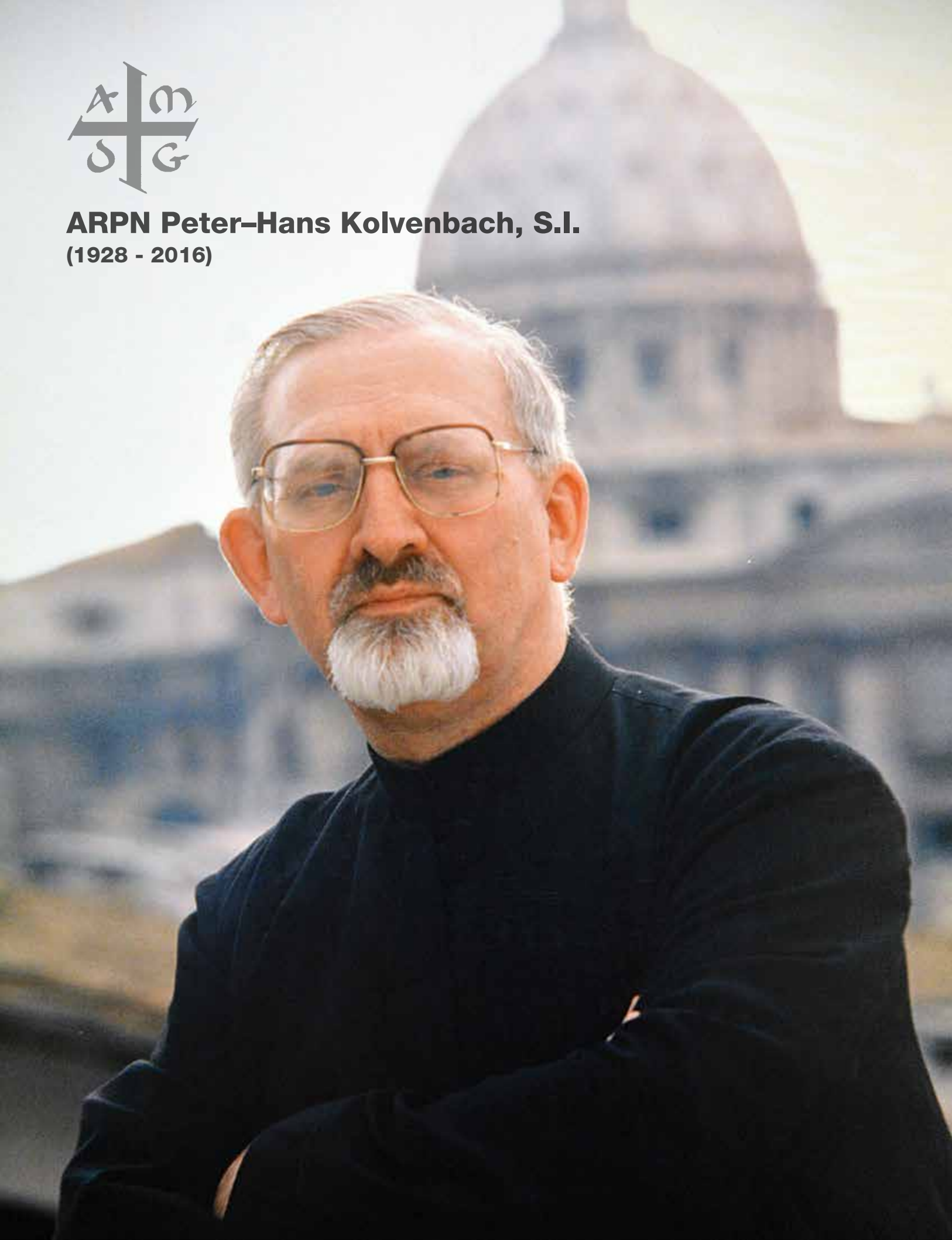




ARPN Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.I.
(1928 - 2016)



Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.I.



In the rooms of St. Ignatius, Rome (14 September 1983)

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.I. was born in Druten (Gelderland), the Netherlands, on 30 November 1928. After graduating from Canisius College in Nijmegen, he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Mariëndaal, Grave, in 1948. Subsequently, he studied philosophy in Nijmegen and taught German at Aloysius College in The Hague, while pursuing studies in linguistics.

He then studied theology at Saint Joseph University, Beirut, and was ordained a priest in the Armenian rite on 29 June 1961. Professor at the Institute of Philosophy of this university, he studied Armenian first in Beirut, then to Paris.

After tertianship in the United States, Fr. Kolvenbach returned to Saint Joseph University in Beirut, first as a professor of general linguistics and Armenian, then as director of the Institute of Philosophy. He was a delegate to the 32nd General Congregation (1974-1975), as Vice-Provincial of the Near East. In 1981, he was appointed Rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome.

On 13 September 1983, during the 33rd General Congregation, he was elected Superior General of the Society of Jesus. A man held in high esteem by all, Fr. Kolvenbach diligently steered the Society of Jesus. He convened the 34th General Congregation in 1995, in particular to update the Society's law and redefine its priorities for the years to come. Feeling his strength decline, he informed Pope Benedict XVI of his intention to present his resignation from the post of General. Consequently, on 14 January 2008, the 35th General Congregation accepted Father Kolvenbach's request to resign. He returned to Beirut, where he died on 26 November 2016.



Presiding at Final Vows, Hungary, 2002

God is served first if in our apostolic lives we consecrate time and space to Him, because in these precise moments of prayer we recognize that it is He who allows us to bear fruit and that it is from Him that we await the apostolic initiatives in the service of His vineyard. He is also the first served when the apostolic body of the Society in prayerful discernment wishes to be touched to the heart in order that its union with God and its plans of action might be a loving and voluntary synergy.

*Letter to all Major Superiors,
6 January 2005*

If we act even unconsciously as though we were the owners of our apostolic works, or if we protect an apostolate or an institution as though it were the last safe preserve for our self-fulfillment, we are no longer servants of Christ's mission. That mission is always received and always held as belonging to the community, meaning both the universal Society and the local community.

*Letter to the whole Society,
12 March 1998*



Visit to Hiroshima, Japan, 1992



Speaking with men in formation, USA, 2004

God is the educator par excellence, and he makes use of human instruments. [...] The second "formator" is the one being formed himself. He learns to take responsibility for his own formation and to live as a Jesuit in creative fidelity. He does not need controls or a director to tell him what he has to do, even if his personalized formation presumes discernment in common. Finally, there is the formator who is God's instrument and the instrument of the Society in transmitting our way of proceeding and communicating a profound desire to serve God and to "help souls", like Saint Ignatius, mainly by the witness of his life.

*Letter to all Major Superiors,
13 February 2003*

Faith and justice are not parallel actions; they go together, because both are inspired by the same charity. Justice without charity is injustice, and faith without charity is a faith without effect.

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach interview with Fr. Hendrik De Gendt, SJ (Chosir magazine, July-August 2006).



[...] For a man “on a mission,” mere service is not nearly enough. We see this clearly when we consider the lives of the first three companions. Ignatius did not live to govern and command; Francis did not travel simply to pursue new experiences and adventures; Peter Favre did not concern himself primarily with attaining inner peace.

Each one of them desired that the Lord of the Vineyard use him in His service for His greater glory.

As a result, their lives were filled with surprises, unexpected apostolic orientations, invitations and requests that upset their plans and projects [...].

Letter to all Major Superiors, 6 January 2007

Undoubtedly, our life is a journey; but we must know moments when we are not moving to reach our purpose or to obtain our self-interest; but rather run and dance on the path prepared by the Lord only for the joy of being his child, his brother and his guest, without looking for self-interest, entirely free of charge.

Man is also created to praise, and this praise does not consist primarily in gratitude for the gifts with which he enriched us, but in singing with all our being, body and spirit, all our wonder, simply because God is amazing.

Homily in the Church of the Gesù, Feast of St Ignatius, 31 July 1990



Homily of Father General Arturo Sosa, S.I.

We all have many memories of P. Kolvenbach. His image is so familiar that we could spend the whole night remembering moments alongside him. To remember Fr. Kolvenbach is to remember a companion of Jesus, a close brother, a priest who reinvigorated life in us, a believer full of hope engaged in the proclamation of the gospel and in building peace, a just man. Therefore, as we did at the beginning of the Eucharist, we can say with the Psalmist: The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree; He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of our God. (Ps. 92: 12-13).

*(Memorial Mass for Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.I.,
Church of the Gesù, 2 December 2016)*



Father General Arturo Sosa, S.I. (left) concelebrates the funeral of Fr. Kolvenbach with Fr. Dany Younès, S.J. (centre), Provincial of Near East and the Maghreb. Notre-Dame de Jambour, Beirut, Lebanon (30/11/2016)



Through the intercession
of Our Lady,
Francis and Ignatius,
and the African Saints
we pray that we may be able
to see all creation
as seen by our Father and Creator,
by Jesus our Lord and Saviour
and by the Holy Spirit,
source of all love and life.

*Address at Official Opening
of Arrupe College,
Harare / Zimbabwe, 1998*



For more information, please visit: www.jesuitgeneral.org/kolvenbach