process has not yet finished.

The leadership role for this specific theme-based network has been awarded to two inter-provincial cooperation realities already existing in the Society: the Jesuit Service to Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, which derives from the Conference of Provincials of Latin America (CPAL), and the Jesuit Service to Migrants of Spain (Southern Europe Assistance). These are two networks with different structures and objectives that have managed to develop over the years a useful collaboration on specific themes concerning advocacy. For an example of such cooperation, we remind readers of the [letter responding to the so-called European directive on immigrants returning](#) to their home countries, penned jointly by the delegates of the social apostolate of Latin America and Europe.

As far as actions to be undertaken in the coming two years are concerned, the migrations network is identifying the best ways to participate in the next World Social Forum of Migrations to be held in Quito in October 2010 (for the 2008 edition see <http://www.fsmm2008.org/>). On the occasion of this international event, the leadership of this network plans to organise a prior meeting for Jesuits of the entire world providing services to immigrants. The objective of this meeting– modeled on the Ignatian family meetings that have preceded the World Social Forums of Nairobi in 2007 and Belem in 2009 – is to establish stronger collaborative links among the people in this apostolate in order to reinforce the universal dimension of the migration network.

## **Peace and Human Rights**

The Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM) has taken charge of coordinating this specific thematic network and entrusted the leadership role to the Hakimani Center of Nairobi (Kenya), an institution that has long been committed to reflecting on and tackling these issues. Other Conferences have also joined this thematic network (CPAL, South Asia, Southern Europe and United States), identifying in turn other institutions active in this field.

In order to prepare a working agenda for this thematic network – one with a very broad spectrum to be tackled from different perspectives – the network leadership has drafted a first proposal, which entails, among other things, the preparation of a document to position the Society on the issue of Peace and Human Rights, and the organisation of a seminar to be held in Nairobi in January 2010 on “The role of civil society in the promotion of peace and human rights: the case of Sub-Saharan Africa.” The members of this thematic network have begun working on developing this first proposal by trying to make it the most universal possible, going beyond the specifics of the African dimension.

## Education

The Education thematic network leadership has been entrusted to Fe y Alegría (FyA), in particular to FyA-Entreculturas, which has long been engaged in international advocacy on issues concerning education. This network has already achieved a wide spectrum of support. Besides FyA (which is part of CPAL), JESAM, South Asia, East Asia and Australasia, South Europe, United States and JRS International have also joined this network.

For the two year period 2009-2010, the network is planning to work on a specific issue: the right of all human beings to quality education. In practice this implies establishing advocacy action to strengthen public education policies and improve basic quality education offered by public schools. To attain this objective a few important future initiatives have been highlighted: to participate to the [International Campaign for Education](#); to prepare a draft document establishing the Society's position on the issue; and finally, to ensure better coordination among institutions and Jesuit networks already involved in education.

## Aid to International Development

This thematic network for international development aid is led by the Xavier Network, another organisational network formed by the Provinces of the South European Assistance and Germany's agencies for development. As of now, we lament the unfortunate absence in this specific network of members from other Conferences, and in particular of those from Provinces which receive international aid. This aspect is a drawback to be surmounted, otherwise the very existence of this network may be jeopardised, especially if we consider that its objective is to contribute the perspective of countries at the receiving end of international aid to a political debate on international solidarity.

## Alternative Models of Development

The proposal to establish a thematic network on this subject is related to the economic and financial crisis that has overtaken the world in recent months, and consequent questioning of the economic development model pursued so far. The objective is to find together with other subjects, different alternative models of sustainable development. This is a decisive and demanding theme. As a first step, this network, led by CPAL, is thinking of establishing constant contacts and exchanges among those of the Society's institutions active in this field in order to share their practical and theoretical expertise acquired over time.

Given the complexity of this issue, the promoters of the initiative have established a time frame of one year to verify if the network is in fact the most effective instrument to achieve the objectives planned.

### **Natural Resources Management**

The natural resources issue is a very sensitive one, concretely affecting the lives of people in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is not therefore by chance that this issue was identified as a specific theme to work on at the November 2008 Workshop at Escorial.

There it was decided to articulate this thematic network in two sub-sections and work on two specific themes: mining resources management, in particular in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and the purchase of land belonging to indigenous populations by multinational and domestic companies in India with the aim of exploiting natural resources. The first aspect on mining resources has been studied in particular by CEPAS in Kinshasa (DRC), and the second, on indigenous alienation from the land, by the inter-provincial centre of Bagaicha (India).

In assessing this subject the coordinators have confirmed the relevance of the issue and believe the Society's engagement here must be greater and more clear-cut. For this reason it was decided that the Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, South Asia and Latin America meet to determine together what objectives to pursue and the organisational structure with which to proceed (In this case, as in the case of the thematic network on alternative development models, the network structure itself may prove not to be the most adequate instrument).

### **Ecology**

In contrast to the other thematic networks already presented, the Ignatian Eco Net (the name chosen for this network) has a wider focus going beyond advocacy action. The participants in this network – representatives of OCIPE (also in charge of the network coordination), CEPAL, JESAM, CVX, South Asia and the Province of English Canada – constitute a qualified group, but the coordinators think it would be useful if other representatives of the Society with matured and various experiences on the theme of ecology could also join.

For the near future this network proposes two objectives:

1. Offer a website consisting of a space for information and awareness (<http://www.ignatian-eco.net/public/>);
2. Contribute to the input of new ideas in view of the Copenhagen Conference on Climate in December 2009 (<http://en.cop15.dk>). The

specific contribution the Society can offer is of a theological nature, in particular the 'theology of creation'.

### Religious Fundamentalism

At the Escorial workshop, the South Asia Conference suggested that among the advocacy themes the Society should take to heart should be the issue of religious and ethnic fundamentalism. Sadly, evidence of the relevance of this issue comes from the news of violence perpetrated against Christians in various parts of India (Orissa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh) and of ethnic conflicts registered in other Asian countries (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan). At the moment there is no real thematic network on this issue, but in the course of 2010 the South Asia Conference will organise an international seminar to consider the response the Society can give and assess the opportunity of establishing a specific advocacy network.

The table below summarises the basic information for each of the above-mentioned thematic networks:

NETWORK NAME	RESPONSIBLE	NUMBER OF MEMBERS
[1] <b>Migration</b>	SJM-CPAL e SJM-Spain	13 members; All Conferences
[2] <b>Peace and Human Rights</b>	JESAM - HIPSIR, Nairobi	5 members; All Conferences
[3] <b>Education</b>	Fe y Alegría-Spain Entreculturas	7 members; All Conferences
[4] <b>International Aid to development</b>	Alboan	5 members; 2 Conferences
[5] <b>Alternative Development Models</b>	CPAL	5 members; 5 Conferences
[6] <b>Natural Resources Management</b>	JESAM - JCSA	4 Conferences
[7] <b>Ecology</b>	OCIPE	5 members; 4 Conferences
[8] <b>Religious and Ethnic Fundamentalism</b>	JCSA	2 members; 3 Conferences

### Conclusion

We conclude this brief review of the activities carried out by each thematic network since their establishment with a few final considerations.



Within the Society of Jesus IAN constitutes a new kind of collaboration attempt because of the specific focus on advocacy, a field only recently taken up by the Society's institutions, and also because of the clear global horizons it entails, involving collaboration among different Conferences well beyond the borders of single Provinces.

This new situation implies that the launch of IAN presupposes setting aside a proper amount of time in which the participating subjects can experiment and metabolise the new idea. The first six months of activity have already yielded some useful indications, but there is no doubt that the testing session is still going on. On this matter we consider six months too short a time to constitute the pattern of collaboration and exchange that all network activity presupposes.

Furthermore, during this first stage, our experience has demonstrated that the selection of leading institutions and participating institutions in each and every thematic network is no simple decision if we are to identify institutions capable of carrying out the requested task.

One last interesting inference one may draw at this early stage is that the model of advocacy network works better in certain cases than in others. In fact we have seen that in some cases – for instance, religious fundamentalism and alternative development models – we are still raising questions about the best way to intervene.

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*Original Italian*  
*Translation by Roberto Scarcia*

## Ignatian Advocacy Network (IAN): The emerging model Fernando Franco SJ

**T**he goal of this document is to describe briefly the formation of the platform of Ignatian Advocacy Networks (IAN). The model described here is based on the conclusions agreed upon by the Conference (Assistancy) Coordinators of the Social Apostolate at the annual meeting in Rome (May 2009).

### Rationale for the IAN

*The call to engage in advocacy.* General Congregation 35 has given the Society a call to engage in advocacy as a means to put into practice our mission of reconciliation, our vocation to build bridges.<sup>1</sup>

*The new structures of Jesuit governance.* By establishing a new apostolic role for the six Presidents of Conferences, GC 35 has opened the way for more universal and global forms of apostolic government, which in turn provide a natural setting for the development of the IAN organisational model.

*Apostolic discernment and planning.* Fr. General has proposed five apostolic goals for the whole Society. The second goal speaks of the need for the Society to determine which the apostolic frontiers and global preferences might be. This implies a process of “creative and daring evaluation of all our apostolates that might lead to ongoing apostolic planning.”

*One apostolic body for a universal mission.* GC 35 strongly expressed the ideal that in the midst of great diversity we are called to live as one apostolic body. This has been felt and expressed at various international events, such as the Escorial Workshop, and the Ignatian Family gathering in January 2009 prior to the World Social Forum at Belém (Brazil).

### Principles underlying IAN

*Principle of differentiated apostolic unity.* This principle emphasizes, first, the need for any apostolic work to have a clear Jesuit identity and to be inserted in concrete Jesuit structures of governance. It defines this unity as pluricultural and characterised by flat hierarchies. Symbols may help to understand this

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<sup>1</sup>“The complexity of the problems we face and the richness of the opportunities offered demand that we build bridges between the rich and the poor, *establishing advocacy links* of mutual support between those who hold political power and those who find it difficult to voice their interest” (D 3, no. 28). [Emphasis mine].

complex reality: multiple-centred entity, nodal point of a structure, and the 'hub'.

*Principle of international apostolic subsidiarity.* Conferences will play a double role in carrying out our mission. First, they will provide a regional context and a broader set of goals and priorities within which provinces will fix their apostolic plans. Second, in collaboration with other Conferences, they may increasingly adopt a new role in defining global apostolic priorities and in supporting international projects.

## Elements of the IAN

One simple way of defining the main elements of the organisational model of the IAN is to analyse the relationships that bind together the various elements of the whole structure.

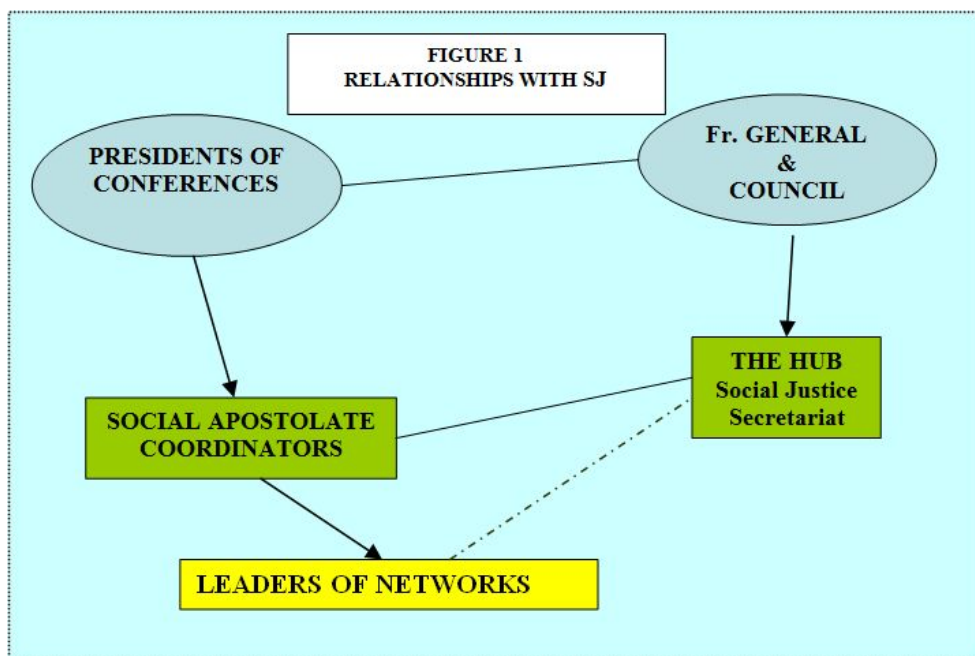
### [1] Relationships with the Society of Jesus

From an apostolic point of view, the government of the Society includes the six Presidents of the Conferences as well as the Curia comprising Fr. General and his Council (Figure 1).

At a **general level**, the IAN needs to be approved and mandated by Fr. General and the Presidents. This mandate may be temporary, subject to further evaluation, and it may be partial, affecting some parts of the model. When they approve a network, the Presidents give a particular mandate to the Delegate or Coordinator of the Social Apostolate to become members, or to start or develop a particular network.

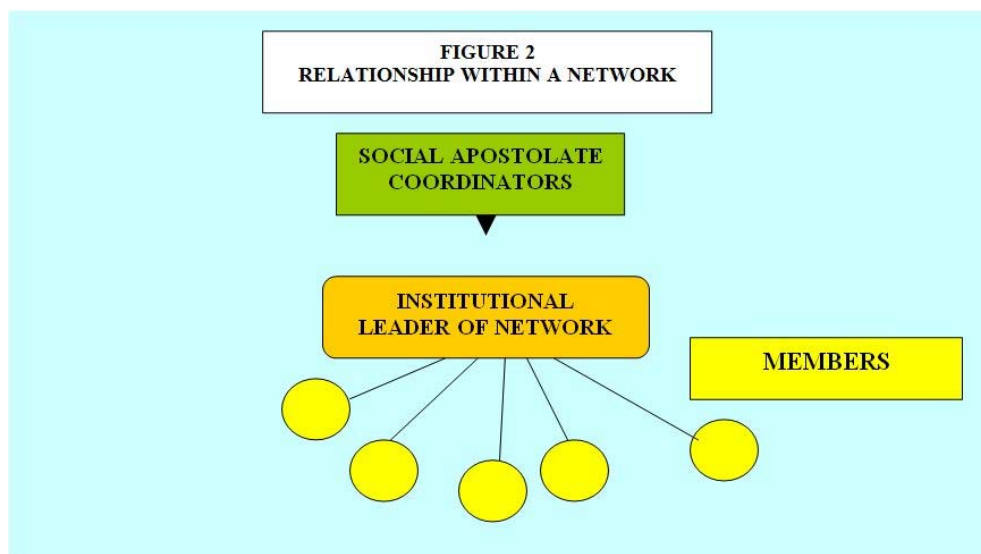
The group of **Conference/Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate** assumes, as a body, and with the support of SJS, joint responsibility for the functioning of IAN. **Each Coordinator** is responsible for the particular network entrusted to him. Financial responsibility for the network remains with its leader.

The **function of SJS** is envisioned as a 'hub', as a centre for accompanying, supporting, making the entire system dynamic. The broken line joining SJS to the group of leaders of networks (see Fig. 1) indicates that it does not have direct authority over the functioning of the networks and emphasizes its supportive role in making a multiple-centred reality function and remain connected to the 'centre'.



## [2] Relationships within a network

The **leader** of the network is primarily a Jesuit (social) institution entrusted with the direct responsibility of managing the network. It is chosen by the Social Coordinator with the approval of the President of the Conference in consultation with SJS (see Fig. 2).



The **members** of the network will be Jesuit institutions approved by the corresponding Coordinator of the Social Apostolate in consultation with the President of the Conference.

Each network needs to have a plan stating at least a set of objectives, strategies and advocacy actions. The approval of an advocacy network may be given according to definite criteria.

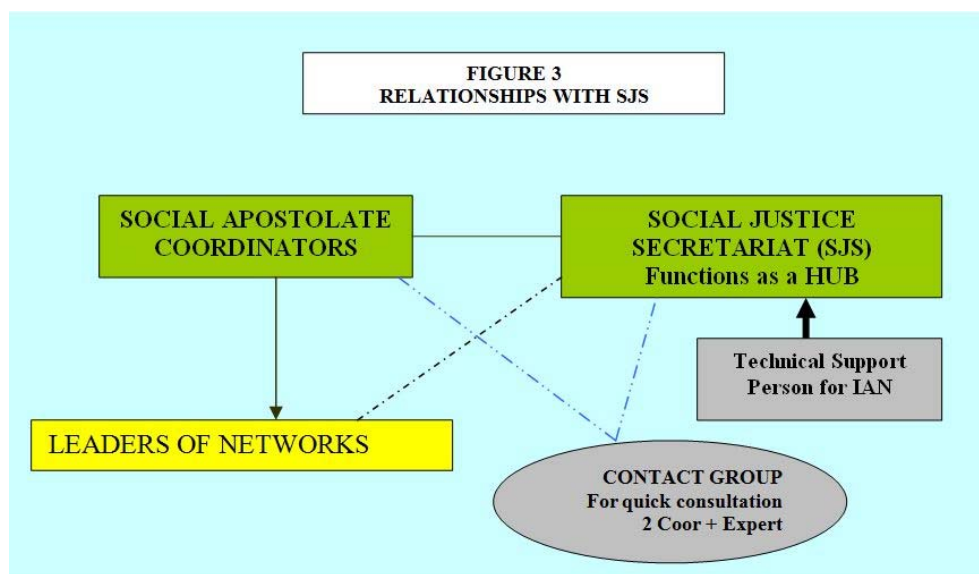
### [3] Relationships with SJS

**SJS**, together with the group of Coordinators, is responsible for IAN (see Fig. 3). More particularly, it

- contributes to creating a shared global vision;
- helps with the development and the management of IAN networks;
- monitors and helps in developing instruments for evaluation; and
- provides legitimacy by connecting to Fr. General.

SJS is to explore ways of supporting particular networks by facilitating, whenever required, the provision of common services like formation and communication. This aspect will take some time to develop.

SJS is supported by the **Contact Group** (CG) whose function is to provide SJS with a quick reference for consultation and checking. The CG is composed of two coordinators and one expert in advocacy-networking appointed by SJS after consultation with the Coordinators.



SJS needs to have a **technical administrative support**, one competent person who can take responsibility for managing the day-to-day responsibilities of IAN.

We are in the process of preparing a Manual '*ad experimentum*'.

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Important background documents that were instrumental in the process of creating the Ignatian Advocacy Network.

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## Module III: ‘Sent to the Frontiers’: Ongoing Apostolic Discernment

### The apostolic “frontier” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the response of the Society of Jesus

Giuseppe Riggio SJ

**I**n the decrees of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (GC35) one central and recurrent theme is highlighted: the Society of Jesus is one apostolic body **for the mission. It is a mission which continuously presents the Jesuits, globally and locally, with new demands and needs.** It deals with those frontiers, physical and spiritual, referred to by Pope Benedict XVI in his discourse to the members of the GC35 on 21 February 2008 and cited in Decree 3. “The challenge of our mission today: Sent to the Frontiers.”

In accordance with the Holy Father’s invitation and the mandate of the GC35, Father General recognised ongoing apostolic discernment as the most appropriate instrument, both to identify the apostolic frontiers to which Jesuits are called to be present and to evaluate the forms and the modalities of this presence.

The social apostolate, like other apostolic sectors of the Society, is called to give its own contribution to this discernment, beginning with the experience so far accrued. At their annual meeting, 18-22 May 2009, the social apostolate conference coordinators dedicated one full day to this issue.

#### The concept of “frontier” in the 35<sup>th</sup> GC

Fr. Joseph Daoust SJ, **Delegate of Father General to the Roman Houses**, opened the coordinators’ day of sharing and reflection with a much appreciated intervention. In the course of his reflection, Fr Daoust sought to deepen our understanding of the concept of the “frontier”. In fact, this concept cannot be fully understood through poetic clichés alone, but in the light of the journey undertaken by the Society 40 years ago during the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation, a journey that continues to the present day.

According to Fr. Daoust, the Society’s understanding of its mission has evolved over the years without abrupt changes or radical divisions, as some believe, **but as a sign of a gradual and progressively more profound awareness.**

In 1972, GC 32 identified the mission of the Society with the service of faith and the promotion of justice. Subsequently, GC 34 (1995) clarified the

interpretation of the concept of **faith-justice**. In 2008, GC 35 linked this understanding more profoundly to biblical and theological reflection. It was this reference to the biblical message that made it clear to Fr. Daoust that the concept of justice in the documents produced by the General Congregation should not be understood in terms of punitive or equitable justice. Biblical justice has always been linked to a relationship which **has broken down** and needs to be **re-established**. Thus, the Society's mission is to contribute to the construction of just relationships in the world, working at their fault lines to re-establish them.

Fr. Daoust sees these as the frontiers indicated by GC35 (see Decree 3). The decree refers to all the places, and not merely geographical locations, where we see an absence of mutual dialogue and understanding arising from racial, cultural, **moral** differences. Clearly we are faced by demanding and difficult frontiers which require a significant level of engagement by the Society, the capacity to understand the positions of all concerned so as "to build bridges of dialogue and understanding" (Decree 1.6).

After having clarified the concept of frontier, Fr. Daoust underlined that the fulfillment of this mission takes places through apostolic discernment of which frontiers we are called to: how to take the mission forward and assess the work undertaken; how to conserve our universal overview and the new challenges arising in the world. In this way discernment becomes a permanent dimension of our mission.

### **"Frontiers" and the social apostolate**

After Fr. Daoust's introduction, the coordinators presented their perspective. In agreement with the overall approach, particularly the role of discernment in the realisation of our mission, the coordinators emphasised the contribution the social apostolate sector could make to the whole Society, the potential obstacles en route, and the role of the Curia and the Social Justice Secretariat.

### **The contribution of the social apostolate**

The social apostolate's contribution to identifying today's frontiers comes primarily from its proximity to the poorest and most marginalised and its long-standing social science research. Both these help deepen our understanding of the Society's mission, offering a more universal rather than a merely local vision. Moreover, the experience of the social apostolate may facilitate the spiritual renewal of the Society – acknowledged as fundamental by many quarters – and promote enhanced cooperation between apostolates within the Society and among Jesuits and their collaborators.



Finally, as the social apostolate has been extensively active in situations characterised by sudden change, sharing this precious experience may encourage the Society to review its priorities and how it meets them.

### **Some obstacles along the journey**

There will be a number of obstacles throughout our journey, some of them more tangible than others. Above all, they weigh heavily on the Conferences where falling vocations are leading to a declining number of Jesuits. This situation makes it more difficult to undertake a forward-looking plan that responds to emerging needs. The necessity to respond to these needs is frequently in conflict with the demands of traditionally well-known and long-established Jesuit institutions. In both cases, men are needed to take the mission forward, but this resource is lacking.

Other obstacles are related to attitudes. Our coordinators observed that the prevailing vision within the Society is characterised by the circumstances of individual Jesuits. They are worried about the specific work they carry out and are well aware of their Provinces’ needs. They are not however quite so aware of the universal reality of the Society. A strong sense of provincialism may be frequently observed. This ends in compromising the outcomes of the mission at local and universal levels. In addition, there is a widespread resistance to change, to undertake new initiatives, and to abandon sectors in which the Society has traditionally been present (even though its presence is no longer required) for places where there is a greater need.

### **The role of the Curia Generalizia and of the Social Justice Secretariat**

The coordinators also debated the most appropriate role that the Curia Generaliza and Social Justice Secretariat can and should play to move forward. It was amply agreed that the Curia should play a fundamental role in supporting, promoting, encouraging and accompanying apostolic discernment with a view to developing long-term apostolic plans.

The contribution expected of the Secretariat may be summarised in two fundamental directives:

- *Attention to the world situation.* The Secretariat must elaborate an integrated vision of the global economic, social and cultural situation and share it with the whole Society. It should also take the responsibility for promoting reflections and initiatives on relevant global issues, such as migration, ecology, advocacy and human rights.
- *Promoters of cooperation.* The coordinators invited the Secretariat to continue promoting cooperation and exchange among Jesuits and

collaborators working in the Social Apostolate (for example the Ignatian Advocacy Network and the meetings organised to mark the World Social Forum in Nairobi and Belém). They also invited the Secretariat to encourage closer cooperation between social works and parishes, universities and the youth apostolate.

## Conclusion

The fruitful exchange of ideas during the workshops brought to light a range of interesting aspects that can be usefully developed at Conference and Province levels. There is still broad agreement on the need for a thorough process of discernment, as counselled in the Spiritual Exercises, in response to the call of the Lord and be present at the “frontiers” of this century.

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*Original Italian*  
*Translation by James Stapleton*

## **Movements of the Spirit: Consolations and desolations during the 2009 meeting**

### **Uta Sievers**

#### **Introduction**

One of the many new features of this year's coordinators' meeting was the way we evaluated our work. Whereas in previous years, we had simply 'gone around the table' to hear each person's opinion, this year the participants filled in an evaluation form and were then asked to write down their consolations and desolations during the meeting on a separate sheet of paper. From the formal evaluation, we can deduce that, in general, people were happy with the way the meeting was run, especially the new methodology of shorter presentations and advance reading of longer documents made available online; this left much more time for discussion.

The consolations and desolations brought up interesting points; our suggestion to our readers is that they read them in concert with the 'narratives' of each module published on the pages preceding this one. They throw new light on some of the points mentioned there and can help with a 'spiritual' reading of the meeting, a reading that goes above and beyond the day-to-day agenda and presentations and production of documents to the sense participants made of the meeting for themselves.

#### **Desolations**

One of the greatest desolations we felt during the 'Interiority in Action' module was the perception that the Society seems to be moving away from the poor. This was first mentioned by several coordinators in their reports from the Conferences/Assistancies, and then taken up by others who felt touched and saddened by this and could relate it to situations they had witnessed 'back home'. The feeling was that this is happening around the world, especially among young Jesuits. 'Being with the poor' no longer, on the whole, appeals to Jesuits.<sup>1</sup>

If we fail to act on our interiority, as we often do, we get entangled in day-to-day responsibilities and find ourselves not free, unclear about how to follow the call of Christ. As a community, it is a sad fact that we are often not free enough to undergo common discernment as a body; while in our works, common apostolic discernment is difficult as it is much more than just another "procedure" needed to do a job well; it requires a different kind of attention.

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<sup>1</sup>See Fr. General's reflection on this question in his talk to the coordinators.

Given the imperative – and huge difficulty – to express what grounds us and gives our life meaning, it was a pity that we did not have more time to explore our personal experiences together during the ‘Interiority in Action’ module.

Lack of clarity about some things led to the main desolations in the module on ‘Ignatian Advocacy Networks’. Initially, it was not very clear what is meant by advocacy, nor what is meant by Ignatian Advocacy, nor was there clarity about the commitments made at the El Escorial meeting. All these led to misunderstandings. Regarding the networks, several people felt desolation about the huge practical challenges those networks face, the difficulty of seeing a clear way forward, and indeed the need to give up those that are not viable. At the same time, there was a feeling that we were attempting to apply the same standards to all networks whereas each network is unique in its intensity, space, speed and possibilities, and needs to be appreciated in its uniqueness, not pushed by the demand for immediate and concrete action plans.

Our own lack of collaboration and occasional inability to listen to each other in the process of building the Ignatian Advocacy Networks were discouraging. Equally frustrating was the realisation that that we have started many networks in the past that have sooner or later all failed, and that so far, we seem to have learned little from our mistakes.

When we arrived at the third module on ‘Frontiers’, we were quite exhausted and the time allotted for discussion of this topic was felt to be too short. It was a pity that there was not enough time to explore the meaning of the changes in the universal Society after GC 35, or to come up with actions that we as a group of coordinators can carry out. But it was not merely the lack of time that was a problem; two people felt that, as a group faced with too many or too far-reaching decisions, we were paralysed and unwilling to be forced into taking clear stands. One of the reasons may have been a lack of understanding in the group of the true meaning of discernment.

Thinking about the social apostolate in our Conferences and Assistancies, our own provincialism and lack of common discernment prevent us from really going to the frontiers. And last but not least, our personal lack of freedom, our unwillingness or inability to discern honestly keeps us from reaching those frontiers.

## Consolations

As described in the article ‘Interiority in Action’, the module bearing that name broke new ground, and the consolations from thence confirmed that sharing spirituality with other coordinators was something the participants

appreciated. Indeed we felt that the module served us as a spiritual renewal, one that we experienced while listening to the others, to their experiences with the poor, and discovering the passages from scripture that had shaped them. Hearing that our experiences were similar and that "Jesuits have to be rooted and grounded in the love of God which must be concretely felt and experienced in the lives of the marginalised", as one participant expressed it, led to great consolation and mutual inspiration.

We were grateful for the spiritual richness of the ensemble of presentations and the spiritual richness that each single participant brought with him, especially in the form of numerous scriptural passages which have shaped our identity as members of the social apostolate. "I have strongly felt that as a group, we are looking for God," one participant said, and spoke of this "method" in our struggle for justice as a novelty in the social apostolate. A sense of "wanting to serve" coming from this joint search can help us renew our energies.

Another participant remarked: "The module got us in touch with a trend, present within the Society since GC 31, that has led away from a legalist, moralist and institutional approach. Instead, we are experiencing a growing freedom, a scripture – based spirituality, a growing sense of joy in Jesuit life and mission."

The 'Ignatian Advocacy Networks' discussed in module II were seen as a source of hope at the level of the universal Society. The Society, acting as a body, is creatively responding to the signs of the times by developing one of many tools, namely advocacy, to address injustice in the world. Many of us felt that, after some initial confusion and moments of insecurity, there was a breakthrough to greater clarity, making it possible for the real work to begin.

Consolation came from the feeling that the right structures and mechanisms, actually an entire process, has been put in place that will have continuity. The advocacy networks will, we hope, give the social apostolate vitality and a more universal outlook while remaining rooted among the poor and marginalised with the primary aim of improving their lives.

One participant expressed his consolation at the process thus: "I strongly felt the Spirit moving us and guiding us while we were working on the future of the Networks. It was when we felt ourselves almost lost, furthest away from our own individual concerns and networks, when we all felt the going was getting tough, that we could sense the Spirit actively present among us."

Inspiration and consolation in the third module on the call to the 'Frontiers' came from the challenges and priorities that materialised once we started talking about the frontiers of the social apostolate. The module felt like a confirmation of the importance of the social apostolate for the universal Society and the service that we can provide.

At the same time, the fact that the Society keeps looking ahead and discerning new frontiers provided us with inspiration: "What is consoling about the third module is the sense that the whole Society is engaged in discernment about the call to the frontiers. Following the great joy of being confirmed in the call by the Pope and GC 35, the main body of the Society is discerning about how to specify this call." A call to conversion at both individual and collective levels, this call challenges the social apostolate to work in new contexts, with the emerging networks, making new decisions – all of which was perceived as a consolation.

While we were glad to discover that the primary frontier continues to be "being with" the struggling marginalised and victimized people, people also felt consoled by new challenges, for example, an understanding of 'frontier' as building right relationships, leading to a new way of looking at commitment to justice; or following a call to reconciliation *within* the Society where needed.

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## Development as Global Standardization? An intentional fallacy Privilege Haang'andu SJ

**T**he World Social Forum in Belem, Brazil, which ran from January 27 to February 1, was preceded by a pre-forum gathering of the Social Apostolate, an event that brought together more than 231 Jesuits and collaborators, more than half of whom were Jesuits. The meeting, organized by the Jesuit Provincials and major Superiors of Latin America, was a moment for us to reflect seriously on how our understanding of faith can help the cause of the marginalized indigenous people of the Amazon. Ecological justice was at the heart of this meeting. The indigenous people of the Amazon live in the forests and the destruction of their forests threatens not only their livelihood but also their very cultural identity.

Much has been said about the outcomes of this meeting through various internet postings. My own angle here is a reflection on the environmental aspect, a crucially important issue. What is at stake is nothing less than the paradigm of development. The debate raises apostolic opportunities for the Church in general and the Society of Jesus in particular.

While General Congregation (GC) 32 stressed faith and social justice, GC 35 speaks of faith and ecology (D.3 n.31-36). While GC 32 was followed by various works within the Society of Jesus to promote social justice, the findings of the pre-forum this year underline the urgency felt within the Society of Jesus to take up the issue of ecological justice in a structured way. Deforestation in the Amazon region and elsewhere, mounting carbon emissions that increase global warming and unsustainable trends of consumerism threaten our earth. The Society and all concerned peoples everywhere are called upon to act systematically and concertedly to save the planet.

It would however be a mistake to think that environmental degradation is invariably an effect only of large-scale practices; individual habitual practices, taken together, can also endanger the capacity and future of the planet. Consumerism is a fallacy that does humanity very little credit. Discussions at the pre-forum and at the World Social Forum made it clear that human beings need to face the fact that the earth's resources are limited. Unless there is a radical change in patterns of consumerism, all forms of life on this planet will be affected; some may disappear altogether.

The Cartesian approach to our relationship with the environment raises another problem – the displacement of peoples that occurs with indiscriminate

deforestation and the erection of industrial plants. What paradigm of development is this that prioritizes capital and profit over human beings? Indigenous people living in the forestlands are pushed out when huge multinational companies seek to establish themselves and have perforce to relocate. If the Amazon seems far away, an example nearer home is the mass resettlement of thousands of Zambians and Zimbabweans during the Kariba Dam construction project from 1955 to 1959. Such movements have led to landlessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, and even, in some countries, destruction of communities. The displacement of the Tonga people during the construction of the Kariba dam meant people had to leave not only their homes but also their fertile lands that they had farmed for centuries, where they had fished, worshipped their gods, raised their children and buried their dead. Simply put, the people were robbed of all that gave them a sense of who they were and where they belonged.

Surely such a pattern of development cannot be justified; it is inherently flawed. We cannot seek development for people by destroying the very people whose development we seek. The well-being and integrity of human beings are the *raison d'être* of development and nothing that diminishes the human person in the name of development can then be justified. Increased material wealth is not likely to compensate human beings for arrangements that erode their self-respect and impair their freedom. Community is the place where people find most meaning and identify themselves as distinct from other societies in language, culture, and worldview. Though these cannot be quantified in economic terms, they are fundamental to a comprehensive, humane understanding of development relevant to planning and policy analysis.

By clarifying the existence of important values not taken account of by economic efficiency in its pursuit of development, we undermine its assumed importance. Even if we upheld the value of economic efficiency, we would still have to ask, 'efficient for whom?' This question helps us to see that the values of one group of people might not be the same as the values of another group. Given that possibility, an economic understanding of efficiency might not actually make sense to a naturalistic people for whom every piece of land is not seen as a possible site for infrastructure construction. For some groups, clearance of forests might mean destruction of their divine homesteads. These considerations are cardinal to a comprehensive understanding of development and to promoting an ethics of recognition among diverse peoples.

Development is not development if it ignores the values of human community and lets the process of creating infrastructure take precedence



over human settlements. After all, some of those existential values<sup>1</sup> have an a priori claim, either because economic life in the long run rests on respect for them, or because they have a deeper normative significance.

I think GC 35 opens inexhaustible opportunities for the Society of Jesus to enter tactfully into meaningful works of ecological justice. A new evangelization of the world can lead towards a different relationship between human beings and nature. Perhaps the Society does not require new institutional structures for the implementation of the 35<sup>th</sup> GC's dream. Could not the mandatory inclusion of ecological justice in Jesuit educational institutions be an important step towards that new world which values and respects creation, refusing to see it only as an inexhaustible pool of resources? A new paradigm of development is urgently, crucially important if life on this earth is to continue, and all creatures, great and small, preserved.

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<sup>1</sup>By existential values here is meant those values that are foundational to the being of community as community, for example, common land, shared social space necessary for physical proximity and physical territorial boundaries.

## Social Apostolate

### Place of spiritual experience

Martin Pochon SJ

*'Place of a spiritual experience' was the theme of the meetings of Jésuites en monde populaire (JEMP), held on 24 and 25 January in Sète and on 31 January and 1 February in Mours. I would like to recapture the sense of unity we felt during those days as we heard testimonies that dropped like royal pearls, as well as the eclectic interventions of people like Georges Cottin, Guilhem Causse and Martin Pochin. As always, there were friendly exchanges and reflections in small groups and plenary sessions. All in all, 36 people participated in the meetings: 10 religious and three members of young European volunteers (JVE) in Sète, and 29, including nine religious, in Mours.*

#### A spiritual life that transfigures our everyday existence

**W**hat is the objective of taking on such a vast theme? We dared to compare this theme with the common assumptions that underlie our liberal societies. Spiritual life releases us from the contradictions of materialism, from a type of atheistic humanism, which, to safeguard human liberty, rejects divine transcendence as alien. There is an internal contradiction here, for how is it possible to think of liberty if everything that takes places in the material world is governed by chance or by necessity? Chance should not be confused with liberty. Spiritual life is a path of reasonable freedom that allows each person to intertwine his or her life with the One who granted it to us. Far from alienating us, the notion of an alliance establishes our liberties. The **expression and affirmation of these in the word** (of God) is surely what distinguishes us from our cousins the chimpanzees!

Moreover, spiritual life is simply **part of our most ordinary human nature**; it consists, among other things, of **integrating** our "humanist values" into an **eschatological** perspective. The movement of this transfiguration is implied in the **beatitudes** of Mathew: "*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied*" growing in the vision of God: "*Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*". The justice we seek to promote in our apostolate is written into the perspective of constructing the **kingdom of God**, with its hope of a union of hearts. It is characterised by a faith in the meaningfulness of life, in man's self-realisation in God. For example, when we accompany someone through his vocational training, his story is not just a human journey with its fortunes, wounds, psychological strengths and weaknesses; it may become a holy story; reading it again, the person may notice how God gives him life, which

endures and survives, which stands out in contrast to others. Nothing of what is given is lost.

### Founding discernments

Openness to this transcendence makes us more open to the unexpectedness of God, to the life of the Spirit, and our Ignatian tradition gives us the precise tools to recognise this. Various discernments have led us **to live out a social apostolate**, to live at the frontiers and on the margins of our society “among the poor and with the poor”, as the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (1.15) invites us to do in a novel way.

Over time, vivacious spiritual discernments have demonstrated their worth. For example, one participant spoke of how every evening, when he returns to the housing estate where his community lives, he feels a sense of lightness and joy despite his modest surroundings. The joy of heart and spirit lies in being reunited with those whom Christ calls on us to love. Indeed we love everyone else too, but give precedence to the poor .

The founding discernments give meaning to our action and help us endure through difficult times. One of the participants evoked this foundation of his devotion in relation to his mission in a hospital in Chad.

To be at the frontiers, on the margins, acting as bridges, gangways, mending the links between city centre and suburb, between the *Gallic* and North African French, between French culture and the cultures of the world, between Christian faith and other religions...this is important. Modestly, to bear witness to the fact that links are possible, that it is always better to discard caricatured stereotypes and discover real persons, to give them a place to learn from one another, to become brothers—all this helps us learn that joining brothers is a powerful spiritual experience, but that discovering brothers is even more powerful.

### Living in the suburbs is an experience

1) Reconciliation: The point is not wanting to make the suburbs a small city, but but posing the question of its bonds with, and links to the city. The suburb is a question addressed to the city, and through that, to society. It is to discover in the excluded the direction which our brothers are taking: “Little by little, they have become brothers, both in fact and in hope. And my own relationship with God has deepened; increasingly God has become everyone’s Father, and I have become more fully his son, with all my own inner contradictions, my inner suburbs, the excluded zones, discarded memories,

the parts of myself I would not want to see in order to seem more presentable.”<sup>1</sup>

The social apostolate brings us face-face with adversity: burnt cars, burgled apartments, provocative abuse. This type of adversity sometimes leads to us being seen as opponents or troublemakers a priori. How do we go from divergences, antagonistic resistance, good and bad cowboys, to the recognition of difference, to the articulation of compromises? We do it by changing the basis of the relationship: going from Arab/French to neighbours/disaffected youth, by coming together to engage with the social housing agency (HLM) of which we are tenants. Having the know-how, we established links with the agency. We no longer live in an era of class battles, we live in a time which calls for mutual understanding, demanding as that is. Overcoming contradictory positions is also about giving and receiving forgiveness.

2) Inner tension: to deal with this we need to establish links between differences and divisions. *“The frontier has a double meaning: it may simply be the meeting place of two people, two cultures, where each one adjusts in his own way and gives the other the best of himself, giving what he has and what the other does not have. But the frontier also has another meaning: it is also a place of rupture, which opens up like a wound in order to separate the social body of a particular group of persons”*. From this perspective, technical and geographical links, institutional links such as AFEP (Association Forézienne d'Ecole de Production - Saint Etienne), the vocational training secondary school in Marais or the AJE (L'Association Jeunesse - Éducation), are important, situated as they are between the city centre and the suburbs.

3) The Generation gap with its triple dimensions: social, intellectual, spiritual. *“What makes the human begin to be human is what makes a human society, the quality of the links between the people who constitute it, those links based on a twofold experience, in two dialogues, the dialogue of promises and the dialogue of forgiveness, the possibility of the second sustaining the first”*.

a) The social apostolate frequently puts us in contact with wounded people: recognising the face of Christ in them forces us to go beyond mere appearances and human capacities. More than in other environments, we are driven to a truth. We cannot take shelter behind knowledge, know-how or games of appearance or power, precisely because these people have been wounded by those who live on false pretensions. Instinctively, they understand our fundamental approach, our fears and our dismay vis-à-vis them. And they help us to be ourselves: “Ah! Take it easy man, be yourself”.

<sup>1</sup>Causse Guilhem, *Les banlieues*, collection of “Que penser de ?”, no. 74, Editions Fidélité, Namur, 2009.

b) Experiencing the joy of a first assignment drives the desire to rejoin “the poorest”, as testified by Anne-Marie. She worked for the Local Mission, but efficiency norms required her to prioritise young people most able to find employment. She decided to go and live with those least able to find employment and to recognise the face of Christ in their faces. It was they who allowed her to discover Christ. Now she no longer reads the Gospel in the same way. The social apostolate teaches us to recognise the face of God in the other; or rather, it is those we meet who teach us, who teach us to be genuine. God is revealed in his nakedness when poverty removes all our worldly rags.

c) As many have borne witness, living in these places means learning to count on God to show his love to those to whom we have been sent. Working with the poor always attracts worries and difficulties. It means carrying a part of their difficulties and many of them are “accumulators” in this regard – if not, they would not be the poorest. One participant at the meetings told us about the difficulties he faced when he tried to organise a first outing with the young people in the district and the difficulties of finding appropriate transport. Finally “providence” helped him accomplish what he had set out to do. It is all about learning to count on God, and also on others since providence frequently comes through individuals whose spirit warms the heart... It is about learning to live together with difference.

### **Synergy between the social apostolate and Jesuit educational institutions**

The social apostolate drives us to appreciate the richness of our complementary associations and institutions: district houses, social centres, parishes, classic institutions, and male and female religious communities. It also pushes us to work with the educational institutions of the Society. The recent gathering in Lourdes was a good opportunity to become aware of existing synergies, to raise awareness in others about them and to help them grow. We would like to promote the development of these synergies at our next social apostolate meeting.

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*Original French  
Translation by James Stapleton*

## Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853)

### Paolo Molinari SJ

*As Postulator of the Society of Jesus I have been aware of the urgency of placing my energies and expertise at the service of the Church by promoting the Causes of lay-people, men and women who are truly exemplary and greatly loved and venerated by the faithful. For this reason it was a source of joy to receive, some twenty years ago, a request from His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York to accept the role of Postulator in the Cause of Pierre Toussaint, who died in that American city in 1853... and whose Beatification is now very close at hand.*

What always attracted me to this figure was precisely his humble origin, the fact that he was of African-American descent. Being actually a slave, he belonged to a class, which, until the first decades of the twentieth century, had no standing whatever in the United States. Yet I knew that Pierre Toussaint, a Catholic, with his graciousness, his spirit, his availability to whoever was in need, had touched the hearts of his contemporaries.

Pierre Toussaint was born a slave in Haiti in 1766 but spent most of his adult life, from 1797 to 1853, in New York City in the United States of America. The French family in Haiti who owned him, Bérard by name, treated him much more humanely than other slave owners: they gave him the chance to learn to read and write and made him learn the art of hairdressing.

Foreseeing the tragic development of the situation in Haiti, M. Bérard decided in 1797 to move to New York with his family and some of his slaves, among them Pierre Toussaint and his sister Rosalie. Pierre's training enabled him to practise his trade as a hairdresser and he became well known among the ladies of the most respected social circles of the city. He earned stipends and tips to the point that he could open a bank account. But Pierre used the money thus earned chiefly to support people in need, black or white. Touchingly significant is the fact that when the Bérard family lost all their fortune, Pierre Toussaint supported Madame Bérard financially till the end of her life.

Just before dying, she wanted to show him her gratitude and, though feeble and frail, went to the French Consulate in New York to sign the document of "manumission" which made of him a freeman: this was on July 2, 1807. All through his time in New York, Pierre Toussaint devoted most of his energies, time and money to support poor people and sustain works of charity. Among these works was the setting up of an orphanage for white children and contributions to the building of the Catholic Church of St Vincent

de Paul in New York. His charity was not limited to donations of money alone. Even more remarkable than his financial largesse was the personal attention that he gave to the sick and dying. Often enough these people were strangers to him, victims of the ubiquitous and contagious diseases that plagued New York through most of the century. In pursuing this personal apostolate to the sick and dying, Toussaint repeatedly exposed himself to dangerous infection, a fact that was not lost on those who watched and admired him from a distance.

When, in the middle of the 19th century, the unrest among the coloured people began to manifest itself and became increasingly radical, Pierre Toussaint – guided by the principles of the Gospel – distanced himself from any movement that was ready to use violence. When asked if he was an “abolitionist”, Pierre replied with a shudder: “Lady, they have never seen blood running in the streets as I have seen it”. He was referring to the experience that he had had in Haiti during the racial riots.

He prized freedom and acted accordingly to promote the equality of all human beings and the outlawing of slavery. As he belonged to a special minority of blacks whose cultural roots were French and Catholic, he was, to some extent, alienated from the majority of African-Americans; yet Toussaint treated the members of such groups with the same cordial respect that he showed to everyone else.

On the basis of documents which have been preserved and testimonies given by those who knew him personally, it is evident that Toussaint was a person who responded readily to the movements of grace, fulfilled the responsibilities of his walk of life and profession and lived the ordinary events of life in an extraordinary way. It is not surprising that those close to him, people of every religious belief as well as non-believers, described him as a “perfect gentleman”. But what is astonishing is that such an appellation was used to describe a person whose skin was black, and who was in addition a Catholic, and was used by people who lived in an environment not at all favourable to people of colour or to Catholics.

From where did Pierre Toussaint derive the strength to live as he did? The animating principle of the life of Toussaint and the force behind his activity was the intensity of his living faith in Christ, a faith permeated by a charity nourished by his love for the Eucharist. It is clear then that this man of God was like a light that illuminating a path, a path since travelled by contemporary Americans – unfortunately amidst tension and violence – toward achieving justice and recognition of the rights of the African-Americans.

Pierre Toussaint, living in the Spirit of the Gospel, contributed, for his part, to a peaceful and harmonious change of attitudes. He demonstrated by his life the truth of the words spoken by Jesus Christ:

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

Blessed are the meek...

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice...

Blessed are the peacemakers... (cf. Mt. 5, 3 ff)

These words from the Gospel were often quoted by Pierre Toussaint.

Paolo Molinari SJ  
Curia Generalizia  
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## The Upheaval of the Masses: An experience of political activity in Brazil

Luigi Muraro SJ

**M**orros (Maranhão state), where I was the parish priest for approximately 19 years, is one of the smallest of Brazil's 5560 municipalities. Nonetheless, the news of the mayor's inauguration on 1 January 2009 was reported by the national press, albeit in a modest number of words. This was certainly not because of the two and an half hour mass that preceded the public inauguration ceremony but because of the long story that today I am in a position to tell.

It all began in 1984, on my birthday, when I received a present – a book by Br. Clodovis Boff, *Feet-On-The-Ground Theology: A Brazilian Journey* (*Pê no chão*, Vozes, 1984). The author, a theology professor at the Jesuit-managed Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, used to dedicate the first academic semester to teaching, and during the second he would visit the grassroots communities (Comunidades de base, CdB) in the forest Acre state, in north-western Brazil on foot. This was more or less the same sort of work that I undertook in Maranhão except that I did it on horseback. I read the book with pleasure and empathy. To tell the truth, I read it more than once, underlining the most significant parts in red. Not only did Br Clodovis keep a diary of his exhausting and engaging trips; during his breaks, he wrote profound reflections on the kingdom of God, so easily alluded to yet so difficult to identify in this unjust human society. In my parish injustice and exploitation were a chronic affliction, the source of perpetual misery and suffering. A doctor friend of mine said to me that Brazil was the Third World, Maranhão the Fourth, and Morros the Fifth! A situation that has persisted since 1908 when the most eminent family in the country became all powerful, removing, with a good sawed-off shotgun, the only person in a position to obstruct its plans.

The Capuchin Sisters, the 70 grassroots communities (CdB) and I were quite busy: giving interviews to the press and radio, exposing the abuse of power by this family, promoting street demonstrations, organising countless meetings to debate community problems, offering so many prayers to the Lord. Nothing changed: the local oligarchy laughed at our beautiful words and prayers and continued to steal without limits. Now, Clodovis's book clearly said that if we had not penetrated government structures, the world would have continued to be the same, a very long way from becoming the "Kingdom of God". The author explained that too often we imagine our adversaries are invincible, while in reality we can count on the support of many people of good will whose work remains unknown simply because nobody publicises their

efforts. It was exactly like this in Morros: the town lacked an opposition party! There was only the party of the old “cunning” politicians.

After having read and pondered over these pages and the various thoughts that they aroused, I decided towards the end of April of the following year to convey my conclusions to the Capuchin Sisters who worked with me in the parish. Almost going directly to the point, I told Sisters Rita, Lourdes and Piedade: “We have to establish a political party and seize power!” It was not easy. The idea appeared so strange to them and so far from their way of thinking that they resisted for a couple of months. But I didn’t give up, and, in the end, they agreed. “Easier said than done”, as the saying goes. At this point, I was unable to go any further for a number of sound reasons. It was up to the sisters to take the initiative forward: they were all Brazilians, fighters, really involved in sharing the lot of the poor.

I knew they would not be afraid of the obstacles ahead of them. Then the opportunity arrived. On 20 August, the feast of the town’s patron saint, Bernard, people from the area normally came to Morros in large numbers. Among them were the leaders of our grassroots communities (CdB) and this is what happened this time. While I was celebrating the solemn liturgy in the old small church bursting at the seams, the sisters, enclosed in the parish house with our most trusted men, founded the opposition party, the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (the PMDB in Portuguese), the only one that was possible in those days. There was a lot to do filling in the party registration forms (the judge forced us to re-do them three times, because of certain inaccuracies); however, in the end we were registered to participate in the electoral campaign just before the deadline expired. Despite not having flyers, posters, loudspeakers or contact with the press, the old political class were left astonished when, in the election of 3 October, we managed to get to win the majority of the seats in the municipal town council: all farmers! As we lacked an appropriate candidate, we did not present anybody for the position of mayor. Unfortunately, we quickly realised that our success counted for not very much. In the administration of the municipality, councillors are just symbolic figures, little more. All the power (and the money) is concentrated in the hands of the mayor. This disappointment was followed by ridicule: the mayor also bought the vote of one of the councillors elected on our party list.

We waited for the next elections and this time we presented a candidate for the role of mayor: a farmer who had been the president of a rural trade union. This time the victory was absolute! But, unfortunately, our new mayor was poorly prepared for the role that he had taken on. And to make the situation worse, his relatives from the nearby city of São Luís were real rogues. We expected change but... nothing! Everything continued as before. An air of impatience and dissatisfaction permeated our grassroots communities (CdB). At the end of the year, a parish assembly of almost 400 people was organised

and the mayor was summoned to explain his actions. Somewhat embarrassed, he sincerely recognised his inactivity and promised he would do better the following year.

He never had the time to implement his worthy proposals. At the beginning of January of the following year, sinister voices began to circulate. Wherever the mayor went, suspicious individuals were frequently spotted in the vicinity. His family began to feel afraid. His older sister, a Dorotea Sister and a close friend of mine, came to me and confided her fears. Lacking experience of the rotten side of the world of politics, I did not give it any weight and responded: "Don't worry: those people are not capable of killing a fly". Two weeks later – 31 January 1991 – the mayor was murdered by an assassin in front of his terrified wife on the doorstep of his home. Notified immediately, I ran over to the spot ... the body still lay on the ground...The sister, despondent, pointed her finger at me and shouted: "Here they are, the threats!" I felt a huge agony inside, an immense sadness. The wake for the mayor, held in Morros Church, lasted three days.

Everybody knew who the assassins were: we waited for the police to arrest them immediately. Nothing happened. After the funeral, our adversaries returned to power. Though it took time to complete the necessary investigations, in the end the police arrested those responsible for planning the crime. Heavens above! The judge had just issued the arrest warrants when 99 percent of the politicians in Maranhão – senators and deputies of the state parliament – used all their political influence, forcing him immediately to free the accused. Since then, the issue has never been discussed in public.

At this point the local mafia thought it was an opportune moment to get rid of me as well. Even though I had always kept a certain distance from the political debate, I was considered to be the driving force behind the whole process. The plan to kill me – a fake road accident – wasn't a stupid one, but somehow it became public and was abandoned (provisionally, as we will see later on). We lost the next elections by a handful of votes, but we did not lose heart. And in 1996, the grassroots communities (CdB) presented a young teacher, Clovis Bacellar, a highly conscientious student of mine from the age of 10, as a candidate for the mayoral elections. The victory was spectacular: more than 60 percent of the suffrage. His administration was even more spectacular: hospitals with doctors and medicines; new roads in the outskirts of the town; a transport service for students living in the rural area of the municipality; an aqueduct and so on. Finally, we had visual proof that our utopia was becoming a reality.

There is an interesting event of that time which I should not omit. Despite their heavy defeat, our adversaries continued with their threats. I was already in Marabá in Pará state when I was informed of the threats. Since the secretary

of the Brazilian president was a friend of mine (we had studied together in Nova Friburgo), I wrote a letter to him explaining the circumstances and a list of the names of those responsible for the assassination of the mayor, beginning with a senator. The secretary passed my message on to a federal deputy for Maranhão, who in turn gave it to the interested parties. They promptly denied the accusation, proclaiming their innocence. But nobody, the public nature of the document notwithstanding, sued me for slander. On the contrary, on the 1999 feast of *Nossa Senhora Aparecida*,<sup>1</sup> they sent four gunmen who broke into my house, but luckily I wasn't in. Once more I had escaped the threat, thanks to divine protection and the timely intervention of the military and federal police. Nevertheless, for my personal security, our regional superior (at that time Father Claudio Perani) ordered me to go to Belém for a couple of weeks.

In the 2000 elections, Clovis Bacellar was re-elected with a substantial majority. At this point it is necessary to explain that Clovis, from the time he was first elected as mayor, always lived with an armed bodyguard who accompanied him wherever he went, day or night. But to live always with a stranger at one's side was tiring. Intimacy with his family suffered the most. For that reason, in November 2002, Clovis decided to dispense with the services of his "protector", an understandable, but fatal decision. In the last week of December, Clovis rang me in Marabá. He was very worried because he had heard about a recent, extremely secret meeting of his political adversaries. To ease his fears, he decided to pay me a visit with his family in mid-January. That trip never took place: on the night of 14 January he was assassinated in ambush. How? Exactly the same way that, 12 years earlier, our enemies had planned to kill me: a car accident. They didn't even change the location. I received the tragic news on 15 January. I immediately got into my car, and in about 10 hours drove the 800 km which separated Marabá from Morros. After only 12 years, violence had defeated the forces of good – Clovis, 37 years of age. He left behind four children, the eldest of whom was 15, and a wife, Silvana. Again so many tears, so much weeping, so many questions: why?

The investigation was not a serious one: the authorities closed the case in haste. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, it was classified as a simple car accident. I shall say nothing of all that happened in the years that followed: dismay, impunity, division. Nevertheless, in 2008, there were fresh elections and the grassroots communities (CdB) (and other people of good will) approved Silvana, Clovis's widow, as their candidate. The supporters of the old oligopoly contested the elections with significant financial resources. In fact, they even 'bought up' many of our leaders. But the local members of the grassroots communities (CdB) (gli *anawin* dei Vangeli) did not give up. On the eve of the elections of 4 October I received a letter in Manaus from a close friend in Morros in which he said, "The prospects are bleak". That election day

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<sup>1</sup> Our Lady who Appeared on 12 October

I was at Januacà Lake on the edge of the Amazon River. I raised my eyes to heaven and said this simple prayer: "Lord, do me one favour: make Silvana win". I felt inside that He had heard me. The following morning, back in Manaus, I learned that I had not been mistaken: Silvana had won by a margin of 100 votes or little more (4,700 to 4,600).

On 1 January 2009, after three days of travel by car, airplane and coach, I arrived in Morros for the commemoration, once again, the victory of the united poor of the word of the gospel. Silvana, accepting the role as leader of the municipality, began her discourse saying: I am not here to serve myself, but to do the will of the Lord: to serve the people of Morros.

Luigi Muraro SJ  
Brazil

*Original Italian*  
*Translation by James Stapleton*



## **The Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in the current tragic situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Emmanuel W. Lenge SJ**

**W**hen I first made the Spiritual Exercises in the novitiate, a new kind of prayer based on intimate encounter with Jesus Christ and with myself became available to me. This prayer training revealed to me many faces of God: serious, tender, sad, frail, merciful. Surely I was discovering something new and I could envisage a new path, a priceless treasure towards which I am still travelling. The enthusiasm of the first days of my 30-day retreat – with its powerful and fruitful meditations such as the Principle and Foundation or the Two Standards, with all the fervour and the emotional thrust this entails – faded away abruptly during the Third Week, which I experienced as a demanding and scarcely joyful moment.

I felt completely lost. After having answered to Christ's Call as Eternal King, I could not recognize this person who was to be imprisoned and condemned, who would not defend himself from the charges brought against him, nor answer back those who insulted and despised him, who would die the death of a criminal, nailed practically naked to a cross. Luckily for me, this week was not very long, and the joy of the Risen Lord that invites the retreatant to love and to contemplate God in all creation restored to me the joy and enthusiasm of the first days.

Many other Ignatian retreats followed all through my Jesuit formation and gradually a new light was shed on my manner of understanding the Third Week, on the significance that the meditation and contemplation of the Passion of God have for me today. In this article I simply seek to share a personal interpretation of the meaning of the Passion and suffering of Jesus Christ – crucified and put to death on a cross – an interpretation inspired by the tragedy that thousands of Congolese people are going through, especially in the eastern part of the country.

In the East of the DRC, a war has been raging for more than 12 years. The majority of the Congolese people do not see the sense of this war. Millions of Congolese have been killed in this war and thousands of others have found refuge in neighbouring countries or have ended up homeless, wandering within the Congo, exposed to illness and persecution from militias. The tragedy is not wholly confined to the east of the country. Even though the west (the rest of the DRC) has no direct experience of the war, it bears the consequences of the conflict while suffering the effects of the Congolese paradox: our country with huge mineral wealth has ended up among the poorest countries in the world, with a population steeped in misery. This very quick and sketchy

snapshot of the situation in the DRC seeks to set the framework for the reflection contained in this article. It is a sort of *composition of place* that enables the reader to situate the subject matter in its context.

The *Principle and Foundation* of the Spiritual Exercises describes God's project for humankind and thus for the Congolese people as well. The human person was created to love, serve and revere God, and thus welcome God's salvation. In such a project, one may see little more than the self-centred plan of a narcissistic God, bent on receiving praise and honour, a God who chooses to create humankind to flatter himself. This is how I saw it some years ago, but I soon realised that the only place where we can love, serve and revere God is in our neighbour. Actually, God is first and foremost present in the persons physically close to us, those we can see with our own eyes and those whom we often consider hard to love and respect. Surely, it is easier to fall in love with an idea about God than to recognize God in the concreteness of a well-known face.

The physical and human suffering of Christ: this is the theme of the Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises. Jesus experiences abandonment, betrayal and absolute loneliness. The Third Week poses the question of evil and suffering. Must God suffer? Does it have to be physical suffering? Why does evil exist? What sense is there in all this?

In the Third preamble of the second contemplation, the retreatant may find the grace that she is invited to ask for during this Week:

*[At this point, I] ask for what I want. It belongs to the Passion to ask for grief with Christ in grief, anguish with Christ in anguish, tears and interior pain at such great pain which Christ suffered for me. [SpEx 203]*

For a long while, I found it difficult to "feel and relish interiorly" the grace of this exercise and even to ask for it with conviction. Surely, it is not about exalting pain, evil and injustice. God does not ask us to take delight in suffering. He created us to praise Him, revere Him and love Him, for He is love. But our world is far from being an ideal universe,<sup>1</sup> and when we become aware of this, its very reality helps us to see Christ's suffering in the actual pain of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. The passion of Christ became visible to me in the millions of dead bodies left on the roadsides of war-torn North Kivu,<sup>2</sup> or on the faces of the thousands of lonely children crying for their

<sup>1</sup>This is certainly nothing new. The Incarnation, as Ignatius portrays it (SpEx 102-109), is a project born from an 'observation'. The Holy Trinity looks in dismay upon the perversion of the project of peace and love that it had planned for humankind. The world has become a battlefield strewn with the victims of hatred, terror and crime. Humankind has to be saved! Thus, the origin of God's plan of salvation is to be found in God's compassion in front of a world turned adrift. Salvation is obtained through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. Because of love, Christ accepts the call to come and save all men and women through love. Fear of rejection, death on the cross, offences and vituperation: none of this has the power to dissuade Jesus from coming to help humanity.

<sup>2</sup>The North Kivu is a region in the east of the DRC.

slaughtered parents, or among the thousands of defiled women who can no longer hide their shame, or among the thousands of child-soldiers, robbed of their innocence. Once again, it is not a question of exalting suffering and evil. Nothing can justify all the tribulations endured by so many innocent and defenceless people. No cause and no reason in the world can excuse the death of six million human persons.<sup>3</sup>

The Third Week teaches us that in the face of such a tragedy, rather than lament or sink further in despair, we may see that all this suffering is not totally useless or absurd, but acquires 'meaning' at another level. We are invited to believe that such wounds partake in the history of salvation and in the ever-present Passion of the Innocent Lamb. I am convinced that in all this, Christ is leading us towards a better future. When confronted with such evil, we feel helpless and we become aware of our finitude: this allows us to come in closer contact with the Great Reality that exists beyond all finite being.

We thus discover, along with many others throughout the history of humankind, that it is possible to go through distress holding on firmly to the one and only Good, and return once again to the unique Absolute. He is the one who can give us faith and hope. While contemplating the passion of Christ and seeing the Origin of innocence led to torture, we can find a new sense in the sufferings of the thousands of displaced people today.

The passion of Christ, as contemplated in the Exercises, is no longer for us a dubious phase of human history, but the faith dimension whose power allows us to carry our own crosses and thus follow the Lord with hopefulness. This is where we understand better the Lord's advice:

*Those who want to be more devoted and marked by the service of their King Eternal and universal Lord, will offer not only their persons to the labour, but, acting against their own sensuality and against their carnal and worldly love, will make offerings of even greater value and greater importance. [SpEx 97]*

The suffering of innocent people thus becomes part of the suffering of Christ when we accept it in faith, when we consent to be set apart for Him. There are those who die with their hearts full of hate, unable to repay wrong with wrong. Their suffering gets worse as their self-love encloses them in a sense of humiliation and a thirst for revenge. They end up engulfed in the whirlwind of evil, tied down by their violent desire to inflict on others the very same pain they themselves have endured.

There are also those who, like Job, abandon themselves to God's will, even though they do not fully understand what is happening to them:

*<sup>6</sup> For hardship does not spring from the soil,  
nor does trouble sprout from the ground.*

<sup>3</sup>This is the estimated figure of the total number of victims of the war.



- <sup>7</sup> *Yet man is born to trouble  
as surely as sparks fly upward.*
- <sup>8</sup> *"But if it were I, I would appeal to God;  
I would lay my cause before him.*
- <sup>9</sup> *He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed,  
miracles that cannot be counted.*
- <sup>10</sup> *He bestows rain on the earth;  
he sends water upon the countryside.*
- <sup>11</sup> *The lowly he sets on high,  
and those who mourn are lifted to safety.*
- <sup>12</sup> *He thwarts the plans of the crafty,  
so that their hands achieve no success.*
- <sup>13</sup> *He catches the wise in their craftiness,  
and the schemes of the wily are swept away.*
- <sup>14</sup> *Darkness comes upon them in the daytime;  
at noon they grope as in the night.*
- <sup>15</sup> *He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth;  
he saves them from the clutches of the powerful.*
- <sup>16</sup> *So the poor have hope,  
and injustice shuts its mouth.*
- <sup>17</sup> *"Blessed is the man whom God corrects;  
so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. [Job 5, 6-17]*

Ultimately, there can be no passion of Christ without the joy of the Resurrection. The glorious Christ always triumphs over evil and death. Life will always overcome death. It is this faith in the Resurrection that enables us to carry our crosses, day after day.

Thus, the Third Week is not a merely a pious and disincarnate meditation, but a true contemplation of the suffering Christ, one that empowers us to see Him still present in our sisters and brothers today. One is obliged not to remain indifferent. It is not an unemotional, dry and lofty exercise but a genuine moment of humanization, since our world continues to bleed from the wounds of human sin. Christ therefore reveals himself all through this Week in those who die of hunger or as victims of human violence, in those who pass away due to sickness such as AIDS and malaria. Christ unveils himself in the sullen faces of abused women and in the expressionless countenances of the young child-soldiers dragged away from their homes and families. Christ reveals himself too in the young girls who end up prostituting themselves so as to get something to eat.

In my opinion, this is the face of Christ in the DRC and in many other places in the world today. This is the face of Christ that presents itself to me when I contemplate each crucifix – whether hung in our churches or worn by

priests and religious – the commitment of so many men and women of little means.

We have said before that the passion of Christ is not the final act of the past and present tragedy, or of the history of salvation. We bear with this passion because we know that beyond it lies the glorious Resurrection of the Lord, the victory and joy of the Fourth Week, the joy of the empty tomb and the wounds that have healed. The joy of the stone rolled away, the stone of our helplessness...

The Resurrection of Christ does away with our despair once and for all. Death will never have the final say. To see Christ's passion in the Congolese tragedy allows us to withstand the temptation of letting hatred fill our hearts. We undertake to seek peace using the means that the glorious Christ gives us by seeking and finding the strength to answer hatred with love and forgiveness. The contemplation of Christ in those who suffer sends us forth, upon completing the Exercises, to carry our fallen brothers and sisters, to sustain the children struggling to stand up, to cry out so that those who cause suffering will no longer have the means of doing evil.

*Ite inflammate omnia*: this is what Ignatius is reputed to have said to Francis Xavier while sending him forth to the ends of the earth: go and set everything ablaze with the fire of love and the passion of Christ! Ignatius knew that Francis, dough that had been so hard to knead, was now aflame with that same fire that the practice of the Spiritual Exercises enkindles and tends.

The contemplation of the passion of Christ rallies us and obliges us to commit ourselves. Commitment is the dynamic and the end of the Spiritual Exercises; at least that is what I believe I have understood. The Exercises, while purifying our intentions and ordering our lives, commit us to choose Jerusalem (the good) over Babylon (SpEx 136), following the footsteps of Christ, the Eternal King. This choice is not, and cannot be, a passive choice; rather it is an active choice to renounce and stand up to Babylon and to evil in all its forms. Babylon is not an aesthetic or abstract image of evil; it is the concrete form of all the injustice that we must not fuel through our prudent passiveness.<sup>4</sup> It is present in the millions of crosses stuck into so many bleeding hearts. Babylon is

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<sup>4</sup>In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Jesuits are actively and concretely committed to taking care of the victims of the war especially through the work of the JRS and the « Parlons SIDA » (Let us talk about AIDS) projects. Many other Jesuits and religious have become involved at different levels, seeking to provide aid to the thousands of victims of the conflict. In my opinion, this aid effort deals with the symptoms of the problem but has little impact on the causes of the disaster, and should things remain so, the effects will remain and even multiply. To deal with the true causes and the real actors we have to go to the roots of the Congolese tragedy (multinationals involved in the exploitation of mineral resources, incompetent and inefficient public administration, institutionalized corruption, proven support of local rebels by foreign armies...). Only at this deeper level can one engage in a more effective action whereby all those responsible – who through their decisions, or failure to make decisions, are accomplices in this human carnage at the national and international level – are enjoined to act.

built whenever we refuse to listen to the cries of the massacred children, every time we close our eyes so as not to see the misery next to us, every time we block our nostrils so as not to smell the odour of the unburied corpses, every time we turn our backs to the outstretched arms that call for help.

I think that the practice and the living experience of the Exercises alone have motivated many people. Among these are Jesuits who live their life in this world as something much more precious than a mere stop leading to the afterlife, and others who have refused to contribute – not even by their silence – to the structures of sin that weigh down on so many persons still crying out for help and justice.

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# BOOK REVIEW

## Proposals for Reforming Capitalism

Raúl González SJ

Giraud, Gaël; Renouard, Cécile (eds.): *20 Propositions pour réformer le capitalisme*. Flammarion: Paris, 2009. 375 pp.<sup>1</sup>

This is what might be called “a French Catholic generation’s book on the economy.” Its authors are academics who are also executives and analysts active in some of the most relevant battlefields of contemporary economic theory and practice: finance, risk assessment, game theory, non-linear models and ethics. All these fields came into being between the mid-’50s and the beginning of the ’70s, a fifteen-year period that in sociology would constitute a generation. Three of the authors are Catholic religious: the two coordinators of the volume (a Jesuit and an Assumptionist sister) and one of the collaborators (a Xaverian sister). The rest are family men and women with an impressive range of professions, working in education, financial institutions, or business.

The book consists of twenty chapters each of which argues and defends a proposal concerning the need for reorganization of globalised capitalism. A large number of these proposals treat of financial markets, business practices, and the public policies related to these – in effect, they go right to the “heart” of the global economy. When finances are in a crisis of massive proportions, then the resulting threat to the system is not just sectoral, but total. Other proposals address more general aspects of contemporary capitalism, such as the social responsibility of business, the internalization of all costs, salaries, taxation and its possible “globalization,” social integration, and environmental safeguards.

The book is conceived in such a way that questions of principle are left in the background: this allows problems to be analyzed with technical precision and highly concrete proposals to be made, some of which even touch on the institutional or societal mechanisms pertinent to each case. With such an inclination toward concrete proposals, the book provides good material for discussing what might be most effective and practicable in the present global context. This book is not a doctrinal discourse. The elements of principle, while certainly a component of a modern-day Catholic vision of the economy, are to be sought here in the foundations and sensibilities that undergird the analysis and provide it with inspiration and perspective, but without interfering with the technical discussion. In this sense, the book sets a new style for Christian participation in the economic debate.

The 20 proposals are addressed to persons who already know something about the contemporary economy. A glossary at the end of the volume helps

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<sup>1</sup>A synthesis of the 20 propositions, in French and English, may be read at <http://20propositions.com>.

the non-specialist reader to understand the technical terms used; in most of the chapters only the most indispensable of these terms are used. Nevertheless, a minimal understanding of the mechanisms of international finance and commerce are necessary to follow the argument in many of the chapters, and familiarity with the language of neoclassical microeconomics and with the criticism of that theory helps in reading other chapters. This book is not written in popular language, but is oriented to analysts, commentators, and decision-makers. Nevertheless, it offers many points that would make interesting discussion for theologians, philosophers and social scientists.

The common starting point of the authors as spelt out in the introduction is the recognition of the inadequacy of business ethics, understood as the individual commitment of the agents to abide by the established rules of the game in order to keep the global economy at reasonable levels of stability, efficiency, and justice. The current crisis shows that the key to the sustainability of the global economic system needs to be sought in the reform of those rules of the game. It is simply impossible to trust in the spontaneous self-organization of the economic system, given the presence of massive externalities, great asymmetries of information, and strong positions of market power and their ability to influence political power. All those factors reveal the enormous distance that exists between the truly relevant markets (the financial included) and what is considered the ideal model of perfect competition.

In the first chapter of the book the diagnosis of “inadequacy” is applied to the ability of businesses to commit themselves voluntarily to social and environmental objectives not subject to regulation – what is usually understood by the concept of “social responsibility of business.” The last decade gives very little evidence of any progress in the willingness of businesses to internalize environmental and social costs, whether expected or not, as undesirable consequences of their activity; and such progress as there is takes the form of rhetoric and image rather than effective results. As a consequence, the harmonization and sustainability of development is not something that can be entrusted to the voluntary commitment of businesses.

For that reason the book’s 20 proposals tend to combine the “carrot” (incitement or soft law) with the “stick” (constriction or hard law) in proportions that are more favourable to the latter than is usual in the prevailing discourse of the business media concerned with these matters. Many of the proposals include the idea of greater regulation of economic activity – transnational activity generally and financial activity in particular – to a point that deeply affects the basic concepts of business and management and the relation of these to society. Business is understood directly in terms of its social responsibility, instead of social responsibility’s being considered merely a desirable complement of other business functions.

The new importance granted to regulation in this book does not mean that it ignores the need for business's commitment to viable plans for the reform of capitalism. Rather, it simply stresses that such commitment requires the additional participation of both the powers-that-be and public opinion, so that those who undertake the reform do not suffer competitive disadvantage. The importance of this concept will not escape the reader: if a different kind of business is desired, one that is both economically profitable and socially and environmentally responsible, then that will be not the task of just corporate shareholders or management, but will require active commitment on the part of the whole society, whether organized through the state or spontaneously decentralized through the markets.

As the authors are well aware, the emphasis on regulation transfers the problem from the terrain of economic ethics to that of global politics, where the inadequacies are no less obvious than in the area of business ethics and social responsibility. The book recounts the difficulties, describes both the national and international precedents, and suggests possible ways in which the proposed regulations can be implemented on a global scale.

Nevertheless, there are two aspects that require additional reflection. First, the multi-polarization of the world means that every political proposal has to incorporate the perspective and the interests of the emerging economic powers. In this sense, the book concentrates perhaps excessively on the Europe-U.S. (or the France-U.S.) axis, as if Russia, China, and the major Islamic and Latin American countries are going to kowtow to the vision and the leadership of the west. This is far from being a certainty, since those countries' reading of history is very different from that of the North Atlantic countries.

Second, when the book was published, the G-20 meetings suggested that United Nations mechanisms were somewhat obsolete, based as they were on very slow and often inoperative international treaties. Is it conceivable that the G-20 – or as some fear a G-2 made up of the U.S. and China – might constitute a sort of World Government that is more effective than the voluntary hyper-multilateralism of the United Nations? Is it possible that the G-20 will decide upon measures with global reach and impose them on others when the U.N. system is unable to do so? (Just look at the Doha Round). As is quite obvious, which propositions become politically viable and which do not will depend heavily on who is making the decisions with regard to this crisis and how the decisions are made.

It would be unjust to censure the book for not attending to these aspects of world governability in more detail, considering the fact that that is not its main concern. The 20 proposals treat of what needs to be reformed in globalised capitalism, and the book's suggestions regarding institutional precedents and viabilities are aimed mainly at showing that the proposals are not abstract or

utopian, but quite concrete and feasible – if only there exists the political will. The development of that effective political will on a global scale is quite another topic, one that would need to be developed from other perspectives, such as the juridical and the political. At the end of the book the editors describe the ethical motivation that is indispensable for any attempt to reform capitalism, and they do so in a tone that suggests that we still have a long way to go along that path.

*20 Proposals for Reforming Capitalism* is a book that is born of a desire to generate discussion. Let us hope that such is the case, and that other technical contributions of the same quality are forthcoming to enrich the search for solutions to the global crisis from a Catholic perspective. Ultimately, the crisis reveals such serious structural problems in the global economic arrangement that we cannot allow ourselves to be led into false solutions, applying a few patches to help us “get by,” without really learning much or making any great changes. This is the basic challenge presented by the book we are reviewing: the present situation is one that provides us with an opportunity to modify some key structures and thus help prevent this crisis from being succeeded by other economic, social, or ecological crises that are even more severe. This first truly global crisis can thus become an opportunity for all humankind to conceive of itself as one community, and so put order into the economic dynamics that unite us with one another and with nature.

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*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Owen SJ*







Buenos Aires 7-9-09

Fernando Franco.

*Promotio Iustitiae.*

Muchas Gracias por el envío de la revista estos años, muy interesante todo el Servicio a los Necesitados y pienso que el P. Arrupe estará muy contento.

No tengo medios electrónicos, así que igual, muchos gracias.

Saludos y Unidos en la Oración.

Brno. Massin.

Buenos Aires 7-9-09

Fernando Franco, *Promotio Iustitiae.*

Many thanks for sending the journal all these years. The service to the destitute is very interesting, something that I am sure Fr. Arrupe would have very much appreciated.

I do not have an email, nevertheless, many thanks.

Greetings and keep in prayerful touch.

Br. Massin

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