

Promotio Iustitiae

COMMUNITY AS MISSION

A body on mission. The Ignatian way to apostolic community

Jesús Sariego SJ

Communities that renew the culture in which they live

Patxi Álvarez SJ

A Catholic sense of community

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Communities of solidarity: Jesuit communities life style

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Jesuit Community "Mariano Campos SJ" in Tirúa. Walking, learning and collaborating in Mapuche territory

Carlos Bresciani SJ and Pablo Castro SJ



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Promotio Iustitiae is published by the Social Justice Secretariat at the General Curia of the Society of Jesus (Rome) in English, French, Italian and Spanish. *Promotio Iustitiae* is available electronically on the World Wide Web at the following address: www.sjweb.info/sjs.

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Editorial

Patxi Álvarez SJ

In 1998, in a letter to the entire Society of Jesus, Fr Kolvenbach stated that the community was already in itself part of the mission, an affirmation which at the time was new to Jesuits. Reaffirming this position, years later in 2008, the 35th General Congregation, proposed a trinity of essential facets of Jesuit life – community, identity, and the mission. Taken together these facets of Jesuit life are mutually supportive, making it possible to give value and meaning to community, and its relationship with the mission.

At the same time, during the second half of the 20th century a number of insertion communities grew up in various parts of the world under the direction of Jesuit who wished to share their lives with the poor. Although there has been a reduction in the number of these communities in the last few decades, other communities welcoming people in need have established in other places. The contributors to this edition refer to these groups as “inclusion communities”.

We can, therefore, affirm there is an interest in renewing the sense of community life in the Society in a way that it could be considered part of the mission and make it possible to offer a friendly space to the poor. The Congregation of Procurators itself, held in Nairobi last year, dedicated a full day to the question of “community as mission”. Hence we wanted to dedicate this issue of Promotio to gather a series of articles which explore the question in more depth.

The first such article, by Fr. Sariago, describes the journey our first companions undertook prior to the establishment of their apostolic community. This historic perspective underlines that the community must be a living testimony of what it announces, and it demonstrates the interrelationship between identity, community and mission. The second article, drafted by this Secretariat, demonstrates how recent congregations have expanded the horizon of communities, expressing their importance to cultural transformation without which the promotion of justice is not possible. Communities of people who engage with new values are essential to our commitment to justice. Moreover, Fr. Godrey D’Lima reflects on the difficulties of understanding the expression “the community is mission” in a religious order which seeks to be apostolic, since there is a risk that this way of community life hinders the mission.

The article written by Social Apostolate of the European Conference is a valuable collective contribution, fruit of a November 2012 meeting between Jesuits that have experimented with new pathways to develop communities close to the poor in Europe. The article contains discernment, experience and consensus. Fr. Hamilton’s well-written piece raises questions regarding the correct way in which each of us – in his own daily life – can make of the community the mission. It was written after a deep reflection based on considerable personal experience. Fr. Andreu Oliva generously allowed us to include in this edition, with some few

changes, the rich text written last year in the 70th Congregation of Procurators in Nairobi, during a day dedicated to this issue by the participants. It offers a balance between the reality on the ground and an ideal situation, and includes valuable questions to give direction to our discernment in this area. For his part, Fr. Peter Knox helps us understand and appreciate the life and service of so many Jesuits for whom community has always been their mission. He also highlights the specific need today to incorporate environmental perspectives into our communities.

This issue ends with two experiences. The first, reported by Fr. Bauman, describes PICO (People Improving Communities through Organizing), faith communities of distinct denominations working in networks involved in the public life of the cities in which they are situated. It is an encouraging phenomenon, well-established and capable of being implemented in diverse places, but possibly little known in the Society of Jesus. The second experience is from Chile, from the community in Tirúa. For a little more than a decade, Jesuits have been living with indigenous Mapuches people from Chile. This came after a sincere and significant preference by the Jesuits concerned and a significant commitment by the province.

Maybe some parts of this edition could be used for reflection by communities or groups and social apostolic commissions. In this case, we hope the diversity of the articles included here can help us deepen our understanding of community life, making it our mission and bringing it closely to the daily lives of those most in need.

*Original Spanish
Translation James Stapleton*



A body on mission. The Ignatian way to apostolic community

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In the frequent talks he gave on the newborn Society, Nadal used to say that every Jesuit passes through the paradigmatic path of the life of Ignatius.¹ His life “founded” the Society in the fullest sense and thus provides the pattern for us, his companions, to understand our own lives. Moreover, the life of Ignatius should help to orient the development of the Society itself; as its history progresses, the Society needs to view itself from the perspective of Ignatius’s life. Keeping in mind these parallels, the following pages review the high points of Ignatius’s life and suggest insights that may help Jesuits create communities that *are* mission and not only *for* mission.

The solitary pilgrim

The dreams of Ignatius Loyola during his initial conversion reveal many elements of narcissistic self-fulfillment. His ideal of service had no notion of a group project. His desire was to imitate the saints, but what attracted Ignatius to Dominic and Francis was not the fact that they were founders of communities but the ascetic nature of their conversion. He was actually attracted more by someone like Onuphrius, the prototype of the eremitic convert.² When he thought about the new life he would live after conversion,³ Ignatius excluded even the Carthusian order since he thought living under a common rule would limit his personal desires. The pilgrim wanted to be free to travel through the world as a solitary penitent.

At Manresa the pilgrim underwent a Copernican reorientation. For reasons still not understood by Ignatian scholars, he decided to postpone his fervently desired trip to Jerusalem and spent almost a year on the banks of the Cardener river. During that time of extraordinary enlightenment Ignatius ceased to be an ascetic and became a mystic. He experienced a profound transformation: God was calling him not so much to conversion but to the following of his Son Jesus, just as he had called the apostles.

After this new experience Ignatius felt an urge to leave his isolated state and enter into communication with others. He was eager to “*to talk about spiritual things and to find people who*

1 Lop Sebastiá, Miguel, “La vida del P. Ignacio en las pláticas de Jerónimo de Nadal”, *Ignaziana, Rivista di Ricerca teologica*, 5 (2008), 3-20.

2 Leturia, Pedro de, “¿Hizo San Ignacio en Montserrat o Manresa vida solitaria?”, *Estudios Ignacianos*, I, IHSI, Rome 1957, pp. 113-178.

3 *Autobiography*, 12.

were able to do that." In the words of Polanco, Ignatius discovered "that his talking to people did them good, and since he gave what he received, his interior life was not diminished but rather enriched." We might speak, as Casanovas⁴ does, of this conversation as the initial seed of Ignatius's community project, but it is actually only a vague, imprecise idea of joining with others who seek to follow Jesus — they were more women than men and more "hearers of the word" than companions. The vagueness of the idea is shown in the pilgrim's idea of traveling to the Holy Land by himself: "even if some companions offered to accompany him, he simply wanted to go alone" since he desired to experience in his life how it was possible "to place his hope only in Him."

It could be said that Ignatius's first conversion was much more a personal process than a group process. The same is true today. To renew both our apostolic and our community structures, we Jesuits need first of all to have direct contact with the source of our identity, the One who called us, and like Ignatius we must place our hope in Him alone. It means returning to Loyola — "mud cabin" in Basque — to let ourselves be remodeled anew, to be reformatted in accord with the consecration of our identity. Possibly some communities need to begin in that way.

Fraternal community

When he returned from the Holy Land, Ignatius began thinking of a group project. He felt moved to replicate the model of the apostles called by Jesus; he vividly remembered how he had felt accompanied by Jesus as he walked through those "towns and castles," as the Vulgate translated Matthew 9:35: "*circuibat omnes civitates et castellas*."

According to González de Cámara, while still in Barcelona Ignatius associated with a few companions, "*all of them young fellows*": Calixto de Saa, Juan de Arteaga, Lope de Cáceres, and Juan Reynauld. Something similar happened in Alcalá and Salamanca, where the members of his group were known as the "enrobed ones"; they wore long, drab robes and were supported by alms, "*living after the manner of the Apostles*."

Many of Ignatius's early attempts to create a group were tinged with the indiscreet fervor of his first conversion, but they gave more solid returns during the six years he lived in Paris. If Ignatius first discovered his mission while watching the deep currents of the Cardoner, it was on the banks of the Seine that God revealed to him the value of community, or as he preferred to say, the "body." Simon Rodríguez tells us that "*it was in that great and illustrious Parisian academy that God sketched out the first shape and aspect of this Society*."⁵ After Ignatius had gained a certain economic stability in 1529, he avoided public preaching and preferred instead to form a group through giving the Exercises. The first recruits (Peralta, Juan de Castroy, Esduayen) didn't work out. The second group was born in the warmth of Santa Barbara, where the first seven companions shared prayer, studies, and even a "finances,"⁶ for as Lainez would later say, "*our frequent visits and mutual exhortation helped to keep us afloat*."⁷

What was noteworthy in this group was the depth of their friendship, a closeness that grew in the midst of difficulties and was confirmed by their perilous journey to Venice. Theirs was not just any friendship; it was founded on following of the poor and chaste Jesus and imitating

⁴ Casanovas, Ignasi, *San Ignacio de Loyola fundador de la Compañía de Jesús*, Balmes, Barcelona, 1944, p. 249.

⁵ Rodríguez, Simón, *De origine et progressu Societatis Iesu*, Fontes Narrat. III, 10.

⁶ Mon. Fabri. 493.

⁷ Láinez. *Epistola*... Fontes Narrat. I, 102. Polanco, *Summa. Hisp.*, Fontes Narrat. I, 184.

his rejection of the world's power and honor; it was forged in joy amidst the many privations suffered by those poor foreign students in Paris.

It is important to point out that during this time, in contrast to the years Ignatius spent at the Spanish universities, the group did not engage in any apostolate. They envisioned a broader mission, one that did not pursue immediate results. They were convinced that the testimony of their lives was for the moment the most effective way to extend the Kingdom. Indeed, the example they gave was the reason why several young men joined their ranks (Jayo, Bröet, and Coduri). In this way they consolidated a communion that would become formalized later in Rome.

Already in Paris, while they were enjoying the experience of living together, they spent time in deliberations aimed at establishing norms for their common way of life. They agreed first of all to dedicate three years to studying theology, to avoid extraordinary practices (penances, habits, ...), and to intensify their personal prayer. As a way of confirming their desire to follow Jesus after the manner of the apostles, they agreed to live in poverty and chastity. Once their studies were finished, they would travel to Jerusalem and dedicate themselves to the apostolate. If this journey turned out to be impossible, they would present themselves to the Pope. As Faber put it, they promised to leave *"fathers and fishing nets."* The agreement was signed in August of 1534.

It should be noted that the companions never lived all in the same place. Despite this, they met together quite regularly and had formal and informal gatherings that helped them preserve the flame of "fire" they had experienced in the Exercises. Their basic conviction was that the Lord was inviting them to remain united: *"he kept them together because he wanted them as the foundation for a grand work that would serve him greatly."*⁸

Their time together in Paris moved them in new ways toward Jesuit community. Not only did the group of friends commit themselves to the Lord, but they also established strong links among themselves despite the uncertain future. In this way the group grew in stability and strength. Before traveling to Spain in 1535, Ignatius was anxious to put to rest an accusation against him *"because he had companions."*⁹ So we have here a second stage of Jesuit community: the companions developed ties of mutual belonging; they grew in the bonds of the love "that comes from above" and were able to express those bonds; they engaged in communal projects that bore witness and appealed to others; they were poor and lived close to the poor; they worked out an evangelical style of authority; they shared their possessions; they opened the doors to those excluded; they were a group that was "original" and noteworthy – in sum, they were humbly building fraternity in a broken world by being a Eucharistic sign of the Kingdom. This is a task yet to be undertaken by many of our communities.

Living the mission as a body

The arrival in Venice in 1537 and the two years of waiting changed the group further. They would now no longer be just "friends in the Lord" but a body for living the mission; something more than friendship would now unite them.

The path that decisively linked community and mission was the result of the deliberations described in the founding documents. The second deliberation occurred in July of 1537 in San

⁸ Laínez, *Summ. Hisp.*, n. 56.

⁹ *Autobiography*, 86.

Pietro Vivarolo in Vicenza. The companions had already received the papal blessing for their journey, but the imminence of the Turkish conflict made the trip inadvisable. They decided to wait, to prepare for their first Masses, and to work in hospitals. They agreed that they would take turns being superior, each one for one week. In reality, Christ was their only superior, for *"seeing that they had no chief among themselves and no leader except Jesus Christ, who was the only one they wanted to follow,"*¹⁰ they decided to call themselves "companions of Jesus."

Almost two years after Vicenza Ignatius invited the group to meet in Rome (April 1539). Ten companions came together in the house of Quirino Garzoni and waited there to present themselves to the Pope. They preached, heard confessions, helped the poor, and got involved in apostolic work in the university. In June 1539, as they were about to be dispersed in mission, they met in the new residence of Frangipani. That was the site of the third deliberation, that of the "first Fathers," and we know the two conclusions reached there: 1) despite being dispersed throughout Italy, they would remain united as a group; and 2) they would pledge obedience to one of their number. These were difficult commitments, especially the second one because it assimilated them to religious orders, which had fallen into ill repute as a result of the Reformation. Nevertheless, these points of agreement were based on their past experience. The group felt that *"they should not break this union and congregation made by God but rather confirm it and increase it more day by day."*

This time they spent together in Rome determined the future destiny of the Society. It would not be a congregation of "common life"; its unity would derive from sharing an apostolic mission. Even though dispersed according to the growing needs of the Church, they would maintain the bonds of unity. As we know, this model of life underwent changes during Ignatius's time in Rome. Nothing transformed the structure of the Society as much as the rise of the colleges. During those early years, Fr. Batllori used to say, the Society changed more than it has done in all the time since then. Ignatius discovered that in order to bring about cultural changes and have an impact on social customs (*"mores"*), nothing was as important as education. That is why he backed projects like the college of Messina, the university of Gandía, and the Roman College, where he himself explained the catechism. This "occupational" change transformed the physiognomy of the Jesuit communities. Those who would *"reside steadily and continually in certain places,"*¹¹ as the Seventh Part the Constitutions put it, would make up the majority of Jesuits, even though they would always be available, *"with one foot in the air."*

This final stage of Ignatius's road to community is suggestive for the mission-community of today. In particular, the mission-community can exist only if the companions have already bonded around an identity. That is why Ignatius delayed the incorporation of new members in Rome.¹² It is impossible to share a mission if there is not a companionship of identity, and since this identity gets constantly reformulated, it demands ongoing renewal. Likewise, there cannot be union in dispersion if there does not exist a bonding around identity. Moreover, there should exist relations between the community and the life of those sent on mission. The chronicles recount how the companions did not hesitate to help as many poor people as appealed to them. The mission environment should leave its mark on the experience of community. There are no "standard" communities; rather, the communities are shaped by the demands made on them. Every community must discover how the Society's mission is to be uniquely incarnated in the place where it lives and works. Finally but importantly, the

¹⁰ Laínez, *Summ. Hisp.* No. 86. Polanco, *Chronicon*, I, 72-74.

¹¹ *Constituciones*, [603], [636]

¹² Osuna, Javier. *Amigos en el Señor. Unidos para la dispersión*. Mensajero - Sal Terrae, 1998, pág. 127.

community must bear living witness to what it is proclaiming; it should be a place of encounter and reconciliation of brothers, a promoter of dialogue in diversity, and a support for the human fragility of all of us.

Original Spanish
Translation Joseph Owens, SJ



Communities that renew the culture in which they live

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On March 12, 1998, Fr. Kolvenbach wrote a document on community life in response to *ex officio* letters from the previous year. In a lengthy text the then Fr. General reflects at depth on this aspect of our religious life.

The Society found a novel expression in this communication of Fr. Kolvenbach, namely, that “community life is in itself an integral part of mission” and not simply a common place of residence for companions of Jesus. The idea had never been expressed so clearly before, and even today it does not fail to produce surprise and confusion among many Jesuits. Kolvenbach’s affirmation therefore needs some explanation, and that is what we will try to provide in this article.

First we will review the documents of the recent General Congregations (GC), and in a second moment we will describe some areas in which this facet of our mission can be developed.

1. Precedents in General Congregation 34

The last time a decree on community life was issued by a GC was 38 years ago. It appears among the texts of GC 32 (1975) with the title, “Union of Minds and Hearts.” The Congregations since then have not produced any documents on community, but both GC 34 (1995) and GC 35 (2008) included in their decrees some references to community life, to which we will refer below. These references inspire a new line of reflection that allows for a more complete understanding of the mission in which community plays a vital part.

The tone of GC 34 is very different from that of GC 32. The fourth decree of GC 32 was a courageous programmatic text that aimed at lofty goals. Twenty years later, in 1995, Jesuits recognized that they had been going through a “time of testing” (d. 1, n. 1) that would provide clarity and wisdom for their work. There had been martyrs, internal conflicts, disenchantments, and the departure of valued companions. It was recognized that the commitment to justice had to have a solid spiritual base for which there were two sources: direct contact with the poor and the inspiration provided by those who work for just causes. More important for the present article was the GC’s awareness that “social change does not consist only in the transformation of economic and political structures, for these structures are themselves rooted in sociocultural values and attitudes” (d. 3, n. 10).

This conviction gave an unexpected turn to the Congregation’s reflections, obliging it to think in new ways. Until then Jesuits felt certain that the promotion of justice should be oriented

simply to changing the political and economic structures that produce injustice. The primary tools for achieving this were public pressure and advocacy. But suddenly there was a collective awareness that if the culture remains untouched, real change is practically impossible.

As a result, the *need for cultural change* came to the fore; there was a need to transform mentalities, attitudes, and perceptions. Culture is a shared way of life based on a system of values, meanings, and worldviews; it acquires consistency in economic and legal structures and institutions. Aspiring to change the culture requires that we believe that it is possible to alter our common way of understanding life and relating to one another.

The Congregation concluded that this cultural change can come about only through inserted communities living with new values, called *communities of solidarity*: “Full human liberation, for the poor and for all of us, lies in development of communities of solidarity at the grass-roots and nongovernmental as well as the political level, where we can all work together towards total human development” (d. 3, n. 10).

It is important to stress here that the GC is referring here not exclusively to communities of Jesuits. The text points to the need for communities of new values, communities of solidarity, in every sector of society.

This line of thought appeared in other texts of GC 34: “A faith that looks to the Kingdom generates communities which counter social conflict and disintegration. ... If wrongs are to be acknowledged and resolved, then possessiveness, chauvinism, and the manipulation of power have to be challenged by communities grounded in religious charity” (d. 2, n. 13). The Congregation also affirmed that “in each of our different apostolates we must create communities of solidarity in seeking justice” (d. 3, n. 19).

Most certainly an important change is taking place here: if we want to promote justice, it is not enough just to do advocacy; we must also build communities with new evangelical values that practice Samaritan solidarity, facilitate a new inclusive culture, and labor in the public sphere for political and economic structures that make just social relations possible. When that happens, then from the perspective of the promotion of justice, the formation of communities becomes an essential dimension of our mission.

2. The reflections on community in General Congregation 35

GC 35 did not issue a decree on community either, but it did make deliberate reference to community in some of its documents. In decree 2 community is mentioned in the context of the relational identity of the Jesuit: “Jesuit identity and Jesuit mission are linked by community; indeed, identity, community, and mission are a kind of triptych shedding light on how our companionship is best understood” (d. 2, n. 19). What we are, the way we live together, and what we do are inextricably interrelated. Our mission—what justifies the Society’s existence—is built on our way of being and our way of relating to one another mutually.

In decree 3, which treats of our mission, the topic is taken up again, most concretely in n. 41, which cites the words of Fr. Kolvenbach to the effect that community is in itself mission since it offers a collective testimony and announces in works what Jesuits proclaim with words. That collective testimony extends to “our ministries and institutions” which “should be incarnated through the justice of our relationships with God, others, and creation” (d. 3, n. 42).

GC 35 therefore repeats two ideas: first, the internal life of the communities expresses and concretizes the message we proclaim by showing the validity of the values we defend and the need to live those values in human groups; and second, the community dynamics required by our mission go beyond our Jesuit communities, reaching in a preferential way our institutions and the other spheres in which we develop our ministries.

3. Building community: a mission wherever we find ourselves

Aspiring to renew the structures by which people live together involves introducing into the texture of our cultures human groups that live according to the evangelical values of mutual respect, inclusion, and solidarity. Serving the faith and promoting justice in our day require that we strive to build communities that make these values visible and viable in a variety of contexts. We will mention three:

a. Communities of Jesuits

Communities of Jesuits are called to be an expression of the Kingdom's values through the way we share our faith, the way we relate to one another, and the way we live our vow of poverty in solidarity with the most needy.

Perhaps we can stress some specially relevant concerns. Our communities are today a privileged place for living close to the poor. At a time when so many of our institutions are situated in affluent districts, the Jesuit community often provides an opportunity to make clear our belief in a church of the poor and for the poor; it provides a place where we can share the harsh conditions of life with the poor majorities of our planet and our societies; it is the natural sphere in which we can identify with the poor and humble Jesus of the Gospel. The physical location of these communities and their material conditions decide in large measure our personal lifestyle. Communities with a certain degree of insertion and communities that receive society's excluded members should be the natural way of life in the Society (Saint Ignatius, "Letter to the Fathers Sent to Trent," 1546).

These communities are also a place for spiritual conversation, for sharing our inspirations, our hopes, and our apostolic dreams. They are a human space for renewing ourselves interiorly in ways that go beyond our usual experiences of life. Often we feel closely united with companions even when they are physically quite distant; they confirm our vocation and renew it with their generosity and their commitment; they help us to deepen our faith, and they strengthen our struggle for justice.

b. Communities in our institutions

Our institutions are called to constitute true communities. They should be especially known as welcoming and respectful of persons and should help people grow; they should be just in their functioning and take effective public stands in favor of just causes; they should be open to persons excluded from society; and they should freely share the faith. These qualities can be achieved only by an institution that has at its heart a community of persons who share their deepest motivations and hopes.

Great efforts are needed to make such community-centered institutions a reality. They must attract and hire persons who can participate in such a project; they must offer formation in our identity and mission; they must be constantly committed to public causes that contribute to a more just world; they must provide space for prayerful discernment in common whereby everyone is able to orient the institution toward the *magis*; and they must celebrate both

successes and failures in a spirit of faith. Considerable effort must be channeled to building up a sense of community in our institutions.

It is easier to hire persons who are efficient than to seek out those who will collaborate in our mission with enthusiastic commitment. But we can contribute to the Society's mission only if we have, besides qualified professionals, a community of Jesuits and lay people who share a desire to serve together in a common mission, who live in accord with solidarity and justice, and who transmit these ideals to others as if by contagion.

c. Promoting lay communities

That fact that much of our pastoral work is based on the Spiritual Exercises perhaps explains why such work is especially oriented toward individuals. At the same time, there is a great need in many places for us to promote lay communities that will develop an autonomous sense of Christian identity. The Church by nature is oriented toward the formation of communities. The persons whom we accompany individually, once they make the decision to follow Jesus, need a community in which they can continue their journey along with others. Such communities can in turn renew the cultural context in which they live better than any individual can. Both the Church and the world are in need of such communities.

In any case, we are aware that none of this can be realized except in a spirit of friendship. In order to build community it is essential to cultivate friendship. Friends must be sought out, cared for, trusted, and supported in difficult moments; they must be committed to one another in the mission. Strong community is always an exercise in friendship and a fruit of friendship.

Insofar as our mission today is the service of faith and the promotion of justice, it most definitely demands that we encourage the building of communities inspired by the values of the Kingdom, for only such communities will empower us to repair the many unjust structures of the social order.

*Original Spanish
Translation Joseph Owens, SJ*



A Catholic sense of Community

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The term Community has different levels of understanding. It begins with physically proximate persons who engage in complementary activity for a specific mission. It extends to a catholic sense of Community which is a widening solidarity of thought and action with and for the service of all peoples – the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is only when one accepts that Community never stops at one particular group of persons but is the ever growing network of relationships for building the Kingdom that the Christian understanding of Community develops. As Jesus is quoted saying: Who is my mother, brother, family? Anyone who does the will of my Father. So Community is to be realised maybe in stages as persons or groups we associate with and who choose to associate with us in the expedition for the Kingdom of Heaven.

This awareness is articulated from experience of Community in Jesuit life beginning with the more segregated Jesuit novitiate Community. Here restriction of experience is emphasised with the hope of deepening the vocational charism. One goes on to bigger common houses where there is more diversity of culture and temperament, more freedom to develop in one's own way. Finally one is commissioned as a priest or brother to carry on the mission in institutions or out of them where the wider society is to be encountered and engaged in a variety of tasks that promote human wellbeing, spiritual, physical, intellectual or whatever other classification we posit.

I have found that Jesuit Community life is most fulfilled when it is inserted into the context of many other circles of Community. During formation I valued the apostolic contacts we were encouraged to make beyond the confines of the houses of formation and the communities therein. In theology a group of us stayed in a chawl along with other lower middle class families so that the ambience of poorer localities would affect the way we theologised and the way we envisaged the direction of our religious vocation.

In my present posting with a Jesuit run organisation based in Nashik City, Maharashtra State, India, we have evolved a purposeful way of being in Community. We do not live physically in one place. We meet to envision and operationalise the work. We then take up residence in different nodal centres from where we address the specific responsibility assigned to each one. The mission is thus served by a Community inserted into other communities, constantly networking with wider and wider circles for the mission to be best served. Our Jesuit Community resembles times in the early Society where members were far from one another on mission yet linked by vision and spirit.

When the General Congregation proclaimed "Community is Mission" I found it inadequate and narcissistic. It seemed to contradict the vocation of the Jesuit and indeed every Christian which is outward looking and takes belongingness to the body as a means to give of oneself totally to the cause of the God's Kingdom. It looked like the Jesuit Society had imploded on itself like a quasar, losing its universal relevance and dynamism. It seemed that we had failed to find ourselves in the context of the Kingdom of Heaven and had fallen back on a parochial option. To make Community a focus without simultaneously stating its greater apostolic purpose would be like stating the Commandment to Love God without its immediate corollary which is to Love one's Neighbour as Oneself. However we are called upon to restore the perspective that might have been lacking in the Congregation's statement by taking the concept of Community further so as to include ever widening circles of human interrelatedness.

The Mission in Community and to Community calls for a growth in oneself to move beyond narrow circles of fellowship contented with keeping the truce; escaping risk and pioneering necessary for further growth. Our solidarity with the wider Community will embrace step by step greater and greater causes, which concern vast numbers of the human family. Who is not my Community! is the rhetoric of the Jesuit and the Christian. Moreso it is the mark of those who claim to be 'catholic'. Wherever there is a possibility of the Kingdom of Heaven to advance, which is the wellbeing and happiness of every human being, the founding of human life on the principles of justice and equality, the constant openness to the Divine, there will the Jesuit find Community. The Jesuit may be alone physically, may even like Jesus experience real abandonment, yet rooted in the Vision and Mission of the Kingdom of Heaven find Community with God and neighbour, often in unexpected and surprising association that makes the mission possible and real.

We have only to look at the life of Jesus to understand that building a Community will be a great challenge. The challenge cannot be met by 'happy hours' and endless narcissistic efforts at keeping the group uncritical of its directions. If the group cannot focus on a more Gospel inspired purpose of Community the struggle will be even more demanding. But such a struggle is worth the anguish. For it is anchored to the following of Jesus and opens the way to greater responsiveness to the needs of God's World. And what better purpose in life than to touch that horizon of human relevance.

The final test of Community is Mission. Mission defines and shapes Community. If the Society is earnest and committed to Mission Community will find its bearings, overcome its struggles of compatibility or learn to live with them in the interests of being of greater service to God's World. In a recent Jesuit meeting in Delhi one Jesuit candidly mentioned that the probable reasons for a sense of floundering in identity is the lack of a definite sense of Mission. We may have not joined the Jesuits with a clear sense of Mission. Indeed in Jesuit infancy narratives the security of a Novitiate becomes a cherished moment. But if we are to achieve Jesuit and Christian adulthood that security must give way to apostolic challenge and a new spirit will fill us with a sense of purpose, a desire to go out into God's World and work for the Kingdom. Then the configurations of Community will keep changing as required by Mission. Sometimes we are in bigger groupings, sometimes alone. We may find fellowship with Christians and Nonchristians in varied engagements. We relate to the Society more in spirit and truth than in physical structures.

Where will we find the Jesuit Community of the future? If we do not completely jettison or water down the faith-justice option we may find ourselves in wonderful groupings of persons similarly motivated to work for better living conditions affecting masses of people. We will draw on ideas and strengths of everyone of goodwill. We may have less time for the

continuous round of Jesuit Jubilee celebrations which we never lack due to our age personnelwise or institutionally. But we will have the joy of belonging to a zealous and committed Community often in diaspora, engaged with peoples of goodwill, bringing about better times for the World, the Earth and its Universe – the Kingdom of Heaven now and to come.

Original English



Communities of Solidarity: Jesuit Communities life style¹

Social Apostolate of the European Conference

Madrid, November 2012

Through the title "Communities of Solidarity" we wish to express the rich tradition of *communities of insertion* as well as the more recent experience of what we have called "communities of inclusion". The underlying question in all these cases relates to our proximity to the poor and excluded, our community lifestyles and the search for ways to revitalize our life in common as a sign of the announcement of the Gospel.

The issue of community life in the Society has not always been simple. While a model of life, "*ad dispersionem*," makes the community a place to meet almost exclusively between various apostolic commitments, the communities dedicated to education in schools tended towards forms of monastic life, partly because the regularity of a teaching job shaped the way of living together.

Since the 60s, in Europe, we have witnessed the experience of many from the Society of Jesus and other religious congregations who have gone to live on the margins of big cities with the intention of sharing their life with poor and excluded people. Their presence has taken various forms. In the beginning the insertion was characteristically through manual work, with strong involvement in living conditions, or with cultural groups. Later, some of these communities added a pastoral dimension (for example, taking responsibility for a parish), the various modes of insertion reflecting the styles of different communities. Over time however many of these communities of insertion have begun to disappear as there are fewer and fewer young Jesuits available as replacements, leading in many cases to closures.

The meeting in Madrid wanted to bring together these experiences, to share them and to start a process of reflection that could be followed up in the respective Jesuit Provinces in Europe, animated by the social sector. This document, a summary of some of the main arguments shared in Madrid, is offered in the hope that it may serve as a basis for this common reflection.

23 Jesuits from 13 different Jesuit Provinces in Europe participated in the meeting at which . Fr. Xavier Jerayaj from the SJES-Rome and Fr John Dardis, President of the CEP, were also present. A list of participants is given at the end of this text. During the meeting, there were two panels and the following experiences were presented:

¹ From 23th to 25th November 2012 a meeting entitled "Communities of Solidarity: Jesuit Communities life style" was held in Madrid organized by the Social Coordinator of the Conference of European Provincials at the request of the Social Delegates of the Conference. The support of the Spanish Social Delegates was crucial for the success of the meeting and we would like to thank to them.

- Loiolaetxea. (San Sebastian, Spain) started in 2000 is a community that hosts mainly people leaving prison. The core group consists of Jesuits, laypeople and therapists. The community project guides this activity, seeking community reintegration and social inclusion for the freed prisoners.
- La Viale (Quartier Gallet - Belgium) is a house designed to host retreats and prayer time and is located in a rural area. From the beginning it has welcomed people with psychological or social difficulties. People are integrated through participation in community life, prayer and service.
- CVX-Sevilla (Spain) had a project that lasted from 2008 to 2011. Two families, members of CLC and part of a Caritas project, shared a home and hosted migrant families, especially women with children. Around them a supporting network emerged: Jesuits, CLC members and many other lay people and friends. They offered a family atmosphere, moved by faith, and were a 'welcoming' a 'community,' and each family, separately, continues to welcome people into their homes on a temporary basis.
- Durango (Spain) is a "traditional" Jesuit community of a secondary school with Jesuit Fathers and Brothers, most of them already retired. They host young illegal immigrants for several months, during which time they are helped to find work, learn Castilian or legalize their stay.
- Malta has a Jesuit community of insertion. Through the Paulo Freire Social Centre they are involved in adult literacy and social promotion. A long journey over twenty years is now challenged by changes in the population and new forms of poverty.
- Padre Rubio Community, (Ventilla,Madrid) The Jesuit community is responsible for the reception of young sub-Saharan migrants who are homeless and in an 'irregular situation'. They share the housework and have a clear, well-defined programme of to encourage training, job search and social integration.
- Uretamendi (Bilbao, Spain) is a community of insertion that was declining because of lack of members. The Province decided to revitalize it through a project with young men coming from the Maghreb region. The project aims at providing skills that will help the young to find jobs and integrate with society.

In addition to these presentations we met in small groups. The meeting was held in the neighbourhood of La Ventilla in Madrid where the Society has a significant presence. We visited the centre "Pueblos Unidos", which gives support in the form of legal help and training to the migrant population. Our meetings were held at the Training School Padre Piquer. The meals were prepared by various immigrant groups and on Sunday we celebrated the Eucharist with the parish community of St. Francis Xavier. The success of our meeting, apart from the useful discussions, was undoubtedly due to the welcome we received from Jesuits and friends--mostly immigrants - in the neighbourhood of La Ventilla.

This document is divided into four parts: 1) understanding the motivation for these kinds of communities; 2) recognizing the path some of these communities followed before they came into existence; 3) identifying the key elements that these communities should have; and finally, 4) suggesting some of the effects such communities can generate in our Provinces.

1. Sharing our lives

"Our closeness to them. It is their cause and they want, and we want, to share it; but this cause demands closeness from both sides. To share spaces, encounters and experiences of proximity. Only through closeness is it possible to accompany those in a community of solidarity." Martin Iriberry SJ, Loyola Province.

The experience of all these years, and the new initiatives that are emerging, invite us to look at the underlying basis of these experiences. Questions then arise, such as the following: why should we be inserted in a community? Why should we live with others?

One of the pillars of religious life finds its community life. In the Gospel we find Jesus sharing meals with the poor and excluded along with his disciples. Living together is a major sign of the Gospel, especially in our time when relationships have been eroded by individualism, and social exclusion leaves many men and women on the margins of human recognition, friendship and dignity.

Following Jesus is a journey of conversion through friendship with Jesus, and sharing the life of the poor and excluded is part of this path². Today, we still feel this strong call to share our lives as far as possible with those who suffer the most. Proximity is obviously not the only criterion, but living cheek by jowl with complex and difficult realities is a good stimulus to foster better understanding and love. The situation of many young migrants without documents, of people in prison who seek reintegration, as well as many others living on the margins, all send out a strong call to our hospitality. Like the host of the Good Samaritan, we receive from Jesus the task of caring for and welcoming those who suffer most.

The pedagogy of the Exercises is another source that invites us to build communities of solidarity. In the contemplations we learn to educate our sensitivity as we understand that nothing is outside the presence of God (Contemplation to Attain Love). In the colloquia we go deeper into the experience of God. The colloquia, the conversations, are privileged forms of encounter with God and with men and women. To create communities of solidarity is to be open to reality, attentive to it, looking for signs of love and brotherhood precisely where there seems to be none. These communities are built through honest dialogue, through the generous, gratuitous colloquia that seek no self-interest, only the joy of the encounter.

Fr. Kolvenbach urged us to consider the community life itself as mission³. This would tend to reduce its functionality and highlight its intrinsic value of aliveness to the presence of the Kingdom. Understanding community as mission, and not just as an airstrip to refuel before starting new initiatives, is to put the focus on *how* we live and *with whom* we live. The community as mission makes the community itself the subject of apostolic discernment.

2. The process: from a dream to reality

"The importance of parity is such that we set a personal project that includes personal, spiritual, and therapeutic accompaniment according to needs. And this is done by each one of us, not just for the people in foster care. We have to be ready to be accompanied, that is, a mutual accompaniment that allows recognizing ourselves as equal to each other. We help each other to heal wounds, because in their wounds we find ours, and we are able to take care of not just theirs but also ours", Txabu Trabudua, Loiolaetxea, Donosti.

² Benedict XVI, Speech to GC 35, April 2008.

³ Fr. Kolvenbach. On community life. Letter to the whole Society. Rome, 1998

Many communities of insertion were born from concrete experiences of presence in deprived areas. The emphasis is put on *being present*, sharing the living conditions (housing, transportation, health ...). By sharing their life, our companions have been developing their presence, sometimes through neighbourhood associations that promote claims for better living conditions, sometimes through cultural associations that promote the cultural development of the neighbourhoods, especially the of young, and sometimes through pastoral presence, mainly through the parishes of these areas.

We find that over the years this kind of presence has diminished, largely for want of replacement. A community of solidarity still retains its meaning, placing, as it does, the religious community on the margins of societies. It is heartening to know that Jesuit companions want to undertake this lifestyle that exposes us and makes us more vulnerable. We realize that while this radical lifestyle cannot be asked of all Jesuits, it must be allowed - and encouraged- for those who want to live this experience. From the essential experience of "being exposed" to this kind of life, from this sincere and humble exposure, is born the desire to follow Christ among the poor and marginalized.

In recent years we have witnessed the phenomenon of communities that, through directly extending hospitality, have welcomed people who are socially excluded. The decision to be open or renew such communities has been made part of the apostolic plan of the Province, after a long process of personal and communal discernment. One of the criteria proposed by the Province is that in principle any Jesuit can be sent to these communities. This is not an initiative for "super-Jesuits" or special individuals, in principle; any Jesuit is qualified for this sort of experience and may be invited to join these communities. Of course, there are sensitivities, different backgrounds and expectations that could motivate some Jesuits more than others. These processes of discernment in the Province help to allay fears, to neutralize ideological components and possible disordered affections. In this process of discernment the most motivated group of Jesuits of the Province, the Provincial and his consultants, are involved.

The shared experiences emphasize the need for a project to continue making this experience possible. These communities must implement a project that can be into the larger planning of the Province. It is necessary to define clearly the objectives of undertaking this shared coexistence, to highlight the educational aspects, the need of healing, and the search of social integration. The community project also has to establish the temporary character of the stay, and clarify how the intention of those who are hosted should be oriented towards their social integration. Those who join these projects, both Jesuits and residents, must meet mutual expectations to avoid later frustrations. At the same time, it is an open road, a path on which there must be mutual listening and shared learning.

Jesus calls us on behalf of the poor and it is this call that we want to answer. We have to be very attentive so as not to instrumentalize these persons; by no means should they be used to make our life more "coherent". The community wants to place itself at the service of those who are looking for our solidarity; that being the case, questions about the "consistency or inconsistency" of our lifestyles, must be answered in a different way -in terms of our vows, or our testimony, not in terms of sharing our lives.

Both, communities of insertion and those we have called communities of inclusion, cannot avoid a certain degree of conflict; being a living sign of the Gospel, they must also assume a degree of misunderstanding. To begin with, society will be taken by sudden surprise when they see that their neighbours are now young unemployed migrants, but also within the Society, not everyone will share this spirit of extending welcome and hospitality. Some,

perceiving the world as a threat more than as an opportunity for God's saving action, may think perhaps that isolation protects us better,

We have found great support from the laity in these communities. Their closeness and help show us that they greatly appreciate this simple way of life which is open to the needs of others. These dynamics, both of insertion and inclusion, create a varied network around us, and people feel strongly invited to share, to collaborate and to celebrate the faith with us. These communities live the experience that openness generates, the experience that generates more relationships and more blessings. Goodness is thereby expanded.

3. Some elements that characterize these communities

"The Community P. Rubio started six years ago as a Jesuit community willing to welcome African immigrants. At that time in Madrid they were the most vulnerable because of their precarious administrative status and police harassment. We wanted to offer a place for them to settle, to get adapted, to go for training, to be protected ... We share the cooking, the cleaning and the maintenance. It is an opportunity to experience cultural and religious diversity, especially with Islam. We made some adjustments in matters of food issues, and also in respecting their different religious periods. There have been two baptisms and one confirmation during these years. Every year we celebrate Christmas with all those who have lived with us, including dozens of foreign young people, as well as families, novices and tertians who have come for the experience", Higinio Pi SJ, Madrid.

Discernment is crucial for these kinds of communities. The Province grants the recognition, the acceptance and the support of the Society. Also, the discernment helps the individuals to feel part of a greater mission, to recognize that we are not the owners of this experience but that our commitment is integrated into the greater desire of God's dream for this world, His Kingdom.

These communities should be alert to the new face of poverty. Their borders are, sometimes, new terrain for us, less obvious and clear, and we are challenged to meet new situations that will change our usual understanding of social exclusion.

Reconciliation, healing and integration are very important aspects for these communities. Apart from hosting, which is fundamental, there is also the journey -looking for jobs, or training, or therapeutic treatment, or regaining self-esteem in order to find social integration. The community project is crucial as it establishes the fact that a roadmap is crucial, and that a personal project for each member of the community should be defined, accompanied and monitored.

We must learn to live in a challenging environment in which we do not control everything. To live with people who have strong emotional demands in daily life can be difficult; this is why we need the support of the community to avoid early burn out, and not be overcome by stressful situations.

There is a great need for communication and openness to other communities in the Province. We must avoid appearing as if we are better, or more perfect, for being in these communities. We need to realize that we are one more piece in the complex puzzle comprising the presence of the Society. We do not wish to monopolize on the limelight, but are simply carrying on a particular way of being and living. The project should be sufficiently inclusive so that, in principle, any Jesuit of the Province can be sent. Not only those connected to the social

apostolate but any Jesuit can be involved as we are dealing with our community life. We too can share our life with those in need.

4. Other impacts of such communities

“When you open the door to someone in your house, you are welcoming him into your heart. That is how it is in Africa and so too in the Jesuit community P. Rubio. As Africans we have suffered much and we are still suffering a lot in Madrid, and they are able to share our life with us during this difficult time. When I met the Jesuits I realized that they let God to speak to me, and that made me feel free and accompanied by them and by God. And I could experience that no one person is better than any other, neither in the community nor in life. This is not about talking about the love of God but showing it”, Prince, Padre Rubio community, Madrid.

The first beneficiaries are all the communities in the Province because our community life is most appreciated on the whole. It shows that our relationships, which have often fallen into the grooves of routine and may therefore be highly functional, are still full of possibilities and have the potential to offer hope and support to people in need.

These experiences renew our relationship with many lay people who see our communities with new eyes. We are no longer hidden, but we can show what we are and how we live. Our testimony is more evident, and the community life is enriched through the practice of hospitality; we are more committed and generous.

The Society, in general, also benefits because the renewal of our community life leads to greater efficiency in our apostolic life. Our ministries are more consistent when our life, including the communitarian one, is open to the service of the poor and excluded.

The Church needs to increase its credibility, especially in these times. A way of life that is open to the poor is always a source of recognition for the Church, and although this is not a primary motivation, it cannot be excluded as an effect of these communities.

After these two days we feel there is strong call from the Lord to look more carefully at our community lifestyles, not to take them for granted, to avoid the inertia that is, little by little, pushing us towards more comfortable living conditions and moving us far from the poor and marginalized.

Original English



Community is mission

Andrew Hamilton SJ

Jesuit Social Services, Australia

To say that community is mission sounds like hyperbole. We are brought up to see them as different things. We might wonder whether community and mission are best described as twin sisters, as husband and wife, as an odd couple, as natural enemies or as sweethearts. But we would certainly never describe them as the same person wearing different clothing.

In fact we are accustomed to think of them as opposed to one another. We relate community to mission as public is related to private, rest is related to work, home is related to the marketplace, Jesuit is related to non-Jesuit, as formation is related to emancipation, or as prayer is related to activity. It is not that we see these paired terms as mutually hostile. We might more normally see them as complementary. But they represent two different poles of Jesuit life.

So, to speak in metaphors, some Jesuits have seen community as like the advance base from which they launch out on their guerilla missions. They expect it to be well provided and to allow the basics of rest and recuperation. But that is all they expect. They would see any attempt to spend time and money on beautifying their base as a temptation.

Other Jesuits have seen the community as like the family home from which they go out to work. They feel responsible for making the community a liveable and pleasant place that can sustain the Jesuit family and provide the spiritual space, conviviality and warmth that are often lacking in the workplace.

Others have seen it as a chapel where they can find reassurance and support in the faith and symbols that are central to their lives. Here they gather strength for the engagement in a secular society that is their mission. They might even describe Jesuit community life as an ideal form of life, out from which they have to move when accommodating themselves to the reality of a society that does not share their values.

If we adopt any of these perspectives it will seem strange to speak of community as mission. But the idea is not new. If we return to the fourth century hermit Antony and to the later Benedictine tradition, we find to our surprise that community and mission were so integrated as to be inseparable. Antony initially conceived his mission as one of being alone in the desert to battle demons and pray. So as people heard about him and came to visit him, he retreated more and more deeply into the desert. But eventually he accepted responsibility for his visitors and those who wished to follow him in his way of life. Monasteries flourished in which solitude was a public service.

In the Benedictine tradition the mission of the monks was also to share a life of silence, prayer and work. But central to their life was the practice of hospitality through which they could welcome people to the prayer and simplicity that characterised their own lives. The community was mission.

Monks who saw community as mission then had to make it work. They needed to mark out the times and places that were their own from those shared with guests. They then had to enshrine these distinctions in the architecture and the customs of the monastery. We can see the movement from an all-encompassing vision of mission to the practical ordering of the monastery in the Rule of Benedict. The Rule moves abruptly from lofty ideals to the pedestrian and strict ordering of the practical conclusion:

In the salutation of all guests, whether arriving or departing, let all humility be shown. Let the head be bowed or the whole body prostrated on the ground in adoration of Christ, who indeed is received in their persons... On no account shall anyone who is not so ordered associate or converse with guests. (Rule of Benedict, 53)

At first sight the contrast between the exuberant introduction and the curt closing instruction may seem to pronounce the triumph of experience over idealism. But the intention of such practical restrictions is surely to ensure that the community mission can be realised effectively.

Of course Jesuits are not monks. So the Jesuit integration of community and mission will have a distinctive shape. From my experience, a community that flows into mission will have several characteristics. The community members will pray together, share meals together, share together what touches their lives deeply, share the chores of the community, participate in the decisions that shape the life of the community, and have a strong commitment to hospitality.

The commitments involved in these characteristics of community must also be real, regular and reflected in the personal lives and values of the community members. This needs to be said because, when presented with new ideals, most of us become skilled in redefining the new ideal to fit the old reality, or find trivial measures to assess our compliance. This is part of the 'domestication of the boundaries' of which Pope Francis speaks.

The test of a real commitment lies less in achievement than in a serious investment in the task. Even though the sharing of life, for example, may be sometimes reluctant and usually messy, the commitment to speak honestly and listen generously makes it real. The same is true of the other characteristics. If people are at home, they will normally eat together. Commitments like these are real if people want them enough to make them a priority, and work to realise the values contained in them.

The commitment to shared activities must also be regular. What regularity means in practice, of course, will depend on the mission of the members of the community and other contingent factors. There is no single order that will fit communities of three Jesuits and communities of thirty or more, or that will fit noviceships and formed Jesuits, school communities and residences whose members are engaged in a variety of ministries, communities where the members travel regularly and those where Jesuits live a fairly settled life.. Each community will have its own rhythm.

But if the commitment is strong we should expect it to be evident in the predictable weekly, monthly and yearly rhythms of the community. If shared prayer is a value, for example, it will naturally be embodied in a regular Eucharist gathering those who can be present.

The commitments to shared activities must also reflect the personal faith and values of the community members. Communal prayer will flow out of a taste for personal prayer. The chores that sustain the community life will reflect a personal inclination to be of service.

If the community mission is to echo that of the Society, too, the community members must own the large desires that are enshrined in today's Jesuit documents. Whatever the particular mission given to each Jesuit in the community, we might hope that he will also be moved by and bring to prayer the commitment to the poor as it is embodied, for example, in the service of migrants and refugees, to the environment and to people who are marginalised. When these commitments touch our imaginations they will naturally broaden the range of people we meet. And they will be reflected in turn in the topics the community talks about, the simplicity of their shared life, and the kind of guests invited to the table.

Ideals of community are easy to describe. Reality is always more difficult. The main difficulties faced in forming a community out of which mission flows, of course, lie in the members of the community. We differ in temperament, in age, physical and spiritual frailties, in our senses of privacy, in what we naturally look for and fear from our community. We also carry the burdens our own ministry places on us, and are scarred by the wounds we carry from our past.

This is to say that we are all sinners called to be followers of Jesus in the Society. Our hopes must reckon with our fears, our energies with our weariness, our trust with mistrust. So it is challenging to shape a form of community life that recognises personal idiosyncracies, limitations, desires and circumstances in shaping a hospitable community that prays, works and shares life together.

Negotiating this kind of community has simple ground rules. No member of a community may have veto rights over the shape of community life, and the tyrannies of habit must be resisted. But also in negotiation the best may well be the enemy of the good. It is often unrealistic to demand that every member of the community be involved in a deep sharing of life together. Modest beginnings and satisfaction with the good results can lead to growth.

The practical challenge entailed in shaping a community that flows into mission is similar to that which faced the monks: to structure time and space in a way that a hospitable and shared community life also allows personal and communal space. A community that removed the locks from the doors so that it would be completely open to guests might be pastorally effective, but few Jesuits would find adequate nourishment in it. As a rule the more hospitable a community is, the more important it will be to dedicate some times and spaces for individuals to solitude and to deeper sharing of life as a community. These patterns will vary for different communities.

Shaping a community is serious work. But good communities are also notable for finding ways to celebrate. Weekends together to plan the year, going to the movies and the pub together and days at the picnic races are good markers both of community and of mission.

Finally, in this age of evaluation, how might we judge whether our attempts to form a community that flows into mission are successful or not? If we were to separate community from mission we would normally ask the members of the community to evaluate it. But if we emphasise the continuity between community and mission it would be more natural to ask guests, companions and observers of the community. In a school or university community we might ask teachers and students whether they find the institutional mission embodied in the operative values of the community and in the relationships between its members. And in any

Jesuit community we might ask those who visit it if they come away with intimations that the Gospel is God's Good News for the poor.

Original English



The Jesuit community as mission¹

Andreu Oliva de la Esperanza SJ

UCA in El Salvador

I have been invited to begin today's discussion on community based on the idea that we can help all of you reflect on the new vision that GC35 gives us about community. In its d.2, "A fire that kindles other fires", which is about our identity, GC 35 presents our life as a triptych consisting of identity, mission and community. In that decree, a Jesuit's identity and mission are both linked by community life. And d. 3, "Challenges for today's mission", will add in n. 41 that "Community life in the Society is not only for mission, but community itself is mission". I do not know much about the situation of other communities in the Society; thus I can't generalize what I'm going to say about community life. I will stick to the reality I know, which is a house of a concrete province (Central America).

GC changes the paradigm of our community life

We all know that the last Congregation made an important change in the way it conceived community life. I dare to say from my short life of 25 years in the Society that GC 35 made a new paradigm official for understanding community life in the Society of Jesus. Many of us have missed this. It is not a sudden change, but one that has been slowly taking place over the last 50 years, starting with the renovations proposed by the second Vatican Council and deepened by a greater knowledge of our sources. This gradual change crystallized in GC35, when it said that Jesuit community life is its own mission. It is the road that many had already taken when they went to live in small communities, in many cases in poor neighbourhoods with the desire to share the life of the poor and be the love of God in their midst.

The change that GC35 makes sums up the feeling of the majority in the Society and deepens what Fr. Kolvenbach said in his letter about community life in 1998. For many years in the Society, community life was understood to be for mission, for dispersal, and with this we have been justifying the deficiencies and lacks of our life in common. For many, community life was a practical reality; its quality was not considered to be in itself to be important. GC35 offers us a road to better understand our life in common, giving it greater value, since it is not only for mission, but is in itself mission. Both realities must be present and complement one another.

¹ This article was presented by the author, with few changes, at the last Procurators Congregation in 2012.

Tension between mission and union

This change in understanding community life has important implications. It is one more strand of tension in the fabric of a Jesuit's life. In the same way we live tensions between being and doing, between contemplation and action, between the universal and the local, between total union with God and insertion in the world with him. To all this we now add tension between community (union) and mission. This tension that has its roots in our own identity, of which community life is an inextricable part just as our apostolate is an inextricable part. The apostolate takes us outside and community invites us inside. Community life can be understood as part of the call to be with Him, who is part of our vocation. We cannot be companions of Jesus or friends in the Lord, if we are not companions among ourselves in the first place. To be with Him is also to be with our brothers; it is to find him present in each of our companions; to know that we all share the same thing, the same mission, and that we are responsible for one another.

That there is tension does not mean that there is a contradiction between a community that *is* mission and another that is *for* mission. On the contrary, a community that *is* mission strengthens our companion and helps him give himself with greater generosity and dynamism *for* mission. GC35 says that "in order to live our mission we need fraternal and joyful communities, where we can nourish and express with great intensity our only passion that can unite our difference, and give life to our creativity."

Elements of a community to be mission

Perhaps the best question we can ask is this: how do we respond to this important change. Without a doubt, it requires a conversion of our heart through the grace of God, who moves us to respond better to community life.

Fr. Adolfo Nicolas himself gives us direction in this respect about the state of the society when he says that community must be "the place where we are called to live with generosity, respect, patience, forgiveness, friendship and disinterested giving of self, it's the place where we are called to live the Gospel together". GC 35 d.3 n.41 says that "community is the privileged place for collective witness where we live our personal and communal relationship with the Lord, the mutual relationship as friends in the Lord, the solidarity with the poor and marginalized and with a lifestyle responsible to creation".

"Community life as witness to communion is in itself an integral part of mission" (Kolvenbach, Letter about community life, 12th March 1998), and "must foster fraternal love and unity so that we may be recognized as disciples of Christ" (CN 316, 2).

"We must go way beyond sharing a roof, a table and rules. We must share our faith, reason for living, and work as companions of Jesus, our experience of profound encounter with Him who sends us. It is a community style known for simplicity and compassion, solidarity and gratuity, preferential love for the poor. Being communal witnesses of the poor Christ and his love for the poor" (CN 327).

For community to be mission, it must also respond to the mission of the Society. It is not that communities need to have a specific mission that is different from the Society's. Communities must make their own the mission proper to the Society and respond in that light. From this perspective, community which is mission, must defend faith and promote justice in dialogue with cultures and religions. It must be a community that reconciles humanity with itself, God and nature (GC 35, d.2). It must be a community that tries to live evangelical values and make

present the Kingdom of God. A community that seriously lives the Society's options must therefore live seriously the option for the poor which the Society has made its own since GC32 and which subsequent Congregations have ratified.

Friendship

I would like to give a bit more attention to the theme of friendship because I think it is extremely important. In our world friendship is highly valued and meaningful, and our friendship as men of God has something to offer the world of today. Unfortunately we are not always able to live as friends, just as we are not able to show others how we care for each other. Building friendship requires time and effort, and no friendship spouts from one moment to another. And it most certainly requires empathy. All friendships are formed gradually, little by little over time, and are based on giving and receiving, a mutual concern for one another, time spent together and knowing something about each other's joys and hopes, sadness and worries. If we are not available to give time to our companions, giving even more than receiving, then friendship in our communities will not be able to grow.

But this is not just a friendship to promote trust, to be hospitable, or to celebrate together; to share in the faith, we must be ready to spend time in our communities, and one thing I have noticed is that those who most complain about community life are the ones who are most often absent.

Lifestyle which more authentically reflects the Gospel will make us more credible

I have already commented on some of the problems we face in our communities, which are problems that are opposed to the Gospel. How is it possible that a body which desires to be reconciled to humanity is not able to find and enable reconciliation between two of its members? What type of witness is a body that is radically divided? With what authority can we announce the Gospel of Christ if it is not even present in our own home? This also happens with the promotion of justice, and with the employees in our communities (many of whom are women). We do not always comply with the appropriate labour laws, and we do not make sure that these persons receive a proper salary to live with dignity.

This new vision and concept of the community is an important step forward in the life of the Society, and it points toward a deeper way of living out our charism. Let us remember how the first companions wanted to live: in union together, in trust, and in profound friendship. This was the same for the first Christian community. The Spirit continues to shape varied and diverse ways for us to live our lives together.

Rethinking Community Structures

In order for our communities to be Mission, we may have to rethink what community life means, and perhaps Father General and his Council could help us in this. As a new concept, it is normal that a body should have some suggestions and guidelines in order to better understand it. This is most probably why Father General has chosen this as a theme for Procurators Congregation 70.

It seems therefore appropriate that, having now a new way of articulating what it means to live in community, we should ask ourselves how communities be the role of the superior if community is Mission? How does the role of the minister change from being in a Community for the Mission? Can we continue to live in large communities where personal and more

authentic communication are not easy? Can communities in large buildings where we slip into anonymity be Mission? Should we live in the more privileged neighbourhoods of cities, where our lifestyle is often higher than that of most people in our countries? Is such a lifestyle of comfort appropriate if we want to show others our dedication to the Gospel of Jesus?

So often we say that our poverty is apostolic, just like our other vows, yet are we convinced of that? Would not our poverty be more apostolic if the world saw us living as the poor do? Would that not truly bear witness that the Kingdom of God is of the poor, and that "God is enough for us".

I know that these questions are not easy for us. They might even make us uncomfortable. But honestly I think that we can embrace them and approach them in the true spirit of Ignatian discernment.

This new vision of the Jesuit community which has been proposed to us by General Congregation 35 is a moment of grace for the Society of Jesus. To take our Mission to the heart of our community life unites us around Mission, and around Christ. It integrates us as people who go out as apostles into the world, but also as apostles in our own home, in our community. It will make us more authentically companions of Jesus, and, in the eyes of others, it will allow us to grow in the goodness and grace of God. If we are able to move in this direction, then our community life may be a better witness of God's Kingdom, and we will also be seen as more genuine in the eyes of the men and women of our world.

General Congregation 35 invites us to give new value to the Jesuit Community, which is not easy. We know all too well the problems we face in our communities. I am sure that in all of our minds we can see the names and faces of those Jesuits with whom it is difficult to live. But we also know that by the grace of God we can do even more than we can imagine. This process will in some cases take a long time, but it has already begun and will continue if that is what the Lord wants of us and we are able to do that which is in our reach.

Help that the Society offers for our growth in this new idea of community life

In my judgment, the Society's documents concerning community life have been very good, and they inspire us to embrace a more Jesuitical way of life which is apostolic while being at the same time very human and Christian. Our problem is not that we don't know how to be a Jesuit community and how community life should be. I think we have plenty of directives in this area. The difficulty is putting them into practice. Unfortunately many of ours are not familiar with how the Society has articulated these directives, which Father Kolvenbach tried to summarize in his letter on community life which I mentioned earlier. Perhaps it would be good to compile in one single text all that has been said about community life from GC31 to the present day, all that is found in the constitutions, the Complementary Norms, the decrees of the General Congregations, and the letters from the Father General. Perhaps it could be a help for our communities to have a text on Community as Mission and its desire to improve our life in common.

Another thing that can help in this area is the development of a Community Project in which the members define how they want to live their lives together. Such a project creates a process of communal discernment whereby the Jesuits agree to a certain level of commitment. The experience in my province is that the development of a Community Project has without any doubt helped us improve our common life.

The role of the superior is fundamental in facilitating the quality of our life in common. The superior who has a gift for this communicates with others, is attentive to the needs of others, offers support and gives space for the necessary human and religious growth of all the members.

As with all things that are worth doing in life, it takes practice. We must challenge ourselves in this area, and must therefore search for the means that can help us to grow in our style of community life so that it becomes our mission. It would be a help if each community were to generate mutual trust amongst its members through community prayer, spiritual conversation, apostolic discernment, brotherly compassion, and solidarity, so that we can go down a path which will lead us to a life in common more suited to our charism and our proximity to the Gospel.

Original Spanish



Something old and something new: community as ministry

Peter Knox SJ

Jesuit Institute, South Africa

Is this new?

Did GC 35 say something new when it identified community as ministry? Or was it stating a truth that we have known all along, naming what some members of the Society have lived all their Jesuit lives? One certainly does not want to minimise the work or insight of the Congregation. It is important to give credit where credit is due. Reconciling community as ministry means giving credit to men who have spent years of their apostolic lives at the service of the community. This consideration occupies the first part of this paper. The second part establishes that the promotion of justice is a necessity ministry within our communities themselves. Finally we explore how that justice extends to our communities' ecological lifestyle.

Acknowledgement of men whose ministry is community.

Men have been in the ministry of administration within the Society for years, some professing the desire to be 'nothing more than a simple parish priest.' Their primary daily apostolate is *cura personalis*. Others are involved in the formation of Ours at many levels, and have devoted their lives to this ministry. Many of our unsung but heroic brothers, have ensured for decades that we have a meal on our table, petrol in our vehicle, electricity for our computers, and a roof over our head, so that to the best of our ability we might fulfil the mission to which the Society assigns us. Others take special care of the frail, the elderly and the sick with such love and compassion that we pray they will still be around when we are in that condition. Companions such as these come to mind when I think of community as mission. They have been among us since the birth of the Society, and since its rebirth two hundred years ago.

Our new aphorism "community is itself mission" acknowledges the contribution these men make to the universal mission. It is a validation of 'stay-home' Jesuits. These are not men who lack the spine or skills for mission to the ends of the earth. On the contrary, they are often highly capable, and their assignment to care for the community entails a significant sacrifice for other apostolic projects. They make the community a hospitable place to which men want to come home, where their prayer life is nourished and their apostolic batteries charged. They lead reflection and sharing in which each member respects the insights and perspectives of the other, so that true apostolic discernment can take place. They may sometimes be required to facilitate moments of communal reconciliation or forgiveness. They keep us conscious of our lifestyle, so that none of us abdicates responsibility for our commitment to poverty.

Individualism

Fr Kolvenbach's letter on community life of 12 March 1998 opened with a reflection on the lights and shadows of individualism. If we are honest with ourselves, very few of us can live a Rambo-esque existence, surviving by our wits with no home comforts. Very few of us want to do so, and still fewer are edified by brethren who try to do so. Our religious vocation is to be men on a mission – in community. We thus have to develop skills and attitudes that foster community life. We are not diocesan priests for whom solitary living is the norm. Apostolic considerations or circumstances might occasionally compel a brother to live this life, but this is seen as an exception. When men live apart from community, we sense that something is missing in our common life, and this challenges us to examine our lack of wholeness.

Each has his role to play

Michael Buckley once wrote in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* that “the superior is the repository of the highest aspirations of the community.” What an awesome responsibility! However at GC 34 one delegate intervened in the aula: “It’s all very well to have laudable notions about community. But who replaces the toilet roll?!” His point was that it is not only those who are appointed to ‘official’ ministries of service to the community on whom the life of the community depends. Each has his role to play, in whatever ‘little office’ has been assigned to him. While the service rendered by each may be a minor act of love for the brothers, it is also necessary for the smooth functioning of the whole, and has the additional role in preventing a ‘hotel’ model of community. That is, the presumption that the larger community is there for my convenience, for me to drop in when it suits me and the apostolate, and I can expect to find everything in place all the time. No matter how small or seemingly insignificant my ‘little office,’ it ensures I have at least a minimal investment in the life of the community, and in the wellbeing of my brothers. Whether I am cellarmaster, sacristan, buyer, entertainer, manager of information technology, or I feed the animals, my office accords me the opportunity to perform a task faithfully, in line with my abilities and hopefully interests, for the service of the brothers.

Community life as quality of presence

Practicalities are only a first level of our commitment to each other. We have a deeper stake and interest in each other's wellbeing and apostolates, because we are committed to each other as brothers. Our relationships with one another should be that of ‘friends in the Lord’ characterised by a quality of presence to each other. And developing this friendship takes time and sometimes requires sacrifice and investment. Relationships take work, both in our areas of pastoral engagement and in the communities. How often have we been amazed to hear that Father X is a most wonderful pastor, and yet the general consensus is that he is exceptionally difficult in community? How sad that the same effort has not gone into building community friendships as has gone into fostering good pastoral relations.

To the frontier – within the community – unity in diversity

In section 9 of his letter, Fr Kolvenbach wrote of “mutually accepting each other as we are.” Our communities are international and multicultural. Gone are the days of a sausage-machine style formation, turning out clones from a mould dictated by a *ratio studiorum*. Our formation is personalised and to a certain extent, tailor-made. Men often now enter at an age at which they are less ‘malleable’ than in former times. As a “universal” Society, formation experiences

vary widely, and expectations are equally disparate. This can lead to tensions and occasionally recriminations within the community. Superiors thus frequently navigate the cutting edge of intercultural encounters and age-related dynamics. Being at the service of the community can well be a mission to the frontiers. Even in the Region of South Africa, with only 25 members, we represent a diversity of cultures, nationalities and political experiences. Our men have been formed on almost every continent and have lived with Jesuits from all over the world. It takes cultural sensitivity and the ability to dialogue, combined with the wisdom of Solomon, to harmonise such a group into an effective apostolic body.

Justice begins at home

As a formator at Hekima College in Nairobi, it is my privilege to hear the stories of men who have just completed regency and are beginning theological studies. Several tell of perceived injustices which were never satisfactorily addressed, because he was 'just a regent.' The man asks himself: 'Is this really the Society I joined? Are these the values I hold dear?' Of course, particularly in Africa, we recognise hierarchy within the Society, but when this is perceived as arbitrary or unfair, we need to examine our communities closely.

The same high standards and ideals apply to our ministries *ad intra* as to the ministries *ad extra*. Thus superiors have to ensure not only that 'charity begins at home' but also that 'justice begins at home.' The service of faith and the promotion of justice are no less dimensions of ministry within the community than they are of our apostolate to the wider world. We might be good at serving faith as we evangelise each other with our homilies and moments of faith-sharing, but is *justice* equally promoted within our structures? Are we as good at ensuring that all members of the community have a share of the common resources, irrespective of their province of origin or their age or status within the Society? When there is any suggestion of injustice or favouritism within the community, this should be taken very seriously. A superior does well to seek the advice of his consultants when such concerns are raised. If our own communities are not marked by fairness and justice, then our external ministries in the name of justice and peace lack credibility.

Ecological responsibility

Our communities' concern for justice extends to environmental justice as well. As the Church and the Society are increasingly aware of global ecological issues, our environmental lifestyle has become an area of apostolic and spiritual discernment. Since GC 33, and in particular the publication of *We Live in a Broken World: Reflections on Ecology* (Promotio Iustitiae n. 70, 1999) and *Healing a Broken World* (Promotio Iustitiae n. 106, 2011), the concern for ecology has been a dimension of Jesuit public ministry. Jesuits have devoted considerable time to the study of environmental justice. But perhaps fewer of us are as conversant with this as we are of issues of political, social or economic justice, to which ecological justice is invariably related.

Rather than being a pain in the collective neck, ecological justice can be a very empowering and encouraging dimension of our communal witness to justice. As new as ecological justice is to the range of Jesuit ministries, it is also a new area in which community really *is* ministry. It is something we *can* take control of, and an area in which we *can* make a difference. It is easy to bring "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" into our common vocabulary and lifestyle, and thereby become a tiny part of the solution.

However, like our other apostolates, this is not a one-man show. It is unhelpful if the community's environmental 'conscience' is perceived as the guilt trip or preoccupation of one

eccentric member. We need to work together as communities, and this is only possible if we all cherish the integrity of creation as a theological and thus spiritual value. It is defeatist, and I venture to say, giving in to the bad spirit, if we are overcome by a sense of powerlessness in the face of global ecological challenges.

Good moral theology is based on good science, and science relies on good data. We thus need to begin with an audit of our common lifestyle. For example, if we see how much recyclable or reuseable waste the community generates in a week or a month, we begin to realise our need to change. If we calculate how much fuel our community burns in a year and thus how many kilograms or tons of greenhouse gases we release into the atmosphere, that might prompt us to find alternate ways to cook, keep warm and travel. We can make a small but real difference, and hope that our example is followed by others.

Whether we like it or not, the lifestyle of our community is visible, and our employees, colleagues and neighbours observe what we do. They are respectively either edified by our resistance or scandalised by our submission to a consumptive lifestyle and our use of resources. It can be a positive witness if, in the pursuit of global ecological justice, a community agrees not to get new cellphones the next time our provider wants to tie us to new contracts, or if we tolerate slower-than-light-speed computers for one more year. Our potential for positive or negative corporate witness is great, and this dimension of our community living indeed constitutes a new area of ministry.

Original English



Jesuit spirituality, community and the practice of social justice

John Bauman SJ

PICO Communities, Oakland

According to the documents of the 35th General Congregation, "Jesuit identity and Jesuit mission are linked by community; indeed, identity, community and mission are a kind of triptych shedding light on how our companionship is best understood. Jesuit identity is relational; it grows in and through our diversities of culture, nationalities and languages, enriching and challenging us." (d. 2, n. 19)

This is a reflection on the intersection of Jesuit spirituality, formation of community and the practice of organizing community for social justice. Organized "community" is necessary for the transformation of individuals, communities and institutions. The Jesuit idea of community as mission is not limited to Jesuit communities, but finds expression in multiple communities across the world. This reflection is based on my experience over the past 40 plus years. In 1972, fellow Jesuit, Jerry Helfrich, and I established a small Jesuit ministry informed by Jesuit spirituality and based in the practice of community. That ministry has grown into a powerful network of community organizations committed to the work of social justice. That Network is called PICO (People Improving Community through Organizing) with 60 affiliates in 19 states in the US and now working in Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala), Rwanda and Haiti.

St. Ignatius sought to integrate a life of prayer and discernment with active work. Ignatian spirituality is a practical method for moving faith into action. It is dedicated to the mission of building the kingdom of God. Thousands of Christians and non-Christians (Catholic, Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim); men and women; Jesuits and lay persons are involved in the ministry of faith based community organizing (FBCO). They believe the formation and practice of authentic, spirit-informed, community is essential to mission. Within faith based community organizing this is understood as the exercise of power which leads to effective action for social justice to transform the world.

Before lifting up some examples of how community is transformational, it is important to describe how FBCO parallels the Jesuit idea of community as mission. Again, according to the documents of GC 35, "Our mission is not limited to our works. Our personal and community relationship with the Lord, our relationship to one another as friends in the Lord, our solidarity with the poor and marginalized, and a life style responsible to creation are all important aspects of our lives as Jesuits." (d. 3, n. 41) FBCO uses the paradigm of relationship building through one-to-ones; community formation through planning and research; action as the exercise of community power for change; and evaluation as a means of reflection on our values and discernment about future work. Organizing begins with the individual who

seeks to live in concert with deeply held values. The first revolution is internal. Like those who confront the call of Christ in the Spiritual Exercises, organizers and most leaders confront themselves through the agency of another, about their willingness to act. Organizing calls this ability to act, power. This power comes from the spirit and the spirit lives in community.

The first principle of organizing is “power is a product of relationship.” In the practice of face to face, one-to-ones, staff and leaders encounter people and appreciate their human dignity and human potential but also experience the daily struggle between good and evil (the two standards) that each of us lives. Every one-to-one includes a challenge to join others in the enterprise of building community with the purpose of taking action. As people gather, they network individual relationships over time into the experience of community. However, it is not community for the sake of community. Rather, it is community with a public purpose: to build and exercise power in order to transform the world as it is to the world as it should be. Leaders become involved in the civic life of their community and identify resources, structures, and individuals that need to be transformed to shape a more just world. In the FBCO model, leaders conduct research and direct community action, seeking to hold those in power accountable for making decisions that produce greater equity and justice. Finally, evaluation is integral to the FBCO model. Every gathering ends with a reflection. Like the Examen, individuals reflect on their actions; hold themselves accountable to their individual and collective commitments; share what they are learning; and discern what next steps should be taken.

The experience of community as mission first occurred during the formation of the original organizing community in Oakland in 1972. Ranging in size from twelve to twenty-five, a group of Jesuits, Jesuit Volunteers, and meagerly paid staff members formed the “community organizing apostolic community.” This core group of people committed themselves to addressing the needs of people in inner city Oakland – similar to the original companions who gathered around St. Ignatius at the time of the founding of the Society. The enthusiasm for social justice in this company was nourished through weekly gatherings for prayer and fellowship, weekly staff meetings to strategize together on the community organizing work, and the personal interaction of people who shared a genuine affection for one another based on a common sense of purpose.

The ministry of building community with purpose took shape when staff went door-to-door in the poorest neighborhoods of Oakland. Organizers did one-to-ones and met people where they were – not where others wanted them to be. Groups reminiscent of “Base-Christian Communities” were formed by neighbors to decide what could be done to improve their communities. Neighborhood groups were organized all over Oakland and thousands of people began to address such issues as housing abandonment, blight and neighborhood safety. Through small community actions, signs of revitalization appeared – vacant houses were repaired; parks were cleaned and improved; stop signs installed, etc. By 1997, the first PICO organization was born in Oakland. Eleven hundred enthusiastic people came together to give birth to the Oakland Community Organizations (OCO). Most importantly, staff and leaders experienced community and its power. Those involved experienced personal transformation and like the motto of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps “were ruined for life.” While the application of the model did not have explicit Jesuit or even Christian language, people were clear about their goal – the formation, multiplication and experience of community dedicated to social justice and with the power to begin simple transformation of their neighborhood.

By the mid-1980s, OCO and PICO were using the organizing model in Catholic Parishes and other congregations. This represented a conscious decision to provide a tool to congregations

committed to the practice of social justice. The charism of Jesuit community as mission expanded to another new dimension – the experience of reshaping institutions themselves. Faith institutions can become stale and self-centered. The real challenge of Vatican II for the Church is “being in the world.” Community organizing is a vehicle for faith communities to become more authentic and extend community beyond their walls to the mission of justice. Community can be transformational of church as an institution. Likewise, the intersection of faith (value), community, and action can transform public institutions.

Value/faith driven community is necessary to transform systems/institutions by making them more just through the application of pressure externally and practicing community internally. Schools whether Jesuit, private or public are among the most significant institutions in society. Along with the family, education is a powerful institution that shapes values and economic opportunity for individuals. It is frequently the pathway out of poverty and influences the way in which individuals learn to express their values. For generations, public schools in Oakland were failing low income, African-American and Latino students. Failure was an accepted norm characterized by low academic performance and high dropout rates. This resulted in a school to prison pipeline and a sense of individual and collective hopelessness. OCO made the decision to remake the education system and individual school institutions. In late 1990s, mothers gathered in parish halls across the poor neighborhoods to share the pain of schools failing their children. People were frustrated trying to improve schools for their children. Confined to the periphery, parents were never at the center of schools and usually not welcome at all. Over the course of a few months, parents discovered and actively researched the “small school model.” This educational innovation rests on principles similar to organizing. Schools are organized around the concept that everyone is a stakeholder, including administrators, teachers, parents and the community. Stakeholders are responsible for making decisions and holding one another accountable. After a successful pilot–project demonstrated positive academic and social outcomes for students, OCO launched a ten year campaign that created 80 new schools and made the Oakland Unified School District the most improved urban school district in California.

Grounded in research based approaches, OCO applied a theory of change in a consistent way over a 16 year period. Using the power of community organizing, OCO demanded adequate and equitable funding; school site autonomy over staff, budget, calendar and program; quality leadership and effective teaching; data driven accountability; and economically and socially stable neighborhoods that promote school excellence. At the same time, organized parents demanded the full participation, ownership and accountability needed to sustain change in each individual school. The community organized to apply outside pressure to transform systems and institutions.

Over time, OCO leaders and staff learned the following lessons:

The power of community matters. Systemic change is a political process and the interests of communities of color and their allies will not be heard if not organized at every level (neighborhood, city, county, state and national).

Organized communities have power. OCO has been a political force in Oakland that has maintained a trajectory of improvement despite seven superintendent changes and a state takeover.

Relationships matter. The adage, “It takes a village to raise a child” is true. The success of OCO’s small school movement is grounded in the experience that when every child is known by name and surrounded by a community of caring adults none will fail. Attending to

relationships must be a continuous process to achieve sustainable change. Only then is collective community (administrators, teachers, staff, parents and allies) ownership of our institutions and the students inside them possible.

Schools must be “our” schools. Ownership and power, often taken for granted by parents and communities of privilege, must be developed in communities of color to achieve similar outcomes. Ownership is foundational for accountability.

Too many students of color – especially African American boys – continue to fail. The achievement gap is not being closed fast enough. The push out and dropout rate at comprehensive high schools is excessive. OCO has committed itself to take the lessons learned and apply them in a spirit of mutual partnership and accountability so that all students graduate ready for college, career and citizenship.

PICO Network has grown dramatically over the past 30 years. The stories of personal and organizational growth are now being shared in Central America, Haiti and Rwanda. The expansion of PICO into other countries represents a significant milestone. Seven years ago, Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Honduras and the Bishops across Central America saw the promise of PICO organizing in the US. They were looking for a vehicle to invigorate the social ministry of the Catholic Church and, as a result, invited PICO to assist in building an organizing effort there. Two years later, Lutheran Pastor John Rutsindintwarane, coming from the experience of the Rwandan genocide, was commissioned by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Lutheran Church of Rwanda to find a means of moving from resettlement to sustainable development. After much searching, Pastor John found the PICO model. This year, native Haitian Francois Pierre-Louis, decided to initiate FBCO in Haiti, a country decimated by natural disasters and political corruption.

Responding to the call of these individuals has taken PICO into countries that are culturally, racially, organizationally complex and different from the U.S. At the same time PICO has found that its model and principles apply in these diverse settings. Forming communities that exercise power can accomplish a mission of individual empowerment and community transformation leading to greater degrees of social justice.

PICO’s international work is already making a difference:

- El Salvador: With the support of Bishop Bolanos, leadership teams from fourteen parishes have organized 5,000 people who have held health fairs to bring free treatment and medicine to low-income residents; secured dependable, clean water; gained passage of public safety and crime prevention measures; repaired roads and bridges and sponsored clean-up campaigns; and insured new services for underserved young people. Approximately 70 grassroots leaders from these communities are engaged in a national coalition to insure people’s rights to clean and affordable water. The total investment leveraged by these communities is estimated to be \$6 million.
- Guatemala: With the support of Bishop Pellecer, leadership teams in three parish communities have organized 1,800 people who have organized community clean-ups, violence prevention programs and access to clean, safe public laundry facilities.
- Rwanda: In the past five years, in the isolated, rural village of Mumeya, where Hutu and Tutsi live together, the PICO organizing model has created a community where leaders engage people of their villages in an incredible expression of faith and action. With the support of the Lutheran Bishop and Jesuit Centre Christus, interfaith

leadership teams are organizing in four communities. In Mumeya 5,000 people participated in the construction of a 38 room health clinic that serves 30,000 and employs 25 people; construction of road, water and electrification projects; and formation of agricultural coop. In Nyange, women are being trained to bake and market roofing tiles. In Kigali, 100 women are developing labor, artisan and other economic development cooperatives. At Centre Christus, 40 youth have formed an organization to promote pathways to employment. These efforts represent an investment of \$3 million.

- Haiti: In PICO's newest organizing effort, the local Bishop, clergy and leaders from 14 parish communities in the Northeast District have begun organizing and are planning a founding convention to be held in 2013. Work on agricultural development projects will start next year.

The PICO Network, like the Church, public institutions, and the Society faces challenges of growth and distance. The intimacy of early community and the experience of common mission can become diffuse and feel disconnected. PICO seeks to shape a response through the renewal, re-creation, and reconnection of community to itself and mission; through the formation of new communities and new ministries in solidarity with the poor and marginalized; through personal and collective spiritual reflection and discernment.

If PICO practices authentically the formation community as mission it will be living out the spirituality of St. Ignatius and the command of the Jesuit congregations, whether it is so named or not.

Organizers and leaders share the same elements that make up the spirituality of the Jesuit community. Thus community gatherings for relationship building, visioning, training, reflection, direction, are all incorporated into the organizing experience.

Organizing also seeks to understand the Ignatian idea of finding God in all things through our work and community life. Organizers strive to help people discern how their gifts can meet the greatest needs of others. In doing so, they participate in co-creating a holy and living space for developing faith in action.

The PICO Model of Organizing does nothing less than create a sense of solidarity among those living on the margins of society in the spirit of respecting all human dignity and life. In this sense PICO's Model of Organizing opens a space where people can lift up the stories of those who have been oppressed, forgotten, and discarded and make them collectively powerful.

Original English



Jesuit community “Mariano Campos SJ”, Tirúa. Walking, learning and collaborating in Mapuche territory

Carlos Bresciani, SJ, and Pablo Castro, SJ

“Our personal and community relationship with the Lord, our relationship to one another as friends in the Lord, our solidarity with the poor and marginalised, and a life style responsible to creation are all important aspects of our lives as Jesuits. They authenticate what we proclaim and what we do in fulfilling our mission.” General Congregation 35, d. 3, n. 41

We came to Tirúa at the beginning of 2000. Surely Campitos¹ was happily dancing in heaven. Going back with Jesus Christ, to those Araucanian pathways cajoling you to move forward, all of the sons of the Society of Jesus hear voices, voices from beyond the grave: it is the voice of the old Society, of its advanced missionary ideals... His voices of past glory, with the echoes of reproach in the present. Chilean Jesuits today admire the work of our elders and yet we have let our hands fall in resignation, preciously the part closest to our hearts: the missions with Mapuches.”

A long time went by before we decided to establish an apostolic insertion community with the Mapuches². Many of us students began studying their language and culture in the mid-1980s. We contacted an urban organisation in Santiago and were hosted by Mapuche families during our holidays. This allowed us to begin sharing our lives with the Ankán Painemilla family who turned their home into a veritable novitiate for many of us. At least 15 years went by. We were young students. But the motion was of the Lord and perseverance bore its fruit.

We came to Tirúa for three fundamental reasons: it is a culturally and politically active Mapuche territory³, the population of the territory was majority Mapuche, and most importantly, the presence of the Catholic Church was fragile and distant⁴. Beforehand we discussed whether to establish insertion communities in the countryside or large cities where most Mapuche people live today. However, even though they live in the city, their hearts continued to be vitally connected to their communities of origin to where they usually return every year to renew their spirit. For this reason we decided that we must live in the

¹ Mariano Campos Menchaca SJ (1905-1980). Professor of History who from the middle of the twentieth century visited and preached to the Mapuche communities of Sara de Lebu in which he lived the last years of his life. His testimony and narratives were the spark of the apostolic flame and the solidarity in new generations of Chilean Jesuits who mobilised the Province of Chile to resume its apostolic mission together with the Mapuche people.

² Indigenous people of Chile.

³ At the time Adolfo Millabur had been elected mayor of Tirúa, a first Mapuche in Chile.

⁴ The headquarters of the parish is 80km from Tirúa town.

countryside, there from where the Mapuche come. This is where the search for today's urban Mapuches begins.

It was our first certainty and it has marked both our way of proceeding and of being. The insertion has been the pathway: community discernment the tool with which to walk, the shared table the greatest joy, our consecrated fragility our deepest truth, the commitment of the apostolic body our sustenance, the justice of the Gospel our passion, and simple life a benediction. We have been extremely happy.

To be welcomed... let others teach us

Our first few months were pure novelty with a lot of insecurity. We felt like foreigners, out of place. We settled in Tirúa town with the desire of going to live in a Mapuche community. But nothing depended on us. Used to taking care of ourselves, now we depended totally on being welcomed by our hosts, both a challenging and liberating experience; it was not easy feeling useless. We had studied and prepared ourselves for years to come to this place, only to realise when we got there that we knew nothing. It became essential for us, companions, to engage in honest dialogue. We abruptly went from the meritocratic culture of "doing" to seemingly the opposite – many days in virtual silence because we did not know people, understand the language or have any experience of the countryside... We had been raised as Jesuits in a province characterised by a culture which valued measurable results and now we were disorientated. Questions regarding the "utility" of the mission were sometimes unpleasant: What are they doing here? What is their role? This, like it or not, was also and continues to be part of insertion. Here it was taking on the value of fraternal dialogue, community discernment and faithfulness in prayer.

After a few months, various Mapuche families indicated their willingness to host us. Finally, the Lonko⁵ Teodoro Huenuman and his wife Marcelina Antivil took us in. It was a gesture of trust and generosity difficult to gauge at the time, but that has remained over the years. Why should they trust the winkas⁶ whose intensions have always been steal their land? The trust they expressed in us was enormous. The effort they made to overcome their fear of being cheated was admirable. When they invited us, they also thought we would go and live in their home. They explained to us that we were like a family. That even though we were only men, we also cooked and tidied the house. Papai Marcelina looked at us rather puzzled, but we continued to ready to receive.

Ever since we got to know the Huenuman Antivil family and all of those who shared their lives we learned to look at things differently, from another perspective. Without possessing anything and dependent on the trust woven into the encounter at the shared table with bread and friendship. Without any great expectation the road of collaboration and alliances were opening up. Of the shared stories between friends and with many kilometres travelled, a number of apostolic proposals began emerging: family greenhouses, the organisation of weavers, Sunday masses, and some baptisms in the lake. Tiring searches and also various failures. What began as a dream of some today has been transformed into a project inserted into the heart of the body of the province of Chile.

⁵ A tribal Mapuche chief.

⁶ Non-Mapuches, traditionally colonisers.

Sharing fragility and consolation. Building bridges.

Living in a modest and small (even by traditional Jesuit standards) brought several requirements, which were transformed into blessings. We continually ran into each other as there was nowhere to hide. It was an invitation to take care of each other, to accompany each other through joys and difficulties. The daily Eucharist was transformed into a more important space to recognise God in each one of us and also to express freely the shackles and difficulties.

We also felt at home in a modest house; nobody felt excluded. Poor and rich shared the same table and the same friendship. The doors of our community are open and it is a bridge on which many can meet. It is a place where companions who visit us are received equally, the family members, neighbours, friends, Mapuche and Chileans. It is place where life is woven between all built upon simple daily tasks. It is a place where we become better friends of the Eternal King because we make friends with the poorest. A separate chapter was the process of discernment when we built the house. How big? What must we do to live an apostolic life and what is appropriate size of this group? How many of us could live as neighbours and how many couldn't? It was a precious, honest discussion. An opportunity rarely given to us as companions. Living modestly in community is a wonderful grace and a source of great consolation.

We also had to learn together to recognise foreigners in their own countries and to take responsibility for a lot of unpleasant history in order to build new bonds of encounter, of dialogue and trust. We also learned to stay silent so that the words of the "people of the earth" (Mapuche) could rise in our minds and hearts. Staying silence has been all an experience of constant conversion, since the Jesuits are used to filling ourselves with words and thinking we have solutions for everything.

Discernment search the will of the Lord

In December 2008, the provincial asked us to evaluate our presence. He suggested we "evaluate and consider if the approach which we had chosen was the most appropriate and if the pastoral duties and the social projects were those that should be maintained".

At the beginning, it was difficult to prepare ourselves in prayer. We undertook an exercise in sincerity to recognise our own insecurities and resistances. We were afraid that the discernment would indicate that we should have to turn away from loved places, people or apostolic works. We feared experiencing failure or going into a process which would be prolonged too much. But we could also look at the discernment as an opportunity of faith in the mission and a possibility of giving it meaning. It was no longer the shadow apostolic sensationalism that stressed other previous discernments and the discernment allowed us to have an honest and fruitful community dialogue. We insistently asked for the grace of freedom and we set to assess the path we had travelled during those years.

The discernment was a veritable time of grace and affirmation. It wasn't easy. After recognising that the apostolic step of making contact and trust building was complete we focused on the question of the future. Contexts, diversity, and the complexity of the reality ahead of us far surpassed our abilities. At this time it was essential we undertook an Ignatian repetition. We had gone in a straight line. We had regained confidence in our mental clarity and had abandoned the centrality of grace. We took a fresh look at the situation. We undertook a process of re-interpretation of anything we had written and experienced until then. From this a number of rays of light appeared and our path began to clear.

Finally, we presented the fruit of our spiritual journey to the provincial. We put the life and mission in the hands of the Lord and He acknowledged us in His peace. We believe that the apostolic challenge of the province, of friendship with the poor, has been fully acknowledged by the Society and the Church.

To be friends with the poor walking towards the Good Life

Being the presence of the Church embodied in the world of the Mapuche, being friends of the poor, and giving witness to all that is seen and heard has been our source of happiness and credibility. It is the way of always being open and discerning. We are on a journey and since our insertion we have been seeking Ignatian integration including reflection and advocacy by participating into different spaces and networks.

We have never claimed that everything would be resolved. Discernment also leaves unanswered questions. Faith is built every day. The mission is of the body and our collaborators. Those who join in freely bring their own talents. Nobody is the owner, only the Lord. The experience of living permanently as guests has probably helped our own understanding of this – not only in terms of land because it is very clear to the Mapuche people that we are all guests in this world; it belongs to God. Nobody is the “owner”, as it is only the Spirit which inhabits every space and all beings. The invitation to live the Good Life is born from this life-giving religious experience, a life in equilibrium with God, with our brothers and sisters, and with nature.

Our community has been a space of discernment, of research and a place in which others could glance into this reality. Collaboration with others, team work and apostolic alliances are the fundamental characteristics of our way of living out the mission. Our way of insertion empowers us as links and bridges between two distinct worlds. Insertion, in any case, never ends, because communal life raises questions, creates ties, weaving histories together. One cannot truly participate in a funeral of three days and three nights until someone who has learned to loves dies on us. And this takes years... Then it really hurts. Then you really truly cry. Then we are truly part of it. Then there is insertion. And like this one enjoys the joys, one shares the sorrows and one struggles for the justice that the Mapuche people demand.

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