

# Promotio Iustitiae

## INVITED TO COLLABORATE

The Dimension of Justice and Apostolic Challenges  
in the Society of Jesus today  
from the Perspective of the Social Apostolate



**Social Justice and Ecology  
Secretariat**

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## CONTENTS

<b>EDITORIAL .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.1 Structure of the document .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.2 Starting point: witnesses of life.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Living alongside the poor and excluded, a source of joy and hope.....	9
A painful reality, but endured by the liberating action of God .....	10
<b>2. THE DIMENSION OF JUSTICE IN THE SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.1. Our commitment to the promotion of justice .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Growing sensitivity in the Society to the promotion of justice .....	11
The need to express justice more in works than in words.....	12
Better understanding of the meaning of justice .....	12
The importance of community life.....	14
<b>2.2 The situation of the Social Apostolate .....</b>	<b>14</b>
The difficulty of involving young Jesuits in the Social Apostolate .....	17
<b>2.3 Some challenges in promoting the justice dimension.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3. APOSTOLIC CHALLENGES TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>3.1. Will we be able to live together? .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Sources of tension.....	21
A profound longing for democracy .....	22
Promoting processes of reconciliation and spaces of harmonious coexistence .....	23

<b>3.2. Will the excluded find a place where they can live a fully human life? .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Dynamics of economic exclusion .....	24
Serving those who are excluded.....	25
Becoming friends of the poor.....	26
<b>3.3. Will people be able to grow strong in faith and solidarity? ...</b>	<b>27</b>
The difficulty of human growth .....	28
The beauty of this adventure .....	29
Accompanying the process of human and Christian growth .....	29
<b>4. RESPONDING AS A UNITED APOSTOLIC BODY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>4.1. "Another world is possible" .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Structural changes .....	31
Responses of the Society .....	32
<b>4.2. Ways of growing as an apostolic body .....</b>	<b>33</b>
The need for extensive collaboration .....	34
Grounded in our Ignatian tradition .....	35
Side by side with our collaborators.....	36
With strategic vision.....	37
<b>Annex 1, Methodology used in elaborating this document.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Annex 2, Responses received from the Conferences.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Annex 3, Proposed questions for prayer and reflection.....</b>	<b>42</b>

## EDITORIAL

During the month of May 2011, the annual meeting of the social coordinators of the conferences was held. The document referred to in this new edition of *Promotio Iustitiae* constitutes the minutes of this meeting. The text by the coordinators was drafted after an extensive examination of the reports provided by the provinces. During the May meeting these coordinators dedicated time to reflect on and pray over this documentation. The fruits of their subsequent reflection are presented in the following pages.

The text deals with two questions: how are we responding to the promotion of justice in the Society – in chapter two of the document – and what are the universal apostolic challenges facing the Society today – in chapters three and four.

The Society of Jesus understands that the promotion of justice is not exclusively the responsibility of the society sector; it is the duty of all Jesuits and apostolic sectors. There is much greater awareness today that the dimension of justice should be present in the work of all our ministries. Without confining the reflection to the role of the Social Apostolate, Chapter two examines the situation of the dimension of Justice in the Society. The analysis developed is based on the information provided by many social coordinators of provinces who have commented on this issue.

Further, the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation has called on us to grow as a universal body, a necessary response in the current phase of globalisation. We have tried to identify the global apostolic challenges facing the Society that require our coordinated responses which go beyond provincial boundaries. Thus, in chapters three and four, we offer a reflection on how we can respond more efficiently to today's challenges.

An important conclusion expressed by the coordinators is the need for a much greater level of cooperation between apostolic works of various sectors and between provinces. Only through this cooperation we be able to respond comprehensively to the challenges of today's world. We are invited to think together about this global reality and to design, also together, the best forms of service and accompaniment.

The date of the Congregation of Procurators, in Nairobi next July, is getting closer. We also trust that these pages will help the procurators to reflect on the Society at this juncture and prepare themselves to give valuable guidance for the future of the Society.

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“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”  
Jn 10, 10

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is a time of change in the Society. General Congregation 35, held in the year 2008, recommended the formation of a body conceived “from a perspective of greater universality” (d. 5, no. 1a), and able to respond better to a mission which, because of the difficulty of dividing it geographically, appears to us today as a “universal mission” (Title of Decree 5). This Congregation provided a legal framework and motivation for setting up the Conferences, which are helping us to develop inter-Provincial collaboration and to overcome the limitations of national borders.

In turn, we are becoming ever more aware that present-day apostolic challenges require the *contribution of all the apostolic sectors* where we are active. Fr. General frequently refers to the dimensions of mission which should be present in all our ministries. Consequently three “Core Secretariats”<sup>1</sup> are being organized, corresponding to these dimensions: the service of faith, the promotion of justice, and collaboration with others.

We now find ourselves confronted by two profoundly transformative perspectives: that of **increasing collaboration among Provinces** and that of **increasing collaboration among Apostolic Sectors**. In the coming years these perspectives will introduce dynamic changes into the culture of the Society which will allow us to respond better “to the accelerated pace of globalization, the transnational and multicultural dimensions of the challenges facing the Church, and our desire to work more collaboratively throughout the universal Society” (CG 35, d.5, no. 1a).

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Adolfo Nicolás (2011), *Some Changes in the Central Government of the Society*, no. 1A

## 1.1 Structure of the document

We dedicated the May 2011 **meeting of the Social Coordinators of Conferences and Assistancies**,<sup>2</sup> convened by the *Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology*, to the elaboration of this document that comprises the most important elements of our discussion. It takes into account these two new perspectives.

*The First section*, given the importance assigned to the justice dimension in the new configuration, examines the **presence in the Society of the dimension of working for justice**, without restricting itself exclusively to the quality and the enduring validity of the Social Apostolate.

*The Second section* seeks to help our **reflection on the global apostolic challenges which confront the Society today**, looking beyond the borders between Apostolic Sectors and Provinces, and adopting the perspective proper to the Social Apostolate. We structure the challenges around three especially probing questions:

- 1) Will we be able to live together?
- 2) Will the excluded find a place where they can have a truly human life?
- 3) Will people be able to grow strong in faith and solidarity?

*Finally*, we reflect on the need to respond to all these situations as a united apostolic body and ways of doing so<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> This year 10 Jesuits attended: the Coordinator of Asia Pacific (Fr. Denis Kim SJ), the Coordinator of Southern Asia (Fr. Xavier Jeyaraj SJ), the present Coordinator of Africa (Fr. Guislain Tshikendwa SJ) and the Jesuit who will soon replace him (Fr. Rigobert Minani SJ), the Coordinator of the United States (Fr. Tom Greene SJ), the Coordinator of Latin America and the Caribbean (Fr. Alfredo Ferro SJ) and his assistant (Fr. César Torres SJ), and the Coordinators of Europe, corresponding to each of the European Assistancies, (Fr. Andreas Gösele SJ, Fr. Brendan MacPartlin SJ, Fr. Higinio Pi SJ).

<sup>3</sup> In Annex 3 we can find some questions for our personal prayer and reflection and for our community sharing.



## 1.2 Starting point: witnesses of life

This document has its special starting point the lives by which persons working in the Social Apostolate bear witness. These social apostles are aware that, within the history of the people and the communities they accompany, the God of life becomes continually present, inviting the People to be hopeful and generous and supporting processes of self-giving, which are a source of great joy for those who contemplate them.

### **Living alongside the poor and excluded, a source of joy and hope**

All the reports we received give evidence of the strong commitment of persons working in the Social Apostolate to building, alongside the poor, a world of justice and human dignity. That is what they dedicate themselves to first and foremost: participating in the desires, the concerns about the future, and the social struggles of the poor.

**Living with the poor and becoming part of their daily struggles are special sources of joy and hope.** This is an experienced reality, rather than a concept that can be explained in words. It is what happens when we observe people's capacity for resistance, the beauty and power of their celebrations, their trusting expectations for the future, their endurance of pain... Anyone who contemplates this with the eyes of faith discovers the presence among them of the God of life who confronts the forces of death and brings consolation by increasing faith, hope and charity, as well as interior peace (Sp. Ex. 316).

For their part, excluded persons see this world from below, from the perspective of the "losers" among whom they count themselves, and so they desire another, different world which is yet to come and which will be more humane, offering a place for everybody. This same desire takes root in the hearts of all who live and work for them.

Finally, when we work on behalf of these persons, **we come into contact with many people of good will** who also share our mission of serving the last and the least. Working with the excluded engenders a current of friendship and solidarity with many other groups, institutions, and communities which unite the forces of so many people of good will. We are not alone in this mission, and this is also a source of consolation.

General Congregation 34 told us the same thing with different words:

“Our service, especially among the poor, has deepened our life of faith, both individually and as a body: our faith has become more paschal, more compassionate, more tender, more evangelical in its simplicity” (d. 2, no. 1)

And a little further on:

“(The commitment to promote justice) puts us into such good company – the Lord’s surely, but also that of so many friends of his among the poor and those committed to justice. As fellow pilgrims with them on the way to the Kingdom, we have often been touched by their faith, renewed by their hope, transformed by their love” (d. 3, no. 1).

### **A painful reality, but endured by the liberating action of God**

The number and variety of the ordeals undergone by those to whom we have been sent is quite remarkable: poverty, marginalization, uprooting, loss of identity, forced displacement... With minor variations such trials are mentioned constantly in the reports, coming from every corner of the planet.

Nevertheless, this pain and suffering cannot be the last word, for we recognize at the same time the presence of a God who continues to work (Sp. Ex. 236) on behalf of so many persons in need. Every day we witness the presence of the Father who, as in the times of Jesus, manifests his closeness to the excluded by healing them and freeing them.

In this meeting of Coordinators we felt as if we were seeing the world from deep within, with all the great variety of persons and circumstances, just as Ignatius recommends us to in the Contemplation of the Incarnation. And we heard that faithful voice of God, who continues to say, “Let us work the redemption” (Sp. Ex. 107). That voice gives us the certainty that God is present and is still summoning us to collaborate with him.

## 2. THE DIMENSION OF JUSTICE IN THE SOCIETY

The state of the justice dimension in the Society took up a major part of the questionnaire which we sent to the Provinces, and we later dedicated a great deal of time, in the Coordinators' meeting, to reflecting and discerning with regard to the responses received.

In this section we present the information gathered and some of the reflections that arose from our subsequent dialogue. We have organized it as follows: first, we will focus on the justice dimension; we will then examine the specific situation of the Social Apostolate; and we will end by referring to the challenges that this situation presents to us.

### 2.1. Our commitment to the promotion of justice

We have detected three aspects to review with regard to the promotion of justice as a dimension: a growing sensitivity in the Society to the promotion of justice, the difficulty of transforming our rhetoric into works of justice, and the need to reach a deeper understanding of the meaning of the term "justice" for us Jesuits.

#### **Growing sensitivity in the Society to the promotion of justice**

This fact is reported in all the Conferences, although not with the same force in all. This is certainly good news: the promotion of justice is in large measure readily assumed to be part of the Society's mission, something that was not so extensively recognized in the past. While in earlier times there was opposition and latent conflict between those dedicated to the Social Apostolate and those working in more traditional ministries, this has given way now to a growing sentiment of mutual appreciation, affection and companionship.

This tendency is confirmed by the fact that **nowadays most of the Society's institutions desire to demonstrate their commitment to social justice**. Some undertake this commitment in a systematic way, while others do so according to the occasions and opportunities that offer themselves.

We also see that the justice dimension has been introduced **very extensively in our writing and our preaching** and that it is communicated and received during formation in a natural, peaceful manner.

### **The need to express justice more in works than in words (Sp. Ex. 230)**

While we recognize that social sensitivity is more widespread and our discourse resonates with our commitment to justice, we do not think that our works and our communities have fully appropriated all that is implied in this commitment.

In many places the promotion of justice is limited to **an intellectual concern** which does not lead to taking public stands on issues, accompanying marginalized populations, or engaging in activities which manifest our desire to serve them.

The difficulties become even greater when the promotion of justice may require **the Society to make public pronouncements** which identify us with the cause of the excluded but may not be well received or understood by other sectors of the society which we serve and in which we find our faithful friends.

At the same time, a key factor in this movement from words to works is the support given by the Provinces as a whole and by their leaders in particular. The real support varies much among Regions and Provinces. Social sensitivity, even though it is quite extensive, shows pronounced differences.

Finally, we note that the actions of other apostolic institutions in promoting justice **do not usually have the same systematic character as their efforts in other fields.**

### **Better understanding of the meaning of justice**

Since the promulgation of Decree 4 of General Congregation 32, around the year 1975, the practice of faith which does justice has helped us to gain a deeper understanding of what this means for us.

On the one hand, the use of the term “justice” allows us to engage in dialogue with many other persons who work for justice, even if they do so from basic convictions that are quite different. It is a category that helps us in dialogue and in collaboration. Moreover, in the public sphere justice has a binding character which makes it especially valuable in social struggles.

On the other hand, justice is for us a category grounded in and nourished by our faith. That is why we can speak of the faith that does justice, or of the justice that grows out of faith, among so many other expressions we use. For us justice is a category that relates to faith and vice versa. Faith provides a mystique to the struggle for justice; justice stresses the prophetic dimension of faith. These two values, one more civic and the other more spiritual, are equally important.

**Ignatian spirituality** has some key elements for carrying forward this struggle for justice, such as its insistence that justice be the fruit of love and gratitude rather than of anger; the instruments it provides for seeking the *greater* justice of the Kingdom; its way of preparing us for resistance and perseverance; its eschatological horizon; and its manner of turning us toward celebration, friendship, tenderness. These are all resources which contribute to anchoring our struggle for justice in faith.

Speaking of justice is something more than just speaking about just causes. Justice relates to the possibility of reaching everybody; it opens up to us a horizon of totality. This aspiration beats deep in the heart of the whole Social Apostolate, and we do well to keep it alive because it is a key tension for the Ignatian *magis*. Nevertheless, in our days, because of the complexity of the world in which we live and the colossal dimensions of this undertaking, it is often easier to aspire to something less.

The most recent Congregations have come to our aid: both General Congregation 34, with its stress on **solidarity** – a term it uses often – and GC 35, which joins justice with **reconciliation**,<sup>4</sup> have helped us to understand better the present meaning of justice for the Society. Justice for us has a meaning which is also symbolic rather than purely operative; it has a meaning which engenders new contents.

This struggle for justice needs **new expressions** in order to keep awakening greater allegiance. These expressions may be verbal or they may be signs and symbols which generate new motives for collaborating in the work for justice. What we understand by “promotion of justice” makes an appeal to the whole person and seeks not only a change of structures but also a conversion of heart and a new culture imbued with solidarity.

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<sup>4</sup> This was even done earlier in GC 32, d. 4, no. 2.

## The importance of community life

Community life, which was mentioned many times in all the reports, figures as a key piece in our commitment to justice. For obvious reasons we tend to relate it with the vow of poverty, but we are not accustomed to reflecting on whether our way of being community is a help or hindrance in the struggle for justice.

It is clear, however, that community life and its dynamics provide us with the coordinates of what we consider a “normal way of life” and make us view the world from a determined social situation: an urban residence, surrounded by some neighbours and not others, being obliged or not to use public transport, having to walk or not through certain places... Community life subtly influences our sensitivity – our view of things, our tastes, our awareness – all of which have fundamental importance in our profoundly incarnate Ignatian spirituality.

The reports indicate that in many places our communities make a deliberate effort to live simply, generally in keeping with our profession of poverty. In general terms, however, the impression is that our communities **do not help us greatly in our commitment to justice**, either because of their locations or their living standards. This situation undermines our commitment and threatens the credibility of our discourse.

Finally, we are informed by all the Regions that **our insertion communities are decreasing in number**. This is a fact which is worrisome for the Social Apostolate and saddening since it means less contact with the poor and reduced ability to have them as our friends. We know that such communities continue to be valuable. At the same time, we believe that we need new models which will help us to grow as communities in solidarity with the poor. In some places efforts are being made to open our doors to the excluded, share our lives with them, and make ourselves present to their situation.

## 2.2 The situation of the Social Apostolate

In the Society there is an intrinsic relation between the Social Apostolate and the dimension of promotion of justice. Fr. Kolvenbach has insisted on this relation in several of his public statements. We recall in particular the Letter on the Social Apostolate of the year 2000, the contents of which he referred to constantly in later years.

In this letter, Fr. General indicated some of the serious weaknesses in the Social Apostolate and then indicated the relation it has to the promotion of justice (no. 5):

“The Social Apostolate is running the risk of losing its vigor and its drive, its orientation and its impact. If this should happen to a particular Province or Assistancy, then the lack of a vigorous, well organized Social Apostolate would little by little result in the disappearance of the essential social dimension.”

A good number of years have passed since that letter was published, but we are still quite conscious of the **importance of a “vigorous, well organized” Social Apostolate** for fostering the growth of the social dimension of our ministry. That dimension, as Fr. Kolvenbach said, risks disappearing without such a Social Apostolate.

Accordingly, part of the questionnaire we drew up was aimed at gathering information about the situation of the social sector. We begin with that part.

The social sector is presently **one that is diminishing**, both in the number of Jesuits assigned to it and in its proximity to the poor. This is shown from the data arriving from almost all the Conferences. In fact, not one Conference mentions an increase in this regard. In many places of mission, traditional works that cannot be sustained are disappearing, and older Jesuits are not being replaced.

What is particularly disturbing is *our diminishing contact with the poor*, since we are well aware that this contact is a source of inspiration for our work and an important aspect of our credibility. How will we be able to promote justice if we are not standing alongside those who are excluded?

Besides these data which are common to the whole Society, we recognize that there are substantial differences among Provinces and Conferences:

- As regards **institutionalization of the social sector**, there is a wide range of options. Some Conferences have a good number of their own social works, but this is not generally the case. Some Provinces have no institutions belonging directly to the social sector. This is a situation significant for the Society as a whole.
- Most Provinces have designated **Social Delegates**, some of whom are assigned full-time to the social sector. Many others frequently have to combine this responsibility with other commitments related to different

apostolic sectors, with the result that their dynamism and capacity for response is diminished.

- Not many Provinces have an active **Social Commission**, whose role is to make discernment about the Society's activities in the social field and to seek new ways of being present there and responding more adequately to social problems.

At the same time, **the conviction of the Coordinators on this point is clear**: the existence of a certain institutionalization of the social sector, the presence of an active Social Delegate and a Province Social Commission that is doing serious work are all necessary elements for the strengthening of the social sector. They are basic instruments which enable a Province to respond in a focused and coordinated way to the questions of social justice that present themselves in a given territory. It is therefore lamentable that such is not the case in the whole of the Society.

In recent years we have learned that **political advocacy** and **creation of networks** to defend the most vulnerable are important strategies, future-oriented ways of promoting justice. In some places there have been successful experiences in lobbying with governments and with businesses, in raising social consciousness and in grassroots organizing. These are areas, however, which we must keep developing. These types of activities are moving us to greater collaboration, both within the Society and with other Church and social institutions.

We want to stress especially that the Global Ignatian Advocacy Network (GIAN) is engendering hope in the social sector, for it aims at strengthening both global collaboration and political advocacy, which are, as we said, the two main courses to be followed in the future.

The **spiritual dimension** is quite present in the Social Apostolate, and we must keep strengthening this aspect since the harsh realities we are working with require the best spiritual resources, which can help us make decisions with liberty, to stay with them, to deal with failures and to persevere despite weakness. At the same time, we still need to work hard on this dimension and, as some reports point out, to offer it more to the poor persons we serve.

In some places there is still evidence of **individualistic behaviour in social institutions**, a weakness that has afflicted the sector for some years. This makes continuity and succession difficult in the institutions affected. When a strong personal presence dominates a work, as happens frequently, the



sector as a whole is deprived of the rich contribution the work can make. It may shine, but it does so by itself. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the Social Apostolate **has learned to collaborate better**, and this is frequently the source of the sector's dynamism and strengthening locally.

The **participation of lay people** in our works is quite notable. The number of Jesuits has decreased, but the number of lay people committed to our works has increased substantially. These persons are a most valuable asset, showing a very high degree of enthusiasm for the Society's mission and its way of proceeding. For this reason, the Social Apostolate is nowadays understood to be a body composed of Jesuits and lay people who, inspired by a profound faith and grounded in Ignatian spirituality, promote justice in the places where they live and work.

Furthermore, there is extensive **collaboration with social and Church organizations** which defend the same causes as we do. Collaboration is essential in the Social Apostolate. For all these reasons we can say that this apostolate is presently touching the lives of many persons.

In most parts of the Society, the need for financing has led to a growing orientation toward project development. In some places the activities of institutions oscillate, depending on the unpredictable financing opportunities that arise. This causes a certain "project mentality." It is observed, nonetheless, that wherever there is good **strategic leadership, assisted by good planning**, the projects succeed in providing a medium- or long-term orientation, which is very necessary for accompanying the development of human communities.

### **The difficulty of involving young Jesuits in the Social Apostolate**

Most of the reports from the Conferences make reference to this problem, and there is need to point out certain facts in this regard:

The promotion of justice often appears as one of the important reasons for entering the novitiate, and it is a concern of young Jesuits in the early years of their incorporation into the Society. However, this motivation tends to diminish in the course of their formation, as compared to the attraction exercised by other apostolic sectors. The final result is that, when the formed Jesuit becomes apostolically active, he is less inclined to ask for work in the Social Apostolate.

We want to point out certain things that we Jesuits in the Social Apostolate should attend to in order to encourage greater involvement by our young companions. This does not mean that there may not be elements in the formation itself which alienate young Jesuits from the Social Apostolate, but we will treat here only of the deficiencies of the Social Apostolate as such.

The **rhetoric of the Social Apostolate** sometimes does not resonate well with the perspectives and expectations of the younger generations. Generally speaking, their sensitivity has experienced a move away from the structural toward closeness and contact, away from a more secular approach toward greater stress on confessional identity and spirituality, away from the prophetic toward the charitable. Sometimes we fail to connect with these new sensitivities and enter into dialogue with them. We need to cultivate new ways of speaking in order to harmonize with other ways of understanding the social reality and relating to it.

We are aware of the need to **accompany experiences of insertion** so that scholastics can understand better the causes of injustice in our world and its impact on people's lives. This accompaniment is also necessary so that they will understand the need to put up with the irrelevancy that results from uniting in solidarity with those who are irrelevant.

Jesuits in the Social Apostolate **need to be more present to those in formation**, doing so in a reasonable and programmed way, so that our young companions come to know and appreciate the Social Apostolate and have opportunities to become involved in it. This task involves approaching the formation communities, offering to accompany the young men in formation experiences, and helping them to deepen their spirituality through close relations with the very poor.

Finally, we recognize that the Social Apostolate does not always do a good job of **incorporating young Jesuits in the social institutions**. This deficiency is due to various factors, such as differing sensitivities, lack of preparation, or inadequate accompaniment. However, because of the serious consequences that follow whenever a companion leaves one of our institutions out of frustration, it is necessary to investigate in depth what actually happened.

## 2.3 Some challenges in promoting the justice dimension

We have already seen that the apostolic challenges to which the Society must respond today require the different apostolic sectors within a given geographical territory to work together.

This collaboration can be strengthened especially by the Provincial and Conference governments, which are able to define the role of each apostolic sector. To that end they need to exercise more leadership not only in the organizational but also in the apostolic sphere, so that every institution and every Jesuit is able to serve the mission better.

As the experience of a good number of Provinces shows, such leadership is exercised when provincial apostolic planning is carried out with the participation of all sectors, so that all contribute as best they can to the joint effort, independently of their economic or institutional importance. In fact, this is the only way the Social Apostolate can contribute to the corporate effort, since otherwise its small size as compared to the educational or pastoral sectors would render its contribution anecdotal. This way of proceeding is being followed in a number of Provinces and helps to create a true apostolic body by allowing a more integrated response to mission.

An especially strategic type of collaboration is that which establishes relations among institutions of higher education, on one side, and social centers and insertion communities, on the other. This type of collaboration can produce strategic analysis which will help us toward a more profound understanding and implementation of our mission.

Experience shows that, in Provinces where the Social Delegate has a clear planning role and the Social Apostolate is dynamic, the Society responds better to its mission of promoting a faith that does justice. We might well say that **the Social Apostolate offers something essential to the mission of the Society, something not easily replaced.**

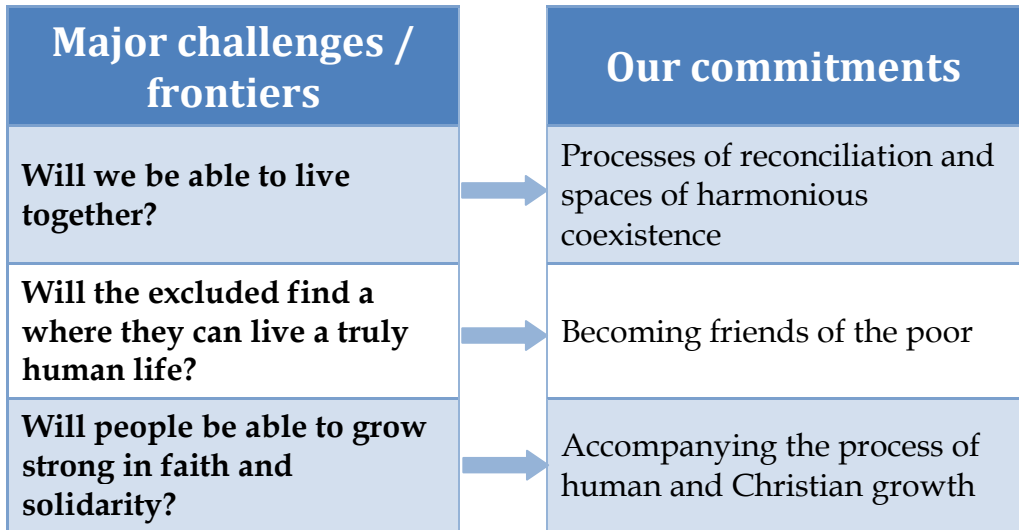
### 3. APOSTOLIC CHALLENGES TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

In this section we bring together the apostolic challenges which, from the understanding of the Social Apostolate, we perceive to be the most pressing for the Society today. We organize them around three questions, which we find especially challenging and cannot easily answer, and yet which call us forth to our mission:

- **Will we be able to live together?**, a question that arises as we behold the astonishing complexity of our societies, sometimes worrisome and at times even ominous;
- **Will the excluded find a place where they can live a truly human life?**, in the midst of the paradox of extraordinary abundance and dehumanizing poverty;
- **Will people be able to grow strong in faith and solidarity?**, when our offer of a faith that does justice meets strong resistance or simply indifference.

It is around these questions that we discover today the greatest apostolic challenges for the whole Society, the frontiers of our world to which we have been sent. These are certainly not the only challenges, but they are the ones which, *from the perspectives of the Social Apostolate*, we identify today with the greatest clarity.

The profoundly faith-based starting point, as we have tried to explain in the introduction, is the special place from which we speak. Consequently, the following pages are not merely a technical diagnosis of the world in which we live, nor do they propose a program. Rather, they constitute a passionate reading of history in the light of faith; they view history as seen by the eyes of a God who is present and active within it as the true force of human liberation, a God who calls us to collaborate with him.



### 3.1. Will we be able to live together?

Our societies show an increasing cultural diversity, which is an essential characteristic of our time. This diversity is due to many factors: the variety of *ethnic and national groups* which make up the societies, the *migrants* arriving from other countries and cultures and becoming part of the societies, and also the diverse *values and ways of life* of people. Diversity in itself is valuable but, depending upon social relationships, it can give rise to many tensions and conflicts.

In fact, some of the reports we received speak of the difficulty of the accompanying process when ethnic or cultural groups are at odds; they tell of the wounds which open up among diverse groups and of the need for reconciliation with those who are different, a need which exists in many countries where we are present. History and distrust weigh heavily on us, as do the images we project onto those who are different.

#### Sources of tension

Many of the ethnic groups, rural and urban groups, indigenous people and those of minority cultures whom we accompany feel **discriminated against and marginalized**. It is not just that they are poor – as they are in many cases

– but the very fact of their ethnic or cultural origin causes them to be excluded from the societies in which they live. In such cases, their human rights – civil, social, and cultural – are put at risk or severely attacked.

Furthermore, western culture, which is now dominant and propagates itself in a multiplicity of forms, exerts a strong **pressure on traditional cultures**, which feel threatened and disoriented. These traditional cultures may have either an ethnic or a religious substratum, or a combination of both. The pressure on them often makes them isolated and defensive, which can lead to further conflicts. Fundamentalisms of national or religious origin, as well as many forms of communalism<sup>5</sup> have arisen as a result.

Moreover, there are situations where **groups compete with one another for scarce resources** and where there is no effective state authority or the state is corrupt. Such situations often produce high levels of violence, and enemies are identified mainly by their ethnic character. That is the nature of many of the bloodiest conflicts we been close to in recent years, and these are the conflicts in greatest need of later reconciliation. These kinds of conflicts readily give rise to religious or nationalist fundamentalism as well as various forms of extremism.

Finally, some countries where we work have histories which have left **severe hostilities between ethnic or national communities**, hostilities which are neither recognized nor pardoned, even many years after the events. This gives rises to fractured societies with terribly distorted social relations. Such societies need profound processes of reconciliation and mutual recognition of the pain that has been provoked and experienced.

### **A profound longing for democracy**

One of the strongest longings that exists today among people is to be able to participate in the decision-making processes of their societies. It is a demand for *civic recognition* and *political and social participation*. As the recent revolutions in the Arab world have shown, the demand is for democracy -- people want decisions which affect all to be taken with the participation of all. This desire for democracy is also expressed in the struggles against

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Communalism’ in common parlance is considered as the force that generates crisis and conflict between two communities since these two communities [hence communal] are considered to be different and even antagonistic to each other.

corruption and political patronage, which produce situations of structural violence.

The demand for this democracy exists in the great majority of the communities that we accompany. These communities feel that they are marginalized, and they want to be recognized and heard.

This demand for greater democracy is found in the leadership of the social movements and of human rights organizations, which are becoming strong protagonists in many countries. Even when they do not put forward concrete, definite proposals, these movements and organizations evidence a strong desire to transform social reality and to create a participative space where everyone is included.

### **Promoting processes of reconciliation and spaces of harmonious coexistence**

The Society works in many parts of the world where marginalized communities are struggling to build a society in which they are duly recognized and can actively participate. The Society is also present in those “hot spots” where cultural or religious groups are in conflict or are in need of long processes of reconciliation.

What is more, in those societies which have gone through periods of caste or ethnic violence or guerrilla war, the split remaining in society is often also found in our own Jesuit communities and institutions. Harmonious coexistence among different groups is not just a social challenge; it is a challenge of everyday existence, which affects us all equally.

We feel a profound call to collaborate in processes of reconciliation among divided groups:

1. It is a call to create spaces where we can come together and acknowledge our shared humanity, so as to be able to develop together a harmonious coexistence. That is what we do, for example, in those countries where we create spaces where immigrants and the native population can meet. These spaces for dialogue and mutual recognition of our common humanity are created in parish settings, schools, social centers, etc.
2. It is also a call to participate in the long processes of peace and social reconciliation in which we often become involved; such processes require much patience and generosity. Their purpose is to restore the

relations that have been damaged by violence and to recognize all who have suffered as victims. These processes are also moments for discovering the value of pardon, which is profoundly healing but cannot be simply demanded. Rather it is primarily a gift of God for the victim, whom it frees from the destructive power of hate.

3. This call moves us from the necessary demands of Human Rights to the Christian dimension of peace and reconciliation in all our works.
4. Because of our religious character and because of the religious component in many contemporary conflicts, we are especially called to promote encounters with those of other faiths and to work, along with them, for a more just society. The dialogue with Islam appears particularly important in many places where the Society is present.

### **3.2. Will the excluded find a place where they can live a fully human life?**

The dominant economic model has demonstrated, above all in recent decades, its ability to produce great wealth. Nevertheless, those of us working in the Social Apostolate live and work with persons whose lives have not benefited from this production of wealth. They are persons who have been excluded from the basic wellbeing that should be shared among us all.

A widely held opinion tends to blame the excluded people themselves for their prostrate condition; it argues that they are that way because of their laziness or their lack of abilities. Those who accompany them, however, realize that that is not the case. Rather, the world is organized in such a way that these persons, as has been the case in most historical epochs, are the ones who have been excluded and inevitably end up losing.

#### **Dynamics of economic exclusion**

The great economic institutions of the world are primarily concerned with producing wealth. It is taken for granted that greater wealth at the global level will end up reaching and benefiting all the inhabitants of the planet.

This supposition is called into question by many of the communities we accompany, for they experience little of the human welfare that they also contribute to creating. The economic system is not designed for equitable



distribution of goods, so that the actual production of the goods often gives rise to growing inequality. Moreover, many national political entities give no thought to social measures which protect their weakest citizens. In these cases, the benefits of production end up in the hands of very few persons. Finally, governments often marginalize economically those who are already discriminated against culturally. When this happens, the affected people are doubly punished.

Furthermore, the economic crises keep recurring over time. We have seen a good number of them in recent decades, many of them severely affecting the emerging economies. The most recent crisis, which is still with us, had a major impact on most of the so-called developed countries. During periods of growth the profits remain mostly in the hands of investors, but during times of crisis it is majority of citizens who have had to pay for the bailouts. Paying off these liabilities means high levels of unemployment, tax increases, lowered salaries, cutbacks in social expenditures, etc. The human cost of these crises is very high for families and persons on the lowest rungs of the social ladder.

Economic exclusion does not correspond to a phenomenon that we might call “natural”; it is not something that is unavoidable; rather it is the result of a combination of forces or factors that can be and should be changed.

### **Serving those who are excluded**

The Social Apostolate is characterized by its accompaniment of many of the victims of these dynamics of exclusion. The reports mention the enormous variety of situations in which people working in the Social Apostolate meet these victims, and these situations are the spaces in which the apostolate for the most part is being carried out.

Almost all the reports mention the **poverty** and **socially precarious conditions of the persons** we serve. They also mention the suffering that results from accompanying these persons who never seem to escape the spiral of exclusion. Without doubt, the majority of those whom the Social Apostolate accompanies are poor, and poverty is the major concern of the Companions who work in that apostolate. On a daily basis we wonder how it is possible for these persons to escape from their situation of poverty. But our work is long-term, for we know that, despite the speed of the world in which we live, there is no immediate solution to the problems facing them.

Many reports also refer to communities affected by the **extraction of natural and mineral resources**. Many such communities are indigenous peoples who live on lands that contain many of these resources. As a result they are often despoiled of their riches, forcefully displaced or deprived of the power to decide about the future of the land they inhabit.

**The sufferings of groups affected by environmental degradation are also mentioned.** Such groups live in inhospitable, run-down landscapes, mostly in the countryside but also in cities, in enormous slums.

Reference is likewise made to the persons who have experienced **forced displacement**, as a result of violent conflicts, lack of food or development of mega-projects.

Finally, there is also constant reference to the **vulnerability of women**, a type of discrimination that cuts across all situations and increases their feeling of abandonment. The simple fact of being a woman marginalizes even further persons who are already suffering discrimination for being members of the groups to which they belong.

### **Becoming friends of the poor**

“Friendship with the poor makes us friends with the eternal king,” Ignatius tells us.<sup>6</sup> In the same tradition, Benedict XVI recently reminded us Jesuits that it is only “natural that one who wishes to be a true companion of Jesus genuinely shares his love for the poor.”<sup>7</sup>

The desire to become friends of the poor has many facets that constitute the specific challenges of this ministry, which is primarily a ministry of friendship:

- **Living with them, committing ourselves to them, entering their world**, taking on their struggles as our own, understanding the situations in which they live, seeing the world as they see it, letting ourselves be captivated by their values and their spirit of endurance, discovering their great dignity. All these challenge us to question the meaning of our own way of life. There cannot be true friendship without a true sharing of the things that give life meaning.

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<sup>6</sup> Letter of St. Ignatius Loyola to the Fathers and Brothers of Padua, Rome, 7 August 1547, no. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Allocution of Benedict XVI to GC 35, no. 8.

- **That friendship is a gift.** We say this not only because that is the experience of those who live with these persons, but above all because, in order to become their friends, we have to be accepted by them as friends and demonstrate our personal or institutional fidelity to them. They make us a gift of their friendship, and we are then left simply with the need to be grateful, for actually living alongside these persons can become a prayer of thanksgiving.
  - o This friendship is related to the **location of our communities**, their lifestyles, their capacity for hospitality and generosity, and their social relationships. There are lifestyles and communities which distance us from the excluded and their concerns, but there are also lifestyles and communities which place us by their side. In those cases we do not need to do much to draw close to their world, for it has become ours as well.
  - o This friendship is not only about accompaniment, but also about **service**. Serving means placing ourselves at their disposition, sharing what we are and what we have, respecting their dignity without imposing our own concerns and agendas, but rather discovering along with them what is best for their growth and development.
  - o Friendship is also about **defending them**. We have said already that the world in which we live has definite dynamics which produce exclusion and marginalization. We hope that someday it will be possible to eradicate them. To that end we need studies, research, analysis and proposals which will enable us to develop lobbying and advocacy skills for defending the excluded.
  - o Finally, as became clear to us at different moments in our Coordinators' meeting, **we need to be ready to experience and celebrate failure**, along with those who have so often experienced it. And that is very hard for us. That is why we need a very solid spirituality.

### **3.3. Will people be able to grow strong in faith and solidarity?**

Each one of us has found the greatest consolation of our lives in the faith which does justice. We have experienced how that means a life which is

“more gratifying, more undefiled and more suitable for the edification of our fellowmen.”<sup>8</sup> We have discovered that “by seeking first the Kingdom of God and his justice,” everything else is given us in addition (Mt 6,33). That is why every Jesuit desires to live in a way that expresses faith and solidarity with others. In fact, we might say that this is historically, as well as today, the great mission of the Society: to work at helping individuals and communities grow in their faith and in their commitment to justice and solidarity.

### **The difficulty of human growth**

Human growth has today become more complicated. In the fluid modernity in which we live, the “good life” is proposed to us in many ways. The possibilities available to each human being have increased tremendously, compared to those that existed in the past.

At the same time, as we said already, traditional cultures are experiencing strong erosive pressures, so that they have less and less influence on the younger generations. Throughout the world one hears about the profound change in values which societies are experiencing. Young people have many more ways of developing their lives than had earlier generations.

As a result of all this, it is now the concrete individual who must decide what values to espouse; it is the individual who must make key decisions about the course of his/her life; it is the individual who must define his/her own identity and future. This is happening, however, in conditions where the traditional reference points have become blurred and no longer serve as helpful beacons; rather they are just one more possibility, along with many others, making multiple offers of the “good life.” That is the reason why human growth is now such a difficult task, especially for those who find themselves in need of making key decisions about their lives, that is, for young people whom we also accompany in many parts of the world.

Today the options have increased enormously. **Accordingly, our own offer of faith and commitment to justice is seen as just one possible way, among many others, of leading a good life.** It is not, however, a simple option, as we know well. It requires human strength, a certain stability, and the ability to make a firm decision for life and to be fully committed to living according to it.

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<sup>8</sup> Formula of the Institute (1550), [5].

## **The beauty of this adventure**

The change of epoch in which we find ourselves, and which leaves us completely to ourselves as regards decisions about our own lives, has its own particular beauty, even if it makes life more complicated.

Individuals nowadays acquire a *high degree of autonomy*, which before they did not have. We are not now as tied as in the past to what earlier generations and traditional cultures required. As a result we find that we also have access to important benefits which before were unattainable. We can learn from many other persons and cultures.

The exercise of one's own liberty now acquires greater value, for the number of options has increased considerably. Persons who take their lives seriously must make a serious effort to evaluate the possibilities before deciding about their life project. For that reason, when they do decide, their decision has an extremely high value.

We have been forced to rely on ourselves at the moment of deciding about our life. This means that there are no longer truths which we must accept uncritically. Rather, we ourselves must *discover the truth by searching our inner spirit* and respond to it effectively. We should realize that this process in which we are involved is a marvelous adventure.

What we present here is a fact, a vital reality experienced by the great majority of people in the world today. It is experienced with particular immediacy by the young people we serve in our educational and pastoral ministries.

## **Accompanying the process of human and Christian growth**

In our Ignatian tradition we have a treasured instrument for accompanying these processes, namely, the Spiritual Exercises and their dynamics, which we try to incorporate into most of our ministries.

The Exercises are precisely what makes it possible for persons to look into the truth about themselves and to discover this truth in the compassionate regard God has for them. **Ignatian spirituality develops the person:** it matures decisions, strengthens generosity, increases personal knowledge, generates a capacity for perseverance and invokes gratitude as a motive for all we do. In this context, persons grow in their capacity to make decisions for themselves, responding generously to what God desires of them.

Today we have no better way to help persons to grow in faith and solidarity, that is, to grow in what is most human, than to offer them our Ignatian spirituality. Only with great difficulty will we find an instrument more suited to the times and more capable of helping people to grow.

Our greatest challenge certainly consists in **offering this Ignatian spirituality in a variety of forms** and incorporating it into all the processes of personal and communal growth that we promote. To that end we must delve deeper into its significance and its dynamics, and we must be creative in including it in all that we do.

Nevertheless, we also encounter important **obstacles**:

- One obstacle is how to offer the faith when all religious creeds are demeaned in some places. In some of our Conferences, the process of secularization has reached the point where many people think that to be a person of faith is equivalent to having renounced human maturity.
- Another obstacle is how to offer the faith when the Church and we ourselves, as part of it, have in many places suffered grave disrepute, which is linked to scandals and to the perception that the Church demands respect for human rights outside the Christian community while within the community it still practices discrimination.
- There is also the difficulty of inviting persons to the Christian faith in societies that are multi-religious or suffer from religious fundamentalism.
- Finally, we are faced with the joyful challenge of involving ourselves in the struggles of the poor without having recourse to moral imperatives or succumbing to rage wherever intolerable conditions are found. That is to say, we must seek ways to present this participation in the work for justice as a source of life and meaning, as a space where people can continue to respond out of gratitude. The difficulty here is very great, for this commitment often means falling into irrelevancy and failure; even if these are not experienced at first, as they may be later, when the response is sustained over time.

## 4. RESPONDING AS A UNITED APOSTOLIC BODY

We stated that there were three questions raised by our contemplation of the world, and around those questions we have tried to articulate what we consider to be the greatest challenges facing the Society today.

Nevertheless, out of our dialogue emerged an even greater desire, one which provides a context for the commitments already mentioned: it is the desire for a world that is more human and more worthy, a world that makes room for everybody and reflects the reality that we are a human family, something which until now has only been a hopeful aspiration.

### 4.1. “Another world is possible”

This is the great desire cherished by the disinherited peoples of our world, alongside whom we live and work: a world with another face, a world of justice and solidarity. The Father still hears “the cry of his people” (Ex 3, 7) and still is working to free them from their servitude. Our world is experiencing “birth pangs” (Rom 8, 22) as a new tomorrow is being born.

We have been called to participate in this dynamic of liberation sustained by the Father, who has the entire world in view and is not content with minor changes of a limited, fragmentary nature. Rather, he places all these changes in a wider horizon, where they acquire their full meaning.

#### Structural changes

We speak of changes in economic and political structures, for these are what basically determine the living conditions of the persons whom we accompany and serve. These include **national structures**: the legal order of a country, the way its economy is organized, the level of corruption, and the legal protection of citizens ... these are some of the key structures affecting the life of people. But there are also **international structures**; in fact, in this time of globalization, these structures have a strong influence on the nation-states, which often must cede sovereignty to other entities, such as multinational corporations or international institutions.

We still believe these changes are possible. Fortunately, our belief is shared by many social and ecclesial movements, which demand the changes in order to defend the common good. We believe this despite the extremely powerful lobbies of governments and transnational corporations, which never tire of scheming so that the concrete juridical and economic structures will serve their interests.

At the same time, we know that there is tremendous naiveté at work. In fact, these changes were considered quite possible in earlier decades, but now it seems that the reality has become less pliant and more entangled, so much so that some people claim that the changes are unattainable.

Nevertheless, the remarkable fact is that **the Society is working right now in a great many places**, not only for the cultural changes recommended by GC 34 (d. 3, no.10) – the mission we could consider “natural” – but also **for political changes**.

### Responses of the Society

There are some fields where the Society is already working and others where it is beginning to work. All these fields need high levels of collaboration among ourselves and with all persons “of good will.”

- We participate in many kinds of **action for advocacy** at national or local level on behalf of the poorest communities. Such action includes dialogue with the political authorities, lobbying in shareholders’ meetings of large companies, public protests, grassroots organizing, etc. Such initiatives take many forms and are carried out in many countries.
- Furthermore, the Society is striving to make its voice heard at the international level. The Jesuit Refugee Service has been effective in this way for years. The initiative of the Global Ignatian Advocacy Network (GIAN), which is being built up around five thematic issues,<sup>9</sup> is also an attempt to influence the many decisions made at the international level which affect the persons with whom we work.
- We seek also to **form a citizenry that is socially aware and compassionate**. Since many of the changes we need at the national and international levels depend on there being citizens who are able to

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<sup>9</sup> These thematic aspects are: Peace and human rights, migration, access to education, ecology, and management of natural and mineral resources.



demand the changes from their governments, the civic formation of those citizens is of vital importance.

Formation of citizens takes place in many ways, using schools, universities, pastoral centers, social works, etc. Taking place in spaces open to collaboration, formation can take various forms:

- Fostering *prophetic reading of the Gospel and training in the Church's social teaching* in the Christian communities which we accompany. In this way we will contribute to the formation of Christian communities which participate in the social debates about the common good of their societies.
  - Making known *our own positions on issues* by presenting profound, prophetic visions of social phenomena, which are based on rigorous research and analysis and which advocate bold responses to social problems. This commitment might involve, in some places, providing *training for excluded communities* so that they can express their own opinions and propose their own solutions to the problems they face.
  - A priority must be the *formation of Christian communities* which are motivated by faith and make clear social and political commitments. In all this it is necessary to make effective use of the *mass media*, which will allow wide diffusion of valuable ideas and knowledge.
- **Collaboration with movements of citizens and Church members** is also important. The task of advocacy is not one we can carry out alone. There are many other groups and communities who for a long time have been doing excellent advocacy work. This is an area where collaboration is quite necessary. It is necessary, firstly, because together we can achieve a far greater impact than if we act separately, and secondly, because the social agenda has already been set and normally we do not have enough strength to produce new initiatives by ourselves. We have much to learn from each other.

## 4.2. Ways of growing as an apostolic body

The challenges we have described in the previous section require of us greater coordination as a united body. The desire for such coordination appeared repeatedly in our discernment. In order to achieve it we need the following: increased collaboration among Provinces and among sectors; a

solid grounding in our Ignatian identity; generous openness to collaboration with other persons and institutions that have a sense of mission similar to our own, at least as regards essential aspects; and a planning process which, by keeping in mind our mission and the ways it has developed historically, will guide us in the creation of structures which respond effectively to the global challenges we face. We detail these needs in what follows.

### **The need for extensive collaboration**

The Society functions well locally, that is, when it is in direct contact with local people and familiar realities. That is its greatest strength at the current time. Nevertheless, the challenges we have spelled out require of us collaboration on a large scale, and that is where we experience many weaknesses.

First of all, it is a matter of **collaboration among apostolic sectors** which have traditionally worked independently of one another. It has now become necessary to promote collaboration among sectors *in specific geographic areas* so that the Society can respond in a coordinated and coherent fashion to the three apostolic challenges we have referred to. Furthermore, if we take seriously the requirement that our responses should include a clear public stance on issues, then that type of collaboration and joint development of responses is absolutely necessary. **The decisions we make will affect all of us.**

From the perspective of the Social Apostolate, we see clearly that this collaboration with other apostolic sectors is essential. The persons and works that constitute this apostolate are able to respond to the challenges facing them only by collaborating with the pastoral and educational ministries. Furthermore, in order to respond to the challenges, we most especially need the grounding for our positions that can be provided only by the intellectual apostolate, including theology.

This collaboration among sectors will require *adequate intersectoral structures*, which so far have not matured sufficiently. Such structures should allow our strategic planning for the future to be done in a more corporate fashion. They should also help us to achieve more than minimal levels of consensus among the sectors.

As we have said, these structures are needed in specific geographic areas, such as a city, a region, a Province, or a Conference. This type of strategic

leadership can be provided only if it is facilitated by Provincials and Conference Presidents.

It will also be necessary to develop **models of collaboration among sectors**, models to which all of us would have a chance to make our contribution in conditions of equality, for the same Spirit works in us all. We wonder how capable we will be of developing appropriate consensus, responses, positions, leadership and common alignments. We are aware that we suffer from serious weaknesses in this area of joint development of positions and responses.

Secondly, there is also the matter of **collaboration among Provinces and countries**. The ongoing development of Conferences has become a key instrument for this collaboration. The Conferences help us to transcend the traditional borders between Provinces and attain a more corporate understanding of the responsibilities we all share. Collaboration among the different Conferences is perhaps more difficult, especially since the particularities of each one incline them more toward autonomy.

This collaboration will require the **use of new technologies**, for which we should prepare ourselves, since this type of instrument will be needed for communication among ourselves as well as for the carrying out of our mission and the promotion of participation.

Finally, we want to point out that this type of collaboration will demand of us tremendous spiritual reserves. Great generosity will be required to leave our small worlds and contemplate reality with a broader horizon. We need to leave behind our individual concerns, trusting that together we will be better able to reach that *magis* to which we are called. For this we will need much humility, discernment and prayer in common.

### **Grounded in our Ignatian tradition**

We are at the service of the basically pluralist societies in which we live. Sent to work at the frontier, we are also missioned to dialogue and collaborate in the increased humanization of these societies. In many cases we are just one group among many that are cooperating - or competing - in the building up of these societies.

We may face a double temptation: on one hand, there is the temptation to dilute our particular identity by putting it aside in order to collaborate with

others; on the other, there is the temptation to be exclusive, working all by ourselves, apart from the others.

Once again we encounter the typically Ignatian tensions, wherein fecundity resides precisely in radicalizing the two opposed poles: we need to deepen our identity further in order to offer the best of our heritage as we in work in collaboration, but we also need to continue to collaborate, while seeking in the collaboration new dimensions of our own tradition.

The fact is that our Ignatian tradition is a rich treasure, highly relevant and capable of energizing persons and communities. It is the best we have to offer. We therefore need to **become more grounded in this spirituality**, especially as regards what it can contribute to leadership in our mission, to life in communities and groups, and to a shared search, through discernment, for solutions to the problems of our world.

### **Side by side with our collaborators**

We are accustomed to speaking of “our mission,” but in reality, as GC 34 (d. 2) says so well, it is the mission of Christ. That is, the mission is not ours in any private sense; rather it is a mission to which Christ calls us, along with many other persons and organizations. There are countless persons called to this mission, which goes far beyond any one of us taken individually.

This means **offering the mission and identity** we have received to the great number of our lay collaborators so that they can freely decide to join in this mission and make the vital commitment to it that goes beyond anything a work contract might entail. This commitment will not necessarily mean extra work; it basically means participating in the passion for the mission, in the desire for more faithful and more authentic responses, and in the building up of a body united through affection and cooperation.

This presupposes that sometimes – and in some places *often*, given the reduced number of Jesuits – the directors of our institutions will be lay persons. The Jesuits who work in the institutions should learn to work in a context where the leaders of our mission are persons whom we call “our collaborators.” This will provide us an opportunity to grow in our vocation of service and in our awareness that the totality of persons who today respond to our mission, both in work and in leadership, is composed of both Jesuits and lay people.

So that this will be possible, it will be necessary to train our collaborators to **participate in the processes of discernment-guided decision making** in our institutions. This will in turn mean a deepening of our **strategic leadership**, for while we will rely on the work, the opinions and the stances of our lay collaborators, we will need to stress also the **prophetic aspect of leadership**. There is no doubt that some Jesuits will find this type of participation difficult, for it will surely demand much of us. It will force us to evaluate our own discourses and our readiness to carry them into practice.

### **With strategic vision**

In the Society there are very many Jesuits who have a keen strategic vision of their particular work, a vision which has made them excel in their field. Now we need a **joint strategic vision** to respond to the challenges of the new frontiers in our world and to help us find meaning and guidance.

A strategic vision of this sort will allow us to **put our priorities in order**, discover their true meaning, and **prepare ourselves for the renunciations** that may be necessary along the way. Only such a vision will allow us to carry out the painful task of giving up works and initiatives which were valuable in the past but which perhaps no longer help us to work on the frontiers which we now identify as important.

We need a strategic vision that can be transformed into options, processes, and projects. It will help us to continue thinking about the Ignatian *magis* and about the best response we can give today.

This strategic vision requires certain key features:

- Capacity for thought about social reality that is rigorous, profound and interdisciplinary.
- Elaboration of diagnoses about social reality which allow us to take mature positions that we can ably defend.
- Implementation of our positions on issues in projects and activities in our different apostolic fields.
- Follow-up and evaluation of projects and activities.
- Apostolic discernment in common should guide the whole process.
- A constant affirmation of our identity, characterized by service of faith and promotion of justice.

Once again, the key for developing this strategic vision lies in our spiritual attitudes. We will need especially great freedom, what Ignatius called indifference, in order to discover God and collaborate with him as he works to heal this broken world.

*In short*, the Society is today called to go as a body to the frontiers where humanity suffers most, to serve the Crucified Who invites us to a renewed life. This is a challenge of generous disposition, open trust and deep hope.

## ANNEX 1

### Methodology used in elaborating this document

In January 2011 we sent the **Social Delegates of the all Provinces**<sup>10</sup> a survey regarding two major topics: **the situation of the dimension of justice today** and **the apostolic challenges to the Society**. The questionnaire to which we refer can be found in this same Annex 1. The wide reach and the variety of the surveys provided us with a large amount of valuable information.

The Social Coordinators then collated the answers to these questionnaires. Annex 2 can be consulted to see what the participation of each Provinces was like, according to Conferences. In all, some 66 Provinces and Regions took part. On the basis of these responses, **the Social Coordinators drew up** – sometimes with the help of a group, at other times individually – **a short report for their respective Conference or Assistancy**, as the case required. Accordingly, we received from each Conference a report on the two questions already referred to. These reports were then sent to all the Social Coordinators, so that they could read them and work on them individually before the May meeting.

Finally, in the annual meeting of Social Coordinators, in May 2011, we spent four days studying the reports, using a methodology that combined **personal reflection and communal discernment**, so as to produce this document which is a joint report. We are confident that it can help us to reflect together on the future of the Society and to be ever more enthusiastic in our mission.

The Coordinators sent to the Delegates the following questionnaire, to be answered according to their Province. The questionnaire included a good number of questions that did not have to be answered one by one; they were questions to be considered in order to answer properly about the issues raised:

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<sup>10</sup> The titles of those responsible for the Social Apostolate in Provinces, Regions, and Conferences may vary. In this text we will reserve the word **Coordinator** for those who coordinate at the level of the *Conferences*, and we will use the word **Delegate** for those who do so at the level of the *Provinces*.

a) Regarding the **most important apostolic challenges of the Society**<sup>11</sup> today:

- What present-day social phenomena (regional or international) call for an urgent response from the Society? These will surely be phenomena that affect our pastoral, educational, research and theological endeavors ... and obviously also our social endeavors.
- What apostolic responses should we offer today to these apostolic challenges? Or what characteristics should our responses have?
- On the other hand, what problems internal to the Society require a reaction on the part of the Society?

To respond to this first part, we should especially examine the areas of faith, justice, reconciliation and the frontiers.

b) Regarding the **dimension of justice**:

- How sensitive are *Jesuits* concerning our work for justice:
  - whether their sensitivity is growing or not,
  - whether it is in a healthy state,
  - what proportion of Jesuits are especially dedicated to this apostolate ...
- What is the situation like in our *communities*:
  - whether our community life reflects our commitment to justice,
  - whether the communities are seen by others to be working for a more just world,
  - whether there are communities of insertion, how many there are, and whether there is demand for them ...
- What is the situation of the *Social Sector*:
  - whether it exists as such in the Province,
  - indicate the institutions shaping the Sector and the scope of their activities.
  - indicate if there is a Social Commission in the Province and whether it is active, passive, really exists...

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to note here that we refer to “intersectoral,” and not simply “sectoral” challenges; we refer, that is, to challenges which affect all the Sectors, the totality of the Society, and which will therefore also find a more particular response from the Social Sector in which we find ourselves.



- how does the Social Sector function: actively, passively, actually?
- How do the *institutions which do not belong to the Social Sector* implement the justice dimension:
  - whether they have made a concern for justice an explicit part of their mission,
  - whether they have done so systematically,
  - whether they collaborate strategically with other institutions in regard to questions of justice...
- Are there intersectorial projects with the participation of the Social Sector: mention successful and non-successful experiences.

We asked the Delegates to respond the questions in a meeting with several Jesuits –and, if possible, some lay partners, also–, in an atmosphere of discernment.

**ANNEX 2**  
**Responses received from the Conferences**

Conferences	Number of Provincial responses	Percentage
Europe	19 responses	61%
Asia Pacific	8 responses	62%
Latin America/Caribbean	9 responses	50%
Africa	3 responses	30%
South Asia	18 responses	90%
US	9 responses	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66 responses</b>	<b>65%</b>

**ANNEX 3**  
**Proposed questions for personal prayer / reflection and community sharing**

1. Reading the text, what brings you feelings of consolation: enthusiasm, hope, light, joy...?
2. What brings you desolation: despair, distress..?
3. Where do those feelings come from?
4. Questions to be shared in our community:
  - How is the Society in your Province/Conference responding to our mission with regard to the dimension of justice?
  - Which do you think are the most important frontiers of the Society today?



