

Yearbook of the society of Jesus

2016



Jesuits







On Sunday, January 4, 2015, Pope Francis visited his brothers of the General Curia of Rome. On this occasion Fr. Bellucci gave the Pope a copy of the Yearbook 2015. Pope Francis then signed a copy, as can be seen in the photo.

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Cover

A girl from Sri Lanka in a refugee camp in Tamil Nadu (India) with a JRS bag and the image of Fr. Arrupe.

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Introduction

Giuseppe Bellucci S.J.

Dear Friends and Brothers in Christ,

In 1980, a refugee crisis seized world headlines. Vietnamese were fleeing their country in anything that could float, and images of the “boat people” were imprinted into many peoples’ hearts. Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, then-Superior General of the Society of Jesus, was one such person. He motivated Jesuits around the world to respond to the crisis. In a letter dated 14th November 1980, he wrote: “This situation constitutes a challenge to the Society we cannot ignore if we are to remain faithful to St. Ignatius’ criteria for our apostolic work and to the recent calls of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations”. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) was born. The organization’s motto - to accompany, serve and advocate - distinguishes JRS from other refugee-service agencies and is the foundation for its response to other refugee crises throughout the world.

Very significant is the declaration made by the directors of the JRS at Chiang Mai (Thailand) in 1985: “While always ready to help refugees in their material and spiritual wants, and also in designing projects leading to a fuller and more independent life, we try to place special emphasis on being with rather than doing for. We want our presence among refugees to be one of sharing with them, of accompaniment, of walking together along the same path”, they wrote.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the JRS, Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás reiterated its necessity and importance, emphasizing in particular the value of hospitality. “Hospitality is that deeply human and Christian value that recognises the claim that someone has, not because he or she is a member of my family or my community or my race or my faith, but simply because he or she is a human being who deserves welcome and respect. It is the virtue of the good Samaritan, who saw in the man by the roadside, not a member of another race, but a brother in need... JRS, in serving refugees, is Gospel hospitality in action” (14th November 2010).

Since Fr. Arrupe first called the attention of the Society of Jesus to the plight of refugees and the phenomenon of forced migrations, both these problems have increased dramatically and spread to other parts of the planet. Yesterday the fragile sailboats in the China Sea attracted the attention of the world; today it is the inflatable boats or the fragile rafts which cross the Mediterranean and often end their lives at the bottom of the sea with their human cargo. Add to this the massacres brought about by extremist groups which in turn provoke new waves of refugees.

This year’s Yearbook has wanted to dedicate a very large part to the world of the refugees, of the displaced and of all those who have been forced to abandon their country because of war, famine, or persecution. The JRS naturally plays a very large part in the assistance to these persons who have lost everything, sometimes also their human dignity. Today the JRS works in more than fifty countries.

But along with the JRS there are still other entities and organisms, still under theegis of the Jesuits, which address the same problems. Several of these are also highlighted in the Yearbook, for example the Network of Jesuits for Migrants which has become an interprovincial and intersectorial organization found in 18 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. And also the Service of the Jesuits for Migrants of Spain which is of notable relevance for its attention to immigrants and for its reflection on migration and society.

The service of the Society to refugees and the displaced has therefore travelled a long road in the last 35 years and we can say with Fr. Nicolás that “we desire to be of help, but in the end we are realizing that those we have served have taught us much more, transforming us profoundly.”

The rest of the Yearbook is a look at the world of the Jesuits and of their work in the various continents. After a glance at some anniversaries a series of activities are examined in the fields of spirituality, education, and social action. These are only examples but they show how diversified the apostolic activity of the Society of Jesus is, in the attempt to reach everyone, to bring to all the Good News of the Gospel and to offer a sign of hope, especially to the poorest and most forgotten

Translated by Robert E. Hurd, S.J.

The Society of Jesus and the world of refugees and displaced people

“Ever since Fr Arrupe called the attention of the Society to the plight of refugees, the phenomenon of forced migration for different reasons has increased dramatically. These massive movements of people create great suffering among millions. Therefore, this Congregation reaffirms that attending to the needs of migrants, including refugees, internally displaced, and trafficked people, continue to be an apostolic preference of the Society.” (GC35, d.3, n. 39/V).



“Hospitality is that deeply human and Christian value that recognises the claim that someone has, not because he or she is a member of my family or my community or my race or my faith, but simply because he or she is a human being who deserves welcome and respect. It is the virtue of the good Samaritan, who saw in the man by the roadside, not a member of another race, but a brother in need... JRS, in serving refugees, is Gospel hospitality in action.” (Father Adolfo Nicolás, 14th november 2010, for the 30 years of JRS).



Pedro Arrupe and the Foundation of Jesuit Refugee Service

Kenneth Gavin, S.J. – Assistant to the International Director

The situation of refugees “constitutes a challenge to the Society of Jesus we cannot ignore if we are to remain faithful to St. Ignatius’ criteria for our apostolic work and the recent calls of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations” (Pedro Arrupe, 14-11-1980).

Thirty-five years ago Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., then Superior General of the Jesuits, launched *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) as an international work of the Society of Jesus. The year before, he had been shocked and distressed by the plight of hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese *boat people* who in the aftermath of the Vietnamese War were forced to flee their homeland in rickety, unseaworthy boats. These refugees, vulnerable to pirates and heavy storms on the South China Sea, faced overwhelming odds as they sought safe havens in countries that would accept them. In fact, one-third of those who set out were lost at sea.

Fr. Arrupe felt himself duty bound to contact twenty Jesuit major superiors throughout

the world. He shared his distress over the refugee situation with them and asked them for their ideas on how the universal Society could bring at least some relief to such a tragic situation. Fr. Arrupe was overwhelmed by the Jesuit response: there were immediate offers of Jesuit personnel to fill both pastoral and organisational roles, supplies of food and medicine, and mass media contacts to influence governmental and private agencies.

Fr Arrupe had, in fact, for many years been considering if the Society should not do more for refugees. In a consultation on this topic in September 1980 he pointed out that in the early Society of Jesus preference was given to the corporal works in times of catastrophe. This led him to be convinced that in our day refugee work must be a priority for the Society. Furthermore, following the lead of recent Jesuit General Congregations that stressed the option for the poor and the voiceless, he was convinced that the Society was being directed to work with refugees who are often the poorest of the poor and, in keeping with words of the Lord in Matthew 25, the most in need.

The Mai-Aini refugee camp in Ethiopia. Thousands of people are often cramped into these camps under very precarious living conditions.



In his letter of 14 November 1980 to the universal Society, announcing the foundation of JRS, Fr. Arrupe made it clear the refugee crisis presented a challenge to the Society that it could not ignore if it were to remain faithful to the call of recent General Congregations and to the criteria that St. Ignatius laid out in the Constitutions for entering into new apostolic works, such as the greater universal good, an urgency that is ever growing, the difficulty and complexity of the human problem involved, and the lack of other people to attend to the need. Given the Society's international character, as well as the Jesuit ideal of availability and its vibrant collaboration with many lay people who work with us, Fr Arrupe expressed the belief the Society was "particularly well fitted to meet this challenge". He made his point even clearer in the closing lines of his letter: "The spiritual as well as the material need of nearly 16 million refugees throughout the world today could scarcely be greater. God is calling us through these helpless people. We should consider the chance of being able to assist them a privilege that will, in turn, bring great blessings to ourselves and our Society."

The date of the foundation letter, 14 November, held particular significance for Fr. Arrupe. It was the feast day of St. Joseph Pignatelli, himself a Jesuit Superior General who had more than once become a refugee as he supported his displaced brother Jesuits during the Suppression of the Society in the late 1700s. By coincidence, it was also Fr Arrupe's seventy-third birthday, a fact that suggests that the foundation of JRS was deeply rooted in his own personal history. His own life experience as a Jesuit priest had begun in 1938 when he was assigned to work as a missionary in Japan. In 1945 Fr Arrupe was serving as the director of Jesuit novices in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb exploded over the city. Given his previous university studies in medicine, he attended to many victims of that enormous human tragedy.

Many years later, on 6 August 1981, the



feast of the Transfiguration and the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, Fr Arrupe recalled his past experience at Hiroshima in an address to a group of Jesuits working with refugees in Thailand. This presentation was to be his last talk to his Jesuit brothers prior to suffering a debilitating cerebral stroke on his return trip home to Rome. In it he recalled the distressing similarity between the tragedy of the Vietnamese boat people and the human devastation of Hiroshima. He expressed his belief that the tragedy of these events lay not only in the human lives destroyed, but also in the tremendous crime against humanity itself.

It would be overly simple to explain the foundation of JRS as simply an *ad hoc* response to a significant humanitarian crisis. In fact, the founding of JRS needs to be seen in the larger context of Fr Arrupe's contribu-

Above, first on the left, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, founder of the JRS and the Centro Astalli of Rome in 1980.

Refugee

IHS

One of the fragile boats which, at the beginning of the 1980's, carried thousands of Vietnamese fleeing from their warstricken country. The "boat people" of those days call to mind the boats that are arriving today from North Africa to the Mediterranean coast.



tion to the Church and the Society of Jesus. Fr Michael Campbell-Johnston, S.J., who worked closely with Fr Arrupe in founding JRS, recently pointed out that in 1974 when he presided over the 32nd General Congregation (GC 32), the highest authoritative structure within the Society, Fr Arrupe recognized that his major task was to help Jesuits throughout the world renew themselves according to the vision of Vatican II. This redefinition of the Society was expressed in the Decree 4 of the GC 32 which stated: "The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement." This understanding led to an ever greater challenge in re-envisioning the role of a Jesuit today: "What does it mean to be a companion of Jesus today? It is to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our

time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes."

Subsequent General Congregations and Superior Generals - Frs Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. and Adolfo Nicolás, S.J. - have built on Fr. Pedro Arrupe's concept of JRS and have fostered its growth throughout the years. Key to the success of JRS has been its clarity of mission and its understanding that both the human and spiritual needs of refugees must always be addressed.

Throughout his twenty-five years as Superior General, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach guided the JRS and the Society of Jesus in its service to refugees and displaced persons. In a 1990 letter to Jesuits worldwide, he clearly stated that he had made the call of Fr Arrupe and recent General Congregations his own. He stressed the importance of JRS "both as an expression of our concern for the poor and as a significant step towards our renewal, personal and corporate, in availability, mobility and universality." In concluding his letter, Fr Kolvenbach stressed that the Society's service to refugees is one real test of Jesuit availability today, and that "a generous response by the Society as an apostolic body to the needs of refugees, whom we encounter or who approach us for help, will make us bear more fruit in other apostolates as well."

In 1995 the 34th General Congregation (GC34) urged Jesuit Provinces throughout the world to support JRS in every way possible, highlighting the work of JRS with refugees that ' . . . accompanies many of these brothers and sisters of ours, serving them as companions, advocating their cause in an uncaring world.'

In 2008, citing five global areas that require special apostolic attention by the entire Society, the 35th General Congregation (GC35) recalled Fr Arrupe drawing the attention of the Society to the plight of refugees, but noted that the phenomenon of forced migration has continued to increase dramatically. The Congregation reaffirmed that care for migrants and refugees should continue as an apostolic preference of the Society and that JRS should adhere to its present Charter and Guidelines.

In 2010, in a message to JRS on its 30th anniversary, Fr Adolfo Nicolás recognized the many new forms of displacement that have emerged since Fr Arrupe's inspired response of compassion for the Vietnamese boat people. He noted that factors that cause new

Fr. Arrupe

forms of displacement include realities such as natural and environmental disasters, greed for minerals and resources, and the increasing number of urban refugees. In the face of these ever-growing challenges, he encouraged JRS to promote the Gospel value of hospitality, noting that in today's world "many are closing their borders and their hearts, in fear or resentment, to those who are different." While stating that "JRS, in serving refugees, is Gospel hospitality in action," he also encouraged JRS to influence creatively and positively the unwelcoming value of many cultures in which we work.

Pope Benedict XVI, in addressing the members of the 35th General Congregation on 21 February 2008, made specific reference to the Society's work with refugees and the role of its founder: "Taking up one of the latest intuitions of Father Arrupe, your Society continues to engage in a meritorious way in the service of the refugees, who are often the poorest among the poor and need not only material help but also the deeper spiritual, human and psychological proximity especially proper to your service."

Pope Francis, who has been a tireless advocate for refugees and migrants both in Italy and beyond, visited the JRS Centro Astalli in 2013 and recalled that, in founding JRS, Fr Arrupe was following the example of St. Ignatius Loyola who in 1538 opened his home in Rome to welcome the poorest. His words to the JRS team of Centro Astalli were deeply encouraging: "Always keep hope alive! Help to recover trust! Demonstrate that with welcome and fraternity a window to the future can be opened – more than a window, a door, and even more that it is possible to have a future!"

In 1981 Fr Arrupe closed his final conversation with Jesuits working in JRS, telling them that, despite all the difficulties and complexity of their work, they must not forget one thing: "Pray. Pray much. Problems like these are not solved by human efforts."

In a homily to JRS team members Fr Adolfo Nicolás, the Society's current Supe-

rior General, also commented on the importance of prayer in JRS: "How to pray? How do you find wholeness in refugee work? How do you rest in the Lord? How do you keep your peace of mind? How do you keep your joy in spite of the suffering you see? How do you keep sane and human in the midst of so much inhumanity? Prayer is not time and a set of practices. Prayer is rest and peace; going to the origin, finding our centre, being who we are before God and his creation. Prayer is our best weapon to remain free, loving and supportive. Prayer is our best defence against cynicism, exhaustion and over-work. Prayer is our best medicine against the infection of the self or of the evil and ambitions that are producing so much suffering and alienation in our world."

Below, the visit of Pope Francis, on September 10, 2013, to Centro Astalli, directed by the Jesuits in Rome. It serves as a first welcome for refugees.



A Service that is Human, Pedagogical and Spiritual

Peter Balleis, S.J. – International Director



The three principles that Fr. Arrupe used to describe the service offered by JRS, human, pedagogical and spiritual, are as valid today as they were thirty-five years ago.

“Struck and shocked by the plight of thousands of boat people and refugees, I asked what the universal Society could do to bring at least some relief to such a tragic situation. Furthermore, the help needed is not only material: in a special way the Society is being called to render a service that is human, pedagogical and spiritual.” (Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., 14th November 1980)

The drama of the boat people in the late seventies and early eighties fleeing from the Communist dictatorship in Vietnam and the genocide in Cambodia deeply moved Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., the then Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Out of compassion for these refugees the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) was

established as a work of the Society of Jesus on the 14th November 1980. The three principles that Fr Arrupe used to describe the service offered by JRS - human, pedagogical and spiritual - are as valid today as they were thirty-five years ago. Rooted in these principles, the growth and development of JRS as an international organisation has been intrinsically tied to major conflicts and global crises.

1980s – The Asian Crises

Throughout the 1980s the global political context was largely defined by the East-West divide between Communism and Capitalism. The wars in Vietnam and Cambodia were carried out along ideological divides with Asia Pacific and the refugee crises there at the centre of global politics. JRS began as the humble initiative of pioneering Jesuits, sisters and lay people who worked together in the refugee camps in Asia Pacific. It was soon realized in the early 80s that a regional office in Bangkok was

needed to coordinate the projects and structure the region's work. These early JRS teams were marked by their closeness to the refugees in the camps where they rendered both pastoral and educational services. During this same period JRS also initiated projects in Central America and Sudan which were supervised directly from the International Office that had been established at the Jesuit Curia in Rome.

1990s – The African Crises

The fall of the Berlin Wall and of Communism in 1989 brought with it, at least for a few brief years, the euphoric hope of a future marked by disarmament, peace agreements and peace dividends for development. In fact, a number of East-West proxy wars in Africa as well as the refugee crises in Asia Pacific were largely resolved. Unfortunately, expectations for global peace were short-lived. In Europe the former Communist regime in Yugoslavia fell apart, ending in a bloody war over ethnic, cultural and religious identity. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda was, perhaps, the most painful humanitarian tragedy of the decade. The entire region of the Great Lakes - Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire (today the Democratic Republic of Congo) - erupted like one of the region's volcanoes. During the two decades of the 80s and 90s several million people died through violence and the impact of war. The former ideological motivation for war was replaced by divisions and struggles for ethnic identity.

Although JRS continued to open projects in Sudan, Kenya and Malawi and formally established the Region of Eastern Africa in 1990, it was the refugee crisis in the Great Lakes that shaped JRS in Africa. In response to overwhelming need, the JRS Great Lakes Region was quickly established in February 1995 with a regional office in Bukavu, followed in May by the establishment of the JRS Southern Africa Region. The explosive humanitarian crisis in the Great Lakes area, like plumes of volcanic ash, spread waves of displaced people over the entire continent. Refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and Congo arrived in Zambia, Angola, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa joined by refugees

from the Sudan war. Within a very short time JRS Africa became the main focus of JRS work. In 2002 the JRS West Africa Region was created in response to the needs of refugees driven from their countries by the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. At that time the four JRS Africa regions represented more than half of the JRS' workload, staff and global budgets.

During the same period of the 1990s JRS started to work in other parts of the world - in South Asia, North Sri Lanka, South India, as well as in Latin America and Mexico. This period marked the beginnings of the JRS region of Latin America and the Caribbean and was marked by JRS work with displaced persons both in Colombia and its neighbouring countries. In addition, JRS also began very significant work in the Balkans at that time, opening its first region of JRS Europe.

Under the leadership of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., who became Superior General of the Jesuits in 1983, JRS developed into an international humanitarian organisation and

Below, Fr. Peter Balleis, first on the left, the international director of the JRS until last September and author of the article. Next to him Fr. Michael Zammit, director of the JRS for the Middle East, with some young refugees of Mosul. On the previous page, a refugee camp of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Services



took on formally its structure as an international non-governmental organisation (INGO). Fr. Kolvenbach often referred to JRS as the Jesuit 'light cavalry' and encouraged JRS to become involved wherever the need was greatest. Drawing on the best tradition of the Society, JRS often engaged in educational activities. Fr. Kolvenbach frequently described education with refugees as a service of hope. Reflecting on his time as Superior General, he mentioned JRS as a consolation for him and he always insisted that JRS had to be present in the refugee camps, meaning that it had to be close to the people and not become a bureaucracy.

2010 – The Middle East Crises

Although the Palestinian refugee crisis had existed for decades, JRS became engaged in the Middle East only recently. In 2005, Iraq was pulled apart by a civil war of religious extremism along a Sunni and Shia divide. In the following years more than two million people fled their homeland and an equal number of people were displaced within Iraq. Given its Christian character, prior to this time JRS had not worked in the predominantly Islamic Middle East. Nevertheless, in 2008 Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., the newly elected Superior General, missioned JRS to work with Iraqi refugees in the Middle East. Within two years JRS projects in Syria, Jordan and Turkey were thriving and in 2010 the new region of JRS Middle East and North Africa had begun. The close collaboration between the local Jesuits and JRS as an international organisation was and continues to be the strength of its work in the Middle East.

The Arab Spring of 2011 and 2012 dramatically changed the landscape of both North Africa and Middle East. In Syria the aspirations for democratic change were crushed in a blood



bath that has left more than two hundred thousand people dead, three million refugees and six million internally displaced people. In the midst of a humanitarian crisis judged to be the worst since World War II, JRS, and six Syrian Jesuits remain within the country, working with over five hundred collaborators and volunteers who are Christians and Muslim, Sunni, Shia and Alawite. In 2013 and 2014 JRS was able to reach out to more than 300.000 people with food and non-food items. Within the past two years, the work of JRS in the Middle East has grown to comprise one-third of JRS' works and now surpasses the operations of all four JRS regions in Africa together. Given the ongoing character of the war, JRS' work in the Middle East continues to grow and has extended from Syria to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and North Iraq.

The conflicts of today are shaped by religious divisions, Islamist extremism and the war against terrorism. The struggle for religious identity has replaced the wars for political ideologies of the 1980s and the ethnic struggles of the 1990s. Today about two-thirds of all refugees served by JRS are Muslims.

The experience has shown that JRS as a Christian faith-based organisation is well-suited to work in the Middle East and Central Asia, including Afghanistan. The fact that both Mus-

Crisis



lims and Christians have become JRS collaborators is a clear sign in these times of religious extremism that there is a way to work and live together. Fr. Nicolás has often encouraged the Society to enter into interreligious dialogue that stresses the importance of respect for one another's religious traditions. He has also repeatedly spoken about the value of hospitality in the context of refugees and asylum seekers. This notion of hospitality is deeply rooted in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions as well as in other religions and cultures. Countries and continents like the USA, Europe and Australia are being encouraged to embrace this value of hospitality and welcome displaced people in need of protection.

Today

In the recent past we have seen a rise in conflicts from Gaza to Kabul, in the northern part of Africa and along the borderline of the Sahel zone and the central part of Africa. The number of forcibly displaced people has reached a record high of 51 million. The Society of Jesus through JRS is engaged in some of the most difficult conflict areas: Syria, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. JRS works now in 48 countries, reaching out to one mil-

lion refugees and internally displaced people with direct services such as education, food, non-food items, and psycho-social services. Nearly 70 Jesuits and 50 religious sisters work side by side with over 1,700 lay collaborators and 4,000 refugees. JRS currently has a global budget of USD 50 million.

JRS is known and valued as organisation that is present to refugees, one that provides, in the words of Fr Arrupe, a *human* service. JRS is recognised by the UN agencies, in particular the UNCHR (The United Nations Refugee Agency), as a reliable and respectable international NGO with a special focus on education. A quarter of a million children, youth and adults attend JRS kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, skills training courses, and tertiary level online classes. The service of JRS is truly *pedagogical*.

JRS is rooted in its Christian faith and rich humanitarian principles and values. It reaches out to every human person in need, regardless of ethnic, political and religious background. In the present context JRS is one of the most significant works of the Society of Jesus in predominantly Islamic areas, working together with Muslims and reaching out to many Muslims in need. The service of JRS is truly *spiritual*, recognizing the deep religious needs of the people it serves.

JRS has a voice which is heard by embassies and decision makers in politics. It purposely adheres to no particular political agenda, but its authority to defend refugees' rights stems from its ability to make the voice of the displaced heard, thereby helping them to advocate their cause at local, regional and international levels.

Fr. Arrupe responded with compassion to the plight of the boat people and was the inspiration behind the JRS of today. JRS has grown into a significant global organisation with the capacity to respond on behalf of Fr. General and the Society of Jesus to the emergencies faced by refugees and displaced people at the frontiers of humanity. The compassion and love of Jesus for the poor and refugees remains the source of and the energy for the JRS mission.

Below, the refugee camp of Masisi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Left, refugee children at Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic.



Accompaniment as a Cornerstone

Danielle Vella – JRS International

“We want our presence among refugees to be one of sharing with them, of walking together along the same path. In so far as possible, we want to feel what they have felt, suffer as they have, share the same hopes and aspirations, see the world through their eyes.”

“Come here and tell me, how are you? How is your mother?” Whenever I visited, Binny would pat the mattress of the narrow bed he was sitting on, a big smile on his upturned face, and wait for me to start talking. Actually, my reason for going to see Binny (short for *Bienvenu* – welcome) was to listen to him, to make him feel better about being locked up for months on end in an immigration detention centre in Malta, as he waited for the outcome of his asylum application. No doubt my visits cheered him up but it was largely Binny who listened to and consoled me as we chatted in the dingy and overcrowded dormitory.

I first met Binny when local armed forces broke his arm as they disrupted a peaceful protest in the detention centre. I had interviewed Binny and his story appeared in the local papers. He was thrilled about that, as were his fellow detainees, because they felt their side of the story had come out, that they hadn’t been totally ignored. I kept on visiting Binny at what was a tough time for my family. My mother was very sick and some people, even close friends, felt awkward when we met because they simply didn’t know what to say. Binny was different. He encouraged me to talk and never complained about his own awful situation. He shared about his mother, his daughter and his coffee plantation back in the Congo, where he was from. When my mother died, mass was offered for her in the

detention centre and my father, sisters and I attended. With their compassionate prayers and heartfelt singing, Binny and the other asylum seekers really accompanied us that day.

This is the single-most important lesson about accompaniment that I have learned in my years with the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS). It is about give-and-take, a mutual blessing, something that can bring equality into the service-provider and beneficiary relationship that is of its very nature unequal.

Accompaniment – a heavy and even incomprehensible word for people outside JRS – has always been the cornerstone of our mission. Since its beginning in 1980, JRS has always encouraged its team members to be close to the forcibly displaced people we serve. When pioneer directors of JRS gathered in Chiang Mai in 1985, they came out with a landmark statement: “While always



Presence

ready to help refugees in their material and spiritual wants, and also in designing projects leading to a fuller and more independent life, we try to place special emphasis on *being with* rather than *doing for*. We want our presence among refugees to be one of sharing with them, of accompaniment, of walking together along the same path. In so far as possible, we want to feel what they have felt, suffer as they have, share the same hopes and aspirations, see the world through their eyes.”

JRS later enshrined the concept of “being with” as one of the three core elements of its mission: to accompany, serve and advocate. It would be no exaggeration to describe accompaniment as the driving force of all that we do: it makes us who we are and it is what we are best known for, not least among the refugees themselves.

Over the past three decades much has

been written about accompaniment in JRS. Yet in 2013, we published another booklet on the topic, called *Side by Side*. We did so to make sure we don’t lose sight of accompaniment as the organisation grows and responds to the many new challenges and priorities clamouring for its attention. To help us flesh out this dimension of our work, we asked contributors, who have worked closely with JRS, to share their own understanding of accompaniment. The booklet is designed as a formation tool and, in 2014, we used it to organise workshops for JRS teams across the world.

The insights of the people who wrote in the booklet and took part in the workshops were hugely helpful in breaking open the concept of accompaniment and concretising the vagueness that can sometimes surround the term. It’s clear that we all see accompaniment as a very practical action. When we

The distribution of food from a camp kitchen in the city of Homs, in Syria, one of the cities that has suffered the most damages during the war.



*A sister talking with
a displaced man
in a reception
camp in Africa.*

asked people to name someone whom they saw as a model of accompaniment, Bambang Sipayung SJ, director of JRS Asia Pacific, mentioned Hans, a driver with the JRS project in the Indonesian province of Banda Aceh. Hans regularly carried out “security checks” before going anywhere to make sure the road was safe and looked after his passengers with meticulous care. Once, Bambang recalls, Hans took a punch from an angry soldier to prevent him from harassing the passengers in the car.

Being present is actually crucial for our service and advocacy. First, our mere presence can be useful in protecting forcibly displaced people from human rights abuses in conflict zones, in refugee camps, in detention centres and anywhere they might be at risk. And if abuses do take place, then we witness them, or at least we are close enough to the people to hear their story, and so we can report what happened through our advocacy and communications channels.

Second, being close to the refugees helps us to focus on the real needs and not just to implement projects blindly. Listening to what refugees have to say, and allowing them

to speak freely, without expecting them to say what we think they should, helps us to discern, to prioritize and to plan more effective programs.

Sometimes, however, all we can do is accompany – nothing else. “For me accompaniment is ultimately a form of surrender,” said Michael Schöpf SJ, former JRS Europe director. “You enter into a relationship with a person, you become friends and share some of his life. It could be a detainee who is there for many months, sometimes years, or a migrant who lives destitute under the bridge, with nothing to eat, and who comes to see you once a week. You try to help in a very practical way. But sometimes these situations are so bare – there is so little you can do – that all you can do is to be present.”

This can be tough. At a workshop of JRS Southern Africa, someone summed it up neatly: “It feels both disempowering and empowering when you see what refugees went through: their resilience is empowering; what feels disempowering is when you can’t help them.” Our very frequent inability to offer concrete help stems from a vast array of depressing reasons, chief among them that we don’t have the means or the power to deliver. If demand exceeds supply, we will only be able to help a limited number of people. If a rejected asylum seeker is desperate to get protection, JRS staff can offer legal aid but cannot guarantee a happy outcome. If someone wants to be released from detention, we don’t hold the keys. And so on.

Sometimes this can be a stumbling block. “Refugees don’t want to be accompanied. They want things I cannot give them,” said someone at a workshop in JRS South Asia. But this is precisely where the big challenge for us lies: to learn how to “surrender”, to accompany without having anything else to give except ourselves. In our workshops, participants came out with a list of tips on how they can do this more effectively: “Accept the reality and learn to recognise what you can do and what you cannot.” And “re-



member, just your presence can give hope". But at the same time "be honest, don't raise false hopes". Ultimately, if you "have a sense of and act with integrity, the refugees will trust and believe in you".

Make no mistake: it is not easy at all to accompany the people we serve. Perhaps one of the most profound reasons why is because they have suffered and often continue to suffer so much, there is a lot of sadness. Theirs are stories of violence, injustice, risk and loss, and this affects us too. Binny, to name just one, escaped from detention in Malta after his asylum application was rejected and tried to reach Italy by boat. He drowned. And how many people do we meet who have lost those they love most in violence back home or on the road to safety? How many do we meet in despair because they cannot get the protection they need? In fact, accompaniment is often just about hoping against hope with the refugees.

Mohammed, an Eritrean who used to work as a cultural mediator for JRS Malta, found it particularly hard to listen to the pain of his fellow refugees. "At first I was taking people's stories home, they were burned in my memory, so it was very tough. When I heard some things, I thought, *why is this happening?* After crossing the desert, the Mediterranean Sea, you'd expect to be able to rest your mind but instead you find more suffering and instability."

Sometimes we simply don't have what it takes to devote our time and full attention as one person after another comes to share sorrow and to seek help. Many of us admit frankly that listening does not come easy. We are too busy meeting deadlines and writing project reports and proposals to attend at length and patiently to anybody.

"You give, give, give, you get so tired but still you have to give," was one telling comment. "Who is going to listen to me?" was another. The message is clear: it is not enough for us to accompany the refugees, we need to accompany one another in our teams too. Something would ring false if we professed to be close to the people we served but failed to show the same consideration for our colleagues. Mohammed found the support of his team to be indispensable: "After getting some experience, speaking with colleagues and learning from them, things got better. In the team, we help one another with such things."



If we do not get the care we need from members of our team, from our leaders, from family and friends, even professional support if necessary, then our efforts to accompany the refugees are bound to falter. We cannot give what we do not have.

Nawras Sammour SJ, director of JRS Syria, put it this way: "We cannot accompany if we are not accompanied first. This is what makes the difference: accepting to be accompanied. I am talking about another dimension here, the dimension of faith, to be accompanied by God first of all, and then concretely by others, by companions, collaborators, friends. You need to give time to be accompanied. Otherwise you'll reach a point when you can no longer accompany but become like a machine, just supplying services."

The faith dimension underlined by Nawras is key because accompaniment is ultimately an expression of our belief in a God who does not abandon his people. Our efforts are not ours alone. The Charter of JRS says: "To accompany refugees is to affirm that God is present in human history, even its most tragic episodes." Every time we accompany or are accompanied by the refugees, we affirm a solid hope rooted in suffering, resilience and love that "those who sow in tears will reap in joy".

Still in Syria, in the city of Homs: last winter volunteers of the JRS distributed bundles of winter clothes to the refugees to protect them from the cold. Thousands of persons have lost everything under the bombing.

Syria

Compassion for Humanity on the Edge

Francesca Campolongo – Rapid Response Team Leader

The immediate human consequence of conflicts or natural disasters is the massive displacement of people. Caring for these people and accompanying them has been and remains today the core mission of JRS.

In the photo, a refugee camp in Lebanon. The war in Syria and the fear of the violence carried out by the so-called Islamic State has produced throngs of refugees in search of peace and tranquility.

I still remember the exact day, the 16th of November 2012, when we visited an area in northern Syria where the first camp for IDPs (“Internally Displaced Persons”) was being built. A Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) project director had received a call from a former worker saying that there was no milk for children in the area and that the people who had begun the camp had run out of funds. He called the Regional Director, who decided that a JRS team should visit the camp to assess the overall needs of the displaced people and respond immediately to their most critical needs. Since I was already in the area, I joined in the assessment visit. It is hard to describe with words what I saw and felt. My heart went out to families in extreme

need who were innocent victims of the armed conflict in their country. Although the tension in the air was palpable, and everyone around us was on edge, we quickly analysed the situation and set ourselves to responding to the most urgent needs. Together with the Regional and International Directors, we decided on a basic plan and within a month’s time a project that provided food baskets, hot meals and winter clothing for 20,000 families was up and running.

In 2014, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners recognized four “Level 3” emergencies (Syria, Iraq, Central African Republic and South Sudan) that called for immediate response. (This “Level 3” classification is used by the U.N. to refer to the most severe, large-scale humanitarian crises.)

- 2012, South Sudan – North Sudanese refugees arrive in Maban, South Sudan. A member of the JRS Rapid Response Team (RRT) was sent to assess the needs and a project was set-up and begun.



- 2014, Central African Republic – While the instability continued to dominate most of the country, a member of the RRT team and the local JRS team kept an educational project for children up and running.
- 2014, North Iraq – ISIS invades North Iraq. The Regional Office of JRS Middle East sent a mission to evaluate the situation and begin a project.

Syria, Iraq, Central African Republic and South Sudan: in these difficult, conflict-filled countries JRS has managed to assess and respond to the needs of refugees and other displaced peoples in collaboration with local Jesuit structures, wherever possible, and with other partners. Collaboration with existing Jesuit works and presence frequently strengthens or, in some cases, opens up space for JRS to intervene. This was the case in Syria, an authoritarian state where the slow but horribly destructive onset of the conflict forced most major humanitarian actors into a very narrow space, making them unable to respond actively to the suffering of the Syrian people. JRS, with its volunteers from all religious and cultural backgrounds, along with the Jesuits on the ground, was able to play a low-key but significant role, inspired by what I call “interfaith dialogue in action.” With this broad collaborative approach we have managed to

serve up to 500,000 people a year in the largest emergency response in the history of JRS.

The immediate human consequence of conflicts or natural disasters is the massive displacement of people. Caring for these people and accompanying them has been and remains today the core mission of JRS.

The JRS rapid response approach generally follows the following three steps: needs assessment, project set-up, and handover of the project to the local JRS regional structure. These steps form the basis for the JRS initial quick response, but are designed so that they can also be easily expanded and consolidated into a more stable project in the mid-to-long term.

The presence of JRS teams in crisis areas, whether small or significant in size, keeps alive the compassion for the humanity on the edge that inspired Fr. Pedro Arrupe in founding JRS in 1980 as he witnessed the devastation and plight of thousands of people seeking

Together



Below, two families in Lebanon, in the Beqaa Valley. These are Syrian refugees assisted by the JRS which has also set up schools for the children. Exile should not prevent them from studying.

refuge from the Vietnamese war. His inspiration continues today to urge JRS to respond to humanitarian crises quickly, flexibly, and with compassion.

The *JRS 2012-2015 Strategic Framework* maintained and advanced the agency's mission, taking into consideration the evolving nature of international humanitarian crises. The framework gave priority of intervention to areas of greatest need and focused on reaching the most vulnerable and forgotten populations affected by crises – regardless of

who they are or where they find themselves. It sought to address those needs that are not being attended to by other actors and called on JRS to draw upon its core strengths, expertise and experiences.

The first goal established by the *Strategic Framework*, Compassion for Humanity on the Edge, established the starting point for envisaging a way to build JRS' capacity to rapidly assess and respond to emergency situations and to support front-line projects.

The *Rapid Response System* (RRS) is a core, proactive programmatic and strategic initiative of JRS to advance its mission in responding to challenging humanitarian crises. Under the International Director's leadership, the *Rapid Response Team* (RRT) has established both a system of operationally based tools and protocols for action and a set of internal policies, procedures, and operating standards.

When I think of my work in the *Rapid Response Team*, I always hear the words of Sr Denise Coghlan (JRS Cambodia Director) echoing in my head: "If people are thirsty, they need water now – not after a committee meeting". These words translate into the aim of the RRS: carrying out timely and efficient actions, always looking in the eyes of the people we want to help.

Years ago someone described JRS workers as "unguided missiles", meaning that JRS teams were going into crises when everybody else was moving out. Nowadays, in a humanitarian world that has become more structured and complex, all actors need to abide by and respect essential rules and procedures. The "rules" aim mostly at standardising the concepts so familiar to JRS – namely those of preserving human dignity and compassion. JRS seeks to organize and structure our approach without losing our core values. The RRS is structured to be an up-to-date version of the "unguided missiles": keeping an eye on the new needs and crises, following the rules, building capacity in the teams on the ground, but still committed to kindling the spirit of compassion and an effective response to people in their hour of need.



The barren landscape is broken by the occasional thorn bush. All around you is sand, and the dunes run for miles as far as the eye can see. Plastic bottles litter the area, and goats forage for food. And then you hear the laughter of little children – they wave at you and smile – as they make their way to school, just like children everywhere. This is the scene in 8 of the 12 refugee camps in eastern Chad where the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) is responsible for 56 pre-schools, 39 primary schools, 7 middle schools, and 5 secondary schools.

Aside from running these schools, JRS also sponsors a project with the *École Normale d'Instituteur* d'Abéché to train and assure the qualifications of teachers from all 12 camps in eastern Chad. At the end of the two year course, teachers take a licensing test and they receive an official teacher's license from Chadian government. The first cohort of 167 teachers was trained and certified in 2014.

While Chad is the largest of the JRS educational projects, we also have an educational presence in 34 other countries, serving a total

Education at All Levels

Boom Martinez, S.J.

The education projects of the *Jesuit Refugee Service* are in the long tradition of education that has marked the ministry of the Society of Jesus. Being able to serve people at the margins by offering a quality education is an ongoing response to the service of faith and the promotion of justice where the need is greatest.

of almost 240,000 people which is about one-fourth of the total number of people served by JRS in various capacities.

The educational work of JRS varies by region, from actually being responsible for running schools as in eastern Chad and in Mae Hong Son in Thailand, to supporting the work of others by helping build and provide maintenance for existing schools in South Sudan. Informal education and adult literacy classes are offered in most JRS projects. School materials are distributed to young children, and they are offered library and internet services. Many primary schools offer supplemental feeding programs, of-

Nepalese Muslim women to whom JRS has given the possibility of going to school. Education is a priority for the Jesuit Refugee Service.



This elderly woman, housed in a Masisi refugee camp (DRC) is very happy to be able to learn how to read and write.

fering the children additional nutrition to help them stay alert and concentrate on their school work.

Many urban refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), such as in Nairobi and Johannesburg, are supported with scholarships to attend local schools. In several refugee camps, JRS provides tertiary education opportunities in partnership with *Jesuit*

Commons: Higher Education at the Margins (JC:HEM).

Working with JC:HEM, JRS is able to provide two types of higher education opportunities in areas where they otherwise would not be available. The first program is the *Community Service Learning Track* (CSLT), which are three to six month courses in English as a foreign language, primary teacher education, psychosocial case management, community and business development, and child protection. CSLTs are offered in JRS projects in Malawi, Kenya, Jordan, Chad, Afghanistan, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. For the more advanced students, usually after they finish a CSLT in English, we offer the 45 credit Diploma in Liberal Studies, which is awarded through *Regis University* in the United States. The program, which is delivered online, is taught mostly by faculty in Jesuit universities. For many refugees, this is the only program that offers post-secondary educational opportunities.

In Lebanon, JRS works with Syrian refugee children to prepare them to attend Lebanese schools by offering *Accelerated Learning Programs* in English and French. Many of these children have been out of school since the Syrian crisis started in 2012. Because instruction in Lebanon is offered in three languages (English and French are required, in addition to Arabic), Syrian refugee children do not have the necessary language skills to attend regular public schools with their age peers. The programs run for six to nine months, and while the primary focus is language preparation, students are also taught academic subjects in Arabic.

In early 2015, at the invitation of the local bishop, JRS established a new work in northern Iraq by offering classes in Ozal, near Erbil, in an area with many Christian, Muslim and Yesidi IDPs. A makeshift school is being built to cater to 1,000 children and JRS is planning to extend the educational activities to the IDP communities in the surrounding villages. By teaching Kurdish, English, and Arabic, JRS hopes to open the way for fu-



ture durable solutions for tens of thousands of IDP children who do not go to school, whether it be by integration into the Kurdish school system, resettlement, or return home.

JRS has education a priority in Northern Iraq, with a special emphasis on language training in the poorer IDP communities of Christians and Yesidis since these are people who will most likely seek local integration and stay in Iraq. Without knowledge of Kurdish, it will be impossible for them to find work in Kurdistan. Having knowledge of English will increase their chances of finding work with international agencies and companies.

While JRS does not sponsor its own schools in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwest Kenya, we offer training programs that serve the local teachers. Currently, 100 teachers a year are trained by JRS, and they are employed in the primary and secondary schools in the camp. With the influx of new refugees, there is a need for more teachers, and JRS is scaling up its efforts in order to be able to train up to 200 new teachers a year.

These are just some of the many educational services offered by JRS, projects which are in the long tradition of education that has marked the ministry of the Society of Jesus. Being able to serve people at the margins by offering a quality education is an ongoing response to the service of faith and the promotion of justice where the need is greatest.



On the left, the girl on the cover. Below, two images of Nepalese girls at school, and young people studying in the refugee camp of Karenni, in Thailand.



Kindling Hope through Learning

Stan Fernandes, S.J.

Kindling hope through learning aims at creating tomorrow's leaders, encouraging young people to bloom by building their capacity and confidence.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) taught me English, starting with the alphabet." Tabasum has come a long way since learning her letters. Within a few years, this bright young Afghan girl became an English teacher and dreams of studying political science. "We were so enthusiastic about learning English, we prevailed on our teachers to continue our training," says Tabasum. "JRS encouraged us to teach 5-7 students in our neighbourhood and then my friend and I were chosen to be coordinators of the *Training Leaders for Tomorrow* program and to teach basic English to other girls."

Tabasum's determination comes as no surprise. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 in Afghanistan, official school enrolment figures for girls shot up from some 5,000 to over 4.4 million today. But the dream of Afghan girls to reach university – and they certainly aspire to get there – comes up against a formidable array of obstacles, among them cultural factors, insecurity, poor quality of education, and just 55,000 slots for more than 300,000 twelfth-graders competing to secure a place to study in a state-run university.

Tabasum was lucky because she came into contact with JRS, which since 2005 has worked closely with local NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and government institutes to enhance access to quality education especially for girls, returnees, and vulnerable communities.

The work has expanded steadily, with

projects in Bamiyan, Kabul, Daikundi and particularly in Herat. Here, JRS runs a school in the returnee township of Sohadat as well as English language, computer and leadership courses in the villages of Guzara Khoshrud, Jebreal and Shaydei.

In November 2013, JRS started an online certificate course in English at the *Herat Technical Institute* in collaboration with *Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins* (JC:HEM).

It was the preparatory courses offered by JRS over the years that paved the way for this online program. 21 girls and 15 boys graduated from the first batch, on March 15, 2014, and were awarded certificates accredited by St Xavier's College in Kolkata.

Sadly this success has come at an extremely high price. On June 2, 2014, the director of JRS Afghanistan, Fr Alexis Prem Kumar SJ, was kidnapped in Sohadat when on a visit to the school. Happily he was released after 8 months on February 22, 2015.

Coming from a family of teachers in a tiny

The photos on these pages refer to the work of the Jesuits in Afghanistan, centred mainly on non-formal education. On the right, a group of students.



South Asia

South Indian village, Prem loves to be with children. Our projects in Afghanistan owe an immeasurable debt to his dedication and professionalism.

When Prem was kidnapped, we suspended our projects in Afghanistan for a month, but later resumed them because we know how many Afghan children cling to the hope they offer.

Kindling hope through learning, we press ahead following a dual approach: one aims at creating tomorrow's leaders, encouraging young people to bloom by building their capacity and confidence. The means: formation in leadership and peace-building; teacher-training; English language classes; technical and vocational skills. Tabasum and her friend Freshta show this approach is bearing fruit. Freshta says: "I want to study journalism and Tabasum political science. We would like to enter politics and play a role in the development of our country." Together with others, they swell the teachers' ranks, eager to share what they received.

The second aims at reaching out to the most disadvantaged children, living on the fringes of cities or in remote areas, who otherwise would stand no chance of going to school. "I wanted to learn English but my family couldn't afford to pay my fees at a private institute. Then I heard that JRS was going to start a project for girls in Jebrael. It was my dream come true," says Shamsi, a returnee from Iran.

On the outskirts of Kabul, JRS teaches English to street children in a day centre and to forcibly displaced children in two settlements. Nearly 34,000 people live in some 52 informal settlements in and around the city; most fled their home provinces because of insecurity and poverty.

"We left Paktia Province because of fighting between the Taliban and government forces," says 11-year-old Bebi Juma. "We couldn't study or go to school because the Taliban didn't permit girls to study. My father could not work and we had nothing to eat so we decided to leave our village and

Below, Jesuit Father Sebastian Nallail while teaching in an orphanage in Kabul.



Below, Fr. Prem Kumar, S.J., awards a diploma to a student of the school of the village of Sohadat, near Herat. It was from here that Fr. Prem was kidnapped on June 2, 2014, and released after eight months, in February 2015.

come to Kabul.” In their new home, disease and malnutrition are common, access to safe drinking water is rare and there is no insulation to protect them from freezing winters. But they feel better off: “Here we are happy that we can study and my father can work. I come to JRS classes at 7 am every day. I have learnt the Dari and English alphabet. I want to be a teacher.”

JRS South Asia has always offered strong education programs. For more than two decades, we have run one such program for Sri Lankan children in 110 refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, south India.

An impact study carried out in 2013 shows JRS has made a big difference: children go regularly to school, many more young people reach college and even university, and

parents show considerable interest in their children’s education, compared to previous indifference. An emphasis on life-skills and counselling helps young people develop self-esteem and strong coping skills. The refugees responding to the survey gave JRS staff top marks for their “human and friendly approach”.

In Sri Lanka itself, JRS continues to serve people in the war-devastated north, running services from preschool to multi-skills training to higher education: JRS-JC:HEM has just started an English language certificate course accredited by *Georgetown University*, at the newly inaugurated *Pope Francis Jesuit Academy* in Mannar on January 28, 2015.

No exposé on JRS in South Asia would be complete without mention of the *Bhutanese Refugee Education Program* (BREP), which JRS has run as *Caritas Nepal* partner since 1995.

BREP managed schools for the Bhutanese refugees in seven camps in eastern Nepal and, at the turn of the century, was the largest formal education system for refugees in the world, reaching some 40,000 students from pre-primary to post-secondary level. Most of the Bhutanese refugees have now resettled, but BREP is still there, accompanying those who remain until the end.

Quality is not easy to measure, because it means different things to different people. One sound way of gauging the quality of a service is to ask those who have used it. Our youth in Afghanistan, in Tamil Nadu, in Sri Lanka and Nepal are largely thrilled with their education and with the hope it offers for the future.

I close with the words of Prakash Ghisingh, a head teacher with BREP: “We are proud of our students who have resettled in the US and elsewhere. They are doing well and much of the credit goes to BREP. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to JRS for providing education, one of the greatest assets any agency can give. The whole Bhutanese community has been blessed – thank you!”

Education



Reconciliation

Merlys Mosquera; Mauricio García, S.J.; Pablo Fernández, S.J.; Miguel Grijalba, S.J.; Elías López, S.J.

By his own hand St. Ignatius included “reconciling the estranged” as one of the fundamental objectives of the Society of Jesus. Likewise GC 35 brought this mission up-to-date for the entire Society: *reestablishing just relations*. In the JRS we believe that the spirituality of reconciliation is political and the politics of reconciliation is spiritual.

Pilar, an Afrocolombian refugee in Ecuador, is above everything else a mother. Why? Working with her in a reconciliation workshop, she spoke of her family history. She was forced to cross the border with her family because of threats from armed groups. Towards the end of the two-hour session, which included Pilar, her brother Luis, her cousin Jefferson and another group of victims, Pilar asks: “And, is it possible to forgive and reconcile when one still sees their wounds every day?” In her case, violence from ill treatment from her husband (now deceased) had left Pilar’s body covered with scars. She showed them to us. How would it be possible to forgive and reconcile in the face of these scars? How can one forget the signs of violence forever tattooed on one’s skin? The only way is to contemplate Jesus coming to meet us from the cross, with his wounds open and filled

The *Jesuit Refugee Service* works for reconciliation in its mission of accompanying, serving, and defending victims, permitting them to recover their integral dignity which has been taken away from them by violence.

with love for us. I respond: “Pilar, who fills your wounds of love?” Hearing this question, her face brightens and with a fresh smile responds: “Valeria!” She looks at the child who runs happily to her mother. Valeria is her seven-year-old daughter who had been drawing a colored tree in the room during the entire session. She is the wellspring of life, of love, to heal such a wound. For Pilar is, above all, a mother.

In the JRS we have learned that children can enable many fathers and mothers to overcome the wounds of the past, whether they are physical or psychological. Their love for

Children building bridges on the border between Colombia and Venezuela. Photo by Carla Casanova.



Bridges



their children is what breaks the cycle of violence, allowing reconciliation and not transmitting violence to new generations, thus giving them a different future. We call this “preventive reconciliation.” The refugees themselves have taught us this, not the manuals. We have learned from many other cases that, even when the adults cannot forgive each other, they don’t want to transmit the hatred and sorrow which they have within them to their children.

We know that reconciliation begins in a personal and complex way and has many interdependent variables both spiritual and political. We have recognized this through walking together with refugees and displaced persons through the course of many armed conflicts. Reconciliation is a process which we discern along with the people whom we serve *according to times, places, and persons*, be they victims or victimizers. This synthesis is a *discerned reconciliation*.

“Extreme trauma” is a massive wound (i.e., gross violations of human rights, war crimes, crimes against humanity, etc.) caused intentionally by a human being against another human being. This intentional and massive vio-

Below, again on the frontier between Colombia and Venezuela: Fr. Miguel Grijalba, S.J., talking with a “victim” who needs “reconciliation of the heart.”

Photo by Paola Andrea Cordoba



lence shatters one’s confidence in the goodness of human beings which is so important for living humanly. As the *Ubuntu* African philosophy teaches: human beings are human thanks to their being able to relate to and trust another human being. When *extreme trauma* has broken this basic confidence in the goodness of human beings, when the extreme violence has destroyed the sources of love and life of the people, how can they heal, how can they recover the sources of life which can heal such death—that can forgive the unforgivable?

As JRS we look to spirituality to heal the sources of life of the refugees destroyed by radical violence, helping them to find in their lives faces near to God, such as Pilar for her daughter Valeria, who are sources of infinite and merciful love, that makes them capable to move freely to *forgive seventy times seven times* and even to choose to freely *love the enemy*—the “extreme love” to which Jesus invites us without pressure. Thus in this spirit of reconciling the estranged from the source of spirituality, we want to go where others do not go to hear even the silenced pain of the victims, and to even go to the prisons and hear the silenced pain of the victimizers, as one provincial invited us as JRS, because *God makes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust*.

We have been able to recognize in this way that a deep spirituality is Christian if it is incarnated in the same reality, in the society and in the political. For this reason, there is no reconciliation or pardon without an authentic



To the side, photo of the group from the Colegio Fe y Alegría of Soacha (Columbia); the educational community lends a hand in the process of reconciliation of those who have been deprived of human dignity because of violence.

and firm effort to transform unjust structures and to pursue justice in the face of violence.

The JRS works for reconciliation in its mission of accompanying, serving and defending victims, permitting them to recover an integral dignity which has been taken from them by violence. This is our principle perspective in the processes of reconciliation undertaken within the complexity of social and state relations, where the so-called “transitional justice” articulates the rights and duties of all the actors around truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of no repetition of violent acts on the part of the armed actors; equally part of the components of reconciliation is the healing of wounds, both physical and psychological.

Thus, from the political perspective of reconciliation it is important: 1) to protect the rights of the victims (refugees and the forced displaced,) prioritizing their social and political reinclusion; forming leaders who are empowered by demanding their rights; 2) to serve and defend the construction of confidence between actors, in the communities and institutions, helping to reconstruct the social fabric; 3) to stimulate both directly and indirectly social and political participation in the democratic processes by the persons whom we serve, as a step which is constructed from below toward above; 4) to promote their integration in the economic dimension of society, understood as the capacity to rise out of poverty thanks to distributive justice, access to education, health, shelter, lands, etc.; 5) to promote a culture of

peace and reconciliation which would help in the healing process and the transition from a culture of violence to one which cares for life.

To conclude, we believe that it is important to insist that the new generations are educated and formed without hatreds, that they can fill up with love the wounds and scars of persons and history, who will be able to pardon with “love in excess” (which is what “par-don” means etymologically). Thus from a spirituality rooted in values of respect and recognition of the other, it will be possible to undertake the road of reconciliation and justice, towards a true, sustainable and durable peace. Otherwise, we have learned that if there is no one who can fill with love the wounds of victims and victimizers, reconciliation will be very difficult.

As seen in the case of Pilar and for many others, as JRS, in our mission of accompanying others facing of the wounds of conflicts, we need to continue to help others ask themselves “who can heal our wounds of love?” In this way we can help bring about deep and lasting progress, both political and spiritual, towards an authentic reconciled society.

Translated by Robert E. Hurd, S.J.

Confidence

A Spiritual and Pastoral Work

Gary Smith, S.J.

“One never reaches home,” she said. “But where paths that have affinity for each other intersect the whole world looks like home for a time.” From *Demian*, by Herman Hesse

Hesse was right. In the pastoral work of the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) the mysterious spiritual connection between the heart of JRS worker and the hearts of the people he or she serves is one of coming home. In that relationship God’s grace moves—the refugee is touched; the JRS staff is touched. We name it a pastoral relationship, one where JRS accompanies, serves, and advocates for those given into its care. In that relationship there is a metaphorical home for the refugee and the JRS pastoral agent: a home created in the midst of pervasive confusion and gripping difficulties; a home where the inner life that longs for meaning and hope and the divine can be uncovered and embraced.

A home of faces and hearts. Makhado, South Africa: 80 kilometers South of the Zimbabwean border. I survey the reception room at the

JRS project. I see on the faces of refugees the strain inflicted by uncertainty, pain, and tension. They bear the scars of months of never having it together, never under control, never knowing what’s next; I see the look of grief that comes from profound loss: of family, of friends, of jobs, of hope. Many have watched loved ones being slaughtered before their eyes. There is the look of distress, of anger, of being demoralized, and of being double-crossed by their government. They know that life should not be like this.

The refugees are at our office door early in the morning or as they straggle in during the day; they are tired, dirty, hungry, broke, disheartened, and apprehensive; most possess only the clothes on their back, an asylum document and a few precious phone contact numbers. Listening to people in counseling sessions, I am aware that the spiritual landscape of many is the jagged terrain of a broken heart. The minions of capriciousness have cornered refugees, tied them up, blindfolded them, put them up against the wall, and administer a slow execution. No one should have to live like this.



JRS moves into this world, binding wounds, providing a listening heart and the necessary physical needs: food, shelter, transportation, and health care. I bring the best of myself in these moments affirming the love of God through my own hands and heart. I am the agent of the mystery of God's love and compassion. Paul's words are a daily *mantra*: "So we are ambassadors for Christ; as if God were appealing through us." (2 Cor. 5:20)

A home that embraces death. Northern Uganda: one morning the leaders of a refugee village arrived at the JRS compound: a young woman had died the night before. Could I come? On arrival at the extremely poor village I was met by her husband. He took my hand and led me along the dusty path to his compound. We entered the small *tukul*; his deceased wife was wrapped in a blanket, except for her head; she was surrounded by a silent circle of women. They greeted me, the priest, the *Abuna*, knowing I had come to pray and be with the moment.

She was twenty-two and had died the night before: complications connected to the birth of

her second child. The women parted, and I knelt before the body. Standing behind me were the leaders of the chapel, who were not much older than this woman, but veterans of human suffering. I prayed and one of the leaders translated. It is the supreme pastoral moment, connecting this life with the next, totally trusting that God was somewhere there present in this tragedy. A midwife whispers in my ear, "We are in God's Hands, *Abuna*."

It is a home with Children. I spotted ten-year old Scovia one Sunday at Mass at one of the villages of the Adjumani Refugee Camp on the Sudan/Uganda border. She had a cleft lip. After Mass I spoke with her mother and we talked about the possibilities of having the cleft lip corrected. She had fear of the cost but I informed

In the photo, the crossing of the Nile in Northern Uganda.

Pastoral



The staff of the JRS, in particular the Jesuits, do not limit themselves only to humanitarian assistance for the refugees, but they are also engaged in intense pastoral work in the refugee camps. Below, the author of the article, Fr. Gary Smith, with a small Christian community in the camp of Kakuma, in Kenya. Above, Fr. Richard Sotelo, S.J., while blessing an undocumented immigrant detained in El Paso, Texas.



her that the Ugandan government sends up a team of Kampala doctors twice a year to attend to children with Scovia's condition. They operate freely. Both the mother and Scovia agreed to the procedure.

Three months later, after a happy send off by her village, Scovia was admitted into the Adjumani Hospital. The next day the doctors performed the cleft lip surgery, a forty-five minute procedure. One of the nurses carried Scovia out

of the theater and placed her on the bed next to her waiting mother. She was still lethargic from the anesthesia. Her mother, who had lived with her daughter's disfigurement for ten years, looked upon her little Scovia's restored face. She took her child into her arms, rocking her gently, weeping silently. She looked up at me and whispered in Arabic again and again, "Fi Ayah, Baba; fi ayah, Baba." ("It is a miracle, Father; it is a miracle, Father.") In my heart this pastoral moment will remain an image of enduring singularity. A coming home like no other. The breach had been mended, the gap in the mouth forever restored to wholeness. I thought that, from this time onward, each time Scovia smiled it would be a testimony to the miracle of surgery and an affirmation of the spiritual work of pastoral care in the JRS mission.

It is a home of compassion. Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. A young woman waited for me as I arrived at one of the chapels. She needed to talk. She was sitting on a bench, under a Neem Tree. She greeted me. I asked if she were waiting for anyone. "For you, Father, I am waiting for you."

She was a tall East African woman, in her twenties, full of heartache. She wanted to make a confession, seeking God's healing from a way of life that was slowly consuming her. In the tortured path of prostitution, there had been a point reached where she knew she had to deal with the abuse she was inflicting on herself; wanting to flee that numbing world of a body





disconnected from the longings of the heart. And now there was the possibility of a good relationship, and a way to take care of her children without selling her body. She had great longing for God.

She placed her hand in mine. I became the lightning rod for God's compassion. She made a confession for the first time in years. There were tears, expressions of her grief and search for the holy. I was, at that moment, the pastor. I met her on the mountain that she had climbed that day, to be present to her, to be the agent of the sacrament of reconciliation which is the touch of Christ, a touch which holds both the belief in herself and the promise of help. When we finished she departed. I would see her nearly every Sunday Mass from that point on; she would always be one of the last to receive communion and the last to leave the Church. "Your faith as saved you, go in peace." (Lk. 7:50)

A home of the mysterious joy that attends the African Church. Kakuma Refugee Camp, a refugee chapel, Easter Sunday: looking out over the people, hearing their stirring singing, seeing their faith-filled faces, watching them sway to the accompaniment of the *adungu*, I thought that there could be no other place in the world I would rather be. If I was going to die, let it be then and there: with these people. The simplicity of it all seized me: no music books, no piano and no guitar; nothing tricky and complicated. Hearing the hymn once, it is mastered; hearing

the beat and pulse once, it is embraced by the African rhythmic instinct.

Like one of those huge steam-driven piston trains, wheels whirling; the chapel roared - full speed ahead - into the final thanksgiving hymn. I, the Pastor, was swept along the wake of that last song which was a bubbling, overflowing pot of spectacular formation-dancing children, ululating women, rhythmic hand-clapping, and an irrepressible singing refugee congregation from many nations that, with each verse, increased its volume and that brand of joy which mysteriously attends the African Church.

The inner life of JRS is benevolently compelled to Accompany, Serve, and Advocate. It is another way of expressing our deepest spirituality, our reason for being; it is to care for our people as a pastor cares for those entrusted to him or her. In doing so it finds the best in itself. This was Arrupe's epiphany as he addressed the suffering boat people of Southeast Asia. That epiphany beat in him like a second heart, as it does in all of us who had the privilege of being in JRS.

JRS also works in Papua New Guinea, as the image above demonstrates; here we are in the Diocese of Kiunga, during the celebration of the Eucharist.

Eucharist

Interreligious Dialogue: Hope and Fear

Mourad Abu-Seif, S.J.

These lines tell of the birth of a JRS project in Aleppo, which bears a special seed and nurtures dialogue and friendship between the different religions and ethnic groups in Syria.

These lines tell of the birth of a project of the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) in Aleppo, which bears a special seed and nurtures dialogue and friendship between the different religions and ethnic groups in Syria. This initiative is a source of great hope.

However, before going into the details it should be noted that the JRS' work for dialogue and reconciliation in Syria is part of a long tradition. The Jesuits of the Near East, present in the heart of the Muslim Arab world whose history is riddled with underlying tensions that make multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic relations complex and delicate, have always made the development of interreligious dialogue an essential priority.

Saint Joseph University in Beirut and the Jesuit schools are privileged places for educating the younger generations in dialogue and in the acceptance of differences, as well as for introducing reflection and research on the culture and history of the Near East. Numerous associations have been founded by the Jesuits in Egypt,

Lebanon and Syria, to become meeting places for people of different cultures and religions. At the beginning of the 1980s, Fr Frans Van Der Lugt, a Dutch Jesuit who lived in Syria, launched treks for the young from different social backgrounds whom he gathered together several times a year. With them he crossed Syria in all directions, from north to south and from east to west, to explore together with them the roots of their history and the riches of their cultural diversity. He wanted these gatherings to be an image of life in miniature. He wanted the young people to be able to experience fatigue and deprivation together and to discover together a new meaning for their lives enriched by their being different. In the 1990s Frans likewise founded the project of Al Ard, not far from Homs, with workshops for the handicapped from the surrounding villages and a centre for dialogue between people of different religions and views. They could come to pray and meditate at the *Dar Es Salam*, the House of Peace, open to all. With the same aim but a different approach, Fr Paolo dall'Oglio, an Italian Jesuit, restored an ancient monastery in the Syrian desert (Deir Mar Mousa), and founded there a religious community at the service of interreligious dialogue.

In December 2008 the JRS was established in Damascus and in Aleppo with two projects for



Iraqi refugees. The Aleppo project was based at the St Vartan Centre and set up educational and psycho-social support for the refugees through a team whose members were initially solely Christians. The team never made any kind of discrimination between Christians and Muslims or between Kurds and Armenians or others. Everyone felt at home at St Vartan. Despite the team's openness and the acceptance of non-Christian members to work there, and even though the vast majority of those who benefitted from the activities were Muslims, the character of the project was always Christian rather than Muslim.

When, under the influence of the so-called "Arab Spring", the uprising of the opposition began in Syria in March 2011 and gave rise to many expectations among Syrians but also to great fear. The Syrians knew that reform and changes were vital for their country's development but they knew too that this would cost them very dearly. From the start hope and fear divided the Syrian population: all aspired to a true reform but for some hope dominated and they supported the movement, whereas for the others it was fear that dominated and they opposed the movement. In both camps there were extremists and moderates. The extremists of one camp wanted change at any cost regardless of the price to be paid and vetoed all criticism of the movement. Those of the other camp condemned the movement once and for all and fought it using every possible means. Between the two extremes there were different, shifting positions that sought balance, a rallying point that would bring together the Syrian people.

As Jesuits in Syria we too experienced this hope and this fear. From the beginning we wanted to be totally present at this rallying point that could gather all Syrians. It was a complex and delicate quest to find a rallying point. And then deciding how to position oneself in a manner appropriate and accepted by all was far from easy. Furthermore, assuming the consequences of this decision was not easy either, for the Jesuits in Syria do not only represent themselves but are part of a specific group (the Christians). Moreover their work is also part of the local Church's work and in a certain way represents it. We were also aware of the instances of international interference due to the geo-political challenge which the movement represented and of the complexity of the confessional, cultural and ethnic composition of Syrian society. In addition, we had to take both these external and internal factors into account at the same time.

From this point our decision consisted in doing our utmost to be instruments of peace and mediation that would work with everyone to find and encourage occasions for meeting that would bring all Syrians together. Syrians of all classes mingle with each other naturally in many aspects of their life, at school and at university, at work and in local neighbourhoods and elsewhere. Yet when it is a matter of activities in

In the difficult situation of Syria the JRS tries to alleviate the difficulties of the displaced people. The photos of this service were taken at the centre of the Jesuits of St. Vartan which has been a reception centre for a number of years. In the photo, the preparation of food in the camp kitchens and a photo of the group.

Dialogue



As always in the reception centres of the refugees, one tries to make good use of time, offering the possibility for continuing studies (photo below.)



mosques or in churches or in the associations that come under their jurisdiction we do not find spontaneous common encounters, nor do we find them in the private sphere where society is very compartmentalized.

Throughout Syria in all mosques and Muslim institutions and in all churches and Christian institutions charitable projects were initiated to help the displaced and those affected by the events. Yet the character of services in mosques is always purely Muslim and the character of services in churches is purely Christian. This is why, for the work of the JRS, we decided to adopt a dual objective, like two wings, both components of equal importance: the first was to take aid to or rescue all who were affected by the violence that was to devastate our country, giving priority to the most vulnerable in-

dependently of their affiliation or orientation; the second was to do all this together with our brothers and sisters of other religions and communities in Syria and never to work on our own. We didn't want the help we were offering to be classified as a Christian service for Christians or as a Christian service for Muslims, or even as a Christian service for Syria. In no case did we want this work ever to have the hallmark of a specific character that would immobilize us in a predefined model, which might be good in itself but which would not respond to the demands of the difficult phase Syria was going through. To achieve this objective of being present at the rallying point of all Syrians without falling into the trap of discrimination and extremism, from the outset our project had to aim to gather all the members of Syrian society so that each and every one could make their own the project to save and to build up their country.

Towards the end of February 2012, although many Iraqi refugees had started to leave Aleppo, the JRS project of St Vartan was still functioning. The violence had not reached the city itself but had already arrived in some neighbourhoods in the suburbs. People were still hoping that the violent events would soon be over and that Syria would rapidly find a solution to resolve the conflict and restore peace and tranquillity. We never imagined that a day would come when we ourselves would be forced to leave St Vartan.

The number of displaced people arriving in Aleppo from Homs, Hama, Idlib and Deir'Ezzor began to increase considerably. Entire families would arrive every day, seeking the safety they had lost along with their homes. Dozens of young people volunteered to help them. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) was mobilized with all its forces and energy. A large number of young volunteers joined SARC or other NGOs in order to help.

In the midst of all this unrest, some youth gathered in small groups of eight that called themselves a "Family of Volunteers". These groups consisted of young university students and young professionals who represented Syrian society in all its diversity. Although they had not previously met they were able to organize a rescue campaign. This showed a high level of openness and maturity and was a luminous source of hope to dawn for our country's future. These young people had no special place in which to meet nor an official title that would permit them to work openly in the troubled atmosphere in



which we were living. They were seeking a place and official cover and, if I dare to say so, St Vartan was seeking them. When I met them for the first time I had no idea how this meeting was going to end, but I was deeply touched by their courage and their sincere desire to be of use. Their greatest torment was seeing families spend the night in the street since they had been unable to find anywhere for them to stay. They felt so strongly about this that some of them sometimes even opened their own homes to families. I suggested that the young volunteers be given a room at St Vartan where they could meet peacefully, and two other rooms in which to offer temporary hospitality to newly arrived families for the time it took to find other places for them, and a store-room where they could prepare their aid material and food baskets to be distributed.

In less than two months the number of volunteers who frequented the Centre St Vartan had reached 100; and the number of families increased from about 20 to more than 700. This accelerated growth did not leave me the time to think of the dangers that could result from a gathering of such different young people in so uncertain an environment.

In the early days I was sometimes worried to see people I didn't know and full cars entering and leaving the Centre at every moment, like an anthill. The St Vartan Centre had its own programme and besides the JRS team there were already other groups (the scouts, CVX, catechesis), who would visit it and who were more or less acquainted with each other. With the introduction of this new team, because of its diversity and its size, life at the Centre became very different. I had to pay attention to the contact between the old members and the new, and this made me monitor their work with great prudence and attention. This continued until an event occurred which turned my whole perspective upside down by causing me to see things in a new way. Less than a month had passed since these young people had started coming to St Vartan when Youssef, a young Muslim, made a simple remark. He had just returned from a meeting with his friends who belonged to another organization and was telling us about his discussion with them in which he had said to them: "we at St Vartan do things differently because our relationship is different". The remark passed almost unnoticed by the others, but for me it marked a turning point in my relationship with the team.

There was nothing new about a young Mus-



lim feeling "at home" at St Vartan. I had already heard this from many Iraqis, Muslims and Christians. Yet this time it had a very different meaning. Youssef's words showed that St Vartan was becoming the place where a "dream" came true: each person felt more human thanks to the bonds created with people who were previously strangers, and this network of relations radiated something, a sort of supernatural goodness which made them a true family in which each one contributed without seeking his or her own personal interest. Youssef is currently living abroad to continue his studies; but his "dream", the team and the whole project, remain engraved in his heart.

When the violence reached the districts of Aleppo it was mid-July 2012, the second day of the sacred month of Ramadan, and the streets were filled with displaced people. The news reached us rapidly and in a few minutes the entire team rushed into the streets to help, and the number of volunteers doubled with the increase in the number of displaced people. Schools were turned into shelters. In two weeks the team found itself in charge of eleven schools which sheltered more than 4,000 displaced people. The financial situation of Aleppo was still good. We had no reserve funds to respond to such a massive demand and yet we felt that nothing was lacking—for a Muslim's fasting has no merit if his neighbour is starving. The generosity of the people of Aleppo exceeded our expectations; this encouraged us to develop our project rapidly.



In the photos, the distribution of medications and bags of food and clothing to those who have lost their home and everything else under the bombardments.

Teaching



In the photo, women often pass the time in the reception camps making small crafts.

We also realized that the crisis would not be over soon and that the resources of Aleppo's population could not support the whole burden. We immediately began long-term planning.

A team was set up for each centre (school-shelter). Its role was to organize daily life and to assure the hygiene of more than three hundred people per school. A medical centre and a team providing psychological and educational support was also established at each of the shelters. A large cooking pot was installed in the courtyard of one of the schools, which subsequently became the campaign kitchen where hot food was prepared for almost 2,000 people a day. On seeing the wretched situation of this kitchen a business man provided us with a piece of land next door to his factory, a large garden with two tents that became our kitchen for a month and a half, before the area became a battlefield. Having to move yet again the Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary welcomed our kitchen in to the beautiful garden of their monastery. Here the JRS kitchen still continues to prepare hot meals for more than 10,000 people a day, including the inmates of several prisons of the Syrian Government. As for the team, the more the needs increased, the more determined and cohesive it became.

Towards the end of September, most of the team's activities were geared to serving the displaced people housed in the schools. The districts surrounding St Vartan had become battlefields, making access to the Centre really dangerous. Some of the local families had sought refuge in St Vartan to escape the rockets and bullets of isolated snipers. Then on 24 September an armed group of the opposition infiltrated the Centre and forced out the families to whom we had given shelter. The exchange of shots fired between the factions lasted for hours and the St Vartan Centre was bombed.

Since then we have never been able to go back there nor even to see the Centre other than in a few photos or videos posted on the internet.

The team continued to work in schools without having any meeting place, as it had had in the past, until the Catholic Bishop of Aleppo responded to the appeal of a friend who had closely followed the progress of our project and we were accepted in the "Catholic Circle". This is an ancient building that had served as a club for the young Christians of Aleppo. It had been directed by the Jesuit Fathers until the 1970s when it was closed and was thereafter used only occasionally. The building has a large hall that served as a theatre and a cinema. It was in this hall that we set up the centre for the distribution of food baskets and essential staples for the displaced families. In 2014 the number of these families served every month reached 12,000. Another room was used as a "data base" centre; and finally a large hall became our "Club", the place for the team's meetings and celebrations. All these changes coincided with the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year.

Many parents realized that their children couldn't go to school since the buildings were occupied by the displaced families. We were prepared for an eventual evacuation of the schools but the number of displaced families seeking refuge in the so called "safe" parts of Aleppo was increasing daily. The Syrian Red Crescent played a very important role in Aleppo for assembling and organizing the efforts of all the charitable associations of the town. The JRS team had a special role in these efforts, thanks to its unique diversity which won it the respect and admiration of other organizations and enabled it to assume the role of mediator/moderator.

A visiting team was formed to be in direct contact with the families resettled in apart-

ments and with the local families affected by the events. This team was often faced with the reality of these families' sufferings. This led it to develop and reinforce its links with them, giving it a constructive experience of which it regularly informed the other teams. Then a medical centre was created to provide all the families enrolled and visited with access to free medical care. Finally, since we had started leaving the schools that the Government had decided to evacuate, it was necessary to create a possibility for continuing our work with children in a centre where we could gather them together. Such a centre was offered to the JRS for this purpose by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition. They made part of their residence available to us which thus became our psycho-social centre. In it a team was set up and trained to take in and monitor hundreds of children, young people and adults, men and women, who were participating in all sorts of educational, cultural and artistic activities, including sports.

In 2014, the number of direct beneficiaries of this project was approximately 60,000. There were up to 250 volunteers in the team, most of whom had come without knowing the others, but they all knew one thing: that to alleviate their suffering thousands of people were in need of their efforts and their hearts. The team evenings at the Club became an opportunity for exchanges, occasions to get to know one another in an atmosphere of fellowship which the volunteers had never had a chance to experience before. That Christians and Muslims were able to have such a relationship and to work together in this way came as a surprise to everyone around us; a pleasant surprise laden with promises for some people, for others a source of disagreement or even animosity. However, independently of both these reactions this innovation had opened the door to a kind of relationship and experience of dialogue that should have been initiated long ago.

Before the Syrian crisis, I had been hoping to have the opportunity for a real meeting between young Christians and Muslims. In this regard, the JRS team in Aleppo and I consider that the crisis has offered us a gift of great value by giving us this opportunity to get to know each other. It has made our daily life in a team a goal in itself, since it has the same value as that of our service to those afflicted by the conflict. It is this which has made our project, in the eyes of those close to us, a core of the future Syrian society.

Personally, before the crisis I should never have dreamed of being able to build my Muslim brothers and sisters relations with such as those we have today thanks to our common work. I should never have dreamed that one day I would say Mass in the chapel of our residence at the time when, in the next room, a young Muslim woman was unrolling her prayer mat, something she would sometimes even do in the chapel. I should never have dreamed of being welcomed in a mosque and feeling as at home as I felt with my brothers in Aleppo. Our work and our liaison for the common good became an occasion for encounter where there is no longer room for prejudice or labelling people. Many of those who have been through this experience are still in Syria and like many others work in silence. They are neither extremists nor terrorists. They are Syria's hope. Their work together has led them towards an anticipated reconciliation which Syria aspires to achieve. But they are waiting for everyone's support so that they may continue to be the yeast in the dough of their society for a better future.

Translated by Kate Marcelin Rice

Below, the organization of games and light work for children; distribution of clothes.



A Service for Justice and Reconciliation

Amaya Valcárcel – JRS International Advocacy Coordinator



Fr. Arrupe had a great vision of JRS as carrying out its threefold mission: serving and accompanying the forcibly displaced could not be done without advocating for their cause.

Advocacy has been done since the early years of JRS existence. Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ, who worked with JRS in El Salvador in the eighties, reminds us of a very practical way of doing advocacy: “We used to invite diplomatic staff to visit the camps and talk to the displaced people, so they saw with their eyes what was happening. We didn’t have to write so many reports!”

In JRS, we understand advocacy as empowering forcibly displaced people to claim the rights to which they are entitled, and assisting them to exercise those rights. This involves promoting the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced persons; lobbying for governmental and institutional action to address root causes of forced displacement; and

working towards sustainable and durable solutions. Advocacy also includes activities to enhance public perception of refugees and forcibly displaced persons, and their re-integration.

JRS carries out advocacy by seeking opportunities to advocate for those whose needs are forgotten by others; addressing both the immediate needs as well as longer-term policy objectives of specific groups of forcibly displaced people; giving people the opportunity to tell their stories; creating spaces for dialogue between the centres of power and those who want to bring about positive change.

JRS advocacy is characterized by the following key principles:

- It is rooted in proximity to refugees and supporting their hopes and aspirations.
- It flows from accompaniment and service and is linked to JRS projects;
- It is based on Jesuit values, inspired by Ignatian spirituality.

Denise Coghlan, RSM (Mercy Sisters Congregation), JRS Cambodia director, explains the background of JRS involvement in the Campaign to Stop Landmines: “If you are helping people who have been injured by landmines, justice demands that you also advocate that the cause of the suffering be stopped; that you ban landmines and call producers to account.

Mercy requires that we serve the poor, the sick and the ignorant. Faith-inspired organizations can help align the interests of the people with the political interests of the leaders.”

JRS advocacy takes place on many levels. In the field, JRS staff frequently advocate on behalf of individual refugees who need help to protect their rights and dignity or to meet

Ignatian ideals

their basic needs. Such person-to-person advocacy is often carried out by project staff who observe and respond to refugee needs in the course of their daily work.

Accompaniment becomes advocacy when an appeal is made by a JRS staff member on behalf of a refugee, to an outside party that can provide help. Some examples: helping a refugee to enroll in a camp programme from which he/she has been mistakenly excluded; helping a refugee with a disability to access specialized care; arranging legal representation for a refugee in trouble.

Apart from being a spontaneous part of the daily work of JRS staff, advocacy for individuals is also a structured aspect of many JRS projects, especially in urban areas, where lawyers are engaged in casework related to asylum applications and other issues.

JRS advocacy also takes place at a country level: when changes in national law or policy affecting refugees or IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) are called for; when national resources could be directed towards better meeting refugee needs; to promote integration and combat xenophobia.

Our advocacy has also a significant regional component, with advocacy staff at this level charged with monitoring the situation of refugees and IDPs in the region, helping to draft organizational responses on relevant issues.

In many countries of Latin America, for example, the institutions responsible for refugee status determination are centralized, far from the areas where asylum seekers arrive and live. JRS in Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador provides legal advice in border areas. The teams follow up cases throughout the refugee status procedure.

Finally, JRS advocates on an international level. Our offices in Rome, Geneva, Brussels, and Washington present the concerns of the JRS network to governments and institutions that can improve conditions affecting refugees, and put pressure on other actors to do so as well. These offices work closely with the JRS regional advocacy officers on areas

of broad concern, such as detention or access to protection.

An example: Using information from JRS Eastern Africa field reports, JRS USA met with staff of the State Department refugee office responsible for Africa to emphasize the strain on resources in Kakuma Camp, Kenya, caused by the recent influx of thousands of new refugees fleeing conflict in South Sudan. Our advocacy had great credibility because JRS USA partners with JRS Eastern Africa in successful State Department funded projects, and because we were able to illustrate our points with specific examples of the effect of the influx on NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) programs and individual groups of refugees. Within ten days of this meeting, the State Department released new supplemental funding for Kakuma.

At every level, JRS advocacy is linked to, and dependent upon, the knowledge and understanding derived from our close relationship to the refugees themselves. The ability to mobilize the entire network to bring the voice of refugees to those who are in a position to effect positive change gives JRS advocacy its integrity. The following are some examples of our advocacy focus.

JRS is an implementing partner for UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner

Below, an instructor in Yei, South Sudan. On the previous page, Fr. Amalraj, S.J., regional director of the JRS, with the refugees from Bhutan in Nepal.



In the photo on the right, Bhutanese refugees in the refugee camp of Goldhap, in Nepal, during a demonstration against violence against women.

for Refugees) and other donors in projects aimed at preventing and responding to SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence) in situations of displacement. Such work includes legal and psychological services for SGBV survivors including refugees and IDPs. Educational initiatives and awareness-raising about SGBV are held for men and women in detention facilities, reception centres and affected communities.

An illustration of these efforts is JRS' participation in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, a global campaign seeking to mobilize communities around the world to end all forms of gender violence; JRS also participated in the Stop Rape and Gender-Based Violence international campaign.

Today, the majority of the world's refugees and IDPs live in urban settings, mostly in the rapidly growing slums of the cities in the global South. Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, hosts an estimated 470,000 people in refugee like situations. This makes it, simply, the largest concentration of refugees anywhere. But it is hardly unique – Addis Ababa, Amman or Bangkok host large forced migrant populations.

A positive approach empowers urban refugees to use their energy and talents to benefit host communities. Urban refugees share all the challenges of the urban poor, and often face additional barriers due to their uncertain legal status and lack of documentation. They constantly face protection risks, among them detention, deportation, and labour and sexual exploitation.

When viewed as a drain on scarce resources, urban refugees may become the target of xenophobia, and face harassment from local authorities and exploitation by employers. In



the regions of Southern and Eastern Africa, Asia Pacific, South Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East, JRS service and advocacy combine to address some of the urgent problems facing them. JRS urges governments and civil society groups worldwide to welcome refugees and other forcibly displaced people in urban areas. We believe that adopting a positive and supportive approach to the presence of refugees in host countries not only promotes their wellbeing but empowers them to use their skills to benefit their host communities.

On a broader level, JRS provides input to the drafting processes shaping international policies and works to see that the principles articulated in such documents and in international human right laws are applied to the treatment of all refugees, including those who live in non-camp settings.

JRS Europe has researched the situation of forced migrants in Europe who live in destitution, and who reside for the most part in urban areas. Due to their uncertain legal status, destitute forced migrants have little or no access to healthcare, reliable accommodation or formal employment. JRS Europe advocates with European Union (EU) policymakers, through one-on-one meetings and at large events, calling for laws and policies that would alleviate the destitution of forced migrants across Europe.

In Nairobi, JRS is part of the Urban Refugee Protection Network, which serves as a

Activism



Below, a child of Sri Lanka, in a reception camp for “internal refugees.”

channel to raise awareness about the plight of urban refugees, based on their experiences, challenges and protection needs in Kenya. JRS works closely with partner agencies in referring urban refugees for medical and legal assistance. In the urban project in Kampala, JRS gives a voice to asylum seekers and refugees by working with UNHCR and the Refugee Law Project to advocate for their legal protection, and through referrals to other NGOs.

But perhaps the first step is to find ways for the story of the urban refugee to break the chains of anonymity and become more widely heard.

Hospitality stands at the center of our Christian faith: welcoming strangers into our homes is a question of justice. In Europe and Latina America, JRS has developed communities of hospitality and awareness-raising campaigns. In France, JRS works with families and religious congregations who welcome refugees into their homes. Starting in Paris, the *Welcome Project* has grown to other 12 cities, reaching out to a greater number of refugees.

Let me finish this article with the testimony of Antony, a refugee from Kenya who now lives in Rome, and who has become one of our advocates for hospitality. He addressed a group of religious sisters in an event organised by JRS at the Jesuit Curia with these words: “It is the call by Pope Francis that we all need to respond to concretely, by welcom-

ing refugees into religious houses, convents and seminaries, walking with them during their time of great need.

Displaced persons have many needs such as housing, food or education. However, in my experience as a refugee, what refugees need most is love and compassion, which enables them to restore the dignity that has been taken away from them by conflict and sudden displacement. They need to feel that they are human beings so that they can heal their wounds and rebuild their lives again, and hopefully heal others who are likewise wounded.”



Families and the Refugee Problems

Danielle Vella – JRS International

The family of Mark (not his real name) fled politically motivated persecution in Kenya in January 2014. Hired thugs burst into their home one evening and took him hostage, leaving his 20-year-old cousin dead and landing a close friend of his in hospital with serious injuries. “They came after my mother,” recalls the soft-spoken man in his early twenties. “We survived by the grace of God. They took me and told my cousin to go back to sleep. As soon as he turned, they hit him in the neck and killed him.” Mark’s family survived because neighbours switched on their burglar alarms and alerted the police. Mark’s mother didn’t wait around. Together with Mark and her 11-year-old daughter, she came to seek refuge in Italy. All were granted refugee status and are now picking up the pieces of their shattered lives in Rome.

Mark’s family was fortunate in its misfortune: at least they all managed to escape together and reached their destination safely. Others are not so lucky. Part of the awful reality of forced migration is that families are

broken up. Husbands and wives are torn apart, parents part from their children, siblings lose sight of each other. This can happen when the breadwinner goes to look for work abroad, because there are simply no opportunities at home, and the family is too poor to survive. And it can happen when people escape conflict, violence and persecution, often fleeing from one minute to the next in complete chaos.

Ultimately those who have no choice but to leave their home and country often take this

tough decision at a great cost to their family. This is not what they intend and certainly not what they want. Quite the opposite, usually they take the decision to protect those they love and who are dependent on them. But seeking asylum or a better life abroad can be a risky business, especially when people undertake the journey without documents via illegal and highly risky channels, because they have no other option.

An untold number of people die on the way. I remember Kofi, a young asylum seeker from West Africa, whom I met in Sicily. His wife and children aged six and two drowned in the Mediterranean Sea when they tried to follow him to Europe. He said: “I used to be a happy type of guy, cheerful and making jokes all the time. But now I’ve really changed, I just can’t laugh and smile like I used to. If only I could have another family, at least one child, so I can start over again.”

In October 2013, a fishing boat carrying 400 Syrian refugees sank in the Mediterranean after it came under fire from what looked like a military or coastguard vessel as it left Libya. Entire families were on board. Around 260 people died, many of them children. Some survivors were the only ones left of their family.

Dr Katrine Camilleri, director of *Jesuit Refugee Service Malta*, remembers hearing one father who had lost his two children speak at a meeting with local government officials. “He said, *We are not blaming you for the death of our children. We know, we killed our children,*” she recalled. “His words left me completely cold because first, as a parent, I cannot imagine what it must be like. But part of me felt, *no, you didn’t kill them, we did, because of the walls we put up to protect ourselves in Europe.* Asylum seekers make this journey because they have no choice but to make it. Many people on that boat had passports, some were professionals, but they couldn’t get visas because the truth is that once it is clear you need protection, the doors are closed. It is practically impossible to get a visa to travel legally to get protection.”



Many refugees leave their families behind in the hope that they will first reach their destination and then arrange for spouse and children to join them legally, which implies a safe journey.

Often men or even women face the perilous journey alone, crossing treacherous deserts and seas and hostile territories, at the mercy of smugglers and traffickers. Many leave their families behind in the hope that they will first reach their destination and then arrange for spouse and children to join them legally, which implies a safe journey.

But reality gets in the way. Even if an asylum seeker gets protection for himself, restrictive family reunification policies and logistical problems can put paid to his hopes. To mention just two of many obstacles, high standards of proof are required by host countries to ensure that the people you want to bring are indeed your family members, and visas and travel documents can be extraordinarily difficult to get even if you do get permission for your family to join you.

There are some who manage. Like the family of Alas, a man who fled to Malta alone after he came under threat in his native Somalia because of his human rights work. His wife and six children got to Kampala and waited there in the hope of joining him. Alas was first granted subsidiary protection, a status that would not have allowed him to apply for family reunification. With legal aid from JRS Malta, he appealed and was granted refugee status. Then he started the process to bring his family over. The procedure took many months of dashed hopes, frustrations and setbacks. Finally, when his family set off from Uganda armed with their hard-won travel documents and a letter stating they would be granted a visa upon arrival in Malta, they faced obstacles every step of the way. At every desk, immigration officials were reluctant to let them through and sometimes forbade them from doing so. Eventually, they reached Malta and Alas, more than four years after they parted and a full year after his request for reunification was granted.

The sheer resilience and refusal to give up refugees can be nothing short of incredible. This is how they manage, sometimes for years, to live apart from their families and then to rebuild their lives in a new place, out of nothing, when they are finally reunited.

Something that can make or break is the support extended by the host community. Alas' family managed to make it to Malta because of the legal and moral support extended by JRS and a Ugandan Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). His wife and

children were accompanied all the way to Malta by a lawyer from the NGO. "We have overcome!" she wrote in a triumphant SMS to her colleague in JRS as soon as they managed to board the last flight to reach Malta.

Mark and his family are being hosted by a religious congregation in Rome. "They have helped us not only by offering a roof but also a place to heal our inner wounds, with spiritual counseling and by allowing us to be part of their family. We eat meals together, share discussions, play football, or watch a game together." Mark was delighted also to find a "second family", a parish group of 20 families. He said: "At first they invited us to their church to tell our story and after that we became very close. They are so good to us. We spent Christmas Eve with one family. This is what refugees need: to feel welcome, not to be seen as a bother."

We see this a lot. In another individual case that had a happy outcome, JRS in Berlin accompanied a Roma family that was fighting deportation to Bosnia. After two years, Germany's Hardship Commission granted the family permission to stay. JRS said: "The solidarity from school mates, teachers and public administration staff, who endorsed the family's request, was extraordinary and encouraging." In France, JRS coordinates a Welcome Network that encourages French families and religious congregations to open their homes to refugees who would otherwise have nowhere to go.

Given the state of the world today, people will continue to flee their homes in huge numbers, and they will continue to face the heartbreak of separation and loss. As brothers and sisters in solidarity with them, our task is to make sure that refugees and other forced migrants achieve the goal they paid so high a price for: a place of safety where they can live together with their families in dignity and hope.



Above, Alas, a Somali refugee in Malta, after many difficulties succeeds in reuniting with his family. On the previous page, the Roma woman of Bosnia, spoken of in the article, who succeeded in obtaining asylum in Germany.

Refusal

Education for Those at the Margins

Mary McFarland – JC:HEM International Director

The *Human Development Index* (HDI) shows that the places of the world with the highest poverty and the highest conflict also have the lowest levels of education. Can you imagine if higher education could help reverse that?

In the photos, from the left, the universities of the Jesuits who sponsor studies in developing countries; a computerized classroom in Ban Mai Nai Soi, in Thailand.

When discussing the importance of access to higher education, the question “Why educate refugees if they can’t be employed?” is often asked. A refugee who is a graduate of the *Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins* (JC:HEM) Diploma in Liberal Studies program responded by saying “We do not seek higher education for jobs, we seek higher education to fight ignorance”. Another perspective comes from a refugee living in Chad, “If we had had education in Darfur, we would not be refugees today. Without education, we were caught unaware”.

Not all who live at the margins are refugees. Many are internally displaced people

within their own country. During a recent assessment visit to Sri Lanka where many internally displaced people live, a teacher reflected on the need for higher education “... so people could have a space in their mind for new ideas - a space to give some distance from the war.” Higher education brings hope for a better future.

The margins are defined by JC:HEM as those places in the world where people are unserved, or underserved by higher education. In addition to JC:HEM, two organizations leading the way to advocate for refugees and internally displaced people to access higher education are *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) and the *United Nation’s High Commission on Refugees* (UNHCR). JRS provides primary and secondary education to refugees in many

Teachers



countries. They understand first-hand how important higher education is to prepare qualified teachers for their classrooms, and the importance of higher education for community development. The *United Nation's High Commission on Refugees* (UNHCR) reports over 51 million people, more than at any other time in recorded history, are living in a state of forced human migration. Very few have access to higher education. As a result, UNHCR has recognized access to higher education as a strategic goal for 2014-2016. The *Human Development Index* (HDI) shows that the places of the world with the highest poverty and the highest conflict also have the lowest levels of education. Can you imagine if higher education could help reverse that? In twenty years the HDI could

depict these same countries with high levels of education, low poverty, and low conflict. It is possible.

In 2007 the US Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) Deans of Adult and Continuing Education programs (DACE) sponsored a worldwide conference to explore how the education rich areas of the world could relate to the education poor areas of the world. That conference led many kindred spirits to work toward what would become: *Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins* (www.jc-hem.org).

JC:HEM, an initiative of the Society of Jesus, exists to ensure those who live at the margins have access to higher education, and that the world has access to the voices and insights of these bright, capable students.

Below, boys and girls in the school of technology of the Arrupe Learning Centre, in the refugee camp of Kakuma, in Kenya.



Right, one of the graduates of the Kakuma camp, and, below, a group of graduates again from the Arrupe Learning Centre of the same camp. In the centre of the photo, Fr. John Fitzgibbons, S.J.



Through the JC:HEM global virtual classroom, the voices of those at the margins reach the world. Professors from around the world volunteer their time to teach. These professors tell of their own transformation after hearing from the students about walking over an hour in 100+ degree heat (100°Fahrenheit equal to 38° Celsius) to reach the computer lab and Internet access to study, about their stories of how higher education brings a better future. Students and professors encourage each other. There is joy in learning.

2010 through 2013 formed the pilot years for JC:HEM. In 2010 two academic programs were developed: The Diploma of Liberal Studies, and certificate level courses or Com-

munity Service Learning Tracks (CSLTs). Three locations were chosen for the pilot: Aleppo, Syria, Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi, and Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. When the war in Syria escalated in 2012, the classroom center was bombed. JRS remained to accompany the Syrian people and the JC:HEM program needed to move to Amman, Jordan.

The Diploma in Liberal Studies is an on-line program awarded by *Regis University* in Denver, Colorado. Students study on-line in a virtual classroom with professors around the world, and learning is supported by on-site and on-line tutors. In each course section of 15 students, ten to twelve different cultures and countries are represented. The learning community includes women and men who are Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and other religions. Alumni are making a difference in their community with some starting businesses, others becoming teachers, and many are called on to be peacekeepers or to mediate intercultural or interreligious conflicts.

CSLTs are certificate courses supported by many Universities. Courses such as: Primary Teacher Education, Counseling, English as a Foreign Language, Child Protection, Special Needs, and Community Health Provider meet local needs and have been offered in English, French, and Arabic. Community leaders, and the on-site partners identify topics for CSLTs. Outcomes of the courses benefit the community directly. In one location where Special Needs was offered the graduates started a respite care center for people with disabilities and their families. Today the center is a vibrant resource to many who live in the refugee camp. In addition to the initial program locations, new JC:HEM locations include Chad, Afghanistan, Mae Hong Son in Thailand, and students from *St. Aloysius Gonzaga Institute* in Taunggyi, Myanmar. In 2015, JC:HEM reaches to more students through partnership with APC in Bendum, Philippines; in Sri Lanka with JRS and the Province; and in Za'atari Camp, Jordan-Syria border with JRS and UNHCR.

Thanks to the JC:HEM team, JRS and other on-site partners, faculty, and Universities like Regis, Georgetown, Gonzaga, and Comillas University who led the way, JC:HEM has served approximately 1,600 students... Jesuit Higher Education: Transform Thinking, Transform the World.



Serving the most vulnerable migrants

Rafael Moreno Villa, S.J.



According to the United Nations Report on International Migration, in 2013 there were approximately 37 million international emigrants in Latin America and the Caribbean. Of these, 1.1% emigrated to Africa, 5.1% to Asia, 10.3% to Europe, 69.8% to the United States and Canada, 0.3% to Oceania, and 13.4% to another country within the Latin American/Caribbean region. Some 43% of the Latin American emigrants come from Mexico, which ranks second to India among countries in the world with the greatest number of emigrants. Colombia ranks second among countries that have the greatest number of persons who are internally displaced because of armed conflict; they have a total of 5,700,000 displaced persons.

Among these emigrants of Latin America and the Caribbean, between 7.5 and 9 million are highly vulnerable. Their vulnerability is due to diverse factors related to their not being able to obtain a visa. Their lack of documentation can have various consequences: they may have to submit to unscrupulous traffickers; they may have to follow highly dangerous routes on which they will be assaulted by the predatory authorities, organized criminals, or common delinquents; or they may face a hardening of migratory policies in the countries through which they pass or toward which

The Jesuit Migrant Network has developed into an inter-provincial and inter-sectorial network that is present in 18 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and includes more than 80 works and programs linked to migration.

they're traveling. Such policies are infringing more and more on their human rights.

For example, the route traveled by irregular migrants through Mexican territory and across the border of the United States is without a doubt the most dangerous route in the Americas and one of the most hazardous in the world. There is an 80% probability that during their journey the migrants will be subjected to detention, extortion, or deportation by the migration authorities of Mexico or the U.S.; or that they will be victims of extortion, kidnapping, sexual assault, homicide, torture, or trafficking on the part of organized crime.

Even though the migratory situation is highly problematic, the Society of Jesus undertook

Above, the participants in a workshop on the theme of hospitality.

Network

apostolic work with migrants only many years after the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) had begun its work with refugees and displaced persons. It was not until the year 1998, at a meeting of the JRS national directors of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), that the then director, Brother Raúl González Fabre SJ, was asked to make an analysis of the situation of irregular migration and to present a work proposal to the LAC provincials.

Finishing his analysis in November 1999, Raúl specified the most vulnerable migratory flows and presented a well thought-out strategy for intervention, a strategy that continues to inspire our work and organization even now. His first insight concerned the need for new organizational forms: “the apostolate with irregular migrants requires us to go beyond our territorially based apostolic structures (provinces more or less defined by national divisions) and to adjust to the phenomenon itself, that is, to the continuous flow of migrants passing from one nation to another. Accordingly, the plan from the start should be conceived on a trans-provincial scale. ... This apostolate must be thought of in terms of regional unity.”

Brother Raúl had other very valuable intuitions: 1) the various tasks should be distributed among the provinces in accord with their role as countries of origin, countries of transit,

and/or destination countries; 2) the apostolate should be conceived of as a multidimensional work with three dimensions: social/pastoral, investigative/theoretical, and political/organizational; 3) the project should be developed gradually in three phases: creation or broadening of the base of local work, regional coordination, and continental coordination; 4) the project should be organized from the start in close collaboration with the work of others, especially the Scalabrinians.

The proposal was approved by the Provincials, but Brother González could not carry it into practice because he was subsequently assigned to Zambia. The proposal was not taken up again until 2002, when a group of Jesuits from the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Mexico met in Quito and decided to provide international coordination for the migration work they were doing at the national level. From 2002 to 2011 that group gradually grew into a network. Originally the *Jesuit Migrant Service* (JMS) included only the works in various Provinces that specialized in migration. Later on we gradually included the migration-related programs in our universities, parishes, and social centers. During all this time we had sporadic relations with the JRS. In October 2011 the Latin American Provincials Conference (CPAL) approved JMS’ present structure and organizational principles.

Even as we were developing the Latin American network, we were also seeking more effective collaboration with migration-related Jesuit works in the U.S., which were organized differently. This effort culminated with the signing of an agreement between the U.S. Provincials Conference and the CPAL in 2004. This agreement gave rise to a process of increasing collaboration at the level of the Americas which has remained until today.

There are four important principles defining the specific nature of the Society’s work in migration and determining the form in which we are presently organized in LAC. First, concern about migration demands that we pay special attention to its global context. This context requires us to act as a universal body with a universal mission, even while respecting the radical diversity of our situations. Second, our organizational forms must be determined by the nature and the trajectory of the migratory flows in LAC and not by our own provincial structures.

Third, given that it is an apostolic priority



of the whole Society of Jesus and one of the priorities of the apostolic plan of the CPAL, our work with migrants, refugees, and displaced persons must be conceived as an interprovincial and intersectorial service, not as the exclusive work of JRS, JMS, or the social sector. Fourth, it is important to respect both the global and enduring nature of migration and the focalized and transitory nature of displacement and expatriation as refugees.

Given these principles, the *Jesuit Migrant Network* (JMN-LAC) has developed into an interprovincial and intersectorial network that is present in 18 countries of LAC belonging to 13 Provinces of the CPAL. The network includes more than 80 works or programs providing assistance to migrants, displaced persons, or refugees in the sectors of social action, education, pastoral ministry, spirituality, and communication.

The specific objectives of the JMN are the following: promoting and defending the human rights of the most vulnerable migrants, displaced persons, refugees, and their families through pastoral and social accompaniment, research, training, advocacy, and promotion of their own organizations; attacking the structural causes that produce these massive movements of human beings; helping our region and its constituent societies to reflect on and undertake the social transformation that give rise to migrants, refugees, and displaced persons; and linking the Society of Jesus of LAC with other initiatives and networks in which the church and civil society are addressing the problem of migration.

The Network is divided into 4 sub-regions: 1) *The Central American and North American sub-region* (CANA) has mainly focused on the flow of Central Americans and Mexicans toward the U.S. Increasing attention is being given to the cases of refugees who are fleeing from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala because of violence. 2) *The Caribbean sub-region* gives priority to the flow of Haitian and Dominican migrants toward the U.S., Canada, and South America. 3) *The Southern sub-region* pays special attention to the flow of Andean migrants toward Chile and of Haitian migrants toward Brazil. 4) *The Colombian and Border Countries sub-region* is mostly dedicated to refugees and persons internally displaced because of the armed Colombian conflict.

Each sub-region strives to provide a variety of services covering four dimensions: *the so-*



cial dimension offers social and humanitarian services directly to the persons affected; *the pastoral dimension* accompanies them evangelically, sacramentally, and pastorally; *the investigative/theoretical dimension* promotes interdisciplinary research concerning the causes and consequences of migration, displacement, and refugee status, and it also provides training and guidance to organizations working on these problems; *the political/organizational dimension* promotes consciousness in the countries of origin, transit, and destination; it engages in political advocacy aimed at getting the governments of the region to make substantial changes in their migratory policies; and it urges the most vulnerable persons to become actively organized so that they themselves play a significant role in pursuing their demands. Also, legal advice and defense is provided to victims of human rights abuses and to the institutions which help them.

All this we try to do as part of the *Human Mobility Ministry* which is being promoted by the Church in the Americas.

Translated by Joseph V. Owens, J.J.

Above, the embrace between Chileans and Peruvians in reference to the controversy over the maritime border between the two countries. On the previous page, women celebrating "Mother's Day."

The Jesuit Service to Migrants

Josep Buades Fuster, S.J.

The *Jesuit Service to Migrants* is considered a particularly relevant actor in the world of attention to immigrant persons, in reflection on migrations and the society shaped by the same, and in the public debate on the politics of immigration and integration.

Spain was a country of emigration during almost the entire 20th century, as well as of exile during the Civil War (1936-1939.) After the 1950s it became an important tourist destination for many Europeans. Little by little, a sizeable number of retirees from Great Britain, Germany, and other European countries converted the Spanish coasts into places of residence, because it was cheaper to live in Spain with the retirement pensions from their respective nations. Spain only began to receive migrant workers at the end of the 1980s, in sectors such as agriculture, domestic employment, construction and the hospitality industry.

The first immigrants were mainly Moroccans, although there were also Dominicans, Argentineans, Cubans, Columbians, Filipinos... But foreigners in Spain did not reach 1% of the total population. Between 1995 and 2008 immigration increased greatly, mainly of Ecuadorians, Columbians, Boliv-

ians, Argentineans, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Chinese, etc. Foreign residents grew to over 12% of the total population. Most recently, three groups account for the majority of the foreign population in Spain: Rumanians, Moroccans, and British, followed by Ecuadorians, Chinese and Columbians. But there are also residents from many other countries.

The economic crisis has been long and intense in Spain. The unemployment rate has topped 25%, even higher for young people and foreigners. This has had repercussions for migrations. The number of new immigrants has fallen greatly, while at the same time, long-term immigrants are returning to their former homes or moving somewhere else, while emigration of young native Spaniards is increasing. These are all notable, but relatively moderate, movements. The majority of immigrants have remained in Spain. With the passage of time, more and more migrants acquire Spanish nationality, so that immigrant no longer is equivalent to foreigner. Spanish society is becoming more diverse and complex. It must be pointed out that, throughout this time, the number of requests for asylum has remained low, and are fewer still the number of refugees who have been given international protection by Spain.

Below, a working group of the SJM, the Jesuit Service to Migrants of Spain. On the next page, a demonstration of refugees.



The Society first gave attention to immigrants in the 1990s. At the same time, there were Jesuits who joined in local initiatives for welcoming migrants. Several provinces incorporated the theme of migrations into their apostolic plans. They began to sketch out works of the Society for welcoming immigrants. At that time the most outstanding initiative was the creation of the *University Institute of Studies on Migrations* at the Pontifical University Comillas.

The year 2000 remains a focal point. In that year, an assembly of the Social Apostolate of the then-six Spanish provinces added migrations to the apostolic priorities of the social sector. This encouraged the creation of works throughout the entire area: *Pueblos unidos* [Peoples United] in Madrid (La Ventilla district), the foundation *CeiMigra* in Valencia, the foundation *Migra Studium* in Barcelona, the foundation *Ellacuría* in Bilbao, and the association *Voluntariado Claver* in Seville. These formed the nucleus of the Jesuit Service for Migrants (JSM,) but these were not the only works. In Madrid developed also the *Centro Padre Rubio* centered on the parish of San Francisco de Borja. In Valladolid and Burgos, the Society participates in networks with other religious congregations, such as the *Íncola Network* and *Atalaya Intercultural*. In Tudela was formed the *Centro Lasa*. Communities of hospitality also were formed in Madrid, Bilbao, Durango, San Sebastián...in which Jesuits share their life with immigrants (especially young Africans.) And there have been other initiatives in Alicante, Almería, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria...

At the same time as these apostolic works were being created, a corresponding interprovincial coordinating structure was formed. This coordination also reached out to join with the *Jesuit Refugee Service* in Europe (JRS-Europe) and the *Jesuit Service to Migrants* in Latin America and the Caribbean (SJM-LAC.) In 2006, when the coordination of the works began to address a number of common challenges, the name SJM-Spain was adopted.

The SJM has also undertaken common projects in several more relevant areas, sometimes shared with the JRS-Europe or what is known as the *Global Ignatian Advocacy Network—Migrations*. It is easy to highlight two areas which involve guaranteeing human rights: the “Southern Frontier” (which

includes Spain with Morocco in the African cities of Ceuta and Melilla, or more broadly the Mediterranean and the Atlantic) and the “Invisible Frontiers” (representing those who suffer within the countries, such as persons who find themselves in irregular situations.) The SJM advocates a welcoming society and is opposed to efforts to criminalize migrant persons. The visits to migrants confined in Centers for Internment of Foreigners as a way of assuring their expulsion have been the basis of very rigorous reports prepared by the civil society and which serve as tools for dialogue with the government. The experience of communities of hospitality, along with other forms of involvement with persons, has led to participation in platforms which have influenced legislative processes



Spain



under the name “Let Us Save Hospitality,” so that the laws not criminalize migrants in irregular situations and those who welcome them. There are other aspects to this mission as well, such as the formation of leaders of the associations, the promotion of citizen participation, interreligious encounter, as well as the empowering of migrant women in domestic employment.

SJM-Spain also discovered areas for common action, and elaborated a reflection on *our way of proceeding*. In 2005 it published a document which presented the specificity of its work with the migrant population and with the society with results from the phenomenon of migration. It profiled the specificity in its way of proceeding, in investigation and reflection, in the socio-educational intervention with the migrant population, in the sensibilization of the society, as well as cooperation. It also set some priorities. In 2010, the SJM continued to reflect on its identity, mission and way of proceeding. It tried to better connect the many works within the SJM. It established two poles in tension: the local and the common. Those which were aimed at the local situation addressed concerns about life and insertion, action, investigation and reflection, social sensibilization, and political repercussions.

The SJM discovered that its mission also tended towards two poles: the immigrant population in a very vulnerable situation and the integration of a pluralistic society. The first pole worked in the frontiers (exterior and interior) and with youth, the second in areas such as the participation of citizens and interreligious meetings.

The SJM is considered a particularly relevant actor in the world of attention to im-

migrant persons, in reflection on migrations and how the society is shaped by the same, and in the public debate on politics of immigration and integration. It has an interesting line of publications (which can be found at www.sjme.org) but also of representations before the government, the Spanish Parliament and other organs of the State. Perhaps 2009 can be seen as a reference: involving the most recent reform of the law of regarding foreigners. Normally, the SJM participates in the public arena along with other organizations. In Spain could be highlighted collaboration with Caritas Española, the Spanish Commission for Assistance to Refugees, the *Red Acoge*, the Secretariat for Migrations of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, and many others. It also collaborates strictly with the JRS-Europe regarding interactions with the European Institutions.

In this presentation it has been seen how the SJM was born in reality from a group of works which coordinated among themselves. In part it could be suspected that it coincided with the commission of coordination; that is, with the directors of work and a few other persons. The SJM has grown in its exterior relationships, principally through publications. Little by little, the professionals and volunteers who make up the works of the Society in the area of migrations feel as their own the identity of the SJM. In important moments workshops for reflection are held with members of the teams. But the first assembly of the SJM was celebrated in 2014. About fifty persons from all of the works attended.

This assembly had its fruits. The participants asked to increase contacts between the diverse entities: more visits among the members of their teams, more opportunities to learn from the experience of one another, for joint formation. They also asked for more common projects involving all the SJM, as well as joint strategic planning. And, in conclusion, they asked for a strengthening of the structure of SJM itself: including an internal bulletin of communication, a renovation of the webpage, along with the funding of an office for the management. It was a matter of furnishing the means to continue to accomplish a mission, to continue to contribute to a society definitively transformed by these migratory movements, a society which we hope will be welcoming and inclusive.

Translated by Robert E. Hurd, S.J.

*In the photo,
professional
formation at the
school San José.*

*Photo by Fr. Josep
Buades Fuster, S.J.,
the author
of the article.*



Roma Mission in Central Europe

Tamás Forrai, S.J.

As a result of the political and economic changes of the 1990s in Eastern Europe, many workers were laid off in industry. Typically, many of these semi-skilled or untrained workers came from a Roma, or gypsy ethnic background. They suffered most because of the changes taking place in the system. During the last 20 years, poverty has reproduced itself for them, because they have been unjustly discriminated against in the distribution of social welfare resources.

The integration of the Roma people in Central Europe presents a crucial challenge for our countries, for the Churches, and therefore also for our Jesuit Provinces. But there are now clear signs that these Provinces are co-operating, sharing networking and local programs. The Hungarian, Romanian and Slovakian Jesuits gathered to reflect together and to share their best practices, while the Romanian Region started a *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) program. What follows are some of the fruits of this collaboration and cooperation.

Hungary

The Hungarian Province of the Society of Jesus has started a unique mentoring and educational program at a variety levels: it ranges from those adults who did not finish grammar school, to those who are at a university level. Its main goal is to build up an educated and socially-integrated new generation, a generation for whom the usual migration, with all its difficulties, might become a thing of the past.

There is the *Roma Residential University College* in Budapest. The aim of this college is to educate successful young Roma college or university students who are committed to public endeavour and active social dialogue. The students at the College must possess professional excellence and be sensitive towards social issues.

The official opening of the *Roma Jesuit College* took place in September 2011. It is a unique example of collaboration between the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic, the Reformed, and the Lutheran Churches. The

Social dimension of migration



“Roma integration in Central Europe is a crucial challenge for our countries, for the Churches, and therefore also for Jesuit Provinces. Moreover there is a visible sign of cooperation between these Provinces by networking and sharing our local programs.”

Churches decided to work together in this single enterprise, which is located in five university cities.

Jesuits lead the program. We work with 31 Roma students who elected to study in Budapest. Our College provides a community and an academic atmosphere which are indispensable for the professional development of the students. Tutors organize programs at the Residential College. They assist students to complete their college and university stud-

In the photo, young nomadics receiving the assistance of the Jesuits in Romania.

Gypsies

ies successfully. When students finish the programs internal to the College, the university grants them their diplomas, certifying that they have successfully completed their course of studies.

This internal program has three parts: the first module includes modern literacy, an introduction to the social sciences, information technology, and language studies – these are essential intellectual skills for a successful career. The second module consists of a study of Roma culture, and Hungarian ethnography. This module includes learning the forgotten languages of Roma people. The third module centres on Christian community activities. The College also strives to provide a college qualification which will assist students, on their successful graduation, in their employment prospects.

Ilona, one of the first students of the College, spoke about the program, which may be called a *School of Possibilities for Adults*: “I am 52 years old, and I want to learn to read and write because I could not do that when I was a child. I was the oldest daughter in the family, and I was not allowed to go to school. I had to help around the house and take care of my four younger sisters and brothers. Later, I had my own family. I brought up three kids, who are now married with their own children. I



would like to read fairy tales and Bible stories to them.”

This system of informal education – there are already eight of these centres in Hungary – relies on the help of volunteers. These are passionate about helping those who had no opportunity to finish their elementary studies as children. So, the main focus is on teaching the Roma people, who belong to this most disadvantaged group in society. As elsewhere in the world, education is the only way to open up possibilities. Women are crucial in this, and that is why they are our primary focus. The first steps were taken in 2010: to date, nearly 200 people have received their qualifications. This is their first step to finding a job and earning their own livelihood, instead of simply relying on unemployment benefits.

“While I adore the miraculous world of the Roma people – the cultural variety of their music, dance, and arts – it is a challenge to make mathematics clear to them, and to apply it to their different way of thinking. We are indeed fortunate that they associate with us,” says volunteer Mrs Éva Balázs, a retired teacher. Volunteers from many different backgrounds are joining the project. Many of them have never had any idea about the poverty of the Roma people, or have had no experience as educators. Sometimes this kind of work with the poorest strains and depresses the volunteers. That is why, twice a year, special training sessions are organized for them. Specialists and experts are invited to help prepare and train volunteers for the work. Both the Roma people, as well as those working for them, have to





deal with strong prejudices and stereotypes. It is therefore important to take these steps which lead to a more inclusive society.

There is the *Miskolc – “Common Space” Youth Program*. In this long-term project, volunteers play a crucial part. This type of work is not as well known in Hungary as it is in western European countries. That is precisely why this important *Common Space* project has many facets and relies so much on volunteers. The project aims to promote social inclusion in an underprivileged housing estate in the industrial city of Miskolc. This neighbourhood is well known for high unemployment and social disintegration. Our volunteers commit themselves for the duration of the school year. They take part in a host of activities: they assist in the local Jesuit parish, organize activities, mentor educational projects which include adults, involve families in eco-gardening, participate in community rehabilitation, and cooperate with other civic services, and with the local authorities. The fact that there are so few such volunteer projects in Hungary makes this one very significant. It is a type of “prototype”, which could demonstrate “best practice” in other parts of the country.

Slovakia

“Better Residence – Hope for Lunik IX” – this is a neighbourhood program started by the Slovak Province of the Society of Jesus. Fr Peter Sabol SJ describes it as follows: “In September 2013, I started working, in a quite systematic way, in *Lunik IX*, a suburb of Košice, where 4,000 gypsies live. There, a

Salesian community is involved in a church which was recently built, and since 2008, in an associated pastoral centre. The team consists of three Salesian priests, three FMA Salesian sisters, and a handful of volunteers.

My work consists in teaching. I teach catechism for eight hours every week at a school for gypsies. In the afternoons, I teach English language twice a week. There are both children and adults in the groups. I also help children to cope with their school subjects. Every Tuesday, I meet with a group of boys, aged between 10 and 16. We play a variety of sports, and then we discuss the Bible.

On Wednesdays, I offer the sacrament of reconciliation during Mass for young people. After the liturgy, I meet with a group whose members desire to change their lives – frequently, they have a history of drug addiction. We speak about a variety of topics, including the catechism and the Bible. Every Thursday, there is one hour of prayer together. We place ourselves before our Lord, praying the rosary, in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, singing and praising the Lord, praying part of the evening hour of the breviary, with a blessing at the end. On Fridays, we offer a reconciliation service, followed by a celebration of the Eucharist for children and parents. After this, I prepare a small group of half a dozen children for their first Holy Communion.

On Saturdays, we spend some time organizing manual work for adult (in the playground, and at the cottage), and we support the *Better Residence – Hope for Lunik IX* project. Finally, on Sundays, we celebrate the Eucharist together, and in the afternoons we organize various games outside or inside the centre. In Advent and Lent, there are retreats and activities for youth. During summer, we arrange

On the left, a moment of relaxation at a reception centre of the Jesuits of Slovakia. On the previous page, Fr. Peter Sabol, S.J., with some children of the Lunik IX project intended for the Roma people in Slovakia.

Students

Also in Hungary, to which the photo below refers, the Jesuits work with the nomadic people, especially in the educational sector. In 2011 they opened a college in which the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Catholic Church and the Protestant communities all collaborate: a magnificent example of inter-ecclesial cooperation.

three different camps for young people, as well as several trips, and one more extensive pilgrimage.”

JRS Romania

For the past fifteen years, JRS Romania has been involved in building and supporting the asylum and migration system in Romania. It does so in collaboration with national authorities and other NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations).

The mission to accompany, to serve, and to plead the cause of refugees has developed during the years according to the needs which JRS has identified, and the possibilities which JRS thought it could realistically respond to. The team consist of twenty people, both staff and volunteers. They do their best to accomplish the mission in which they believe so passionately.

In 2014, the work focused mainly on providing direct assistance. But this primary work was supported by awareness campaigns, advocacy, training, and research. Romania is a country where the number of refugees and asylum seekers is not all that significant compared to the numbers in other European countries. But the asylum and social system demands constant efforts if they are to improve. The team’s efforts were notably evident in the following areas:

- in helping those who arrived in Romania

by boat. JRS was able to provide emergency help, and through campaigns to collect funds, food and clothing to cover basic needs. In the last year, almost 350 people arrived by boats on the Black Sea. They needed help in asking for asylum and in surviving those first days in a foreign land;

- in trying to protect the rights of asylum seekers in the face of various legal hurdles, so that they are able to remain legally. Over 1,000 asylum seekers received such information, or were counselled, and were supported in this way to start their new life in Romania;
- in giving a helping hand and assistance to those who were granted asylum, and were faced with integration into their new society. This help included vocational and educational courses, and financial assistance towards accommodation, health care costs, food and clothing;
- in providing emergency accommodation, at the Pedro Arrupe night shelter, to those left destitute on the streets. For those with no or little support, social and legal services were offered. Besides a measure of pastoral care, financial support for food, medicines, and basic needs was provided;
- in empowering asylum seekers through seminars and round-table conferences. These were presented by lawyers, and others who work to assist refugees and migrants;
- in providing a location where different foreigners, who come to Romania, can feel welcome and at home in the local culture. The “My Place Centre” has offered social, educational, and recreational activities, to more than 450 foreigners. They make this place “their own”, while meeting each other, learning, and sharing each others’ cultures.

The most important part of our work remains accompanying, supporting, and helping those in need to the best of our abilities. And the numbers we have touched in this way throughout the country – both in community-based and in detention centres – is significant. Last year, there were just under 1,500 asylum seekers’ applications lodged in the country.



Safe and Dignified Migration

Benedictus Hari Juliawan, SJ. — Coordinator for Social Apostolate and for the Migrant Network, Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific

When Francis Xavier arrived in Malacca in the late 1540s, the great missionary must have witnessed an arresting sight of the port city which would become his home base in the Pacific. Long before his arrival, the city and the neighbouring regions had become a bustling centre of trade and commerce. Merchants and their galleons from as far afield as Europe and the rest of Asia Pacific plied the waters laden with spices, sandalwood, tea, porcelain, cloth and slaves. Today at least 70,000 ships chug through the blue-green waters of the Straits of Malacca on their way to and from the Pacific with a third of the world's seaborne oil and many of its goods in their bellies.

Indeed Pacific history has long been characterised by the movement of goods and people, and today more than ever, the region is the world's engine of growth. The 21 countries in the so-called Pacific Rim account for nearly half of global trade. A special report in *The Economist* magazine suggested that today is "The Pacific Age". Trade in goods and services may be a darling of all governments but for all the success stories, there is a skeleton in the cupboard, a tragic one at that.

According to the 2014 *Global Slavery Index*, almost two-thirds of the estimated 35.8 million people in modern slavery are in the Asia Pacific region. The economic engine that powers the growth in the region requires a cheap and obedient workforce that often comes from the less developed economies in the region. Particularly vulnerable are Asian nationals who migrate for low and semi-skilled job opportunities. Each year, millions of people from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Vietnam travel to other countries in the region and the Middle East in search of a job, for the promise of being finally able to provide for their families. From the recruitment in their hometowns and villages to the placement and repatriation, the whole migration process is fraught with hardship and danger.

In 2010, the *Jesuit Conference of Asia Pa-*

The economic engine that powers the growth in the Asia Pacific region requires a cheap and obedient workforce that often comes from the less developed economies in the region. Particularly vulnerable are Asian nationals who migrate for low and semi-skilled job opportunities.



cific made migration a common priority in social actions. It identified the phenomenon as a defining feature of our age that is characterised by the ease of travel and promises of prosperity, but also by failings and dangers. Present in almost all countries in Asia Pacific, the Jesuits are in a good position to respond to the needs of these migrants. However, even including the *Jesuit Refugee Service*, which serves refugees and asylum seekers, there is much work ahead before we can respond to this challenge in a meaningful way across the Conference.

At the national/Province level, there are only five very different institutions that directly serve migrants and defend their rights: To-

Lessons at the Rerum Novarum Centre of Taipei (Taiwan.) The Centre was started in 1971 to defend the rights of migrant workers who had begun to arrive on the island.

Asia Pacific



An Indonesian domestic worker's story

Hasnawati was 28 when she first went to Baghdad to work as a house maid. In three years she worked for two different employers. At the end of her last contract she was raped by her own agent and set on fire by the agent's relatives when they found out what had happened. When Sahabat Insan found her upon her return to Indonesia in July 2012, she was in terrible shape. She had severe burns on her face, neck, chest and both arms, which made it difficult for her even to move her head. And she was six months pregnant.

She needed several operations on her burn wounds but these were delayed until after the baby was born because, according to the doctor's instructions, Hasnawati's first medical priority was to give birth to the baby. This ensured that the baby would not be affected by the use of the anaesthetics needed in the medical operations. The baby was born healthy and because Hasnawati did not want to keep it, Sahabat Insan found a couple to adopt it. When she was declared fit for further procedures, Hasnawati underwent surgery to heal the wounds. She needed five operations and along the way Sahabat Insan supported and accompanied her. She is now reunited with her family.

Meeting foreign workers in Tokyo

Great Tokyo has over 800,000 foreign workers, and a section of our centre focuses on legal assistance and education of children and adult workers of foreign nationality.

In early December 2014, nine people came in for private interviews with one of our lawyers. One of them was a young mother of three carrying a four-month-old baby. One of our staff volunteers took care of the crying baby while the mother consulted the lawyer. She had two other children, one of whom was in a special school for the disabled. The boy was being bullied in school and had suffered injuries. They had decided to remove the boy from the school for his safety, but the school got angry when told of their decision, saying that the accusations were untrue. It demanded over US\$7,500 in compensation and threatened to sue the family. We were able to help her resolve the situation. (Fr Ando Isamu SJ)

kyo Migrants' Desk (Japan), *Yiutsari* in Seoul (Korea), *UGAT Foundation* in Manila (Philippines), *Rerum Novarum Centre* in Taipei (Taiwan) and *Sahabat Insan* in Jakarta (Indonesia). They are small local institutions and offer specific services to specific groups of migrants be they migrant workers, vulnerable foreign spouses or undocumented migrants.

Of these five organisations, the *Rerum Novarum Centre* is the oldest. Established in 1971 to respond to the issues of human and labour rights, the Center later shifted its attention to the plight of migrant workers who began to arrive in Taiwan in large numbers. At the moment it employs 16 people, some of whom are Filipino, Indonesian and Vietnamese nationals. Its work focuses around caring for victims of occupational accidents and mistreatment through its shelter in Taipei. Each year around 100 individuals go to this shelter seeking refuge, protection and counseling. Under the leadership of the energetic Sister Stephana Wei Wei of Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz, the Center also runs various training courses. Its Mandarin language classes are particularly popular with newly arrived migrants.

Similar to the work in Taipei, the *Yiutsari*, which literally means "living with neighbours", is a service for migrant workers in South Korea who come mostly from Cambodia, Vietnam and the Philippines. Founded in 2005 it has a staff of two Jesuits, three lay women and about 20 volunteers, who work under the leadership of the tireless Fr Kim Chong-dae SJ. They offer sacramental, counseling, healthcare and training services from the office in Gimpo. On a typical weekend it accommodates more than 50 individuals who are eager to learn the Korean language and many more migrants come when it organises community events such as the Khmer New Year and Water Festival.

In Japan, the *Tokyo Migrants' Desk* (www.migrantstokyo.wordpress.com) officially opened its doors in 2011 but the work with migrants dates back long before that. Unlike *Rerum Novarum Centre* and *Yiutsari*,

the *Tokyo Migrants' Desk* works mostly with migrants from Latin America. Japan does not recognise the legal term "migrant worker" so these migrants enter the country through various other channels and soon get into difficulty when they overstay or need to work in the country. That is why the organisation offers crucial services in legal advice, family counseling, informal education for children of migrants and language training for adults. The youthful Fr Ando Isamu SJ, who is in his eighties, leads another Jesuit, three paid staff and many volunteers in campaigning for hospitality towards migrants in Japanese society.

While the first three institutions work in so-called host countries, the other two institutions work with migrants from so-called source countries, i.e. their home country, upon their return. Harrowing stories of abuse by employers are well documented but little is known about how they are treated when repatriated and how families cope with their absence.

UGAT Foundation (www.ugatfoundation.org) in Manila offers counseling services for these migrants and their families. The organisation gets its name from the spirit of *Ugnayan at Tulang para sa maralitang pamilya* (UGAT) or connecting with and help for poor families. Under the leadership of Fr Nilo Tanalega SJ, who is a counselor with more than 20 years experience under his belt, and now Fr Roberto Archie R Carampatan SJ, the organisation responds to the need for healing and reconciliation.

Much smaller than its Philipino counterpart, *Sahabat Insan* (www.perkumpulansahabatinsan.blogspot.org), or *Friends of Humanity* in Jakarta is a purely volunteer organisation. It began informally as a group of friends around Fr Ignatius Ismartono SJ who were moved by the suffering of the 2004 *tsunami* victims. When the *tsunami* response ended, the group switched its attention to migrant workers who received very little attention from society. Relying on volunteers and partners it now works to help repatriated migrants who need medical attention and accompaniment.

By the end of 2014, these institutions had agreed to form a network for migration in Asia Pacific. Along with *Jesuit Refugee Service* and *Jesuit Social Services Australia*, the network envisions a safe and dignified migration process particularly for the most vulnerable. When St Ignatius sent Francis Xavier on his way to India, he could only trust his dear friend to God's grace and not much else. The Jesuits in Asia Pacific are now trying to do their part to give shape to that divine generosity.

Below, young people of the Tokyo Migrants Desk of Japan at work in a rice plantation and migrants at lessons at the Yiutsari Centre of Seoul (South Korea.)

At work



Employment for African-Australians

Carolyn Ryan – *Jesuit Social Services, Australia*

The African-Australian community is an emerging community in Australia. Some arrived as refugees, fleeing violence and persecution, others are the children of Australian citizens of African heritage, still others arrived as skilled migrants.

In the photo, alumni of the “African-Australian Inclusion Program” who have already finished their courses.

This Program is spearheaded by the Social Services of the Australian Jesuits on behalf of the African immigrants in the country.

“I’m the first person in my family to get a university degree. In fact, I’m the only one from my whole village. I came from a hopeless place. But now I hope I can inspire others.” These are the words of Alison John, a 20-year old Sudanese man who migrated to Australia three years ago and, after a challenging transition, was accepted into the *African-Australian Inclusion Program* (AAIP).

The AAIP is an initiative of *Jesuit Social Services* (JSS) in Australia in partnership with *National Australia Bank* (NAB), one of Australia’s largest financial institutions with over 40,000 employees globally. The program aims to break the cycle of under-employment in the skilled African-Australian community by providing a six-month paid internship, and

extensive mentoring and skills development to Africans with academic qualifications but little or no corporate experience.

The African-Australian community is an emerging community in Australia. Some arrived as refugees, fleeing violence and persecution, others are the children of Australian citizens of African heritage, still others arrived as skilled migrants. For many, the path to Australia was extremely difficult, and when they arrive, they face new challenges including the lack of a social network, cultural differences and racism, the high cost of living, and difficulties in getting a good job.

Alison John says the initial months in Australia were daunting. He had grown up on a Sudanese island, and only knew the brother who had sponsored his migration. He began studying within two weeks of his first flight beyond Sudan’s borders, and was soon juggling jobs as a waiter and in a factory to finance the significant Australian university fees. He did this, he says, because his childhood had taught him the value of education. “I lost my father when I was four, and my mother was always working, cultivating food to support us. She told me if I wanted something different, I needed to study. No one was checking up on me. I realised I needed to be my dad, my mum and the child. As a boy, I forced myself to learn to read. I knew that education was the only way out.”

But like others in the African-Australian community, he found that education alone was insufficient to secure meaningful employment that enabled him to use his skills and talents. He also needed experience. “I applied for 100 jobs, got only two interviews, and was unsuccessful in those two,” he explains. “I felt a lack of confidence. And there was also a sense of fear. I started to think I am not good enough to get a job in Australia. Even someone who is passionate and determined, without experience they don’t have a chance.”

This sentiment was echoed by fellow AAIP intern Teresa, who migrated to Australia at the age of 13, after years in refugee camps

Australia



in Ethiopia and Kenya. There the two-hour walk to school was often followed by beatings for not having the correct books or clothes, luxuries her family could not afford. Teresa attended an Australian high school and went on to obtain a university degree, but her lack of experience prevented her from obtaining professional employment. For Teresa, finding a job meant far more than a career path and an income. It was a message to her siblings. "My success is also my family's success," she explains. "If I fail, what am I teaching my little sisters who come after me?" The AAIP, Teresa says, provided a lifeline, although this did not come easy. She was unsuccessful in her first efforts to join the program, but a NAB employee began acting as a mentor, preparing Teresa for the application process, and on her third attempt she was accepted.

Gaining a place in the program is only the first challenge. After getting "in", participants must get "on" by proving their worth to the organisation. All face a steep learning curve, and the outstanding outcomes of the program reflect their determination.

"My mum always taught me you don't give up," says Teresa. "I'm really happy with all the rejections because they made me stronger. I feel like I finally have a chance to prove myself. My future is in my hands now."

Since the AAIP pilot program in 2009, JSS has facilitated the placement of 160 people within NAB, and the program continues to grow in strength. Participants receive commercial experience and are assisted in developing professional skills and their business networks. They are also provided with comprehensive job search support including interview techniques and resume writing. Around 87% of interns have gone on to find jobs in their field of interest. Close to 90 former participants (about 63%) are now employed at NAB, and in turn support the new rounds of interns. There is little doubt the program is assisting many Africans to make a fuller contribution to Australian society, and that the entire community benefits from their integration and from the different

talents and perspectives they bring.

The AAIP grew from a chance meeting. A Jesuit-educated NAB employee, John Prior, visited JSS' African program at the public housing estate in Flemington, an inner-city suburb of Melbourne. Asha Saleh, a member of the community and JSS employee, told him about the many African-Australians who had university degrees in finance but were working in nursing homes, stacking shelves or driving taxis. The next day she sent him 17 resumes, and asked if JSS and NAB might work together to address the problem. Believing that the corporate world, and NAB in particular, should and could help society, John began a grassroots initiative to build something with JSS.

Around the same time, coincidentally but fortuitously, former federal Finance Minister Lindsay Tanner issued a challenge to NAB's deputy CEO to do more about the situation of African-Australians struggling to get a foothold on the career ladder. Together, these two encounters led to the collaborative professional development initiative that is AAIP, and the program has received numerous accolades including Victorian African Community, City of Melbourne and Australian Human Resources Institute awards.

Jesuit Social Services is active at all stages of the AAIP, from recruitment to graduation. It plays a crucial role in identifying and encouraging potential participants, while shaping the internship program in a way that acknowledges both the needs of the participants and the demands and challenges of a commercial environment. Its pre-existing work with African-Australian groups allows it to engage with them and understand what will be most helpful in facilitating a transition into a corporate workplace.

It believes the program's success is due to three factors. First, the AAIP has from the beginning been truly grassroots. It was initiated and continues to be run by a handful of people who seek to make a difference. It is not imposed on NAB staff, but inspires, connects and develops employees who desire



Above, Teresa happy to show off her diploma, and the directress of the school, Pauline, with Grace, one of the alumnae of Sydney.

and are committed to shaping a better and fairer world. The connections made between participants and NAB staff mean all involved become personally invested in the success of the initiative and of the participants. JSS backs this by running workshops and providing other support to ensure participants are ready for the challenges of the internship, and provide a “listening ear” and guidance as any difficulties arise.

Second, the program is creative and seeks to test new ground. The AAIP is designed to fill an unmet need, so innovation was central to its success. It encourages participants to step out of their comfort zone, but also nudges NAB to reflect on the best way forward.

Third, the AAIP is empowering both for the African-Australian participants, who finally have the opportunity to prove their capabilities, and for the NAB staff who are prompted to reflect and realise their own ability to bring about change, with JSS acting as the facilitator between the two groups. *Jesuit Social Services* has long run programs tailored to meet the needs of marginalised and disadvantaged people, on its own and in partnership with community organisations and the business sector. The AAIP is an important part of its “Just Leadership” program, which

seeks to develop the leadership capacity of individuals, organisations and communities in ways that contribute to building a more just and compassionate society.

The AAIP encourages NAB staff to think about and enact corporate responsibility in a very tangible, grassroots way. As one NAB staff member comments: “I realise how one phone call can be really powerful in someone else’s life. Where do you want to go? Who do I know? It’s about our sources of rank and relative power. I realised I did have a power that I could use well.” Another says: “This program teaches our people ... about perspective ... and the importance to give back to those who have not been as fortunate.” Yet another NAB employee said, “Candidates have been a great example to the team of overcoming challenges to achieve what you set out to achieve, and their drive and passion to succeed when they join the team can be infectious and inspires the whole team to pull together.”

The program has also proved a valuable source of talent for NAB, often producing better-performing staff than traditional recruitment paths. For the participants, the impact can be life-changing. “Without the AAIP, I would still be working in a factory with low self-esteem,” says Alison John, adding that the positive impact extends to the community. Working African-Australians can become role models for younger members of the community, motivating them to stay in school and become qualified themselves. This is because at the base of it all is education. As Teresa wrote in an essay as part of her AAIP application process: “Education allows individuals to help themselves and in turn help people around them and that’s how change begins.”

The AAIP demonstrates the powerful impact that the community sector and business can have when they work together, and the benefits to both business and the wider community when they rise to that challenge. For more information about *Jesuit Social Services*, visit: www.jss.org.au.

An African immigrant demonstrates a dance of his country for the curiosity of the spectators.



Jesuit Prison Ministry

Nopparut Ruankool (Bee), S.J.

Social work is one of the most significant Jesuit ministries in Thailand. Since the 1980s, many foreign Jesuits started coming to Thailand in order to help the thousands of refugees in various camps under *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS). Fr. Olivier Morin, S.J., a French Jesuit, one of those missionaries, volunteered to work with JRS and was later assigned to minister especially to the Vietnamese boat people in the east of Thailand. After some years of service, there were fewer Vietnamese since they were helped to be transferred to other countries. While thinking about going back to France, Fr. Olivier then made a visit to the *Immigration Detention Center* (IDC) and later to Bangkwang Prison. Seeing the terrible conditions in these two places, he saw other urgent needs for social services in Thailand, that is, to help the detainees and the criminal prisoners. These later became two Jesuit social projects in Thailand: The IDC Project and the Criminal Prison Project.

At present, these two projects fall under the same ministry called “Prison Ministry” although they are focusing on different target groups. The IDC Project focuses more on the detainees who are detained for some period and are not criminals: these include illegal immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and former prisoners. These people are waiting for documents and money for buying tickets to go back to their countries or to other countries. On the other hand the Criminal Prison Project focuses more on the convicted prisoners who still need to serve out their sentence in the prisons for some years in Thailand.

Looking back to 1989, when Fr. Olivier visited the *Immigration Detention Center*, he saw that many detainees were put in narrow cells and were offered very poor food. Husbands were separated from wives, and the small children were placed with the mothers. Many of the detainees were not able to buy tickets to go back to their own countries, and so had to stay in those cells for many months. After receiving permission from the Jesuit Regional Superior (Fr. Sigmund Laschenski, S.J. at that time) and from the police, Fr. Olivier started



The first priority of the Prison Ministry is to accompany and to give encouragement to prisoners. The ministry's motto is: “You are Greater than Your Fault”. This inspiration has helped prisoners to realize that whatever mistakes they made in the past, they still have their dignity as human persons.

working in the *Immigration Detention Center*. With his effort and the cooperation of other lay-collaborators, there was the beginning of two programs inside IDC: a medical program and a release program.

The medical program monitors the detainees' health, gives medical treatment, and provides needed medicines. A medical doctor, a nurse, and other volunteers work with us. At present the medical doctor comes twice a week to check detainees and offer treatment and medicines. Once a month, there is an opportunity to arrange for the haircuts for the detainees. In addition to these services, the medical program creatively arranges “Family Day” once a month, which offers an opportu-

In Thailand the Jesuits place great importance on Prisons Ministry. Above, Fr. Olivier Morin, S.J., gives painting lessons to prisoners in the prison of Kao Bin, in the Province of Ratchaburi.

Thailand

nity to the men-women-children detainees to meet together as families. The IDC team also arranges the Eucharist once a month to spiritually support the Christian prisoners who can meet to pray and share their belief with one another.

The other program inside IDC is the “Release Program”, which is to help the detainees who have problems going back to their own countries, either because they lack documents, or lack finances to buy plane tickets. Through this program, we are able to help the detainees contact their embassies for the documents, and we can do fund-raising to buy the needed tickets. We also cooperate with other organizations such as *United Nations* (UN), *International Organization for Migration* (IOM), and the *Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugee* (COERR). Together with these organizations, we have built a committee called *Immigration Detention Center Coordination Committee* (IDCCC). We have regular monthly meetings, in order not to work alone but to cooperate and support one another.

Nevertheless, in the beginning, though this work was going on well, it became very clear that the work needed great financial and organizational support. Therefore, the IDC Project requested to be placed under the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) in order to have better professional support. Finally, in June 2014, this project was handed back to the Jesuits of the Thai Region and was put under the *Jesuit Prison Ministry*.

In 1991, after the IDC project had been going on for two years, Fr. Olivier visited some

African prisoners in Bangkwang Central Prison. He found that there were many foreign prisoners who had been in prison for many years without any visitors and help. Most of the foreign prisoners were charged with drug trafficking, which carries a very heavy sentence in Thailand. Few of them were accused of credit card fraud, murder, rape, and robbery. Through the permission of the Regional Superior, Fr. Olivier recruited some lay persons to work for those prisoners; and eventually he founded the *Jesuit Prison Ministry* (in October the same year).

The first priority of this new *Prison Ministry* was to accompany and to give encouragement to prisoners. The ministry’s motto is: “You are Greater than Your Fault”. This inspiration has helped prisoners to realize that whatever mistakes they made in the past, they still have their dignity as human persons. That is the reason why our *Jesuit Prison Ministry* continues to visit these prisoners: to make them know that they are loved and have a chance to live their life better.

Today, with that same inspiration, our *Prison Ministry* team visits more than 1,500 prisoners in 12 prisons throughout Thailand. Five prisons are in Bangkok and perimeter, and seven others are in different provinces. Our aim is to meet the prisoners who are poor and do not have relatives or visitors. Therefore, most of our prisoners are foreigners, from more than 50 nationalities. Our activities depend upon the permission of each prison’s policies. Some prisons request that we talk with the prisoners by phone, while other prisons want us to enter inside to conduct activities such as sharing inspirational stories, playing games, singing songs, and so on. We also distribute some necessary personal items, especially at Christmas every year. In addition to this, we establish links with other organizations in order to help the legal processes of some cases and advocate for prisoners’ rights (e.g., with *The Lawyers Association*, *Thailand Amnesty International*, and so on).

During the past three years (2012-2014), through the leadership of our new director, Ms. Vilaiwan Phokthavi, there are new and extended programs for the prisoners. Firstly, we extended the visit to the prisoners’ families, especially those in Nepal and Laos. The purpose of the visit is to bring news about the prisoners to their immediate families, and also to create better understanding on both sides.



In these two countries, we received the help and cooperation of Jesuits and lay collaborators who know the local situation very well. Secondly, we extended our visits to Chiangmai Province, to the Men's Central Prison. The prisoners there are from many tribal areas in northern Thailand, and many of them are truly poor.

Through the support of *Joy of Sharing Foundation*, coordinated by Fr. Lorenzo Yom, S.J., a Korean Jesuit, we are also able to offer scholarships to some prisoners' children, so that they can have a better future. At the moment, we can support the children's scholarships both in Nepal and Laos. The scholarship is later followed up by the Jesuits who work in those two countries. We remember a trip to Vientiane, Laos, in March 2014; we visited to more than twenty families. The trip was arranged with our collaborators there. In one family, we met one girl whose mother and father are prisoners in Thailand. She was in poor condition and had to help her grandmother by sewing, although she also had to do her studies in the University in Vientiane. After reading her father's letter, which passed through us from Thailand, she broke into tears and was so thankful to us for the news about her parents. We then later supported her scholarship, and communicating with her through the help of our collaborators there.

When we ask ourselves, "What is most challenging about Jesuit Prison Ministry, for both the IDC Project and the Criminal Prison Project?" Our answer is: the limitation from our side to help the detainees or prisoners in their living conditions. So much depends directly on the police/prison authorities. We cannot deny that in order to work with the officers, we need good relationships and patience. We are occasionally denied permission to visit or to give personal items. However, on some occasions, the officers are very supportive. One clear example is that we have the office space and work space inside the *Immigration Detention Center* for our clinic (medical treatment) and our release program. No matter what, we learn to do our best to help the detainees and

the prisoners, as best we can, within our limitations.

For more than 20 years now, the *Prison Ministry*, through these two main projects, has been able to contribute help to many detainees and prisoners. Many detainees are helped by us to go back to their own countries; and at the same time, many prisoners are accompanied as they serve out their sentences. Above all else, the most important thing is that while these people are still detained or imprisoned in Thailand, the *Jesuit Prison Ministry* can help them realize their own dignity as human beings, and to make them know that they are worth being loved and cared for. When we make a visit to these people, we know that we are not just another *Non-Governmental Organization* (NGO) to help out in their physical needs; rather, we want to offer something deeper than that level. That is God's love through our friendship and accompaniment, in order that they can eventually return to society with hope for a better life.

Below, a moment of exchange with the prisoners of the Province of Phatumtani. On the previous page, Fr. Manasan Wongvorn, S.J., and Mrs. Vilaiwan Phokthavi, an official of the Prisons Ministry meet with the detainees of the Immigration Detention Centre in Bangkok.

Prisoners



An experience, a method, a horizon

Arturo Estrada Acosta, S.J. – Juan Diego Galaz Carvajal, S.J. – Team of Centro Zanmi

“*Centro Zanmi* is above all the fruit of encounter and reciprocity, of dialogue with people from different cultures, creeds, religious orders, and nationalities. It captivates us and transforms us.”



In the photo, a lesson at the Centro Zanmi. The Center wants “to share with the immigrants their uncertainty, but also their joy when their life is transformed into celebration and hope.”

On 15 November 2014 we celebrated the first anniversary of the inauguration of Centro Zanmi, the first office of the Jesuit Service for Migrants and Refugees in Brazil. This was the unexpected result of a meeting of lay people, Daughters of Jesus, and Jesuits. We all came to Brazil for different reasons, but as we got to know one another, we began to join together and collaborate in our efforts to accompany and serve the immigrants and refugees in Belo Horizonte.

For us Jesuits especially, this new office is an important achievement since it confirms the ideals proposed for the Mission of the Universal Society as stated in the Common Apostolic Project (2011-2020) of the Conference of Latin American Provincials.

As will be clear from the following pages, the path described here is illuminated and permeated by what is most distinctive in our manner of serving the faith and promoting justice within the concrete reality in which we live. It all began with our assignment to the CIF in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, where we encountered the growing Latin American consciousness and solidarity among people who were motivated to live an apostolic, incarnated spirituality. We strive to seek out and serve our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, those living on the frontiers of exclusion. We want to go where others cannot go or do not want to get involved.

In many ways our experiences that have led us to test our personal limits and the limits imposed on us by history. GC 35 tells us how *God labors intensely in the hidden places. Rising from the tombs of personal life and history, the Lord appears when we least expect, with his personal consolation as a friend and as the center of a fraternal and servant community. From this experience of God laboring in the heart of life, our identity as ‘servants of Christ’s mission’ rises up ever anew.* (GC 35, D. 2, #7)

We have often said that the heart of our Center is “Zanmi.” This word means “friend” in Haitian Creole, and it is what best describes both what we want to experience and what we want to preserve and promote. It is our trademark; it helps us recognize who we are; it expresses our desire to share in the uncertainty and vulnerability of the immigrants, as well as in their joy whenever their lives give reason for celebration and hope.

Our Haitian friends have taught us some Creole aphorisms that describe well our experience. “*Men anpil chay pa lou*” means “With many hands, the burden’s not heavy,” and “*Yon sèl dwèt pa manje kalalou*” means “You can’t eat spinach with just one finger.” Overcoming difficulties means we have to work together. “Zanmi” is our foundational experience, the method that guides our work, and the horizon toward which we want to advance.

Zanmi: an experience. Centro Zanmi is above all the fruit of encounter and reciprocity, of dialogue with people from different cultures,

Zanmi

creeds, religious orders, and nationalities. It captivates us and transforms us. We started with just three Haitians, a Chilean, and a North American who were learning Portuguese and Haitian Creole in a Mormon temple. Later we were joined by a Frenchman, a Dominican woman, a Mexican, and an Indian. We all worked together with a fast-growing group of Haitians who were arriving to work in the food industry. As one member of the group expressed it, *Zanmi* is above all the experience of being *migrants among migrants*. We are accompanying the new migrants in the same learning process that we are going through, and at the same time we are trying to change the unjust and frustrating conditions to which they are exposed because of their experience of a new culture, their unfamiliarity with the Portuguese language, their lack of money, and above all racial discrimination.

The dialogue and the time we shared with them gave birth to new experiences. While they (along with us) became “Brazilianized,” we gradually became “Haitianized.” Besides their friendship, they have given us also the treasure of their Creole proverbs and the strength of their dignity. In their homes we have experienced the extraordinary generosity of their culture, and we have enjoyed their abundant and delicious cuisine. We begin our Portuguese classes by singing in Creole the national hymn of Haiti, “La Dessalinienne.” When we visit museums, we speak about the differences in our histories. We also have visited the zoo, a *candomblé* celebration, and various cultural festivals organized in the city. When we are asked, “And who are you?” we say simply, *nou se Zanmi Ayiti*, “We are friends of Haiti.”

Because of the mutual trust and our close relationships, we were able to see the immigrants’ needs and limits with greater clarity. We began to study the procedures required for permanent residence and became familiar with the institutions responsible for granting it. We learned that Brazil has created a humanitarian visa for Haitians and that the Federal Police in most cases are well disposed to receiving them. By establishing contact with the Haitian Embassy in Brazil, we were able to help the immigrants renew their passports and obtain the consular certificates they needed to apply for residency. We also became part of the Brazilian Migration Network and visited the Pro-Haiti Initiative and the Manaus Network. We did our best to broaden the scope of our accompaniment and also to learn about the initiatives undertaken in other parts of the country.

At the same time we got to know other Haitian friends who were arriving in the country in search of a new and better life. We realized that the first ones to arrive had come mainly from the cities, some of which had been devastated by the terrible earthquake of 2011; these immigrants had technical and professional training and spoke at least three languages. But the ones who came as part of a “second wave” were from the rural areas; they brought with them a rich cultural tradition and folk wisdom, but in many ways it was very difficult for them to adapt to the city. Finally, we now have the “third wave,” consisting mostly of women and children who are arriving to be reunited with their families. Each of these waves brings with it histories, expectations, and needs that must be accompanied. That is the job we’re trying to do.

In the midst of all that was happening, it became clear to us that there were three challenges to which we needed to respond: continuity, quantity, and quality. Continuity requires us to maintain faithfully the relationships we have with our Haitian friends and with governmental and social institutions. Quantity requires us to respond to the demand, which increases day by day and brings an ever greater variety of persons. We are gradually becoming a reference point for many immigrants, not only those from Haiti but also those from Argentina, Nigeria, Colombia, Mali, and Sierra Leone. Quality requires us to realize that the problems are ever become more specialized and require a qualified professional response.

Below, a planning meeting. “The experience of encounter which we are experiencing will certainly produce its fruits for those without prejudices and who want to get to know the persons who are arriving from outside.”



Zanmi: a method. So that's way Centro Zanmi was born, and that's how we became part of the Jesuit Migrations Network in Latin America. At the present time the work of Centro Zanmi is divided into five areas: social, juridical, language and culture, volunteering, and reflection/advocacy. Every area seeks to promote and involve immigrants as the ones responsible for their own migratory project. At the same time efforts are being made to help Brazilians to understand migration from the perspective of human rights. In this sense, Centro Zanmi is above all a place of encounter and dialogue in which all the work-

ers, whether paid or volunteer, strive to create a space for mutual recognition and encouragement. The center also provides legal defense and representation, although often we are the ones who must undertake these tasks.

To achieve these aims, Centro Zanmi seeks to become involved in networks and to form alliances with public and private institutions that are promoting a

more just society. At the local level we belong to the network of the municipality of Belo Horizonte (in the area of rights) and are allied with the League of Construction Workers. At the national level we belong to the network of the Brazilian Institute of Human Rights and Migrations. At the international level, we take part in the networks of the Jesuit Migrant Service of Latin America and the Jesuit Migrant Service in the Southern Cone and the Caribbean.

We have also become associates of the Center for Migration of the PUC-Minas (in collaboration with the International Organization of

Migrations), with the diocese of Belo Horizonte, with the Colegio Loyola, and with the Foursquare Gospel Church. We collaborate with the Center for the Prevention of Slavery and Trafficking of Persons, with the Federal Police, and with many social service centers of the region.

Aprè fèt tambou lou ("After the party the drums are heavy") say our Haitian friends. It is reasonable to expect that by the end of this year we will have a new migratory situation, and we will be able to respond to it better if we have strong ties with other institutions.

Zanmi: a horizon. As far as we can see, Centro Zanmi is moving in the right direction. The path we're following immerses us in what is happening among our immigrant brothers and sisters; every day we are entering areas that open up new questions and challenges. As the Common Jesuit Apostolic Project for Latin America states, we are called to make a preferential option for those who are experiencing the greatest vulnerability, those who are on the frontiers of our societies and our cultures. We continue on the path together, with successes and failures, but always with confidence.

In Centro Zanmi we want our actions to bear witness to the kind of society we aspire to, a society where relations of friendship give rise to mutual recognition and respect without regard to a person's origin, language, or skin color. We want a just society where all men and women can be what they are, where they can offer the treasures of their diversity as a way of developing a life project that corresponds to their ability, and where they can live in close communion with others. We want to strengthen our presence among young people and become an active influence on public opinion. We feel certain that our present experience of encounter with immigrants will also help others to get to know those who are arriving and to make them feel welcome.

The history of Brazil teaches us that when different cultures encounter one another with respect, humankind becomes the richer for it. This is the commitment we have undertaken, and we want to invite everyone to join us on our pilgrimage.

Translated by Joseph V. Owens, S.J.



Above, Luciana Lorenzi, on the left, from Brazil, and Pascal Peuzé, from France.

Brazil

Deposition

Daniele Libanori, S.J.



A new altarpiece has been installed on a side altar of Rome's Gesù Church on the occasion of the second centenary of the Reconstitution of the Society. It is the work of Safet Zec, an artist from Bosnia.

In order to remember the second centenary of the Reconstitution of the Society of Jesus in the universal church brought about by Pope Pius VII on August 7, 1814, an altarpiece was placed above the altar of the Chapel of the Passion in Rome's Church of the Gesù. In this way the chapel recovers the thematic integrity of the pictorial

cycle of Giuseppe Valeriani and Gaspare Celio, which had been lessened by the disappearance of the original, the work of Scipione Pulzone, which had been removed at the beginning of the 1800's and is now on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The journey towards the realization of the new altarpiece was long and not easy: in fact, considerable reluctance needed to be overcome before a contemporary work of art could be placed in such an historical context and then to identify an artist who could and who would want to accept the inevitable challenge of the confrontation with the ancient and who would respond to the rigorous requirements of the officials who would need to grant their authorization.

The long history of the Church of the Gesù has seen the harmonious stratification of works of art and diverse styles in an almost uninterrupted sequence, at least until the most recent massive interventions—in grand part of restoration—of the first half of the 19th century. Not only this. The magnificent pictorial cycle of Giovanni Battista Gaulli realizes a singular agreement between the patrons and the artist: the complex and articulated iconographic program envisioned by the Jesuit Fathers was magnificently interpreted by Gaulli, and from this collaboration was born a masterwork of the baroque period and the illustration and communication of the Catholic faith.

With the assistance of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico Artistici ed Etnoantropologici [Superintendence for Historical, Artistic and Ethnoanthropological Goods] of Rome and the Commissione Diocesana di Arte Sacra [Diocesan Commission for Sacred Art], this effort was undertaken to reinvigorate the by no means simple dialogue between the Church and artists.

The challenge was demanding and risky for many reasons, but also stimulating. Such a commission entails for the artist the challenge of dealing with a space—defined by the requirements of the commission itself as well as the requirements of the physical space to which the work is destined—in which the artist's creativity



In this detail from the altarpiece is represented Fr. Arrupe, Superior General of the Society during and immediately after Vatican Council II. On the following page, another detail.

could feel itself constrained.

The artist would also have to interpret the project in the light of many factors having to do with its being destined for an important church as the Gesù of Rome. The work should not be primarily celebrative, but rather express the spirit which animates the Society of Jesus and the desire for service which it wishes to carry out wherever it is invited to bring the Gospel. The personages depicted are protagonists of difficult times in the Reconstitution of the Order, and, in reference to Father Arrupe, the post-conciliar

renewal. These, in the action of bringing the body of the Lord down from the cross, should recall the vocation of the Society, that is, to serve only God and the Church under the banner of the cross.

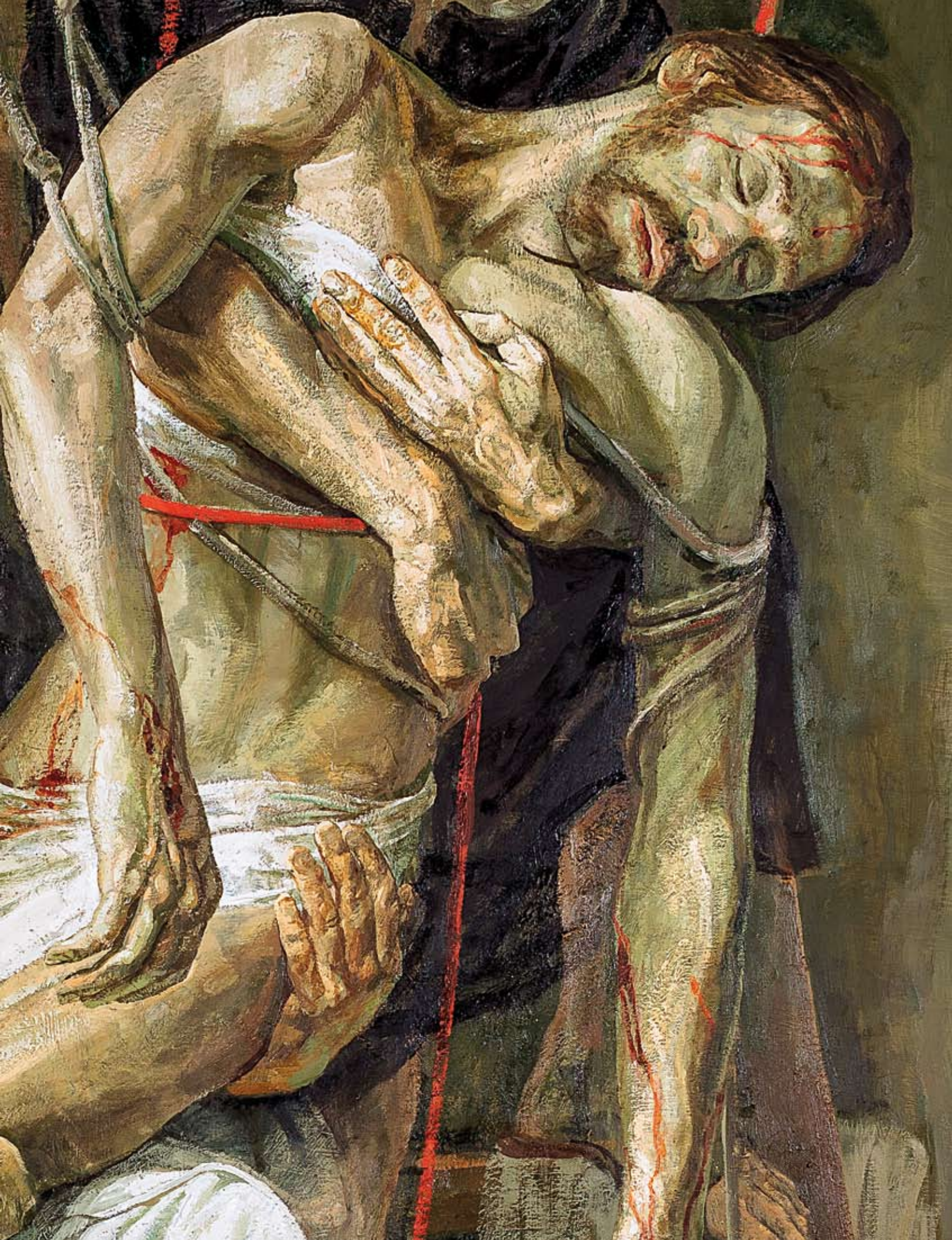
Visiting the vast work of Safet Zec, it seemed that he could be the right interpreter for the enterprise. The sensibility of this Bosnian artist, rendered more acute and vibrant by the terrible experience of the fratricidal conflict which devastated the Balkans and which had hit him directly and severely, had given life to works of rare intensity: portrayals of intimate participation in suffering and compassion in embraces, in eyes full of tears and dignity, from intense and engaging glances on the poor things of daily life, signs of the times. Bread broken lying on a white table cloth appears as a memory of the warmth of a table disturbed by a fearful and sudden tragedy, the invitation and promise of a re-found communion and friendship...

One finds in the work of Zec an anxious silence which fills up the soul, a passion which grows towards the infinite, but which does not give into the temptation of a liberating shout; it remains rather closed in the heart and is transmitted to those who accept to rest their gaze upon a soul which is revealed timidly in the images of a tragedy preserved on canvas or on the silence of old facades of Venetian houses, magnificent and dying, or in still life which preserves the nostalgia for an abandoned house. A picture by Zec of high technical and material mastery, strong and heartwrenching, and always above and beyond any rhetoric.

In the Chapel of the Passion are venerated the remains of St. Joseph Pignatelli (1737-1811), who was an undisputed protagonist of the Reconstitution of the Society, as well as the mortal remains of the Servant of God Father Jan Philip Roothaan (1785-1853), the second General of the reborn Society of Jesus. In the same chapel reposes also Father Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991), who was the Superior General and a decisive figure in the updating of the Society of Jesus after the Second Vatican Council.

In the canvas which one can now admire the artist has represented, as in that of Pulzone, the

Passion





Above, a detail with Mary and Fr. Roothaan, the second General after the re-establishment of the Society. On the following page, a detail and the face of St. Joseph Pignatelli, a key figure of the re-establishment.

Below, the location of the altarpiece in the side altar of the Gesù.

deposition of the body of the Lord from the cross; but the inspiration is entirely new. One notices immediately, both by the faces as well as the clothing that the men represented are the same as those whose remains rest in the chapel. This substitution of the persons in the evangelical account is an illustration of the contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ suggested in the Spiritual Exercises, in which the one who contemplates takes part in the action. The spiritual fruit is conversion, from which arises the desire to serve Christ poor and humble, shar-

ing the mission and, finally, apostolic creativity. The invitation to contemplate and then to produce fruits of apostolic charity reaches the one who looks on, who discovers how the work can be a pedagogy for contemplative prayer which focuses on the mystery represented and on the gestures and objects, gathering from them their significance as from pregnant symbols.

The scene is taken from the moment in which, with effort, the body of the Lord is being brought down from the cross, having been just freed from the nails. The vertical stake of the cross, the hanging cords, the ladder resting on the cross, the effort of the persons to carry the weight of the dead body, all make one think of a “workshop” in which something of unique importance is being constructed. It is the demanding and all-encompassing workshop in which the disciples learn the lesson of loving action which builds the Church. The deposition of the body of the Lord and the care that the friends take with it is the gesture which inaugurates the care of sick and humiliated humankind.

Here the three friends united in their common affection for the Son of God and in the pious care of his body represent the Society and its desire to serve without sparing itself. Through this gesture the friends of the Lord, as happens through the persons in the gospels, reveal themselves as disciples and enter actively into the passion of Christ for man, determined to be associated to his fate, because in the cross of Jesus they have found perfect liberty and in faith in him the pearl of great price.

The friends remove from the cross and embrace with profound respect the body that had been stripped, torn, and exposed to mockery; they desire to restore the dignity which had been denied to him and hasten to repeat for him the gesture of humble love that Jesus had taught them: they wash the feet and limbs of the Messenger of good news who announces peace.

According to John’s Gospel and the ancient liturgical tradition, the Mother of the Lord stood beneath the cross of her Son, pierced by sorrow but certain of the fidelity of God who hears the cry of the humiliated. Mary does not take her gaze from the tortured body of Jesus but does not take part: her being in her place sustains those whom she was given as sons and daughters by her dying Son in that school of loving service. She is the great Woman who now gives birth in a sorrow full of hope to the Church born from the pierced side: she is the Mother of the Society of Jesus, resolved to serve the Lord and the Church.

Safet Zec



On the ground are the symbols of service: the basin and the towel, similar to the one which Jesus wrapped around his waist before washing the feet of the disciples to teach them the love and availability to become the least and the servant of all. Lying on the ground is also the white garment that the victorious King will soon put on at his resurrection, and the crown of the passion, become the sign of his reign and of the glory that the Father has reserved for him. He who was enthroned on the cross now sits as king forever and beside him will sit those who have resolved to carry to the end, behind him, their own crosses, with the certainty that the more they have become like him in the passion of their daily lives, the more they will be able to administer to men and women the richness of his mercy.

Translated by Robert E. Hurd, S.J.





FROM THE JESUIT WORLD

Events

An attitude of hospitality and kindness toward those who are engaged in the various developing programs of agriculture, ecotourism, agronomic formation and others form part of the human, social and religious mission that is proper to Taanayel.

Taanayel is situated roughly halfway on the international road from Beirut to Damascus, and not far from the mountain pass between the chains of the Anti-Lebanon and Mount Hermon which gives access to the last part of the road and is known as the “glorious gate to Damascus”. The stretch of the road that passes in front of the Taanayel Center is situated at nearly 1000 m. altitude and traverses from west to east a plateau, the Beqaa, between Mount Lebanon in the west and the Anti-Lebanon and Mount Hermon in the east. The northern limits of this plateau are disputed, but we notice that in periods of stability and productivity the Beqaa was considered to coincide with its geological formation, practically between the actual frontiers with Syria in the north and Israel in the south. Because of its

geographical situation, the Beqaa is climatologically and agriculturally of prime importance for Lebanon and the surrounding countries. Three rivers have their sources in the Beqaa: the river Jordan, the Orontes and the Litani. From the time of its forming part of the Roman Empire, it has been an important granary for various Mediterranean countries. The nearby seaports of Beirut, Sayda and others offered great advantages to these commercial contacts.

In the Beqaa we find some traces of human organization and culture from the millennia antecedent to the Roman presence. Yet, with the conquest of the Eastern Mediterranean territories, and the establishment of the Province of Syria in the first century of the present era, a period of peace and order begins for the Beqaa under the banner of the *pax romana*. The Romans were great builders wherever they established their authority. The city of Baalbeck, situated in the center of the Beqaa, offers the most imposing collection of temple ruins in the region. Also elsewhere on the Beqaa, memories in stone of the Roman times are not lacking. Other powers later came on the scene. Closer to Taanayel, at Anjar, the refined rests of a palace built by the Umayyads (8th century) can be admired.

The time of the Crusades, during two centuries from the end of the 11th century, brought periods of relative peace to the inhabitants of the Beqaa, especially with the establishment of the

Lebanon

150 Years of Taanayel Center

Arij Roest Crollius, S.J.

Frankish states. During the same period, various Islamic sects and also Christian churches found refuge in the rather underdeveloped territories between the two mountain ranges. This migration brought with it various local tensions, which facilitated incursions by better organized powers in the region, and finally together with several Mediterranean countries the Beqaa became possession of the Ottomans. During the long period of Ottoman administration (1516-1917), the Beqaa appears to have been almost forgotten. In the 16th century the Popes several times sent Jesuits for special missions to the eastern Mediterranean shores, but it is during the last century of the rule of the Ottoman Turks that the Jesuits established structures of apostolic service in the territory that is now called Lebanon.

In 1843 the General Superior of the Society of Jesus entrusted the Province of Lyon with the mission in Syria, which also included Lebanon. The answer of the Lyon Jesuits was rapid and generous. In the Beqaa, in 1844 a school was opened in Zahle, while in the south of the country another important school was started in the administrative town of Deir-al-Qamar. To provide in the expenses of schools for the poor and orphanages, agriculture and viniculture proved very helpful. From Zahle and from Deir-al-Qamar, Jesuits began various projects for the betterment of pieces of marshy land they acquired.



In 1860, while also with local vocations from Lebanon and Syria the mission began to flourish, cultural and religious tensions in the region began to accumulate in such a degree that members of the Druze community in a few days time killed nearly 10.000 Christians, mainly Maronites, but also Catholic and Orthodox Byzantines. The centers where this “final solution” was applied were Zahle and Deir-al-Qamar. Six Jesuits also gave their life: three Lebanese, one Syrian, one Italian and one Frenchman.

In a very literal sense the tragic events of 1860 led to a new and promising start of the mission in the Beqaa. A new type of civil administration was set up by an international commission. In

In the large photo, the vast panorama that is enjoyed from Taanayel, while in the distance the mountains which delimit the Beqaa Valley. Above, the house for the Spiritual Exercises.



Events

Below, a list of the works of the Jesuits in Taanayel. In the centre, fishermen on the pond of the park of the residence.

1863, through the intermediary of the French government, the Ottoman administration made a concession of 230 ha of swamps and sandy soil near the village of Taanayel to the Jesuits, as a compensation for the death of six of them a few years earlier. Fathers and brothers from Zahle, near-by Jdita and Deir-al-Qamar traveled there daily to develop the terrain, begin new plantations and make a beginning with cattle breeding. Before long a house for the Jesuits was built, a chapel was added, school edifices were provided for orphans and the children of workers. In 1881, when an Italian Jesuit brought from Algiers a copy of the icon of Our Lady “de la Consolata” venerated in Turin, the settlement was put under her protection.

To throw light on the development of the domain of Taanayel and also to better discern its principal tasks for the future, it is necessary to consider the context of the principal requirements of the apostolic thrust of the Society of Jesus. These were not long ago formulated by the present General Superior in a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the death of Fr. Arrupe. Three main perspectives were recalled here: total detachment, total immersion and total cooperation.

Total detachment required for the apostolate at Taanayel means an unconditional willingness to serve guided by the values of the Gospel. This implies being free from a desire of privileges and of traditional cultural particularities. At the moment, the four members of the Jesuit team at work in Taanayel hail from four different countries. Each one also has had a formation that made him acquire different professional qualities. And such has been the characteristic also in the past, as it is the case in many Jesuit communities throughout the world. An attitude of detachment with regard to one's own customs



and points of view is an ineluctable condition for the freedom of giving oneself to the continuously changing demands of a service in a region that for centuries is at the crossroads of peoples and cultures.

Total immersion in the environment evidently is an immense demand in the multiple forms of apostolic commitment that are typical for Taanayel. A first task of the team is *parish work and spiritual formation*. The Eucharist is daily celebrated in various rites of the Catholic Church. Persons come, sometimes from far away, for the sacrament of reconciliation and for spiritual accompaniment. Regular biblical and theological meetings are held. Throughout its existence, Taanayel has been much in demand as a center for retreats and other forms of spiritual exercises. The peaceful atmosphere of the surrounding forests and plantations, and also a well provided silent retreat house contribute greatly to this service of prayer and spiritual formation. Another kind of apostolic service that the Jesuits of Taanayel have exercised from the beginning is *catechism and schools*. Primary and secondary schools are connected with the team, some even directed by them, and in collaboration with the Jesuit University in Beirut, institutes of technical and agronomical studies have risen on the grounds of Taanayel. Also, from the very beginning, a priority in the apostolate was the care of the *people living at the periphery* of the society. All the services the members of the Jesuit team are connected with follow a preferential option for the poor and in a special way also for the refugees. Centers for *healthcare* have also always



Taanayel



been on the program of Taanayel. And finally, a main service of the Taanayel team has been the development of the *agricultural domain*, by planting trees, sowing grain, growing vines and herding cattle.

Total cooperation is a third requirement of the mission Jesuits are sent out to live and work on at Taanayel. Given the enormous needs that come to the small group that makes up the Jesuit residence, the spirit of cooperation has, from its very beginnings, animated the community. This attitude is a must in the present times with the strong demand of professionalism, the growing universalism of until recently closed communities, the encounter of various cultures with its special demands on inculturation and the increase of regional, national and international legislation. The most evident fact of this collaboration is the operative relation with the non-governmental organization *Arcenciel*, which after a brief period of common administration now is responsible for the totality of the management of the domain of Taanayel, while the Jesuits only keep a voice in the direction. An attitude of hospitality and kindness toward those who are engaged in the various developing programs of agriculture, ecotourism, agronomic formation and others form part of the human, social and religious mission that is proper to Taanayel.

As to the care for the refugees who recently have flocked into Lebanon by hundreds of thousands, many governmental and non-governmental organizations are active, among them the *Jesuit Refugee Service* which also finds different kinds of support in the ambiance of Ta-

anayel. Healthcare is today a task of the various regional and private hospitals. When persons ask for pastoral assistance, often an appeal is made on the members of the small Jesuit community. As a whole, pastoral work is done in collaboration with the various church-organizations in the neighborhood. The schools that are still directed by the Jesuits form part of various educational networks and find there opportunities for an often appreciated collaboration. A particular demand of this "total collaboration" in the Beqaa is linked with the fact that people from two main groups of religious confession are involved: on the one hand various Christian churches and on the other several currents and groups of Islam. In the past this led every now and then to grave tensions which are felt sometimes even today. Collaboration in this context requires that elements of mutual respect built up in the past are honored and that audacious attempts be made in creating new forms of living and working together.

The Beqaa is a historical and cultural treasure of humanity, through its history of several millenaries, cut into a gem with many facets. It is only waiting for an operative accord to bring its inhabitants to a reasonable degree of cooperation among themselves and to the necessary strength to become authentic contributors to growth and development in wider dimensions. Taanayel is a promise of such a future of justice, peace and liberty. Its 150 years show that such a future is possible, and even on the way of becoming a reality.

Again in the park, the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes.



Africa and Europe Together

John Dardis, S.J. - Michael Lewis, S.J

Jesuits in Africa and Madagascar (JESAM) and Conference of European Provincials (CEP), complex history, a new future. Finding new ways of collaboration and building new friendships.

The histories of Africa and Europe are intertwined and, for better or for worse, Africa and Europe have been journeying together for many years. On one side, colonial history, of course, has made things difficult and there are bitter legacies. But the work of missionaries has often been very creative and has laid the foundations for the building up of the Society of Jesus and the Church in Africa. The weeds and the wheat grow together.

In recent years an Inter-Conference Commission (*Commissio Mixta*) of Provincials from Africa-Madagascar and Provincials of Europe was established in order to break new ground and build a new future. Its aim is to improve our connections as we go forward. The Commission meets twice a year.

The core group includes the two Presidents as well as the head of the European NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) and Mission Office group. When the Commission meets in Africa-Madagascar, three Provincials from JESAM attend; when it meets in Europe, three European Provincials attend. When JESAM meets in Rome, the entire Commission gathers. The commission has tackled a number of issues. Its aim is to be a catalyst for creativity and for working together.

Refugees and migrants. The refugee and migration issue is one challenge that both continents share. It is an increasing crisis. It

has been well documented how many people from Africa and Madagascar travel north in order to seek a new life on the continent of Europe. Some of them come for economic reasons; some come because of violation of human rights; some qualify as refugees, some don't. "The numbers of people who head north shows how, for so many people, our world system is not working" says Mike Lewis, President of the Jesuit Superiors of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM). "The Jesuits of Africa and Madagascar are well aware of the situations of injustice which drive people from their homes. Africa is losing some of its best people as they flee from poverty and violence.

The Society of Jesus has chosen to work with others for good governance in the Continent. And when we see the numbers who just vanish, drowned in the Mediterranean, when we see how Africans are exploited by traffickers, when we see how they are detained as they await their status, one has to be moved by compassion and even anger. This should not be happening. Someone has to say 'stop, there has to be another way'. And that is what we are trying to do – propose another way."

"The Society of Jesus has to witness in a prophetic way about asylum seekers and migrants" says John Dardis, President of the Conference of European Provincials (CEP). "More and more they are being defined as 'not welcome' or 'aliens' or 'illegal'. In the Christian tradition we are all brothers and sisters; the Church and the Society of Jesus are called to witness to this, while acknowledging the right of countries to protect their borders."

We wanted to show that we can work together to tackle this issue and so a special inter-conference project was set up, attached to the JRS (*Jesuit Refugee Service*) office in Malta. It involves pastoral outreach to refugees and asylum seekers from the African continent. A European scholastic and an African priest work side by side – a concrete

witness to solidarity and unity. The project is small, but because it is embedded in the JRS team it can achieve many things. From 2010-2014, the Polish Province sent two scholastics on regency – each of them for 2 years, from 2014-2016, a scholastic from Ukraine has been working there.

“One of the greatest discoveries in my work with refugees in Malta, is that despite the very difficult situation they do not lose hope” says Vyacheslav Okun from Ukraine. “It is a real spiritual growth that I see in them. They are deprived of everything, excluded, and forgotten. We support them, the best we can, by providing legal, psychological, social services and pastoral care. But the most important thing is just our permanent presence, the sacrifice of our time, our ordinary conversation. Because in the refugees – the poorest of the poor – we can see the image of Jesus Christ, whom we as Jesuits are called to serve.”

The East African Province and Province of Central Africa have been the ones, so far, who are providing help from the African side. Both of the Conferences provide some financial aid. Prophetic projects such as this can have an impact far beyond their financial value. Challenges have included the high turnover of migrants as well as dealing with people who have been traumatised either on their journey or by the system of detention. Another challenge is to define the meaning of ‘pastoral’ when a majority of the migrants and asylum seekers are Muslims.

The Pope’s visit to nearby Lampedusa was a wonderful encouragement to everyone who works with asylum seekers and migrants and especially those working on the frontiers of Europe in places such as Malta. It said “your work, and those you work for, are not forgotten”.

Networking Social Centres. The Inter-conference Commission has dealt not just with migration but with other social issues too. The Social Centres of Africa are an extraordinary resource for reflection on social issues



on the African continent and in Madagascar. The Spanish Province and the Jesuit NGOs of Spain have given finance to help with the networking of eight of these Centres.

“This is a key project” says Rigobert Minani, Jesuit Social Apostolate Co-Ordinator for Africa and Madagascar. “For the 50 years of independence in Africa, many social centres have been at the front line in some Provinces. Jesuit Social Centres in Africa have great resources. Our challenge today is to work together as a network in key advocacy themes.

Together we’ll have a great chance to be more effective and to bring about real change. Social Centres have been good in Helping people on a day to day basis. But structural change is needed today in the continent and that is where our Network (JASCNET, Jesuit African Social Centres Network) comes in.

Among our themes at the moment are peace, reconciliation, leadership, governance of natural resources, education etc. We are building up capacity – training our men in the Social Centres as well as our partners to advocate on these themes”.

Formation. Looking to the future it is important that the people in formation know about each others’ continents. Scholastics and young priests from the JESAM region have, for many years, been coming to Europe but a fairly new development is that some Je-

Above: Fr. Michael Lewis (right), President of JESAM, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, April 2015, during the “Mixed Commission” meeting between Jesuit Conference of European Provincials and the Conference of the Jesuits of Africa and Madagascar. With him, from right to left, Fathers Jose Minaku (Provincial of Central Africa), Jude Odiaka (Provincial of North-West Africa), Jean-Yves Grenet (Provincial of France), and Chiedza Chimhandu (Provincial of Zimbabwe).



Events

suit students from Europe study in Africa. Tertiaries from Europe also attend the tertian-ship in Africa and vice versa. Recently, some scholastics from Lithuania and from Ukraine have been studying theology in Nairobi.

"It is a great chance for me to be here in Africa" says Vitaliy Osmolovskyy from Ukraine. "The first thing that surprised me when I arrived in Nairobi, was that the children do not run around during the Liturgy, but instead sit quietly and listen. I asked them about this and they replied: "Because Mom and Dad said so." And they added: "This is the house of God, God is here". In addition, I would say, that, here in Africa, you could learn here how to be happy with what you have, with the opportunities that God gives you today. The people here know how to live in the here and now".

Relationships are fundamental to the Society of Jesus. There is a great richness among the young men of both our continents. If they get to know each other during their formation years, those relations will continue. We need good relations based on equality and trust. That is the future that we want.

Jesuit Historical Institute. A recent devel-

opment is the partnership in which the Provincials of Europe have engaged with the *Jesuit Historical Institute in Africa* (JHIA), which is based in Nairobi.

The Institute, which belongs to JESAM, was commissioned by Father General because he wanted the writing of history to be decentralised and African history to be written with African eyes. The JHIA has been established for this purpose. Father General gave this as a mission to the Provincials of JESAM and the Provincials of Europe are happy to support it.

"Tasked with promoting primary historical research in Africa, the JHIA undertaking is as big as it is novel for the Provincials of Africa and Madagascar," says its Director, Fr Festo Mkenda.

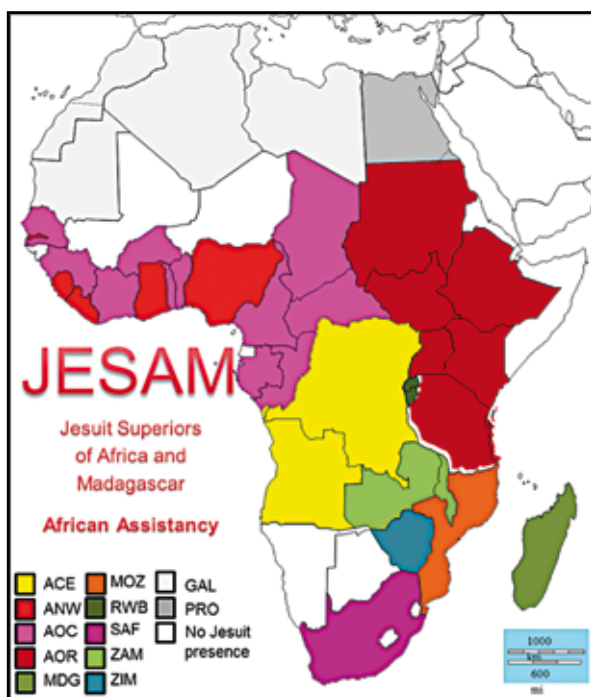
Seminar for provincials. As the number of missionaries from Europe declines, we need to keep the knowledge of Africa and Madagascar alive on the European continent among Jesuits.

Therefore, another initiative which the Inter-conference Commission has promoted is a travel visit to Africa and a seminar for European Provincials. The aim is to show the creativity and the apostolic initiatives taking place in Africa and Madagascar. Africa is bursting with life but often you just see the problems reported in the media. But Africa is more than a collection of countries with problems; it also has rich traditions and resilient people. We want European Jesuits to be aware of all of the African reality, not just the reports they see on TV or in the newspapers.

Final comments. The Inter-conference Commission or *Commissio Mixta* is about building a Society of Jesus that is truly universal.

It is a modest effort but has been gaining momentum over the years. Africa-Madagascar and Europe have to put the misunderstandings of the past behind us and move forward with trust and mutuality. We want to build a future that is brighter and different from the past – for both of our continents.

Below, the map with the countries which make up the JESAM, the Conference of Jesuits of Africa and Madagascar.



Ten Years of a Province

Events

Ujah Gabriel Ejembi, S.J.

Sometimes it feels like the world is driven by dreams. For many years, the then New York Province dreamt of a Province from the Nigeria-Ghana Region. The dream was discerned, presented to God in prayer and later transformed by a decision into a reality. It happened like the creation narrative! Let there be a Province and, on the 22nd of July 2005, there was the North-West Africa Province (ANW). It has been ten years and our shared graced history brings us a sense of gratitude, because we are witnessing initiatives, creativity and, above all, the grace of God at work through the different apostolic ministries in the Province. The journey has been one of fledgling infancy held by an unwavering faith. What started as the Nigeria Mission of the New York Province in 1962 eventually became the Nigeria-Ghana Mission in 1986, and then morphed into a Dependent Region in 1992. With many indigenous Nigerians and Ghanaians responding to God's call to serve as Jesuits, this Region was beginning to mature.

Sometimes it feels like the world is shaped and molded by discernment. As each day passes, the call to establish a Province and to deepen our commitment intensified, the apparent opportunities for apostolic expansion and consolidation confirmed this call and after several Jesuit gatherings and Regional discernment sessions the *kairos* moment finally arrived. This was a time to take a bold step forward while trusting that "Nothing is impossible for Yahweh," to use the Old Testament expression (Genesis 18, 14).

Sometimes it feels like the world originates through a decision. After a period of prolonged prayers, discernment and consultations, the then Father General, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., brought to birth the ANW Province with Fr. George Quickley, S.J., as its first Provincial. Fr. Gerald Chojnacki, S.J., then Provincial of the New York Province and Fr. Raymond Salomone, S.J., who was just finishing his term as Regional Superior of the Nigeria-Ghana Region were very instrumental in seeing the process through. Inaugurated on 22 July 2005, this new Province comprised of Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. We are indeed grateful to the former New York Province, now part of



the re-constituted USA Northeast Province, for her trust and confidence while nurturing the Nigeria-Ghana Mission through its different stages of growth to what is now the North-West Africa Province.

Since its inception, the ANW Province has experienced tremendous growth. *St. Joseph's Parish* in Benin City, Nigeria, continues to be a model of an effective Jesuit parish. With its old buildings brought down and a new structure erected, the parish is now one of the largest parishes in the Archdiocese of Benin. In 2010, Bishop Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji, then administrator of the Archdiocese of Benin, gave the parish to the Jesuits in perpetuity. Still in Benin-City, a team of five resident Jesuits of the ANW Province also serve the spiritual needs of God's people through the *Jesuit Center*. This Center runs programmes in

The Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Benin City, in Nigeria.

The ten years' journey of the North-West Africa Province is a story of growth, a story of hope, and a story of grace. In fact, counting on the grace of God and the hopes woven in the labours of her ancestors, the Province can tell its tales of growth and success.

N-WAfrica



Events

Below, a group of the first students of the Jesuit Memorial College of Port-Harcourt (Nigeria.) This school arose in memory of the 60 students of our college of Abuja who died in a tragic air accident on December 10, 2005.

spirituality, formation and Ignatian retreats.

We also have Jesuits working at *St. Francis Catholic Church* in Idimu, Lagos State. The parish equally has a secondary school run by members of our least Society. The school has a student population of 1,140 and has recently developed boarding facilities to accommodate those students whose family homes are far away from the school and to offer quality education to the girl-children who are constantly distracted by some traditional values in society and domestic chores in the home. It is rated among the top Catholic secondary schools in this city of over 17 million people.

In pursuit of the *magis*, *Loyola Jesuit College* (LJC) in Abuja continues to thrive in offering quality education and formation to students selected through an entrance examination from every part of Nigeria and beyond. Started in 1996, LJC presently has a student population of 571 with seven resident Jesuits. Abuja, the capital of Nigeria where LJC is situated is in the north of



Nigeria which is facing unrelenting threats from the Boko Haram group. LJC responds to this challenge by offering not only quality education to both Christian and Muslim children but also creates an environment for interreligious dialogue and the transmission of ideologies of peace,

tolerance and religious co-existence.

Unfortunately, ANW Province was only four months old, when *Loyola Jesuit College* lost sixty of her students in a tragic plane crash on the 10th of December 2005. Hope was, however, reborn, by the opening of a new secondary school, *Jesuit Memorial College* (JMC), in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, where the tragic plane crash happened. This college, symbolic in its nature and origin, serves, to immortalize the young lives lost in that crash and to offer holistic education to many children from different backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities. Besides, JMC is the dream of the

bereaved parents who expressed their intention to have a Jesuit school of an analogous quality of LJC sited in Port Harcourt which is about 600 km south-east of Abuja. What that symbolizes, in one sense, is that children from Port Harcourt could attend a school as good as LJC in Port Harcourt, and would no longer be exposed to the dangers of Nigerian roads or air travel in search of a good college. JMC is in its second year with a student population of 187 and five resident Jesuits. Within the premises of JMC stands a primary school (Grade 1-6) in its first year run by JMC, which provides quality education to promising and talented children who can afford it and several other indigent children from the host community.

Furthermore, a team of four Jesuits serve a population of over 6,000 Catholic faithful at *Christ the King Catholic Church* (CKC) in Ilasamaja, Lagos state. It is important to mention too that *St. Francis Catholic Church* was previously an out station served by the Jesuits of CKC. We also have a team of three resident Jesuits (a sub-community of CKC) at the chaplaincy of *Lagos State University Teaching Hospital* where they serve the pastoral needs of Catholic medical staff and students, Catholic patients in the hospital, and Catholic faithful inhabiting the environs where the chaplaincy is situated.

In Ghana, the North-West Africa Province has two communities, one in Accra and the other in Cape Coast. In Accra, there are presently three Jesuits who are ministering at *St. Anthony Catholic Church* in Teshie, Nungua – a parish with an estimate of 4,466 lay faithful. *St. Anthony Catholic Church* has two vibrant out stations and one university chaplaincy: *St. Ignatius Catholic Church*, Baatsona, *Our Lady of Perpetual Help*, Nungua Barrier and *Regional Maritime University* in the outskirts of Nungua. The Jesuits at *St. Anthony Catholic Church* equally serve a Mass center at Manet Estates in Accra. The most recent development at St. Anthony is the ongoing new church building project. In Cape Coast, there are three Jesuits involved in various ministries: teaching at the university and the major seminary, retreat ministries, spiritual direction and pastoral work. In the past, *Claver House* also welcomes Jesuits preparing for final incorporation into the Society for their tertianship.

In 2007, just two years after the inauguration of the North-West Africa Province, the Jesuits assumed the administration of *Holy Family Parish*, Caldwell, in Liberia. The population of parishioners is presently about 350. There are two

Jesuits in Liberia serving various pastoral and formation needs of the Church in Liberia. Ever since *Holy Family Parish* was taken up by the Jesuits, its impact has been felt in the township community of Caldwell. It would be important to mention that Liberia is one of the countries most affected by the *Ebola* epidemic. Our team of two Jesuits, Frs. Timothy Baghrmwin S.J., and John Perry S.J., accompanied the people of Monrovia and Caldwell during this phase of challenges. It is not surprising that the Catholic community of the parish has doubled since the arrival of the Jesuits. *Holy Family Parish* has a new church building which not only accommodates more people but is also fenced, which offers a more serene and private ambience for religious activities. Moreover, a parish school, *St. Ignatius Loyola Academy*, was started to serve the needs of children from the neighbourhood. The parish also oversees the *Holy Family Medical Center* which is one of the only two medical clinics in the Caldwell area. The North-West Africa Province also received her first novice from Liberia in the intake of 2014.

Several visits have been made by Frs. George Quickley, S.J., and Jude Odiaka, S.J., (previous and present Provincials respectively) to Sierra Leone and Gambia to discern the possibility of our future engagement with these countries where we are yet to begin a ministry – a future reality that, God willing, will be fulfilled some day when the Province has more Jesuits.

In any case, our ten years' journey has been largely defined by the consolidation of and, in some cases, the beginning of new ministries and apostolates. In the case of the latter, we could underscore the emergence of *Jesuit Memorial College*, Port Harcourt; the development of boarding facilities at *St. Francis Catholic Secondary School*, Lagos State; the rebuilding and the ownership of *St. Joseph Catholic Church*, Benin City; and the growing apostolic and pastoral engagement with the people of God at *Holy Family Parish* in Caldwell; the vital contributions in the area of retreat and spiritual direction in Cape Coast and our contribution to Ghana's intellectual formation through our teaching ministry at the University of Cape Coast where Fr. Isidore Bonabom, S.J., is a lecturer in the Faculty of Law; and our service in the area of the intellectual apostolate with Fr. Abuchi Muoneme, S.J., taking up an appointment as a staff of *Veritas University*, the Catholic University of Nigeria, Abuja.

From a statistical perspective, at her inauguration, the North-West Africa Province had 82

Jesuits serving (and or studying) in ten countries. Out of that number, 18 were members of other Provinces, 64 were indigenous Jesuits, with only twenty-one ordained priests and two in final vows. It is vital to also note that we had nine superiors of our different communities and only two were indigenous Jesuits. Today, there are 121 Jesuits in the Province, of which, five are members of other Provinces. There are 47 indigenous Jesuit priests of the North-West Africa Province today and twelve have made their final vows. Besides, all our different communities' superiors are indigenous Jesuits. This statistical analysis gives us concrete indications of growth which for us serves as a sign of hope. The ten years' journey of the ANW Province is a story of growth, a story of hope, and a story of grace. In fact, counting on the grace of God and the hopes woven in the labours of her ancestors, the ANW Province can tell its tales of growth and success, and she is still counting because the fertile labours of the early missionaries continue to bear abundant fruits.

Students in the chapel of Saint Francis Secondary School of Idimu, in the region of Lagos (Nigeria.)



Jesuits

Father Rasschaert, Messenger of Peace

Louis Francken, S.J.; Aurel Brys, S.J.; Cyprian Ekka, S.J.; J. Marianus Kujur, S.J.

“Father Herman Rasschaert, S.J. was a man of total commitment. He would never refuse a service to anyone. He was very sincere and could not tolerate any double talk. His life will always remain for me a source of inspiration and courage.” (Fr. Louis Francken, S.J.).

24th March 2014. Over 15,000 people gathered at Kutungia church compound on the Jharkhand-Odisha border, 240 kilometres South of Ranchi (India), to observe the 50th anniversary of Herman Rasschaert's martyrdom. The 42 year-old Belgian Jesuit of Ranchi Province had been a parish priest there. A fundamentalist Hindu mob killed him on 24th March 1964 at Gerda village, some 8 kilometres away. According to eye witnesses, he had tried to deter the mob from killing the Muslims huddled in a mosque and at an adjacent *Madarsa* (Islamic elementary school). Rasschaert's catechist Bernard Jojo, 90, said that the martyr had pleaded with folded hands, “Please leave them! Do not harm them!”

The celebration underlined Rasschaert's pastoral commitment, message of peace, pursuit of communal harmony and justice. While divisive forces seek to inject the venom of caste, creed, colour and ethnicity-based hatred, his little known self sacrifice continues

to kindle hope and conviviality.

Ahead of the Golden Jubilee, *Indian Social Institute*, New Delhi, and *Sadbhavna Manch* (Forum for Harmony), had jointly organized a conference on 16th November 2013, in Ranchi city. The theme of the conference was, ‘Quest for Harmony in a Changing Context’. Over 365 people from Christian, Hindu, Islam, Sikh, Buddhist and *Sarna* (traditional tribal) faiths, including Cardinal Telesphore Placidius Toppo of Ranchi participated in the event.

Rasschaert's martyrdom was also commemorated by over 600 invited guests at *St. Xavier's College*, Ranchi, on 10th March 2014. The event was jointly organized by the *India Desk*, Ranchi, and the local unit of *Sadbhavna Manch*. “It would have been out of his character, if my son were not to die as he did!” Spontaneous response of Julian Rasschaert to the news about his son Herman's violent death best sums up the latter's supreme sacrifice for communal harmony amidst communalization of politics and religion in India.

Rasschaert's birth in exile at Kampen, Netherlands, on 13th September 1922 presumably left an indelible mark of unjust war on him. Nurtured in Flemish nationalist moorings, he had developed strong convictions early on. Endowed with robust physique, Herman loved strenuous activities. Brought up by his mother Cecilia in a Catholic environment, he had also cultivated considerable religious piety. In the final year at a Jesuit-run school in Aalst, Belgium, he decided to join the Jesuits much against his father's wish. His decision to become a missionary in India surprised many of his novitiate companions. He landed at Calcutta on 28th November 1947, three months after India's independence.

As a priest with a few years of pastoral experience, Rasschaert arrived on 2nd January 1961 at Kutungia parish. When he died, the parish had 17 village churches and 2,500 Catholics. A dedicated pastor and energetic consolidator, he made pastoral tours on bicycle to all village chapels three to four times a year.





Wild rumours of violent confrontation among the majority Muslims, the Hindus and the *Adivasis* (Indigenous Tribals) in East Pakistan in early March 1964 was making the border towns in India restless. In addition to enduring persecution by the Hindu fundamentalists, some Christian *Adivasis* reportedly suffered Muslim hostility as well. Of the thousands of refugees seeking shelter in India, many were sent from Kolkata by special trains to resettlement areas in Madhya Pradesh, a centrally located region. The sight of so many terror stricken refugees and some allegedly mutilated bodies caused indignation among the Hindus in India.

Fanatic groups used the opportunity to further whip up communal passions. Conflicts erupted in the significant industrial centres of Jamshedpur and Rourkela by 18th March 1964. All educational institutions and steel factories were indefinitely closed. The violence speedily escalated on both sides of the border between the states of Bihar and Odisha. Armed gangs forayed into the country side, spreading fear and wild rumours — “Pakistan has declared war! The Muslims are killing the Hindus!” Many villagers, including *Adivasis*, were forced to join the marauding gangs. Frenzied mobs attacked the Muslims, killed them and burned their houses.

It was Monday of the Holy Week. Back from a sick-call at a borderline village of Kutungia, a visibly somber Rasschaert was pacing on the verandah. Less number of participants at the Palm Sunday liturgy and virtually no one coming for the second Mass were indications Rasschaert might not have missed. On his way back from the sick-call, a villager informed him that the Muslims were in great panic of possible attacks by frenzied gangs on the prowl.

The next day Rasschaert learnt that no worker had turned up for duty. His catechist informed him that a big crowd led by outsiders had surrounded Gerda village. Shaken by night long strife, the Muslims of the area had taken shelter at Gerda, a home to 36 Muslim and 18 Catholic families. They were, however, outnumbered by the aggressors. A small police force posted there had fled for fear of being killed. Amidst tremendous yelling and wailing the final assault on the village began roughly at 7 in the morning.

For the likes of Rasschaert such injustice



and barbaric acts were intolerable. Having entrusted the keys to his catechist, he instructed the latter not to refuse shelter to any stray Muslim. As he was to leave for Gerda, the catechist and some teachers dissuaded him in vain, “It is too dangerous. You will be killed!” His answer was equally succinct, “I am ready to give my life!” Dressed in a cassock, he sped to Gerda on his bicycle and reached the mosque within 20 minutes. Even as he made his way on foot through the crowd, some people recognized him. “This is not a place for you,” they begged.

Undeterred, however, Rasschaert made his way to the low boundary wall surrounding the mosque. Even as the attackers hurled stones and bricks at the hundreds of people huddled in the small enclosure, he told the Muslims not to fear. He then turned to the crowd of attackers with these words, “Killing people is a grave sin! Stop this madness!”

Above, the little shrine with the bust of Fr. Herman in the village of Gerda, the place of his martyrdom on March 24, 1964. It was inaugurated by Cardinal Toppo, the Archbishop of Ranchi (photo on the previous page, with the photo of the martyr.) On the following page, on the bottom, Narayan Roy, an official for human rights of the High Court of Justice of Ranchi, commemorates Fr. Herman.

India

Below, the tomb of Fr. Herman, which is always covered with flowers.



The attackers, predominantly outsiders, apparently did not recognize him. “He is one of them,” was their uproar. A boulder landed on his head. He fell on his knees. While he tried to rise in vain, more blows with sharp weapons did him to death. Next, the mosque was torched in order to flush out those inside. Nearly a thousand people were killed and all their houses burnt down. Triggered by the Gerda massacre, communal violence threatened to spread throughout the region.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, announced at a Congress Party meeting, “Father should be honoured”. Numerous public figures also paid glowing tributes to Rasschaert on the first anniversary of his martyrdom. Doctor Ashok Mehta, a veteran freedom fighter-cum-political ideologue, presided over the function. “Father Herman Rasschaert was a Man of Humanity, a Man of God. We must continue to keep his remembrance in the years to come,” he said.

Picking up from Mehta’s tribute, Jesuit Father Louis Francken, a contemporary of Rasschaert, notes, “Father Rasschaert was a man of total commitment, no half measures.

He would never refuse a service to anyone. He was very sincere and could not tolerate any double talk. He was like Nathanael in the Gospel “in whom there is no deception” (John 1:7). His life will always remain for me a source of inspiration and courage.”

“If Father Herman had not sacrificed his life in the communal violence on 24th March 1964 at Gerda, many more people would have been killed,” observed Bishop Vincent Barwa of Simdega, the home Diocese of Kutungia parish. “His blood will never go in vain. The blood of the martyr makes the Church wider, larger and stronger. We must draw inspiration from Rasschaert, who at a very young age gave up everything, came for us all and laid down his life to establish peace and harmony in our region,” the Prelate concluded. Coinciding with the 50th death anniversary, Gerda has been made a parish.

A Muslim survivor of the carnage, Yasim Mia, 79, said he lost 135 members of his clan, including his wife and 5 children. Similarly, Khalil Khan, 75, claimed to have lost his wife and 10 children. According to them all houses of the Muslims at Gerda were burnt to ashes. Except for 17 survivors at ground zero, local Muslims and those from the neighbouring villages were massacred.

William Kandulna, a devotee of Rasschaert, who has built a private chapel in the martyr’s honour, claimed that many documented wonders are attributed to the intercession of the great martyr. People also find it miraculous that while there were about 2,500 Catholics during Rasschaert’s time, by 2014, there were 18 village churches with as many catechists, 1,188 Catholic families with 6,497 members and 2 catechists at the centre. Moreover, Kutungia parish has given 20 priests, 16 Religious Brothers, 40 Sisters and 1 Bishop.

Former school companions and friends of the great martyr remarked that if he had not laid down his life in such circumstances, he would have regretted it all his life. The Ranchi Jesuits are aware that Rasschaert’s legacy of communal harmony is of immense relevance. Hence, they intend to utilize Rasschaert’s martyrdom to further promote and foster communal harmony, justice and universal brotherhood.

The place of Rasschaert’s martyrdom at Gerda has since become a place of pilgrimage, where people gather every year to commemorate his death and pray for his blessings.



My Experience as an Astrophysicist

Adam D. Hincks, S.J.

“Will my scientific training be put to use if I join the Society of Jesus?”, I asked the vocation director when I was discerning a call to the Jesuits back in 2007. I was in the middle of a doctorate in astrophysics, and though I desired to serve as a Jesuit in whatever capacity was needed, I was curious about how my education might be integrated into my vocation.

“I can’t promise you *how* your education will be used,” he responded, “but I can promise you that it will be used. We value everything that a man brings to the Society, and it would be stupid not to make use of your skills. And I can tell you one thing: we’re not stupid!”

I entered the novitiate in 2009 and have since come to understand the wisdom of that response. During my philosophy studies, for example, I found that my scientific training was a great preparation for the critical thinking skills that philosophy demands. I also began discovering that many people—both those of faith and those of no faith—have questions about the relationship between science and religion, and that sometimes my experience could provide some clarity to these questions.

In conversations with my superiors, I learnt

“It is important for the Church not only to teach that there is no fundamental conflict between science and the Catholic faith, but also to show by concrete actions that she takes an active interest in scientific progress.”

that they were seriously interested in having me gain some more experience as a research scientist. Thus, when my Regency was approaching—that period of formation between philosophical and theological studies—I was asked to try and find an academic research position for two years. I was happy to be offered a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, a city where we have a small but burgeoning Jesuit community after establishing a presence only a few years ago.

At UBC, I am one of about a dozen members of the *Experimental Cosmology Laboratory*. Our work consists in developing instrumentation for telescopes that allow us to observe the Universe on its largest scales of space and time. These data help us to understand how the Universe has evolved over its fourteen billion year-old history.

A young Jesuit recounts his experience as an astrophysicist. Photo by M. Halpern.



Canada





Events



In the photo of A. Hincks, S.J., the Atacama Cosmology Telescope located in the Northern Andes Mountains of Chile. This is an international project including Canada, Chile, South Africa, Great Britain, and the United States. Its location is ideal for capturing the light emitted by the universe.

It is an exciting time to be a cosmologist. For the majority of human history, most questions about the nature of the physical Universe as a whole—such as how old it is, what most of it is made from, and how it has come to be as it is today—could only be addressed speculatively. Today, however, we have both the technology and the scientific theories that allow us to give empirical answers to these questions.

For example, one project I work on, the *Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment* (CHIME), is an observatory that will make a precise measurement of how fast the universe is expanding. This is a very interesting topic because about twenty years ago, astronomers observing distant supernovae, or exploding stars, discovered that not only is the universe expanding, but that its expansion is speeding up. Why it is accelerating is a huge puzzle, because gravity, the only force we thought mattered over cosmic distances, pulls things together rather than pushing them apart. To try and understand this strange phenomenon, we need a very sensitive telescope to look billions of light-years back in time to the epoch when our Universe began accelerating.

The result is CHIME: a huge, 100×100 metre radio telescope in the interior of the Canadian province of British Columbia. It is an initiative of UBC, the University of Toronto, *McGill University* and the *Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory*. Right now, most of our effort is directed to building the telescope and its components, understanding the details of our instruments and figuring out how to mitigate the light from our own Milky Way galaxy that obscures the much more distant galaxies we are interested in. Doing research in astrophysics is not at all a case of pointing a camera at the sky and snapping a picture! A project like CHIME takes years of effort from dozens of people before it can bear fruit. But

the scientific value of what we hope to measure is what drives all of us onward.

The other project I work on is the *Atacama Cosmology Telescope* (ACT). It is an international collaboration of institutions in Canada, Chile, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. ACT is located in the mountains of Chile's Atacama Desert: an ideal location for capturing the light from the very early universe. In fact, ACT can see the epoch soon after the Big Bang when no stars or galaxies had yet formed, but when all the matter in the Universe was still collected together in a hot, dense gas of hydrogen and helium.

The observations ACT has made so far have helped us better understand what the Universe was like in the instants after the Big Bang and how that initial state has evolved into galaxies and stars. We have also used ACT to detect huge clusters of galaxies billions of light-years away to help understand when and how structure forms in the universe. One of our favourite objects, which we named *El Gordo* ("Fatso"), consists of two huge groups of galaxies that we caught in the act of colliding into each other and forming an even more massive cluster.

We continue to improve ACT and earlier last year we completed the installation of our latest camera. I spent the month of January at the observatory helping to implement these upgrades with a team of colleagues. It is a privilege to visit the site, located deep in the Atacama Desert, where the natural beauty of the desert and mountains is rivalled only by the spectacular skies at night.

Usually I don't have to convince people that cosmology is a fascinating and worthwhile subject to pursue. On the other hand, it may well be asked whether it is worthwhile for a member of a religious order to spend most of his time engaging in such research. Even some Jesuits I have met think that I have an odd regency assignment! But there are in fact many reasons why this is an important mission in which the Church should be visibly involved. Let me share three of them.

First, as I mentioned earlier, many people

are unsure what the relationship of faith and science is. Various forms of both religious fundamentalism and aggressive atheism claim that there is a basic incompatibility between religious belief and empirical investigation. It is important for the Church not only to teach that there is no fundamental conflict between science and the Catholic faith, but also to show by concrete actions that she takes an active interest in scientific progress. Having clerics and religious working side-by-side with lay researchers is a visible symbol of the Church's commitment to promoting science.

Second, involvement with science is engagement with culture, a particular interest of the Society of Jesus. Several years ago, before I was a Jesuit, I gave a lecture at the *African Institute for Mathematical Sciences* (AIMS) in Cape Town, a school that provides a one-year programme for African students preparing for graduate studies. Before my lecture, one of the faculty members told me a bit about why AIMS exists. He explained that a society's development depends not only on economic and technological progress, but also on cultural progress, which includes scientific research. I think he was right. Discoveries in astronomy have a profound influence on culture—think, for example, of how the pictures from the Hubble Space Telescope feed the imagination of so many people.

Spreading knowledge of astronomy is therefore a service the Church can provide to culture. In this regard, I was privileged to be invited to help run the 2014 *Vatican Observatory Summer School*. This is a biannual, month-long course offered to graduate-level astronomy students from around the world, regardless of creed. It is an important service that the Vatican Observatory (a work entrusted to the Jesuits) provides to the global astronomical community. Near the end of the school, the students and faculty were granted a private audience with Pope Francis. The Holy Father praised the objectives of the school, and asked the participants to bring the benefits of astronomy back to their homelands: "Finally, I would also encourage you to share with people in your own countries the knowledge about the universe which you have acquired. Only a fraction of the global population has access to such knowledge, which opens the heart and the mind to the great questions which human beings have always asked: Where do we come from? Where

are we going? Does this universe made up of hundreds of millions of galaxies have any meaning?"

In this spirit, the third reason why the Church should promote scientific research is that it is at heart a contemplative practice. Many astrophysicists, though by no means all, are not religious believers. But what all in this field ultimately have in common with those of us of the Catholic faith is a desire to contemplate the truth. If astronomers were not interested in pure discovery, they would have other jobs that could earn them more money! The real drive of people who do astronomy is the desire to know more about the world. This basic human need finds a wonderful subject in the heavens. And for those who do have religious faith, the night sky has always been a source of inspiration. St. Ignatius relates that soon after his conversion, "The greatest consolation he received ... was from gazing at the sky and stars, and this he often did and for quite a long time."

I have considered myself blessed to be able to make a small contribution to progress in our knowledge of the Universe over the past two years. Hopefully in the process I've been somewhat able to embody what I've described above—to foster authentic dialogue between empirical investigation and religious faith, to improve human culture, and above all, to allow the heavens to be a channel of contemplation.

Adam Hincks, S.J., the author of the article, intent on his electronic work at the Atacama Cosmology Telescope.



Atacama

Art and Spirituality

Pablo Luque

“...A work of art is a glimmer, a glow of the divine; its contemplation entrances, moves and overwhelms...”

The symbolic universe that we are able to construct, when the opportunity comes our way, allows us to modify our beliefs as to what we may think is impossible: it can give meaning to what we do, and enable us to understand and overcome suffering. Meaning is born and reborn.

In education, the great challenge for us is how to enrich the mental structures whereby we can grasp both reality and new possibilities. The artistic endeavour allows for the transformation of reality in a way that is deeply human and yet transcendent. It symbolizes the human capacity to establish contact with the spiritual dimension of humanity; thus it gives form to the imaginative, and allows the creation of new worlds and

of other forms of life.

As numberless possibilities open up within it, the moment of artistic creation is *sublime*, however exaggerated that term may appear. A new reality is being thought and we ourselves are rethought as part of it. “A work of art is a glimmer, a glow of the divine; its contemplation entrances, moves and overwhelms...”

An interior world undoubtedly exists in every work of art: a universe of emotions, sensations, judgments and thoughts.

Jesuit education gives particular care to the development in each student of imagination, affectivity and creativity in all branches of study. These dimensions enrich the learning process and prevent it being purely intellectual. They are essential for the integrated formation of the person, and they form a way to discover God who reveals himself by means of beauty. [*Jesuit Commission on Education: Orientations, principles and proposals*. 1.2 “The complete formation of each person within the community”]

The task of educational institutions is to ensure that each student can develop individual talents and capabilities as much as possible. The

Argentina





Spirituality

In the photos on this page some artistic images in the discovery of the national cultural patrimony. In the previous page, a boy is learning to paint.



Spirituality

*On this page,
painting and music
are two important
aspects of education
in art and spirituality.
Below, Pablo Luque,
the author
of the article.*



artistic sphere has exceptional importance in this regard. To our way of thinking, the production of a work of art is a source of aesthetic delight. We take into account the possibilities of each student and the influence that these can have on personal paths of exploration.

By means of art, one comes to know the world; but also one re-creates, one gives the world expression. The creative process, once set in motion, allows the pupil to develop capacities not only as an individual but also as a social being. However, any work of art needs to be envisaged in its own context.

The Jesuit schools in the suburb of San Miguel are located in areas with great social difficulties



that have to be taken into account. Many challenges must be met and the policies we have established are aimed at having an influence on the real world. The vision of the world that St. Ignatius gives us is a positive one, all embracing, with an emphasis on personal freedom.

In the face of obstacles that may seem insuperable, our task as educators is to resist; in fact, we challenge such obstacles and turn them into opportunities to our advantage. We know that resistance is not most effectively carried out through opposition, but rather by means of an alternative tactic. We seek to promote a spiritual vision of the world, as opposed to a materialistic one; the care of others, as opposed to the dominant self-interest; the practice of austerity and a critical capacity of reflection, as opposed to an unexamined consumerism. By means of aesthetic training, it is possible to inculcate these values, and draw the students into the experience not only of being active, but of being appreciative. A fundamental aspect of artistic creation is learning how to contemplate by the application of the senses.

In the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius invites us to practise the 'composition of place' and also the 'application of the senses'. He is encouraging us to give ourselves whole-heartedly to the adventure of the imagination; the whole of our human nature is called into play and we are able to discover how deeply and unconditionally we are loved.

Creativity



Below, more children learning to paint. On the left, a dance exercise.

Each time that pupils paint or draw or dance, they undergo an experience whereby they become conscious in the first place of certain limits, but also that possibilities exist beyond these limits. Initially, this is only a partial knowledge of what is the full potential.

The dynamic of artistic creation always invites them to take a further step, to surpass limits, and to set out on paths that are new. But on the road they are not alone: it is the work of the educator to accompany, direct, listen and encourage, so that pupils may grow in self knowledge and come to see that they can go ever further in their achievements. Alongside them are also their peers, who can value and appreciate. Even if the production of a work of art is carried out by an individual, it emerges from a group. The pupils come to respect the finished work of art: it is the focus of a complex process by which the different experiences are seen to have contributed to form a whole with a new meaning. Their symbolic universe has been enriched and they have acquired the tools with which to undertake new projects that are even more challenging.

One may ask what it is that a work of art is trying to express. The answer is that it is part of the science of what is real, a new aspect of what is around us. Although the pupil may not be aware of it, the work he or she produces opens a path to God.

Translated by Joseph Munitiz, S.J.



The Dance of a Saint

Néstor Gustavo González – *Jesuit Communication Centre of Paraguay*

The “Roque Marangatu Ballet” is an intense recounting of the life of the Paraguayan saint, Roque González de Santa Cruz, from his birth to his martyrdom and subsequent canonization.

Paraguay

Saint Roque González de Santa Cruz was a Jesuit with a great missionary spirit and a strong sense of vocation. He opened up new frontiers by developing the Jesuit Reductions as a way of defending the indigenous peoples, who were the most defenseless people of that epoch. Now the testimony of faith given by this Jesuit martyr has reached the stages of the theaters of Paraguay with the “Roque Marangatu Ballet,” a creation of the dancer Miguel Bonnín, who is choreographer and director of Modern and Classical Ballet of the city of Asunción.

The work presents an intense narration of the life of Saint Roque from his birth to his martyrdom and subsequent canonization. The one-act performance, lasting one hour, requires a broad and varied production team, including 50 dancers, musicians, as well as technicians for scenery, lights, and sound.

The music for the ballet is a fusion of rock with Paraguayan folk songs, indigenous music,





Gregorian chant, hip-hop, electronic music, jazz, and other elements, all brilliantly blended together into a lively and moving score. The creator of the work states: "It had to be modern music with indigenous accents because I wanted it to reach young people. I spoke with the Paraguayan composer Rolando Chaparro, and he agreed to compose the music for the ballet." The choreography is powerful and rapid, inviting the mainly youth audiences to enter fully into the work and feel strongly motivated by it.

The work opened in August 2013 at the Municipal Theater of Asunción, where there were 14 performances in all. A special performance was held in the Great Lyric Theater of Asunción when Cardinal Claudio Hummes came to Paraguay as a representative of Pope Francis and attended the closing ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Roque. Of this performance Miguel Bonnín related:

"At the end of the work all the people gave us a standing ovation, which inspired us. The theater resounded with applause and expressions of jubilation. As they left, most of the people had tears in their eyes because of the emotion they felt. As the ballet ends, one hears the words Saint John Paul II spoke when he canonized Saint Roque; he urged Paraguayans to keep their faith in Christ alive and to defend the faith for which Saint Roque and his companions suffered martyrdom. That produced strong emotions in the people and brought them to tears. I believe that Paraguayans feel a great desire for holiness within themselves but that it get buried in our materialist consumer society."

How did the work come about? The seed for the creation of this ballet was sown in the heart and mind of Miguel Bonnín by the



Betharramite priest César Antonio de las Heras after the opening performance of the ballet "La Fierecilla Domada" in 2002. The priest told Miguel a story he had written about some Indians who had been helped by a missionary who might have been Saint Roque. "We agreed to get together so that he could give me the libretto," says Bonnín, "but he died and I never learned what he was thinking of."

Nevertheless the idea was planted in the brain of the choreographer, who had felt especially attracted to Roque and his companion martyrs from the time he was a child attending the Blessed Roque González school. "After I produced the 'Spiritual Exercises Ballet'

Above, Cardinal Hummes congratulates the creator of the work, Miguel Bonnín, who, smiling, prepares to embrace him. On the left, Fr. Casimiro Irala, S.J. Photo, Alvar Fáñez.

Spirituality



On these pages, other scenes from the ballet on the life of St. Roque González de Santa Cruz, the Jesuit missionary among the Guaraní, martyred in 1628.

in 2007, which was inspired by my making the Ignatian exercises in ordinary life, the Franciscans asked me to create a ballet about the life of Saint Francis for 2009, the year when they were celebrating the 800th anniversary of the approval of the Franciscan rule by the Vatican. That's when I realized that I could make the saints dance, and I began to think about doing something for Saint Roque González de Santa Cruz."

Bonnín commented further: "I felt great satisfaction in being able to reproduce the life of Saint Roque through the art that I know best, which is dance. The Municipal Ballet building is very close to the cathedral where Saint Roque was pastor, so that when the rehearsals went well, I had the strong sensation of being closely connected with him. The lives of the saints were filled with a great passion for Christ, and I think it's sad that those passionate lives of the saints are not presented more often for people to see. The saints have an extremely important message for the youth of today and

for everybody. As Saint John Paul II said in his letter addressed to artists: *Art needs religion just as religion needs art in order to bring today's men and women to the eternal message of the Gospel.*"

Bonnín says that when he created "Francis of Assisi" he experienced much fear and doubt because he had never created a ballet on that kind of theme. Moreover, making saints dance was not an easy task since the traditional cassock limits body movement. Nevertheless, Fr. Casimiro Irala, a well-known Paraguayan Jesuit and musician, gave him the push he needed to move ahead with the project. The two men worked closely together on what would be a great adventure, one that combined two passions: a saint's passion for Christ and a lay person's passion for dance. United together on the stage, they had a powerful positive impact on the public.

Father Irala outlined the themes that would provide the story line of the ballet, and the two men discussed the many cultural conflicts of that epoch. They debated about the best title for the work until the priest proposed calling it "Roque Marangatu," which means "holy Roque" or "good Roque."

Also collaborating actively in the production were the composer Rolando Chaparro, the Association of Friends of the Municipal Ballet, and the Department of Culture of the city of Asunción. They all contributed enthusiastically to bring to fruition that tiny seed that was planted in 2002.

Other Jesuit priests played an important role in developing the project. The dancer, who is a faithful member of Christ the King, a Jesuit parish in Asunción, states: "I have had a long-standing connection with the Jesuits. When I was only 12 years of age, Fr. José María Blanch had my sister and me act out parts of the Gospel during the Christ the King festivities. Fathers José Luis Caravias and Carlos Canillas always encouraged me, as did the provincial, Fr. Alberto Luna, who translated into Guaraní some of the texts included in the work."

The "Roque Marangatu Ballet" presents the life and death of Roque, the Paraguayan saint who, inspired by ardent love of Jesus Christ, founded and evangelized the first Jesuit Reductions. Roque was born in 1576 in Asunción, one of the ten children of the royal notary Bartolomé González and the mestiza María de Santa Cruz.

When he was a child, his mother told him

Ballet

that he should never forget that he had Guaraní blood flowing through his veins. He was an altar boy in the Asunción cathedral and sang in the choir. He was ordained a priest when he was only 22 years old and shortly afterward was named pastor of the Cathedral of the Most Holy Assumption by the Franciscan bishop, Fray Martín Ignacio de Loyola, grand nephew of Saint Ignatius Loyola. Roque was involved in various apostolic activities but turned down the post of Vicar General of Asunción because he wanted to work in the evangelization of the Indians.

Roque left behind the comforts of city life and undertook the work of a missionary. He entered the Society of Jesus and even as a novice opened up new frontiers by bringing the Good News of God to the remote corners of the continent. Living in close contact with the indigenous tribes, he founded the Reductions, which have now become big cities. He always fought on behalf of those who were most deprived and defenseless.

In his final attempt to found new townships among the Indians, he had serious differences with the tribal leader Ñezú of the Caaró region in the Uruguay River Valley, now part of Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil. Thus it was that, in 1628, the All Saints Reduction of Caaró was destroyed while Roque González was murdered along with his companions, Alonso Rodríguez Olmedo and Juan del Castillo, both young Spanish Jesuits.

Their bodies were burned, but some remains were preserved. Five years later, Roque's heart, some bones of his companions, and the stone hatchet that killed them were taken to Rome



and then to Spain. In 1928 these relics were returned to the Americas, to Buenos Aires to be precise. In 1934 Roque and his companions were beatified by Pope Pius XI. Roque's heart and the hatchet were transferred to Paraguay in 1960, where they are still preserved in Christ the King Church. On 16 May 1988 Pope John Paul II canonized Roque González, Alonso Rodríguez, and Juan del Castillo when he visited Paraguay.

Translated by Joseph V. Owens, S.J.



Bad Schoenbrunn: A Symbol

Tobias Karcher, S.J.

The *Lassalle House* in Bad Schoenbrunn is a Spirituality Centre of the Swiss Jesuits which is ever sensitive to the spiritual needs of contemporary people and open to dialogue with a variety of religious experiences.

Switzerland

For us, it was a very moving experience – that last prayer session which members of the Zen and Christian traditions held together in our Red Chapel. After our time together, we disbanded. Each person took a significant item of his tradition with him – a cushion, a prayer shawl, the sacred text – and we left the Lassalle Centre and Bad Schoenbrunn as a group. The Centre had been a very significant home for us for over forty years. Mist, snow and ice made the break-up hazardous. More than one hundred friends of the Centre joined us along the way. So, we proceeded carefully, step by step. Halfway along our road, the mist suddenly lifted, and the strong rays of the sun brilliantly lit up the snow-bedecked trees and peaks of that unique alpine landscape. Soon, we saw the dome of the monastery of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. That monastery – its guests, employees, friends, and Jesuit community – had been our

spiritual centre for more than fifteen months.

Why did we disband? After forty years, the work of our Centre needed extensive renewal. Yet, its very architecture, whose dimensions correspond to the harmony of music, aptly befitted the lives of people who came to us as they travelled forward on their spiritual journeys. The prayer rooms and chapels, in their quiet and centering ways, invited people to enter the reality of their inner selves. Conference and guest rooms opened out onto gentle grounds, bringing space and nature together into harmony. The breath of the Spirit of the Exercises sighed in the very architecture, and invited people to return to the world, strengthened again to involve themselves in its concerns. These are the reasons why the Swiss Province has decided to give the Lassalle Centre a new birth.

“To disband . . . to let go . . .” This important concept in our Judaeo-Christian tradition describes the experiences of all those associated with the Lassalle Centre at this time. Indeed, it pictures the history of Jesuit involvement in Bad Schoenbrunn, the largest institution of the Province in Switzerland. It lies halfway between Zürich and Luzern. The Centre has had repeatedly to leave behind ways with which it had become familiar, and to find new ways of



Spirituality



inviting people to its doors, to help them on their life journeys.

It was in 1929 that the Swiss Jesuits purchased a former sanatorium and its grounds in Bad Schoenbrunn. It was a bold venture at the time. The Swiss Federal Constitution, influenced by the Kulturkampf of the 19th century, explicitly forbade Jesuits to work in Switzerland. During its first thirty years, the classical preached retreat dominated the work of the Centre. This work was focused on the large, homogeneous Catholic population of central Switzerland.

With the advent of Vatican II, the Centre extended its vision to include Christian ecumenical work, and a more general formation of adults. A very fruitful collaboration began with members of the Reformed Church. They were very interested, as they continue to be today, to learn about the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.

At the beginning of the 1990's, Bad Schoenbrunn broadened its horizons yet again to include interreligious dialogue. This was the time of the Jesuits' 34th General Congregation. This Congregation, besides emphasizing faith and justice, also placed involvement with, and dialogue between cultures and religions in the

foreground. At that time, the Centre was named after Hugo M. Enomiya Lassalle. Father Lassalle had been active in the Japanese Mission since the 1930's. He was one of the first non-Japanese to train as a Zen teacher. Beginning in the 1970's, Father Lassalle, inspired by the openness of the Catholic Church to interreligious dialogue, began to bridge the religious gap between the East and Europe. It was his goal to open up to Europeans the rich spirituality of Zen, and for Christians to rediscover their own mystical traditions.

Since that time, in an atmosphere of silence, the Lassalle Centre has brought together the threefold triad of spirituality, dialogue, and involvement, and it does so from a number of spiritual vantage points. Within the context of the Ignatian Exercises and Christian contemplation in general, the Centre also accompanied people along the Zen and Yoga ways. Responding to deep convictions, the Centre maintained dialogue with the Jewish community in Zürich. However, the spiritual journeys did not only end in a more peaceful interiority, but always encouraged people to take up their responsibilities in the world.

After twenty years, the Lassalle Centre is faced with the questions of what to do now,

In the photo, the road towards the Lasalle House in winter.

The Centre, born as a house for Spiritual Exercises, is open today for ecumenical dialogue and adult Christian formation.



Spirituality

Below, the Centre during the winter season; a Eucharistic celebration.

and how to reach people now. How can it make people aware of the workings of the Spirit in the world, and invite them again to engage with the Christian message? The context for this discernment is the increasingly secular nature of Swiss society. The Centre is faced with the challenge of devising what it can helpfully offer in that atmosphere of silence, which is Schoenbrunn. Three new opportunities are emerging.

Firstly, there are possibilities of cooperating with the health professions. The Centre is able to offer “spiritual care” to people who work in hospitals, nursing homes, and outpatient centres. In recent years, the health profession

in German-speaking countries has become increasingly aware of the spiritual dimension of people. This is especially evident in moments of suffering or loss. Schoenbrunn can be a resource, and offer people valuable help to accept and give meaning to the difficult stages of life.

Secondly, one result of a secularized society is the divorce between people and traditional religions. But encounters and contacts are now possible which would formerly have been considered inappropriate. This allows the Centre to approach companies and offer courses which deal with inner life and values. This stress on the inner life helps people to distance themselves from, and come to terms with the stresses of everyday life. Considering values and value systems encourages people to reflect about the purpose in their lives, and to discover their autonomy vis-à-vis the large institutions in which they find themselves. In international companies, questions about justice and sustainability emerge, even on a global scale.

Thirdly, health and nutrition are becoming ever more important in our society. Again, religions have extensive experience and knowledge about these. The Centre is planning to develop a program dedicated to “fasting”, and how well it fits into its culture of silence. The fasting practices of religious traditions open people up not only to the spiritual world, but also to social issues related to the use of resources, nutrition, ecology, and justice.

The Lassalle Centre is not only a formation centre, but also a spirituality one. In recent years, the Centre has succeeded in attracting friends and neighbours who come daily to the prayer and meditation sessions, and who help shape its worship through their participation. We also welcome people who are travelling their spiritual journeys along different paths, and we invite them to live with us and take part in the programs that we offer.

Our motto is: “Give the Spirit Room”. This motto inspires the renewal of our spirituality Centre in Bad Schoenbrunn. We trust in the workings of the Spirit. This gives us the impetus to be ever ready to respond to new challenges.



Lassalle

“Deepen your Faith”

Shannon Pereira, S.J. – Director of “Deepen your Faith”

Deepen Your Faith is a ministry of the Goa Jesuits, who are based at the *Pedro Arrupe Institute* which is situated in a quaint village called Raia, in the South of Goa. South Goa has a sizeable Catholic population which was largely evangelized by the Jesuits in the 17th century. However, the global suppression of the Jesuits in the 18th century resulted in them losing their influence on the local populace. In their absence, the diocesan priests in Goa played an important role in nurturing the faith of the people. The Jesuits returned to Goa only in 1935, and revved up their stalled efforts at evangelization. They, along with other congregations, gradually made their mark in the second half of the 20th century.

Deepen Your Faith was initiated in August 2011 by the then two young Jesuit deacons, Richard D’Souza and Shannon Pereira, as part of their ‘diaconate ministry’. The main purpose of the ministry was to help a lay ordinary Catholic to reflect critically on his/her faith. The program was structured taking into consideration several facets of the Goan society, one being that most of the older Catholics of Goa are very devotional and pious. As a result, apart from the public devotions, private devotions keep mushrooming across the state, and witness large gatherings of adults. Most popular among these, is the devotion to Saint Francis Xavier, that sees Goans in flocks and droves congregating at the Basilica of Bom Jesus where rest the relics of the great Jesuit Saint.

While these devotions aid in fanning the faith of the older generation of people, a sizeable number of younger Catholics do not subscribe to these practices, including



The Goan youth learn to discover God in their daily lives especially in their studies. They hold the keys of tomorrow’s future, and therefore we wish that they grow deeper in their understanding of faith.

such as the Eucharist and the other sacraments. They strive to comprehend their meaning, unfortunately without finding satisfactory answers. A common thread that runs among these youngsters is that, as children, they were forced by their parents into blindly participating in these devotions and rituals, without a proper understanding into their meaning. In addition to blind faith,

The Jesuit community greets the visitors. Below, a monthly meeting of young people.

India: Goa





there are several older Catholics who grew up being instilled to attribute superstitious beliefs to their faith, such as the belief that they would face the wrath of God should they fail to partake in these devotions.

This, along with a wrong understanding of Catholic morals, created a sense of guilt and fear in the simple folk; their God was a punishing God. The proliferation of unfounded beliefs, along with the recent global scandals in the Church, contributed to discourage and distance the younger generation Catholics from the Church, the Sacraments and the clergy. These disillusioned young adults, though educated, sought answers where it appealed to them, primarily on social media. Some of them boldly termed themselves as 'Spiritual but not Religious', while others joined Evangelical groups that are steadily flourishing in Goa. A few others resorted to New Age practices.

In the background of this context, a need was felt in the Goa Province to respond to the queries of these seekers. In its first year, *Deepen Your Faith* strived to create a general awareness about faith among Goan Catholics, through a once-a-month weekend course that was focussed either on Scripture or the Catholic Tradition. The method and language used for these courses is

very simple and easy to comprehend, without compromising the depth of faith. The viewpoint of the Catholic Church is plainly stated, discussed and appropriated. Dialogue and questions are encouraged. Mis-understandings are clarified. This approach of teaching was starkly different from the one-sided pulpit-audience discourses that Christians are so used to, and therefore saw an exponential rise in participation. The enormous response from the people gave immense boost to this ministry. As word spread, more people, especially from the educated section began to participate. The approach of *Deepen Your Faith*, which is 'non-judgemental' and 'non-moralising', highly appealed to them. To further fuel their interest, reflections on the Sunday readings are emailed every week to those on our mailing list, besides also being posted on our website (www.deepenyourfaith.in) in three tracks – Spiritual, Scriptural and Theological. This is to help the laity participate actively in the Sunday Eucharist and receive the Word of God.

The overwhelming response gave a huge impetus to the *Deepen Your Faith* ministry in the years that followed. We began conducting courses on a more regular basis; we then went one step ahead – we literally began reaching out to them, conducting courses at various locations across Goa. While we retained the courses at our



Youth

Institute, Scripture classes were held at various other locations, once a week, for an hour in the evening. This attracted a good number of lay faithful especially those who could not travel all the way to our Institute. Our services extend also to small groups of friends, seekers, families, prayer groups, Church groups, etc. who have strong personal quests with regards to their faith, Scripture, Catholic Tradition and Theology. These sessions are conducted at their own convenience and at their own locality.

During the second year of the ministry, Fr. Richard D'Souza had to leave for further studies and a few months later Fr. Joseph Cardozo joined the *Deepen Your Faith* team. He initiated programs in the local language (*Konkani*). This encouraged the simple people of God also to reflect on their faith. Upon evaluation, we felt the need to introduce Ignatian Spirituality as part of the already existing curriculum of Theology and Scripture. This brought in another dimension to our courses – integration of faith in everyday living, apart from intellectually understanding it.

We thus began conducting introductory courses on Ignatian Spirituality to enable the laity to participate in *Retreats in Daily Life* and the Ignatian silent retreat of four or eight days. *Retreats in Daily Life* was the preferred choice of many laity, especially during the season of Lent, as they

could incorporate the retreat into their day-to-day work. The retreat consists of daily prayer, review, the night examen and a regular spiritual direction. Fr. Savio Rodrigues and Fr. Patrick de Melo, senior Jesuits of the Province, lent their knowledge to the spirituality dimension. They have successfully trained a small group of 'Ignatian Leaders'. Today, these leaders themselves organize programs at the Institute with the help of Jesuits. Their reach goes far beyond the kind of people that the Jesuits would normally attract. The questions and search posed by the adults in attendance gives us a fairly good understanding of the general perception of the Church and religion. Apart from the programs at our Institute, Ignatian orientation programs themed, *Finding God in Service*, are organised for various school teachers, college professors and small working groups at their workplaces.

In keeping with the Ignatian dimension of discovering God in the real world, we unceasingly endeavour to address current issues, keeping them in line with the essence of faith and God. Seminars addressing various issues of interest and concern to Goan Catholics are conducted once a month at the Institute. The topics covered range from science to ethics, to religion, to social/political issues, such as "Being a Goan Catholic", "Catholic Response to Pen-

Below, a moment of relaxation during a meeting of young teachers. On the previous page, Fr. Joseph Cardozo during a moment of prayer with a group of students.



Spirituality

tecostal Christianity in Goa”, “Christianity and other Religions”, “The Challenges of New Age Movements”, “A Christian Response to Social / Political Issues in Goa”, “Relevance of Religion in the Age of Science”, “Embryos and Ethics” and so on. These participatory seminars strive to respond to the questions posed by the laity and to help them develop their own personal convictions with regards to such issues.

As *Deepen Your Faith* was firmly rooted among a sizeable population of adult Catholics in Goa, the Spirit was leading this movement to reach out also to the younger section of our Church. The idea gained girth in the form of Spiritual weekends for young professionals of ages 23 to 35 years. In keeping up with subtly different energy and ideology of these youth, the weekends were carefully chalked out to be holistic – they included revitalisation, relaxation, prayer, sharing, and dollops of nature with the purpose of discovering God in all of this, not to mention individual spiritual accompaniment. The setting laid the carpet for youngsters to place on the table their queries and doubts with regard to religion and faith.

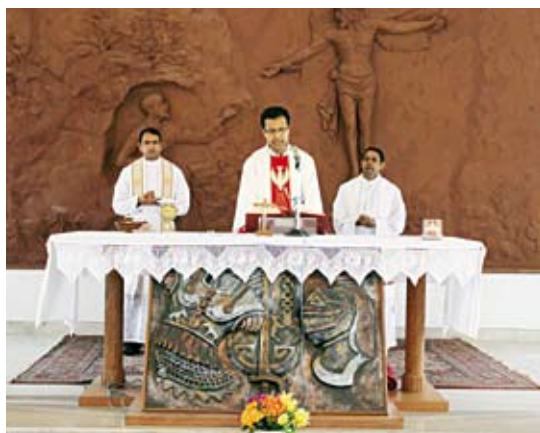
Another program that appealed to the zest of

the young was the Ignatian immersion program where groups of young Goans spend a couple of days with the people of remote and poor villages outside the state of Goa. The program aimed at placing oneself in different and unfamiliar situations to learn from the lives of others and to see God and oneself in new ways. It is to seek and discover how, despite all our differences and peculiarities, we can still all be God’s Church. The encounter with people of other faiths and cultures provides young adults with a refreshing new perspective, thus helping them to better integrate their religious practices with their professional lives. The experience from these outreach programs enables them to actively organise programs for the unfortunate section of society such as the street children, orphans, people in old age homes, etc., back in Goa.

The future of *Deepen Your Faith* depends on the youth of Goa, and therefore, since June 2014, the *Deepen Your Faith* ministry has invested tremendously in the “Youth Magis Formation” and “Retreats for the Youth of Higher Secondary School/College”. These youth belong to the age group of 16 to 21 years. The monthly weekend “Youth Magis Formation”, which seeks to subtly inculcate meaning in devotion, sees youth get introduced to simple Ignatian prayer, the daily Examen, understanding of the Eucharist, the Church and so on. On the other hand, the “Youth Higher Secondary School / College Retreats” are overnight programs for which Christian Higher Secondary Schools / Colleges send their students to the Institute during the week. The theme of the program is “Finding God in All Things”. These youth learn to discover God in their daily lives especially in their studies. These youth hold the keys of tomorrow’s future, and therefore we do not wish to see them running clockwork on blind beliefs. We wish that they grow deeper in their understanding of faith and more importantly that they grow in the awareness that services like the ‘Deepen Your Faith’ are available in Goa itself.

Thus, what began as a ‘diaconate ministry’ of two young deacons, today has become a full-fledged ministry of the Goa Jesuits. The Spirit was and is at work in this movement. Plans to grow deep and profound in our programs are in progress. The use of social media to further reach out to all sections of the populace is in the working. The Christians in Goa have the potential of contributing immensely towards an Indian Theology and a New Ecclesiology. Their faith needs to be articulated in the right categories. This can be the gift of the Goa Jesuits to the universal Church.

Three moments at the Arrupe Institute of Raia: Fr. Francis D’Sa in a workshop on Christianity and other religions; a Eucharistic celebration; the orchestra of young people during the celebration of Arrupe Day.



Leadership Training Service

Spirituality

John Rojerse, S.J.

Leadership Training Service (LTS) is a 56 year old youth Movement for youth of all faiths. It is supported and promoted by the Calcutta Province of the Society of Jesus. The ideals proposed by the Movement have inspired and moulded youth in and outside India these last five and a half decades.

The journey began with the vision of five students from various religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds on 2 July 1959 at *Goethals Memorial School*, run by the Irish Christian Brothers at Kurseong, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India. In those days, students from the Jesuit theologate at *St Mary's College*, (now shifted to *Vidyajyoti College*, Delhi) used to go to the school as a part of their weekly ministry to teach catechism and to help out in the Sodality of Our Lady (which later evolved into the Christian Life Communities, CLC).

Till then the Brothers basically assisted the Catholic boys in their faith formation and personality development. Co-curricular activities were rare in those days and the focus was essentially on spiritual renewal programmes. Then, some students from other religious faiths, too, began to show a keen interest in coming together to groom themselves in leadership development with an eye to do something worthwhile for the country. Their vision was much larger; they dared to do something different. They expressed their desire to Fr Emmanuel M Briffa, S.J who helped them with a set of guidelines which were adapted from the CLC. Thus, with their enthusiasm, the assistance of a Jesuit and the unwavering support of Br Thomas Fitzpatrick, CFC, the then Principal of the school, the LTS was born.

The LTS is a special ministry of the Calcutta Province that brings together people from various religious traditions. Very interestingly, out of the five boys who pioneered the dream, one was a Bengali Hindu, two were Chinese Buddhists, one was a Punjabi Sikh and one was a Chinese Christian. Thus, from the very beginning the LTS took on the character of religious pluralism and continues to be a converging point for various cultures, languages and backgrounds.

The LTS can be rightly called an Ignatian win-

Leadership Training Service is a Movement promoted by the Jesuits of the Calcutta Province that brings together people from various religious traditions. Inspired by the principles of Christian Life Communities, its ideals reflect the core of Ignatian spirituality.

dow to the people of other faiths as it is inspired by the principles of the CLC and its ideals reflect the core of Ignatian spirituality. Thus, even before the Vatican II document on *Gaudium et Spes* the LTS had already initiated its contemplation on the Modern World. Though it is secular in nature, the LTS has as its bedrock the Ignatian contemplation where God looks down on the world, and seeing the sad state of affairs, invites people of good-will to join with him to heal the broken world. The LTSers thus become collaborators with God as they respond to him in this task of rebuilding the society.

Though the Movement is not officially part of the ministry of inter-faith dialogue, the LTS surely offers a platform for the youth of various faiths to come and work together. From its very inception, the LTS has been an entirely student initiative but accompanied and promoted by the Jesuits of the Calcutta Province as a part of their commitment to build human communities. It is the only one of its kind run by the Je-

In the photo, a meeting of a leadership formation group that brings together persons of various religious traditions and is inspired by the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola.



Spirituality

suits of West Bengal and Bangladesh that caters to people of all faiths.

The LTS members, who are made up of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Jains and Christians, are constantly in healthy dialogue as they pray, work, plan and do things together daily growing in the belief that the human community has more in common than what separates them from one another. Mr Saifuddin, one of the LTS alumni members, once presented his view: "I am a Muslim at home but an Indian in the street". The LTS respects, appreciates, affirms, acknowledges and promotes religious pluralism, gender equality, cultural, linguistic, and regional differences. A number of dedicated Jesuits have worked to make the LTS a growing youth Movement. After Fr Briffa, Frs. Robert Slattery (Hazaribag Province), Albert Huart, the late Raymond Pilette, Felix Raj, and Charles Pollet made remarkable contributions in the making a dream into a great legacy.

But the Golden era of the LTS was during the tenure of Fr Robert Wirth, a Maltese Jesuit. He belonged to the then Santal Parganas Mission (now the Dumka Raiganj Province) and was assigned to work for the LTS by Fr Pedro Arrupe in response to the request of the LTSers who had experienced the charisma of this 'firebrand father' during a leadership training camp in 1971 at Guhijori, Dumka, Jharkhand. He took over the Movement, from Fr Pilette in 1971, consolidated it in Calcutta and transformed it into a National Movement. In 1978, with the assistance of Sr Margarita, CJ, the LTS reached Nepal becoming an International Movement.

Br Brendon MacCarthaigh, CFC, and Sr Cyril, IBVM, also played vital roles during the initial years of the Movement along with Fr Wirth. A number of dedicated visionaries like



Fr Dominic Kachira, SDB, Ms Daphne Stockman, Mr John Joseph Ciriama, Mr Dominic Gomes, Mr Dipankar Basu have also played a significant role in the growth of the Movement. Ms Stockman took over from Fr Wirth as the second National Promoter of the LTS and guided it for 12 years. She led the LTS to focus on gender equality and promoted the cause of women in leadership positions. Today the Movement has expanded into India and Nepal working with over 20,000 youth leaders. In India it is spread over 22 states collaborating with schools and colleges.

Over its fifty-five years of existence, the LTS has evolved into five branches: *Leadership Training Service* (LTS), for students from classes VIII to University studies (age group 13 – 21) since 1959; *Little Guiding Lights* (LGL), for students of classes V to VII (age group 10 – 12) since 1978; *LTS Alumni/ae Association* (LTSAA), who support the parent body in various ways since 1999; *Leadership Training Service Pragati Foundation* (LTSPF), for those working adults who actively labour for social change (age group 21 and above) since 2011; and *Family Leadership Service* (FLS), for the parents of the LTSers & LGLers (since 2011). The LTS Annual Family Get-together brings all these branches together to celebrate the LTS Way of Life and rekindle the spirit of the Movement in the members.

In 2009 the Movement celebrated the Triple Jubilee of three of its branches from 26 to 30 December 2008 at *St Xavier's College*, the first ever LTS Unit in Kolkata: the Golden Jubilee of the LTS (1959-2009), Pearl Jubilee of the LGL (1978-2008) and Aluminium Jubilee of the Alumni/ae Association (1999-2009). In the National Camp that was organized, over 1,000 members from two countries participated in the event. Leadership Training is for service.

Kolkata



Thus, the building up of leaders who continue in leadership roles as adults, becomes very significant. They follow the LER Principle: “Learn, Earn and Return”. From the very beginning of their formation they are taught to give back to society from what they have received, thus contributing to build a better world. As they become adult members, they are ready to make a difference in society.

The Adult LTSers try to give back to society in various ways, e.g. in 2011 they initiated a library project. In this project they gift libraries to the village schools where there are no facilities for students to open their minds to the wonders of knowledge. They also give away cycles to those girls who live far from their school. The regular ongoing programmes in the LTS are a series of one-day Leadership Camps, World Women’s Day Celebration, World Environment Day, Students Leadership Conclave, World Forest Week celebration, village-city interaction, a series of National Leadership Camps, and Ignite – an eco-friendly winter carnival.

The LTS has taken very seriously the call of GC 35 to promote the cause of the environment. It has included a number of important environmental activities in its training modules. The members regularly celebrate Earth Day and other important days that promote awareness of the environment. Moreover, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation has entrusted the LTSers with a park in the city to exercise their commitment to the environment. From 2014 the LTS has opted for solar energy alternatives where the city students gift solar lamps to the village peers.

Youth ministry is a universal challenge. How we all reach out to the youth more effectively? What are their needs and aspirations so that they are ready to come together and achieve dreams together? In the LTS, we are convinced

that the Movement is able to offer to the youth of today what they are searching for and that is why they are ready to gather under the LTS banner. They are caught up by the vision of the Movement which imparts to them needed soft-skills to achieve their aspirations. The Movement has gifted a number of quality leaders to the world in various fields. There are LTSers who have worked in the UN, served as Ambassadors, mesmerized audiences over the Radio, pioneered business ventures, inspired new generations as enlightened teachers, professors and principals, worked for justice as lawyers and judges; and this list can go on and on.

In the formation module the ‘four leadership domains’ or ‘4 H factors’ are well taken care of – Head, Heart, Hands and Habits. Thus intellectual formation, emotional maturity, the dignity of manual labour and building healthy relationships and positive attitudes are stressed. It is generally believed that it is challenging to work with youth. But our experience is that if they are sympathetically understood and properly oriented, they are ready to work together with mentors and guides. The youth have a lot to offer to the world. Impelled by the spirit of Ignatian transcendence and Magis they can be moulded into the architects of a better world, enthusiastic and service oriented. The LTS beckons the youth to new frontiers, to travel the roads less travelled, to realize their potential and possibilities.

On the left, a formation session during a national meeting of the movement. Below, members of the music committee.



Daring to Dream a Brighter Future

Ashley Evans, S.J. – Director of Xavier Jesuit School Project



“I think that it is time to rebuild the spirit for Cambodian youth after the civil war which had destroyed completely the dignity, mind, and unity of the people. It is good to have an education based on critical thinking, and I believe that *Xavier Jesuit School* will be good at it.”

On 18th November 2013, Fr Francisco Oh In-don S.J., Delegate of the Korea Provincial for the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia, made an unexpected announcement. For over three years, the Jesuits in Cambodia and their partners in mission had been discerning how to respond to the educational crisis facing young Khmer people in a troubled society. Fr General had approved the education project. Now the decision was – Where should this project be located? The capital city of Phnom Penh, with its huge, growing population was the obvious choice. If not Phnom Penh, then surely the city of Battambang, the centre of

the Prefecture where a Jesuit, Msgr Enrique Figaredo, is the Apostolic Prefect.

Fr Oh's decision came as a surprise to many. He announced that after much consultation and more discernment, he had chosen to locate the new Jesuit education project in the remote town of Sisophon. He said in explanation, “While weighing the pros and cons of the two possible locations for our new Jesuit school, Battambang and Sisophon, I tried to listen as carefully as possible to the opinions of the various people with whom I spoke, and it was very clear that we Jesuits should serve poor children first. We can, of course, find many poor children in Battambang. However, if we look at the two cities, Battambang and Sisophon, we see that Sisophon has fewer educational opportunities and the city itself is poorer. Battambang is already the location of two reputable schools. In Sisophon, there is nothing. This is the most important reason for my decision.”

So the new education project is located just outside Sisophon on a 16-hectare site bought in Phnom Bak (Broken Mountain) village in Teuk Thla (Pure Water) Commune. It is called the *Xavier Jesuit School Project* because it is situated within the boundaries of the St Francis Xavier parish of Sisophon. The first building is the Richie Fernando building, named after the 26-year-old Filipino Jesuit scholastic who gave his life to protect disabled students at the *Jesuit Vocational Training Centre* of Banteay Prieb in Kandal Province on 17th October 1996.

The project has four key components. The first component is a *Community Learning Centre*. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Cambodia, has encouraged the development of such centres in poor areas where significant numbers of young people drop out of school at an early age. Large numbers of young Cambodians from Sisophon move across the border to Thailand, where the minimum wage is much higher, to work in factories or on farms or in the tourism sector. As their education level is invariably low, these young people are vulnerable

Cambodia



to exploitation. The *Community Learning Centre* aims to help educate them before they start manual work. It will also provide literacy classes to adults and kindergarten classes to the many young children living in the two villages near the new project.

The second component is a small Primary School with two classes in each section. The plan in 2011 was only for a Secondary School but the extensive consultation revealed that the education problems in Cambodia are so deep that this would not be sufficient. Accordingly, a small co-educational primary school was added to the project to ensure that a group of children reach their academic potential in their early years and so can set the standard for the students who start secondary school with them. This involvement in primary education in the province of Banteay Meanchey enables the Jesuit education project to cooperate dynamically with the *Primary Teacher Training College*, in Sisophon town, where Fr. Ashley Evans S.J., Director of the *Xavier Jesuit School Project*, teaches mathematical pedagogy to the trainee primary teachers. Fr. Ashley previously taught Mathematics and Philosophy to aspiring secondary teachers at the Royal University in Phnom Penh for 20 years.

The third component and major focus is a large secondary school that follows the Khmer curriculum and applies international standards of excellence inspired by Ignatian pedagogy and exemplifying the Jesuit Characteristics of Education. The school will have four sections in each grade and, similar to the primary school, is being established in a dialogical way with strong links to the *Regional Teacher Training College* for middle-school teachers located in the adjacent province of Battambang. The students will be from poor families but they will have the opportunity to reach the highest standards of academic excellence. At the end of their studies, they will have a more “rounded” and wiser formation than students in the most expensive private schools in Phnom Penh.

Chour Damo SJ, a Khmer scholastic in

formation, spoke of his enthusiasm for the school. “I am glad that the *Xavier Jesuit School* is emerging ... I experienced myself how hard it was ... when I acquired the unqualified formation – corruption in school, cheating during exams, stereotype thinking, and no communal sense of unity or purpose. I think that it is time to rebuild the spirit for Cambodian youth after the civil war which had destroyed completely the dignity, mind, and unity of the people. It is good to have an education based on critical thinking, and I believe that *Xavier Jesuit School* will be good at it.”

The fourth component is a *Teacher Resource Centre* where “in-service” teacher training at all levels will be provided initially to primary and secondary teachers from across the North-western provinces of Cambodia and later to teachers from all provinces. The discernment process revealed that teacher training should be a major priority of the new education project but it is not possible in the present political context to set up a *Teacher Training College* for secondary teachers as the Jesuits are doing in Timor-Leste. However it is possible to set up a *Teacher Resource Centre* for “in-service” training.

Although the school has yet to be built, the project runs a “summer school” program for primary school students from many different schools during the school holidays each year. The program enables them to transition to their next grade in a more systematic and structured fashion. Thy Liheng, an 11-year-old female student from Teuk Thla Primary School, said: “Since I have joined in the summer school program, I do mathematics much better and also the other subjects. At first my parents did not want me to join this summer school at all, because they want me to help in the house,

Below, young people of the new educational project of the Jesuits of Cambodia. On the previous page, the leadership group of the Xavier Jesuit School Project together with Mgr. Kike Figaredo, S.J., Apostolic Prefect of Battambang.



Education

One of the motives that has driven the Jesuits to bring about this initiative in the field of education is to give young people the capacity to reflect and make personal choices in freedom.

but I told them I really want to study and it is for free. Finally I got permission. Every day I show my parents about what I learnt and how many stickers I got. I also told them that all of the teachers are good and they teach well. I hope next year I can join again. I want to make my parents to be proud of me.”

One of the principal issues that spurred the Jesuits and partners to launch this new education initiative is the extraordinary prevalence of rote learning at all levels. Even though some Cambodian young people can reach high technical standards through this type of learning, their capacity to reflect, adapt and think freely is often seriously impaired and underdeveloped. Even the interpretation of Khmer literature follows clear socialist guidelines that seem to have been internalized almost everywhere in the country. Khmer literature,

architecture and culture flourished in the years between the Second World War and the arrival of the Khmer Rouge in 1975, but Khmer culture and society have still not recovered from the devastation and destruction that came with the Khmer Rouge regime.

Another issue often raised by our Khmer Buddhist partners is the moral

confusion among young people growing up in a society where traditional values are challenged and uprooted by rapid globalization and economic development. The *Xavier Jesuit School Project* has become a clear lighthouse beacon in a moral fog affecting young people in Northwest of Cambodia.

As Lucia Wong, a Hong Kong missionary,

working on the project shares, “I am sad when seeing children walk home after coming all the way just to find out that the teacher does not come. I am sad when hearing children keep repeating the same text over and over again without knowing what it really means. School is more than a place where one learns how to read and write. To me, it is a place that has led me to wonders and dreams since I was four. I am ready to accompany the children to begin the journey of wonders and dreams.”

The school team consists of Jesuits, sisters, lay missionaries and volunteers and dedicated Khmer staff and teachers. In this sense the school community is a “mixed” community inserted into a local Khmer community where all are called to grow into an authentic community of flourishing human beings. The school will not charge fixed tuition fees. Instead families will pay a contribution according to their income. The project is anticipated to become self-sustainable and running entirely on funds raised locally after 12 years. A scholarship fund has also been set up to provide full funding for 20 percent of the student intake each year. In this way the orientation of the school to the service of the poor has been incorporated into the very structure of the project.

Paul Nguyen SJ, a scholastic from Vietnam working on the *Xavier Jesuit School Project* team for his Regency, said he can sense how the project is rooted in the long history and experiences of Jesuits and our co-workers, friends and donors in praying for and serving the poor in Cambodia. He is also happy that the project has started not only by building a school but also by finding good policies for teaching pupils and students and for training teachers. “‘Dare to dream of a brighter future’ was the first interesting phrase I heard about the school project,” he said. “I had a dream of serving the poor but no involvement with education in the Kingdom of Wonder. However, God had a different dream for me. A big building begins by small bricks. I imagine myself as a brick God uses to build His Holy Dream. ‘Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain ...’ (Ps. 127:1).”



Freedom

“I will believe in myself and is my ability to succeed”

Len Attilia, S.J

“Good morning. Welcome to *Mother Teresa Middle School*. My name is Elizabeth. May I show you around our school?”

And so our tour began with the help of this poised, self-assured grade-7 student who evinced not only great pride in her school but also a composure and dignity uncommon for any person her age, and especially for a young First Nations (Indigenous People) girl from the inner city of Regina, Saskatchewan. If anyone needed a reason to justify the existence of this school, this young lady and her fellow students would certainly provide it.

Mother Teresa Middle School (MTMS) is the first of its kind in Canada, a member school of the *Nativity Miguel Coalition* established in the United States. Nativity schools were created in urban centres to serve the needs of academically capable children from low-income families whose socio-economic circumstances limit their ability to develop to their full potential. These schools are committed to breaking the cycle of poverty through faith-based education.

MTMS was the result of the generous leadership of Paul and Carol Hill of Regina who, after meeting Mother Teresa herself, were inspired to respond to the needs of the poor in their home city, especially the children, the majority of whom were members of First Nations communities. Having learned about the *Nativity Miguel Network*, knowing that many of these schools were established in association with the Society of Jesus from whom he had received his own education, Paul approached the Provincial of the Jesuits in English Canada, Fr. Jean-Marc Laporte SJ, to seek his blessing and support for the creation of a Nativity school in Regina that would be inspired by the values of Jesuit education. His dream was realized after three years of hard work and with the generous and effective support of the *Regina Catholic School Board* and *Campion College*, the Jesuit liberal arts college on the campus of the University of Regina. MTMS opened its doors to its first class of 18 students in September 2011.

In June 2014, 16 members of that first class graduated from Grade 8 and are now attend-



The story of *Mother Teresa Middle School* in Regina. “As a Jesuit-inspired school, it tries to inculcate the values of Jesuit education in the minds and hearts of the students, to form them as men and women for others.”

ing four different high schools in Regina and beyond. They entered Grade 6 with reading and math skills well below grade. They entered with low self-esteem, limited interpersonal skills, low expectations for success in school based on past experience; they entered from unstable family circumstances, and from social settings that provided little support for academic pursuits. But they also entered with a desire to succeed, to escape from the limitations of their poverty, and to create a better future for themselves.

MTMS provided for them a safe, nurturing, supportive environment within which they could fulfill their desire. Through a combination of an extended school day, an extended school year, proper nutrition, remedial instruc-

Above, students playing the violin. Music also helps develop the talents of the students.

Canada



Education



In the photos, some aspects of the activity of the MTMS of Regina. Above, the struggle for a fair market; below, Fr. Meehan celebrates Mass for the students; Fr. Chipman (right) speaks to the students.

tion, attention to health needs, and a whole host of other supports, the school has helped these students to grow in self-esteem, to recognize and appreciate their abilities, and to imagine a future that includes advanced education. Not wishing to leave the students to their own resources after graduation, the school provides continuing support all the way through to the completion of post-secondary education.

As a Jesuit-inspired school, MTMS tries to inculcate the values of Jesuit education in the minds and hearts of the students, to form them as men and women for others. This is perhaps best expressed in the Student's Pledge that is recited daily in the school: *In my words and in my actions, I will try my best today to live the values of St. Ignatius. In my school work and in my play I will treat others with compassion. I'll strive for excellence in school, I will not argue, fight, or bully. And I will follow all the rules. I will believe in myself and my ability to succeed, I will be responsible and honest and I will help those in need. As a Mother Teresa Student I will always do my best, I will work as hard as pos-*

sible. And let God take care of the rest.

Judging from the evidence, that is, the students' maturity, academic growth, consistent attendance, and self-assurance, the school has met the challenge and succeeded in its mission.

Inspired by this success, a group of Catholic laity, alumni of St. Paul's Jesuit High School in Winnipeg, Manitoba, are working to create a similar school in that city. Within the inner city of Winnipeg there are some of the poorest neighbourhoods in all of Canada. In these neighbourhoods, patterns of school attendance and rates of success in school are among the lowest in the country. All indications are that there is a real need for a school of this nature.

The group that is steering this enterprise is made up of St. Paul's alumni, past and present administrators of St. Paul's and of St. Mary's Academy, an independent Catholic girls school owned by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, as well as representatives from the educational, political, social service, and business sectors. At the time of this writing, they are engaged in a feasibility study that, it is hoped, will lead to the decision to proceed with the creation of the school in time for the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. An ambitious goal, to be sure, but well within the realm of possibility.

Success



Let's Journey to Jhapa

Cap Miller, S.J.



Please accept this invitation to journey to a part of Nepal that few people in the outside world know about: Jhapa District in South East Nepal. Don't expect a stereotyped Shangri-la. Jhapa's beauty is of a subtler kind: green jungles and fertile plains.

The indigenous people of Jhapa exhibit another beauty of their own. They possess the quiet dignity of plains people, in contrast to the happy-go-lucky spirit of those who live in the crisp air of the hills and the cold of the mountains.

Jhapa District shares the climate of the adjoining Gangetic Plain of North India with its intense summer heat, somewhat reduced in the months of monsoon rains and followed by a foggy bone-chilling winter.

Our journey to Jhapa aims not at fulfilling a tourist's desire for comfort and thrilling experiences. It's a visit to see what the Jesuits

“Our journey to Jhapa aims not at fulfilling a tourist's desire for comfort and thrilling experiences. It's a visit to see what the Jesuits are doing there.”

are doing there. So we board a night bus in Kathmandu for a 16 hour trip to the village of Deonia.

On arrival in the morning we climb down from the bus on wobbly legs and stumble along a mud road marked *St. Xavier's Deo-*

The Bishop of Kathmandu, Mgr. Simick, visiting the school of Maheshpur, in the East of the country.

Nepal



Education



nia. A girl in a simple school uniform of blue and white catches up to us. When we tell her, "We're going to our school," she answers, with obvious pride, "It's my school too."

Fr. George spots us as we come through the gate. Though still young, he has spent many years at *St Xavier's Deonia* as teacher, as Principal and now Superior of the school and the Jesuit community. He welcomes us enthusiastically and brings us to meet the energetic principal, Fr. Mathew Das. He is walking to the outdoor assembly of over 700 girls and boys from Class One to Class Ten and invites us to take part.

The Nepalese lay teachers line up the children, joined by Fr. Juel, Fr. Lawrence, three Daughters of the Cross, and two Carmelite Missionary sisters. All these Jesuits and their sister collaborators from India have made Nepal their home. Fr. Mathew Das introduces us to the children and asks us to say a few words of encouragement. The School Captain calls all to attention for prayer and

the national anthem and thus the school day of classes and many activities is launched for God's greater glory.

During the first break in classes, we find Fr. Lawrence outside his classroom and reminisce about the origins of this Mission. It began with an intervention at a Nepal Jesuit meeting in 1996 when Fr. Victor Beck issued a challenge to us, "We must go to the Catholics of East Nepal!"

Who were those Catholics? They comprised several ethnic communities with their own distinctive languages and cultures. The Oraon, Kharia and Munda aboriginals migrated generations ago to South-East Nepal from North India to work in Nepal's tea plantations. Even earlier the Santhal aboriginals walked a shorter distance across the unmarked Indian border to clear jungle areas in Nepal for subsistence farming. Only the Santhal had acquired Nepali citizenship. Many among both groups had been baptized while living in India.

In the early 1950's pioneer Jesuits Fr. Marshall Moran and Fr. Ed Niesen in Kathmandu had heard reports of tribal Catholics living somewhere in the wilds of South-East Nepal but, without roads or bridges over the many large rivers in the area, it was not possible to minister to them.

At one point a Canadian Jesuit, Fr. Tony Milledge, sent an Indian catechist from his mission in Darjeeling District in India to search for these Catholics. After many days of dangerous travel on foot through the jungles, the intrepid man did find a community of Oraon Catholics in a tea plantation near a small settlement called Damak. He also discovered that the people had built a church where their lay leader, Simon, faithfully conducted weekly prayer services.

But, back to that Region meeting. Fr. Victor's prophetic challenge produced an enthusiastic response. For years the younger Jesuits had been raising a cry: let's move out of the Kathmandu Valley! Now here was a place to go and the means were now available too: a road. King Mahendra's dream (which many

Jhapa



called impossible) of an East-West highway through the Terai had just materialized in the eastern sector. Fr. Leo Cachat, the Region Superior at the time, missioned Fr Victor himself to “go east, young man” and so began the Jhapa Mission.

The Jhapa mission aimed at faith-formation and the sacraments for the Catholics there, present and future. This included providing opportunities for education and Fr. Victor began to search for land for a school in Deonia that could be a service for all the people in the area. This school would build good will among the predominately Hindu population and facilitate work for missionary effort. Scholastic James P.A. served as founding principal.

Another pioneer, Fr Norbert, founded a second school in the area, seven kilometers from Deonia in Maheshpur village. This school would provide education for the children of Catholics working in a large tea plantation on meager daily wages and living in sub-standard living conditions.

At Deonia Fr Victor first put up a small building to store materials for the school construction. It also served as a humble place to live for him and Br. Ireneus. In Maheshpur, founding principal Fr. Norbert built a one-room school in 1999 on land bordering the tea plantation. He lived at one end of the room and the children attended class at the other, sitting on the floor with their slates.

The next Region Superior, Fr. Mathew, often traveled to the Jhapa District headquarters to deal with the red tape of registering the schools. It was he who chose the name *Moran Memorial School* for the school in Maheshpur to honour the memory of Fr. Marshal D. Moran, founder of *St Xavier's School*, Kathmandu, in 1951.

Now let's go and see what is happening today at “Moran”, as the school is called locally. Br. Clarence arranges a jeep for us to travel the seven bumpy kilometers from Deonia to Maheshpur. We first meet Br. Ireneus, now administrator and treasurer of the school. Most of his Jesuit life has been spent here in



Jhapa. But *Moran Memorial School* is no longer a one-room school house for little ones but an impressive 3-storey building.

Another veteran of Moran, Br. Tej Kalyan, guides around the school grounds adjoining the tea plantation where most of the children live.

He points out a bamboo grove at the far end of the school property and tells us it is the site for a large parish church to be built in the near future. He was one of the first Jhapa Jesuits to offer Mass there after his priestly ordination last year.

It is especially here at Moran, the centre of the Jhapa parish of St. Ignatius, that we sense the ongoing fulfillment of Fr Victor's vision of Jesuit ministry to the Catholics. The parishioners with their catechists gather for worship and faith formation here and in 15 mission chapels scattered over a vast area. The Pastor, Fr. Paul K.C. and the other Jesuit priests and brothers of Jhapa Mission minister to them at all seasons, in the heat, the rains, the foggy cold.

Let's journey now to Sadakbari village to meet recently ordained resident priest Fr. Tomson. We travel with nurse Sr. Jaya in the Nepal Jesuit mobile clinic for her weekly health camp and also visit the temporary convent of three Sisters of St. Anne. These sisters teach in *St. Xavier's School*, Sadakbari, now temporarily housed in five bamboo huts.

The huts serve as classrooms for the little children in nursery, lower kindergarten, upper kindergarten, Class One, and an office

Above, the school of Maheshpur: on the left, Bro. Ireneus Guria and, to the right, Fr. Sanjay Ekka, with the children. In this region of Nepal, the earthquake of April 2015 did not cause much damage. On the previous page, the bishop greets the players.



Fr. Cap Miller, the author of the article, speaks to the students of the St. Xavier's School of Deonia; on the right, the principal of the school, Fr. Mathew Das.

for the principal Br. Clarence and his staff. A few feet away local workers busily build permanent structures for the children as they progress year by year to high school graduation. Fr. Tomson adds supervision of this construction work to his pastoral work in Sadakbari and nearby Simulbari village.

There Carmelite Missionary Sisters from Mumbai will soon begin a primary school which can send students to the future high school section in Sadakbari. This area has the greatest concentration of Santhal Catholics and thus the development work going on there.

Now let's return to Maheshpur. A young Catholic is waiting there to take us for a visit to the tea garden homes. The families we visit welcome us warmly and inspire us with their faith as we pray with them.

Two of the families have sons now preparing for the priesthood at the initial stage in Kathmandu. We rejoice that the dream of lo-

cal vocations is becoming a reality.

It's the end of a busy day now and time for supper, good conversation and sleep at the Jesuit residence. The sun shines as we wake up to a new day and a meeting with Fr Sanjay, a veteran of the Mission as Pastor, teacher, and now Principal of Moran. His face shines as he tells us about the changes he has experienced.

In his early days the parents seemed indifferent to the opportunity for their children's education. The children too lacked motivation to attend classes regularly. Now, after 7 graduating classes, parents show great interest in their children's progress and the boys and girls study seriously.

He adds proudly that girls are a majority at Moran. We sense that seriousness as we walk around the school and see students spend a study period sitting on the grass in small groups or individually focused on their textbooks and paying no attention to us as we move among them. Impressed by this last image, we return to Deonia to catch the night bus to Kathmandu.

Jhapa Mission may never attract international tourists during its beastly hot summers, torrential monsoon months, and bone-chilling winter season.

But for you and me, our journey to Jhapa has been worth it, don't you think? Worth it in terms of our joy at witnessing what is being done for God's greater glory and of admiration for the parents, catechists, sisters, brothers, priests – so many of them over the years since 1977 – the workers, past and present, in this vineyard. The harvest is indeed showing signs of greatness. Thanks for coming to experience it.

Nepal region

Forming Engineers to Engineer a Just Society

Francis P. Xavier, S.J.

After the restoration of the Society, the French Jesuits (from the Toulouse Province) founded the New Madurai Mission in 1838. In remembrance of the French collaboration, *Loyola-ICAM College of Engineering and Technology* (LICET) was founded in Chennai in 2010. It is an academic co-branding with *Institut Catholique d'Arts et Métiers* (ICAM) founded and entrusted to the Jesuits in 1918 in Lille (France). After serving for more than a century and a half in the educational field of arts and science, the Jesuits in Tamilnadu opened up new vistas in technical education that would be accessible to the marginalized and at the same time that would ensure academic excellence and professional relevance. The engineers so formed in LICET are to be men and women of creativity, competence, commitment, compassion, and consciousness and they would emerge as leaders with social responsibility.

LICET is approved by *All India Council for Technical Education* (AICTE); and affiliated to *Anna University*, Chennai (August 2010); recognized by the Tamilnadu Government as a Christian Minority Institution (July 2011); and an ISO ("International Standard Organization") 9001:2008 certified institution (May 2012). LICET offers five degree courses: Bachelor of Engineering (BE) in Mechanical, Computer Science, Electrical and Electronics, Electronics and Communication, and Bachelor of Technology (BTech) in Information Technology. In keeping with the GC 32's of the Society of Jesus preferential option for the poor, 30% of the admissions is foreseen for the economically and socially marginalized (such as the rural poor, first generation graduates, and the *Dalits*). Right now, there are 1,560 students at LICET with nearly 100 faculty members and 80 non-teaching staff. 40% of the students are girls.

LICET is committed to individual formation resulting in social transformation; and is evolving as the epicenter of social change and a beacon of global education. Apart from the academic collaboration with ICAM, LICET has signed a *Memorandum of Understanding*



After serving in the educational field of arts and science, the Jesuits of Tamilnadu opened up new vistas in technical education that would be accessible to the marginalized and at the same time that would ensure academic excellence and professional relevance.

(MoU) with universities in the USA, Spain, Germany, and Taiwan. Faculty and student exchange programs offer global exposure and expertise. After completing the infrastructure for academic requirement, efforts are taken for institute-industry networking to ensure effective job placements for the students. Working relationships have been established with over 300 industries and some of them are training the students (while they are still learning) for the needs of the industries. Practical and lab oriented learning is offered at LICET by ICAM with the help of ICAM engineers.

Above, the technology laboratory.

India-Licet



Education



LICET, within a short span of five years, is making its academic impact felt around. It is recognized as the nodal center for faculty and students' training by *Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay*; and ranks within the top 10 engineering colleges from among 570 engineering colleges affiliated to *Anna University*. LICET's patronage of sports and games has also started yielding good results.

The students of the first batch of the College have just completed their studies and have ventured into the world as innovative engineers. Two of them have got university ranks; four have applied for patents for their inventions; and two have already become young entrepreneurs by founding their own companies.

LICET pedagogy consists of five-pillar formation.

1. *Academic Excellence*: The broad-based *Anna University* syllabi are reinforced with hand-on experiential learning. Students are encouraged to open up house-

hold gadgets, computers, engines, and automobiles to understand the working of components and to become innovative in their turn as engineers.

2. *Personality Development*: The target group of students has been affected by millennium of economic exploitation and social discrimination. Further, they are politically ignored and religiously sidelined. Thus, the manifold disadvantages faced by students have resulted in very low self-esteem and very little self-confidence in them. Such students are given special care and attention through summer camps, bridge courses, and mentoring/counseling. Once they are given a clear focus and confidence to achieve it, then they are able to pick up in studies and grow in self-esteem and self-confidence. Each student is accompanied, all through the eight semesters, by a mentor.

3. *Professionalism*: The industrial world thrives on competitions and innovations, but the academic milieu in the university is still outdated and more bookish. Promoting the concept of 'Corporate Citizenship', industrial personnel are invited to train our students as responsible and innovative engineers, so that they would create a new world of technology. The placement cell organizes periodic industry visits, internships, and semester-long projects prior to getting the degree. The Jesuit charism of discernment and decision-making are imparted to them during their formation at LICET. After every event in the college, such as cultural program, sports, games, symposium etc., there is an evaluation, in which the officials, faculty members, and students take active part. It is a learning process of *magis*.

4. *International exposure*: LICET is evolving as a center for global formation. In order to prepare engineers for global needs, the college sends students, during their summer vacation, on exchange programs to universities abroad that have signed MoUs with LICET. Some of the students of the

Excellence



first batch are now pursuing higher studies in the USA, France, the UK, and Australia. Students from ICAM spend a semester at our College and they are housed with our students in order to promote cultural harmony and academic collaboration.

5. *God quotient*: In a world of professional competition, God-quotient is very much missing. Hence, God- and value-centered formation is given to them. Annual Retreat and periodical Masses are offered to the Catholic students. At the same time, the non-Christians are given motivational talks and life-skill formation. Campus events, such as annual *Corpus Christi* procession, help students grow in Christian faith. “Center of Peace”, the common prayer hall, is open to students of all faiths to pray and spend time in meditation.

Right from the inception, the founders wanted LICET to be unique and to become a center of global learning. In order to realize this dream, an effective milieu is created. The infrastructure is one of the best in *Anna University*. The academic collaboration with ICAM (France), along with the international programs, has motivated as well as kindled the confidence of the students to face global challenges and service. Extending financial assistance to the poor and the needy help them concentrate on their academic excellence.

Encouraging students to take active part in seminars, cultural programs, sports and games, etc. brings out their hidden talents. The *Unmanned Aerial Vehicle* (UAV) developed by a LICET student was used by Government in time of floods. Students are able to capture titles at state and national levels in sports and games. Tech-Mahindra has recognized this College as a Premium Partner. This brings in training by the industry personnel and a bulk selection of students for placement.

Membership in various national and international professional organizations, such as *American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers*, *Indian*



Society for Technical Education, etc. give an opening for students to get incorporated into industrial environment.

Our students are to engineer a just society. They are given opportunity in ‘service learning’ (Outreach Program). During that time, the students spend a few days among the rural poor understanding their simplicity and how they dare to be happy amidst poverty. They are moulded to get inspired to do their best for the uplift of the poor and the needy when they come up in life.

Along with the regular studies, research is promoted both among the faculty members and the students. LICET has two demo-models of windmills. It is blessed with 40 kW solar power plant; and soon there would be an additional 80 kW solar power plant. The power generated is connected through grid-system for use in the college. Efforts are on to bring in industrial research within the premises with the faculty members as consultants.

LICET is striving to be unique in forming students for national as well as global needs; and is working to attain academic autonomy. In addition, it is working on more collaboration with other universities and industries both in India and abroad so that the students here are trained as excellent engineers and formed as social agents of transformation. LICET is striving to be the center of global training for leaders with social responsibility. The goal of such formation is: the common to become eminent and brilliant; the marginalized to become empowered; and the receiving end to become the commanding center.

The basic assumption is that each one is a potential leader who is capable of transforming the society for the better.

Above, the imposing building of the LICET seen from the main entrance. On the previous page, below, lessons in the electronic mechanical laboratory.



“Light to the Nations”

Oscar Momanyi, S.J.

Loyola Secondary School, Wau, continues to be a beacon of hope for the South Sudanese people in spite of its troubled past and the present challenges. Its students are very promising and the Jesuits hope that they will help to shape the future of this new nation.

One November day in 1982, two Jesuits from Detroit arrived in the town of Wau in the Sudan after an overland journey of 55 driving hours from Port Sudan. The town of Wau was in the Bahr el Ghazal Province, in the western part of the then Democratic Republic of Sudan. These Jesuits, Fr. Norman Dickson, SJ and Br. Joseph Shubitowski, SJ were responding to the request of the then Bishop of Wau, Joseph Bilal Nyekindi. Bishop Nyekindi had realized the need for a Catholic Secondary School in the region because the existing secondary schools were poorly run and were hardly ever open.

Another Detroit Jesuit Fr. Keith Esenther, SJ was working at *St. Paul's Major Seminary* from 1977-1979 in the village of Bussere which is seven miles west of Wau. He observed that the main Secondary School in Wau at that time (*Bussere Senior Secondary School*), which was near the Catholic Mission at Bussere and *St. Paul's Major Seminary*, was open for no more than two to three months in those three years. Fr. Esenther continued to observe that most of the seminarians whom he was teaching had no interest in becoming priests but they were after getting an education. He felt that these seminarians could be given an option of getting a decent education without them being forced to join the seminary. To help solve this problem he proposed to Bishop Nyekindi to start a good secondary school in the area.

Thus, Bishop Nyekindi and the Provincial of the Jesuits in Detroit Fr. Michael J. Lavelle, SJ

began a collaboration to start a model school that would help educate the people of Wau. This school would also serve as a good example of sound education for the then existing schools. The school came to be known as *Loyola Secondary School*, Wau with the motto: “Light to the Nations”.

The first challenge the Jesuits faced when they arrived in Wau in early 1982 to start *Loyola Secondary School* was building the school. The area was isolated, without proper road transport, insecure and with few basic materials for building. Almost all the materials had to be imported from the neighboring countries and from abroad. This made the beginnings so tedious. Br. Shubitowski, who was an experienced builder, and Fr. Dickson, who was the first director of the school, were among the first to arrive. They spent a lot of time planning, coordinating the building work and designing the curriculum. Other American Jesuits joined the mission in 1983 when the school opened its doors to Sudanese students.

Meanwhile, the second Sudanese civil war, the infamous *Anyanya II*, which began in 1983, was underway. *Anyanya* means poison concocted from venom of a river snake and rotten beans. This is according to the local Madi people. *Anyanya II* was a war between the North Sudanese people who are of Arabic origin and are mainly Muslims against the Africans of Nilotic origin in the South who are mainly Christians.



South Sudan



The war was sparked by the enactment of what came to be known as the *September Laws* by the Islamic President Major General Gaafar Muhammad Nimeiri. These laws re-divided the South creating three regions: Upper Nile, Bahr el Ghazal and Equatoria and destroyed the 1972 self-government for the South that had been enacted in Addis Ababa. The *September Laws* also sanctioned the use of physical punishment, *hudud*, which included: flogging, amputation, stoning and execution for minor crimes. The *September Laws* also prohibited the sale of alcohol and the collection of interest on debts. This was essentially an imposition of *Sharia Law* on the whole country. The *September Laws* were part of Nimeiri's continued project of "Islamizing" and "Arabising" the whole of the Sudan even though the South was predominantly Christian. These laws were oppressive to the southern Christians who decided to rebel.

Thus, because of *Any-Nya II*, the school functioned only for four years, before it was taken up by the Khartoum army and used as a military barracks for over twenty years. Efforts to reopen the school in 1986 were dashed. Fr. James O'Reilly, SJ who stayed on in the school as part of the caretaker team after its occupation by the military commented: "Will *Loyola* open again as a *Senior Secondary School*? The soldiers occupying the school and a couple high officers smile, saying no. But... time will tell".

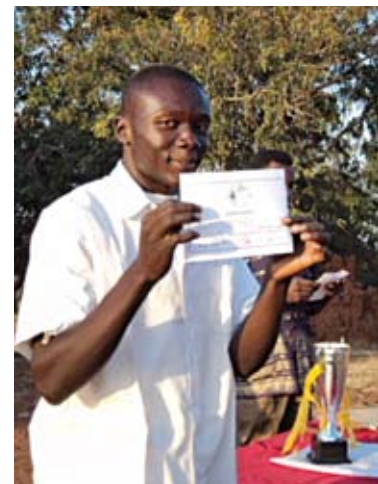
With the intensification of war, the educa-

tion system in the South of Sudan which was already flimsy was totally destroyed. Most of the Southerners fled the country into refugee camps in neighboring countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia. Others went to Khartoum, in North Sudan, where they found a temporary haven amidst the injustices there. It was hoped that the *Loyola Secondary School* would be opened after a few years but that hope was dashed when the war continued.

Thus, for over twenty years, the school was shut down. In the meantime, the soldiers who were using the school as a barracks kept on destroying it. Several heroic Jesuits stayed on during that time to safeguard the property as much as they could and also to help the displaced people around Wau. Fr. Dick Cherry, SJ who was one of those holding the fort at *Loyola* at that time recounted his ordeal of being tied up overnight by some soldiers after he denied their request of using the school borehole freely.

Several attempts were made to reopen the school in the 1990s but that was not possible. Luckily, the civil war in the Sudan ended with the signing of the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (CPA) between the government of North Sudan and the South Sudanese people in the town of Machakos, Kenya in the 2005. Thus, 2005 marked the end of *Any-Nya II*. The next year, 2006, the Jesuits went back to *Loyola Secondary School*. Their first task was to persuade the military to leave the school. Then, the build-

Below, the joy of the winner. In the large photo, the morning prayer at the beginning of the lessons. On the previous page, girls during the Eucharistic celebration.





Education

ings had to be renovated and made ready for use. Br. Joseph Shubitowski, SJ who was the original builder of the school spent one and a half years renovating the school and the Jesuit residence. The building had been severely damaged by almost twenty years of occupation by the military.

Other Jesuits came gradually to the mission between 2006 and 2009. They began thinking of ways of reopening the school and also how to make an impact on the local church through pastoral ministries beyond teaching at *Loyola Secondary School*. In April 2008, the school opened its doors again! In the 1980s the school was only for boys because girls were not allowed

to venture out of their homesteads. However, in 2008, the Jesuits made the school coed because of the increasing need of educating the girl child in the South of Sudan. At the reopening of the school, a group of local Jesuits from the Eastern Africa Jesuit Province took charge of the day to day running of the school. However, the Detroit Jesuits continued to be involved in the school.

In 2011, the first group of students after the re-establishment of *Loyola Secondary School* did their Sudan Secondary School Certificate Examinations. They produced an impressive result which made the school to be popular among the citizens of South Sudan. The same year the Southern Sudan got its independence from Sudan, and a new country called Republic of South Sudan (ROSS) was born.

Loyola Secondary School is composed of students from the various ethnic communities and religious affiliations found in South Sudan. This places the school in a good position of inculcating the value of multiculturalism to its students. This has helped the Jesuits to foster reconciliation among the aggrieved ethnic communities whom they serve. This is part of the contribution the Jesuits are making to develop a culture of peace in the country.

The school also serves the community around it. A youth center known as *Loyola Youth Center* has been established in order to help young people come together and participate in activi-

Peace



ties that are valuable which can help transform a society broken by war. Activities at the *Loyola Youth Center* include teaching catechism to the children from the neighborhood, singing and dancing, football, volleyball games, etc.

The school continues to grow although it is faced by manifold challenges. Currently it can accommodate four hundred students, but the vision that the Jesuits, parents, teachers and the local church have is to accommodate one thousand students. This is a mammoth task because building a new infrastructure in this part of the world is still difficult just like in the 1980s. This is because the region is still inaccessible by road yet most of the building materials must be bought from outside the country. Also, to get the funds for the development projects in the school has continued to be an uphill task. The school lacks proper laboratories and sports facilities. It is our hope that these facilities will come with time, at the moment the teachers and the students improvise and make good use of the materials that are available.

Lack of enough qualified teachers is also another setback. According to the UN, only 3% of teachers in South Sudan are trained. This is the reason why the Jesuits in collaboration with the local church are thinking about opening a *Teachers Training College* in the area. Implementing the new South Sudan curriculum, which uses English as a medium of instruction,



Above, a seller of water in a village near the school. In the other images of these pages, several aspects of scholastic life: during the lessons; the presence of the military recalls the lack of security in this country only recently independent.

is a challenge because the few teachers available were trained in the old syllabus developed in Khartoum, North Sudan. This Khartoum syllabus was conducted in Arabic and emphasized Islamic values. Thus, it will take a long time to undo the “Arabisation” that took place for almost a century in South Sudan.

Another challenge that the Jesuits face is insecurity which is caused by inter-ethnic violence and the easy access to small arms. A new civil war began in December 2013 causing fear among the people that the good work at *Loyola Secondary School* will be interrupted. Luckily, the war did not affect the town of Wau and thus the Jesuits continued their work uninterrupted. Even though war was continuing in other parts of the country studies continued normally at *Loyola Secondary School* in 2014. The students continued to take their studies seriously. Their smiles and laughter were a clear demonstration that they were full of hope. Their future was not going to be bleak.

Loyola Secondary School, Wau continues to be a beacon of hope for the South Sudanese people in spite of its troubled past and the present challenges. Its students are very promising and the Jesuits hope that they will help to shape the future of this new nation. The parents are proud to have their children in the school. They appreciate the kind of valuable education that the Jesuits try to impart in their children.





The author speaks about the hard struggle to protect the federation of Grain Banks, begun with many difficulties and now at risk of falling into the hands of totally unscrupulous people.

Below, the traditional barns used by the Chadian population in the villages. On the following page, the sacks of millet and the millet before the harvest.

Our region in Chad, whose capital is Mongo, lies in the Sahel. That means that it suffers from endemic food shortages due to the scarcity of rain, the attacks of grain-eating birds or insects.

So it is fertile ground for money lenders, all wealthy local people or large-scale farmers, who have slowly made hostages of the large group of peasant-farmers. To pay back loans taken out in times of drought, farmers had to sign over almost the whole of their future harvests, so that they ended up not farming for themselves but for the money-lenders. I note in passing that both victors

and victims were 97 % Muslims and didn't think it at all strange that they found themselves praying in the same mosque every Friday. Only the Christian communities, occasioned by the feasts of first harvests, tried to formulate a gesture of sharing with the less fortunate.

During the growing-season 1993-94 the Catholic Church of the Guera region had to intervene massively to confront a new famine. Still, aware that distributing aid could only be a short-term solution, we thought of a more radical solution for passing from continuous dependence on external resources to responsible self-sufficiency. So it was decided not to give anything away free but to furnish loans in wheat which were repayable, again in wheat, to the next harvest, asking only a small interest-rate so as to be able to renew the stock in the villages



The Endless Struggle of the Grain Banks

Franco Martellozzo, S.J.

themselves. The profit, in fact, remained totally in the village with the possibility of increasing it in the five successive years. Only then would the amount received be taken back to found a new bank in a nearby village. This proposal was something absolutely new, and it began to function only with many difficulties – not least the opposition of the “wise” Muslims who hid behind the Islamic Law’s prohibition of lending with interest. So what of the money lenders?

Thanks to a strong effort of raising awareness and the intervention of local authorities both civil and religious, the project finally got started and little by little succeeded in creating grain banks in all the villages of the region, grouped together as a federation, and able to get rid of most of the money-lenders. Now the peasants farmed their fields tranquilly, enjoying the harvests and getting assistance from the grain banks in case of drought. It was a real socio-cultural revolution for the whole region, and it landed the Church in the forefront of all the organizations working at achieving self-sufficiency in food. But I won’t go into further detail; instead I’ll come to the question which interests us now.

Up until 2009 we worked in peace. Then there came a huge project linked to FAO (the United Nations’ organization for Food and Agriculture) which included food insurance and which launched – without any prior discussion with our federation – a large competitive initiative of barns for food insurance. Of course this was a disaster because often storehouses were built practically across from our federations’ banks, with their own governing boards and with different regulations. Then the farmers threw themselves at the better offer and the federation was on the brink of dissolution. It was saved by a miracle I can’t explain – perhaps by the holy intercession of the patron of the zone, St. Anthony of Padua.

The massive project of FAO was finished three years ago, and there arrived suddenly a crowd of experts for a final evaluation. Once on the ground, they came across the Food Banks of the federation (often right across from FAO’s) and they asked FAO’s local project managers



just to whom these other storehouses belonged. They were told that they belonged to the Catholic Church and had been built subsequently to FAO’s and without any collaboration with FAO. The experts then came to see me, furious. But, faced with the documentation I could provide, they ended having their eyes opened and the lie was instantly laid wide open. So they invited me to a final meeting and asked their own employees to collaborate with us in the event of a further project – which in fact they already foresaw.

Once the experts departed and the enormous FAO project was closed, their storehouses for food insurance faced an immediate crisis. Through an official letter, I was invited to integrate them into our federation. I agreed, despite the difficulty that entailed, but on the condition that in future they would agree on collaborating with us and working together without being competitors.

The new project arrived at the end of 2013 and was once again entrusted to some large interna-



Chad

Social commitment

tional organizations full of money but without experience. In accord with the local FAO we engaged in multiple organizational meetings but in reality it was once again a disaster. Their organizers continued to behave as if they were in the Wild West: in many villages they tried to dissolve the committees of the federation and to create new ones with new regulations. But here another miracle happened: in every village the people simply refused, saying: "If you want to intervene you have to recognize and collaborate with our structure; otherwise get out!" This shows that by now the farmers are mature: they no longer can be tricked. They've come to see that only the federation has a long-term future, while other projects are short-lived.

In any case, the situation was becoming cha-

otic; we had to find a definitive solution. During a large meeting with the directors of the federation we came up with a protocol for collaboration with the interested NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) which asked for initial communication at every level. The protocol was sent to Brussels and ... it was accepted. Now we are just awaiting a decisive meeting between the directors of the NGO and those of the federation to walk ahead hand in hand and build the future together.

During a long conversation the Governor of the Region of Guera, referring to the attempts at cooperation, spoke very critically of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. But let's go in order.

According to the Governor, up until the end of the '90's projects were designed by the two above agencies and decided on in Brussels, Rome and Washington without any consideration of and consultation with the administrators in Chad. They were so-called "para-chute drops" without any base for sustaining them and were often either refused or ignored by the local population.

In those days the interventions didn't take any account of the viewpoints of the structures of appropriate Ministries (Agriculture, Health, etc.) which were usually used to implement such projects. Generally speaking, in the course of implementation a foreign director arrived, very well paid, who was given a local personage without any real power because everything had already been decided elsewhere.

In the end the directors from outside went away and the project collapsed because local teams had not achieved the necessary competence to carry it on, and didn't have an adequate support structure.

The results of many such interventions were dramatically thin – the classic case of the mountain which gave birth to a mouse. No significant change on the ground, no step ahead toward sustainable development. But not only that. Besides seeing little or no results, the government of Chad found itself in debt to the financial entities insofar as this so-called Aid were often loans to the government and thus funds to be paid

Cereals





To the side, again the sacks of millet which are conserved in the “cereals banks” for times of famine. Below, the offering of the first fruits of the harvest during the celebration of the Eucharist.



back. Fortunately, this method of cooperating which amassed debts without accomplishing anything was ultimately abolished.

In the last decade many projects of the World Bank were entrusted to the large international NGOs which had other processes involving complicated language and structures, and sending numerous teams and international experts which cost a fortune. Local functionaries were only able to be a kind of valet service, not to assume real command of the projects.

Although they left a large footprint, the projects were simply too complex and their implementation too difficult to be transferred to local administrators. Generally speaking, functionaries of the various Ministries were employed as consultants or workers who were qualified and well-salaried but once again without any real decision-making power. Projects of this kind resemble huge, lumbering wagons. In the offices of evaluation, the revolving experts regularly reported a lack of interest on the part of local administrators from the interested sectors (agriculture, health, water) and then set off on a new project of exactly the same kind.

Here the reflections of the Governing body agreed with our own: too often cooperative projects ignored local administration and took no account of existing structures, whether public or private, while putting into place an enormous machinery which had no hope of working.

But we must never simply fold our hands helplessly: collaboration between us and FAO, although difficult, is proof that even this kind of miracle is possible.

Translated by John J. O'Callaghan, S.J.



A New Frontier for Jesuits

Erik John Gerilla, S.J. – *Jesuit Social Services, Timor-Leste*

The change in social atmosphere and political climate in a young independent country like Timor-Leste calls for new ways of engaging communities for the advancement of justice, peace and development.

Below, professional formation of the adults. On the following page, a meeting of those responsible for the projects.

A new frontier of Jesuit social apostolate in Timor-Leste was ushered in almost two years ago as the country shifted from turbulent times to a time of picking up the pieces and putting them together. The change in social atmosphere and political climate in a young independent country like Timor-Leste calls for new ways of engaging communities for the advancement of justice, peace and development. This is the context in which the *Jesuit Social Service-Timor-Leste* (JSS) was formed.

JSS was launched in July 2013 with the withdrawal of the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) from Timor-Leste. For many years, JRS had served Timorese displaced by the conflict in their country, helping them to recover and rehabilitate their lives. When JRS decided that there was no longer a need for this service, the Jesuits in the Timor-Leste Region decided to pursue a more active role in country's social development, which resulted in the decision to set up JSS. Some of the JRS staff, including former country di-

rector Mr Isidoro Costa, moved over to the new organisation. Mr Costa served as Acting Director from July to December 2013 and two Jesuit scholastics were assigned to JSS for their Regency to help initiate projects. A seasoned missionary Brother Noel Oliver SJ served in an advisory capacity in 2013 before taking over as Acting Director from January to June 2014. The current director is Fr Erik John Gerilla SJ.

At the beginning of 2014, after reviewing the projects in its first six months and considering its needs and opportunities in the coming years, JSS developed a mandate for 2014 which has shaped the JSS we know now, two years later: *Jesuit Social Service Timor-Leste* is dedicated to community development among the Timorese people.

While remaining available to respond to future crises of displacement, it will work to conclude the services offered by JRS to particular communities over the past seven years and will henceforth concentrate on communities in need and close to where Jesuits have a long-term presence or other relationship. This will facilitate on-going accompaniment and sustainability for services among those communities, enabling JSS in time to be free to go to areas of greater need. After initial surveys, three geographic locations have been chosen for JSS programs in 2014: Hera,



Kasait and Dare.

In its first full year of operation, JSS initiated projects to address the pressing concerns of some communities. There were difficulties along the way such as the lack of training and resources as well as cultural and behavioural barriers among the people in the communities.

Fortunately, the months of labouring with them afforded us an introductory experience of community organizing and motivated us to learn from our mistakes in order to become better and more effective. As 2015 drew near, the JSS team stayed determined to find ways to put into action the challenge set forth by General Congregation 35: “New frontiers beckon that we should be willing to embrace” (Decree 2, No. 24).

On the macro-level, Timor-Leste is one of the least developed economies in the South-east Asian region and ranks 147th out of 187 countries in the *United Nations Human Development Index*.

About 41 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, according to the World Bank report 2009, and hundreds of thousands out of approximately 1.2 million Timorese are struggling to make ends meet. Although the future holds some promise as the country is earning millions of dollars from its oil and gas reserves, the lack of human capital development affects the nation’s ability to grow.

The meagre development and access to basic services are heavily concentrated in the country’s capital, Dili. People in the rural areas are more vulnerable to economic exclusion as most of the access roads are in poor condition hampering the delivery of basic services to these areas. As Jesuits, we cannot ignore these realities – our mission to proclaim the Gospel is essentially a work of justice. It is in this context and with special attention to women, youth and children that JSS aims to address a few of the many issues that have beset Timorese society for years.

From its community engagement, JSS has identified certain problems as pressing and



compelling for solid action.

The team has discerned that it needs to develop internal capacity and then offer its services to alleviate the problems of poor access to water and sanitation, lack of food security in the rural areas, lack of entrepreneurial skills among women, massive unemployment among the youth and poor access to healthcare.

As these issues require our urgent response, JSS is set to reorganize itself to prepare for the challenges of these frontiers. A strategic framework, developed in response to the invitation to embrace new frontiers, is in place. It is the desire of the JSS team to contribute, in no matter how small a way, to the realization of the goals stated in the Timor-Leste government’s Strategic Development Plan 2011 to 2030.

Inspired by the vision of the national development plan, JSS hopes to participate in developing the country’s social capital, infrastructure and economy and has identified

East Timor

Social commitment

The economy of Timor-Leste is still underdeveloped and, therefore, a strong social effort is necessary on everyone's part to improve the situation.

four key areas of social service: water and sanitation, agro-social enterprise, women and youth social innovation, and public health development. These will mark JSS as an emerging Jesuit apostolate in Timor-Leste.

JSS' vision is inspired by the overall vision, mission and goals of the Jesuits in the Independent Region of Timor-Leste. This vision should help to create a country consisting of united, self-reliant and self-sustaining communities that will build a strong Timorese nation, animated by love for their country and motivated to form a just society that promotes the common good. To pursue and realize slowly this vision, we are committed to mission goals in the five key areas of social service we have identified.

These are:

- (1) alleviate the poor access to water and sanitation through community-based infrastructure projects,
- (2) help secure adequate food supply that is

affordable to all through innovative agricultural development programs suitable to each community in the rural areas,

- (3) train and mentor groups and individuals to become successful entrepreneurs and provide them with access to capital using either the micro-finance scheme or the co-operative model,
- (4) facilitate learning opportunities for the vulnerable youth sector through livelihood and functional literacy skills training especially for those out of school and unemployed,
- (5) develop public health interventions in the rural areas where there is poor access to healthcare.

These mission goals are attempts to embody the social vision and the loving acts of Jesus Christ – our ultimate model for social action. With strong hope for the future, we are poised to shape the JSS in the service of the Timorese people. In this light, we rely on the loving guidance of Holy Spirit leading our way, the goodness of the people who support us and the vigour of those who work with us as active partners and collaborators. With a spirit of Christian service, JSS is starting to find ways in pursuing its core principle: "In all things, to love and to serve."

Changing



The Road travelled and the Miles to go!

George Joseph & Francis Xavier

Chennai Mission enters the twenty fifth year of its chequered, but graced and meaningful existence of empowering the marginalized. *Chennai Mission* was founded as Chengai Mission in 1990, comprising parts of areas of the Old Madurai Mission, Karnatic Mission, and Mysore Mission which, before the suppression of the Society of Jesus, flourished. *Chennai Mission* has drawn inspiration from great missionaries and stalwarts, like Robert De Nobili, Constantine Beschi, St. John de Britto, and a host of others for the apostolic dynamism, daring creativity, and solidarity with the people.

Chennai Mission is not a mere outgrowth of the Madurai Province, which comprises the political states of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry in South India with its membership of 513 Jesuits as the third largest Province in the Society of Jesus. For Madurai Jesuits, *Chennai Mission* symbolizes a conversion experience of encountering the Crucified. It came into existence as a result of a belated discovery of the terrible and horrendous injustice suffered by the *Dalit* (oppressed) Christians in the caste-ridden Indian society as well as in the Indian Church.

As the victims of the centuries-old caste system and its obnoxious ideology and practice of untouchability, they were deprived not only of their human rights but even the very right of being human. Their lives were marked by abject poverty, stigma of untouchability, political powerlessness, religious neglect, and social exclusion. Though Madurai Province was one of the most inculturated Provinces in India, it too has remained blind to the plight of the *Dalit* Christians who, in fact, constitute the majority (65%) of the Tamilnadu Church. We were totally unaware of this social reality because we too were wearing the caste blinkers. Thanks to the pastoral insertion, on the invitation of the Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore Archdiocese, in two parishes, Malligapuram and Ongur, of the present Chengelpet Diocese, the Jesuit pastors not only got the feel for the sheep, but they came face to face with the smouldering embers of anger, helplessness together with aspirations and longing for empowerment, liberation, in short the possibility of living their lives with

Jesuit Chennai Mission



The *Chennai Mission* started in 1990 with the mandate to initiate and animate people's movements to secure the *dalit* rights, to provide liberating education to children, skill training programmes for unemployed youth, and to reorient pastoral ministry with faith-justice mission.

dignity and freedom.

The theory and practice of the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" took a pastoral shape in initiating people's movements resisting against all caste based discrimination and fighting and struggling for their right to be human. As the birth centenary year of Dr Ambedkar, the icon and inspiration of *Dalit* liberation, was around, there was an upsurge among the *Dalits*. Dr Ambedkar's clarion call 'to educate, organize and agitate,' reverberated not only in the *Dalit* villages and slums, but it resonated with the Je-

Above, the technology laboratory.

India

Social commitment



Above, the location of the Chennai Mission within the Indian State of Tamilnadu. Below, the placing of the first stone of Loyola College.

suit understanding of the mission according to General Congregation 32. The result was the formation of *Chengai Mission Team* in 1990 comprising of Jesuit pastors, a social activist lawyer and educators. The team was given the mandate to initiate and animate people's movements to secure the *Dalit* rights, to provide liberating education to children, skill training programmes for the unemployed youth, and to reorient pastoral ministry with faith-justice mission.

The mandate was carried out with great enthusiasm and the Mission was able to start *Loyola High School* in Kuppayanallur and a socio-legal centre - *Dalit Human Rights Centre* - in Chengelpet, besides giving pastoral leaderships to four vibrant parishes of Ongur, Maligapuram, Palligram, and Pappanallur – all in the *Dalit*-dominant rural areas. The mission was successful and it gelled with the apostolic zeal of the Province. As a result, two subsequent Province Congregations (1990 & 1994) sent postulates to Fr General requesting him to

initiate the process to create a Dependent Region from present Madurai Province in order to give a momentum to this evangelical thrust and mission.

Fr General directed the Province to make a feasibility study and promised to consider the proposal in the light of the report of this study. A committee was appointed by the then Provincial and it completed its task in 1997. The *Feasibility Study Committee* was convinced of the need of more Jesuit involvement in the integral development of the *Dalits*, especially of the Catholic *Dalits*, and other marginalized groups, especially Tribals in these less developed parts of Tamilnadu and hence proposed that after an initial development work of three years, 2000 AD, the Jubilee Year of the Lord, would be the appropriate year for the bifurcation of the Province and creation of a new Dependent Region.

In the light of this report and the advice of Fr General Assistant to develop the Region and divide the Province, the then Provincial appointed an Animator for Tamilnadu North Region in July 1998, with the mandate to systematically expand and coordinate Jesuit presence and ministries in this mission area and to generate the funds for the same. *Chennai Mission* established its identity and expanded its ministry to Vellore Diocese starting a socio pastoral ministry (1999) in Kilpennathur and *Loyola Industrial School* for the dropout youth (2003) in Ranipet. In order to raise the status of the Mission and to invest it with greater autonomy, Fr. Provincial requested Fr. General to appoint a Superior for the Mission. Fr General, acceding to the request, created the *Chennai Mission*, comprising the geographical area in Northern Tamilnadu above the river Cauvery and the union territory of Pondicherry, and appointed Fr A. Victor as the first Mission Superior of *Chennai Mission* in 2007 with the responsibility for the overall direction and supervision of all apostolic activity in the Mission area.

Under the leadership of the new Mission Superior and with the active support of the Province, *Chennai Mission* experienced tremendous growth and expansion. It was able to start *Loyola College of Education* (2007), *Ar-rupe Retreat House* in Mettupalayam of Ooty Diocese (2007), *Loyola Arts and Science College* (2009) in Vettavalam of Vellore Diocese, and an *Engineering College* (Loyola-ICAM College of Engineering and Technology in

Chennai



2010) and a CBSE School (*Loyola Academy*) in Vadamelpakkan of Chengelpet Diocese (2011) and VRO-Pondy Women Empowerment Centre (2011). As an overwhelming majority of the Tribals live in the *Chennai Mission* area, a project for their empowerment and uplift has been initiated with a pastoral perspective in a tribal village in Makkampalayam of Ooty Diocese (2012) and with a movement perspective in Tindivanam (2014). Also on the anvil is the very challenging ministry (2014) for migrant workers who often, with their families, flock to the urban areas in search of work and who are forced into a kind of slave labour. Plans are afoot to start another Arts and Science College in the Diocese of Salem (2015) and a job oriented training Institution (2016) in the Diocese of Dharmapuri in response to the invitation of the local Bishops.

Thorough planning, evaluation, and course corrections of these ministries are done through frequent formal and informal meetings organized by the second Mission Superior, Fr. Jebamalai Irudayaraj and his team. Mention must be made of the three General Assemblies of *Chennai Mission* (2007, 2009 & 2014), which strengthened its identity and boosted its morale. *Chennai Mission* experienced providence of God in the support and solidarity of donors in Europe and USA, especially the Mission Procurators of Germany and Switzerland and also Madurai Province.

The ministries listed above show the wide scope, reach and variety of our apostolic activities, which require intellectual depth and administrative competence, social awareness and commitment, and pastoral sensitivity and compassion. In order to promote the local vocations, an apostolic school has been started in *Chennai Mission* (2014). There is a sense that *Chennai Mission* is moving along the right path. There are more than one hundred Jesuits working in these various ministries.

There are, however, many challenges facing *Chennai Mission*. While we need to envision new and creative forms of socio pastoral and spiritual ministries for the integral growth of the people of our option, we cannot overlook the fact that in this era of commercialized education, the felt need of the *Dalits* and other marginalized groups is quality and affordable education, which is at the same time humanistic. It is a herculean task that we need to attend to. Our people are not to be left behind nor ignored in the globalized, competi-

tive and meritocratic society that India is fast becoming. As Yahweh heard the cry of His people in the burning bush and as Jesus took his stand with the poor and the marginalized, the Jesuits are to live out the Ignatian vocation of 'caring the soul' blooming today as holistic liberation of the economically and socially marginalized.

By consciously taking the side of the marginalized, who are increasingly becoming assertive and militant, *Chennai Mission* runs the risk of finding itself on the wrong side of the political and ecclesiastical powers and consequently, of being sidelined and silenced. For the Society of Jesus challenges have often turned out to be opportunities for an abundant harvest! The question facing *Chennai Mission* and Madurai Province is whether trusting the words of the Stranger standing on the seashore we should cast our nets on the other side or rest our oars and nestle snugly in the complacent security and safety of our old moorings! *Chennai Mission* is marching with the marginalized and it draws inspiration and strength from the restored Society and the resurrected Jesus. The goal is to empower the marginalized; and to bring those at the receiving end to the center of leadership.



Below, children busy in their studies. The Chennai Mission is inhabited mainly by the dalit, that is the most poor and emarginated people, to whom an education is being imparted that will liberate them from poverty and ignorance.



“College to Village” Project

Cheryl Francis – Director of Social Work & NSS, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata

“No elite College goes in search of people who are poor and marginalized. A renowned and reputed College like *St. Xavier's College* (Kolkata) going to the rural milieu only proves that the Jesuit option for the poor is enhanced and concretized.”

The first group of students of the St. Xavier College of Raghampur. On the following page, students and volunteers who work in the villages.

“I can't believe that I too can study at *St. Xavier's College*,” exclaimed 16-year old Sarika Pailan who studies in class 11 and has been coming regularly, since she was in class 9, for all Sunday visits organized by College students at Shalpurkur (a neighbouring village of Raghampur, which is a Jesuit parish situated about 22 km away from the city of Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal, India).

Deepika Korali, an earnest and sincere student from Debipur, another neighbouring village, is currently studying in class 12. A first-generation learner, she passed her class X Board Examinations and was elated to learn that *St. Xavier's College* is starting its rural campus at

Raghampur. Like her, there are many students in the surrounding villages who now see their dream coming true – a divine destiny arriving.

This is an outcome, one successful culmination of the “College to Village, Village to College” project, popularly known as *prayas*, initiated in 2006 by Fr. J. Felix Raj, SJ, Principal of *St. Xavier's College* Kolkata. Also known as the “one rupee revolution,” it is a part of the persistent effort to bring about overall development of the students both in the College and in the villages. With nine Bengal villages (Debipur, Shalpurkur, Ghostomath, Bolorampur, Nurshidarchowk, Bholakhali, Gurap, Jhantipahari and Mirga) under its ambit, *Prayas* has gradually metamorphosed from being a project into being a full-fledged movement.

While inaugurating the Raghampur campus on 7 July 2014, His Grace Bishop S. Lobo, of Baruipur Diocese, expressed gratitude to the Jesuits, “The campus is a Jesuit gift to the diocese,” he said. “No elite College goes in search



of people who are poor and marginalized. A renowned and reputed College like *St. Xavier's* going to the rural milieu only proves that the Jesuit option for the poor is enhanced and concretized", observed Fr. Joseph Raj, SJ, Academic Coordinator of the Raghampur campus.

Prayas has turned out to be a remarkably successful endeavour - the primary objective being the provision of continuous support and assistance, academic and material, to the less fortunate children. Since its inception, the number of villages under *Prayas* increased rapidly. Initially there were only two villages, Gurap and Pandua in Hooghly district. Within a span of eight years, we have spread our work to more villages of which six are situated in South 24 Parganas and one in North 24 Parganas.

"What differentiates *Prayas* from many social initiatives is that it has stayed the course. I am delighted that a new campus is being set up at Raghampur because of the *Prayas* initiative. I am particularly happy because I had worked at Raghampur as part of the *Prayas*. Our small efforts are bearing fruit", stated Asad Rauf a Computer Science student of the College, when asked to share his thoughts on the Raghampur project.

The foremost component of the movement is the organization of *Prayas* camps. The camps (College to Village and Village to College) have played a very important role in motivating the village children to pursue higher education. From 2006 to 2014, there were 50 'College to Village' camps held where more than 1,500 College students participated. Again from 2007 to 2014, 15 'Village to College' camps were held wherein more than 1,000 village children were involved. It was during the latter that village children got an opportunity to remain in the College premises for three days per camp. The College, through the students, provided these young boys and girls from the villages with a dream - a dream to study further, to be well-read and one day call themselves a 'Xaverian'. The *dadas* (brothers) and *didis* (sisters) became their role models. Till date the College students spend their Sundays in these villages teaching and participating actively in the life and living



of the village children. In fact, these villages are called 'our extended Xavierian families.'

With the Raghampur campus, many such dreams will be fulfilled. Ropena Naskar, a 15 year old girl from Ghostomath village wants to be "*an independent and educated woman*". She now feels that her parents will allow her to receive College education as she will not have to travel far from

Support

Social commitment

her home and she will also have the company of her other friends for her security, which is naturally a major concern for parents.

About 100 parents from four villages who were recently interviewed regarding this initiative were extremely optimistic. Debjani Dolui, a parent from Nurshidarchowk said, “I’m very happy that now our village children will get good jobs after studying in *St. Xavier’s College*.” Others spoke about how they would not hesitate to send their daughters to College for further studies.

When we began our work in Debipur village initially, we found that children, especially girls, discontinued after the 6th or 7th standard. In stark contrast, today we find students who have completed their Masters and Teachers’ Training course. A good number of students, mostly girls, have completed 12th standard and are presently attending Government Colleges

for which they need to travel considerably long distances. Thus, *Prayas* participates in the promotion of the education of the girl child. For them, *St. Xavier’s* college at Raghobpur will prove to be a blessing. Fr. Dejus of Baruipur Diocese aptly puts it, “Now these village children will develop well. They will not have the fear of an elite College, its culture, language and environment, etc. They would now feel more confident and at home with the environment which will encourage them to study better.”

The immense commitment with which this work is undertaken reaps its reward in the hope and trust that the village residents bestow on *St. Xavier’s College* and the activities that the College undertakes on their behalf. The presence of *St. Xavier’s College’s* rural campus in Raghobpur will certainly bring about positive, virtuous changes in the cultural, social and moral life of the people of the area. It will provide an opportunity to village children to realize not only their academic aspirations but also their desire to grow up as quality human beings, eventually as - ‘men and women for others’.

Mrs. Uma Majhi the village animator from Debipur who helped coordinate all the village activities with the College was extremely grateful when she heard about the Raghobpur campus and this is what she had to say, “I want to thank Fr. Felix Raj for making way for the development of the villages and making this arrangement for the village children. After graduating from *St. Xavier’s College*, our village youth will surely lead a good and successful life. The existence of *St. Xavier’s*, Raghobpur campus, has helped Debipur and its surrounding villages as well, especially the poor students. Not just that, the parents are exclaiming with pride that their son/daughter is studying at *St. Xavier’s*. The studies are good and classes are held regularly. This College is a blessing to all of us.”

The *St. Xavier’s College* campus at Raghobpur which began in the academic session in July 2014 is in full progress. The Bengali Honors course has 50 students on the roll. The BA General has 52 students and the Commerce section has settled with 20 students. The medium of instruction is Bengali. Special classes in English

Kolkata





To the side, children of the villages and those of the city fraternize together. Below, a girl lights the traditional lamp at the opening of the work camp. On the previous page, the St. Xavier College of Raghampur.

are held to facilitate the students' capability to express themselves in English as well.

The co-curricular activities like National Cadets Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), Bengali Literary Society (BLS) has added more life and vigour to this rural campus. Active participation by the students is very encouraging. About 100 students have already joined the NSS, more than 50 have joined NCC and about 90 have joined the BLS. The Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola on 31st July and the Independence Day celebrations on 15th August 2014 saw enthusiastic involvement among students. 'Sharod 2014', a BLS festival, was inaugurated at the campus on 27 September to encourage students to keep up the rich culture and tradition of Bengal.

A dedicated group of faculty members set out every morning from the Mother Teresa Sarani campus and head for this rural College, enjoying a 45 minutes' drive in a white *Scorpio*. Greenery on either side welcomes them as they travel towards Raghampur, away from the din and bustle of the City. With their enthusiasm, commitment and energy still in place, the 14 faculty members including the ones from the main campus, ensure that they carry forward the tradition and heritage of the academic culture of *St. Xavier's*. The two-member team of office clerks under the able leadership of the Academic Coordinator and other workers has set the momentum for increasing the courses offered.

In 2015 session, the Raghampur campus has offered History honours as well. A community College that will offer vocational courses like bakery, health assistant, computer hardware

and software, carpentry, etc. is one of the future plans for this campus.

So many dreams... so many aspirations... so many expectations... on the verge of being fulfilled! All this was possible only because of a person who dared to dream and took it to its present design and destiny. A Jesuit visionary, following the footsteps of two great Saints, Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier, Fr. Felix Raj, SJ with his one dream, has lit up many lives. As Father Raj himself says, "If it is God's work it will continue".

A good team of dedicated Jesuits and lay leaders must ensure that we act together to make this rural campus a role model for others to follow, all for the greater glory of God.





Peru: the jesuits in Andahuaylillas

The Jesuits arrived at Viceroyalty of Peru in 1568, while St. Francis Borja was the Superior General of the order. During the first half of the 17th century, strong disagreements arose between the Bishopric of Cuzco and the Jesuits over control of the parish of Andahuaylillas. The reason was that the Jesuits considered that, just as in Juli, along Lake Titicaca, a mission was established in the Aymara language; Andahuaylillas was the ideal place for such an end in the Quechua language. In spite of the fact that the Jesuits did not take charge of parishes, "doctrines", it is thought that due to opposition referred to it was conceded to them that they would have charge of the parish of Andahuaylillas between 1628 and 1636.

After its expulsion, the Society of Jesus returned to Peru in 1871 and to the province of Quispicanchi in Cuzco in 1968. The Jesuits assumed the pastoral mission in another six parishes: Andahuaylillas, Huaró, Urcos, Ccatca, Ocongate, and Marcapata. All these promoted an inculturated faith and justice which goes with it.. From this perspective the faith was lived out incorporating the traditions of the place, including songs in Quecha and processions enriched with the local culture. The pastoral and social attention reached not only those who lived in the towns but also more than 150 farming communities as well.

At the same time the parishes offer full social programs which attempt to address the situations of extreme poverty in which much of the popu-

lation lives, while offering services which permit the formation and development of the talents of the children and young people. This translates into dining rooms which serve food to more than 1,000 boys and girls in the region, social assistance, health assistance, gaming halls, libraries, computer rooms, boarding school, music shops, among others.

Besides in Andahuaylillas the Jesuits lead the NGO CCAIJO, founded in 1971 for the development of the farming regions; the primary school Fe y Alegría 44 San Ignacio de Loyola and the project of Educación Rural Fe y Alegría which serves 25 small schools of the farming communities of Andahuaylillas, Urcos, Ccatca, and Ocongate.

The image which appears on the stamp, as a commemoration of the centenary of the political creation of the district of Andahuaylillas, corresponds to the **Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin** which is located in the upper central part of the main altar of the Church of St. Peter the Apostle of Andahuaylillas. The main altar is a baroque carving dating from the middle of the 17th century made of cedar wood with gold-leaf finishing. It also includes examples of canvas paintings, sculptures and mirrors of the Cusqueña school. The detail which appears in the stamp corresponds to a niche which contains in polychrome relief and gold-leaf the Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin by the Most Holy Trinity. The Virgin on her knees over a quarter moon is crowned by

In recognition of the centenary of institutional life of the district of Andahuaylillas, on the 19th of December 2014, was presented the postage stamp of the "Main Altar of the Church of Andahuaylillas", also known as the "Sistine Chapel of America."

the Eternal Father and Christ. Above, the Holy Spirit, represented by the dove, emits golden rays illuminating the scene.

The Church of St. Peter the Apostle of Andahuaylillas forms part of a larger group still: the Andean Baroque Route (La Ruta del Barroco Andino (RBA). This is an initiative promoted by the Society of Jesus which joins the churches of the Society situated in the Parade Ground [Plaza de Armas] of Cuzco, Saint John the Baptist of Huaró and the Chapel of the Purified Virgin of Canincunca (Huaró.) These churches are true jewels that began to be constructed in the 16th century and whose principle decorations in sculptures and paintings both murals as well as canvases were made in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Andean Baroque Route is committed to the diffusion of the cultural patrimony of the region by means of the restoration, conservation and upkeep of the churches. It is a constant effort to cherish the patrimony and to allow the cultural development of the zone by means of publications, concerts, and the promotion of the local cultural traditions such as dances and songs.

At the same time, the Andean Baroque Route encourages the touristic development of the zone in order to generate opportunities for employment for the population: restaurants, hotels, sales of craft items, etc. Finally, the Andean Baroque Route contributes to the social work that the Jesuits carry out through the parishes where these churches are located. Through the beauty of the churches, the countryside and above all of the people and the cultural riches that they still conserve, we can say that here heaven and earth create art.

Carlos Miguel Silva Canessa, S.J.

Lebanon: Three Centenary Celebrations

The Lebanese Mail Service in 2014 issued a stamp commemorating three anniversaries associated with the St Joseph University in Beirut. These anniversaries center on the Faculty of Medicine (1883-2013), the Faculty of Law and Political Science (1913-2013), and the Faculty of Engineering (1913-2013). “To care for, to defend, and to build. These three verbs describe the three essential social functions of these faculties. A civilization would simply not exist if it lacked medicines and hospitals, lawyers and tribunals, engineers and building sites. These three pillars of life in the wider society are reflected in these first three non-ecclesiastical faculties at St Joseph University (USJ). They are now part of its genetic patrimony. Those many years ago, it was exciting for the University to be the “mother” of

the impulse to establish these faculties, and then to actualize them. Since the end of the 19th century, they have assisted Lebanon, and accompanied her into the modern world. When we are part of the birth of a university, in some way, we witness the birth of a society” (USJ info, n. 38). But the university did not always have an easy life in a country which has so often been at war. We recall, for instance, “that the Faculty of Medicine has been destroyed three times; that the campus of Science and Technology has been sacked three times; and that lectures at the Faculty of Law changed location a number of times. In response to this destruction during conflicts, USJ created a number of regional centers. The present celebration then, in a period of renewed stability, takes on an added significance.”







