

Promotio Iustitiae

Decree 4 (1975) on faith and justice: looking towards 40th year

Africa

Antoine Berilengar, SJ
Léon de Saint Moulin, SJ
Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ

Latin America

Benjamín G. Buelta sj
Miguel Cruzado sj
Alfredo Ferro sj

Asia Pacific and Australia

Julie Edwards
Denis Kim, SJ

Europe

Luis Arancibia
Peter Balleis, SJ
Norbert Frejek, SJ
David Nazar, SJ
Frank Turner, SJ

India

Rudolf C. Heredia, SJ
Michael Jeyaraj, SJ
Xavier Jeyaraj, SJ

North America

Peter Bisson, SJ
Alfred Kammer, SJ
John Sealey



**Social Justice and Ecology
Secretariat**

Editor: Patxi Álvarez sj
Consultant Editor: Suguna Ramanathan
Publishing Coordinator: Concetta Negri

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Editorial

Patxi Álvarez, SJ

In 1975 General Congregation 32 (CG 32) decreed that “the mission of the Society today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement” (D. 4, no. 2), and it considered “the promotion of justice to be an integral part of the priestly service of the faith” (no. 18).

The Congregation was conscious of the many injustices in the world in those days, and it perceived them as forms of an atheism that rejected the God of life. At the same time, the Congregation understood that, even though human beings were able to do something about those unjust situations, they didn't really want to because they weren't ready to pay the cost that changing things would require.

The radicality of that fourth decree of GC 32 caused commotion in the Society. Speaking with total clarity, the members of the congregation were well aware that if the Society began to work seriously for justice, there would be a price to pay (no. 46). And such has in fact been the case: since that time more than fifty Jesuits and countless lay collaborators have died as a result of their commitment to the faith that does justice. Decree 4 of GC 32 brought about a rebirth of the Society, which joined eagerly in the ongoing renewal initiated by the Second Vatican Council a few years earlier.

Decree 4 demanded of Jesuits a painful process of conversion, a process that was not free of errors and conflicts. Some years later, in 1983, GC 33 made a list of those errors and conflicts (D. 1, no. 32-33), pointing out that sometimes Decree 4 had been interpreted only partially, unilaterally, or in ways that were not well thought out. GC 33 also stated that social justice had not always been understood in the light of evangelical justice and that the Society had still not dedicated itself completely to the mission defined by Decree 4. It further remarked that neither disincarnate spiritualism nor merely secular activism truly contributed to the integral proclamation of the Gospel.

In 1995 GC 34 affirmed that commitment to the promotion of justice had been a marvelous gift of God; it had placed the Society in good company, alongside the Lord, alongside the poor, and alongside all men and women working for a more just world. The Society had experienced a renewal of its faith, its hope, and its love (D. 3, no. 1). But GC 34 also recalled the difficulties that had been encountered: sometimes the promotion of justice had been separated from its wellspring of faith, sometimes dogmatic attitudes and rigid ideologies had fueled conflict among Jesuits, and sometimes we were simply lacking in the courage needed to radically change ourselves and our apostolic institutions (D. 3, no. 2).

Fr. Kolvenbach around the year 2000 wrote a letter in which he summed up the situation of the social apostolate. He took note of the commendable positive elements, such as the commitment, energy, and creativity to be found in all corners of the world, but he also took note of the growing difficulties: there were fewer and fewer Jesuits prepared for this kind of apostolate, and they were sometimes discouraged, isolated, and lacking organization. He wrote that the social apostolate was running the risk of “losing its vigor and impulse, its orientation and impact. If this were to occur in a particular Province or Assistancy,” he insisted, “the resulting lack of a vigorous, well organized social apostolate would little by little leave the Society’s essential social dimension debilitated.”

In 2015, as we will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Decree 4, it will be an ideal moment to contemplate serenely the changes we have seen. This long process has been experienced firsthand by a large number of the Jesuits who now make up the Society. For this issue of *Promotio* (no. 115) we have asked some of the protagonists of these changes to tell us what this decree has meant for the life of the Society and to evaluate the situation in which we find ourselves today. This issue therefore seeks to make an initial assessment of this ongoing process, and we hope that it will be useful to all the provinces and conferences as they undertake their own reflection on this topic during the coming year.

In many cases the authors have included references to their personal history in the Society since they see it as closely linked to the implementation of the decree. Several of them have chosen to give thanks for “so much good received” (Sp. Ex. 233). Altogether there are 19 articles – two by lay persons, the rest by Jesuits – coming from all six conferences.

One simple way in which this issue of *Promotio* can be used in communities and groups would be to select a few articles of particular interest, ask people to read them, and then, collectively, try to follow the authors’ lead in giving thanks and evaluating the present situation.

Such an exercise is sure to rouse many interior movements and will help us to renew once again our desire to “seek the Kingdom of God and its justice” (Matthew 6:33) so that everything else will be given to us as well.

*Original Spanish
Translation Joseph Owens, SJ*



Decree 4: A reflection from Chad

Antoine Berilengar, SJ

Centre d'Etudes et Formation pour le Développement, N'Djaména, Tchad

My reflection on GC XXXII Decree 4 is limited in scope, although I have been working in the Social Apostolate for 15 years. In fact, since 2001, I have been working more and more in and along with social centres, as well as helping out on Sundays in a parish in the city of N'Djamena. The viewpoint developed in this article is the direct result of my experience in the West Africa (AOC) province and particularly in Chad.

Jesuits in Africa received Decree 4 in a political and social context which did not appear very encouraging in view of its appropriation and application.

From a political perspective, this document reached Jesuits in Africa and Madagascar at a time when not all African countries had achieved independence (namely Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia). Furthermore, some African countries were more drawn to Marxist or socialist ideologies (such as Madagascar, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia and Benin) or towards authenticity and a return to the origins of African values (Congo-Kinshasa and Chad). These political options at times do not leave space for the Church or religious freedom. On occasion Church property has been confiscated or nationalised (Congo Kinshasa). Besides, this decree arrived in Africa at a time when the continent, at the height of the Cold War, was subject to regimes brought to power by coups d'état. In addition, practically without exemption, these countries had a political system consisting in a single party government or were ruled by autocratic regimes. There was not much space for freedom of expression, the taking of initiatives or the defence of human rights. This context had engendered a lack of political freedom, and in some cases, also religious freedom, poverty, injustice, violations of human rights and exploitation of culture for political aims (authenticity). Thus, in such a context, the Society in many of these countries could not welcome this decree with anything more than caution. Since it would have been taking a great risk to speak about a mission of the Church or a congregation in terms of service and justice or defence and propagation of the faith. Put simply, commitment to the decisive struggle for faith and justice under the standard of the cross is not easy. Particularly since the use of the word "justice" was already seen as reactionary or revolutionary.

However other companions, in the context thus described, found increased encouragement and greater incitation towards evangelisation and the promotion of faith and justice than obstacles for the appropriation and the implementation of the decree. In other words, the possibilities of welcoming the document favourably and implementing its decrees was greater than it may have seemed.

Appropriation of the contents of Decree 4

Yet another opportunity, in addition to the Church synod on justice and the publication of the exhortation of Pope Paul VI, was the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), in 1977, 1978 and 1981, which made a solemn commitment to consider evangelisation work intimately linked to the promotion of peace and justice (Yaoundé, July 1981). In view of the gravity of the situation, in addition to their exhortation, the Bishops initiated a series of reflections on justice and peace from 1983 to 1987. Thus, there is a real will to inscribe pastoral mission within a social framework for the Church in Africa. In fact, action in favour of justice and the transformation of the world is clearly presented as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, in other words, of the mission of the Church for the redemption of humankind and the liberation of people from every situation of oppression. The Church is called in its evangelisation process to make the Word of God the Good news of freedom for all.

Local Churches had committed themselves to numerous charity works, even though the commitment to promote justice and oppose structural injustice and sin did not seem to be a priori the foremost mission of the Church. Through their commitment and support to the Bishops in preparing pastoral letters, opening social centres (Silveira House - Harare, Zimbabwe, CEPAS - Kinshasa, DRC, CEFOD - N'Djamena, Chad and INADES - Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, among others), undertaking the management of certain parishes and dioceses, Jesuits in Africa warmly welcomed the decree, included it in their programmes and used it in their pastoral work. The promotion of the social Apostolate, "justice and peace" commissions or Jesuit cooperation in these commissions all form part of the appropriation of this option. Therefore, in terms of what was happening in local Churches, this decree arrived as an encouragement to undertake a whole new direction.

Apostolic options inspired by Decree 4

Social work with street children, prisoners, refugees and the opening of social centres have also been guided by this decree. In Lusaka in Zambia, "the Jesuit Theological Centre", founded by a former director of the *Centre for Concerns* in Washington DC, has inscribed faith and justice as a key programme in its institution from the moment it was opened. Furthermore, the Society's commitment continued to increase in scope in the 1990s with the era of democracy inaugurated by national conferences. During these assemblies, where the Church played a major role in chairing in some countries (DRC, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon and Benin among others), the Society mobilised all its resources in order to contribute to the advent of democracy in Africa. The involvement of the social centres has maintained a determining role throughout national elections (CEPAS - DRC and CREC - Benin), post-election crises (CERAP - Côte d'Ivoire), the establishment of good governance for natural resources (CEPAS, CEFOD - Chad), distributive justice (Jesuit centre for theological reflection) and peace and reconciliation (Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Côte d'Ivoire).

Decree 4 was very well received. In an encounter with a vocational group, in January 1984, a Jesuit father presented the mission of the Society in a totally unprecedented way for me, coming from a college and parishes directed by Capuchins, *"the mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. For reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another"* (no. 2). All the works (including spiritual centres, Colleges, parishes, health centres, development works and language research centres) Jesuits are committed to must reflect this double dimension of the mission of the Society. The houses where these documents have been studied and social insertion organised all have a charism in this sense.

Assessment and formulation of the apostolic plan examined in the light of D. 4

On reading the self-assessment report on apostolic options in the province (November 1985 - June 1986), with regard to parishes, Jesuits in Séhoué (in Bénin) reported that, "insertion in a parish is an opportunity to live Decree 4. 98; in order to keep parishes, we also need to form men who are humble, close to their people and accessible to everyone... even though parish ministry is specifically the domain of secular clergy, we understand that in a parish framework insertion must be maintained and even promoted, according to demand and possibility" (1 April 1986). For Jesuits in the parish of Saint Pierre Claver in Kyabé, "to be present in the world of the disenfranchised and the exploited (urban and rural poor and marginalised people, refugees) provides a privileged opportunity to advance our Jesuit option for the promotion of justice". In the same way, for Jesuits in the parishes of Békamba, Koumra, Béboro and Bédaya in the Diocese of Sarh, "the rural parish is also a privileged place in the struggle for justice that is derived from faith, since the rural population, if not allowed to evolve, will continue to be victim to great injustice. Elsewhere, people fight for freedom, here we have the chance to anticipate evil so it will not occur". For companions in Saint Pauls parish in Kabalaye, "the parish offers excellent insertion possibilities, including a link with the hierarchy, contact with the whole population and not only certain sectors, interesting possibilities for inculturation and sharing the path with the poor, the oppressed and the abandoned. This presupposes on our part a great proximity, knowledge of customs, language and their real situation, with a view to defending their rights, or better still, to assist them in defending their rights themselves", (Sarh Cathedral, 28 April 1986).

For these companions, the place to live this preferential option for the poor, faith that does justice, is not only parishes in rural settings, but parishes in general. The community in Bousso-Bailli (Chad) advise that in their programming "they seek to maintain a balance between Jesuits working in the classic ministries of the Society and others (not too many of course) in a rural environment. It is necessary to prepare to work in a rural setting with at least the same commitment with which we prepare for other environments". Companions in formation, in their review, reaffirmed their attachment to their rural origins, and willingness to work in these parishes before their replacement by local clergy. Nonetheless, they encouraged their companions to consider that parishes are not the only means or places to reach the rural world.

The intuition of this decree and its interpretation or actualisation by other General Congregations continue to inspire Jesuits in their initiatives in favour of faith and justice. For example, in Guéra (Apostolic Vicariate of Mongo, in central Chad, located in a mainly Muslim community), this option helped to oppose usurers exploiting the farmers (one bag of grain lent in the lean period at a price equivalent to two bags at harvest). In order to put a stop to this unjust exploitation, a Jesuit father, along with a mixed group of Muslims and Christians, has set up an association called "Cereal Banks". They keep food supplies harvested directly from the fields or bought in storehouses and sell it again as necessary at a just price which is accessible to all.

Beyond justice....

Evangelisation and economic and political freedom were and are still very important issues for the Church in the third world, particularly in South America and in Africa at the time this decree was promulgated. However, besides these issues, in Africa, we have to add the issue of announcing the Gospel to non Christians in a language appropriate to their culture. This is because we cannot talk of faith and justice without taking into consideration the specific

civilisation of a people and a thorough understanding of their culture. Here the decree also opens the path to inculturation (GC XXXII n° 102-105, 109), and theological pluralism. In fact, inculturation is a means at the service of a very deep evangelisation process for Christians in Africa who seek to fill the gap between faith and culture as well as affirm an identity which is both African and Christian for those who welcome the word of God as Good News. It is in this spirit that Jesuits in Sarh Cathedral in Chad noted, “our commitment to the promotion of faith and the service of justice requires on our part a greater proximity, a greater knowledge of customs, language and real life situations [of the people we are working with] in view of defending their rights or, even better, helping them to defend their own rights by themselves”. In other words, work with the poor entails not only insertion but defence of human rights and knowledge of each specific culture. This conviction has materialised in every part of the African provinces in research initiatives into the area of languages (DRC, Benin, Cameroun and Chad among others).

Towards a conclusion

The decree reached the companions in Africa in a context which was at the same time supportive and difficult for its appropriation and implementation. Nevertheless, companions in Africa welcomed it as a new mission, a call which joins the call of the Church in the place they carry out their mission. To summarise, almost 40 years after this important decree was proclaimed, its interpretations by several General Congregations and many companions continue to nourish Jesuits and their partners in their commitment to Africa.

*Original French
Translation Judy Reeves*



Implementation of GC 32 Decree 4. An African Perspective

Léon de Saint Moulin, SJ

CEPAS, Central Africa Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

The proclamation by General Congregation XXXII in 1975 that "the mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" (n° 2) was the product of a specific current of thought. My intention is to indicate those lines of reflection which have also conditioned our response, and to propose strategies which seem to me to be the most useful in contributing to progress towards justice in Africa.

The context of the General Congregation decree

After the decolonisation movement and in the years of prosperity which followed, the whole world believed it was possible to overcome under-development. At Church level, Pope John XXIII was to interpret the changes taking place as if they were calls from God, signs of the times. In *Mater et Magistra* in May 1961, he wrote, "history shows with ever-increasing clarity that it is not only the relations between workers and managers that need to be re-established on the basis of justice and equity, but also those between the various branches of the economy, between areas of varying productivity within the same political community, and between countries with a different degree of social and economic development" (n° 122). The encyclical *Populorum progressio* by Pope Paul VI in 1967 was also filled with hope.

Latin American liberation theology was one of the powerful currents of thought which pushed the Synod of Bishops in December 1971 to affirm that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation".¹ However Africa has never really felt its needs were reflected in the Liberation theology which is almost exclusively economic. Rather, Africa has adopted, as a key to the interpretation of the history of African societies, the concept of "anthropological pauperisation", proposed by Father Engelbert Mveng.² It is in fact particularly with regard to their human dignity that Africans feel unacknowledged and scorned, and renew their call for greater justice.

The development aid which followed decolonisation was nothing more than a cosmetic panacea on the wounds engendered by the international socio-economic system. We are

¹ Justice in the world, in *La Documentation Catholique* (1972) n° 1600, p. 12.

² Cf. Engelbert MVENG, *Africa in the Church – Words of a believer*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1985.

familiar with the comment made by Msgr Helder Camara - "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist". Saint John Paul II fully underlined the structural nature of poverty from his very first encyclicals onwards³. Neoliberal economic policies of stabilisation, liberalisation and privatisation imposed at the time on numerous countries was not aimed at improving the standard of living for the population, but at maintaining regimes which have continued to deepen inequalities at national level and between different nations. It is the same with current policies of good governance or the re-launch of a State when these are incited or piloted from outside the country. In the face of these failures, a crisis of ideologies is held accountable. We are equally affected, in particular because there is no consensus among us, nor in the Church, regarding what is fundamentally the promotion of justice. We have to integrate this pluralism in our prospects for the future, as well as develop useful points of exchange for progress in both mutual understanding and in widening our areas of convergence.

Nevertheless, in a concrete way, social action undertaken by the provinces of the Society of Jesus in Africa has been much more plentiful than many have perceived. Jesuit provinces maintain ongoing and serious commitments towards education and health, as well as in development projects. In countries where they were present at the time of independence, they contributed to the construction of new States. They have all encouraged space for social conscientisation and have been, to different degrees, actors in the democratisation movement of the 1990s. Spiritual facilitation, in particular, contributes towards supporting people to stand up and promote their own dignity.

What strategies to adopt for the promotion of justice in Africa?

The importance of the vision of humanity and society

The value of our action on society as such stems from a vision of human life and of the societies which are their foundation. Yet all the same I feel that the Society is not concerned enough with capitalising on the progress of the social doctrine of the Church and humankind. Many of us do not know enough about the General Congregation Decrees and the letters from Father Generals. Some of our discussions regarding the issues facing society are not pertinent and our actions may also be a vehicle for an exacerbated individualism which is one of the causes of the exploitation we should be condemning. Nonetheless some strongly committed voices have been heard, notably the late Father René De Haes, a theologian in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He stated that *Centesimus annus*, in 1991, is still firmly rooted in a Eurocentric cultural concept, "in this context, the individualistic concept of private property is reaffirmed, albeit nuanced by the universal destination of goods, which suits the individualist culture of consumer societies. The terrible impoverishment of marginalised people in Asia, Africa and Latin America over the last ten years and the criminal attack on life which this represents are referred to from the perspective of the first world and as a consequence an annexe of the ruthless capitalism denounced in the Encyclical. Once again the social teaching of the Church has been expressed in a reformist report, critical of the abuse of capitalism but not of the system itself which needs to be set right....The option for the poor is therefore reduced to works of condescending charity towards those who have been

³ John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis* (1979), n° 16 § 5 ("So widespread is the phenomenon [of social inequality] that it brings into question the financial, monetary, production and commercial mechanisms!"), *Dives in misericordia* (1980), no. 11, § 4 ("It is obvious that a fundamental defect, or rather a series of defects, indeed a defective machinery is at the root of contemporary economics and materialistic civilization, which does not allow the human family to break free from such radically unjust situations").

marginalised by the system without implying any change in the oppressive structures which lie at the cause. The poor are the object of charity, not the subject of their own history nor of the changes which need to be put in place". He ends his analysis, as a man of faith devoted to the Church, with a last paragraph entitled promisingly, "Towards a social encyclical for Africa"⁴. If only we could contribute to the preparation for this!

The role of the social sector

It seems to me that the role of the social sector in the promotion of Justice as a dimension to all our ministries can be compared to the dimension of prayer time in a life which should be entirely devoted to prayer. If there is no special time nor place to focus on the specific objectives of one dimension of life, this dimension can't be deep. The social sector must bring all his 'social' activities and all our social commitment in line with this fundamental aim - the promotion of justice. This of course does not exclude works of charity and development, which already care for the poor. However social works committed to reflection on social problems and the creation of strategies to reduce poverty at its origins should be considered the social sector in the strictest sense.

Social centres, specifically, should assist all social Apostolates to help people stand up and become increasingly the actors of their own destiny. Our theological institutions, in partnership with them, should acquire authority in the domain of Christian reflection and form young people to analyse and act in society. We need a theory of social change and a theology of salvation renewed with the help of extensive appropriation of the social doctrine of the Church - going beyond the organisation of the Compendium in 2004.

The choice of social solidarities

What really limits our social action furthermore is our lack of solidarity with the poor. We try much harder to escape poverty than to become ourselves closer to the poor. *Gaudium et spes* warns us however that the choice of our social solidarity is what most determines the social action we can exert (n° 30). We could participate much more in the cultural and social vitality of the country we are living in. Several dioceses have clearly denounced the mechanisms of exploitation which govern the unequal relationships between Africa and the rest of the world, especially with regard to foreign debt and 'lion's share' oil or mining "contracts". The people themselves, despite their limited means, manage to establish community mobilisation which can resolve issues at local level and simultaneously prompt self discipline. Jesuits who have been able to take part in initiatives of this kind, albeit at a simple level, have here themselves found a path to maturity. Justice and Peace Commissions are also doing excellent work. It is not by isolating ourselves that we can hope to exert effective social action.

In conclusion, I am happy to be able to underline the fact that the sectors of analysis and social action in which I have been advocating for increasingly greater commitment, are nonetheless the same areas where I have had the joy of witnessing the huge progress achieved in over fifty years. General Congregation XXXII and the confirmation given it by three successive Congregations have been useful tools as well as significant milestones.

*Original French
Translation Judy Reeves*

⁴ Zaire-Afrique, 1993, no. 275, p. 287-292.



Forty years after Decree 4: Looking back and looking forward

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ
Provincial of East Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

It may seem presumptuous on my part to write about the reception and implementation of Decree Four (“The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice”) of General Congregation 32. I was eight years old when GC 32 promulgated Decree Four, and I would not enter the Society of Jesus for another eleven years after it came into force as the clear and definitive articulation of the contemporary mission of the Society of Jesus.

Looking back at the earliest moments of my Jesuit life, my first encounter with the decree happened in the sanitized context of novitiate formation. Essentially, the encounter consisted of a cursory reading of the text and a passing commentary on its meaning and implications. Neither the reading nor the commentary captured and conveyed the radical spirit of the decree. Both were detached from the lived reality that informed its formulation and promulgation. Even when the death of the UCA martyrs in El Salvador – three years after I entered the novitiate – jolted the Society’s consciousness of the bloody cost of the option for the service of faith of which the promotion of justice was a constitutive dimension, still, such events seemed remote and exceptional, notwithstanding the conviction of many Jesuits that the UCA tragedy was an inevitable collateral of the Society’s commitment to faith that does justice. Although subsequent history – even as recent as the brutal murder of Fr. Frans Van der Lugt, SJ, in worn-torn Syria – has validated this conviction, the thinking and actions of my Jesuit peers at the time did not quite glow with the fire or the spirit of Decree Four. Its stirring rhetoric and rousing appeal oftentimes sounded more like jingles and slogans than a clarion call to faith lived through justice.

I recall a short-lived immersion community at the heart of the notorious Kibera slum that nearly abuts the Jesuit theologate in Nairobi, Kenya. It consisted of a few scholastics living in the midst of impoverished slum-dwellers while studying theology. Even though it was celebrated as a concrete manifestation of the preferential option of the poor that is a constitutive element of Decree Four, it failed to impress many of my peers, for whom theology was more speculative than practical. As proof of the nominal success of that experimental insertion community, its closure barely registered a whimper of protest or lamentation among students and teachers of theology. For a considerable period of time, little if anything would change in the way the decree was received and implemented by Jesuits of my generation.

By the foregoing remarks I am not suggesting that Decree Four has had no impact in Africa. Rather, there is a trajectory of comprehension, a process of appreciation and uneven evidence of the actualization of the tenets of Decree Four. At the risk of generalizing, I believe that

Africa has had to look back to discover the core message and practical implications of Decree Four for Jesuit apostolic life and ministry. From this retrospective perspective, Decree Four appears less as an event in a remote and receding past than an unfolding process that unceasingly reinvigorates and challenges the authenticity and orientation of Jesuit life and ministry now and in the future. Thus, understood as a process of history and not exclusively as an event in history – pivotal as it may have been – Decree Four has set off a chain of events that shaped and defined the landscape of the social apostolate and mission of the Society in Africa. The following three examples serve to illustrate the impact and enduring legacy of Decree Four in the Society in Africa.

To begin with, since 1975, across the continent and its islands, Jesuits have initiated an assortment of social apostolates and ministries, variously categorized as “Faith and Justice”, “Justice and Peace”, “Development and Peace”, “Human Rights and Justice” ... Irrespective of the nomenclature or the variety of permutation and combination, the interests of these apostolates are as diverse as the issues they deal with are pressing. The list would include Jesuit-led advocacy for equitable and just management of natural resources in Chad and DR Congo, constitutional reform in Zambia and Kenya, peace and reconciliation in South Sudan and Kenya, and civic and political education in Zimbabwe and Côte d’Ivoire. To this we must add the related issues of ecology, governance, human rights, gender and corruption.

Second, in addition to these centres for advocacy and action, a related but distinct phenomenon is the emergence of educational institutions for research and reflection on the twin issues of faith and justice. These institutions incorporate theological ethics with social science methodologies, analysis and research to create a wider body of reflection on faith and justice. The outcomes of their research and analysis – delivered via a variety of platforms, such as conferences, workshops, seminars, colloquiums and publications – contribute a unique perspective to socioeconomic and political issues that affect the continent. It should be noted that such approaches derive from and are nurtured by the values of catholic social teaching and the principles, guidelines and criteria enumerated in Decree Four as refined and reinterpreted over the last four decades by subsequent General Congregations. Two examples that come to mind here are Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR) in Nairobi, Kenya, and *Centre de Recherche et d’ Action pour la Paix* (CERAP) in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. Like the centres referred to in the preceding paragraph, these educational institutions have the distinction of creating a collaborative network with other institutions that are interested in global ethical issues and how they affect local communities. Essentially, both models of social apostolate could be identified as faith-based civil society organizations inspired by Decree Four.

A third example concerns initiatives that seek to integrate elements of the service of the faith and the promotion of justice into Jesuit ministry. It is now commonly assumed that Jesuit commitment to justice ought not to operate parallel to or counteract other Jesuit apostolates and works. In schools, parishes and spirituality centres across Africa and Madagascar, numerous programmes exist that seek to realize the ideals of Decree Four through outreach programmes to marginalized communities, re-appropriation of the experience of Ignatian spirituality, attention to the plight of the oppressed and effective improvement of the condition of poor, displaced and sick people.

In Africa there is no dearth of issues that underscore the contemporary relevance of Decree Four. A short list would include violent conflicts, ethnic tension, leadership deficit, poor governance, sectarian violence and religious intolerance. These issues continue to distort the dignity and worth of women and men on the continent. In light of these challenges, two points

need to be underlined as a critique of the reception and implementation of Decree Four in Africa.

First, although I would be hard-pressed to provide indisputable empirical evidence for this claim, the perception is strong that social justice tends to be approached from a predominantly theoretical and intellectual perspective. In making this observation I am not suggesting that this approach is not valid, but, rather, that it is limited, hence the need to maintain a constructive balance between theory and praxis in actualizing the mission of the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

Second, to reprise a point that I have made above, communities of insertion that seemed to be the hallmark of the implementation of Decree Four have all but disappeared. There is a danger here of losing the critical anchor of the authenticity and radicalness of this decree, namely the principle of preferential option for poor, oppressed and marginalized people expressed in concrete acts of solidarity with them. Father Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, has alerted the Society to this reality in his *De Statu* report of July 2012.

In sum, a balanced assessment of the four decades of the promulgation and implementation of Decree Four ought to see the developments discussed in this brief essay as examples of historical, contextual and practical outcomes of the groundbreaking formulation of Jesuit mission by GC 32. Like the rest of the Society of Jesus, Decree Four has had its share of martyrs and discontents in Africa.

Recently, I met an African Jesuit who introduced himself proudly as a “man of Decree Four,” by which he meant that the ideals and objectives of the decree inspired his vocation to the Society of Jesus. I am convinced that the impetus and momentum generated by Decree Four continue to galvanize Jesuit life and ministry on the continent, albeit the ways of understanding and expressing it have evolved over the four decades of its existence. Decree Four serves as a basic grammar that undergirds the articulation of Jesuit life and mission in the 21st century. To use a vivid metaphor from GC 35, forty years on, perhaps Decree Four would be best understood and appreciated as a fire that has kindled other fires.

Original English



The process of our mission: dialogue between “in” and the “inter”

Benjamín González Buelta, SJ

Tertiarship instructor, La Habana, Cuba

I will examine the mission of the Society formulated during the 32nd General Congregation as “the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement” (no. 2), based on my experience of having accepted this option in 1975, when I worked with three other Jesuits, in an inserted community in a marginalised district of the Dominican Republic, and on my current role as a Tertiarship Instructor living in a very different society in Cuba.

In the decree about our identity (GC 35, D. 2, no. 15), the 35th General Congregation affirms, “This option changed the face of the Society. We embrace it again and we remember with gratitude our martyrs and the poor who have nourished us evangelically in our own identity as followers of Jesus: ‘our service, especially among the poor, has deepened our life of faith, both individually and as a body’ (GC 34, D. 2, no. 1)”. The clear assertion by Benedict XVI during his address to the participants of GC 35 situates the commitment for the poor in its true creative centre: “As I was able to reaffirm to the Latin American Bishops gathered at the Shrine of Aparecida, «the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty» (cf. II Cor 8: 9)... For us, the option for the poor is not ideological but is born from the Gospel (Address to the GC of Benedict XVI, no. 8).

GC 32 recalled a worry of many Jesuits and formulated the experience of those who ever since the end of the 1960s had begun a physical, spiritual and psychological exodus towards the world of the poor. Every step towards the urban marginality of large Latin American cities or the abandoned countryside was a liturgy for us towards finding God in the rejected. Not only did we move towards the alleyways of unknown social realities, but we also moved towards the experience of a God, a fascinating creator of an absolute passion. Arising from on our way of understanding reality, a new synthesis began to take shape in our language, our prayer, our relations and all the dimensions of our personalities. Insertion and inculturation were not only an external consequence, but also a reconfiguration in the heart of our sense of intimacy.

The first surprise was seeing how the word of God understood in the poorest alleyways awakened a creative dynamism in the people; it stood them up straight and strengthened their identities. The district residents found their voice again and dared to formulate repressed complaints and never before imagined dreams of justice. The Word understood in its own context seemed as if it were at home, in the humus where it was born for the first time. The small Christian communities were formed in the midst of poverty and joy. The parish was coming to life in the midst of the encounters’ of all these communities. In time, those communities, whose stature was the size of a mustard seed, began establishing district

organisations, education and health institutions, and undertaking socio-political commitments.

We announced liberation, but the arrival of neoliberalism accentuated the dynamics of exclusion and accumulation. The district began deteriorating with new problems and others similar to those in other Latin American districts, such as armed groups fighting for control of drugs and territory. At the same time Christian communities began strengthening themselves based on an interior consistency. Rereading this experience and comparing it to other similar ones in other countries, I believe that some limited conclusions can be drawn beginning from a concrete experience of which all its nuances cannot be interpreted.

1. *We undertake an experience of the poor in God and of God in the poor.* This point of departure of the communities was not the teaching of the catechism, but the living meeting with the word of God. Nor was it a methodology of socio-political analysis. The Gospel has a dynamism of its own which allows us to experience the word of God as salvation, and at the same time make it possible to recognise the individual and social conditions of life which are inhumane. The biblical and theological teachings slowly arrived much later, as did the analysis of the circumstances depending on the people and communities involved. As the years passed, we discovered that the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, undertaken in different ways, helped to form consistent, creative and whole people in the midst of a very harsh reality. The poverty of our Jesuit community life in a house, as in those of our neighbours, offered the closeness of open doors to all, with no more insulation than the rotten wooden walls.
2. Our pastoral group of religious contained individuals qualified in social sciences and theology, in pedagogy and spirituality. Some did a *good management at balancing the spiritual experience and apostolic work with the pastoral work in the district and participation in academic institutions and research and social action centres.* District life constantly nourished our analysis and research on the unmediated reality of what we were experiencing. Reflection allowed us to give a name to processes which could otherwise be hidden dynamics, driven by the wind of an impoverished ideology repeated ad nauseum as slogans.
3. We discovered the need to *take care of subjectivity.* Both the growth of the communities on all fronts, the attention to the socio-political situation of poverty, and the urgency and the depth of the problems facing us increasingly pushed us to our physical, psychological and spiritual limits, to breaking point. On many occasions, obsessed by our goal, we forgot about the how hard the other was working. Each religious and lay community had its own history, with potential and wounds, which was crystallising in a new way. We could not be limited by the community dimension of the Gospel; there was a need to pay close attention to the processes of each individual with time for listening and accompaniment.
4. Inevitably *we were confused by limits.* The fall of the utopias dismantled clear or subtle motivations, built upon vanishing ideological supports. The idealisation of the poor was exposed as a lack of respect for their reality, expecting outcomes from them which were more to do with our impatience and our planning than their true possibilities. Respect for the reality in which God works (Spiritual Exercises 236) became the foundation of contemplation, discernment and sustained commitment.
5. The *relationship with Jesuit communities and institutions* also underwent a process. In the initial moments of insertion, the surprise of this option, the novelty of the approach,

the aggressiveness of a harsh reality which invented language to express itself, provoked confrontation. Later came a time for listening and respect for the diversity of apostolic options based on which we could dedicate ourselves to the poor, since the service of faith and the promotion of justice form an essential part of the whole apostolate. Then came forms of collaboration between education works, spiritual centres and works of insertion which united most of the apostolic body with a renewed dynamism. Fr Kolvenbach clearly summarised it: "All for the poor, many with the poor, some as the poor".

6. We began building *dialogue between the "in" and the "inter" in a global culture*. From insertion, inculturation, immersion..., we have gone on to the intercultural, inter-religious, international, inter-sectorial, interdisciplinary... The new global culture imposes profound and dramatic change, riding an increasing rapid technological wave. New faces of poverty, going beyond national frontiers, have emerged, such as migration and people smuggling. Computer screens and smartphones – whose sharp resolution is alluring in a rich world – are built on poverty wages in Chinese factories. Concrete displays of poverty appear situated in dynamics which cut across nations. Solidarity can also circulate on digital highways. Work in networks is the symbol of a new way of perceiving our commitment. Small consistent knots unite with other knots across strong and flexible wires. This solidarity is concretely respected and strengthened precisely by the process of bringing the knots together. It is no longer possible to make plans in isolation. The "in" can no longer be seen as a closed and short-term commitment, but a long-term commitment with small steps in a new imaginary world which we are seeking, inspired by the open utopia of the Reign of God, in the reconciliation of all in Christ. "Building bridges" in the innumerable "frontiers" of a fragmented world, is the symbol chosen by GC 35 to describe our mission (CG 35.3).

For the young Jesuits today who come to tertianship, there has not been a reduction in their awareness or interest in the option of the Society, service of faith and the promotion of justice. There are less Jesuits in every province, but they communicate better with those from other provinces. They specialise in extremely concrete issues, but are aware that they need to understand other areas of knowledge. They wish to collaborate with lay people not only on an organisational level, but also in spiritual experiences. Occasionally destabilised by extreme jobs and by the multiple feelings scattered by a globalised culture, they are concerned about the devastation of the poor and the inner fragmentation which affects us all. They look to find their own position in the world in a mystical and ascetical experience inspired in the Spiritual Exercises which allows them to be creators of a new way of looking for those for who are lost in the new digital avenues or in the innumerable frontiers of our daily lives where the Father works for the future with us.

Original Spanish
Translation James Stapleton



“An option we carry in the heart”

Miguel Cruzado, SJ
Provincial of Peru

The Decree 4 has changed the face of the Society, the issues and spirit with which we lived led us to taking on new roles, other ways of carrying out the mission and service; everything changed, including the way in which Jesuits throughout nearly all of Latin America are seen. As Jesuits in Peru we have diversified our presence and got closer to the many working class communities – new communities and works far from urban areas and centres of influence –. We have incorporated new issues into our regular reflections: educators as always, now we are also working class educators; training leaders for development, then also for new forms of economic management – such as cooperatives, campesino communities or small businesses–. Our theological reflection on the poor has deepened and sought out commonalities with anthropology and other social sciences. We have engaged directly with working class organisations – campesinos, local communities, workers – and their struggle for justice and dignity. Our formation houses were inserted into the lives of the local population; the experiences and contents of this formation were also enriched within the perspective of a Society of Jesus ever more present in the community life and concerned about the “promotion of justice as an essential to Christianity”.

Today we are thankful for all that the Lord has given us and which continues to embody our lives. This does prevent us from recognising that during these decades of apostolic renewal, we may also have committed errors. In the midst of the passion for the justice of the Kingdom and structural transformation we may have neglected the nearby compassion. Our insertion into the world of the poor did not eliminate the risk of paternalism and other superficial forms of justice. We have seen that in the urgency of the daily struggle we could neglect our permanent point of reference, the Lord. Not everything has been success and happiness and, as the Decree 4 matures, we can already recognise this with serenity.

In all the Latin American provinces passionate stories of ‘those years’ are told: of the new initiatives in formation, of risky placements in new missionary territories, of situations of prophetic denunciation – of which our martyrs remind us –, of novel ways of exercising ministry. The early decades required a great deal of spiritual dynamism and apostolic audacity. It was also a time of controversy, of conflict between brothers.

Today it seems as if this time of brimming passions and risky initiatives has passed by. Today we consolidate our existing works, attending above all to the breath, depth and sustainability of the missionary initiatives, before proposing new audacious ones; even more so in these times of apostolic restructuring in which the number of Jesuits continues to fall. Thanks to the spirit of maturity – 40 years on – the Faith-Justice binomial has become a place of quiet reflection throughout the Society and the apostolic sector. “The service of faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement” is an unquestionable institution in all we do:

in our colleges, parishes, youth pastoral work, universities, etc. This allows us to involve many others in the transformation of the world.

In this time of maturity, however, a new risk may appear: to convert what has been achieved into a new order, in which one learns and communicates, but is not necessarily deeply committed in the sense of the disciple. The Faith-Justice binomial has no future without passion for life and friendship – compassion – with the poor of Jesus Christ, without the capacity of indignation and condemnation of injustice, without the audacity to dream of hope. (Com)passion, indignation and audacity – devouring forms of zeal found in the Lord's house – are not accessory or transitory dimensions of this binomial, but part of the evangelical dynamism which created it and even today give it life. It is for this reason that the decree defines it as “an option we carry in the heart”.

The encounter between Faith and Justice is not only a programmatic formula which orients forms of work or reflection, it is above all a vital truth – an option of the heart – which experiments and is revealed in prayer. The encounter between Faith and Justice is found in life or it is not found at all – therefore every reformulation of our mission, in the sense of Faith and Justice, needs to mention the new challenges facing us –. It is the experiences – of injustice which wounds the soul, of friendship and compassion with the suffering, of impossible situations of transformation of the world – which drive the dynamism of the decree.

The decree cannot but involve profound feeling because it inevitably and regrettably puts us in an antagonistic and controversial position. The encounter between Faith and Justice brings us to the critique of “intolerable structural injustice”. This critique requires constant lucidity, profound reflection and a permanent sense of self-criticism; however, above all, it requires one to live out the Gospel concentrating on the lives of people, without neglecting love, being capable of forgiveness; and maintaining alive the capacity for indignation to condemn and stand up against “intolerable” situations of abuse of people.

With regard to our lives as Jesuits, the decree underlines that conversion is permanent. This mission presupposes a level of personal virtue and adhesion as it is an option carried in the heart. One danger with the “institutionalisation” of the decree is to believe we have already achieved it and to ignore any revision of our own way of living and behaving – of our closeness to the poorest, of indignation in the face of suffering, of audacity to offer alternatives with our own lives –.

Dialogue and debate between ourselves – and with others – is fundamental during this permanent conversion. In the search for the justice of the Kingdom, disagreement is part of the journey and it helps us go forward; there are many perspectives and, as such, controversy is possible. Disagreement should not lead to confrontation or distance – as Alberto Flores Galindo, the great Peruvian intellectual, used to say – that disagreeing is way of bringing us closer together –. Passionate debate helps us maintain the spirit of the Faith-Justice binomial alive amongst us. The end of debates frequently expresses the – silent – dominance of one vision over others. Permanent consensus may give the impression that there is nothing more to say.

The other challenge of our time is the weakening of the “social sector” in the face of the strengthening of the Faith-Justice binomial as a “dimension” present in all ministries. As Provincials we constantly experience this tension. Testimonial presences and direct action on the frontiers of justice are not easy to sustain in the face of requirements of far-reaching traditional institutions, which also incorporate the social dimension within their structures. Nevertheless, we need to maintain the presence and works of the “sector” even though they

do not appear to be successful, even though few people are able to participate in them, even though resources are scarce and we feel their proposals appear risky and their demands on society, the Church and the Society itself appear impulsive; we need them because they offer daily evidence of passion, indignation and audacity which permeate and enrich our entire mission. This “dimension without the “sector” could slowly lose internal dynamism and credibility for others.

The formation of young Jesuits in the spirit of the decree is another challenge today. The young join a Society of Jesus in which the decree is no longer a novelty or countercultural. Young Jesuits, formed in the critical spirit of philosophy and the humanities, will pose their own questions about the decree and have to find their own ways of recognizing the link - Faith and Justice - which for older Jesuits appears so obvious and unquestionable. These new Jesuits, formed as autonomous subjects in the essence of the Spiritual Exercises, will need re-establish within themselves the spiritual experience which flows from every sentence of the Decree 4. In order to announce the Gospel to diverse worlds, young Jesuits, formed in recognising the signs of the Kingdom in life, will imbibe from the testimonial force of our experience of the Faith-Justice binomial. If debate on the binomial is inward looking, it will possibly generate adverse reactions or, worse, indifference, the interruption of any queries and therefore of any connection to real life.

Today, 40 years on, we must continue rediscovering the encounter between faith and justice, with its new forms and demands, based on the heart of our experiences. This means that we continue to be close friends with the poor; that we continue to raise question and become indignant in the face of unjust suffering; that we take risks to put forward audacious proposals that generate hope. It also means we maintain dialogue, without fear of disagreement, among ourselves; allow the young to receive the revelation of this evangelical binomial, exposing themselves at the frontiers of injustice; and accept that this mission of God is always up-to-date and can take many new forms every time: new places of mission, new ways of service, and new institutional arrangements.

*Original Spanish
Translation James Stapleton*



Justice flowing from faith (Rom 9.30): a Latin America and the Caribbean assessment of Decree 4, GC 32

Alfredo Ferro, SJ

Pan-amazonia Project, Manaus, Brasil

Initial approach

It is not easy to assess 40 years of what has been the journey of the Society of Jesus in Latin America following the promulgation of Decree 4 of GC 32. There would be many ways of looking at the issue up close, different approaches, various conceptions, and analyses of one or another of its aspects. In general, these multiple perspectives bring closer to responding to the question that we would like to ask ourselves. How was what we consider the central nucleus of our mission, service of faith and the promotion of justice, received and implemented by the Society of Jesus?

The decree of GC 32, certainly of great importance to the Universal Society in my opinion, becomes a point of permanent reference for the institution and its members in their actions and spirituality, due to the depth and richness of its formulation. In the midst of the discussion from which it was conceived and with the significant influence of Latin American Jesuits at GC 32, this decree constituted a breaking point in Jesuit and ecclesial terms in its way of understanding and projecting what would and should be our mission as companions of Jesus.

My reflection is based on my formation in sociology and my experience as a Jesuit in many social works of the Colombian Province and subsequently more recently as a delegate of the social sector of Latin American Conference of Provincials (CPAL) from 2008 to 2013. It focuses on two perspectives. One is more theoretical. It incorporates the principle documents or texts, which explain, stimulate and encourage a better understanding of what it means to live missionary commitment in Latin America. The other, more from an institutional perspective, describes, albeit in a limited manner, some of the characteristics we saw as necessary for the implementation of the decree, or in short, what it meant concretely in everyday life to put the decree into practice.

No shortage of inspired and inspiring documents and texts

"The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds; it does not rest till it reaches its goal, Nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds, judges justly and affirms the right" (Ecclus 35, 17-18)

For those of us in the social sector, the basis of Decree 4 can be found in the meeting of major superiors and the process of the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus, based on the Fr Janssens's instructions (1949) on the motivation for the establishment of the research and social action centres (CIAS). It also finds its basis in the letter by Fr Arrupe about the social apostolate in Latin America (1966) and in the famous Rio Letter of Latin American Provincials, which at the meeting that occasion with Fr Arrupe (1968) caused quite a stir for its radicalism.

The formulation of Decree 4 of GC 32 in the emerging context is a consequence of what we call today indignation. On one hand, it is the response to the cry of injustice, heard by our companions. On the other hand, it is an attempt to be coherent with our belief in the Lord Jesus, which based on our faith we are called upon to live deeply and coherently our commitment and the option for the weakest and poorest. In this sense, we cannot deny the strong influence that the document of CELAM¹ have had for us, of special importance in our Latin American context, such as those of Medellin on the preferential option for the poor (1968), and later the one from Puebla (1979), with its description, among other things, of the diverse faces in which we must recognise the suffering of Christ, the Lord, who questions and challenges us (Chap. II, No. 31-39).

Following the publication of Decree 4, there were various meetings at regional and universal levels, as well as various documents which provided feedback on the formulation of the decree and encouraged us to put it into practice. Among them I could mention GC 33 (1983), the Congregation of the Procurators which dealt with the issue of faith and justice (1990), the many annual meetings of the social sector of Latin America and the Caribbean which have met annually since 1991, the International Seminary César Jerez on "Neoliberalism and the Poor" (1993), the CG 34 (1995), the Naples International Congress (1997), the letter on "Neoliberalism in Latin America" by the CPAL provincials (1996), the letter on the social apostolate of Fr Kolvenbach (2000) and lastly, GC 35 (2008).

It would be a serious error in this case not to mention the significant influence liberation theology has had on us and some theologians in particular, including various Jesuits. It is very much a Latin American theology - very original with a particular approach - based on the experiences of our people, which possess two essential characteristics: poor are both believers and sufferers of injustice (Faith-Justice).

The practice of the Society of Jesus in Latin America and the Caribbean: wanting to put love in its works more than in its words

"Because the poor are being oppressed, because the needy are sighing, I will now arise... I will establish in safety those who yearn for it" (Psalms 12:5). Trying to briefly outline the progress and challenges in relation to Decree 4, without affirming that this decree sowed doubts in relation to its orthodoxy and also caused division between us in relation to the "orthopraxis", would not take into account what the decree meant to us Jesuits, our works and communities in Latin America. The option for faith and justice fundamentally polarised us in the 1970s and 80s. Today, although there are differences of focus or even ideology, our relations are based more on peaceful co-existence and dialogue, trying to put into practice actions that respond to this common mission.

From our perspective, God's plan rooted in the law and the prophets, which Christ will achieve, is no other than the reign over God's people with justice and the salvation of the poor

¹ Latin American Episcopal Conference.

(Psalm 72). The evangelisation should be the commitment to complete liberation; otherwise, our faith will hardly be credible in today's world. If the poor are the visible proof of a failure in the work of salvation (GC 35, D. 2, no. 9), we have to commit ourselves with our hearts and with all our strength, with dedication and commitment, in defence of those preferred by God and therefore in the transformation of the structures of injustice.

It is for this reason that the Jesuits and their works have tried – in many diverse ways –, struggling in Latin America against everything that threatens life in an attempt to integrate faith-life-justice. Listening to the cry of the poor, and interpreting the sign of the times, we have tried to be faithful to the call of the God of the poor in the Gospel.

We have established social centres working with campesinos and urban dwellers. Together we have developed a network and proposed alternatives to the current development model based on local structures. We have established popular education centres, such as Fe y Alegría throughout the continent, vocational training and capacity building centres for the marginalised and excluded, hostels and centres for children and women, and development and peace NGOs and networks to assist migrants, the displaced and refugees. We have “inserted” and “incarnated” ourselves among indigenous peoples and communities and in marginalised districts. We have roamed Amazonia listening to indigenous peoples. We have undertaken a wide range of research and analyses to understand the economic, environmental, political and social context, and systemised our own experiences. We have organised diverse events, workshops, seminars and courses in policy and context analyses. We have developed contacts with young people living in situations of marginalisation and poverty. We have committed ourselves to the defence of human rights. We have provided emergency assistance to populations affected by diverse natural and human-made disasters, such as that of Haiti. We have established community radio stations. We have deepened the social dimension of all our works. We have strengthened the level of social responsibility in all our universities and schools. We have written in blood the radicalism of our commitment to our martyrs. In the midst of our troubled experiences, we have undertaken theological reflections on what God asks of us, and also opened up to the God's solidarity from the side of the underdog; and we have certainly done many other things.

Despite all this, which is laudable and worthy of note, we face big challenges due to our limitations. We find it difficult to organise ourselves together. We recognise our potential with great difficulty and, therefore, our power to undertake advocacy on public policies and participate in major decisions affecting the poorest and most excluded is limited. We have lost inserted communities and our closeness or nearness to the poor and marginalised. We have become gentrified in our community life. We have lost the radicalism of our theological positions. We have become too settled in the defence of our traditional education works, frequently turning our back on the reality facing our people. We have lacked the spiritual vitality to reinvigorate and strengthen our faith. We have lost the capacity to be surprised and outraged in the face of the injustices of our world and we are hardly aware of the environmental problems facing our planet. We have many other weaknesses, but there is no space to list them all.

Each of us will make his own assessment; however, being one body for one mission, we have to be much more demanding about how we respond to the challenges facing us, in spite of the fall in our vitality and numbers. Nevertheless, we want to be faithful to this mission today, still relevant and nuanced, which continues encouraging and pushing us to accomplish our ideals as Jesuits and religious.

*Original Spanish
Translation James Stapleton*



Forty Years after Decree 4 - a view from Australia

Julie Edwards

Jesuit Social Services, Australia

I have walked 'alongside' the Jesuits in one way or another all my life.

I was born and baptized in a Jesuit parish; brought up by a father who loved the Jesuits who educated and nurtured him; am surrounded by male relatives also educated by the Jesuits; spent my twenties living in a lay Catholic community in another Jesuit parish and formed strong, enduring relationships with Jesuits and others in that network; have regularly done Ignatian retreats over the years; am married to someone who worked for years with the Jesuits; and then, thirteen years ago, went myself to work in a leadership role with Jesuit Social Services (an organization whose vision is 'building a just society'; whose mission is 'standing in solidarity with those in need and expressing a faith that promotes justice'). I feel 'Jesuit'.

I was struck by that again today as, in preparation for writing this piece, I reviewed some core Jesuit documents. I feel 'Jesuit'. What does that mean? Obviously I'm not a Jesuit; and as I read, I found myself skipping over references to community life and other fundamental aspects of being a Jesuit - that's not me. I'm a married woman; I have three children in their twenties.

But I didn't feel like I was reading about 'them'. I felt like I was reading about 'us'. Our spirituality, our mission, our way of proceeding, our priorities. I've been wondering why this is so.

In 1976, a year after Decree 4 was published (unbeknown to me), a couple of young people and I started a Christian community connected with a small household of Jesuits living in the same poor, disadvantaged suburb - while each house had its own idiosyncratic ways of living out the gospel and faith life, both houses were characterized by a lifestyle of extreme simplicity and radical hospitality. I didn't know about Decree 4 - but it was Decree 4 that we were giving expression to. I had just turned twenty-one. Although I didn't know it then, it was Decree 4 that was going to shape my life right until this point in time, and beyond.

My experience of the Jesuits over most of my life is that they have been very coy about openly and explicitly sharing their 'Jesuit gems' - in explaining Ignatian spirituality; in discussing core documents, for example, from the General Congregations and other significant 'inside' information. I'm not saying they haven't lived it, nor that they have not influenced me and others in their ways - in fact, in the main, the opposite is true. It's just that they have been reserved in articulating it - perhaps it's part of being appropriately sensitive and respectful. I do think that this reservation has been diminishing over recent years, perhaps in part to the

greater number of lay people who are part of the Jesuit enterprise, at least in Australia, and the mutual desire to be in true partnership. Nevertheless, when I took on my current leadership role at Jesuit Social Services I had to discover much of these Jesuit foundations for myself.

The reason I'm spelling out this background is that it underlines for me how integral Decree 4 is in the world of faith and action that I inhabit; I may not have known about Decree 4 until the past ten years or so, but it has long infused my understanding of faith and service. For me it's just the way things are, the way faith is, the way we do things.

In that sense, in reflecting on the impact of Decree 4 I acknowledge its deep and broad influence. So many people now 'intuitively' understand that the "promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" of the service of faith. How could it be otherwise?

But on further reflection I'm prompted to ask, how far have we actually come in living a "faith that does justice"? It seems we're better at linking the two - conceptually in our minds, and practically in our mission statements. But to what extent does this translate to our transforming our lives? To influencing who shares our table? Or to where we direct our resources or invest our money? To how we prioritize the endeavors of our people?

I recall the first Province gathering I attended about ten years ago (at that time there were many Jesuits with only a smattering of lay people) and we broke into small groups to discuss the Province's new strategic priority of 'deepening love for the poor'. I was struck by the conversation where a number of Jesuits in the group clearly named their "fear" about the Province "going down that path again" - they were concerned that the anger, divisiveness and hurt of a previous era (immediately post Decree 4) would be revisited. They also expressed, with great humility I felt, that they felt "ill prepared" for such a refocus. They variously described themselves as "academics", "middle class", "unskilled in that domain" (the 'social domain').

Over the years I have heard much about the "errors" and conflicts that marked the post Decree 4 era. I have heard about the rebalancing that has occurred. From a lay person's perspective this isn't dissimilar from what is referred to as the 'rebalancing' following the Vatican II reforms. From where I stand, this 'rebalancing' is no such thing.

Rather it strikes me as a watering down of the intent of Decree 4, a turning away from the call for transformation. I'm not promoting the divisiveness and judgmental attitude that characterized earlier decades of the past forty years - and I don't think that we would necessarily go to that space again anyhow, embedded as it was in the general countercultural context of that time.

Re-reading Decree 4 today, for me it stands true; lighting a clear path we need to tread, individually and collectively. The reality of an unjust world that it describes has only become worse in many ways. The disastrous impact of our greed and disregard for our natural world is devastatingly clear in a way that could hardly be imagined forty years ago. The hunger for spirituality that was understood at that time of apparent growing distancing from religion and faith, is now more evident than ever. There should be no turning away from Decree 4, rather a reorienting of ourselves in all humility to its call. The concerns of our era require it.

So while the words "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" roll more comfortably off our tongues these days, and while there continue to be excellent works within the social sector devoted to this endeavour, plus more take up of

this call across other ministries, we have a long way to go - and a number of the signs aren't positive.

My work gives me opportunity to spend time within the broader Jesuit network, both within and beyond Australia. I speak from this experience and my discussions with colleagues across the world. One thing I notice is an increasing interest by Jesuits, and others, in the spirituality ministry. That makes sense. But I also see a decreasing interest and capacity in the social ministry. I wonder why.

Well, it's hard. It pushes us beyond our comfort zones and we will squirm our way out of it if we can. But I think it's more than that. Somehow the call to a "faith that does justice" needs to be more focused and definitive within the Society - at a corporate level. There's too much wriggle room. This leads me to governance and leadership. Too often it seems that such an imperative is presented as a 'guiding principle' not an absolute requirement.

The "faith that does justice" is not just a dimension or an add on. It is a fundamental orientation and approach. So we (I'm saying 'we', I notice) need to recruit for this - ensuring that those who want to become Jesuits have a very clear understanding of and commitment to living a "faith that does justice" before they join. This is our mission, it's the type of faith that we live and practise, so if someone wants to join the team he (and it is 'he') needs to be clear about this. Then we should orient, form and nurture people in this - from day one; building capacity, stamina and commitment to this way of understanding and living faith. Immersion experiences and a simple lifestyle are critical, but more is required.

There is the need for relevant skill building - intellectual, emotional and spiritual; and we need kind and capable mentors to guide young Jesuits along this pathway. Part of the skill building required relates to working in partnership. Increasingly there are lay people working and leading in all aspects of the Jesuit enterprise, including the social apostolate. Such partnership, while in many cases born out of necessity, can be more accurately understood to reflect a fundamental aspect of who we are as collaborators in mission. But partnership is a two way thing, so much of what I've said above applies to lay people too. If you want to join the team you need to know what you're signing up to.

To return to the comparison with Vatican II, Decree 4 set out a big vision and undoubtedly it changed us. It needed to happen. It caused pain. We stepped away from it. We need to revisit it. Maybe we always will.

Original English



Decree 4 in Korea: Between compressed modernization and Jesuit university

Denis Kim, SJ

Gregorian University, Roma, Italy

In 2012-13, for their peace activism in collaboration with the diocese against the construction of a naval base in Jeju Island, Korea, three Jesuits have been put into prison. They were given suspended sentences of about a year of prison with two years of probation. These incidents illustrate that Jesuits have actively committed themselves to justice-related public issues. Given this situation, how do Korean Jesuits evaluate the implementation of Decree 4 for the 40 years history in the Korean Province? After being requested to write this issue by the editor, I chose to describe the Korean Jesuits' reflections rather than writing my own. I hope to make this opportunity a collective awareness of Decree 4 on the Province level. For this process, I sent a few questions to 20 Jesuits in diverse status and ministries across ages and sectors. Eight Jesuits, including two in formation, replied with rich and insightful reflections. They cover the young and the old, and have lived from 6 to 55 years in the Society. Though I try to deliver their voices, due to the limit of the space, I have to sacrifice the richness. I will first introduce their evaluations and reflections, together with contextualization.

Lights and Shadows

Responses commonly address the active social engagement of Jesuits in Korea. The engagement started from the insertion into and the advocacy for the urban poor by Rev. Il-woo Jung (John Daly), a missionary Jesuit and naturalized Korean, in the early 1970s. Several Jesuits respond that his life inspired them. Since the 1990s when younger Korean Jesuits, inspired by him, began their ministries after formation, they expanded social involvement into other areas, such as workers, marginalized youth, and recently into transnational migrants, anti-nuclear power, and peace in the Korean peninsula. Jesuits have been active and visible in public. In 2006 Korea Province was given responsibility for the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia - an ongoing challenge. In addition to the social activism, another part of implementation of the Decree 4 was a social center, Institute for Labor and Management, for research and education for workers in 1970s. It was a timely response to the social problems caused by rapid industrialization. The center contributed to the training of the labor leaders and was closed in the 1990s when it seemed to finish its contribution. However, another center, Jesuit Research Center for Advocacy and Solidarity, opened in 2010 to deepen and guide our engagement.

In spite of the positive evaluation of the past contribution, the general tone of the responses was not positive about the present and the future. The following voices convey the atmosphere of the current state:

“The social apostolate has lost its vitality. Especially, those in formation even have strong social awareness but have little desire to commit to social ministry”.

“Despite the commitment, social ministry seems to fail to motivate and inspire other Jesuits. It is seen as the work of individual Jesuits rather than that of collective efforts for justice”.

“Migration is considered as important. However, our work is not much different from the other church groups or NGOs. I wonder what element we contribute to this field”.

Accompanying their general evaluation of our implementation, several weaknesses were pointed out: lack of a vision which could energize diverse ministries, the decrease of insertion, the lack of communication and collaboration among apostolic sectors, etc. Usually, lights and shadows are two different sides of the same coin. We thus need to go into deeper analysis in order to understand the implementation of Decree 4 in Korea.

Historical and Social Context

The Jesuit mission in Korea officially began in 1955, particularly responding to the request of the Korean bishops to establish a Catholic university. As many other countries in Asia and Africa after the World War II, Catholics were a minority, and the demand for modernization was strong in Korea. The bishops saw the Catholic university as a means to contribute to this societal need and to evangelization. In response, the Jesuit mission was established mainly by Jesuits from the Wisconsin Province, the USA. It became an independent region in 1983 and then was made a Province in 2005. A successful mission history! This young mission territory has experienced the Vatican II (1962-65) and Decree 4 in 1975. Interestingly, this period coincided with that of the explosive growth of the Catholic Church and the compressed modernization of Korea. Thus, the Jesuits’ reception and implementation of the Decree 4 cannot be understood outside this ecclesial and social context.

Firstly, in the context of the Society, the Jesuit mission has evolved centred around the development of the Jesuit University, Sogang University. This has had double-edged effects: providing the Jesuit mission with stability on the one hand; but absorbing our best men and thereby limiting the development of other apostolic sectors on the other. Secondly, the Korean social context, characterized by compressed modernization and the division between North and South, has provided a fertile ground for the social apostolate. Rapid industrialization has transformed the Korean society to a (post-) modern society, forcing Koreans to face all kinds of social issues such as the increase of economic inequality, irregular workers, the fragmentation of family, suicide, etc. Thirdly, in the ecclesial context, the Korean Catholic Church has explosively grown for this period. It can be attributed to two inter-related aspects. One is the emergence of the middle class in cities; and the other, the Church contributed to democratization. As a consequence of compressed modernization, a middle class with high educational background has been formed. Interestingly, the Catholic converts have mainly come from the middle class, highly educated, and in the city. This group has been attracted to the Church. Stephen Cardinal Kim, Archbishop of Seoul from 1968 to 1998 made a great contribution in this regard. He earned wide respect across all sections of society by his firm, balanced wisdom for the democratization movement.

Therefore, Jesuits, although focusing on Sogang University, have been influenced by the social and ecclesial context. Under the leadership of Cardinal Kim, the advocacy for justice and human rights was widely promoted in the Church. Decree 4 was a Jesuit confirmation of this trend.

For the Future

The examination of these contexts provides a big picture of the reception and the implementation of the Decree 4 in Korea. Firstly, institutionally, the Jesuit apostolate and mission have centred on Sogang University, where the “joy and hope” of people were not their direct and major concern. The maintenance and development of Sogang University have been practically the principle concern, rather than the justice and common good in the rapidly changing Korea, that is the major concern of *Gaudium et Spes* in the Vatican II or Decree 4. In this regard, a respondent poignantly states:

“GC 32 gave a new integrative expression to our mission to “help souls”. In Korea, I think neither Superiors nor formed Jesuits were well prepared for this call. Sogang University was our priority, and most of our men, including superiors, worked at Sogang University. Promotion of justice was especially difficult at Sogang because of Korea’s national security situation and the government’s direct control of education...”

Then, the future depends partly on how to make Sogang University the kind of Jesuit University envisioned by the recent General Congregations and Father Generals.

Secondly, there is an issue of generational transmission. In spite of the fact that Jesuit mission as institution focused on Sogang, a few individual Jesuits seriously responded to the cry of the people. By this, they answered to the call of the Decree 4. They actively committed to justice, inspired the younger Koreans, and provoked many Jesuit vocations in the mid-1980s and 1990s. Eventually, this “second generation” has now led many social concerns in the Province. However, this commitment has mainly come from this particular “generation of democratization”, comparable to the “68 generation” in Europe. This generation, nevertheless, seems to fail to inspire the next one. The change of social context, for instance, post-democratization and post-modern Korea, may explain this tepidity among the younger ones.

A respondent, however, points out that the failure of transmission can be attributed to a different angle that is leadership. Many justice-oriented works have been initiated and sustained by individuals from the generation of democratization. Sometimes, unfortunately, they lack leadership skills. Therefore, “Obviously, they should be praised for their courage and self-sacrifice. However, it has a limitation to rely on individuals. <...> They have been weak to give leadership to others [younger ones or the lay]”.

Whether our failure is due to the change of context or weakness of the present generation, our challenge is how to hand over the spirit of Decree 4 to the younger generation. This leads to the final point.

Very importantly, the implementation of Decree 4 needs to go deeper beyond the justice-oriented actions. It should evoke “spirit” within us and others. A respondent reflected upon this characteristic as following:

I’d like to say with caution. Our recent commitment for justice does not seem to move others interiorly regardless of external achievement or outcome. It means that their interior influence is too small to change society or others. We look burned-out rather than in consolation.

He continues the significance of this interior influence by pointing to Pope Francis:

Why does Pope Francis inspire others? It is not because he is in the position of Pope. Rather, people are moved because they see his love, joy, and simplicity. <...> It is love, flowing from the personal relationship with Jesus, that move others. Unless our commitment is out of love, we may neither move others nor witness the Good News. Therefore, if we desire to commit to justice, as Fr. Arrupe solicited, our commitment is to come out of prayer and deep interiority.

In conclusion, Decree 4 calls Jesuits to attend and respond to “joy and hope” of people. In spite of my companions’ concern for the future, listening to their reflections consoles me. I come to see more vividly how strenuously they work for embodying this spirit.

Original English



40 years of Decree 4, GC 32

Luis Arancibia

Entreculturas, Madrid, España

When the Jesuit participants in the 32nd General Congregation concluded their deliberations, I still had not reached my eighth birthday. It would still be a few more years before I started participating in the Social Apostolate of the Society, at the beginning of the 21st century. My perspective of the application and internalization of GC 32, and in particular Decree 4 is limited to the last 15 years, after the two subsequent Congregations had given their first assessments, enhancements and confirmations of the decree. During this period I have come to know and participate in the life of the Society, and in particular in its Social Apostolate, from a broad geographical perspective, although focused in Spain, Europe and Latin America, and to a lesser extent in Africa, the United States and Asia Pacific. With these, together with my own personal limitations, I'm encouraged to share my emotions, thoughts and feelings to contemplate the reality and the mission of the Society understood as the service of faith and the promotion of justice. These lines do not seek, therefore, to be an analysis or diagnostic, but only an opportunity to share some reflections and deep feelings arising from close observation, full of affection and gratitude.

Decree 4 is reason for gratitude today and a source of consolation for the originality, inspiration and momentum it has brought to the lives of Jesuits, the Ignatian family and the Church in general. According to the common Spanish expression we could say that the "Decree 4 has aged well". Its audacity and novelty have driven a profound sense of renovation in the Society and its vision and direction have given a sense of dynamism to the apostolic life of the Society. With it, the Society would probably have less initiative today, be less prepared to face the enormous challenges posed by globalisation, post-modernity and the technological revolution. Neither would it be in the position nor willing to go to the frontiers of the world just as the Church today is asking. Without a doubt, the Society is smaller today and some of its strengths have been diminished and others have not been exploited to the full, but beyond the figures, the body of the Society (in particular of the Ignatian family) is, in my view, better able to complete the process of renewal and renovation initiated over the last few decades. Seeing the long-term effects, I believe that the Society, and with it all of those who feel united in the mission, must be thankful to God and to all those who have made possible the renovation and renewal we have experienced over these years, encouraged by that General Congregation and in particular by Decree 4.

It is known that the application of Decree 4 generated internal tensions and some division among Jesuits. Without having lived through this period, I feel that today the Society harmoniously and fully embraces the challenge of this decree and the reformulation of the mission it proposes. The promotion of justice, as an indissoluble dimension of the service of faith today is no longer a source of internal division and pain, but constitutes a horizon and

consciousness that fundamentally inspires and enriches the spiritual and apostolic life of the body of the Society. Certainly the Society, and even more the Ignatian family, is very plural, but I believe that, in the midst of this diversity, the promotion of justice as expression and source of faith today is a space of communion, encounter and unity. Undoubtedly this is linked to a double dynamic that in these years I believe has produced on one hand the appropriation of the dimension of justice by the body of the Society and on the other hand the deepening of the evangelical foundation, and more spiritual depth in the Social Apostolate. My personal experience is that the people and the works involved in the work for justice have developed a deeper sense of rootedness and relief in the Lord, more than the effort based on our own activities to generate social change; the awareness of seeing ourselves as collaborators in the mission has increased, more than as actors in the development of a concrete project; and the capacity to contemplate, and celebrate the discreet presence of God that accompanies, has deepened, more than in recognising the material and concrete transformations revealed by analysis. From my experience, the work for justice in the Society today is a motor of spiritual density and a source of encounter with God. If at the beginning the journey was about faith that translates into works of justice, today it also works the other way around, with a promotion of justice that is holy land and a privileged place for an encounter with the Lord.

Besides this greater integration of the faith-justice binomial in the Society, I have the impression that, without wishing so, it has been deepened at the cost of losing a certain radical evangelism in the work for justice. The greater harmony and unity, I believe it has come with a certain loss of some of the expressions, appearances and initiatives with greater edge, audacity and total liberty and availability in the service, accompaniment and defence of the poor. I believe that all those who form part of the apostolic body of the Society are called to be capable to take care of and nourish this common understanding, but at the same time, to find ways, promote spaces and encourage people capable of revealing extreme and unconditional love of God for justice, peace and creation, through a testimony of greater dedication that encourages and energises the rest of the body.

This loss, I believe, is probably connected to the fact that today the Society is further away, emotionally and physically, from the poor and excluded. I am not referring only to the number of Jesuits living in marginalised and inserted communities. This could be true, depending on the particular situation. The sensation I have is something less concrete but more significant. In general I feel that in the Society and its collaborators in the mission, I believe that we find it harder to develop close and deep friendships with the poor. In spite of the fact that I know many inserted, welcoming and dedicated Jesuits and lay collaborators who display a huge sense of solidarity, we do not find it easy to put the hopes and sorrows of those on the margins of our world into the centre of our being and our action, all of it without ideologies, nor ethical duties, but as a natural consequence of shared lives in close proximity.

It is maybe because of this that in many occasions I have heard the affirmation that there has been an increase in the justice dimension of works taken on by the Society, but at the same time, there has been a reduction in the strength of the social sector in many places. It is probably an overall assessment, but in addition to that I believe that it is worth underlining that the most novel, original and fruitful upcoming and coming initiatives are the inter- and trans-sectorial initiatives. Faced by the audacity of the integrated and unified formulation of faith and justice, proposed by Decree 4, sometimes our practices and structures contribute, inadvertently, to a fragmentation which limits us. Nevertheless, some significant experiences over the last 40 years (JRS, Fe y Alegría, assistance to migrants and indigenous people,) reveal the enormous potential of the joint efforts of all those people and initiatives of different sectors which enrich each other by bringing complementary knowledge and perspectives together. I am convinced that this enhanced inter-sectorial (and inter-provincial) cooperation today

constitutes a source of inspiration and innovation for action by the Ignatian family, in the spirit proposed by Decree 4 of GC 32.

I conclude with these reflections from Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, one of the living wounds of our world, and maybe for this reason it seems to me that the vigour and capacity to reflect the creative dynamism of God of Decree 4 are alive and well nearly 40 years later. Reading the text again from this perspective, I see two appeals that today we continue launching:

- Follow the light of audacity, bravery and capacity to change which Decree 4 represented in the life of the Society and the Church. Face the difficulties and challenges of today with confidence in salvation by the Lord clearly inferred by the text and with the capacity of innovation and renovation envisioned by GC 32. Living today, imbued by the spirit of the Lord, which is always the call to take the path and breathe the fresh air which was so present and visible in 1975.
- Live passionately in love with the God of life and for the **lives** of men and women, particularly those who live in the most difficult situations. Personally, this, I find, is most challenging and intriguing message of the decree at this moment. To grow personally in love for justice, peace and creation as, because and with the love that God has for us. Accompany each other in this journey and to live it together as companions in the Lord.

*Original Spanish
Translation James Stapleton*



“To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6.8

Peter Balleis, SJ

JRS International Director, Rome, Italy

In 1975 the Jesuit General Congregation 32 took place and defined in its Decree 4 the mission of Jesuits today as “*the service of faith, of which promotion of justice is an absolute requirement*” (no. 2). Six years later I joined the Society of Jesus in Germany with the explicit wish to work in the missions. Decree 4 on faith and justice played a major role in my life as young Jesuit. I am writing this reflection from my personal perspective on how my own understanding of the Society’s mission has evolved over the years and how it is still being shaped in my current work with refugees.

First Period following Decree 4

I would like to divide the 40 years since Decree 4 into two parts from 1975 till 1995 and the second part after till today. Decree 4 was written within the context of two competing models of society and two rival ideologies: capitalism and socialism. The Cold War had divided the world into two camps. Armed revolutions struggled to change unjust social structures and bring down exploitative regimes. In this context the Church along with its theologians and faithful struggled to address the grave injustices and give adequate answers to the social questions of their time. The social teaching of the Church, liberation theology in Latin America, and black theology in Africa were all responses to these burning questions. The Church’s approach embraced neither of the two dominant models of socialism or capitalism. The Church’s answer to structural injustice – as well as that of the Society of Jesus – focused on the preferential option for the poor. A number of social institutions created during this period focused much of their efforts on social research and publication in the arena of social justice. It needs to be noted that the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) was also founded during this period in 1980 by Fr. Pedro Arrupe as a practical response to the cry of the boat people of Vietnam and Cambodia. It has been said that the creation of JRS was very important to Fr. Arrupe precisely because he wanted the Society to be involved with the poor in very concrete and tangible ways.

With the fall of the Berlin wall and the peaceful revolutions of 1989 the socialist model of society lost much of its attractiveness. One after the other socialist countries turned away from the socialist ideology and model and moved towards the western model of a free market and capitalist society. The successes of capitalism led countries to embrace the unbridled capitalist free market model. The famous Washington approach of the time offered many countries socio-economic solutions that included economic structural adjustment programs, an opening up of the economies, liberalization of the financial market and a reduction of the role of the

state. The end of the Cold War brought a peace dividend only for a short time; very soon new wars emerged many of which were marked by internal civil conflicts based on deep cultural and religious identity differences. The delegates of General Congregation 34 addressed this new context and in its Decree 2 to add to the mission of faith and justice the important role of both cultural and interreligious dialogue. Liberation theology, supported by those who leaned strongly on the socialist model, suffered a crisis of relevance towards the end of this period. Equally significant was the diminishment of the interest in the social apostolate among young Jesuits. At the very same time JRS grew and expanded its services to Africa as response to the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Africa was to become the main focus of JRS in the years to come.

Second Period following Decree 4

My first years as a Jesuit, from my first days in Novitiate when I found many discussions of our lives as Jesuits too ideological, were shaped by Decree 4 of GC 32. As scholastic I went to Zimbabwe to work on a classic mission in the Zambezi valley. For me at that time of my life faith and justice meant the proclamation of the faith through running schools and a hospital in Chitsungo Mission. After ordination I wanted to prepare myself for the social apostolate with specialized studies in Brazil of the social doctrine of the Church and in liberation theology. These studies came at the time of the fall of the Berlin wall, the end of socialism and the declared victory of democratic capitalism. Back in Zimbabwe the Economic Structural Adjustment Program was being implemented with significant costs to the poor. Zimbabwe had also moved away from a socialist model to the free market model. I found myself fighting like a 'prophet' against these changes, criticizing the ideological base of the Washington consensus, struggling against unjust structures and taking the side of the poor. I cried out at times with a loud and angry voice. Once, however, while conversing with a wise elderly Jesuit, I received advice that I have never forgotten: "Justice, yes; but with love".

The refugee crisis in Africa - Mozambique, Angola and the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 - marked a turning point in my life, when I was asked after tertianship to assume the responsibility of JRS Regional Director in the newly established Southern African Region from 1995-2000. Following that assignment, I continued, as Director of the Jesuit Mission Office in Germany, to be connected as a fundraiser with JRS while also supporting many other social, developmental and educational services of the Society of Jesus for the poor. Towards the end of 2007 I was missioned to my present work as International Director of JRS. This new ministry has brought me great happiness in being able to help support JRS's concrete, tangible works of service to the poor. Fighting against ideologies, enormous unjust structures and systems can often lead us to become angry, bitter and negative. But fighting for services to poor people and refugees, providing concrete improvement to their difficult lives has been for me a more energizing, positive and rewarding approach. It is true that recent years have brought great disappointment in terms of the many great liberators who, in turn, have become themselves dictators and oppressors. Most significant for me was the experience of Zimbabwe. All hailed Mugabe in the early 80s as the great liberator. Now many people curse him as the eternal dictator who cannot die and let go. The refugee experience and the endless wars made me think differently about leaders who seem to fight for the just cause, but justify violence and only end up as the newest set of violent dictators. Justice without love has become so often new injustice.

"To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6.8) When I was ordained a priest in Zimbabwe, I chose these words from the prophet Micah as the focus of my priestly life. I liked it at first because of its stress on the word "justice". The years that followed, as well as my experience of working with refugees, however, have taught me an

even greater lesson – the importance of love, mercy and humility. While our work and struggle for justice is very important, it needs to be accompanied and balanced by a love for mercy and by deep humility. The fight for justice alone can give us the illusion, even the hubris of being able to achieve a better and just world on our own. We think we can achieve it all by ourselves. This is the road traveled by the socialist model and by a long train of revolutionaries who have resorted in the end to violence as a solution. But humility as expression of our faith in God is deeply needed and even more important. All is in his hands. Mercy is also crucial because often enough the many tragic situations of humanity, the unjust violence and wars, and the suffering of refugees and the perpetrators cannot be understood. Only in an act of faith in the merciful God can I truly understand how God embraces with his love and mercy the most senseless acts of violence and injustice. Compassion and mercy are the driving emotions in refugee work, not anger against the perpetrators.

Interestingly also in the papal declarations and encyclical writings of Pope John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now in those of Francis, the theological term ‘*miser cordia*’ has become ever more central. Pope Francis referred in the very first Angelus address after his election to a recent book of theologian Cardinal Walter Kasper on the subject of ‘*miser cordia*’. Repeatedly Francis has spoken of the merciful God who never gets tired of forgiving us. Pope Francis talks freely and more often than previous popes about the unjust structures and economic and financial system – wealth concentrated in the hands of the very few – which deprives the poor of the conditions necessary to live and work in dignity. The poor feel more than any of us the injustices of an unbridled victorious capitalism. More than ever before these injustices need to be addressed. The validity of Decree 4 of GC 32 is still strong and Pope Francis, steeped as Jesuit in its understanding, continues to reinforce its importance.

But justice cannot stand alone. Perhaps in the early days following GC 32 we often focused on justice taking faith for granted. Over the years I have come to understand that faith is built on mercy and humility. These two words balance the action for justice and give practical meaning to faith. In the light of my personal experience and spiritual journey with the prophet Micah, I read now Decree 4 as service of faith, mercy and humility – “*of which promotion of justice is an absolute requirement*”. In JRS we place our primary focus on compassion, accompaniment and concrete humble service. It is only out of this faith-filled, compassionate and humble service that our stress on advocating for the rights of refugees arises. Changing unjust laws; addressing discrimination against the “other” on local, regional and international levels; and promoting peace and reconciliation all flow from our faith that does justice. JRS was created by Fr. Arrupe in response to the call of Decree 4 and out of compassion for the refugees. In JRS we learn a crucial lesson – to walk humbly with the refugees (accompany), to love mercy and serve with compassion (serve) and to act justly (advocate).

Original English



Not tribune of the people but witness

Norbert Frejek, SJ

Angelus Silesius House, Warsaw, Poland

At the beginning I would like to refer to item 51 of the Decree in question. In my opinion, the following passage can be seen as the manifesto or motto of the whole Decree and a starting point for the examination of conscience: "The life we lead, the faith-understanding we have of it and the personal relationship to Christ which should be at the heart of all we do are not three separate realities to which correspond three separate apostolates. To promote justice, to proclaim the faith and to lead others to a personal encounter with Christ are three inseparable elements that make up the whole of our apostolates".

Coming back to Decree 4 of the GC 32, I consider it a milestone in the perception of our involvement in the world. I see it as a certain attempt to translate the Second Vatican Council's constitution *Gaudium et spes* into our "modo de proceder" – way of proceeding. I will try to look at the context of creation of that decree in short in the manner of Our Holy Father Ignatius. He suggested praying with the history of the Incarnation: at first, one should see the whole world and people of various races, religions and beliefs inhabiting the world; then, one should gradually look closer until one sees Mary in a house in Nazareth. When we look globally at the context of creating the Decree, we cannot forget the 1968 cultural revolution, numerous revolutions and wars plaguing the world of that time, as well as military and police regimes ruling many countries. Nevertheless, it was also the time of growing polarisation of the world between the rich North and the global, poor South. When we look at it more locally, at Central and Eastern Europe, we see that local communities were controlled by hostile regimes which completely forbade pastoral work or – like in my country – which allowed the Church to lead parishes only. Retreat houses, schools and universities led by orders were pipe dreams. For people of the Church, it was actually a time of one single activity – of bearing witness to the faithfulness to Christ and to the Church. On the one hand, the Polish Church was subject to harassment, on the other – to attempts to divide it by, for example, recruiting some priests to cooperation with secret services. For a number of our fellow brothers from my part of the world, half of the past 40 years were, above all, the time of bearing witness and of fighting for justice. For our numerous fellow brothers, this time of "intensified" witness-bearing is still not over.

I also think that the Decree provided space for "holy experimenting" (a number of years ago, in the Polish TV theatre I watched a performance entitled "Święty eksperyment" [The Holy Experiment] about Jesuit reductions in Paraguay). I think that the past 40 years were a time in which we as the Society gradually realised what faith and justice are. I consider the Decree in question a certain starting point for purifying the motivation to fulfil the Gospel in the modern world. Faith alone, without actions, is incomplete because the faith in Christ demands actions, it demands to be fulfilled here and now. On the other hand, sole actions without personal faith

in and bond with Jesus make one just another social worker. The synthesis of both those aspects shows, for example, what the priesthood of a Jesuit should be like: it should be Paul's priesthood, which means concern of human as a whole, of one becoming more and more like Jesus in every dimension of one's life. To my mind, Decree 4 – though indirectly – depicts that vision of service.

I also think that the Decree shows us – Jesuits – and our collaborators that we are called on to change the world in its various areas. According to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the Second Vatican Council focused “its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives; that world which is the theater of man's history, and the heir of his energies, his tragedies and his triumph” (item 2). The Council Fathers were also aware of the following: “Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a huge proportion of the world's citizens are still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before has man had so keen an understanding of freedom, yet at the same time new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance.” (item 4) In my view, Decree 4 integrated social matters related to people of that time with the commandment of love. As a result, social matters began to be perceived as Gospel matters. Decree 4 demands that we see the world and its challenges in the light of Epiphany. One can of course choose a different way and interpret various phenomena with the use of such sciences as sociology, social philosophy or psychology – and surely it is necessary and useful. Rejecting “liberal arts” would be a serious mistake. Nevertheless, the Decree invites us to see the world in the perspective of the Gospel. Let us use the contemplation on the Incarnation from the *Spiritual Exercises* here. If the Holy Trinity – upon seeing the world as it was – decided that the Second Person of God would become a man and would redeem humankind by coming to the world as it was, the answer of Jesus' companions should be similar: they should go to the world as it is and follow their Master. We go to particular people, not to people of our dreams or of our invention. We enter a particular social, political and cultural context – not a context which we would plan for ourselves.

In Decree 4, item 50 we can read: “If we have patience and the humility and the courage to walk with the poor, we will learn from what they have to teach us what we can do to help them. Without this arduous journey, our efforts for the poor will have an effect just the opposite from what we intend, we will only hinder them from getting a hearing from their real wants and from acquiring the means of taking charge of their own destiny, personal and collective. Through such humble service, we will have opportunity to help them find, at the heart of their problems and their struggles, Jesus Christ living and acting through the power of Spirit”. In this context, not only does the Decree mention those for whom we should irrevocably engage our efforts but it also obliges us to fulfil our engagement with patience and humility, to agree to accept “something from them”. It is a short definition of what service should look like and who a Jesuit should become. It reminds us of contemplations on the Birth of God: one should become a poor servant and serve the Holy Family. The first obstacle here is not, as it seems to me, scepticism about one or another of our Decrees but lack of faith; the second aspect is the feeling of defeat – it can seem even more painful when we see that in many areas the Church has been forced onto the defensive. Nevertheless, the Gospel defines the term “success” in a different way. Patience and humility have nothing to do with victory. Victory in the spirit of the Gospel is only possible if one – together with Christ – accompanies another person on his or her way, also when he or she is experiencing his or her cross. If we look at it in a human way, Christ was defeated. We – people educated in solid formation and

experienced in intellectual struggles – should not forget that the whole experience of Jesus Christ is inscribed within our lives.

Yes, from the perspective of 40 years we can say that Decree 4 was understood unwisely in certain parts of the world, maybe even as a weapon for political battles. I think that a number of our fellow brothers have noticed that work for justice requires humility. Today's politics is rarely guided by ethos or care of common interests. Instead, it consists in fighting for gaining the biggest possible benefits for oneself and for one's party. People to whom we go do not need tribunes but witnesses who will go further than making promises. This in turn requires acceptance of the fact that not everything in a given mission can be accomplished. Decree 4 may defend us too weakly against current politics and its values which are frequently distant from the ideal of the Gospel. Nevertheless, the world is changing so quickly that it is difficult to keep pace with it. On the other hand, Decree 4 pays a lot of attention to accompanying others in their poverty. It is a different look at men. Today, young people are taught, above all, how to have a career, be successful and manage stress. The number of therapist's offices shows that this model rather does not perform well... And once again, this time without religious inspirations: people would be healthier if they devoted a certain part of their lives to others.

I think that Decree 4 has proven itself. In the spirit of that Decree, each Jesuit should become a man of deep prayer and well-thought-out actions. The Decree can still inspire, especially our youngest fellow brothers, how to combine contemplation with actions. Apart from that, Decree 4 perceives the world broadly, hence it can be a good inspiration in part or as a whole. Nevertheless, it will be possible to understand the Decree in accordance with the view of the Church and the Society and to read it anew only if one fundamental condition is met: in one's life, one should follow Jesus, not Barabbas.

Original English



A boy goes to Church...

David Nazar, SJ

Superior of the Jesuits of Ukraine

In 1957 at the request of Latin American bishops, the conferences of bishops from Latin America, the United States, and Canada met to discuss the needs of Latin America. It was a time of growing compassion for the so-called "Third World". The meeting inspired North American priests and sisters to become missionaries in various Latin American countries.

As a boy growing up in Toronto, I remember the visits of these priests who would come to schools and parishes to speak of their work and the plight of the peoples they served. As children, we would collect pennies during Lent to be sent to aid their work.

This Third-World consciousness was not restricted to the church. In the post-war West where prosperity was increasing steadily, governments felt a call of conscience to respond as well, sometimes in collaboration with the church and sometimes through such organizations as Canada's aid organization CIDA and America's Peace Corps, which President Kennedy himself established in 1961. On becoming pope, Paul VI addressed the United Nations and challenged western governments to dedicate one percent of their annual budget to foreign aid, an appeal which was well received.

Initially, there was a romantic aspect to this missionary sensibility. Relentless progress in the West could be transferred to all countries, it seemed, and the world would be a better place. And then something happened. Priests returning from Latin America began to preach that an essential aspect of the poverty in Latin America had its origins in North American fruit companies, mining firms, and the aluminum industry. And they were now preaching with prophetic anger. This was in the 1960s, coinciding with the dramatic Vatican II declaration that the hopes and joys and sufferings and anguish of any segment of humanity were equally those of the church. Liberation movements, campus revolts, the Vietnam war demonstrations - all called for systemic changes in place of optimistic charity.

In 1973, I entered the Society of Jesus in English-speaking Canada. The Province was hotly dealing with a new social critique and the church's mission. GC32 presented one of the first, very courageous articulations of what was at stake. Could one truly be a Christian and ignore the structural injustice that profited some to the suffering and death of others. This was not an idle discussion since it affected the pedagogies of our schools and universities, the preaching in our parishes, and even the delivery of the spiritual exercises. The scriptures themselves say that a spirituality without a social dimension can hardly be called Christian, yet did this mean revolution? And if revolution, was this social, political, cultural, ecclesial, economic or all of the above?

The experience of the Society in Latin America provided a prism to see ourselves differently. The Society in Canada was, like the general society, made up of many immigrants: east Europeans, Italians, Maltese, with growing numbers of Africans and Asians, as well as the earlier French and British. To hear of liberation movements and revolutions was as exciting for some and as it was frightening for others, all with good reason. Liberation theology appeared as a new fire that gave both heat than light, always sparking passionate debate about who we were and what we were doing for Christ. One could disagree with it, but no one could ignore it.

The Canadian Province was quick to renew the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises and on the basis of some expertise the Spiritual Exercises Apostolate offered to sponsor a conciliatory meeting after GC32 on the issue of social justice. About thirty Jesuits gathered, among them the most influential in the Province. Despite the best efforts of the Spiritual Exercises team to establish a space for brothers in the Lord to speak honestly and in love, the meeting collapsed quickly into argument, judgement, and colourful language. I was a novice at the time and, although I felt myself closer to the social justice arguments, I could not bring myself to look upon the “other side” as unkind or unchristian. After everyone exhausted his colourful vocabulary, all went home unreconciled until another day.

The quality of formation experiments changed radically. Canadian novices were being sent to India to work with Mother Teresa for their long experiment. Virtually everyone worked in a L’Arche home. Some were sent to work with Canada’s indigenous people. Men in formation were being transformed by such experiences and the fruit was readily seen. One could debate the relative merit of liberation theology, but one could not criticize working with the Calcutta poor. Slowly, the social justice agenda was taking on flesh that softened the edges of ideological and theological debate in the Province. In time, as social apostolates were established and producing fruit, the arguments died down and a mutual esteem began to grow. Under the insistence of the Society’s documents, schools and parishes began to examine how they could incorporate the demand for social justice into their work.

In regency, I helped to develop programmes for high school students to visit urban Native people who were living in poverty, to visit prisoners to hear their personal and spiritual journey. One could see that the social justice emphasis had a pedagogical aspect that touched the heart. Young students saw the human being in the prisoner, in the alcoholic, and in the Native street person. While the broader debate in the Province might have been about whether to have schools or not, that sometimes strident debate was causing healthy change within those very schools.

After doctoral studies in inculturation, I went to work with aboriginal people. I now had to put together much learning, many debates, Jesuit formation, new documents about the social apostolate in order to effectively serve in this ministry among “the poor”. While I was prepared for every battle, the hearts of the people told where the battle really was. Canada is a wealthy nation and there is no shortage of money for its Native people. However, the people are poor, their villages might suffer an 80% alcoholism rate, and there are all the other statistics about suicides, physical and sexual abuse, youth pregnancies, AIDS, and general depression. And yet, there was no shortage of money. People were free to leave and live anywhere. Education opportunities at no cost were available. There was no corporate superstructure keeping these people down. The injustice was real, but it was cultural: the values of Native culture—harmony, reconciliation, equality, sharing, self-sacrifice, community—were not those of the dominant Canadian culture—individualism, efficiency, progress, autonomy, economic gain, self-realization independent of others. It is difficult simply to be Native in Canadian culture, despite Canada’s pluralism. When General Congregations progressively gave

nuances to the ministry of justice and began to use the word “dialogue”, this gave clarity to what we experienced in our ministry. The justice required was not political or economic. This justice required dialogue between cultures. The very use of the word “dialogue” underscored reconciliation and mutual understanding, and thus the creation of a more inclusive human community. It helped to draw out the human quality in the ministry of justice.

This period in Native ministry was crucial to me when I was named Provincial. In contrast to the dominant culture, I was keenly aware that decisions could not be taken without community. Each has a voice and we could not be sure we had heard the Lord until all concerned had spoken. Sincere dialogue opens us more deeply to the word of God that saves.

In 2002, I was assigned to work in Ukraine to help establish the Society where new vocations were appearing. In a post-Soviet environment, once again the social apostolate changes. After my arrival, Cardinal Husar, then head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, asked if the Jesuits could begin a social apostolate in the country, something outside of the boundaries of the parish. One can readily understand that a church having lived underground during the Soviet period had to re-discover itself now that society was open and free. The existing models of church, however, were dated and risked becoming irrelevant in a society now under rapid change and development. Cardinal Husar simply said, “You Jesuits know how to do this. We don’t.” His primary concern was to get the church into the lives of people, their hopes and joys, sufferings and anguish, and not wait for people to come to church. His passionate request coincided providentially with our own planning. I wanted to establish all the essential apostolates of our charism from the beginning, and not wait until one by one they were in place or give priority to one over another. When I proposed to him the possibility of refugee work, he was delighted for three reasons which he articulated immediately. First, there was a growing need for refugee work in Ukraine. Second, because it was not parish-based nor even based in Ukrainian people, it would provoke and inspire other religious orders to imagine their mission more broadly. And third, he noted that many people in government were people of conscience but were unable to live conscientiously due to high levels of corruption. Our work would be a collaboration with the government and lend support to those who wished to create a more just administration. On all three counts, he was right and our work proved fruitful thricefold. Certainly, this kind of thinking opened the Ukrainian church to its crucial role in the recent revolutionary “maidan”. And our previous history helped the Society to interpret the maidan in language appropriate to the Christian tradition and not purely in political or ideological terms.

In sum, my life in the Society coincides with the development of the rise of the social justice thematic. In my own experience as in the broader church, the Society articulated its own complex social justice experience, and in doing so it did this for other religious orders, and thus for the entire church. The Society has played a key role in taking this lived experience, which is often risky and conflictual, thinking it through, finding God in it, admitting mistakes, and articulating it all. And thus, the mission of social justice has gone from optional to essential, from moral to missiological, and, most importantly, from social teaching to soteriology. It seems that for Jesus himself, that is where it belongs (Luke 4:14-21).

Original English



Decree 4 shaping Jesuit life and lives

Frank Turner, SJ

Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC), Brussels, Belgium

In a strong and quite literal sense, Decree 4 of General Congregation 32 has been a “pivotal” document. It is the fruit of previous reflection that gathered a strong impetus and, perhaps more than any other Jesuit document of the twentieth century it has shaped the dynamic of our collective life ever since, as well as the manner in which those outside the Society (including those holding high office in the Church) perceive Jesuits and Jesuit mission. My own experience mirrors this collective experience. With hindsight, I see how Decree 4 confirmed my initial choice of Jesuit life, and how it has since shaped my Jesuit path.

As a boy I had considered a diocesan priestly vocation, going so far as to live between the ages of 11 and 18, in a “junior seminary”. In some ways that education was good and humane, in other ways narrow in a way that one can hardly imagine today. (For example I am almost illiterate in the physical sciences.) At the seminary we were scarcely helped to reflect on our vocation to priesthood, only to pursue it. However (and in retrospect, this was important to me) when I considered leaving the seminary, I was treated by the rector with notable respect: his courtesy at the time perhaps enabled me to remain open when, years later, I was ready to reconsider.

I left the seminary in June, too late to gain university entrance that autumn. I found work in banking, first in the UK then in Africa: and Africa changed my life.

The international division of Barclays Bank was then named Barclays Bank DCO. Evidently the bank evidently felt sufficiently uneasy to abbreviate – though not yet to change – the full title (“Dominion, Colonial and Overseas”). It is true that the bank seemed to me to embody an economic colonialism that long outlived Ghana’s political independence. After a single “tour of duty” in Ghana, of fifteen months, I resigned. I was moved by the life of Africa, but hardly by the ethos or interests of my employer.

I now knew only what alienated me, not what might draw me forward. But I had missed out on university: and to read English Language and Literature on a Monday morning was a vivid and agreeable contrast to banking. While at university I returned to a Church from which I had drifted away but which, post-Vatican II, no longer looked the same. (No one at my junior seminary, I think, would have made sense of the first poignant paragraph of *Gaudium et Spes*. We were shut off from the “griefs and anxieties” of the age, and from “the poor and afflicted” themselves.)

Now the Church began again to make sense to me. I approached the Jesuits from this small zone of clarity, conscious of a larger circle of obscure apprehension. I wanted a life with larger horizons than seemed to me, probably unfairly, that offered by the diocesan priesthood. I

wanted a way of addressing some of the injustices I had begun to distinguish living as an “expatriate” (that is, “migrant worker + privilege”) in Africa. But I did not know for what kind of work I might have some talent, so the range of Jesuit attracted me negatively, offering reassurance that some suitable niche might be found.

I joined the novitiate in September 1974, on the eve of GC 32. Our novicemaster, Michael Kyne, was a delegate to the Congregation, which was thus instantly real to us. I sensed Decree 4 but also Decree 2 (with the opening paragraph that has so touched people when echoed by Pope Francis at the beginning of his papacy) as a confirmation of my vocation.

After ordination in 1981, I joined the Centre for Faith and Justice in the deprived area of inner-city Liverpool. Since then the search for an authentic integration of faith, justice, and Ignatian spirituality has been the guiding thread of my Jesuit life, although in diverse specific roles and lifestyles. For a decade I lived in insertion communities; I did a doctorate (encouraged by the province’s “social sector” on the principle of “If not you, Frank, who?”) in the significance of a political philosopher for theology; I taught political theology in two universities. Since 1997, in response to external requests to the Province, I switched focus from local to global, since I have held two different posts in international affairs, though still under the rubric of faith and justice. In Brussels, the requirements of our mission to the European Union mean that our community resides in what is known as a “maison de maître”. This phrase sounds bourgeois, dubious in the light of Ignatius’s meditation on the Two Standards: weekend pastoral work among mainly migrant communities helps keep alive a perspective in part formed by those who live on the margins.

This history means, I think, that Decree 4 has been so central to my consciousness as a Jesuit that I see even my personal defects through the lens of the document.

Have we Jesuits sometimes allowed justice and faith to be disconnected? Our editor recalls to us contributors the Society’s subsequent self-critique, as in GC 33, Decree 1: “Our reading of Decree 4 of GC 32 has at times been incomplete, slanted and unbalanced. We have not always recognized that the social justice we are called to is part of that justice of the Gospel... [On the other hand] we have not learned to enter fully into a mission which is not simply one ministry among others... neither a disincarnate spiritualism nor a merely secular activism truly serves the integral Gospel message”.

I wouldn’t be surprised, since as a career justice advocate, I recognise these failings in myself. My engagement with the search for justice, however flawed, seems to me to derive from the authentic heart of faith, inspired by the practice of Jesus. Embodying this drive in both discourse and practice is far more complex and delicate. I suspect today that in Liverpool in the 1980s, I somehow equated criticising Mrs Thatcher with proclaiming the Gospel, even if from the pulpit such criticism was usually left implicit. Still, today, when discussing relevant issues in secular company I find it far easier to speak of justice than of faith: anything can trigger justice language, whereas my speaking explicitly of faith depend unduly either on guaranteed personal sympathy (from Christians talking to ‘the priest’) or on an explicit institutional framework.

In other words, the context I seem to need may be either religious or (paradoxically) explicitly secular. It might be the Eucharistic homily, or the formal lecture to Christian audiences (so that I reach non-Christians only through the mediation of my hearers, leaving the hard work to them). In Brussels, on the other hand, the context might well be one of the regular formal debates and dialogues – interreligious, or ‘inter-convictionnel’ (between religious believers and secular humanists) – established by the Treaty of Lisbon. In either case my dependency,

on personal approval or on explicit situational mandate, falls short of the spirit of the Acts of the Apostles.

However, in re-reading Decree 4, I notice that the balance we may have lacked, in our 'reading' or in our lives, is not lacking in the Decree itself. Of the abundant examples here are just a few:

No. 7: without faith, our work as Jesuits will be 'unavailing';

No. 18: the Gospel demands the freedom from egoism which can only be the gift of God's Spirit, as we are drawn into the friendship that permits "the priestly service of the faith";

No. 26: we need to "leave fallen idols behind us and rediscover the true God"

No. 38: the primacy of the companionship of Jesus, in line with "apostolic pedagogy of St. Ignatius that should characterise our every action";

No. 72-73: the reliance on the method of discernment which requires indifference, so that we may become contemplatives in action by way of "a conversion of heart as well as of spirit."

No. 2 & No. 27: the assertion of a deep bond between justice and reconciliation, which emerges from the heart of the mission of Christ, and which can deliver us from becoming the slave to merely political ideologies or a narrowly technical "social analysis". Even more than other elements, this link has been elaborated and restated in the decrees of subsequent Jesuit congregations.

When we observe the broader Church's struggle to discern and describe the true spirit of Vatican II, the disputes about a "hermeneutic of continuity" versus a "hermeneutic of rupture" (whereas, surely, broad areas of continuity and development coexist with a few crucial ruptures), we ought not to be surprised how difficult it is to reimagine and restructure Jesuit life in response to a distinctive inspiration. This is especially true in Europe as our provinces shrink and age, so that we are compelled to clarify mission in the process of supporting Jesuits in their diverse talents, whilst consistently closing apostolic works. But Jesuit reflection since Decree 4, recognising not the errors of the document, but our own struggles to be faithful to it itself inhabits the hermeneutic of continuity.

The energy of Decree 4 continues to transform major Jesuit institutions. I will spend the academic year 2014-15 at the University of San Francisco. Its webpages include under the rubric 'Why choose USF?' the promise of a "[Passion for Justice](#)". Its outgoing President, Stephen Privett SJ, gave [a long interview](#) articulating and justifying the university's sense of values. The excitement of external media at the vision of Pope Francis, reveals the persuasive power of this spiritual movement for justice: yet we all know what happens to those swiftly exalted by the media. If there continue to be swings between consolation and desolation, praise and violent criticism, Jesuits ought not to be surprised by that.

Original English



Walking with the poor: forty years after Decree four¹

Rudolf C. Heredia, SJ
St Xavier, Bombay, India

Review and Reorientation

The four decades since the promulgation of Decree Four have not been without controversies and ambiguities. Reflecting on where we have come and how we got here, we need to address the dilemmas that still confront us to discern where we are called to go. The tension in these dilemmas and controversies must not be resolved by eliminating or compromising either or both contraries involved, but lived in a creative synthesis. In this regard I attempt to sketch three issues in the context of the South Asian Assistency: universality and preference, institution and charism, option and action.

Universal Openness and Preferential Option

The universality of the Gospel and its option for the poor presents a difficult dilemma that still confronts us with practical difficulties in our apostolates. On the one hand, the Gospel is good news for all, on the other, it is preferentially weighted to the lowliest and the least. Jesus is good news for the poor because he brings them the justice of the kingdom in its most comprehensive meaning: healing, forgiveness, wholeness. He is good news for the rich because he calls them to be free of their riches.

The early controversies were precipitated precisely by an exclusivist either/or understanding of Decree Four: in serving the rich we end up abandoning the poor; to promote justice for the poor we must withdraw from the rich. And yet, there is only one Gospel to be preached to all, only one kingdom to which all are invited. This only sharpens the dilemma of ministering the Gospel in two opposite directions. It is not unlike the tension of serving two irreconcilable masters. And all too often it is the richer and stronger one that prevails. Too often universal openness leaves out the poor, by choice and/or by default.

Moreover, institutionalisation, further accentuates the dilemma between a universally open and a preferentially weighted Gospel, especially when these institutions are rich and powerful. The dilemma is not solved by balanced compromise: making the Gospel available passively to all, but ministering it actively to the preferentially chosen. For when passive

¹ This essay draws on an earlier more extensive one, "Option for the poor and promotion of Justice", *Ignis Studies*, Vol. 2 No.8. (Oct-Dec 1984), pp. 53-62.

availability to one group is juxtaposed to active ministry to another, it amounts to an exclusion of the first.

We realise Decree Four calls us to reverse this, to hold together the poles of this dilemma in creative tension. For this the universality of the Gospel is the necessary condition for a preferential option for the poor, which in turn is the authenticating sign of the Good News for all. We are learning that in practice, the openness of any Gospel ministry is critiqued by reference to its relationship to the poor, and the preferential option for the poor is no longer defined in negative terms as an option against the rich.

Discerning Options and Committed Action

A preferential option for the poor must be expressed in action for the promotion of a just society. There is a genuine deepening of our understanding of this over these last four decades. The earliest understanding of the option for the poor was service and charity for the have-nots, practically expressed in relief work, usually alms-giving to relieve the harsh lot of the poor. A later understanding was human development for the underprivileged, expressed by raising living standards for a better quality of life for the deprived. Today we understand the promotion of justice as liberation for the oppressed, especially their human rights in their broadest sense.

These levels of understandings do not negate but rather complete each other. So too different levels of action must complement not neutralize each other. We now are more aware that action at one level must open to, and not exclude action at another, or the justice promoted will be truncated. Charity for the have-nots must not hinder progress for human development or obstruct liberation for the oppressed, just as development must not deny charitable service or liberating justice, nor justice for the oppressed deny charity or negate development.

A differentiated and specialised society demands an inclusive vision to reconcile the dichotomy between option and action for the poor. Hence while all our ministries may not be directly with the poor, all must at least indirectly impact them positively. Further, while a ministry directly with the poor may not be open to immediately reconciliation for all, it must never exclude this.

Thus the preferential option for the poor is exercised when the basic thrust of the apostolate is towards the poor and its fundamental openness reaches out in reconciliation to all. If it is not possible for a particular personal or institutional ministry to do this, it must be integrated into a more comprehensive one that does. Thus all apostolates that are not directly for the poor are justified by their integration into one which is directly for them.

We have also learnt that an engagement several levels away from the grassroots is often needed for structural change on the ground. We must interrogate the terms of discourse in an unjust society to promote a just one. What authenticates our promotion of justice and our solidarity with the poor, is the degree to which our action for justice facilitates a fulfilment of a deeper more comprehensive one, whatever our apostolate may be. Thus it is only as an integrated part of a larger whole that such 'indirect' apostolates are justified, the individual in the community, the community in the province.

Correspondingly, if an apostolate precipitates confrontation and conflict it can only be justified as part of a larger effort that eventually is intended to bring an inclusive reconciliation and peace. The challenge is to reach across multiple divides that mark the fault-lines of violence in our societies: caste and ethnic, religious and regional, racial and national... For the

justice of the kingdom must include reconciliation and forgiveness, a faith that reaches out to other faiths in inter-religious dialogue, a mission that expresses itself in solidarity with the cultures of the people it serves.

For ultimately it is the kingdom of God that we work for: a kingdom of faith and justice, freedom and harmony, of peace and joy, with all men and women of goodwill. Thus the service of faith and the promotion of justice thus extends into a ministry of reconciliation and beyond: no harmonious peace without justice, no sustainable justice without reconciliation, no credible reconciliation with forgiveness. Surely, such forgiveness is a Christian ministry and should be a Jesuit priority in our divided and violent world.

Prophetic Institution and Institutionalised Charism

Over these forty years the dynamism and creativity of the original inspiration of Decree Four has been institutionalised. We need to understand and discern the risk and possibilities thus opened for our apostolates. If a charism is to be preserved over a period of time and spread across geographic space and not left to get dissipated or corrupted, it must be institutionalized. This is a necessary routinisation of charisma, which in turn, inevitably constrains and compromises the dynamism of the original charismatic inspiration.

All religious institutions experience this tension between institutional need and prophetic charism. Once the meaning and practice of the Gospel message is institutionalised in a community, this option for the poor becomes ever more problematic. If this dilemma is to be creatively resolved, then the institution must be at the service of the charism, and vice versa, the charism must continually renew the institution. However, the administration of our institutions is in the order of means, living out our charism is in the order of ends. In a religious institution this is the tension between the priestly and the prophetic, in the Society it is between the spirit and the rule.

The Jesuit magis call us not just as individuals but as a corporate body to be prophetic witnesses in our mission and work. If our mission of the service of faith and the promotion of faith is to be expressed in all our institutions and apostolates, then our institutions must not just create a platform and a space for individual charismatic witness, they themselves must become prophetic. This is particularly pertinent to a more recent ministry like social action. As it is increasingly institutionalised it risks losing the cutting edged inspirational witness it earlier had.

Given our huge institutional commitments and our complex confusing world, a prophetic witness is most effective when it is cooperative and corporate. This is difficult and demanding, but over the long haul such prophetic institutions will break new ground and beat new paths for others to follow. As replicable exemplars they can have a multiplier effect, and thus a much larger and effective impact. For this, given our limited resources in facing the enormous challenges confronting, we need to strategically position both our institutions and ourselves in them.

Creative Fidelity

Our 32nd General Congregation refocused our vision and mission in a post-Vatican II Church, calling us to a creative fidelity: firmly rooted in our charism, faithfully reading the signs of the times, and courageously anticipating the future in our ministries. After four decades Decree Four still challenge us with the magis:

"If we have the humility and the courage to walk with the poor, we will learn from what they have to teach us what we can do to help them. ...to help themselves: to take charge of their personal and collective destiny...to help them find at the heart of their problems and struggles, Jesus Christ living and acting through the power of the Spirit." (GC 32, D. 4, no. 50)

Then will our lives "provoke the questions, 'who are you, that you do these things ... and that you do them in this way.'" (GC 32, D. 2, no. 10)

Original English



Reception and implementation by Madurai Province of the Decree 4, forty years after its publication

Michael Jeyaraj, SJ

Director of the Institute of Development Education, Action and Studies, Madurai (India)

What would be your overall assessment?

Thanks to the determined efforts of a few individual Jesuits and a few Provincials, the atmosphere in the ancient Madurai province underwent a radical and positive change ten years after GC 32.

When I took over as Provincial (1981), it was an uphill journey to make the province men realize and own the Decree 4 of GC 32.

'People's Action and Liberation Movement in East Ramnad' (PALMERA) started by my predecessors began to take deep roots in the 80s and had meaningful impact in the minds, hearts, attitudes and behavior of the province Jesuits. The younger men, in particular, were highly enthused with the new apostolic thrust and found a meaning in living the thrust of GC 32 in **all** the apostolates. S.J. meant for them 'Social Justice'.

After the year 2000, we have lost the momentum and we have to start all over again 'with renewed vigour'.

Overall Assessment

The impact of GC 32 had far reaching consequences, mostly positive. GC 32, Decree 04 brought a new world vision, new spiritual force, new missionary perspective and ultimately new life to the Society of Jesus. It gave us a new hope, new challenges and new demands pushing us to work for the oppressed and marginalised and to fight for their rights. It gave us a clear and a decisive direction towards contextualization. "Option for the poor", "option for the Dalits" became new phrases in our meetings, and gatherings.

At the same time GC 32 also created some fissures in the minds and hearts of Jesuits. Many times it created unnecessary tension and dilemma, division and dissent in and among the members of the province. Union of minds and hearts became more and more difficult to realize.

To summarise, GC 32 Decree 04 became the central point both of forward thinking in the Society as well as the bone of contention.

What have been the most important progresses?

1. GC 32 Decree 04 became the new prism through which everything else (mission, formation, spirituality, way of proceeding, etc.) shaped up and became the fabric of Jesuit life and mission. GC 32 taught us new language, vocabulary; helped us generate new epistemology based on social and cultural experience and expression of the people with whom we started associating.
2. It is the Justice option that opened our eyes to the injustice perpetrated on Dalits in the Indian society and the Church. While we played an important role in the wider society, we almost brought about a revolution within the church! I consider this as the most important progress that we were able to make because of the justice option.
3. Social apostolate was gaining importance and was at least treated on par with educational apostolate. The province administration was consciously encouraging and allotting people for social apostolate. This led to a lot of frictions and confrontations with dominant class, groups and governments including the Church authorities. But the leadership vastly stood by the side of "our men". This stand of the Society inspired again the young Jesuits.
4. It is the justice option that made Spiritual Exercises come alive for us making us realize how discernment matters in a world of ambiguity. Its impact in our thinking (especially theological), and or praxis which determined our apostolic priorities, life style and our relationships was considerable. It freed us from the disincarnate pre-Vatican spiritualism and it made us face the stark reality of the world in which we live.
5. The new vision developed and deepened our involvement with the oppressed groups to fight for justice through creating awareness, building up peoples movements. It was also instrumental in evolving theologies to be contextualised like Dalit theology, Tribal theology, Feminine Theology and the theologies of the oppressed. Thus it enabled us to "theologise" in a radically new way.
6. In Jesuit Formation
 - Relevant courses were included and pattern modified –Introduction of liberation theology (in the Indian Context)
 - Exposure through experiments in different stages of formation
 - Regency in the social action centres (now stopped)
 - Liturgy made more meaningful
 - Creation of Writings & Hymns reflecting justice.
 - Paradigm shift in the perspective (from 'Charity' to 'justice')
 - More inclusive ministries (Concrete option for the poor, Dalits Catholic Dalits.) were included.
7. Governance and Leadership in the Province. I have always felt proud about Madurai province. It has understood the meaning of pioneering spirit and frontier ministries in its totality. That is why Madurai province was able to lead, guide and even challenge other provinces on some grounds. Let us pray for such leaders today.

...and the biggest limitations/obstacles?

We began the new millennium (2000 AD) with a lot of noise with declarations and decisions in province gatherings and ministry commission meetings. The document "Walking with the poor" gave a temporary impetus to the sagging spirit of the faith-justice mantra. I remember

to have read a paper on the “Millenium Thrust of Jesuit Ministry” in the Seminar held in the year 2000 before a gathering of 200 Jesuits from Madurai Province.

At present, the “option for the poor” is not even heard as a slogan. Faith-justice thrust has disappeared and the digital and globalized world with all its mesmerising attractions has engulfed our thoughts and life style. The clarifications and directives on faith-justice dimension of our mission of the successive General Congregations have not been helpful either.

Jesuit formation is one key area that has suffered and as a result, is limping. The recommendations suggested by the “Formation Commission” (of which I was a member) and accepted by the whole Assintancy are gathering dust. Formation in mission, once vibrant and exciting, does not find any takers any more. As a result, there has been a clear departure from anything that will remind us of our formation that prepared men for the mission of propagation of faith and promotion of justice. In the last 14 years, Madurai province formation sector seems to have lost its direction and dimension.

Social Apostolate is another sector which has been looked at with suspicion and negative connotation. As a result, this ministry which once gave shape and style to the functioning and relationship among the Jesuits, became ground for disunity and distance.

Some other limitations and obstacle include:

1. Invasion of the spirit of consumerism, and a thinking deeply influenced by globalization,
2. Institutional security and prestige that prevent younger members to think of a more challenging and relevant ministry
3. Our stake in our institutions which will not allow us to come into conflict with the powers that be.
4. Alas, now we have even descended to a stage to say boldly that our option which was a historical response of the Province has become optional.
5. Solidarity with the poor and Dalits stops with giving admission and appointments. We are dangerously moving away from the poor and the victims of society, as if they do not matter.

What would be the major challenges for the future?

1. To bring back the province to its cohesiveness around the faith-justice option. We need to achieve a healthy transcendence from one’s caste, clan and personal ambitions
2. Our institutions are strengths and challenges –in terms of resources they are strengths and they are challenges for social Justice because they are largely again used by dominant classes/groups. The institutions create a constant struggle for power among the Jesuits and lay collaborators which lead to forget our target people – whoever may be!
3. The relationship between the Christian Dalit leaders and the Jesuit society was cordial, friendly and we struggled together to bring about the liberation of the oppressed people within the Church and the wider society. Unfortunately, this relationship has hit rock bottom. Immediate action should be taken to restore positive and constructive relationship between the two sides.

4. A sense of “Mission” should be inculcated again in all stages of formation, all age groups within the Society and the monolithic structure of the Society should be changed into a more democratic one, and we should be prepared to learn from Pope Francis.

5. The Jesuit Madurai Province has a membership of 511 (2014) and covers an entire state of Tamil Nadu. The northern part has been named as Chennai Mission and has been functioning as a part of the province for the past decade. For a long time, the urgent need has been felt by the members in this region and some others in the Province that this “mission” could be elevated to the status of an Independent Region with its own Major Superior. This would facilitate the effectiveness of the mission and of the entire administration. This creation of the new Region would certainly further the goal of our faith-justice option.

6. Above all, we should find ways to develop a sincere and deep love for the poor, as is manifest in the attitudes, gestures and words of Pope Francis.

Original English



Social action in South Asia: Individually admirable, collectively desirable

Xavier Jeyaraj, SJ

Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, Rome, Italy

My reflection on the “Decree 4 of GC 32 after 40 years” is based on my personal experience of 13 or more years of work among the poor in Kolkata, and later over four years as the Secretary of Social Apostolate for South Asian Conference, and now as assistant to the Secretary at SJES, Rome since 2012. All these years of involvement with the abject poor in remote villages, meeting with academicians, activists, researchers and scholars at national and international forums, have been an experience of ongoing training and transformation. While, on the one hand, I have grown in my experiential knowledge, I have also lived with varied emotions of consolation, joy, pain and doubt. All these feelings of joys and doubts have consistently challenged and invited me to greater and deeper commitment as a Jesuit, both at the personal and collective levels. My sharing has components of feedback received from some of the Indian Jesuit companions involved in the social apostolate, India¹.

Positive outcomes of Decree 4 in South Asia

Decree 4 with its clear option for the poor came at a time when India was facing a serious economic crisis. At the time the Maoist movement known as Naxalism had revolutionized the Indian youth. Such a radical political climate did have its sway among the younger Jesuits. The idea of ‘justice as an integral part of the Jesuit vocation’ came as a moral boost to them. At the same time it also created polarization among the Jesuits involved in the social sector and educational/institutional ministries. Walter Fernandes, a veteran Jesuit social researcher, says, “there was also a feeling that Jesuits in the social field had a ‘better than thou’ attitude and that their ‘structural analysis’ was destructive of traditional Jesuit work.” Despite such disunion and tensions, GC 32 provided the first inspiration required to combine the Jesuit vocation with social commitment. GC 33 and other later documents asserted the preferential option for the poor and appreciated the role of institutions while insisting on the integration of justice in every other apostolate.

The outcome of Decree 4 in South Asia has been extremely positive and encouraging:

Firstly, it helped many Jesuits and Provinces to commit themselves to direct grass-root involvement with and among the dalits, tribals and unorganized sectors. Some of their significant involvement includes non-formal education, conscientization programmes, legal

¹ Jebamalai Raja (MDU); Walter Fernandes (KHM); Stan Lourduwamy (JAM); Anthony Dias (BOM) and Joseph Xavier (MDU).

aid and leadership training, organizing dalits, tribals, and women and mobilizing them to demand their rights, fighting against environmental degradation and human rights violations. In the past, some Jesuits have even moved from the security of a structured community living to pitch their tent among the poor. Such direct grass-root involvements helped positively for the growth and outlook of the Church, as a Church “of” and “for” the poor. Vocations to religious life increased not only for the Society of Jesus but for the entire Church in India.

Secondly, influenced by the recommendations of GC 32, many urban educational institutions in India changed their approach and attitudes to the poor. The language of instruction became the regional vernacular, and their admission policies clearly favoured the oppressed dalits and tribals. Many Provinces consciously opened new schools and colleges in remote villages to reach out to these marginalized communities. Such a clear shift in the preferential option for the poor resulted in the poor benefiting in many ways with better education, more awareness on their rights and health issues, better living conditions and job opportunities.

Thirdly, our formation became more integral and down to earth, forging greater immersion in the real world of the poor and marginalized. Our theologizing and philosophizing were more in the direction of empowering the poor, and the teaching extended from classrooms to the streets, integrating “formation in mission”. Acknowledging the contribution of Jesuits involved in social action, the South Asian Provincials, in a document titled *Walking with the poor* in the year 2000, stated, “The radical commitment manifested by many Jesuits through social involvement, even unto death, has had its impact on our life and ministries in South Asia”. They further said, “Our life-style, food habits, travel and recreation have become less ostentatious. Our formation and ministries have been re-structured. The Formation Review Commission Report (1992) furthered an incarnational spirituality related to experiencing God at work in the lives and struggles of our people.”

Fourthly, the works of Jesuits in the last 40 years, particularly among the dalits and tribals, have created strong value-based leadership among them. The training programmes, formation programmes, research studies and publications by the Jesuits, with a clear focus on ‘option for the poor’ in general, influenced not only the Church and other religious congregations but also many secular-minded social organizations and people’s movements. Amidst the innumerable challenges of communal, casteist and market-oriented forces today, and constrained by the minority status of Christianity in India, Jesuits in the social apostolate have continued to work creatively towards “empowering the poor,” forging alliances and networks with them. Many leaders of these formidable dalit, tribal and fisher-folk movements in the country today openly acknowledge and give credit to their Jesuit mentors who have given not only a value-based training but have influenced them by their lives.

Limitations and Obstacles

Having enumerated some of the positive impacts of our social involvement let me also express a few critical observations for improvement, more as an insider.

First of all, there are a sizeable number of Jesuits in social action who feel that the successive GCs have “diluted” the radical, uncompromising stand of GC 32 on the “option for the poor”. There are others who think otherwise. They say that the call of Decree 4 has been further “sharpened” to include other dimensions that were not visible or nonexistent 40 years ago. Without going into the controversy of who is right and who is wrong, let us acknowledge the fact that there are fewer Jesuits available today and that they are less prepared for social involvement than formerly. In addition, there are other internal and external factors

contributing to weaken the social apostolate. Though the alarm was raised already in 2000 by Fr. Kolvenbach who invited the Jesuits to re-examine and reorganize from within, this aspect has not become a serious issue. The need of the hour is to reinvent our social responses in keeping with the needs of the globalized world today.

Secondly, the South Asian conference has about 300 Jesuits, full-time or part-time, directly engaged in around 110 or more social centres – *more as project implementation centres* – among the priority communities. As Asians, particularly as Indians, we are easily moved by the sufferings of the poor that helps us respond quickly and generously. There is, however, a need to let our minds engage in critical thinking, even while we feel emotionally in solidarity with them. Our many social centres have not become centres of innovative research and publication though there are individual Jesuits who possess such gifts. Rudolf C. Heredia²says, “the fallout for those who took seriously the call to a preferential option for the poor but misread Dec. 4, was a devaluation of the intellectual apostolate.” Many of us social activists - *I include myself here* - believed that direct activism was the most important way of incarnating oneself among the poor. Hence, many Jesuit social activists dismissed any form of intellectual engagement as part of the social apostolate. Direct involvement was valued over informed involvement that required serious intellectual effort and critical action. Such non-reflective, uninformed activism got many of us into sloganeering, repetitive imitation of works without critical analysis. Consequently, our mission lacked the strength that comes from interpreting the rapidly changing socio-political and economic reality of the world.

Thirdly, our Jesuit institutions of higher learning, given the antagonism of the 1970s, remained cut off and “sealed their hearts” to understand and learn from the experiences of misery, the poverty of the millions. As Rudi points out in his article, a Jesuit in the social apostolate as well in institutes of higher learning “must be an intellectual and an activist, a thinker and a doer, with discerning ideas and ideals, as also committed to values and norms.” The challenge of Decree 4 for our Jesuit institution is not merely to achieve administrative efficiency or academic excellence but to speak truth to power, and bear witness to justice against oppression, just as our companions in *Universidad Centroamericana* did in El Salvador. Our solidarity with the poor dalits and tribals cannot stop at giving admission or appointments to a few from these oppressed communities, but as Ignacio Ellacuría said, “as a social force an institution of higher learning should enlighten and transform that reality in which it lives and for which it should live.”

Fourthly, in a globalized world today, our responses too must become global without neglecting direct involvement at the local level. With GC 32 and the subsequent GCs, we have redefined our understanding of faith in relation to social justice and have partnered with many lay people’s movements and organizations, secular NGOs and people of every faith. It has sharpened our faith as well as our identity as South Asian Jesuits working among the dalits and tribals. Probably what we really lack is sustained reflection on our lived experiences of social reality, sharing our analysis with the world, evolving a spirituality that is unique to Asia. We also need to advocate more concretely at the global level.

Challenges and opportunities

The biggest challenge for us in South Asia is not merely to *think collectively* but also to *work collectively* at the level of the Conference. We have had at least two major Conference level

²Rudolf C. Heredia (Rudi), “Jesuit Intellectual Apostolate: Passionate mind, Compassionate heart”, *Jivan: News and Views of Jesuits in India*, September 2013.

assemblies, one in 2001 in Mumbai and the other in 2010 in Jamshedpur, to discern our common concerns with a desire to work collectively as a conference. The thrust areas identified during this discernment were Displacement and Migration; Environmental Concerns, and Fundamentalism. What has happened thereafter? Where did we fail in our follow up actions? The difficulty has been to work collectively on collectively made decisions. This has been one of the biggest problems in our conference. Can the leadership alone be blamed for it? I don't think so. The responsibility lies on many of us as well. That is why I say that individually we are admirable, but collectively there is a lot to be desired.

We need to ask a few serious questions as we commemorate the 40 years of Decree 4:

- Do our centres/institutions in the Provinces and in the South Asian conference, exist from an expressed need of our priority communities or from an unexpressed need of individual Jesuits?
- Can I, as a reflective Jesuit activist, get out of my own comfort zones and place myself psychically, spiritually and, as far as possible even physically, as part of the people - dalits, tribals, women and unorganized sectors - and collectively advocate the cause of the poor for whom I have vowed a preferential option in the Society of Jesus?
- Am I willing to sacrifice my personal, Province needs for the good of the conference and universal Society at large?

I believe the greatest strength of our social apostolate in South Asia lies in its direct grassroots' involvement, organizational ability and our movement-based approaches. Many of us have been part of innumerable advocacy actions at the local and national levels. We share in the common concerns of our people to defend the rights of the oppressed and marginalized. At the same time, as Jesuits we have a larger body of wisdom and immense intellectual, institutional, spiritual and experience-based knowledge and power. After 40 years, if Decree 4 of GC 32 has to make new beginnings in the present context of a world without borders, where the decisions are made at international levels, we cannot but work collectively to build alliances and networks at local, national, and international levels.

Original English



GC 31 to GC 35: The promotion of justice shaping the service of faith

Peter Bisson, SJ

English Canada Provincial, Toronto

After Vatican II, the progressive incorporation of justice into the Society's service of faith has changed the form of the faith that justice has been incorporated into. As our engagement with the world developed from General Congregation 31 to GC 35, especially through the justice commitment, our own faith or religious consciousness grew into a new form that the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur would probably call a "second naïveté".

In the first naïveté, religious faith did not need to be aware of itself. It simply was part of life. Then came modern science, and modern movements for social justice and emancipation, both of which developed in ways that often did not rely on religious forms of thought. Secularization distinguished sharply between religious forms of living and thinking and the new forms, and in many instances also marginalized religious faith into private and inner life. Religious faith often reacted by becoming self-conscious and defensive or apologetic. Then, responding to Vatican II, the Society's new engagement with the world, expressed in the promotion of justice, gradually gave the service of faith –our own religious consciousness-- a new self-possession, a post-secular second naïveté.

The journey to second naïveté began with GC 31 in 1965 and 1966. Implementing Vatican II's spirit of renewal, GC 31 brought a new, more systematically intellectual approach to mission. Since mission is one of the main ways that Jesuits talk about faith with each other, GC 31 also brought a systematically intellectual approach to Jesuit faith. Unlike previous General Congregations, GC 31 was not very concerned with practical norms for particular ministries, but instead was much more interested in a comprehensive, global notion of mission, with which all the ministries and the life of the Society could be thought in one concept. This comprehensive notion of mission was fleshed out by means of the abstract ideas of global priorities, values, criteria, orientations and guidelines for the better choice of ministries that were to apply to the whole of Jesuit mission and therefore to all our ministries around the world. For example, out of this form of thinking Fr. General Pedro Arrupe developed his four apostolic priorities for the whole Society: theological reflection, education, social action, and social communications. This way of thinking about mission, and of managing it, in a comprehensive and abstract way was new.

GC 31's ways of thinking about mission opened the way for GC 32, in 1974-1975, to say that the Society needed a "priority of priorities". This in turn developed into the "service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" (GC 32, Decree 4, n.2). This formula transformed the promotion of justice from one apostolate among others –the social

apostolate- to a dimension of the whole of Jesuit mission and therefore of every ministry and aspect of Jesuit life. Furthermore, this formula for mission brought social justice, which in a secular Western context belonged to the public and secular world, into the private and inner world of faith. This made the promotion of justice into a religious thing and faith into a public thing. The boundary between public secular space and private inner religious space had been breached, allowing a new flow between the two areas.

This flow had tensions, which had become clear by the time GC 33 met in 1983. GC 32 did not really know how to integrate justice into faith, but knew it had to be done. GC 33 did not know how to do it either. Nevertheless, despite the temptations to calm the tensions by separating faith and justice again, GC 33 kept them together in one single decree, *Companions of Jesus Sent into Today's World*.

In 1995, GC 34 expanded the meaning of the justice of the Kingdom to include social, cultural and religious (interreligious) dimensions. It also did something novel in its attempt to integrate justice into faith: it turned to the Society's inner experience of mission. Each of GC 34's four mission decrees, *Servants of Christ's Mission*, *Our Mission and Justice*, *Our Mission and Culture*, *Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue*, had a section on how the Society had experienced Christ acting in the world, and been transformed by Him, through the promotion of justice in the service of faith. GC 31, 32 and 33 explained mission in terms of the relations between faith and justice. GC 34 continued this with the more complex explanation of Kingdom justice, but added how this was experienced by the Society as a transformative experience of Jesus Christ on mission in the world. With the language of religious experience the Society was no longer gazing outward at the world, but at the same time was also looking within to the qualities of its own experience of mission, and doing so in a self-critical way. In GC 34 the Society was paying attention not only to *what* we were experiencing through engaging in mission but also to *how* we were experiencing it. Here the Society became critically aware of itself as an acting subject and of the qualities of our agency in our relationships with Christ on mission. Our reflection on mission, and therefore on our faith, continued to have an analytical and explanatory dimension, but also became an exercise in religious self-awareness, as in the Examen or the review of prayer.

GC 35 in 2008 further developed the theme of awareness of our own religious experience of mission in two ways. Its Decree 2, *A Fire that Kindles Other Fires: Rediscovering Our Charism*, was full of experiential and poetic language, and was not really meant to be read discursively but instead to be prayed. Secondly, GC 35's chief summary of our mission was not expressed in abstract language relating concepts to each other but rather in relational language. Decree 3, *Challenges to Our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers* formulated our mission as promoting "right relations with God, with one another, and with creation". With these two developments GC 35 took another step in the Society appropriating its identity as an agent of mission and subject of religious experience as it acts on mission with and in Christ.

What are the elements of "second naïveté" religious consciousness as suggested by recent General Congregations? The object of our mission concern has expanded to include human society then to include all of creation and all the objects of Christ's saving love. As the General Congregations have invited us to expand our engagement outward, they have at the same time also invited us to deepen our engagement inward. Thus the social, cultural, interreligious and natural (ecological) aspects of promoting the justice of the Kingdom are also aspects of how we relate to or experience Christ on mission in the world. When we notice this, then promotion of justice is more obviously a religious experience. Becoming aware of how our faith and religious consciousness are transformed by being on mission is part of our service of faith, the goal of our mission. Engagement with the world gives our religious consciousness

a prophetic aspect. Engagement with our inner world gives it a wisdom aspect. Where secular cultures have made it difficult for faith to speak to faith, wisdom of this form, with its prophetic action, allows faith to speak to intelligence and good will. Thus, the evolution of justice in recent General Congregations has also led to a new religious consciousness, and service of faith, that can be self-critical, self-possessed yet humble, prophetic and wise.

Original English



Into the public square. Forty years of the Faith-Justice mission

Alfred Kammer, SJ

Jesuit Social Research Institute, New Orleans, USA

In the fifty years since I entered the New Orleans Province, I have seen significant development in the U.S. Society's appropriation of the faith-that-does-justice mission of GC32. Except for six years as provincial (2002 to 2008), my work has been in the social apostolate – as an attorney providing civil legal services to the poor in Atlanta, directing a diocesan Catholic Charities agency in Baton Rouge, provincial assistant for social ministries, health and welfare policy advisor for the U.S. bishops' conference, president of Catholic Charities USA, and now director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University New Orleans, focusing on racism, poverty, and migration in the Gulf South.

When I entered in the 1960s, our province social apostolate was represented in three ways. First, a few Jesuits worked in the tradition of the "labor priests" – Fr. Louis J. Twomey, SJ, of the Institute of Labor Relations at Loyola University, Fr. Albert S. Foley, SJ, of the Kennedy Institute at Spring Hill College, and Fr. Harold Rahm, SJ, working at Our Lady's Youth Center in El Paso. (Fr. Twomey assisted Fr. Arrupe in his 1967 letter *On the Interracial Apostolate*.) Second, parishes served the Hispanic poor in El Paso, San Antonio, and Miami. Third, as did other provinces, we responded to the 1960s call from Pope Paul VI to commit men to Latin America, sending them to Brazil.

In 1965, Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* called us to share the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the poor and afflicted. As the civil rights era developed, the War on Poverty expanded, and the Vietnam War worsened, Jesuits became involved in inner-city parishes, civil rights and anti-war demonstrations, and outreach to the poor. In our province in 1969, they formed the Southern Committee on Social Action (SCOSA), calling on the province to structure a broader commitment to the social apostolate. Our first Province Congress of 1969-70 recommended a Province Coordinator of the Social Apostolate, a Social Apostolate Commission, "direct action social apostolate" guidelines, ways all institutions might address social justice, and the formation of all Jesuits for the social apostolate.

In the 1970s, the Synod of Bishops declared that "action for justice [is] a constitutive element of the preaching of the Gospel..." Fr. Arrupe recommended educating "men for others"; and GC32 followed with "action for justice is the acid test of the preaching of the Gospel." In the U.S., intentional small communities formed in poor and minority neighborhoods. The first Nativity School began for poor middle-school boys in Manhattan, priming a widespread new movement. The Center of Concern was founded by Jesuits to provide social analysis and justice education resources. Scholastics and priests engaged in community organizing – founding, for example, the national network of the Pacific Institute of Community Organizing

(PICO) and, locally, such groups as Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio. The Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), founded in 1956 in Alaska, expanded across the nation in the 1970s.

In 1980, Fr. Arrupe founded the Jesuit Refugee Service. As the decade developed, most U.S. provinces began new parish-based social ministries, such as Holy Name Church in Camden, Immaculate Conception Parish in Baton Rouge, and Dolores Mission in Los Angeles. In 1980, the New Orleans Province Assembly called for every Jesuit to spend “some time each week with the economically poor” to embody an option for the poor. This mandate, not universally observed, inspired men to celebrate the Eucharist in local jails and volunteer in hospitals for the poor. During the same period, the mission of the Christian Life Communities (CLC) incorporated the faith-justice dimension.

Most transformative for many Jesuits and colleagues was the 1989 killing of six Jesuits in El Salvador. No longer was social justice considered the work of a few mavericks, but now Jesuit university professors had died for what they taught and preached. Memorial trees were planted on the campus of Loyola University New Orleans and graduating seniors at Spring Hill College wore colored armbands in solidarity. The killings drew students from higher and secondary education institutions to the annual School of the Americas protest in Georgia, into the “Jesuit tent” to share stories of work for peace and justice, and eventually into the national Ignatian Solidarity Network.

In the early 1990s, Pope Saint John Paul II issued his New Year message *Peace with God, Peace with All Creation* giving the highest sanction to environmental activism. Earlier, Jesuits from Wheeling Jesuit University worked with Appalachian bishops on their pastoral *This Land is Home to Me: A Pastoral Letter on Poverty and Powerlessness in Appalachia* (1975), developed through dialogues at 14-15 public hearings and two public drafts. Subsequently, Maryland Province launched the Jesuit Appalachian Project with Frs. Joseph Hacala, Joseph Peschel, and Robert Currie. Fr. Albert Fritsch had founded Appalachian Science in the Public Interest in 1977, leading it for many years. Appalachia was just one example of Jesuits continuing work with local bishops’ conferences. Jesuits also staffed the U.S. bishops’ conference, including: the consultative work done by Frs. John Donahue, David Hollenbach, and Joseph Daoust on the 1986 pastoral on *Economic Justice for All*; the 1990s roles of Fr. Rick Ryscavage leading Migration and Refugee Services, Drew Christiansen directing the Office of International Justice and Peace, and Joseph Hacala at the helm of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development; and, still later, the work of Fr. Allan Deck, directing the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity.

Fr. Hacala earlier presided over the National Office of Jesuit Social Ministries of the Jesuit Conference which staffed the National Board of Jesuit Social Ministries. The board sponsored the 1991 *Faith Doing Justice Conference* at the University of Detroit-Mercy. The conference had seven co-sponsors: the Jesuit Conference and six faith-and-justice networks: Jesuits in Native North American Ministries (JINNAM), the Jesuit Hispanic Ministry Conference (JHMC), Jesuits in Black Ministries, the JVC, the Jesuit social centers, and the Conference of Jesuit Prison Personnel (CJPP). Fr. Kolvenbach addressed the conference participants.

In 1995, the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC) began for those 50-years older, combining service to the poor with spiritual direction. The first Cristo Rey Jesuit High School opened in 1996 in Chicago, combining college prep education and workplace experience for low-income boys and girls; two dozen more have followed. In 1998, Fr. Bill Creed began the Ignatian Spirituality Project, offering spirituality and retreats to the homeless and those in recovery.

In the new millennium, the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA) published *What Makes a Jesuit School Jesuit* [2000] declaring that “teaching and acting justly” is one of ten criteria for Jesuit schools. Later, in the *JSEA Profile of the Graduate at Graduation*, “committed to doing justice” was one of five characteristics for an effectively formed student. In 2000, 400 delegates from 28 Jesuit colleges and universities attending the conference on Justice in Jesuit Higher Education heard Fr. Kolvenbach challenge them to make faith-justice transform all aspects of their institutions. In 2012, the U.S. Jesuit Provincials and the presidents of the U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities published *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and University* stating that each institution must “insert itself in the world on the side of the poor, the marginalized, and those seeking justice.”

From this partial review, strengths of the Jesuit and colleague responses are clear: institutionalization of justice at the provincial office levels, including responsible investor activism; repeated affirmations urging greater commitments on the part of all Jesuits and ministries; acceptance of formation for justice for Jesuits themselves and for our students; widespread student immersion experiences; the service and justice commitments of Jesuit Volunteers, Ignatian Volunteers, and Ignatian Solidarity Network; university social justice institutes doing the social analysis and theological reflection mandated by successive Congregations; and the multiplication of Nativity and Cristo Rey schools.

On the downside, despite good commitment to the immersion moment in the pastoral circle for students, many institutions find it difficult to implement consistent social analysis and theological reflection leading to further action for justice. Many Jesuits seem not to know how the faith-justice mandate can be integrated into their preaching, teaching, ministries of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and other works. Others simply resist the mandate, as in one of our province high schools where a student wanting to begin a social justice club was told that the term was “too controversial” and to choose another title. Fr. Kolvenbach already noted the decline in small communities of Jesuits living among the marginalized. Our communities live more simply than fifty years ago, but, after formation, still largely in the pattern of upper-middle class families who can afford servants. Some social centers have closed, and others no longer involve Jesuit staff. Currently, perhaps reflecting simply the decline in Jesuit numbers, only lay colleagues serve as provincial assistants for social ministries.

While one may lament some weaknesses in our grassroots faith-justice engagements, the landscape of Jesuit ministries has changed in many and varied ways as we have struggled to understand and bring to life the service of faith and the promotion of justice in the U.S. context.

Original English



A living Decree with an abiding relevance

John Sealey

Social Coordinator, Wisconsin, US

"All truth passes through three stages. First it is ridiculed. Second it is violently opposed. Third it is accepted as being self-evident." Arthur Schopenhauer

As a middle-school youngster forty years ago, I had yet to meet my first Jesuit. So to get some historical perspective I consulted several men who initially received Decree 4 (D.4) and have been responding since 1975 as well as some younger Jesuits and colleagues whose ministries and motivations are strongly informed by the document.

Preliminary comments

The "*new challenges to our apostolic mission*" which prompted D.4 seem to have only deepened since 1975. The wealth gap between the rich and poor both within and between countries has measurably grown. A January 2014 [Oxfam briefing](#) found that the richest 85 people in the world are now worth more than the poorest 3.5 billion and even the World Economic Forum ranked extreme income inequality as one of the greatest worldwide risks to stability. Meanwhile, the incessant advertising messages to consume/conform have multiplied through technology and globalization.

Other *challenges* now confront us that were unknown or unnamed at the time of D.4. While pollution was surely real, climate change had yet to enter our vocabulary. The situation of indigenous people, migrants and refugees were not explicitly mentioned and D.4 pre-dates the establishment of JRS by 5 years. Human trafficking, arms/drug cartels, transnational corporations and investment banks had not reached their full power.

While the charge to confront injustice is probably D.4's best-known legacy, the document similarly challenges the issue of unbelief. "What is at stake here is the fruitfulness of all our apostolic endeavors, and notably of any coherent attempt to combat atheism. The injustice that racks our world in so many forms is, in fact, a denial of God in practice, for it denies the dignity of the human person, the image of God, the brother or sister of Christ." (no. 29)

Since 1975, European and Canadian secularization is well-known, but now even in traditionally religious USA, 1/3 of Millennials (Generation Y) reject organized religion, viewing it as intolerant and expressive of only far-right views (Putnam, 2012).

Not surprisingly the lived humility and renewed emphasis on social inequities expressed by Pope Francis has resonated with young people and provided an opening for many to reconsider the place of religion. In this way, the work for justice is not only a personal

requirement of faith but also provides an evangelical witness which can invite some to reconsider the place of the transcendent.

Areas of progress

Choices of Ministries

The re-direction of new ministries to be at the service of the poor has been a measurable response to D.4. The Global south provinces are to be commended for their apostolic efforts among the most oppressed and impoverished groups. Elsewhere, the rapid growth of the Cristo Rey and Nativity school networks have been inspired by the decree to bring Jesuit education to urban, immigrant, and underserved communities. Universities are responding to the calls of Frs. Kolvenbach (Santa Clara, 1991) and Nicolas (Mexico City, 2011) to re-imagine justice in higher education and to go beyond service to understand institutions themselves as social forces. The Ignatian Spirituality Project has adapted retreats for homeless women and men to know themselves as loved by God. New initiatives such as Ignatian Solidarity Network empower students and stakeholders to advocate with decision makers. Restorative justice programs heal relationships broken by violence. Contact with the poor has been incorporated into all stages of formation. In these ways, “the promotion of justice is not one apostolic area among others, the ‘social apostolate;’ rather, it should be the concern of our whole life and a dimension of all our apostolic endeavors.” (n. 47)

Renewing ties that bind us as a global community

We are better understanding ourselves as an international company. Province to province agreements now stress mutuality, reciprocity and cooperation. International networks such as GIAN, Jesuit Commons, Xavier Network, and Jesuit Migration Network encourage our united presence at the frontiers.

Newer regions and provinces provide local guidance and their international partners better understand their role as limited and cooperative. More importantly, many Jesuits and colleagues have been enriched by directly experiencing the lived solidarity by Jesuits in provinces other than our own. Such international contacts and friendships have also increased trust and transparency and encouraged new exchange in areas such as formation, advocacy, and communications. We are less parochial and provincial, hopefully becoming more frontier-oriented (Adolfo Nicolas, 2009-04). In the social sector, issues such as migration have provided opportunities to work more cooperatively across borders and establish creative new projects such as the Kino Border Initiative.

Healing of factions

Some people recalled that ideological fortresses which sprang up after D.4. While the document was embraced by many, others did not see themselves or their work in the document. Defensive encampments staked their ground: Social activists vs. cultural traditionalists; new ministries to the poor vs. established ministries to the non-poor; reformers vs. status quo; and even misunderstandings between sectors boxed us into compartments.

Congregational documents which followed D.4 sought clarifications to heal these rifts. With time and dialogue, we slowly learned that our mission is stronger united rather than divided. Similarly, many of these so-called divisions were created by cultural wedges outside to the Society. We better understand that our mission is best expressed in principles not

partisanship. In words of Frank Turner, S.J. we strive to be both critical and constructive in our push for social change. (*A Model of Ignatian Advocacy*, 2008).

Areas for continued growth

Living more simply...

During a recent meeting of Social Assistants in Tijuana, we had the opportunity to meet several Mexican novices on their 3-month apostolic experiment. Their placement was simply to work anonymously in a maquiladora (low wage factory) on the Mexican/US border and subsist on those wages. This was an entirely different orientation for being among the poor, not as service provider or observer but that of co-laborer, albeit having the knowledge that the maquiladora time was of short duration.

The prevailing consumer culture is now so pervasive and insidious, it literally hems us in like a sandstorm or blizzard. To oppose it is an act of resistance. We become accustomed to comforts and constant connectivity and often rationalize that more efficient gadgets free us to do *more* of our important work. We may sometimes feel we have earned certain comforts which is the very narrative of the consumer culture. Gratitude is so foundational to our spirituality but simplicity so elusive. "The personal backgrounds of most of us... often insulate us from poverty, and even from the simple life and its day-to-day concerns. We have access to skills and power which most people do not have. It will therefore be necessary for a larger number of us to share more closely the lot of families who are of modest means, who make up the majority of every country, and who are often poor and oppressed. Relying on the unity we enjoy with one another in the Society and our opportunity to share in one another's experience, we must all acquire deeper sensitivity from those Jesuits who have chosen lives of closer approximation to the problems and aspirations of the deprived. Then we will learn to make our own their concerns as well as their preoccupations and their hopes. Only in this way will our solidarity with the poor gradually become a reality." (n. 49)

Has Decree 4 language become so mainstreamed that it has lost its edge?

While the charism faith-justice still encounters violent opposition from social and political forces outside the Society, within the Society, D.4 is now generally accepted as self-evident. Thematic justice banners and artwork is prominently displayed in our auditoriums and hallways but do these run the danger of becoming jargon? In short, has the "service of faith and promotion of justice" lost the punch it delivered in 1975?

Fr. Kolvenbach's linguistic insights might help on this point. In a published conversation with conference social coordinators, he noted a preference for D.4's Spanish translation which speaks of "luchar" (struggle/battle) rather than "promotion" of justice. For him, *luchar* better captures the spirit of D.4. Many global south Jesuits describe their justice work this way. In addition, I have heard South Asian Jesuits use the collective *we* when describing the communities they accompany and their mission is not just a struggle it is sometimes described as a *fight*. It would be much rarer for provinces in the global north to describe their mission in such didactic language. *Justice "promotion"* (as opposed to *struggle*) is more passive, perhaps more like a marketing campaign than a mission to resist injustice.

Some noted that we are often more comfortable using "service" paradigms. While this provides some short term relief (for both parties?) might it also perpetuate dependency

dynamics and limit our capacity to see the areas of our own lives which are un-free. This may be a growing edge for us to re-learn in D.4.

Frontiers in Faith-Justice

At its 40th birthday, D.4 continues to restlessly challenge us to find the Lord ready to meet us through those who are poor and by stretching ourselves to more closely participate in their liberation. I'll close by sharing some hopes which I heard as we look forward:

- *Maintaining an Ignatian approach to evaluation of ministries rather than an outcomes (or Darwinian) approach.* One Jesuit shared that we are not called to be successful but rather to be faithful to our mission. When we are with people who experience failure it may feel at times that our best attempts do not “bear fruit” that some other successful ministries can show but this should be seen as a true sign of accompaniment.
- *Working with others on the meta-issues.* We shouldn't always need to lead and in fact it can be good to let others be out in front. One Jesuit rector shared a wonderful community discussion question: “What is that last presentation you went to that you were not the speaker?” Some noted the work done by religious women and the many difficult ministries which they have pursued which are areas we have only recently begun to discern.
- *Making room for prophets:* A frequent nostalgic sentiment is sometimes expressed that the Society doesn't have the “characters” it once had... those legendary personalities and pioneers. Perhaps the same might be said of prophets. Prophetic zeal can at times seem uncompromising, righteous, and personality-driven rather than institutionally-sustainable. However heroic prophetic role models can also form us and we are attracted to their authenticity and boldness which affects us. Prophets incarnate our most important values into human situations, such as we will remember later this year as we mark the 25th anniversary of the Salvadoran martyrs. How can we positively encourage those among us who may be called to prophetic boldness? Perhaps some of them are already living among us.

Original English

Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat

Borgo Santo Spirito, 4

00193 Roma

+39 06689 77380 (fax)

sjes@sjcuria.org