

**CHARACTERISTICS of
the SOCIAL APOSTOLATE of the SOCIETY OF JESUS**

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Dedicated

to our brothers in the social apostolate:

A.T. Thomas, S.J. (1951-1997), Hazaribag, India, who worked prophetically for the dignity, education, and land rights of the dalit people and gave his life so that they might have life.

Joakim Mtima Chisemphere, S.J. (1958-1997), Zambia-Malawi delegate to Naples, resonating with Gospel values of justice, who lived the Congress with great openness, zeal and consolation.

With God's grace may these *Characteristics* help us hear the cry of the poor as A.T. did and make good on Joakim's hope for the Jesuit social apostolate.

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Since the current version of *Characteristics* is a working draft, please feel free to photocopy it in part or whole for internal use, but please do *not* publish it in any form without the express permission of the Social Apostolate Secretary. A definitive edition of *Characteristics* is expected in early 2000.

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Preface

According to the *Constitutions* and *Complementary Norms*, the social apostolate flows from the overall mission of the Society of Jesus. Its specific goal "is to build, by means of every endeavour, a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common" (NC 298). This definition serves well to introduce the social apostolate which, in its great variety around the world, includes "social centres for research, publications and social action" and "direct social action for and with the poor" (NC 300).

In order to comprehend its mission and goal better, since mid-1995 the social apostolate has been undertaking a thorough process of reflection. The initial stimulus was provided by the following question:

How do you Jesuits of the social apostolate bring the justice of the Gospel to society and culture?

Responses out of the experience, prayer and discussion of Jesuits working in this field worldwide coalesced into the themes and exchanges of the Social Apostolate Congress at Naples in mid-1997 and have been distilled into the characteristics presented in this handbook.

Contents

We get an initial idea of the *Characteristics* by looking at the table of contents and noticing how the chapters and sections come together in different ways. From among several possible "itineraries," here are three suggestions:

The *first* itinerary follows the concentric groupings of the graphic beginning with the outer or most shaded area:

Foundations: The *fundamental orientation* is found in the faith which motivates us and the vision which draws us:

1. Who inspires us? and 5. Why do we hope?

All the *Characteristics* are permeated by the spirituality of St. Ignatius and the tradition of the Society of Jesus.

Framework: Our activities, along with how we live, where we are socially and spiritually inserted, and our way of proceeding, together form an organic whole:

2. What do we do and live? and 4. How do we proceed?

Wherever we are and whatever our involvement, we rely on constant reflection and dialogue in order to choose freely and well among the permanent tensions in the social apostolate.

Building blocks: In the central, least-shaded area — **3. How do we work?** — we find the many vital concerns of each Jesuit social project. These find expression by:

- a. **Reading the situation** in order to comprehend the changing surrounding reality;
- b. **Promoting the work**, that is, developing and sustaining our activities appropriately; and
- c. **Forming the apostolate** so that each member and each work is responsibly inserted in the sector, and so that the Society exercises its care for this ministry ...

A *second* itinerary follows the table of contents from top to bottom:

1. We begin with the inspiration or spirituality at the *origins* of the social apostolate.
2. This spirituality finds expression in an *integration* of basic living and working elements.
3. From the ministry thus embedded, we pass in review of its many features:
 - a. complementary *readings* of the situation;
 - b. *attention* to what enhances our service; and
 - c. *responsibility* for the social apostolate exercised by each work and by the Society.
4. Aware of the *complexity* of these many elements, we spell out our way of proceeding.
5. In all this we are drawn by a *vision* which we share with others, the Good News ...

A *third* itinerary begins in the central area of the graphic and follows the *Characteristics* as they slowly emerge out of what we do:

- 3b. We reflect on the concrete daily *work* in the particular Jesuit social project or centre we are involved in or know best.

Whatever the activity, it perforce includes

- 3a. *reading* the surrounding social reality, and
- 3c. *attending* to our Jesuit base.

Then making explicit what often remains in the background, we account for:

2. Our *life* as a whole and 4. our *way of proceeding*,
and finally for
1. the *faith* and 5. the *hope* that we share ...

Each chapter, standing on its own, is closely related to the others, and the ensemble expresses the characteristics of our social apostolate. This the *Preface* now goes on to explain, and then identifies those by whom and for whom the handbook has been written.

Ideas on characteristics

These *Characteristics* elaborate the purpose of the Jesuit social apostolate — *to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common, to bring the justice of the Gospel to society and culture* — and establish a common basis on which Jesuits and colleagues can meet, reflect and work more closely together in the mission entrusted them.

At the same time, the *Characteristics* offer our lay co-workers the full account which they deserve of the social apostolate to which they contribute. The 34th General Congregation decreed that every undertaking for which the Society of Jesus takes ultimate responsibility "must be guided by a clear

mission statement which outlines the purposes of the work and forms the basis for collaboration in it" (d.13, n.12), and the *Characteristics* serve as such a statement for the Jesuit social apostolate as a whole.

The *Characteristics* reflect the approach, attitudes, concerns and questions of the Jesuit social apostolate emerging from a patient process of reflection. At Naples we learned that our apostolic sector is characterized by our typical ways of looking at problems, by deeply held and widely shared convictions, by key questions which arise time and again, by on-going tensions running through all our works and Provinces.

Drawn up out of our experience and tradition, the *Characteristics* are neither description nor doctrine. They suggest "what should be" without legal pretence of regulating an apostolate which by essence needs to be flexible and responsive.

What makes them characteristic is that they are "questions which *cannot not* be asked" by anyone involved in this apostolate.

Our apostolate is made up of a very great variety of social, cultural, human and organizational situations. Social reality itself is complex, and our apostolate cannot ignore this complexity in its discussions and projects without betraying the reality into which the Lord Jesus sends us to live and serve. The *Characteristics* respect this variety and complexity, hopefully without themselves becoming too complicated.

Located midway between the Constitutions or General Congregations and the mission of each Province, the *Characteristics* make our common mission concrete in a particular apostolate. The purpose is not to separate our sector from other apostolates, nor is the intention to appropriate any idea or value exclusively or to deny it of other Jesuit ministries or of other groups. Our hope, rather, is to contribute to a more frank exchange and more fruitful collaboration.

We acknowledge how the *Characteristics* document for Jesuit education was a moment for greater collaboration among headmasters, principals and staff, and we hope that our co-workers can benefit from greater sharing by Jesuits about their spirituality and values through our own *Characteristics* document. (Naples Congress)

Like the book of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Characteristics* is meant to be *used* as a guide and stimulus to personal and especially group reflection. Every reader is urged to *keep a specific Jesuit social apostolate in mind* — the work, the individuals and communities associated with it, the people accompanied and served — and to ask if the reflection corresponds to this experience and sheds light on the situation. While reading or in discussion, one might continually be asking:

- How is this characteristic true of our social apostolate, that is, this specific project or centre, or the social sector in this Province?
- Do the main points affirmed help our social apostolate to reflect on its situation and challenges, and discover the next steps for renewal?

➤ *Putting the handbook to use (Appendix A)*

In dialogue

The *Characteristics*, authored by the Jesuits of the social sector, are primarily directed to members already involved in the sector:

- **Fellow Jesuits in the social sector**, so that we might develop our common notions, language and understanding. The basic purpose is to stimulate reflection on the state of each one's social effort — whether active, intellectual, developmental, organizational or pastoral in form — and those of the whole sector, with the hope of renewal.

- **Colleagues and co-workers with whom Jesuits work closely in the social field** are also the intended audience, for the sake of better, more open dialogue together, beginning with the "state" of our common work and going on to reflect on other aspects of the shared effort. **Future colleagues or co-workers** — men and women applying or volunteering for a position in a Jesuit social project — will find here a thorough introduction to our whole social mission.

The *Characteristics* handbook, though written by and for the social sector, is also affectionately and respectfully made available to others, beginning with:

- **Our fellow Jesuits and colleagues in other apostolic sectors and Jesuits in community:** we very much hope that improved comprehension and communication within the social sector will somehow lead to more fraternal dialogue and greater mutual understanding and the possibility of working together more closely.

- We are happy to share this ongoing reflection with **brother priests, brothers and sisters in religious life, fellow followers of Christ in the Church**. Our hope is that together we will better serve God's people, especially the poor, in culture and society. In addition, we hope to engage the generous dreams of **young people** considering a vocation to priesthood or religious life.

- The *Characteristics* handbook offers **young Jesuits** an opportunity to reflect on their social experiments or pastoral involvements, and hopes to engage their interest in the social apostolate as a regency or when planning special studies. It can also be used by **formatores** and scholasticate **professors** when refashioning the course of studies and when orienting their students.

- Last but also first, **Provincials** in their concern for the whole mission and for its different aspects, may find the section "Forming the apostolate" (3c.) of special relevance. The **Social Apostolate Initiative** of reflection and renewal, within which this handbook is an instrument, is meant to encourage each Province to respond corporately — with a vigorous social sector and also a vital social dimension — to the challenges of poverty, injustice and suffering encountered in contemporary society.

The poor, those who suffer, the excluded and the victims of injustice to whom God sends us, are present at the origins of the social apostolate, throughout its evolution, in its every form and effort, and at its goal. They are also at the origins, throughout the dynamic, and in the very purpose of the *Characteristics*. May the Lord who hears their cry also accept this our effort "to pursue a commitment to justice for the poor in an effective and profoundly Jesuit manner with the best possible comprehension of today's society and culture" (Father General at Naples).

1. *Who inspires us?* — Origins

Ignatius of Loyola, inspired by Jesus Christ and the saints in their poverty, exchanged his nobleman's cloak for the tunic of a beggar. Putting all his trust in God, he set out on a lifelong pilgrimage in which he always remained close to the poor and interiorly became ever more deeply poor himself. In Rome, his travels over, he worked with prostitutes and the homeless while serving as General.

For Ignatius, the neediest in Rome. Similarly the sick in the hospital of Trent for Laynez and Salmeron, the "savages" of New France for Jean de Brébeuf, the Africans deported as slaves to New Spain for Peter Claver, the fisherfolk of South India for Antonio Criminali. The early companions heard the cry of the poor in an entirely natural and entirely spiritual way.

"Our commitment to follow a poor Lord," Ignatius wrote to the Jesuits in Padua, "quite naturally makes us friends of the poor." The same love of Christ, said Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach at Naples in 1997, "impels us to be near people and with them in their daily life, like the first Jesuits to take once again to the streets of our cities, in order to read there in the very heart of people's existence the signs of the times, the signs of the Spirit's action."

The contemplation of Jesus who becomes a poor man in order to bring about the Kingdom of God and dies for this cause and is raised by the Father, inspires the first companions to follow as pilgrims the way of Jesus. And they decide to do so as a group, continually seeking the call of God to commit themselves wherever the Kingdom seems most threatened. (Latin America)

The natural and spiritual significance of the poor for Ignatius becomes for us, in a more complicated social context, the most compelling paradox and the origin of our social apostolate. *Miserable* are the poor: it is enough to hear their soundless cries of suffering, their strident shouts of protest. *Blessed* are the poor: it is enough to meditate on the Beatitudes and consult our own experience.

In a thousand scattered places where these words are being read, the "poor" are neither a sociological category nor a pious generalisation, but the name for the real persons and groups among whom we live, whose conditions we study, with whom we work

pastorally and socially or whom we foresee serving in future. In their eyes we see the warmth of care, the shine of dignity, the glow of hope, a twinkle of humour, a spark of protest. We also see the tears of sadness, fear and insecurity, the pain of rejection, the dullness of despair.

The encounter with real — not romanticised, politicised or spiritualised — poor people in their suffering and with real — not abstract or commercialized — poverty is shocking and dull, uninteresting, intolerable, unattractive and ungratifying. Logically it is to be avoided. Contact with the miserable poor in reality and with social reality as they live it is a real scandal. The abuse, misery, injustice they suffer cause us indignation because people whom we know and cherish are afflicted.

Contact with the blessed poor is also in reality a beatitude for us. The involvement with them leads to authenticity, freedom from attachment and greed, liberty to give and receive, and great happiness. To be with the poor in daily life and to remain near their suffering is to be questioned and continually

invited or nudged to go deeper and to change. Remaining with the suffering, feeling resourceless and powerless — there is truth here but not defeat. When suffering is assuaged, injustice set right or conflict overcome, then we are blessed to have been witnesses and perhaps of some help. "To live poverty as a grace in an egotistic world lacking a sense of responsibility for others, will place us joyfully with the Son and with those among whom the Son wants to be, the poor and neglected of the earth" (GC34, d.9, n.18).

This then is the paradoxical origin. Poverty and misery are never treated complacently in the Gospels. They are non-values which simply should not exist and which in no way express the will of the Creator. An engagement with the poor in reality, not just on television or in statistics, is an encounter with suffering and injustice but it is also an encounter with happiness, the original meaning of beatitude.

Faith in Christ drew many of us like Ignatius to encounter the poor whom we would otherwise naturally flee. Christ has us "hear the cry of the poor in a spiritual way" and so brings us to the poor. We recognise them as special "friends of the Lord," the same Lord whom we wish to follow. From them we often learn a great deal, especially about how to live as disciples of Christ.

This drawing near is born of our faith, our desire to follow Jesus poor and humble, our feeling that we are sinners yet called and sent to proclaim the good news to the poor. From a purely human perspective, without the love of Christ crucified, there is nothing good to see and everything to despise (Isaiah 53). Now we live the blessed scandal, the scandalous beatitude.

Contact with the poor gives a special colouring to our spirituality and our spirituality makes our action more radical — more rooted in itself and going more deeply to the roots of injustice. Drawing near to the poor and letting ourselves be touched by their suffering becomes a major source of our spirituality. Their weakness brings out the best there is in us and involving us emotionally in their life, makes us live that mixture of tenderness and indignation called "compassion."

In drawing near to the poor, we have received as a gift from the Church the ancient tradition of charity adapted during more than a century of insightful social teaching in the praxis of development and justice. *Rerum Novarum* (1891) alerted the Church to the exploitation and suffering of industrial workers and launched the tradition of social research and theological reflection in which we participate.

We have also received the gift of the Spiritual Exercises, the form and manner in which as Jesuits we live a lifelong relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Following the outline of the Exercises, here are examples of what we have learned:

Beginning with all people as God made us, within reality as made for us to care for: the enemy of human nature who waits in ambush, especially in situations of fragility, causing confusion, sorrow. Contemplating the Holy Trinity who hears, sees, knows and intervenes, inviting us to enlist in the mission of the Son ... and live as He did, in real poverty. The choice between two Standards always seems ever clearer. Following Him, watching and listening. Contemplating the Cross, both totally upset and peaceful; with His help, we experience the same feelings, anger, desolation, silence, sense of abandonment as He did, as the poor do. Seeing His crucified body so near, so like the bodies of those who most suffer, sometimes we even wish our own body to

approach the Cross, too. Then our souls, sometimes discouraged due to lack of visible results, are overjoyed with the Resurrection reinvigorating with the light and the power of hope. We pray to obtain love and aim for the greater glory of God and for the magis, the more.

We have also learned from the Constitutions and the General Congregations of the Society of Jesus. The "Instruction" (1949) of Father General Janssens called on Jesuits to humanise the crushing conditions of society, and "Decree 4" (1975) defined the struggle for justice as essential to the service of faith.

We find Jesus standing with the poor and hungry, the marginalised and oppressed, the women and orphans and refugees, the victims of AIDS and famine and so on. (Africa)

"From the witness of many companions who live with the poor, we know that, along with the hard lessons of poverty, such experiences bring the evangelical values of celebration, simplicity and hospitality which so often characterise the life of the poor" (GC34, d.9, n.15). The poor value feelings, family ties, the body, the basics. They have a knack of bringing us back to what is essential in life. They accept us as we are, poor in our own way, with our riches. They are a source of hope, a source of authenticity. They become our friends.

We try to make what we have acquired in our formation and experience, from the Church and all human fields, our studies of social and political reality, available to the poor, we work for and with them, contributing what we can without pretence of solving everything — or sometimes anything. We learn to accept and give simple things. Even when we seem to do no visible good, we stay. We become their friends.

In following Jesus according to the Gospel, it is characteristic for us to live our Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit tradition within a social involvement, a social commitment.

An incarnate spirituality has chosen Christ who identifies himself with the poor and wants to be welcomed and served in them, in order that the poor be respected and assisted. It is only on this basis that we can utter the beatitude of poverty (Father General at Naples).

What is also characteristic is to live our social commitment and insertion on the basis of the Ignatian spirituality of the Society. The very different situations in which we live "intersect" with the usual Jesuit manner of assuming and living our heritage, and our sector places its own accent on certain elements.

The lifelong commitment to follow Jesus, the daily friendship with the poor, can change a life, go on changing lives and generating community, sometimes visibly and often imperceptibly helping to make the world at once more human and more divine.

Questions

1. Does the paradox of poverty — both *miserable* and *blessed* are the poor — shed light on our personal vocation and commitment? Does it serve to explain some aspects of our social ministry or justice work? Do we experience it as a compelling paradox at the origin of our social apostolate?

2. We understand thoroughly that poverty is not natural; even if not always produced directly by human hands, "it is now within human power" to overcome it "but we do not really want to" (GC32, d.4, nn.20,27). How does this seem true of poverty in our area or country? In what sense is overcoming it a question of spirituality as well as economics or politics?

2. *What do we do and live?* — Basics

Ignatius and the first companions imagined that their future lay in pastoral work among pilgrims in Jerusalem; while waiting for passage to the Holy Land, they worked in hospitals and preached in the streets. But when the trip to Palestine proved impossible, they placed themselves at the disposal of the Pope.

Had Paul III entrusted them with a specific ministry, this would have given a certain identity and focus to the young group. Instead, the Pope accepted their desire to be always available for "*whatever* the present Roman Pontiff and others to come will wish to command us ... and *wherever* he may be pleased to send us" (*Formula* 1540).

No sooner had the first companions decided to remain together as friends in the Lord and a society of Jesus, than the assignments they accepted in obedience to the Holy Father or to Ignatius as General had the effect of dispersing them all over the globe. But the fact that Jesuits are available for mission *ad dispersionem*, far from diminishing the importance of community life, makes it all the more essential.

"What do we do and live?" forms an integral question about our social activity together with the community which sustains it. We are not known exclusively for our work, as some may think, but also by how we live. This conviction has not always been shared to the same degree by social apostolate Jesuits, but it is increasingly becoming central. There are three fundamental reasons: because effective work in the social apostolate requires the support which essentials of community provide; because community life is itself evangelically, apostolically and even socially effective; and because some of the most important values which we promote in our work become all the more credible when we live them in our communities. These values include care for one another, mutual help, right relationships, inclusion and simplicity — in one word: solidarity.

Much to do...

The work is central to the mission, and the poor and the struggle against poverty are central to the work.

When asked **"What do you do?"**, a full reply includes our spirituality in contact with the poor at the origins of our work:

It is a spirituality lived out within a social involvement, within a social commitment, following Jesus, according to the Gospel. This commitment is an experience which involves our whole life.... An incarnate spirituality has chosen Christ who identifies himself with the poor and wants to be welcomed and served in them, in order that the poor be respected and assisted (Father General at Naples).

We do not think of a spiritual core and a material shell, or a spiritual reality with a historical expression. We are neither just intellectually interested nor just personally involved, but both; neither

visitors passing by and taking a look, nor professionals who deal at arm's length, but friends and hard workers. ➤ *Origins (1.)*

A community founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine and for the propagation of the faith by the ministry of the word, by spiritual exercises and works of charity, and specifically by the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity. (Formula 1540)

From the beginning, the companions took up a great variety of works, among them "works of charity." The word "charity" and the expression "corporal works of mercy" (feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead — see Matthew 25:31-46) point to needs without specifying the response. More than 450 years later, the same concerns of charity and mercy, understood in terms of contemporary society, underpin the social apostolate. The adjective "social" points to all human coexistence as lived, as changing, as analysed or studied, and the expression "social apostolate" suggests concern for suffering, injustice and poverty. But again, no particular activity or approach is specified or ruled out.

Besides the expression "social apostolate," terms used in different parts of the Society include: social action, social ministries, *pastoral social*, social sector, *mission ouvrière*, social justice, *missione popolare*, *Quart monde* or Fourth World, and perhaps others. The different terms are not exact synonyms. "Social apostolate" is used here as a convenient generic name, but not as an attempt to impose a single name or uniform vocabulary.

To find out what the social apostolate means in the Society of Jesus today — how our spirituality is embodied in daily life, how the motivation gets expressed, how the mission is carried out in reality — a good starting point is to ask "**What do we do?**"

A written answer may be found in the *Catalogue of the Social Apostolate* arranged in four fascicles of some thirty pages each: *Africa and Asia*, *America*, *Europe*, and *Social Centres*. The *Catalogue*, first published in 1997, gives the name and purpose of each significant work of social action, and of each centre for social research, training or action.

The works can be broken down in various ways:

- **according to type of injustice, suffering, exclusion or exploitation:** abandoned children; child prostitution; oppression of women; abortion; forcible displacement and exclusion of refugees; unemployment and underemployment; rural and urban poverty; problems of the elderly; addiction to alcohol or drugs; HIV/AIDS
- **according to people served:** ethnic or racial minority like aboriginal, indigenous or tribal people, dalits, gypsies or travellers; civil groups and associations; trade unions and other movements
- **according to type of activity or service:** social or socio-cultural centres for research, reflection or action; centres for training or rehabilitation; health; housing; legal aid; programmes to welcome foreigners or marginalised people

- **according to role or identity:** social scientist; worker priest; prison chaplain; social worker; community organizer; Jesuit accompanying a social movement or marginalised groups
- **according to purpose:** development; solidarity; protection of the environment; promotion of human rights or the rights of peoples
- **according to approach or technique or institutional form:** teaching social analysis; literacy training or popular education; pedagogy of justice and solidarity; community or movement organising; advocacy of policy change; formation of leaders; formation of volunteers
- **according to level:** from the most grass-roots to the most global, from local through regional and national to whole continents, world organisations, the United Nations

The *Catalogue* provides an overview of the social efforts in each Province and, cumulatively, in each Assistancy. In certain places or regions, Jesuits have opted to accompany particular peoples and made a long-term commitment, for example, with native people in the Americas, with aboriginals in Australia, with dalits and tribals in India. Overall, the *Catalogue* gives an impression of great scope, variety and plurality, which may seem bewildering at first. No one issue, group, approach or type of work characterises what Jesuits do socially.

Without doubt, great issues like unemployment, housing, racism and global warming are urgent and worldwide. Each has a domino effect on many other issues, and a whole lifetime can worthily be dedicated to any one. It may be tempting — with a view to giving the social apostolate focus, facilitating cooperation and strengthening its identity — to choose one of these or a similar issue as *the* social priority. But the Society resists making such an option. The evident benefits are outweighed by the restrictive effect it would have on our availability, mobility (not just geographical but especially socio-cultural) and creativity in response to changing needs.

We are concerned with integral human development, dignity, rights, someone to listen to the lost, someone to speak for the silent, offering access and equity. We are trying to accomplish the promotion of a human environment of justice, freedom and charity where people's self-initiated efforts can grow and find direction. (East Asia)

In times of crisis (conflicts, war), we give special witness to our integration among the victims of injustice by staying in physical solidarity with them in the midst of instability and insecurity. (Africa)

No one approach has been favoured, much less imposed, but certain lines of development can nevertheless be traced in the fascinating history of the social apostolate ("From *Rerum Novarum* to Decree 4," *PJ* 66, February 1997). Today under very rapidly changing circumstances, the challenge is to choose well from among many different possible forms (more or less institutional), ways and means (more or less academic or professional or popular), styles of cooperation and techniques of communication.

Each particular work is important in its origins, development, purpose, service. The many works are not just a haphazard collection but have something important in common and find their place

together in the social sector and within the mission of the Province and the Society. The fact that projects of great variety together constitute a sector, small or large, depending on the history and circumstances of the Province, is a characteristic of the social apostolate.

➤ *The Jesuit Body (3.10)*

Community life

Community life is characterised by a project in which the personal and the ecclesial mission, personal relations, the style of life, communication with others, common prayer, and insertion in the human context are all taken into account. Recent General Congregations have encouraged Jesuits to live up to high ideals of community life — for example, GC34:

- "Our manner of life personally and in communities has to be simple, hospitable, and open" (d.9, n.8).
- "When community life is strong in its support and truthful in its challenge, then Jesuits are inspired through their chastity to make visible the God who labours to help others" (d.8, n.21).
- "Some insertion in the world of the poor should therefore be part of the life of every Jesuit. Our communities should be located among ordinary people wherever possible" (d.3, n.17).

Such appeals can inspire and motivate, but the difficulty in living them can also discourage. With the recognition that community is an involved and delicate topic, the following reflections suggest how community life might come a bit closer to the ideals. Please keep an existing community in mind, its members (the members may include other religious or lay people) and neighbours, its place in the Church and the world.

Just as the previous discussion laid out the great variety of things done in the social apostolate, here we classify the various living-situations, beginning **according to Jesuit occupations**:

- Jesuits involved in the same project (grass-roots or development or social research) live together in one community, which may be located in the same premises as the work;
- several Jesuits in one community are all involved in the social apostolate, but in various works or projects;
- several Jesuits of one community are involved in the social and other sectors, and have differing contacts with the world of poverty.

Another grouping is **according to contact with the poor**:

- Jesuits work for the poor (social research, teaching, writing, advocacy) and live in a non-poor area;
- the community members work with the poor and live elsewhere;
- Jesuits live among the poor with some social or pastoral involvement, and work or study elsewhere;
- an individual Jesuit lives on his own among the poor and is connected with a nearby Jesuit community;
- Jesuits work with and live among the poor in full insertion: the most visible, coherent and credible form of community for the social apostolate.

This typology, probably not a complete one, serves to situate the **important features of community life** which follow (not in order of priority). They are too well known to be spelled out, but they deserve repeated attention to see how they can be fostered:

- fellowship, meals, Eucharist and common prayer, recreation, rest, informal exchange of every kind, brotherhood and friendship;
- sensitivity to problems of injustice both nearby and on a larger scale, and support for those who struggle for justice;
- readiness to stand in solidarity with neighbours and local groups;
- concern for one another's work and for the mission of the whole community;
- the Spiritual Exercises each year, personal prayer, the respectful sharing of faith and spiritual experience;
- honest communication and supportive relationships, by twos and as a group, with mutual support and challenge, including support for the superior in his role;
- appreciation for the quality and simplicity of life together and willingness to contribute;
- regular meetings on community life itself, discernment of significant community issues as well as apostolic reflection in common;
- bonds with the Church: the parish, the diocese, religious congregations and lay movements; • relationships with other Jesuit communities and with the Province.

Are these features generally present? Probably yes, in varying proportions and with an increasing desire to live a community life marked by such points. To consider them commonplace or routine would be a mistake; on the contrary, creativity and energy need to be invested if we are to have, for example, effective community meetings, meaningful common prayer, a simplified lifestyle. A great help is for each group to examine its community life annually, identify the features to be improved and draw up a feasible plan or project.

➤ *Planning and Evaluation (3.8)*

The features of community also depend on material facts. Do the location, size and style of our dwelling help to connect the community with the neighbourhood and make it accessible to poor people? What effect does the interior design have on the way we live together and relate with one another, on the hospitality we offer and the image we project? How does an open and hospitable dwelling also allow for some privacy? When starting a new community, considering a change of location, or planning an expansion, serious discernment should precede the major choices involved. (Similar questions may be asked about the location and architecture of buildings that house our social centres and projects.)

Practically the antithesis of community is the *individualism* typical of many cultures, including that of the Society. Each one's life, work, spirituality may become "none of your business" to the others. Despite this powerful tendency, good community is a real encouragement to put and keep our life in common. There may be room for what used to be called "fraternal correction" whereby, when someone is behaving irresponsibly or endangering himself, others make the effort to help him see what is amiss and remedy it.

Community becomes the locus for *apostolic reflection*, especially when the members are involved in various ministries rather than all in the same project. Ideally, each member should feel encouraged to speak about his own involvement and, when facing an important choice (e.g. with whom to work, whether to change projects), to put the question "on the table."

For most of us and despite our failings, this communion of life with the poor forms a joyful part of our daily life, to a greater or lesser extent and since quite a long time. "To be with" means situating oneself at the same level of the people, without any particular power or authority, to share situations of exclusion and marginalisation, if these arise. (Europe)

On this journey in proximity to the poor, our Jesuit community is important when it offers us support and solidarity, when it makes us feel part of the body of the Society, when the witness of our brothers is a source of inspiration. When such solidarity or support is not offered, this causes great difficulty and suffering. (Naples Congress)

Jesuit common life sustains and nourishes our faith, desires and commitments, and these — how we live, how we pray — influence and sustain our work of social apostolate. What we do returns to enrich common life as subject of prayer, reflection, occasional discernment. Our community becomes a living parable of hope and solidarity for neighbours, colleagues and visitors. Hospitality gives such testimony if the poor are welcome at our table, and if young men considering their future calling in life are welcome to "come and see" how we live, what we do, who we are. Community therefore is for mission and is mission, and the renewal of community helps us to reconceive what we are doing in the social apostolate.

Insertion

Insertion among the poor, particularly important for the social apostolate, is an attractive but complicated subject. Few of us are called to live like the poor or to exercise a principal ministry of simple presence, yet insertion is one of the topics most often and insistently raised at the Naples Congress.

To be inserted means to have continuous prolonged contact with the poor — those who suffer misery, injustices, violent conflict, exclusion — and to enter into real relationship with those whom we accompany and serve and whose concerns we research. Insertion among the poor does not take the same form for each work, each community, each Jesuit. It may occur among those with whom we live or with whom we work. But in all these forms, insertion is characteristic of the social apostolate.

Insertion means entering with the poor into a personal and cultural relationship so real that trust can develop. Seeing things their way and taking on their viewpoint shapes how we see, understand and interpret many things, from details of daily life to large issues and transcendent values. Insertion marks our reading both of the Gospel and of social reality. Insertion helps us resist becoming too comfortable and may mean going without some comforts or even a few basics. Insertion is a testimony and an encouragement to others.

➤ *Cultural Reading (3.2)*

Whether in the urban set up or in the rural area, our preference should always go to a poor neighbourhood so that our desire to follow Christ poor can express itself in the daily solidarity with the poor, becoming their natural companions and friends in the Lord. (Father General, 1997)

Both living among the poor and working with them is the ideal. In the *mission ouvrière*, for example, Jesuits took the plunge into working-class milieux from which the Church had become largely absent. Truly inserted communities and works can serve to anchor both the faith lived and the reality grasped by the entire social sector. Once Jesuits are deeply there in the world of the poor, living and listening and learning, new initiatives and projects may emerge.

"What do we do and live?" is a single question, and our overall reply in this chapter may be encapsulated in a triple friendship — friends of the Lord, friends with the poor, friends in the Lord. When our friends are in need, as GC34 rightly says (d.2, n.9), we cannot turn aside. We want to do what we can to address their many crying needs.

Questions

1. Reading the ideals expressed in GC34 or in Father General's 1998 letter on community life in relation to the Jesuit community you are familiar with, which are the most appropriate values to strive for? To what extent are they being realized? How does this common life enhance the work of those living in the community?
2. How are those involved in the social apostolate, inserted among the poor? Is this insertion significant for their social ministry? Is it significant for Jesuit community life and in the lives of other staff-members? Does it seem to say something to others?
3. Thinking of a specific social effort in the Province (whether grass-roots, or organizational, or intellectual), how may we describe the social change it is working for? Is there an explicit effort to transform culture as well as structures? In what senses would we call it apostolic or evangelical?

3.1 Socio-Cultural Analysis

The deep impulse to understand our social context flows from several sources:

- Friendship with the poor causes us to ask, "Why must they suffer?" And if injustices accompany or cause suffering we also ask, "Why the injustice?"
- The Jesuit tradition of the *magis* or greater service has us put the best methods and understanding we have at the disposal of the poor.
- Seeing sin at work individually and in structural ways spurs us to look for the deepest roots of injustice and to place our hope in the transforming mercy and justice of God's kingdom.

The impulse to analyse and understand may seem to conflict with a commitment to action. Urgent needs impel us to respond even when it is not fully clear how best to do so. Real engagement with others means being vulnerable and not in control, responding without having all the answers. Therefore analysis should not paralyse our social action; neither should it be a refuge from responsibility. We do not need to know everything before acting.

On the other hand our action risks remaining blinkered or blind unless it is guided by firm understanding. Thus the very responsibility to respond as best we can to people's needs requires that we analyse the context and dynamics of their situation. It is also true that our understanding powerfully shapes our action and choices so that even the most concrete response presupposes an analysis. So it is vital to reflect with care and discernment about the authenticity of our analysis.

Types of Socio-Cultural Analysis

Different though complementary types of socio-cultural analysis, each with its own link to social action, might usefully be identified:

- **"Academic"**: This tries to examine social and cultural problems through different interpretive frameworks provided by the human and social sciences. Such analysis must respect the criteria of evidence and coherence established by the interpretive framework being used. The work is primarily one of study, reflection, research and writing. Such analysis can be fairly distant from social action. Its results, however, should inform our action, which can benefit from the systematic effort made by "academic" analysis to be as objective as possible.
- **"Policy and Planning"**: Two kinds of analysis come under this heading. The first involves preparing dossiers on particular issues of concern in order to bring about specific changes at a political or structural level. This type of analysis focuses on supporting action to campaign for change. It is motivated by the scandal of injustice and aims to persuade those who can bring about change. It also contests and opposes views that condone on-going injustice and accepts the need to propose practical solutions or ways forward. The second kind of analysis is meant for planning and prioritising: e.g, a refuge for the homeless needs better to understand the phenomenon of homelessness so as to decide what type of service to extend or phase out.

- **"Social awareness":** This emerges from the base. It is a patient listening to and dialogue with the marginalised about their culture, the structures of injustice they experience, the kind of society they hope for. This type of analysis is also educational. It shapes and enhances culture in a process of learning together. It is also mobilising as it enables the marginalised in their struggle to articulate their needs and to work for more justice.

Policy-oriented analysis that seeks to bring about a specific change in social policy may be somewhat resistant to the many questions raised and qualifications added by an academic point of view. One might fear that the academic approach would weaken the "political" punch of the policy-led analysis. Academic analysis, on the other hand, can have a strong policy impact by setting the dominant paradigm, for good or ill, and may cause harm if it endows harmful policies with an undeserved academic prestige.

Academic analysis may also seem opposed to the type used in popular education and organising. The academic can easily dominate or dismiss the insight and searching questions posed at the community level. There is also a tension between the legitimate desire to protest against suffering at the popular level and the legitimate concern at the academic level to establish distance and objectivity which will convince even those who are insensitive to the injustice. Similar tensions exist between analysis for policy and analysis for awareness. Policy-based analysis can become quite remote from the day-to-day dimensions of poverty and injustice and get caught up in bureaucracy and compromise in the search for solutions that work. On the other hand, awareness-raising can get stuck in a repetitious kind of protest unless it focuses on possible real changes.

Characteristics of our Socio-Cultural Analysis

Our starting point: In the social apostolate our starting point is Christian compassion, which is more than merely sympathetic feeling. It comes from real listening and commitment to those who suffer. Compassion then is also the starting point for our socio-cultural analysis. This is not lack of objectivity, for true compassion is open to the truth and is not prejudiced. Moreover, no socio-cultural analysis has a neutral standpoint. We always start from some existential or academic position and each opens up a limited horizon.

Academic rigour, then, is absolutely indispensable. It comes as a second step that helps bring realism and solidity to an analysis that is already born of the "shock" of injustice. Academic objectivity also ensures that those who do not share our option can understand the results of our reflection. Some Jesuits live a fully valid expression of their vocation working in the social sciences as teachers, writers and researchers within the intellectual apostolate.

Multiple academic frameworks can be used to interpret even the simplest concrete human situation: psychological, economic, anthropological, sociological, ethnological, cultural, political, historical, philosophical, religious, theological; the list is an open one. Each of these highlights different complementary aspects of what is going on in a single concrete situation. They are like so many lenses, each providing a certain hue and definition. Each perspective rests on its own set of assumptions and value judgements both in the models or categories used and in the way they are applied. Yet even if one trained all these lenses on a given situation, there would always be more to be said. Human life and human freedom are ultimately mysterious.

Social scientific methods are extremely useful in identifying the most important objective facets of a problem, culture, or social structure. They should be used with a care that *respects the integrity of the method by acknowledging and respecting its limits*. Academic frameworks are frequently applied inappropriately to areas of life that they do not adequately account for — for example, market economics applied to questions of culture.

We need to develop a new way of thinking which has to be both critical and creative, confronting our reality in order to illuminate it, to interpret it and also to change it. In what we are and what we do, we have to think globally because we are more and more interdependent, and also to act locally for the transformation of culture and society. (Europe)

Intellectual honesty about the limits of an analytical framework helps avoid ideological misapplication because it acknowledges our limited perspective, belonging as we do to one period in history, with limited intellect and mixed motivations. We must let go of some of our opinions when we subject them to thorough examination and the available evidence. It takes humility to engage in a real search for understanding of our context. Similarly, real sensitivity to the suffering of the poor humbles us and makes us sensitive to the consequences of our analysis for the weakest. It is an ethical limitation on academic analysis that such consequences only emerge slowly after implementation.

In the social apostolate, then, the analysis of our context is characterised by compassion for those who suffer, the quality of our use of different academic frameworks, and the humility with which we acknowledge their limits.

Attention to the consequences of analysis for action: Analysis can paralyse, particularly when split by a dualism between the micro level and the macro level of socio-cultural structures. If analysis is to inform our action, then it must address the spaces of freedom for action. Many persons and groups find it hard to find any space for free action at the macro level. The situation seems too vast and complex, and socio-cultural analysis at this level may induce fatalism. So it is vital to attend to the middle structural and cultural level — the *meso level*. This meso level is where we find the structures and culture of a city neighbourhood or rural village. If we attend to the meso as well as macro and micro levels, we might identify spaces of freedom for social action.

Socio-cultural analysis can bring about good effects but have negative ones as well. If it gives a veneer of rationality to prejudice, intolerance or violence, the consequences can be tragic. Academic analysis can apparently legitimize structures that bring about injustice with arguments that purport to meet the academic requirements. Policy-led analysis can remain at the level of denunciation or propose unworkable policies. Analysis for social awareness can inflame passions or inflate expectations and then, when these are frustrated, provoke disillusion or violence.

On the other hand, academic analysis can deeply challenge unjust social structures by analysing them with clarity and demonstrating their incoherence. Policy-driven research can effectively support movement for change, and engage policy- and decision-makers in a dialogue that respectfully challenges their fundamental presuppositions. Social awareness analysis can appreciate the culture and dignity of marginalised groups. Dialogue is required in conducting socio-cultural analysis so as to maximize the probability of positive effects and safeguard against negative consequences.

Socio-cultural analysis conducted in dialogue: The first safeguard is to *carry out analysis in relationship with those who will be affected by it*. Their feedback is a key test of the truth of the analysis. It is all too easy to propose solutions from the outside and miss critical factors in the context that make the proposed solution totally inappropriate.

An important way to connect our analysis with those affected is collaboration within the social apostolate between those who work at the level of academic reflection and those who work on the front line. Those taken up with the work of analysis can only be involved to a limited degree with front-line work among the poor. Yet the analysis is an integral part of the social apostolate because it is directed towards the long-term alleviation of the suffering of the poor and those on the margins.

➤ *Cooperation and Networking (3.7)*

In this light, it is crucial to foster real dialogue between those of us in the social or university apostolates who do social analysis and those on the front line. Moreover, there are conditions for such dialogue: knowing the limits of the social sciences, being willing to learn from each other, not being overly critical at first, seeking to know why others say what they say.

The second safeguard is to *conduct our socio-cultural analysis in a team*, where the limitations of one person's analysis or theory is subjected to the group's questioning and exploration of the issue. Since the intellectual formation required for competence often induces an individualist style of working, academically-formed people can find the process of teamwork quite challenging.

A Christian awareness of the world's suffering: We are acting out of Christian awareness when we analyse honestly, openly, sensitively; when we recognise the bias that can distort our analysis and blind us to the harm it causes; when we are open to the truth, even if it means admitting to being mistaken; when we read the signs of the times; when we are aware that our contexts (social, cultural, economic, political) are fundamentally affected by the drama of sin and salvation; when we distinguish

between those things in our world and environment that lead to death and those that lead to life; and when we recognise the signs of hope in places where God, already at work, awaits us.

**We do not want our analysis to be a merely academic exercise. Born from our contact with life wherever we find it most threatened, the analysis seeks to defend life in concrete action. Our analysis is oriented not only to enrich our understanding of human life in its social dimensions, but also to propose and, insofar as possible, to create forms of social coexistence more respectful of the dignity of every man and woman.
(Latin America)**

The *Characteristics* now offer four "readings" of the contemporary situation: cultural, economic, political and religious. They are neither theory about culture/economics/politics/religion nor complete exposés of each field. Rather, they try to show the *relevance* of each context and its *connections* with our work for justice.

Questions

1. Thinking about the Jesuit work of social analysis you are most familiar with, which category best describes it — academic, policy and planning, or social awareness? Does it have the strengths of this particular form of analysis that are identified here?
2. How does the ideal of Christian compassion seem to motivate or influence our social analysis, and does the analysis seem to generate feelings of compassion and lead to some action?
3. What efforts are made to ensure that our work of social analysis is conducted in dialogue with the poor, with others doing work of different kinds? Does the dialogue seem fruitful? Are there notable short-comings in the way the analysis is done?

3.2 Cultural Reading

"If we have the patience and the humility and the courage to walk with the poor," noted Decree 4 of GC32, "we will learn from what they have to teach us what we can do to help them" (n.50). This patient, humble and courageous "walking with" and "insertion" influence how we perceive and interpret the surrounding context of the social apostolate. The first "reading," which provides a viewpoint or perspective on the others, is the cultural one.

Decree 4 identified well the human or cultural roots of social reality: "The structures of society are among the principal formative influences in our world, *shaping people's ideas and feelings, shaping their most intimate desires and aspirations*; in a word, shaping mankind itself" (n.40, emphasis added).

Twenty years later, GC34 expressed our mission in terms of evangelisation, culture, dialogue and the promotion of justice (Decrees 2-5), where *culture* means "the way in which a group of people live, think, feel, organize themselves, celebrate and share life. In every culture, there are underlying systems of values, meanings and views of the world, which are expressed, visibly, in language, gestures, symbols, rituals and styles" (d.4, note 1).

But can *culture* and *dialogue* simply be added to faith and justice as understood since 1975? Are these categories simply grafted onto existing approaches of the social apostolate and its traditional social analysis? Clearly not. Then how are they to be integrated into our work?

What seems required is to pay a new kind of attention: to learn — from the poor, from personal experience, from social science — to perceive culture until eventually this awareness becomes habitual and colours our prayer, analysis, interpretation, planning and action.

Learning to cross the river

"To cross the river where the stones are" is a graphic image of finding culture. Such crossing does not require the engineering concepts needed for building a bridge, nor would these be useful. What's needed is rather an experiential knowledge born of watching where the people ford and have always forded. What's needed is to learn what thousands of crossings have taught them, where to go without slipping and falling in. This may not be the only nor even the best place to cross: there may be other stones not discovered yet. For the time being, though, let's stay on the bank to watch and learn where the stones are. One day, we make a first crossing, then a second, then another and eventually we find out about the real boulders deep under the water. At the same time, we recognise that culture is as much the river as the stones.

Perhaps impatient to get a new bridge built as a step towards other changes, the social apostolate used to think differently. But with the great adjustments after 1989 and with GC34's insistence on culture and dialogue, we realise that social analysis and social action often remained on the surface, without risking a dive to look for the real stones of culture under water. Social movements did not usually pause to ask if the changes would meet people's real needs, correspond to their aspirations, help them reach their real goals, coincide with their deeper faith and feelings, and so on.

The stones of culture, even when concretely experienced, do not necessarily submit to rational analysis using our customary sociological, economic or political tools. What we can do is cross the river where the stones are, acquire the habit of perceiving them even if they are partially or fully beneath the surface, describe them with care and reflect on their significance for justice.

Culture is something to taste, touch and sense, not only to see and analyse. We human beings are not *homo economicus* limited to market exchanges and the drive to maximise advantage in every human exchange, nor exclusively a "political animal", nor simply a private individual. Any analysis (economic, sociological, psychological) risks the distortion and reduction of culture to rational

In the Esplugues neighbourhood of Barcelona, the older people (above 50 years old) use the services of doctors provided by Social Security but, when these seem not to help, the people go to healers. The healers charge exorbitant fees but their mix of prayers, rituals, remedies and massages does occasionally bring about a cure, a result not obtained from the Social Security doctors. Consequently, the people are unlikely to support demands for a new Primary Health Care Centre (since they have little confidence in the effectiveness of the doctors). They find it difficult to understand our preaching against "superstition" (because for them it is true and real, not superstitious). Just as we question their confidence in the healers, they relativise our unquestioning trust in modern so-called scientific medicine. The Neighbourhood Association and the parish, respecting the people's culture, ask whether it can and should be changed and, if so, how to do so without further uprooting the older population who are being deprived of familiar securities without finding new ones to replace them.

categories which prevent grasping the viewpoint of those who cross the river stepping from stone to stone.

This "viewpoint" includes accepted norms, shared values, whatever motivates daily life and also public life. Attention to culture helps us see that injustices touch or affect aspects of daily life which went unnoticed in earlier models of survival, family, social groups and classes.

So we understand that the laws of a state, the rules of trade and commerce, access to basic goods and services like education or health or recreation, family relationships and many other structures or institutions would not exist or function if people had not internalised the countless norms, values, opinions and tastes that configure a concrete culture.

Compared with hard (economic) facts, culture seems subjective, and in a sense it is: it shapes real people's way of life from within. Culture is also "collective" and structural because it is *shared* by a human group. These shared motivations, norms, values and ideals serve to maintain or to change social relationships, be they just or unjust.

Global "culture"

Global "culture" seems very distant from the rural image of fording a river on foot, but in fact it is both near and relevant as it is spreading all over the world and interacting in various ways with local and traditional cultures.

In this global sense, the word "culture" is placed in quotation marks because, while we note its powerful effects, we are not sure whether it really is a culture. Does anyone live more globally than locally? The adjective "global" suggests that this phenomenon reaches everywhere and yet is hard to grasp. Global "culture" is ambiguous, ambivalent, with both positive points and destructive ones.

The mass media and the open market economy are leading towards the creation of a monocultural world resulting in the destruction of indigenous cultures, skills and technology. Multinational organisations are particularly active in creating a consumerist culture: the human desire for incessant wants and the fascination for anything big and foreign. (South Asia)

On the one hand it appreciates individual achievement, competition, and the possession and consumption of material goods. It is supported and propagated by the extension of market structures into all spheres of human life, by the production and sale of images, and by the world wide web of mass media. It is all too often an anti-solidarity culture.

On the other hand, the global "culture" reflects the claims of science and the benefits of technology. It also promotes human rights and the free flow of information and has spawned networks of local and non-governmental groups that struggle for justice.

This "culture" is experienced in different ways in various regions of our planet. At times it is beneficial, at times threatening and at times corrupting. Everywhere it mixes with local elements to form the actual operative culture of a people.

There's a danger of personalising global "culture" and demonising it instead of distinguishing the liberating points from the destructive ones. In an ever more interdependent world, global "culture" is unavoidable and its quality and effects are of vital concern.

Dominant and minority cultures

Powerful or majority groups have tended to use their economic, political or military advantage to dominate minorities, and an aspect of such domination has been contempt for and repression of minority culture. Ethnic, racial and religious minorities, immigrants and refugees are often excluded economically, politically and also culturally. The dominant or majority class, caste or group exercises power in the cultural dimension, and the dominated or minority group resists in various ways, also culturally.

The language of human rights seems well founded and universally recognised, yet often fails to persuade the majority that the minority has intrinsic dignity and deserves the same unconditional respect that people extend to "our own." Inclusion and dignity are cultural realities. The integration of the minority would involve them in a new culture, a mutation of their previous one, and the dominant one would obviously change too.

The most dramatic cultural dilemmas obtain when powerful ethnic, racial or religious conflicts break out. We run the danger of being partial to our own group and therefore blindly uncritical of the abuses and injustices committed by our side. Rather than absolutise our culture as the only "real" one, our vocation calls us to perceive injustices when "our own" are responsible or complicit, and to speak out and resist them. This takes gifts of openness, lucidity, discernment and reconciliation. It's not easy, it's nearly impossible, but it's necessary and important!

Those in social ministry, Jesuits and members of the laity, have to contend with serious issues of morale coming from the general contemporary U.S. cultural climate of cynicism about ideals and social structures, worsening income polarities, fearfulness as values shift and disintegrate. Those in church-based organisations must also deal with a growing U.S. disaffection with organised religion and with tensions within the church itself over a variety of issues. Social ministries can be scattered, sporadic, unfocused. They can lead individuals involved in them toward burnout. (United States)

Some examples

Since culture is always concrete and specific, it may be useful to recall the "reading" which social analysis used to do of several issues, and then ask ourselves what difference it makes to add a strong cultural component:

- We used to argue about capital punishment ethically, make the case for abolition legally or historically, approach the problem politically and legislatively. Yet the debate between adoption and abolition is a highly emotional and cultural issue among many peoples.

- Many people outside South Asia are shocked to learn that some 130 million dalits (formerly known as "untouchables") are systematically humiliated, impoverished and deprived of their dignity. Yet those working for political and legal reform recognise that cultural change, which may be even more difficult to achieve, is what dalits really want.
- The personal, biological, medical, economic and political aspects of HIV/AIDS are obvious, and obviously very important. Nevertheless, HIV/AIDS is a very cultural and, often enough, religious issue as well.
- Corruption is a complex phenomenon. Whether it is more endemic than formerly or just more visible seems hard to say, but clearly in many poor countries corruption may constitute the single greatest obstacle to development and improved welfare. Corruption rests upon shared values, social bonds and cultural patterns as well as on individual selfishness.

From our African cultures, we draw the hopes for a society marked and influenced by the values of family, community, solidarity, hospitality, respect for life, and deep religious consciousness. These values promote hopes not for a return to older forms and styles (often irrelevant to modern situations) but rather the building of future forms and styles more congruent with the integral development and promotion of suitable livelihoods we all desire. (Africa)

- Once a dictatorship or civil war has come to an end, how should serious abuses or crimes of that era be handled? One common-sense idea is "wipe the slate clean, let bygones be bygones, and make a fresh start." Yet many countries have gone through the process of a truth commission (Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, South Africa) or war crimes tribunal (Rwanda, former Yugoslavia) in order to deal publicly, culturally, with past abuses.

- In Sri Lanka, history seems to have introduced powerful elements of rejection into the two ethnic cultures. It seems impossible to reconcile the Tamils and Sinhalese by political or military means. Small-scale projects, for example, that bring young people of the two groups together, may be effective in creating a more tolerant common culture.

- Those working with an excluded group testify that it is not the handicap or impoverishment itself but the subsequent exclusion and rejection that causes the greatest suffering. Dignity, acceptance and inclusion are structural *and* cultural issues; a merely political or legal change, for which one struggles, may be only a first and in fact the easiest step in achieving real social change which involves change of attitude, behaviour and

relationships. Work with marginalised people, if it is to be socially relevant, needs to inculcate new patterns of behaviour both among the marginalised themselves and in other groups of society.

Our own culture

Observing the stones which others use may be easier than taking notice of one's own river. "Our own group" may be the one we grew up in, or it may be one with which we have come to identify deeply. In either case, culture structures us from inside, and we cannot claim an above-it-all "objectivity" as if we lived outside time and space. We are always "submerged" or "immersed" in the culture of our own people and as Jesuits we have a culture of our own.

Thus a certain inter-cultural dialogue takes place within us, including the culture of the universal Society of Jesus, requiring sensitivity and considerable generosity of spirit. Among the staff of a

Jesuit project, there may be colleagues or co-workers who do not consider themselves religious. Significant cultural and religious differences exist but often remain unspoken. It seems important to find occasions in which to dialogue at the level of these usually non-verbalised ideas and instincts, norms and values which earlier were called the rocks for crossing the river. The *Characteristics* aim to provide the space and language for such dialogue.

Justice and culture

What the culture of a society has to do with its just and unjust structures is not easy to determine with objectivity or precision. To begin with the culture, to learn where the stones are, does not mean to accept that culture uncritically. Reflecting on the words "justice" and "culture" as they form a cross at the centre of the Naples Congress logo:



- Culture, including religion, can lead to economic, political and social injustices. Injustices, that is, recurring injuries causing innocent suffering, are a rebuke to the culture in which they occur.
- Cultures support and legitimise injustices, namely, unjust dynamics or patterns and also support the new laws or arrangements meant to repair them and achieve justice; culture as it is may contribute to change; stones can (with difficulty!) be changed, or different ones used, or another ford may be found or made.
- Work for justice has to find roots in the ideals and motivations of the culture, or else there will be no real change; economic, social and political transformations demand cultural changes as well; social action may contribute to cultural change.
- Working for cultural change remains an abstract idea until one finds the necessary material and means. Schools, colleges and universities have traditionally been the Society's privileged means for promoting cultural change — especially in the students, also in their parents, and indirectly in the wider society. Today, social apostolate projects offer an apt vehicle for cultural change at different levels of society. Working in this way on culture, one hopes slowly but eventually to see structural changes as a result.
- Great social changes require great cultural changes and vice versa.

- In our changing, interrelated world, we seek to promote transformations which support the life of the poorest and achieve justice for all. Thus our research, organisations and action are often situated on the cultural frontiers and have the effect of transforming culture. Like ourselves, our organisations are often inevitably agents of modernisation. We should promote, in a conscious way, those cultural changes that are as human as possible.

- True charity and true personal conversion introduce new behaviours and new values at the level of daily life and, if these are supported by a group, they become socially relevant and help bring about a socio-cultural change which in turn advocates institutional or structural changes.

Crossing the river where the stones are means taking the people's culture as a continuous point of departure for developing social-justice thinking and action. Otherwise, can a social apostolate contribute to real social change?

The creation of a human environment of justice, freedom and charity is a joint enterprise but with the main responsibility on the poor. The outsider must also enter through the door of the poor's culture. (East Asia)

Questions

1. Reflecting on the culture that you consider most deeply your own, which of its features would appear most striking to a visiting outsider?
2. To encounter a culture is "to cross the river where the stones are." How does this metaphor apply to the culture which you live and work in? What is the river, and what are the stones? What might be involved in a real change or transformation?
3. Several examples were given in which adding a strong cultural component leads to a different understanding of issues than the one obtained through social analysis alone. Can you add other examples from your own experience?
4. "Only within cultures can we speak of God and his justice. But the justice of the Gospel, for its part, always questions every culture" (Naples Congress). What does this suggest about the evangelizing mission of our social apostolate? What are some implications in practice?

3.3 Economic Reading

"Give us this day our daily bread," Jesus taught us to pray, and also: "Man does not live by bread alone." The unemployed and the hungry appreciate what a secure livelihood means because the lack of it causes them much suffering, and they also know the importance of hope.

Realizing how the poor people we live near and work with actually face their hardships and survive is an indispensable source for the social apostolate. Their economics of survival, as closely observed by us, forms a basis for our economic comprehension, cooperation and action, and provides us with a compass for moving through the local, regional, national and global levels from micro to macro and back again without getting lost or discouraged.

Interpreting the economic context

Constantly bombarded with news about the economy, we are familiar with quite a few elementary expressions if only because of repetition:

aid, capital, class, commodity, consumerism, consumption, corporation, credit, cutbacks, debt, dependency, development, disparity, distribution, dollar, economic policies, environment, euro, exchange rates, finance, First World, franc, gap, globalisation, goods and services, growth, IMF, income, industry, inflation, interest rates, investment, jobs, lira, manufacture, mark, market, MNC, nation, North-South, poor, pound, poverty, prices, privatisation, productivity, public spending, public debt, raw materials, recession, rich, rupee, SAP, social services, speculation, technology, Third World, TNC, trade, unemployment, union, wages, work, World Bank, WTO, yen ...

To reflect on the basic meaning and ethical value of terms like these is immediately to encounter the complex ambiguities of the domain of economics. Each Jesuit social project, whether it helps people survive in a poor neighbourhood or confronts global structures, can benefit from identifying the most used expressions and deepening its understanding of them. "Deepening" means combining the experience of people who live the phenomena, the expertise of people who work in them, and the knowledge of those who study and teach them.

What is characteristic for our work in the social apostolate is attention to economic issues in their social, political, cultural, religious aspects as they affect those we seek to serve. This chapter will probably be of greatest use to those whose "reading" tends to overlook the economic aspect.

Since as Jesuit social apostolate we are directly involved at all the levels identified above, it is characteristic that we do our economic "reading" in an inter-level dialogue. Economic problems and injustices cannot be understood, much less faced or solved, without this intelligent cooperation.

What is characteristic, then, is not *an* interpretation or *an* analysis of the economy (much less claiming to be *the* correct one!), but stimulating each group to undertake an active, interrelated reading and rereading of the economic circumstances of the people it serves.

Which means to:

- identify categories, ideas or notions to keep in mind
- connect economic vocabulary with lived experience
- enrich ideas with opinions coming from various milieux
- appreciate ambiguities and complexities
- include ethical and spiritual dimensions

This we do here with three excerpts, each exploring a major notion or category — the market, poverty and globalisation. Of all economic categories, these probably have the broadest application. Two of the texts are from Jesuit sources, and the third is from the United Nations *Human Development Report 1997*. They show what "reading and rereading economy" might mean, and they are selections worth taking as points of departure for analysis, reflection and group discussion.

The market:

The market as an historical expression of the need for human beings to support each other and to fulfil their present and future potentialities is neither good nor bad, neither capitalist nor socialist. It exists for everyone as a complex of relationships that must be controlled skilfully, in freedom and solidarity, in order to ensure an agreeable level of life for everyone.

Like any kind of relationship, the market can be employed perversely to destroy persons and peoples. But the fact that such perversion is possible should not make us forget the patrimony of knowledge and culture that mankind has created around the market throughout its history.

The challenge is not to destroy the relationship of trade, but to place it at the service of human fulfilment in harmony with creation; to situate it in a context of equality of basic opportunity for all people; and to dignify it by liberating it from the forces of domination and exploitation that distorted it into the mode of production that proliferated in the western world (*Document of the Latin American Provincials on Neo-Liberalism, 1996*).

Poverty:

Poverty has many faces. It is much more than low income. It also reflects poor health and education, deprivation in knowledge and communication, inability to exercise human and political rights and the absence of dignity, confidence and self-respect. There is also environmental impoverishment and the impoverishment of entire nations, where essentially everyone lives in poverty. Behind these faces of poverty lies the grim reality of desperate lives without choices and, often, governments that lack the capacity to cope (*Human Development Report 1997*).

India today is a country of class and caste inequalities. Within this general division cumulative inequalities based on caste and sex differentiation are particularly conspicuous. Some groups accumulate almost hegemonic power and advantage based on urban-rural, class-, caste- and sex-based differences. This section of the population can afford to live at western levels of consumption. At the other extreme, 48 per cent of the country's 880 million people suffer from malnutrition, illiteracy, and ill health and are victims of the same urban-rural, class-, caste- and sex-based differences. (South Asia)

Poverty, with roots in local culture and influenced by global factors, is to be "read and reread" culturally, politically, religiously as well. "Poverty and misery are never treated complacently in the Gospels," said Father General at Naples. "They are non-values which simply should not exist and which in no way express the will of the Creator."

Globalisation:

The theme of "globalisation" could not be ignored when it came time to analyse the various contexts of our apostolates, but it proved impossible to reach agreement on just what the term entails.

- For some, it is a question of the globalisation driven by Neo-liberalism which widens the gap between rich and poor.
- For others, it implies cultural globalisation which destroys local cultures.
- For still others, globalisation is an ambiguous phenomenon; and Neo-liberalism as well has its positive aspects which have to be humanised.

For this reason there were no unanimously adopted strategies.

Some delegates, especially from South Asia, urged that the Society should take a clear position condemning the system.

The delegate from Detroit graphically described the futility of King Canute who tried to stop the incoming tide by brandishing his sceptre at it and predictably ended up soaking wet.

This is the reason for the varying emphases in particular and limited proposals: for structural changes, or for modest initiatives to improve the situation of the poor; or for worldwide attempts to oppose the system. And yet it was clear to all that Neo-liberalism, insofar as it puts macro-economic growth over and above the welfare and life of the poor, becomes an ideology and, to this degree, should be resisted. The whole issue is to determine whether this is the interpretation which fits the economic reality from country to country (*Naples Congress in PJ 68, September 1997*).

Hearing the cry of the poor

When working on economic issues, Jesuit social projects seem to combine, in different proportions, several perspectives of reflection and emphases in action:

- ethics: naming values which should be decisive
- protest: denouncing the unacceptable
- reform: possible solutions, alternatives and collaboration

Ethics provides light, such as found in Catholic social teaching, for thinking out the whole sequence, from the injustice people suffer all the way through to action for change. The economy exists for persons,

Promotion of sustainable livelihoods (a mix of economy, ecology and equity considerations) is increasingly difficult. The spread of HIV/AIDS is having disastrous economic consequences in many countries, as are ethnic conflicts, violence and war. (Africa)

not persons for the economy. Therefore economic policies and institutions have to be judged by how they protect or undermine the life and dignity of persons.

Groups marginalised for reasons of race, sex, caste or class are frequently very poor, and the same reasons may falsely "legitimate" their exploitation by a dominant group. Corruption, discrimination and ethnic conflict also frequently exacerbate poverty, while public investments in education, health, environment, physical infrastructure and appropriate social institutions are often concentrated where the relatively wealthy live, thus perpetuating discrepancies or a so-called "gap".

All people have rights to life, basic necessities, education, housing, work, decency, participation in society. Therefore government and corporate institutions, indeed all people, have moral obligations to work together to achieve these goals. The fundamental moral measure of any economy is: how the poor and vulnerable are faring.

Protest is born of close contact with those who suffer impoverishment, exclusion and exploitation. It depicts the suffering as intolerable so as to awaken those who are unaware or complacent and win their support for action and change. The urgent protest of the poor can lead others to examine their own lifestyles and options.

Protest is often stark and dramatic and forthright in condemning. It may be quick to blame those at another level while neglecting responsibility that lies close at hand. The impulse to protest comes first and only afterwards talk of reform. It is important to identify spaces of freedom and responsibility for action at different levels.

Change or **reform** tries to create, find or build solutions, through research, politics and negotiations. Many efforts at reform consist of local small-scale economic efforts, for example, appropriate technology to make local products more marketable, credit schemes for micro-enterprises, job retraining programs to upgrade skills, enhancement of watersheds. Local improvements often depend on identifying regional or national factors causing poverty or injustice. Since poverty is usually multi-dimensional, so too effective reform needs to be multi-dimensional.

Other efforts are made in collaboration with governmental, non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations and people's movements and target broader concerns, for example, human rights, fair trade practices, housing for the urban poor, agrarian reform, foreign debt, environmental sustainability.

Facing constraints at local, national and international levels, reformers seek spaces of freedom so that change might really be effected, and they turn to protest when such possibilities are blocked. ➤ *Political Reading (3.4)*

There is a widespread assumption that the "American Experiment" is, all things considered, a success. Jesuits generally share the optimism of most people in the country about the U.S. way of life, the stability of our political institutions and our ability to change life for the better. We expect social change to be evolutionary, not revolutionary. We look upon government as generally beneficial and often responsive to changing needs. This accounts for our efforts to work through and influence local and national political structures. (United States)

Located at every level in nearly every area, our social apostolate has the chance to recognise, not just conceptually but in practice, the interdependence of different economic situations — between rich and poor within countries, between the poor of different countries, and between rich and poor countries.

Those close to suffering and experiences of injustice may cooperate with those who work for reform, those in "the developed North" with those in "the developing South." Communication and travel make networking relatively easy. The critique of global economic problems such as the international debt requires a solid intellectual understanding of global economic realities and how they affect the lives of the poor.

➤ *Cooperation and Networking (3.7)*

An increased awareness of the cultural dimension does not make economic analysis any less important. On the contrary. Our approach may be characterized by a simultaneous insistence on both "daily bread" and "not by bread alone," an economics in service of all of humanity.

Questions

1. At the beginning of the chapter some sixty economic terms were listed, and then reflections on three of them were cited. Choose three more terms from the list and reflect on them, bearing in mind their deeper meaning and ethical and spiritual dimensions.
2. What in our experience is the role of the poor in economic and social change? What is the key to emerging from poverty and participating in society? Is it participation in the market, or an alternative approach? Does the Church effectively accompany people in such efforts?
3. Why does awareness of the cultural dimension not diminish the importance of economic analysis. How do the cultural and economic readings affect each other?

3.4 Political Reading

A cry — sometimes loud and strident, sometimes silent with suffering — comes from "those who have no voice." The Jesuit social apostolate, living among them, working with them directly or for their cause, constantly hears this cry. This apostolate consists of many efforts to help the voiceless find their voice, to help the poor express themselves and turn their powerlessness into responsibility. "We Jesuits enter into solidarity with the poor, the marginalised and the voiceless, in order to enable their participation in the processes that shape the society in which we all live and work" (GC34, d.26, n.14)

Their silent, inarticulate or loud cry changes our comprehension of social reality. It enters our consciousness and becomes our point of view. The powerless influence our manner of dealing with the powerful. We discover links between the "insignificant" experiences of suffering and the big structures of society and culture.

This chapter presents not a political theory or a political interpretation but an approach that our social apostolate can use to do a political reading of its situation. "Politics" can be a hot or sticky topic. Strong convictions emerge about what Jesuits must or cannot do; often the words are emotionally charged and imprecisely used. Some guidance may be helpful for discussion within our groups and with others. Moreover, "politics" points to an important dimension of our work that has much to do with its significance and effectiveness. We do well to become aware of it, take responsibility for it, and clarify our specific contribution with some self-critical reflection.

➤ *Planning and Evaluation (3.8)*

Interpreting

Politics takes place within a particular context — a municipality, a department or province or state, a country — that we can think of as a great area. Within this area, politics can be something very specific, but it has the overall role of keeping nearly everything else in its place and in harmony or balance. In this most general sense, politics begins with sovereignty, authority, decision-making, and it touches on many facets of life:

- nationality and citizenship whereby each individual participates in all the rest
 - trade and commerce, finance and taxation
 - foreign relations and defence
 - the justice system and penal system
 - immigration and minorities
-
- education and communication, culture and sport
 - family, marriage, social relations, religion
 - social assistance or social security
 - many others, some depending on the country and culture

These are the many sorts of things that public authority is supposed to see to actively. But we can also conceive of public authority as minimally responsible for the basic conditions without which people cannot take part in human life. These minimum guarantees are defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Every human being, without distinction of any kind, has the right to the following:

- life, liberty and security of person
- recognition as a person before the law
- freedom of movement and residence
- participation in the government of his or her country
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- work, rest and leisure
- an adequate standard of living
- education
- much else which, if absent or violated, leaves life less than human

The two open-ended lists, one positive, the other minimal, are vast in scope. Like economics and culture, politics in its own way touches on "nearly everything." Political authority, for its part, is not vague and all-pervasive but highly articulated everywhere, even in very remote or "undeveloped" places. There are multiple levels of authority: local, municipal, regional, national, international, global. They take many interconnected forms: executive, parliament or congress, political parties, civil service in departments or ministries, countless public institutions and offices — and more.

In whose interests does the whole political complex function? Obviously the answer should be "everyone's," but this ideal is subverted in a variety of ways. A very obvious contradiction occurs when a political space is ruled by a dictatorship or a dominant minority, which in a non-representative manner diverts the political or governmental process to serve narrow rather than common interests.

Less obvious but very real distortion can come from the economic side. With the so-called "triumph of neo-liberalism," major economic actors like multinational banks and corporations seem exempt from any legitimate political control and, instead, dominate many aspects of life where non-economic criteria ought to prevail. Business and advertising are free to impose their consumerist model. Structural Adjustment Programmes, meant to put the economic house in order (much needed), are imposed without sufficient political control and create a disproportionate burden for the poor. Instead of being broadly political and taking many aspects into account, policies can become narrowly economic. ➤ *Economic Reading (3.3)*

Our political action should be different because it tries to heal abuse of power and those abused by power. Our spirituality, therefore, is vital for the success of the social apostolate: a spirituality which can accept failure, non-success, incompetence and division will help ensure that our involvement with power and influence be as "clean" as possible. (East Asia)

Corruption — hidden although "everyone knows" — is another widespread form of betraying the political process with disastrous effects on many facets of socio-economic life.

So, many people in many very different countries feel that public authorities do not adequately fulfil their role of distributing power, resolving conflicts, and making it possible for people to work together. The prevailing mood of apathy or "anti-politics" seems justified by feelings and reasons such as:

- the public apparatus has outgrown its competence and become inflated and inefficient; many citizens feel cheated and frustrated;
- reform or down-sizing has cut so deep as to leave the state incapable of exercising its functions; citizens feel badly served, neglected, abused;
- continuous crises of governability, caused by poverty, violence or natural disasters like drought, leave citizens insecure;
- state institutions and functionaries, parties and politicians have lost all credibility with the public;
- poor media coverage trivialises politics and reduces it to image, public relations and opinion polls;
- utopias have collapsed, disappointing many who had hoped to bring about a more human world through political, structural or revolutionary change;
- a sense of politics as only concerned with "competing interests" has eclipsed any notion of the "common good";
- in a culture of individual or private satisfaction, people pay little attention to the public interest.

➤ *Cultural Reading (3.2)*

In this apathetic or cynical climate of "anti-politics" which prevails in many places, people do not look to traditional political authorities like parties or the civil service to respond to urgent needs. Instead, an alternative political actor or subject, sometimes called "civil society," has emerged to take matters in hand.

Our common social dwelling is crumbling and our societies are turning into conglomerates of individuals with no ties to each other, set against each other in varied and wide-ranging violence. To rebuild this common dwelling means strengthening civil society and its ethos, popular organisations, the State and its power to govern, political institutions. All this goes hand in hand with the bringing to birth of new social projects, planned and carried out by the community. (Latin America)

A concrete problem which the public authority cannot or will not resolve and which no one individual alone can solve motivates people to band together and take it up as a common cause. Overcoming their own fears and often lacking much cultural support, people look for very immediate solutions. In some ways this process is similar to the formation of trade unions in the nineteenth century to confront the problems of low wages and sub-human working conditions.

Local groups of all kinds have mushroomed everywhere to face very specific problems — illiteracy, contaminated drinking water, unfit housing, police brutality and many, many others — involving poor people in urban slum areas, peasants, indigenous people, AIDS sufferers, and so on. Groups fail, succeed, wither away, while some make the transition from a specific

problem to a more general issue like land tenure, social services, human rights, environment. Groups

solidify, band together, become local organisations, enter into coalitions and networks, evolve into civic movements for political change. Some groups develop into stable organisations, usually called NGOs, dedicated more professionally over the longer term to the same causes.

Thus in nearly all the areas and at all levels under political authority, popular groups and movements find small-scale solutions, meet needs that public authorities fail or refuse to meet, or constrain authorities to exercise their responsibility. The groups usually stress participation and strive to be internally democratic with leaders coming from their own membership. The claim that poor and ordinary people have no options, no voice, no influence is refuted in practice.

The groups and movements that make up civil society usually do not aspire to become political parties or win political power. In this sense they remain "anti-politics" and work in an unstructured way for humanisation and solidarity. Many state their purpose as a "without": a neighbourhood without drugs or without youth unemployment all the way to a world without land mines, child abuse or environmental degradation. Such "withouts" avoid describing a particular political model and leave space for other aspects of a fully human development.

Neither winning a particular local issue nor achieving more responsive political structures comes easily. Social change may be highly desirable, a great mobilisation may seem very promising, and yet the moment may pass without any real change. Popular politics requires both realism and perseverance.

Political dimensions of our work

Where does the Jesuit social apostolate fit in relation to the two ideals described above — public authority and civil society? Our projects do not usually fulfil a state function, although we occasionally contract to provide a public service and often accept government funding.

Our projects or centres do not usually identify institutionally with a political party, though advice and other help may be given discreetly, and sometimes it is hard to distinguish between supporting a movement and belonging explicitly to a party. But the people we work with often do get involved. A lay member of our staff active in partisan politics is said to act in an individual capacity, but this distinction is often overlooked by the public, and the lay staff may be restricted in their political activism as if they were members of the Society.

Over the past decades, Jesuit social projects have supported great political movements for liberating change in some countries. These movements have brought significant improvements in the freedom and quality of life. Yet the same movements have fragmented, lost credibility, become bureaucratic, or lacked ethics. Support, when "unconditional," proves to be unworthy.

In relation to civil society, Jesuit social projects do a great deal of political work with great integrity and occasional success. The social apostolate takes part in every type of group, coalition, network, mobilisation or movement, in pursuit of specific solutions as well as transformations of structures.

Sometimes our project consists precisely of organising such groups or movements and accompanying their development. In other cases we are approached by groups for help. Occasionally

one of our staff exercises some leadership, though it is nearly always better to encourage and support others to exercise leadership. In a coalition, the Jesuit project's role may be to promote reflection or bring in ethics or spirituality. Often we contribute the capacity to do research, clarify the problem, think out a policy solution, develop a plan or strategy. Our staff is familiar with the public sphere — they know whom to call, how to get things done or prevented. Such know-how, put at the disposal of the poor, is a political contribution. It helps others express and further their concerns in the public sphere and — often indirectly — serves to transform structures.

Jesuit social projects, especially research centres, may be explicitly and deliberately oriented towards influencing the public sphere. Often we advise others who criticise injustices or urge public authorities or economic leaders to adopt alternative policies. At times we speak out ourselves. In some countries such advocacy takes the form of political lobbying, local or national, and there is also effective work done with regional bodies like the Organisation of American States and international ones like the United Nations.

We use the media to criticise injustices and influence public opinion. When it is possible to enlist broad support from many sectors of society, there is a better chance of achieving some social change.

"Any realistic plan to engage in the promotion of justice will mean some kind of involvement in civic activity" (GC32, d.4, n.80). For example, caring for the homeless or promoting rural development will have consequences in the public sphere. Working with the homeless may lead to influencing public authorities to adopt a more compassionate housing policy, while working with the rural poor may lead to encouraging a fairer marketing of agricultural produce.

Jesuit social projects seem to have several related political responsibilities. Since every activity to promote justice has some political impact, we should ask if these ramifications are coherent with the basic convictions which motivate our project, and if people actually see our work in the same light. We are interested in bringing the justice of the Gospel to society and culture; therefore we should take care how our apostolate comes into the public domain. Even a ministry of simple presence accompanying those who suffer, which seems very low-profile or small-scale, has an authentic vision, dedication and testimony to share with others in the *polis* and the Church.

**At the same time, the current mood in the country at large is characterised by disillusion over unmet expectations, distrust of big government, economic insecurity, fear of losing control of our economy and traditional values, a growing antagonism toward new immigrants, and the persistence of racism. There is general agreement that our governmental and social institutions often fall into an adversarial mode of operating. This promotes the formation of interest groups and the pursuit of narrow agendas, developments which do not serve the common good.
(United States)**

Pluralism and reconciliation

Social justice work dealing with deep suffering, structural violence or persistent negation of rights often gives rise to conflict. In addition, when our own nation or ethnic group is in conflict with another, the natural sympathy we feel for our side can blind us to our group's intolerance, hatred or violence — impulses from which we are not exempt. ➤ *Cultural Reading (3.2)*

We cannot avoid conflict, but we do need to pay close attention to our attitude towards the individuals and systems involved. We are called never to "demonise" others, no matter how cruel or unjust their behaviour, but to distinguish between the sin and the sinner. When we protest, we must be clear in our analysis of the issues, forthright in condemnation of injustice, and calm in trying to persuade those who are opposed. Similarly, when criticising our own country or another, we must do so with balance and respect.

New mechanisms are needed to promote understanding and reconciliations among the warring countries of the South. There is an increase in the number of refugees in South Asian countries as a result of ethnic conflicts, religious fundamentalism, and so forth. Jesuits should engage in the efforts towards the promotion of friendship and understanding among neighbouring countries. (South Asia)

Our work should always be ready "to reconcile the estranged" (*Formula*, 1550). Reconciliation goes to the heart of everyone's motivations and allegiances, requires much freedom and courage, involves great depth of encounter with others, and offers opportunities for personal healing and social transformation. Members of the Jesuit social apostolate have given heroic witness, even with their lives, to the extraordinary radicality of unconditional Christian forgiveness and reconciliation.

At a national and even international level, true reconciliation requires uncovering the injustices perpetrated and a limpid process of justice. The social apostolate can contribute to public processes of truth and reconciliation and to negotiated settlements of conflicts. We may serve as guarantors of fairness in compromise. We should work tirelessly for reconciliation in divided societies and for truth and justice rather than vengeance.

The political dimension, precisely because it deals in the currency of interests, influence, privilege and power, has an inherent ambiguity and entails considerable risks and temptations. The "buzz" that comes with a public profile and media attention can easily carry anyone away. The greater the political impact, the greater the need for a discerning interior freedom in orienting our action and so for frank discussion with fellow Jesuits and colleagues.

When a social project loses sight of its Jesuit mission, however, political and ideological errors all too easily result and the project can get used in favour of a partisan political interest. It takes great honesty to be self-critical and great courage to approach a colleague — especially the director! — in this regard. Despite these risks and difficulties, we do not renounce the public voice or political dimension; otherwise ours would not be a social apostolate.

The social apostolate, even within a single Province, does not depend on political unanimity among its members but glories in a healthy pluralism of political conceptions and styles which actually increases our apostolic effectiveness. This pluralism is put to the test when it comes time for a whole centre, the whole sector or the whole Province to take a public stand on an issue.

Although public service has lost prestige and "anti-politics" is widespread, political life cannot be abandoned to unscrupulous, self-interested or technocratic mentalities. Jesuit social projects need to foster the political vocation as a noble choice for those who wish to serve the broader interests important for everyone.

The *political dimension* brings us back to basics: to the exercise of power by all the people for all the people; to respect for human, political, civil and social rights and for each person's freedom; to participation of all citizens through the many and varied channels of democratic society; to the traditional notion of the common good, central to the social teaching of the Church.

The promotion of justice is an integral part, not of an ideological view or a political programme, but of the evangelisation whereby the justice of the Kingdom is really communicated and put into effect.

Questions

1. A lay staff member in a social apostolate project is invited to stand as a candidate in an election. How should the staff as a whole and in particular the Jesuits respond? What factors need to be taken into account?
2. Our Jesuit social project, involved in a nationwide coalition on a controversial justice issue, is elected to the steering committee. What factors ought to be weighed in deciding whether or not to play this leading role?
3. Do many people in our area seem disappointed in politics? Are they seeking other avenues for protecting themselves, raising a protest, promoting change? Should our work try to help rehabilitate the "political vocation"?

3.5 Religious Reading

If we are near enough to hear it, the cry of a refugee, AIDS sufferer, unemployed parent or abused child transfixes us: "Why does God let me suffer like this?" and "Blessed be His holy name!"

Those who in large numbers suffer intensely, perennially and innocently are the poor, and theirs are the problems of injustice which the social apostolate exists to address. The same poor — "the widow, the orphan and the stranger" — are those who in our Christian faith enjoy God's preferential concern: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me."

The same poor, in great proportion, are religious believers and religion is essential for many of them. To overlook this is not to encounter them fully, much less to comprehend them. To depreciate their religious beliefs or treat them as a merely private matter is yet another impoverishment imposed on the poor by others. In our social apostolate, we Jesuits and most of our co-workers are religious, too, and while doing much economic and political analysis, ironically we have paid little attention to the religious dimensions of justice until now.

Religion is also an essential part of nearly every context. Some situations are marked by important religious differences; for example, many Christians in India are dalits living in a society strongly shaped by Hindu beliefs and practices, and there are differences between Catholics who are dalit and those who belong to a caste. A situation may also be marked by diffuse traditional elements which have lost their vital religious force but still have a social significance. There is a sense of the numinous or the sacred expressed in new-age and non-institutional forms of religiosity.

This chapter, not a theory about religion and social change, seeks to clarify some elements for reading the religious situation, shows some connections with our work for justice, and reflects on the depths of our social action.

Elements for interpreting

Religion is notoriously difficult to define or even to describe. It is, like culture, "both stones in the river and the river itself." It is like politics in that it gives meaning and order to everything and yet constitutes a specific area of human reality and an institution, in different ways, of both traditional and modern society. Obviously there are many connections but also significant differences between faith and religion; here, usually, we mean both. A religious reading is meant to be combined with the previous cultural, economic and political readings to provide an integrated reading of a whole social situation with all its changing vital connections and complexities.

In the social apostolate we constantly meet people of various religions because in hardly any situation of ours does a single religion exist by itself. People we work with — those we serve, our co-workers on staff, members of other groups and organisations — may be Christians (either Catholics like ourselves or members of another denomination), or members of other religions, or people who have grown up distant from religious tradition or have been formed in an explicitly

atheistic or secular viewpoint. Therefore, while our commitment to work for justice is rooted in our own religious experience, other people's commitment may be rooted in very different religious experiences or in humanist, liberal or political values. Among the poor, their religion itself or, if Christian, their way of living it often differs from our own. Beliefs can be expressed in simple ways which someone from "outside" or with a modern mentality may easily fail to grasp, especially if in a hurry.

Religion is within culture and forms an important — sometimes the most important — ground and content of a culture. It embodies and expresses a people's or society's system of beliefs, enhances what is truly most important in human life, and gives meaning to major personal and communal moments and historical transitions. Religion also differs from culture: it goes beyond merely human meanings and values, connects with origins and tradition, and opens up to the transcendent and the future beyond time. While work for justice has its own integrity and intrinsic value, it also has an open meaning not restricted to the secular plane.

Considered in its social ramifications, religion appears ambiguous. It may include elements that have been used to justify oppression, enslave the human spirit, prop up the status quo and resist justice with fatalism or resignation. As the poor typically show long suffering, social activists could fear that their religious belief would sap their political anger. There can be a very unhealthy link between religion and nationalism. Religious people may resist social change that could free them from repressive bonds but also foments individualism.

Religion may also liberate people from enslavements of all kinds, motivate them with compassion and generosity and even self-abnegation, free them to care for others and for creation, and give them courage to act, even to offer their lives for a noble cause. The religion which people depend on may also keep them bonded with one another in community.

In this reading of religion, then, we are truly participant observers. Our viewpoint is not unreligious or atheist, as if that could ensure objectivity, but religious because both we and the situation are religious. Nor do we profess to work for justice on a purely secular basis as if a "neutral" or "value-free" ground would provide a sound foundation for justice and solidarity. But where political conflict and even violence occur in a decidedly sectarian form, it may better serve both truth and justice to work with others on a strictly secular basis. Our attitude in all places should be respectful, where respect includes transparency, openness and, when possible, sharing one's best with the other.

When the social apostolate "reads" the economic or the political dimension, it does so competently and seriously. But in the background there is a "not only" (*not only* economic, *not only* political) which comes from Christian anthropology that sees human beings as open to the transcendent. We read the economic and political situation from an internal standpoint, not from outside it; a cultural reading involves us even more intricately; and in a very special way are we implicated in the religious reading.

Links between religion and our work for justice

Between religion and justice, the critique may go in both directions. Whatever critique is put forward, especially if in public, needs to be made respectfully, not self-righteously.

The viewpoint of justice may need to criticise religion — a belief, a practice, a religious leader — as regressive for covering over and justifying an unjust situation. Does the religion implicitly support injustice or elitism, or does it genuinely favour the transformation of injustice? In ethnic conflicts, the groups fighting one another may be labelled according to their respective religions. As a result, the conflict can appear to be primarily religious even when the real issues are of quite another order, like land, resources or sovereignty.

Some religions encourage human action for the transformation of the universe. But others can at times foster a passive and fatalistic attitude toward nature and development, life and death, social relations and structures. There is however always a liberating force in faith. In the present situation of overwhelming odds against justice for the poor, it calls for religious courage to stand up to the titanic forces of oppression. (South Asia)

The religious viewpoint may also find injustices in a given situation and criticise them in the light of its beliefs or in the name of its communities, as when religious leaders resist a tyranny, condemn racism or apartheid, or pray for peace. Religious beliefs are frequently at the root of people's social hopes and motivate them to face and change an unjust situation. Religious practice can support people as they try to find the causes of their sufferings and overcome forces far greater than their very limited resources. Even among the very poorest, for example in refugee camps of unimaginable misery, communal religious celebrations motivate, inspire, unify and orient everyone. This belies the prejudice that people need to be healthy, educated and secure before being able to believe and act religiously.

Thus, religious belief may encourage people to be compassionate, to help one another, to carry on even when they meet resistance. Religion can strongly support the struggle for justice by inspiring the poor themselves as well as others working with them, for them or in solidarity with them. The multiple relationships we should have with all these people and their religions can be characterised by the word: *dialogue*.

Dialogue requires respect and listening. Respect for the beliefs of others does not usually mean avoiding the topic, hiding our own convictions, or pretending that they and we are non-religious. Occasionally it is appropriate that the basis for cooperation be secular and the faith of those involved not be expressed explicitly. Social justice ministry among non-Christian peoples should not be misconstrued as a tactic to proselytise or elicit conversions.

Dialogue begins with a preference for putting a good interpretation on another's statement rather than condemning it. But this presupposition from the *Spiritual Exercises* does not mean accepting everything in the "other" unilaterally, or with the over-compensation which finds nothing but light in the other tradition and only obscurantism in one's own. Self-critical regarding our prejudices, we express our convictions transparently and respectfully, while openly and honestly searching for the truth. It is when we seek a shared understanding, really listening to those who hold different views from ours, that we best perceive and learn.

Listening to words and descriptions is important, but just a start. Dialogue means perceiving, in the living beliefs of others, the social impact or significance of their faith. It means paying attention to what is good in their tradition and seeking respectfully to share ours with them.

We keep open the possibility of criticising beliefs or practices which enchain people, cause social fatalism, justify violence, or support elitism — and of being so criticised ourselves. Among the poor or among colleagues, we may encounter religious prejudices, caricatures of God, harmful ignorance about our own Church or the religion of others. Dialogue includes facing these as respectfully and effectively as possible.

Of great interest to the social apostolate is the *dialogue of action*, in which Catholics, Christians of different denominations and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people. One of the fruits of this collaboration may often be greater mutual religious comprehension and tolerance.

Christian faith fosters a keen sense of sin as radical disobedience of God and radical betrayal of our human identity, nature, vocation. In the light of the Gospel we see most clearly that injustice springs from sin, personal and collective, and that it is made all the more oppressive by being built into economic, social, political and cultural institutions of worldwide scope and overwhelming power (GC32, d.2, n.6). Without recognising sin it is impossible to accept forgiveness and difficult to forgive others, and this in turn leaves reconciliation superficial. ➤ *Political Reading (3.3)*

**Promoting the justice of the Gospel should never, to be sure, be confused with proselytism which is so prevalent among some sects. On the other hand, the fear or the risk of being accused of proselytism does not offer us an excuse for systematically living our faith in secret, for hiding our faith, for making it purely a private affair or for failing to share our deepest convictions.
(Father General at Naples)**

The South Asian religions have a common humanising core of teachings concerning personal, moral and social life. They lay stress on the value of unselfishness and detachment from material things. They teach compassion and concern for the other, sharing of possessions, love of the family, respect for the elders, care of nature and right conduct in personal and public life. These core common values can be the basis of integral human liberation and for cooperation in building human communities in our pluralist societies. (South Asia)

Our directly pastoral work with poor people can help their Christian faith grow and include the promotion of justice as an integral part. The Eucharist celebrates the presence of the Risen Lord, the unity of the whole body of the Church, and with its deep sense of community, it is both an experience and an anticipation of the justice of God's kingdom in which we are truly brothers and sisters to one another.

Catholic Social Teaching is a heritage we could make better use of. Beginning with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, the Catholic Church has analysed and reflected on the great problems which began with the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of modern society (worldwide since decolonialisation and accelerated with globalisation) in the light of Christian faith and Catholic tradition. The following are some of the major themes, presented following more or less the chronological order in which they appeared:

- concern for the "voiceless" of modern society, the exploited industrial workers
- the call not only to provide charity but also to rebuild

society itself

- interventions for world peace and reconciliation
- fundamental flaws in communism and capitalism
- within the common good, the state's obligation to promote the welfare of all sectors of society
- the important principle of subsidiarity which allocates responsibility to the appropriate group or level in society
- condemnation of the international arms race
- human rights and individual liberties, duties between states
- the obligation of rich individuals, groups and nations to share resources and provide the poor with the necessary means for their own development
- the transcendental and social nature of each person as the basis for social teaching
- the poor and oppressed as protagonists of social change
- the preferential option for the poor, and solidarity
- a solid, nuanced appreciation of the economic aspects of life and work
- the meaning of sin in its social manifestations and structures
- the urgent problems of international debt and impoverishment
- the social and religious significance of protecting the environment

This tradition of social teaching can enrich everyone's "readings" of the situation at all levels. It can serve as a basis for collaboration. The social apostolate as both action and reflection also contributes to the social teaching and practice of the local Church.

"I cannot define religion, but I know it when I see it" and "A good religion is one that produces saints" are affirmations by learned experts. We are drawn into a reading and reflection on religion which cannot be only "out there." As participant observers, our personal engagement manifests the

inspiration which motivates us and the hope which keeps us going, and in both of these the poor have a great share.

Questions

1. Prepare the discussion of this chapter among the co-workers in such a way that first the religious situation, and then our own involvement, are respectfully treated. Would some of the conditions favouring dialogue be of help?
2. Does anger have a legitimate, even necessary, place in social justice work? Is it tension with a commitment to reconciliation?
3. In a specific situation where religious people are working for justice, does religion bring an extra dimension to the work? Are there political consequences? Does justice have something to critique in this religious situation?
4. Are we accustomed to do "religious reading" as described in this chapter as part of our socio-cultural analysis? What effect does it have on the other readings of society which we usually do?

3.6 Teamwork

In the social apostolate the institutional form or set-up varies a great deal from work to work. This variety is reflected in the different names used — *apostolic community* or *apostolic team, centre, institute, project* or *working group* — and the very different types and levels of activities undertaken: accompaniment, research, grass-roots work, development, writing, popular movements, advocacy. Working together in such activities are Jesuits, other religious, professionals, support staff, volunteers and perhaps others, in varied and complementary roles.

What basically unites all these people is the daily work. This depends on some form of organisation, which can be simple or sophisticated depending on the history and circumstances of the project. Organisation — whether of a tiny project or of a multi-purpose centre — includes the distribution of tasks, the efficient use of human and material resources. It may also include planning, sharing social analysis, evaluation, coordinated research and action. These aspects do much to develop the staff and form a team.

Working as a Jesuit apostolic team includes good organisation but also goes deeper. It becomes really possible if each member occasionally shares with the others at the level of beliefs, hopes and values. In the sharing, each person's vocation becomes manifest in its integrity. As competence, dedication, energy, affection and good humour come together, the team gains in substance, spirit and identity.

Teamwork, not only an internal matter, is a significant form of witness. What we do together and how we do it together give more credible testimony than words alone to what we believe in, hope for and work for. Our teamwork is not just efficient and productive but, with our faith and hope shining through, effective in service and social change.

➤ *On-going Tensions (4.2)*

Relationships of openness and trust

Every culture has preferred ways of organising work. While each group can probably learn, inter-culturally, from approaches used elsewhere in the social apostolate, there is no question of imposing a single way of working together. The purpose here is to help discover what might be done to strengthen teamwork, and the present reflection must be adapted with sensitivity to the local situation.

To encourage and develop teamwork, the following are usually helpful:

- formation of staff
- clarity of roles and goals
- giving/taking appropriate responsibility
- conflict resolution in a culturally appropriate manner
- leadership which listens to the members and cares for them
- proper structures of accountability for both staff and leaders

The fundamental bases on which as staff we want to work with one another are relationships of *openness and trust*, with a high degree of consultation, dialogue and involvement in decision-making.

Listening is always at the origin of working together! Listening may be a human gift which some have more than others, but everyone can probably learn it. It begins with taking time rather than being too busy, and giving full attention to the one speaking. To listen is to let go of one's own task, role or expertise, to set fears and frustrations aside, and to look beyond the first meaning (often the cause of misunderstanding) for the experience and real intent behind the other's words. Be more eager to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it, advises St. Ignatius at the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and presuppose that the other person is doing the same.

Lack of listening may not be the root of all staff problems, but without good listening teamwork is surely impossible.

We participants were drawn from all walks of life within the Society: old and young; various nationalities, experiences, professions, status, language. But amazingly we were able to communicate and listen to one another without any form of discrimination or complex. It reminded me of stories of the first Pentecost! This was the Society of Jesus I wanted to join, live and die in when I freely became a member several years ago. (Joakim Mtima Chisemphere at Naples)

We make up work teams with other persons: inter-disciplinary teams which seriously face the challenges of our time, requiring creativity and a critical attitude with sensitivity to the life of the people whom they accompany and from whom they learn; teams open to regional, national and world realities, motivated to establish relationships with other teams, accomplishing professional work motivated by the following of Jesus. (Latin America)

Each one needs to try to listen, but as a group it is also important to clear some space and set aside time to speak together, sort out our disagreements, clarify our misunderstandings, and develop a common language for communicating with ease and security. These are skills which an outside facilitator may help us to learn.

Good communication allows us to put important things "on the table" for discussion, and this mutuality and transparency are the basis for teamwork and participation in decision-making. To find the right points and an appropriate way to discuss them is probably the role of leadership. Everything is not equally or identically discussable by everyone. Hopefully every Jesuit social apostolate, from a simple group or collective to an articulated institution, can become a team or include teamwork in this full sense.

Styles of Working

Considering a Jesuit social project, here are some "types" which, when put together, show the variety of persons involved:

<i>status</i>	<i>work</i>	<i>category</i>	<i>origin</i>
Jesuit	administration	professional	local
other religious	programme	support staff	national
person with family	support	intern/trainee	from another country
single	<i>ad omnia</i>	volunteer	of a different culture

Such combinations of types usually produce a rich complementarity, but they can also sometimes lead to friction. For example, professional staff vs support staff vs volunteers; those who earn more vs those who earn less vs those who do not earn; those with families vs single people vs Jesuits.

Besides persons, a *style* also colours the whole work. Within a project, relationships can be quite informal, the tasks distributed flexibly, and leadership exercised in an *inspirational* or charismatic way. Everyone appreciates an *esprit de corps* which motivates and supports the members and which communicates the intrinsic worth of the project to others who, in turn, are attracted as volunteers. However, a charismatic or informal style may prove inefficient in the use of resources, reluctant to adapt to new challenges, awkward in integrating new staff. The leadership, if dominated by personality, may not allow the members their proper autonomy and responsibility within the organisation.

The social apostolate also uses an *institutional or professional* style which puts the premium on competence. Instead of being informal, roles and functions are differentiated. Here we find features like clear distribution of tasks, lines of authority, areas of responsibility, planning and management,

contracts between employer and employee, fair scales of pay and benefits. Such conditions help make sustained teamwork possible. The work is seen to be of good quality, and this generates confidence and support from the public and the Church. An institutional style can also suffer, especially if the centre or institution grows too large, inaccessible to the poor and bureaucratic in dealing with people. Attachment to jobs or professionalism in the pejorative sense can replace dedication to the work of service. Once rigidity sets in, the institutional style becomes difficult to renew.

Each project is a particular mix or permutation of informal, inspirational, institutional and professional elements. For it to work well, the complementary roles and contributions of support staff, professionals and leadership need to be appreciated. The combinations, in reality, are not always easy — if a project becomes so professionalised that the volunteers get squeezed out; if a volunteer working out of free personal commitment misjudges an employee doing a paid job; if an inadequate salary scale makes it impossible for people to continue when married; if leadership is heavy-handed; if administration becomes bureaucratic.

Some shortcomings are inevitable, but a Jesuit social project can also sin through authoritarianism or clericalism, through discrimination against minorities and in particular against women, through systematic under-appreciation of the worth and dignity of certain persons on staff. Our mission to promote the justice of God's kingdom behooves us to face such sins and make every effort to reform, even at great expense or pain.

Teamwork does not mean that everyone gets involved in everything, but that the various contributions come together. For this it is important that a team really have *coordination*, not only in action but also at the level of research and reflection, where the great challenge of developing effective interdisciplinary teamwork awaits us.

**Partnership of the laity in social apostolate is a significant phenomenon for us today. Lay men and women can often be true witnesses of the mission. Hence, it is expected that they are enabled to identify themselves with the mission, and participate in greater measure in the decision processes. The question is: To what extent have they experienced this identification and participation?
(Naples Congress)**

Finally, rather than types or styles, it is people who make up a team, and we know it works when we perceive spontaneity, generosity, clarity, gratuity, security, dedication, effectiveness, simplicity. Are these present in our work?

Jesuit-lay collaboration

Each role or category — employer, employee, professional, support staff, full-timer, intern, volunteer — can be filled by a Jesuit, other religious, single person or someone with a family. Fundamentally, each group needs to understand and appreciate the strengths and constraints typical of the others.

Lay people have much to offer, including occupations or professions which are essential for bringing greater justice to society and culture. At the same time, lay people have needs in terms of income, commitments to family, professional development, job security, social life.

Jesuits and members of other religious congregations offer their personal and professional competence, often shaped by their religious formation; they bring their special links with the Church; they can share their spiritual heritage and a style of leadership which makes possible the work of others. They also have needs and constraints typical of community life, the availability which obedience requires, commitments to the Society or Congregation.

Mutual understanding and respect, therefore, are indispensable: a real appreciation of the dignity, equality and difference in the lay and Jesuit vocations, and a readiness to recognise the gifts, needs and sensitivities typical of each group.

In the social apostolate there is a great variety of working relationships between Jesuits and non-Jesuits. Focusing mainly on projects or institutions which the Society sponsors and directs, the Jesuits owe it to our co-workers to give a clear and transparent account of our aim and purpose. A work for which the Society takes ultimate responsibility "must be guided by a clear mission statement which outlines the purposes of the work and forms the basis for collaboration in it. This mission statement should be presented and clearly explained to those with whom we cooperate" (GC34, d.13, n.12). A Jesuit in a non-Jesuit work like a trade union, popular movement or UN research centre has the opportunity to share with others what we are trying to do in the social apostolate (n.14).

Moreover, we Jesuits may give testimony, in word and deed, in freedom and vulnerability, of our life as followers of Christ in the Society of Jesus. Some will resonate with this testimony. Christian colleagues of an Ignatian formation and spirituality join in implementing our mission.

➤ *Origin (1.), Vision (5.)*

Religious of other congregations and other Christians are similarly invited to express the faith as followers of Jesus Christ and members of his Church and the spirituality which motivates their social justice work. Those of other faiths and spiritualities are welcome to do the same, and secular-minded colleagues to share their important human and cultural values.

Some co-workers have roots in social action, in the parliament of the streets. Some come from a faith (although not necessarily Church) premise. Others come from a secularist-humanist concern for justice and now search for transcendent foundations of their social action. For some, it is mainly a job, and so the need for clear terms, conditions, job description, staff appraisal. (East Asia)

There are fears and hesitations which might block this deeper communication. Earlier sins of intolerance or proselytism; a false respect for the sensitivities of our colleagues be they Christians, of another faith or of none; the implied or express rejection by others of Christian faith, the Church or Ignatian spirituality — any of these may discourage Jesuits from trying to communicate our deepest inspiration. It is up to us to find an appropriate, transparent manner of doing so. At the same time, since it is the Jesuit social apostolate we are working in, the tradition and full reality of the Society of Jesus constitute an important "given." Without imposing, they establish a realm of meaning and discourse with both content and limits, so that religious, moral and spiritual issues are not simply up

for open-ended debate.

➤ *Religious Reading (3.5)*

Although there is a risk of sharp disagreements and even conflict, and although there are situations where silence is the appropriate respectful attitude, a taboo should not be allowed to cover all such issues. We have much to learn from the variety of one another's humanism, social vision, faith and spirituality.

Formation

All staff should have the chance to avail themselves of opportunities to increase their competence, through informal training as well as formal education.

The Jesuits, as sponsors of the social project, should inform the staff about the Province and the Society, share relevant materials such as decrees of recent General Congregations or certain letters of Father General, and offer those who are interested an on-going formation in Ignatian spirituality. In addition, just as we Jesuits want to share our vision and spirituality, we also have much to learn from others and are happy to.

The Ignatian charism would have us find God in all things, and the Jesuit charism would embody this mysticism in a concrete work. It is in this spirit that each social project or centre would like to have bonds of friendship and kindred spirits and a real working community.

**To invoke a dynamic of openness in this way, which is also a dynamic of solidarity and hospitality and compassion, is to thank the many Jesuits and many non-Jesuits who at the inevitable risk of connivance have helped the Church of the Lord learn to become fraternal again and welcoming to the life of the poor and to work with all people in building a more human world.
(Father General at Naples)**

Questions

1. Which aspects of an institutional, professional model and which of an inspirational, informal one are found in our centre or project? What would help us work more as a team?
2. How are characteristics, vision and mission to be discussed between Jesuits and colleagues? Are there opportunities for sharing and formation?

3. How are authority, decision making and accountability exercised and shared?
4. What is the identity of the project: Jesuit, Ignatian, Christian, independent, non-confessional, secular? How does this identity shape relationships between Jesuits and non-Jesuits on the staff?

3.7 Cooperation and Networking

Cooperation and networking of all types probably represent an authentic *sign of the times* in the sense meant by Vatican II: something new emerging simultaneously in different places, something both challenging and promising in the light of the Gospel.

The poverty, suffering, exclusion, injustice and violence we deal with are enough to overwhelm even the most dedicated or sophisticated project of the social apostolate. Therefore our projects and ministries must work with others. We pool our creativity, intelligence and strengths with those of others to face problems of great scale and complexity; and our cooperation itself is a significant witness to the solidarity and justice that we believe in, hope for, work for.

A great deal of cooperation in the promotion of justice is already underway, and some efforts have been very effective. We want to learn from these and reinforce them. At the same time, networking as an approach to social injustice is relatively new and sometimes quite difficult in practice, and we want to be realistic in facing the problems and resistance.

This chapter considers cooperation within the social sector in each Province and Assistancy; cooperation with Jesuits and colleagues in other sectors; and cooperation with other social centres, projects, organisations and movements at every level. In each case, we will try to discover what might be done to enhance both our cooperation within the social apostolate and our contribution to networking with others, to promote the justice of the Kingdom.

Sectoral cooperation

➤ *The Jesuit body (3.10)*

Within the social apostolate, we look back over several decades of much creativity, deep fidelity, fraternity and cooperation. We also notice the vigorous spirit with which strong positions were taken, which sometimes made it difficult to step back and find the distance to listen to one another. We realize that a passionate and prophetic commitment to a social cause should not exclude listening to others. When it does, those who do not listen eventually become isolated, and the net result is to weaken the social apostolate, that is, our corporate response to poverty, suffering and injustice.

Lack of listening and non-cooperation are serious defects and not without their irony. Those who know us are often struck by the strong ties among Jesuits generated by our common spirituality and tradition and nurtured through a long course of formation. Logically, these fraternal links as Jesuit companions should translate into an extensive and effective web of contacts among all sorts of Jesuit efforts and projects. Fine long-running examples of such cooperation already exist.

Among the many factors which contribute to the life of the social sector in each Province, we may distinguish two kinds of cooperation, one based on the *issues* and the other accenting the *approach* or *disciplines* we use.

The issues themselves can bring together social apostolate projects of similar kinds within a Province or in different Provinces. For example, those who are dealing with unemployment, homelessness, drugs, urban youth, human rights, have much experience worth sharing — at least for the sake of learning and mutual support, but perhaps also to help one another, coordinate efforts, join forces. This can only enhance the justice which each effort is striving for in its own way, while at the same time strengthening the social sector we belong to.

Some Jesuit projects are networking with their counterparts in other Provinces, for example, Jesuit Volunteer programmes, Jesuit social scientists in Europe, prison chaplains in North America, ministry among indigenous peoples or the urban poor in Latin America.

The other characteristic form of working together is between different disciplines and levels. The cheerful image evoked at the Naples Congress of "head" linked with "feet" is in fact a very high and very promising ideal. It means connecting direct and organisational involvement among the poor, reading of and research into social reality, and action on culture and structures.

➤ *On-going Tensions (4.2)*

Even within an individual Jesuit or lay colleague, "head" and "feet" can exist as a healthy tension: a Jesuit inserted among the poor who works as a competent social scientist, or a social researcher who is directly involved with the poor.

Such personal integration contributes to the still greater challenge of developing working relationships at the Province, Assistancy and Society levels. Thus, individuals involved in Jesuit projects and centres at a geographical and social distance from one another exchange experience and insight, not as finished results but as complementary inputs into an on-going common effort. Social research centres and centres for faith and culture, whether free-standing or based at universities, find new points of contact with other types and levels of social action.

"Head" and "feet" learning to work together, besides giving fresh impetus to the social apostolate, may allow us to take up a fundamental challenge in our field. Socio-cultural reality is so complex that no social science by itself, nor the social sciences put together, nor even a broad practical approach like "Human Development" put forward by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offers a sufficient method for comprehending it. Action and reflection in the social area need to be connected on a new basis. The basis could be habitual collaboration between some who reflect critically on social issues and formulate theories, and others who work actively in the field.

A central strategy of much Jesuit social ministry involves strengthening local communities, encouraging participation in community building, and developing local connections to wider social resources and networks. Usually such social ministry is highly collaborative, with Jesuits working side by side with lay men and women, members of other religious communities and other local organizations. (United States)

Each may profit from the experience and insight of the other: the theoreticians in closer touch with lived problems of poverty and injustice, the practitioners absorbing perspectives of analysis which

give quality to the direct, developmental or organisational assistance which they offer, and both as they make their impact in the public sphere.

Cooperation involves more than merely juxtaposing the current methodologies of analysis or critical reading with fieldwork as currently practised. Rather than just hope that something interesting might emerge, we can learn to combine the typically isolated enterprises of "head" and "feet" into an integrated approach to social reality bringing direct experience, social sciences, philosophy and theology together. The task is to forge a valid inter-disciplinary approach for the sake of greater justice, and the Jesuit social apostolate is perhaps uniquely placed to take up the challenge.

Instead of lamenting the individualism and fragmentation typical of our day, we can learn to combine "head" and "feet" within a shared mission on a worldwide basis, maybe a unique chance to find new intellectual and practical methods for the promotion of justice.

Cooperation with other Jesuits and colleagues

The social apostolate has much to learn and receive from other apostolic sectors and also much to offer to the rest of the Province: to other ministries, formation, community life, vocation promotion and volunteer programmes. The **Social Apostolate Initiative** is meant to facilitate better communication, interchange and mutual support between the social sector and the rest of the Province.

➤ *The Social Apostolate Initiative (Appendix B.)*

But given the sometimes difficult history we have travelled (some of whose consequences are still with us), what is the best way to foster such cooperation?

One option is for the social sector to wait until others approach us and ask for information or suggestions. For example, a Jesuit finds himself distant from the poor and asks for ideas about living or working in a more inserted manner; or a Jesuit community wishes to draw nearer to the poor and asks for suggestions on how to exercise effective solidarity.

Another option is for members of this apostolate, avoiding blanket criticisms or general advice, to propose specific occasions for cooperation. Thus, Jesuits working in the social sector could approach a Jesuit school of business administration to develop appropriate accounting techniques; develop techniques of reflection on social experiences for candidates, novices, high school or university students; ask a media Jesuit to make video available as a tool for work on social issues in a poor neighbourhood; approach retired Jesuits who may be willing to tutor kids in difficulty or visit with AIDS sufferers or homeless people; or ask Jesuits in the infirmary to pray for suffering or despairing persons.

Cooperation is so important that it is worth preparing carefully. The social sector, for its part, is taking time during the current **Initiative** to clarify its purpose and discourse, a positive step towards working effectively with other sectors which have a long and steady apostolic history.

The open possibilities for communication with fax and electronic mail allow Jesuits to work together internationally in the area of social justice. Examples include:

- the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in the campaign against landmines;
 - Jesuits for Debt Relief and Development (JDRAD) on the cancellation of the external debt crushing very poor countries;
 - International Population Concerns (IPC) on demography and poverty;
 - the Global Economy and Cultures (GEC) project based at the Woodstock Center in the United States;
 - the electronic-mail list, called "sjsocial," for discussion of justice issues and the exchange of information.
- *Resources (Appendix D.)*

There are many issues such as environmental protection and the reform of international institutions on which we could work together internationally. GC34 recommends international work with communities of solidarity in supporting the full range of human rights (d.3, n.6).

Cooperation with others

Those with whom we cooperate may be individuals, groups and organisations, public entities (municipal, province or state and national levels), the Church, intergovernmental bodies. The types of cooperation include exchange of information or joint work on specific issues, involvement in coalitions and participation in networks.

Cooperation takes place on all levels from local through regional to international, with at times complex inter-relationships running through different levels of a single problem. GC34 strongly encouraged regional and worldwide cooperation:

**In many respects, the future of international cooperation remains largely uncharted. With creative imagination, openness and humility, we must be ready to cooperate with all those working for the integral development and liberation of people.
(34th General Congregation)**

Such networks of persons and institutions should be capable of addressing global concerns through support, sharing of information, planning and evaluation, or through implementation of projects that cannot easily be carried out within Province structures. The potential exists for networks of specialists who differ in expertise and perspectives but who share a common concern, as well as for networks of university departments, research centres, scholarly journals and regional advocacy groups. The potential also exists for cooperation in and through international agencies, non-governmental organisations, and other emerging associations of men and women of good will (d.21, n.14).

The work, the issue, the cause is what brings us together. What do we of the Jesuit social apostolate have to offer? Based on our experience as a worldwide body, rooted deeply in a particular place but with international contacts and perspectives, we can contribute much to the networks of organisations concerned with social and global issues: witness, vision, method, connections, ethics, know-how.

While the work or issue brings us together, experience shows that it may be easier to unite *against* than it is to agree on what alternative or change to work *for*. Moreover, are there values which prove incompatible, or is the issue itself enough to render all differences "indifferent"? It may be necessary, though painful, to take a stand on issues of life, arms or non-violence, ethical issues like plagiarism or defamation, or social issues like ethnic chauvinism or religious bigotry — even at the risk of weakening or leaving a coalition.

The impulse to cooperate comes from the experience of the complexity of social issues in a "globalising" world and the relative powerlessness of each individual effort. Successive technologies (telex, fax, e-mail) make networking ever more possible and inexpensive. A proposal to set up a network usually meets with initial enthusiasm, but unless the network's purpose and rules are clear, however, those enlisted are unlikely to make use of it. A network can serve quite different, related or overlapping purposes: urgent action, exchange of "hard" information, exchange of "soft" news, cooperation on a common project, advocacy or lobbying, monitoring public or global institutions (the national government, the United Nations) or participating in a special event like the Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen or Beijing conference. Effective networking, like any other social project, requires good planning, leadership, discipline and resources.

In the process of cooperation at whatever level, working with others to have an effect on society, differences that used to put distance and even opposition between groups, prove interesting and even complementary resources. If cooperation is a real priority, then our social project or centre invests time and human and material resources in cooperation and develops a work agenda in common with other groups.

A real commitment to cooperation, which often means sacrificing one's own preferences or immediate interests, shows that we do not consider ourselves or our project the sole or entire solution. On the contrary, we happily acknowledge complexity, diversity and pluralism, and we affirm cooperation itself as a positive value — for its efficiency and for its cultural and evangelical effectiveness. It is an important sign of the times and an expressive witness to the kind of world we hope and work for.

We try to live the principles of a future society to which we contribute with the work we do, such as: respect for personal freedom, solidarity, pluralism, commitment to justice, fraternity and democracy in decision-making. (Latin America)

Questions

1. Are there examples of cooperation in this Province between individuals or works in the social sector and individuals or works in other apostolic sectors. How might such cooperation develop?

2. What are some successful examples of local cooperation and broader networking that you know of? Are there some unhappy ones? What factors have significantly contributed to or worked against the success of these efforts?

3. What values do cooperation and networking both realize and project? What are the strengths and weaknesses of technologies like fax, e-mail, the Internet, the World Wide Web? In what ways has technology facilitated networking and promoted justice?

3.8 Planning and Evaluation

In every Jesuit social project, a constant exchange of information, impressions and new ideas is going on, and so planning and evaluation are always taking place: informally and implicitly in the midst of the work; in routine meetings and tasks which make up our working together; and in occasional, more or less formal procedures.

Evaluation examines what we set out to do, how we implemented our programme of research and action, what has been achieved. Planning, having gathered the relevant factors, proposes new approaches to achieving what we earlier set out to do or, more profoundly, formulates new objectives.

There is much overlap: evaluation tends to look back for the sake of the work in future, while planning looks forward on the basis of assessing the relevant factors both in the field and within the project. All planning involves some evaluation, and all evaluation has implications for planning.

A great deal of know-how concerning evaluation and planning is available from manuals, experienced facilitators and staff members of other social justice and Church groups. The present chapter — not a full treatment in itself — helps to identify the steps or resources that might be needed. Discernment, which marks all our evaluation and planning but cannot be reduced to these, characterizes the entire social apostolate and is treated separately in chapter 4.1.

Beginning with the evaluation and planning already going on, we review the features of the process, consider the components of our social apostolate being evaluated and planned, and conclude with larger themes our planning and evaluation raise.

Informal, regular and formal occasions

In the daily flow of work, staff members constantly meet and ask one another: "How are things going? What's new? Has something gone awry? What are you doing next?" This informal interchange, with its typical asking, recounting, probing and verifying, willy nilly includes elements of planning and evaluation.

Things may generally be going well — everyone on staff busy, much output and outreach, many needs being met, donors sending support. However, these facts (or impressions!) do not render superfluous a deliberate effort to examine our activities and programmes.

Many Jesuit working groups regularly set aside some time (a morning, a day, a weekend) to report on activities, bring everyone up to date, take stock and make suggestions. More explicit evaluation and planning are usually involved when hiring staff, redistributing tasks, finishing up a project, taking up new work, applying for funds, writing a report, budgeting for the coming year. Informal evaluation may lead to an improvement in how things are done.

Those unfamiliar with good process may resist planning and evaluation as pretexts for intrusion and inspection or simply as a waste of time. There is also the fear of changes that might result or the opposite fear that a congratulatory rather than self-critical exercise will paper over what is really amiss. Despite these fears, evaluating and planning, competently undertaken and followed through, bring many essential benefits.

From time to time, a Jesuit social centre or project may deliberately undertake a formal process of evaluation and planning. There are a number of valid reasons that motivate a social work to take stock formally and set goals and objectives for the future:

- Significant changes occur among the people served or the issues worked on.
- External demands seem to overwhelm all plans and determine priorities, and staff members feel overloaded.
- The people we work with or the groups we collaborate with suggest new directions.
- The work seems to lack focus or the results leave us dissatisfied.
- The staff faces an important transition such as finding a successor to the founding director.
- A funding agency requires a full report.
- The Province apostolic planning requests an account of the ministry.

In the following, it helps to choose either evaluation or planning as the focus for reflection and to keep a specific social centre, work or community in mind. The concerns also apply, in different ways, to the whole social sector in a Province and may usefully be taken up by the social commission or by coordinators meeting at the Assistancy level. If a point seems too obvious to be worth mentioning, please remember that in another project or Province, or in this project or Province at another time, the same point may be very relevant.

Ingredients

Planning and evaluation — whether a one-off meeting, a regular series, or a formal process — themselves need to be reviewed, to see if they are well-designed and running well. The purpose here is to look over some basic elements that are usually involved, to see which weak or missing ones are subject to improvement.

Planning and evaluation are shaped by those who commission the exercise, those who design and conduct it, and those who participate in it. Evaluation may be commissioned by the project or centre itself (either the leadership or the whole group), by funding agencies, by the sponsoring Province.

An *external evaluation* is designed and conducted by outsiders, with more or less involvement of the staff. When a problem runs very deep, for example, the leadership or the whole staff is in crisis, then evaluation generally needs to be external if it is to be credible and effective.

An *internal evaluation* is designed and conducted by the centre or project itself and is, in this sense, a *self-evaluation*, while planning is by nature internal. Both can benefit from the expert and dis-interested help offered by facilitators (design, group dynamics) or technical consultants (financial auditing, statistical sampling).

Experience shows that whether evaluation is internal or external, participation is most important. The active participants may be the leadership or administration, or the professional staff, or the whole staff. An evaluation involving as many of those engaged in the work as possible gives better findings and makes the implementation of recommendations or planning much easier. Beneficiaries of our services, groups we collaborate with, NGOs or public agencies, funders and Church representatives may also be invited to participate.

A second concern is the design of the evaluation or planning. It is essential to define the purpose or objectives as precisely as possible. What needs exactly are to be met? What are the most important questions to be answered? If the questions are about success or failure, how are these terms defined, and who (external evaluators, leadership, professionals, staff) establish the criteria? How are the constraints that establish the limits of the project's viability to be found and faced? Does our socio-cultural analysis inform our planning and evaluation?

A third set of issues may be found in the method or style. For example, a different approach is used to prepare a year's work than to review the overall mission. It is important to establish an appropriate calendar: a hasty process risks superficiality, a prolonged one may drag down all the other activities. Another aspect is the level or scope: can the problems that are identified be solved on their own or do they point to a deeper malaise?

A final set of questions about the outcome needs to be faced at the beginning. What are the hoped for results? What is the range of possible changes? Being ready to draw the fruit from evaluation or foreseeing how planning will be implemented help to keep the process honest and modest, feasible and focused, and are convincing pledges of its seriousness.

Let us develop methods and techniques of planning which arise from a reading of social reality in which we are inserted, a reading from the perspective of the poor and constantly updated by the frequent practice of social analysis. (Latin America)

Components of our work

We now look at what is being evaluated and planned: Which components — whether of a whole centre or work, a single department, or a particular programme — are going well? Is something needed to maintain them? Are they worth strengthening? Is a component overlooked or neglected and, if so, how can it be brought in?

As all our work is finally for and with others, the first questions may well have to do with efficacy and impact: how the work or centre meets the real needs of people in society and the Church. We need to look at the results — admittedly hard to appreciate, much less quantify — and ask whether they are what earlier planning would lead us to expect. Are they in harmony with our mission? Are they sufficient? Are they unexpected? Our research and writing may "produce" useful things, but do these get out and reach people? We may do good workshops and communicate effectively, but does sufficient research support the activities?

Intrinsic to the work of our project or centre is its "reading" of society. Despite our good reputation in this area, as a staff we might rarely share our analysis with one another, much less verify if it has become routine or is really perceptive of new problems emerging and responsive to change. Is our analysis precise, and adequate to the complexities?

It seems that our approach to social analysis up to now has often been too narrow, focusing on the economic dimension to the neglect of the cultural, spiritual and ecological aspects. Such a fundamental question is very much the "business" of an evaluation. (Africa)

Our social, cultural, evangelical effectiveness depends very much on how staff members work together. Appropriate levels of openness and participation are important. Evaluation and planning can look at what really gets put in common on the table, and whether we make use of opportunities for constructive criticism or tend to avoid them. Cliques or divisions, individualism, careerism and neglect of coordination are obstacles to teamwork. Evaluation and planning are opportunities for a team to coalesce and take active responsibility for its work.

Since so much depends on collaboration, we might evaluate our links with sister groups and consult some of them in our planning. Otherwise we run the typical danger of appearing too busy or independent to cooperate with others.

Without reducing everything to professionalism, we want to employ professional and intellectual skills in all our social ministry. Is the work well set up, efficiently run, productive? Is creativity encouraged? Does the outcome of the project warrant the human, financial and material resources employed? Given the undertaking, are these insufficient? Given the resources, are the expectations realistic or not? Is the work cost-effective and sustainable and can it be replicated? To ask if we should cut back, change focus or wind down may seem threatening since a work, once institutionalised, operates on the presumption that it will carry on and usually grow.

The way in which decisions are reached is another area to be examined. Is there incisive evaluation and proactive planning? This area also involves looking at the way in which leadership contributes to the life of the team and the quality of the ministry. Does it find a balance between authoritarian excess and the anarchy of everyone deciding everything?

The needs are usually enormous and endless, and the work done obviously relevant. But is it well thought out? Is this the best way of running it? For example, does the technology we use show simplicity? Does it enhance both productivity and the service of justice? Or does it distance us from sister groups and the people we serve? The material, financial, infrastructural means used also need to be examined to see whether they are effective, in harmony with local culture, and of some witness value.

Finally, how does the particular centre or project participate in the social sector of the Province, and how does the Province exercise care for the work? Are young members of the Province familiar with and supportive of the project, and do some of them foresee being involved in future? Or is the work, even though located within the Province territory, not a "corporate apostolate" but outside the social sector and the Province mission? If so, what might be done to bridge these gaps?

Very significant Social Apostolate works are frequently developed by talented and hard-working Jesuits who do not involve themselves in a team approach. Their efforts are highly personalised in planning, administration, fund raising, and evaluation. Often they bear only a tenuous relationship to the local Province or Region, not being a corporate apostolate. Younger Jesuits are not encouraged to be involved in the work nor adequately prepared to take over responsibilities for it. As a consequence, the work may simply die out when the Jesuit dies or leaves the area. (Africa)

Planning and evaluation, in the spirit of *Characteristics*, involve looking for the questions which *cannot not* be asked. Sometimes, for both objective and emotional reasons, these questions are difficult to find and raise. It is also difficult for a group to be self-critical and face change. Despite obstacles and resistance, though, we should find which steps (few or many, big or small) are needed in *this* particular work or social sector at *this* time: the grace to see, and the strength to do.

Themes for reflection

Planning and evaluating sometimes uncover broad, deep themes worth thinking over in our work and also in our community life.

The Jesuit social apostolate does not invent its own mission but receives it from the Society of Jesus: to bring the faith and justice of the Gospel to society and culture. Each work, project, centre or community implements this mission and in turn contributes to the whole sector and the overall Province mission.

Do our work and way of life fulfil the mission integrally or — as is sometimes the case — do they respond to motivations which are intellectual, ideological or psychological in nature?

To work well requires organizational efficiency and professional competence, and in vital tension with these are Gospel values of charity, forgiveness, gratuity and reconciliation. At the same time, the Gospel is no substitute for competence and organization, no excuse for complacency or sloppiness. Effectiveness in service of the poor is not identical with, but mysteriously greater than, "bottom line" efficiency according to the dominant system.

Preaching in poverty is accomplished, paradoxically, by struggling in poverty, with all competence and professionalism, with all the effective planning and indispensable strategies, because the poor deserve to have the best, the *magis* of our effort. For we make use of these impressive means, not to our own advantage, but always with generosity, gratuity and non-violence which mark the commitment to the service of others, all the way without turning back and without recompense (Father General at Naples).

The immediate objectives, the means of achieving them, may become all-absorbing; the project or institute may have obeyed the "natural" logic of expansion rather than grow (or not!) according to evaluation and planning which take the mission as foundational.

Seeking to promote the justice of the Kingdom, it is not easy to evaluate the fruits. Some results are perceivable and objectively appreciable, but many others — connected with people's conversion and social transformation — are invisible yet very real, with direct or indirect effects on individuals and communities, culture and structures.

Jesuit institutions can use the following means to help in implementing our mission: institutional evaluation of the role they play in society; examination of whether the institution's own internal structures and policies reflect our mission; collaboration and exchange with similar institutions in diverse social and cultural contexts; continuing formation of personnel regarding mission. (34th General Congregation)

Differentiating between success and failure — real, apparent, short-term and long-term — is a matter of the criteria that are obeyed in practice. Does what we do and live translate our mission into reality and convey our vision to others, or do these ideals actually get reduced to the tasks that take up all our time? Our day-to-day practice communicates unerringly, far more accurately than words, the values we really embrace.

Mistakes made in the socio-cultural field may have wide repercussions and lasting effects on others and ourselves. Some are practically inevitable, others avoidable. Let us acknowledge our failures, celebrate successes, learn and grow through both.

Evaluation and planning mean paying attention to the culture which our ministry is promoting: the model of society which is being encouraged, the political impact, the ethical meaning, the evangelical significance. They present a continuous opportunity to make what we do and live, in a social centre or project and an entire sector, ever more truly characteristic of the Jesuit social apostolate.

Questions

1. What planning and evaluating are going on in our work? Are they only informal? Are there regular meetings as well? Is there occasionally a formal process? What, in each case, are the benefits and shortcomings?
2. In our community, how do evaluating and planning take place? Are the themes for reflection, like the ones presented, relevant to community life?
3. Other social justice groups notice a penchant, in Jesuit projects, for methodical thinking and critical reflection. They sometimes ask us to help them plan or evaluate. What — out of our formation, experience and characteristic approach — have we to offer such groups?

3.9 Administration

Administration is not a topic towards which most Jesuits have a natural inclination. However, it is worth remembering that St. Ignatius spent over fifteen years administering the new Society of Jesus as its Superior General and writing its *Constitutions*. His example is strong encouragement to take this topic seriously. "Administration" and "management" belong to the worlds of business or bureaucracy, while "our way of proceeding" is a very Jesuit expression. In this chapter they come together in the actual running of a Jesuit social centre or project.

This *daily concrete running* may, depending on the kind and size of the work and on the local culture, be called *action, administration, conduct, direction, management, operations, practice* or *programme*. Insofar as ours is similar to other comparable grass-roots work, NGOs, research and action centres, these are important to refer to in thinking about our administration.

Much of what is involved in the actual running of a Jesuit project usually remains in the background, but that does not make it indifferent to our mission. Here the characteristic consists in paying attention to apparently pedestrian ones, so that "how we manage" really supports, enhances and testifies to "what we are trying to do."

Just as earlier chapters (3.2-3.5) showed *how* to read the situation rather than giving a picture, so this chapter does not describe any particular Jesuit project, much less define a correct or ideal type. Instead, it mentions points to consider under a number of headings — place, human resources, finances, material means. Each group needs to find what issues it ought to attend to and apply with intelligence and creativity.

Day to day

The *place* we work in (a room, a building, a complex) and live in (a house, an apartment, a residence) should be physically accessible and culturally welcoming to the people for and with whom we work, in a special way to the poor. It should also have facilities apt for living, hospitality, working, meeting, thinking, writing. It should be reasonably clean. What receives prominence in the decoration — pictures, posters, images, symbols — makes an impression deeper than many words. Does the decor say what we want to get across?

With respect for both the donors and the beneficiaries, we use *material means and resources* well: paper, books, vehicles, computers, audio-visual equipment. We avoid a throw-away mentality and are careful not to damage or waste. Buildings and equipment may seem "just a means" which does not deserve attention, but something considered normal in one culture (to discard paper, to borrow a car) may have quite a different significance in another.

The resources called "ours" have been entrusted to us to be used for the social apostolate, for the poor, for justice. Whether or not we share material resources with sister groups that are less well-endowed is sometimes at issue.

Our working together also depends on conditions such as: just wages, social security and other minimums of labour justice for both professional and support staff (an important and sometimes complicated

distinction which small projects usually need not make). They also include basic working conditions for interns and volunteers, and the Jesuits who sometimes fit into these categories and sometimes do not.

Also related to working together are the resources of leadership which should serve the whole project. As much as possible things should be run with transparency, and everyone on staff should be kept well informed. However, not all staff members are equally responsible for the issues of administration, and openness may be difficult if some on staff cannot keep confidence. Finally, "human resources" in quite another sense are the staff's competence, formal knowledge and learned skills, put to work together.➤

Teamwork (3.6)

In some countries, people involved in social justice projects and research centres are adapting techniques of business administration for use in their own administration. Jesuit organisations, especially larger ones, may benefit greatly from submitting themselves to an appropriate discipline in terms of personnel, resources, finances and fund-raising, without assimilating a for-profit mentality.

Financial questions

Exercising responsibility for our *financial resources* may begin with taking care to use money well. At a minimum this means using it honestly, not being arbitrary, accounting for income and expenses with transparency, and using accounting methods appropriate to the size and type of project. Once again, while all staff members are not equally responsible for financial issues, an appropriate level of information is important.

Because of the poverty situation of the Continent, many excellent and well-developed Jesuit Social Apostolate works must seek outside funds from church organisations, foundations and private individuals to support their capital expenditures and ordinary running costs. Over the years, this can engender a dependency that dictates past orientations, present operations and future prospects. Because of recent economic and political developments outside Africa (e.g., recessions, opening up of Eastern Europe), the source of funds is significantly declining. This has direct results on the viability of many of our apostolates. (Africa)

In some case *the Society of Jesus* sponsors the social project, provides the facilities, assigns Jesuits to work in it, provides financial resources, and consequently accepts an important moral responsibility. *Other sources of funding* carry responsibilities too. Funds provided by the Church, by benefactors and sometimes by beneficiaries are a form of cooperation or partnership. It is important to keep the sponsor and supporters well informed.

Funding from corporations, foundations and the state may provide an essential piece of the budget, with the risk however of making us dependent, affecting our real priorities, and limiting our freedom to act or to criticise. Many projects are trying to diversify their sources of major funding, but this takes effort and may result in loss of income.

Investments made in our own name or by the Society for us deserve scrutiny according to principles of ethical and responsible investment. Religious congregations and NGOs have developed such principles that are applicable to Jesuit projects. The purpose of investment is to earn

revenue to support the work, but should we invest in corporations whose conduct we criticise? Should we invest overseas to earn a higher yield at lower risk, or invest in the national economy with less earnings for the social apostolate and sometimes real danger of losing the capital?

Preparing a budget may be the occasion for reflecting on our real priorities in what we choose to work on and spend on. A temptation is the "economy of scale," which favours activities of greater proportion and scope for the sake of greater efficiency or productivity and to reach more people. Is this logic always valid for us?
➤ *Planning and Evaluation (3.8)*

Despite good intentions, abuses may be committed, and there are no fail-safe recipes or perfect solutions. The point is to be watchful, pay attention, exercise care for persons on the basis of justice and stewardship in the use of resources. This responsibility we accept is a question not only of integrity as seen from within but also of the public image we project.

The public *persona*

The public *persona* of a Jesuit project, more than just image, is essential in having an effect in society and culture:

- to communicate our concerns
- to relate with other groups
- to resist injustice, promote change, involve others
- to influence public and political opinion
- to protect the vulnerable (occasionally ourselves) from attack
- to raise money or win other needed forms of support.

In any encounter which people have with our project or centre (personally, in groups or in the media), what do they see, experience, expect and conclude? The ways in which we manage our physical, human and financial resources translate into cultural, ethical and spiritual impressions. Do people find us and our project competent, cooperative, generous and reliable?

How the media treat our work, the positions we take and the causes we promote, are also our responsibility. On us depends how we treat journalists, which groups we associate with, and what kind of image or *persona* we project. Learning how to give a good interview is a practical way to improve our media presence.

A Jesuit social project fulfilling its mission projects a certain coherence between social action and spiritual discourse. Others will testify to its credibility, to the witness it offers, to the hope it shares, to the Good News it conveys.

**The agencies for economic assistance have turned their eyes and hearts to other continents. They complain moreover about the lack of successful experiences in the struggle against poverty which endure and serve as a repeatable model.
(Latin America)**

Tensions

The project/organisation/institution is a multiplier of individual efforts, a presence or even weight in society and culture. Such a resource, providing prestige, influence and a comfortable livelihood, can become absorbing in itself. A well-established work does not easily shed a critical light on itself, and criticism from without is often unwelcome.

➤ *Planning and Evaluation (3.8)*

Some Jesuit groups fear that concern for administration might dull the prophetic edge of their work. This fear may be due to an unexpressed preference for "anarchy/spontaneity" rather than running things as a team. Other groups may find the concerns raised here obsessive, introspective or self-centred because they do not see their relevance to urgent issues and demands. Still others, enmeshed in internal difficulties, may find the points "too little too late" to help them out of a morass, whereas new or small projects may see in them early signs of their future institutionalisation.

Many a Jesuit works full-time on administering a project or centre, spending practically all his energy on management, fund-raising, public-relations, hiring, planning. His leadership makes possible the social justice service which staff offer. Externally, a Jesuit director is often credible in the public realm and among supporters. Administration is a real service in providing the conditions under which the work can be done effectively and harmoniously, and the fact that the Society provides or helps assure the leadership and resources is appreciated.

The leadership of a Jesuit gives many a project its Jesuit identity — and yet sometimes, sadly, only in the transition to the second generation does the work really become integrated into the mission of the Province. Those in positions of leadership in the social apostolate are invited to lead with awareness and discernment of the real tensions underlying the choices to be made. Without interior freedom we can easily be trapped by the apparent good of careerism or an addiction to the task at the expense of persons. If we do not pay attention to this dynamic within the groups and institutions in which we ourselves are directly involved, we can end up violating justice and human rights even as we strive for them.

**The true paradox of our apostolate is found here, between work for justice which is socially and culturally effective, and work for justice which is evangelically expressive of the Good News.
(Father General at Naples)**

In many concrete administrative decisions, "efficiency or professionalism" and "social results" come into tension with "poverty or simplicity" and "evangelical, counter-cultural witness." The debate often moves between "principle or purity" and "organisational pragmatism or expediency." The point here is that choices made unconsciously are better made with awareness of the tensions involved and after discussion by the staff.

➤ *On-going Tensions (4.2)*

Administration and justice

"Don't sweat the small stuff" *and* "Be faithful in little things" are two apparently contradictory bits of proverbial wisdom which illustrate the challenge of administering well a work or centre of the social apostolate.

Openness and transparency, dialogue and, sometimes, counter-cultural courage may be necessary for a group to recognise and face the ambiguities, limitations, temptations, even sins which mar its day-to-day functioning. Thus, administration has a wide-ranging relevance for the justice which every social

apostolate centre or project not only talks about but also tries to implant or promote. It is a living experiment in people learning to work together for others, translating ideals into social and cultural reality, testifying in deed to the Kingdom of God.

In conclusion we make our own the promise expressed by the Latin American Provincials of the Society of Jesus in their November 1996 *Letter on Neo-liberalism in Latin America*:

To make our undertaking credible, to show our solidarity with the excluded of this continent, and to demonstrate our distance from consumerism, we will not only strive for personal austerity, but also have our works and institutions avoid every kind of ostentation and employ methods consistent with our poverty. In their investments and consumption, they should not support companies which violate human rights or damage the eco-systems. In this way we want to reaffirm the radical option of faith that led us to answer God's call to follow Jesus in poverty, so as to be more effective and free in the quest for justice.

Questions

1. In its action and outreach, our centre or project is trying to implement justice, reconciliation, solidarity. Are there concrete signs of these values in the daily running of it? Are there also counter-signs, values which ignore or deny the justice of the Gospel?
2. Could the Jesuit Province Treasurer help to develop more specific questions for the social apostolate to raise regarding our administration, working conditions, investments? Could someone help us reflect critically on our public relations and presence in the media?
3. Since Jesuit community is not a "private" but an intrinsic part of the social apostolate, are there questions of administration worth asking about our community life?

3.10 The Jesuit body

The mission of the Society of Jesus according to the *Formula* of 1550, "to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine," was re-expressed by GC32 in 1975 as "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement, since reconciliation with God demands men's reconciliation with one another." This, added GC34 in 1995, "cannot be achieved without attending to the cultural dimensions of social life and the way in which a particular culture defines itself with regard to religious transcendence" (d.2, n.18).

This historic decision commits the Society of Jesus to the promotion of justice at the most fundamental basis of our identity and all our activity: our mission. "The service of faith and the promotion of justice cannot be for us simply one ministry among others. It must be the integrating factor of all our ministries; and not only of our ministries but also of our inner life as individuals, as communities, and as a worldwide brotherhood" (GC32, d.2, n.9). Therefore "the promotion of justice should be the concern of our whole life and a *dimension* of all our apostolic endeavours" (GC32, d.4, n.47). Expressing this concern and living out this dimension have constituted an important effort of the Society's since 1975.

From the overall mission of the Society, according to the *Constitutions* and *Complementary Norms*, flows the social apostolate. Its specific goal "is to build, by means of every endeavour, a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common" (NC 298). The social apostolate consists of "social centres for research, publications and social action" and "direct social action for and with the poor" (NC 300). These projects and institutions and the Jesuits and colleagues expressly dedicated to this apostolate make up the social *sector*. The purpose of the social apostolate is to work together, effectively and evangelically, for the poor and for the Church.

Each Province maintains structures to sustain the social apostolate, and the social sector relates in particular ways with the rest of the Province and, reaching out, with the rest of the Society. At first sight these might seem like issues for Jesuits alone, but they affect everyone sharing our work, spirituality and mission.

The social dimension

All Jesuit ministries respond to important human, spiritual and religious needs. All want to reach and serve the whole person. This cannot be done, according to GC32, 33 and 34, without also always confronting sin and promoting justice in society. The commitment is strong, the idea is clear, but to discover what the commitment means *here and now* and put it into practice has not been easy. Nor have we Jesuits found it easy to help one another in this regard. Despite the historical difficulties, however, today there are many Jesuits and colleagues, in every sector, who show great social concern in practice.

All Jesuit ministries are meant to integrate the promotion of justice into their mission at one or more levels: through direct service to the poor, by developing awareness of social responsibility, or in

advocacy for a more just social order (GC34, d.3, n.19). There are outreach programmes located in Jesuit universities or secondary schools in middle-class communities, as well as educational and pastoral institutions serving people on society's margins: *Fe y Alegría* elementary schools, inner-city (Nativity-type) middle schools with intensive programs of education for the urban poor, urban core parishes largely engaged in social ministries.

But unhappy memories and resistances still do damage today, and misunderstandings continue to occur. Since Decree 4 all Jesuits have had a serious responsibility for the promotion of justice. Therefore, some Province members fear that they may legitimately be criticised for their work or lifestyle, denounced or told what to do by those in the social apostolate.

The fact that there are some social projects and works and "inserted" communities in a Province is no reason for others to "leave the promotion of justice to the specialists." More subtly, perhaps, the fact that someone works full-time in social research does not exempt him from the justice dimension either, including living simply or among the poor and having direct pastoral contact. Or the fact that a Jesuit works full-time on a particular social project — for example, with the homeless or illiterate day-labourers — does not exempt him from reflecting on wider social issues like consumerism or human rights on which the Province may take a public stance.

The social sector

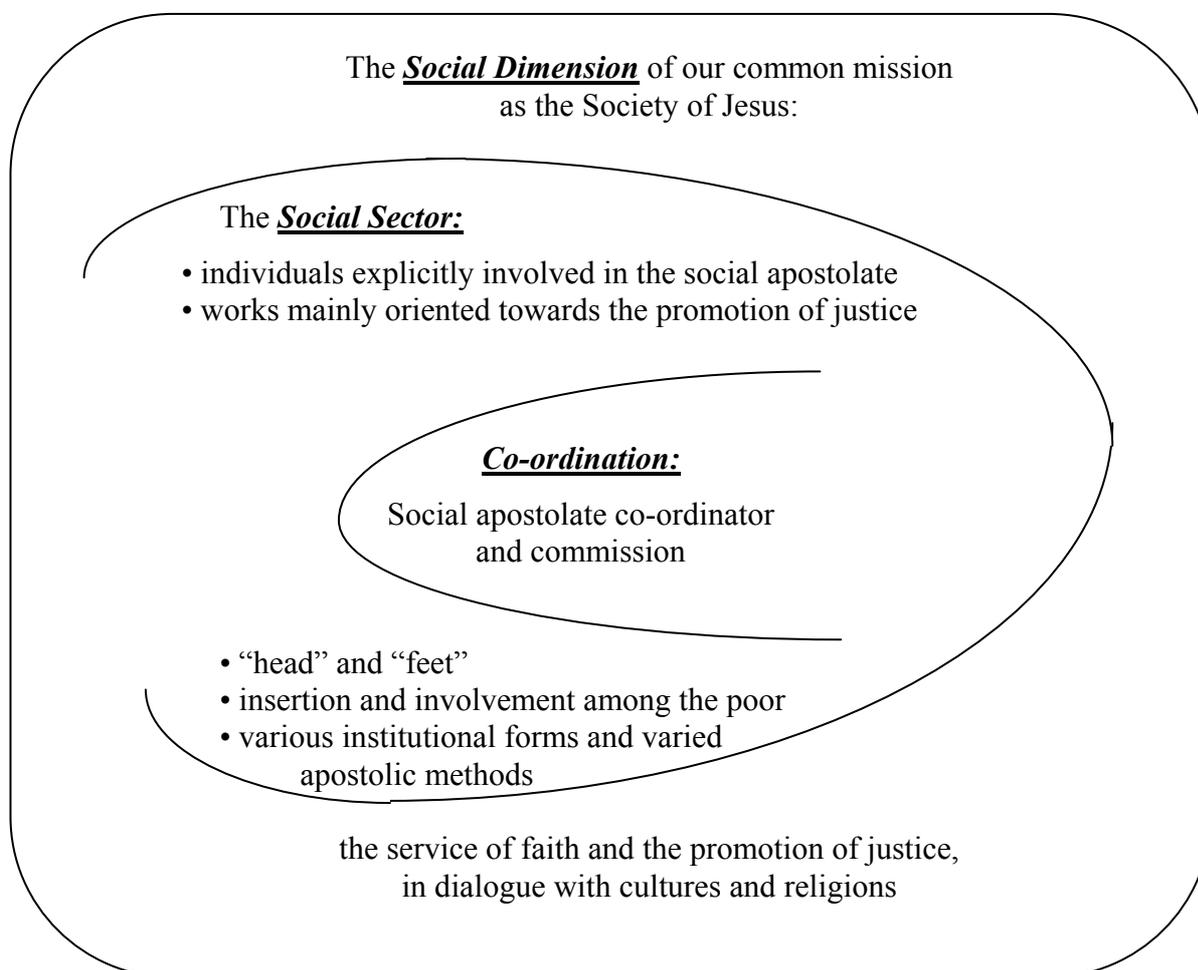
The activities of the social apostolate — "social centres for research, publications and social action" and "direct social action for and with the poor" — have different names in different parts of the world: *social action, social ministries or social-pastoral ministries, social justice, social work or services, development, worker mission, work with the excluded or marginalised, Quart monde or Fourth World.*

Without wanting to replace any of the local names, we use the expression "social apostolate" to refer generically to this great variety of *activities* or involvements in society and culture. The similar expression "social sector" refers to the Jesuits and colleagues, projects and works from the *organisation* point of view and distinguishes them from other apostolic sectors.

While this makes logical sense, it is not always easy to imagine or visualise the social sector. Nearly all other apostolic sectors are typified by a definite, often traditional institutional form. Thus, education: schools, universities; spirituality: retreat houses; communications: publishing and electronic media; pastoral: parishes or missions; formation: novitiate, scholasticate.

If you ask a Jesuit, "What do you do?" and he answers "I'm in secondary education," a significant image immediately comes up. If he adds the name of the city, the subject he teaches or the administrative post that he holds, you quickly form a pretty complete idea of his ministry. By contrast, the social sector has neither traditional institutional forms nor typical means or instruments of its own. It is marked by nearly endless variety and rapid change. So if to the friendly question, "What do you do?", the Jesuit answers, "I'm in the social apostolate," no image comes up unless he quickly spells out what he does, where, since when, among which people, in what kind of setup, with which colleagues, to what purpose.

Therefore, without making unnecessarily sharp distinctions or demarcations, it seems helpful to think of the social apostolate *sector* in terms of concentric circles.



The intermediate circle illustrates or represents the *social apostolate* or *social sector*. It consists of all the institutions and individuals that have received from the Province the explicit mission of working in the social field.

Institutionally speaking, these include the projects, works or institutions explicitly dedicated to the promotion of justice, along with schools, parishes and communities inserted in very poor areas

From the point of view of the persons, belonging to the sector are those Jesuits and colleagues who work expressly in the social field, Jesuits working in social institutions or projects not sponsored by the Society, and young Jesuits still in formation and preparing for this specific apostolic area. The sector also includes Jesuits and colleagues who, while committed to activities in another sector, dedicate some time to direct work for justice, and/or live among the poor, and/or have strong bonds with the core group. All these form the whole *social sector*.

In the innermost circle are those who provide the service of *co-ordination*, which is indispensable for the life, and development of the social apostolate: the co-ordinator supported by the social commission.

Finally, the largest circle represents the essential *social dimension*: the other Jesuits and their colleagues working in other sectors, in formation or in retirement, for whom the promotion of justice is an always present dimension of their mission.

If, with all their heterogeneity, the individuals and works of the social area remain scattered and unconnected, they remain difficult for other Jesuits to comprehend and consider part of the corporate commitment or mission of the Province. "That's not a work of the Province," it is too often said, "but Fr. So-and-so's project.... It's within the territory of the Province but isn't part of our mission."

The social sector can be for Jesuits an area or "space" in which we come together, feel welcome, express ourselves, exchange ideas, are heard, reflect, discern — and also pray and celebrate our faith and life together. For we are not merely social activists; we are men and we are religious, and we need to cultivate and express what makes us such. The young who join our work need it and ask it of us, as do in their own way our non-Jesuit colleagues.

To create a vibrant social sector, a most important feature is the full participation of the "head" and the "feet," as they were cheerfully dubbed at the Naples Congress — the more intellectual ones and those more involved in direct action. The two groups usually differ considerably in daily experience and work style; if this has created distance in the past, now an opportunity exists to make this difference an advantage. The "head" and the "feet" of the social apostolate need each other's viewpoint and contribution. If one aspect is weak, the effort — worthwhile as it may be — falls short of Jesuit social apostolate. Communities in which "intellectuals" and "organisers" and "workers at the base" live together facilitate this sharing on a daily informal basis.

➤ *Cooperation and Networking (3.7)*

Besides specific projects, the social apostolate has spawned significant groups and movements, and the *mission ouvrière* and the Jesuit Refugee Service are of similar spirit. Incorporating these in a social sector and fomenting its life does not threaten the diversity; rather, it is a pooling of blessings

The *Social Apostolate Catalogue*

- Coordinator and social commission

Sector:

- a) Significant works of social action**
- b) Centres for social research, training and action**
- c) Collaboration with other groups or projects of social justice**
- d) Other important aspects of the social sector**

Dimension:

- e) Pastoral projects with a noteworthy social aspect**
- f) Educational works with their justice dimension**
- g) Jesuit magazine, review or other media projects treating contemporary issues**
- h) Works of Ignatian spirituality with a social accent**
- i) Social experiments and reflection on justice in Jesuit formation**
- j) Other noteworthy aspects of the promotion of justice in the Province mission**

and strengths and, eventually, a sharing of responsibility for the social apostolate as a ministry within the Province mission.

Even in Provinces where very few people are ministering socially, there may be the occasional sporadic effort. Then the social sector often develops in stages. The first stage may be called a "collection" of individuals or pioneers: some come when a meeting is called, others do not, everyone speaks but only to exchange news. The second stage may be called a "federation" of representatives: people come to defend or further their own interests or works. The third stage is a real sector whose members care for the sum of projects, works and staff, taking collective responsibility for the social sector as an organic apostolic body now and in future; this could go as far as taking responsibility for coordinating the submission of project proposals to funding agencies.

Even as a federation but especially as a true sector, this is the appropriate forum in which we can raise problems, propose new initiatives, and take some responsibility for human and financial resources. This is the appropriate place to study the Province page in the *Social Apostolate Catalogue* and ask what should change or develop in the social apostolate of the Province.

The social sector in the Province

The social sector exists not only to take care of its own but also to serve the Province and help the Provincial.

Each Province and Region should appoint a coordinator for the Social Apostolate, whose task will be specifically to encourage and facilitate the personnel and activities of the social sector in order to assure effective faith and justice works, and to assist all Jesuits to integrate the social dimension of faith and justice into their lives, communities and ministries. (Africa)

A vital social *sector* contributes intrinsically to the mission of the whole Province and helps it fulfil the whole Society's commitment to justice. Not only does it make its own sectoral contribution, but usually through deeds and examples rather than through words of advice (much less denunciation or criticism) it also proposes ways in which the Province may implement the Society's mission in the socio-cultural field.

A united and active social sector can promote human rights; take a public stand on a social issue, whether local, national or international; make a contribution along lines of Catholic social teaching; participate in a coalition with other religious congregations, on the diocesan level, ecumenically and nationally. At such moments the social sector is at the Provincial's service. It can give him advice, prepare materials for him, accompany or represent him.

The Provincial is to encourage the social sector with *cura apostolica*: by listening and providing direction, assigning men and material resources if needed. The Provincial should visit each social apostolate work, and the coordinator may usefully prepare the annual visitation. Besides his *cura personalis* for the Jesuit members, the Provincial may also give the colleagues an opportunity for a colloquy (manifestation) to encourage them spiritually and affirm their contribution to the mission of the Province.

The Coordinator/Delegate and Social Commission

The Social Coordinator and Social Commission are the usual organisational structure of the social apostolate in a Province. Their work helps to create and maintain and develop the social sector. Where it does not exist yet, an active coordinator and small commission can do a great deal to help a sector develop.

The delegate and commission unify the various social activities, Jesuits and colleagues and future members, into a vital apostolic sector. They turn a bunch of individual or group activities into a definite "area" within the Province. The coordinator and commission help the sector to function and develop healthily and the various social efforts to integrate appropriately within the Society.

The coordinator chairs the commission and cares for the sector's inner life, internal cohesion, continuity and intercommunication, its creativity and renewal. He has an important role as advisor to and liaison with the Provincial and his consultants, providing encouragement in the social field where others may feel some hesitations. He works with the coordinators of other sectors, especially the Delegate for Formation.

The Social Apostolate Commission, which reflects the reality of the sector, be it a collection, federation or apostolic body, can be a sounding board, a kind of parliament, a sort of "consult." At least one member should be a Jesuit student, and the commission should be consulted about social aspects of formation and about experiments, regency and special studies for interested young Jesuits. The commission mediates the sector's relationships with the rest of the Province.

Since the social apostolate is difficult for others to visualise, the coordinator and commission may serve as a kind of image or symbol to which the Province can refer and in which young Jesuits might see reflected their apostolic aspirations for the future.

➤ *Next Generations (3.11)*

Beyond the Province

The social problems we come up against, as concrete and local as they may be, are often rooted in global causes. Yet "we Jesuits do not exploit all the possibilities given to us by being an international apostolic body. A certain kind of provincialism, the immediate demands of local needs, and a lack of appropriate interrelated structures have prevented us from realising our global potential" (GC34, d.21, n.5).

➤ *Cooperation and Networking (3.7)*

At the Assistancy level, a social apostolate coordinator and a commission made up of the Province coordinators may meet annually. Their tasks, similar to those on the Province level (above), are to reflect on larger issues, provide orientation if not agree on common programmes, and organise interprovincial cooperation on problems involving several countries. In Latin America, such meetings involve both Assistancies together, while in Europe there is exchange of information among the four Assistancies involved.

Great solidarity and availability and real openness to change (mobility) will be necessary among the Provinces, even as we remain firmly rooted in our own culture, in order to foster the growth of cooperation and coordination, in service of the world-wide mission of the Church. (Europe)

The Social Apostolate Secretary at the General Curia in Rome is mandated to offer encouragement and facilitate cooperation and the flow of information. Being external, he can help in a special way as animator of the reflection in each region and Province; on the other hand he can animate and coordinate the joint work and reflection between different Provinces and regions. *Promotio Iustitiae* is an instrument of communication that can be strengthened. "Initiative and support for these various forms of networks should come from all levels of the Society, but the Secretariats of the General Curia must continue to play an important role in establishing them" (GC34 d.21, n.14).

Questions

1. What points, highlighted in the *Characteristics*, do we have in common as a sector? Or in other words, what does our common life as a sector consist in at the Province level? at the Assistancy level?
2. Looking at the *Social Apostolate Catalogue* or the graphic of the core group, social sector and social dimension: do these outlines reflect our concerns and shared responsibilities for the social apostolate?
3. Do the works and projects of the social apostolate enjoy an adequate relationship with the Province, the larger membership and the leadership? Are there ways and means which might improve the integration, the communication, the collaboration between those in the sector and those living the dimension?

3.11 Next Generations

The small Louvain community gathered: two older Belgian Jesuits, one teaching computers, the other working with refugees, and younger Jesuits in their thirties: two from India, one each from Belgium, Ireland, Korea and Scotland.

They were talking about the new decrees of GC34 [1995], and the older Jesuits were saying, "The language of these documents is quite old-fashioned, it's very theological, quite traditional." And the younger ones said, "No, we think it's modern."

"But read GC32 [1975]," insisted the two. "It's really modern, contemporary language." And the younger group said, "We think it's somewhat old-fashioned."

The important words in the decrees of our recent General Congregations are chosen with great care. And yet in the space of one or two decades, their reference, their resonance and even some of their meaning have undergone an imperceptible but real shift. Such shifts, which correspond to people's age, become like differences of culture between the generations. These may seem too obvious to affirm, and it takes an effort to perceive the differences and recognise their importance.

Other chapters of the *Characteristics* deal with changes in the social apostolate in response to changes in its surrounding context: the forms of injustice, the available resources, the thinking of the Society. But as the people who carry out the apostolate themselves change in their manner of living and working, this has the effect of changing the social apostolate as well. The present chapter considers the distances separating the generations, the possible dialogue between them, and the formation offered to the younger members.

Generations

"Older" generation — obviously a relative term — here means Jesuits with studies completed, final vows pronounced, some years and even decades working in their social apostolate assignment. These men and their colleagues, their response shaped by experience of the world and Church some years or decades ago, represent the existing social apostolate. The apostolate recognises that attitudes and responses born in an earlier time need to be renewed, and this renewal is what the *Characteristics* process tries to promote.

"Younger" generation means Jesuits in formation, before final vows, who are being introduced to the social apostolate. They have a different experience of growing up in society and Church. Their encounters with the social apostolate lead them to wonder: "Can we find our place here?"

Questions such as the following are present whether or not they get asked:

- What does the social apostolate do?
- How does this respond to the poor, the suffering, the injustices?

- If the effort looks secular at first sight, what does it really mean for Jesuits in terms of faith, religious life, priesthood?
- What faith motivates this apostolate and how does this ministry in turn express our faith?
- Can I imagine myself working as a Jesuit priest or brother with others in this apostolate and thereby fulfilling my human, religious and priestly vocation?
- And how does this sector carry out our mission and relate to the other priorities of the Province?

Such questions are not necessarily new. The established generation lives out its way of answering them, and this constitutes the social apostolate in each Province today. The questions become urgent when the younger group re-asks them according to its own sensibilities, and tests the established responses against its experience of society/culture/Church and its future hopes.

The potential for misunderstanding is great, as we saw in the opening example, and the stakes are high because, unlike groups which have the option of either engaging or ignoring each other, here the evolution of the social apostolate depends intrinsically on the transition between generations of Jesuits.

**Some of you are pioneers. You are the crusaders. You started it. If I can do it, it is because I stand on your shoulders. And I salute you. But, how am I to find my place as a young person, beside you who crusaded, who started? How am I to find a space where I can learn, where I can make mistakes?
(Naples Congress)**

Dialogue

The language of GC32 compared with that of GC34 caused opposite reactions in the Louvain community meeting, and much the same takes place regarding words important for the social apostolate, such as:

action, analysis, authority, community, compassion, culture, development, faith, formation, insertion, Jesuit community, justice and injustice, mission, obedience, the poor, power, prophetic, protest, research, service, simplicity, social science, society, spirituality, structures, struggle, system, teamwork.

Over time, words like these accumulate a load of experiences and acquire a weight of feelings, associations and therefore significance. Events that marked the earlier generations, concerns that motivated them and causes they struggled for are loaded into these words as they mean them now. Decree 4 itself is an "event" of this type. For younger Jesuits, however, such events are history. They have to be learned about and become meaningful only insofar as they connect with *their* experience. And that experience consists of growing up with other events and phenomena — worsening poverty, massive tragedies, the nuclear threat, horrible injustices, chronic unemployment, ethnic conflicts — which the elders lived through, too, but with *their* own categories and feelings. Each generation brings its readings, then, to socio-cultural reality and to the Society's mission therein.

Besides words with their accumulated differences, the social apostolate also seems to gather powerful images or convictions that are nearly always loaded with strong emotion. These are often claims about the "one important thing" to do: work with *these* people rather than any others, this

activity is *the* key one, *this* the all-promising approach, *this* the priority of priorities. Other fixed notions based on misunderstandings — for example, that the social apostolate lacks spirituality, or that the younger generation lacks social concern — do damage to both the social sector and the Province. They are not so easy to recognise and overcome.

Thus, just as much more is involved than the meaning of words, so there are many ways of carrying forward a dialogue: in living community together, in reading reality, in prayer together and shared spirituality, in working together, in being as Jesuits both brothers and colleagues. If people are willing to listen, to respect, to learn, to give, to receive, if elders resist imposing their meanings and if younger colleagues are willing to learn beyond their immediate experience, then real dialogue can and will result.

**At the beginning I was reluctant to talk about my story, having the impression that only "experts" would speak. But as time went on, I realised that the Jesuit family gathered in Naples wanted to hear my story, our stories, and I started freely sharing in the small groups and in the larger Congress gatherings. I discovered that many of my ideas and feelings were in resonance with others at this assembly.
(Joakim Mtima Chisemphere)**

In many Jesuit works, the older generation is represented by a Jesuit founder, a charismatic leader. If a young successor has been designated, he is rarely ready (in both senses: willing and prepared) simply to "take over." Significant issues of priorities, style, dimensions need to be faced, such as working together; individual work rather than collaboration or teamwork; and administrative responsibility for large-scale and costly institutions. If the incumbent director makes little effort to introduce the young Jesuit into the work and train him gradually, it is difficult for the latter to involve himself on his own.

The *Characteristics* mark out the common space in which dialogue might occur. The future social apostolate is being prepared in any case. If younger Jesuits are involved in the dialogue and contribute to the renewal, the

future apostolate will probably not differ in essence from the one in place today — many (maybe all) the major elements will be found, though with different emphases, in different proportions, and with new creativity and enculturation. Young Jesuits on staff and in administration, together with their lay colleagues, will shape the apostolate in response to the changing needs of God's people.

It is important for those already in the social apostolate to have good links with young Jesuits from candidacy on throughout formation. Talks, visits and experiments should be marked by transparency. These encounters are potentially formative for young Jesuits generally, in terms of the social dimension of our mission. Specifically, they are our opportunity to offer encouragement and advice to those who in future might work in the socio-cultural area. Interested students could well hold occasional meetings for exchange and reflection with current members of the social sector.

Those who, immersed in the conflictual and suffering world, live Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuit vocation transparently while competently and enthusiastically carrying out the social apostolate are an important encouragement for younger members of the Society.

Option for the young

Many of those entering the Society now worked previously with the poor or marginalised, part-time during school or taking a year off for service at home or overseas. If such experiences and motivation tend to fade and disappear during formation, the social sector might well ask itself why this happens.

Formation in the social apostolate begins with a kind of volunteer placement: candidates, pre-novices and novices often work in social ministries, usually in direct service with the excluded but also in popular education, development or even research and writing. Such experiments or placements, linked with pastoral work, are occasions for young Jesuits to encounter the poor, enter into socio-cultural aspects of reality, exercise the social dimension of our mission and, hopefully, further develop the social concern that many had on entering the Society.

Social experiences may be part-time ministry during studies, full-time involvement during a summer, or regular studies in a rural or village context for a semester or two. They require good personal and spiritual accompaniment as well as guidance in doing socio-cultural analysis and theological reflection. It would be a great service to formation if the social apostolate could help develop methods and techniques of theological reflection on the socio-pastoral experiences which many young Jesuits are having during their formation.

An adequate curriculum of studies includes social philosophy and ethics, culture and media, social science, moral theology, Christian social teaching and other traditions of social thought. Formation communities do well to be located in poor or simple areas and have contact with the neighbourhood. But insertion and involvement, rather than cause studies to suffer, have their proper place within the over-all process of Jesuit formation.

The Society has clearly declared its commitment to simplicity, insertion and social responsibility, and some young Jesuits live these values within the formation phase. But insofar as the same values do not seem to be appropriated and implemented by the "adult" Society but superseded by other options, they remain associated with and limited to the early phases of Jesuit life. The process reaches a natural limit: formation cannot effectively form young members contrary to the mainstream, and it serves only to a limited degree as a means for reforming the Society as a whole.

Regency in the social apostolate is both an experience of the Society's mission and an excellent preparation for future work in this sector. Ideally it is a practical process of supervised learning. But if a Province has no suitable social apostolate community or team, then how can a scholastic be sent to regency in the social apostolate?

A Jesuit who goes into the social apostolate without adequate theoretical and practical formation risks remaining a sort of "ordained permanent volunteer" among the poor. Programmes need to be

Many younger Jesuits still have the feeling that the works of the social apostolate are too secularised or sometimes insufficiently integrated in the apostolic planning of the whole Province. Direct contact with the poor and with the sector are important during the course of formation. (Europe)

designed, often on a case-by-case basis, to help Jesuits acquire the needed degree of competence, university-level knowledge and practical know-how.

For *formatores* to orient a young Jesuit and for the Provincial to assign him to regency in the social apostolate, to special studies or to a permanent assignment, they need to be able to visualize the young man as a fully formed and well-rounded member of this apostolate. Jesuits already in the social field can offer useful suggestions for a programme of special studies to equip a young Jesuit with the competence he will require in future as a member of this apostolate.

Young Jesuits are welcome to participate in social apostolate meetings in the Province. It is good for them to have an opportunity occasionally for exchange at an Assistancy or international level with other young Jesuits interested in the social sector.

Jesuit inter-generational dialogue has a special quality in its lack of symmetry. On the one hand, the young are not only dialoguing with their elders out of interest but are being formed by the Society and socialised into it. On the other, the young have a certain weight, priority and responsibility, not because they are always right, but because by definition of history the very future of the Jesuit social apostolate depends on them. And we believe that indeed it is in good hands.

Questions

1. A long-established word like "development" takes on new meanings as the society and culture change. A simple exercise to discover differences of meaning which often remain hidden: take the thirty italicised words listed alphabetically above and put them in your order of importance, while someone twenty years older or twenty years younger does the same. Compare the results to see if some significant inter-generational differences emerge.
2. In the inter-religious context, GC34 recommends the fourfold dialogue: of life, of action, of religious experience, and of theological exchange (d.5, n.4). Might these serve as a useful "agenda" or outline of four areas to consider when reflecting on the relationships between the current social apostolate and the young members of the Province?
3. The dialogue between the older and younger generations is not necessarily symmetrical, nevertheless both would be vitally concerned about the apostolic and spiritual patrimony of the social apostolate. How might each generation contribute to a process of passing on the heritage? What are the avoidable obstacles? How might the process be helped along?

4.1 Discernment

A few years after pronouncing their vows on Montmartre, the first Jesuits drew the conclusion, "By experience we have learned that the path has many and great difficulties connected with it." They included this sentence in the first *Formula* of the Society approved in 1540. "In their own communal apostolic discernment, which led to the founding of the Society, Ignatius and his companions saw this as their unique call, their charism: to choose to be with Christ as servants of his mission, to be with people where they dwell and work and struggle, to bring the Gospel into their lives and labours" (GC34 d.1, n.7 citing the *Deliberatio* of 1539).

Experiences in the Jesuit social apostolate also include "many and great difficulties" to be faced with discernment. Discernment is a gift the Society of Jesus received from Ignatius as he learned to discern at Loyola and especially at Manresa, shared this grace with the first companions at Paris and Venice, and wrote the *Constitutions* in Rome.

What is discernment?

Discernment in the ordinary sense of the word means "the power or faculty of discriminating; acute judgement." It comes from the Latin *cernere*, "to sift, to perceive," and it means exercising good taste, showing an educated sensitivity, detecting trends in culture — sometimes called "the signs of the times."

Ignatian discernment of spirits means a combined spiritual attention to the outer situation and the inner motions of consolation and desolation, in order to find what the Lord is asking. For example, "consolation" refers to that deep and abiding peace and joy which is qualitatively different from pleasure and pain. "It is also consolation when one sheds tears which move to love of the Lord, either out of sorrow for sins, or for the Passion of Christ our Lord." If the reader does not understand these expressions, it may be better to talk the topic over with someone experienced in Ignatian spirituality rather than read this chapter.

Discernment is a pattern one can trace throughout the Society of Jesus: our mission, our lives, our formation, our obedience. We learn it, it becomes a habitual exercise, and occasionally we exercise it deliberately — and in all this it also becomes an overall attitude. There is much expertise and a vast literature on Ignatian discernment in the Society of Jesus. The purpose of this chapter is to suggest the relevance of Ignatian discernment in the Society's social apostolate as presented in these *Characteristics*.

In the social apostolate

The word "discernment" is widely used in the social apostolate. It sometimes means

- to read contemporary or future trends
- to calculate, weigh, estimate
- to make a well-educated guess, a politically astute judgement, a cunning choice

The language of discernment is commonly used when

- employing some group dynamic or group process
- getting in touch with our hopes and fears, optimism or depression, personal or interpersonal tensions
- identifying a problem, participating in a decision, reaching a consensus
- agreeing on reasonable improvements, greater efficiency, better techniques
- determining what to do, whom to hire, what to build or to buy

Meanings, situations and usages like these can enter into Ignatian discernment, as we shall see below, but the essential meaning of discernment according to St. Ignatius and in the Jesuit tradition cannot be separated from

- personal love for Jesus Christ
- faith in the Providence of our Father and the action of the Holy Spirit
- experienced contemplative prayer
- perception of spiritual consolation and desolation
- detachment ("indifference") with respect to all that is not God, so that we can love God with our whole heart and our neighbour as ourselves
- ability to articulate such interior experiences
- faith-filled respect for Church authority

These are not differences of degree or shading between an "original" and an "applied" meaning, or a "strict" and a "loose" interpretation. For not discerning at every meeting, one should not feel badly; the far graver problem is using the language of discernment loosely and baptising every choice and decision with the name "discernment" as if it were a vague quality which automatically accrues to anything remotely "Jesuit."

Obviously, how the language of discernment is used depends on each social apostolate group, and especially the Jesuits involved in it. In what follows, discernment is intended in the Ignatian, faith-full and prayerful sense.

Doing discernment

As Christians experienced in Ignatian spirituality and as Jesuits, we seek to live contemplatively, continually in the presence of the Lord in our lives and work. This habit of contemplation readies us for discernment. When it occurs daily, it is called the *examen*.

Since the *examen* is usually done on a personal basis, in the following description "we" is to be read as "each of us":

The examen is a habitual prayer of reflection on God's active presence in everything. It is a moment to give thanks as the basis for our relationship with all reality including our life. In God's presence and with thanksgiving, we examine (consider, review) our actions and encounters over the past day or so and ask forgiveness for the sins committed "in what I have done and in what I have failed to do" and for the evils we met up with, the sufferings caused by others. Accepting God's compassion and depending utterly on His grace, we seek what the Lord calls us to from now on and undertake anew to fulfil it with the same gratuity we have just experienced.

Sometimes our examen deals with blatant evil, with obvious egoism or selfishness, with compulsions to dominate, succeed, or be perfect. Often the forms it deals with, though, are subtle: attachment to our point of view or the bias of our group, narrowness of horizon, temptations to complacency or despair. Evil comes as an apparent or disguised good — self-deception, self-serving rationalisation, defensive narrow-mindedness or narrowness in committed action, blindness to the unintended harm caused by a certain action, the disproportionate cost of some limited good — which can only be detected or discerned with God's help. When social action is directed towards satisfying our own need to be needed or important or successful, God nudges us to acknowledge the mixture of motivations, the fear, ideology, lack of hope, ambition and intolerance that bias our analysis and action.

It is also God who prompts us to give thanks for the gift of any insight and success, to accept our weakness in greater honesty, to learn from the poor and from colleagues, to make the first move towards healing a rift, to apologise and to forgive, to trust even when our work meets with misunderstanding, criticism or apparent failure. And it is God finally who calls us to metanoia, continuous conversion of heart and of mind.

Some social apostolate communities or working groups set aside a regular period of time to do an *examen* together, and this usually takes the form of sharing according to the above points, noting the resulting spiritual motions of consolation or desolation in the group, and seeking the invitation of God to the group. On a larger scale, the social sector in a Province or even an Assistancy may do an *examen* together on a basic question like the **Initiative's** "How do we bring the justice of the Gospel to our society and culture?" as specified in the *Characteristics* with questions such as these:

- Are we attentive to the daily conflict suffered by the people?
- What is the evangelising action of our social institutes and projects?
- Do we transmit and give witness to the same solidarity as Jesus showed?

A local community may also do a shared *examen*. It reflects prayerfully on its common project or the ministry of its members, its lifestyle or that of its members: questions like insertion among the poor or contacts with the marginalised, personal relations, prayer and liturgy, the mode of subsistence. The community way of life allows such an *examen* to take place: each one's personal prayer nourishes the communal prayer, the common discernment significantly orients the community's life, and the shared prayer supports the communal and working relationships and the service offered to God's people.

The gathering and interpretation of factual data, though essential, is not yet discernment. Discernment properly so-called is the prayerful reflection on a human reality (which we have tried to perceive as clearly and objectively as possible) in the light of faith and with this object in view, to shape our lives and guide our actions concerning that reality only and solely as the Spirit shall direct. And this brings us to the notion of conversion. (Father Pedro Arrupe)

➤ *How do we live and work? (2.)*

Our commitment to the social dimensions of the Kingdom is continually submitted to a listening to these internal motions in which the Spirit of God is revealed to us. Fidelity to such attentive listening is what will give us the capacity to navigate the difficult waters of social conflict so marked with ideological obstacles. (Latin America)

Furthermore, from the daily *examen* there is a continuity to the discernment of a serious personal option, and from the shared *examen* there is a continuity to the communal discernment of a significant issue and decision.

Both the classical "election" prepared for and detailed in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Deliberatio* of the first companions give indications of how to undertake a communal discernment. Thus, the pattern of a personal election is followed in communal discernment and in apostolic decision-making:

- in preparing for the choice or decision by clarifying the matter to be discerned, as the issue is rarely cut-and-dried
- in evaluating pros and cons in the light of spiritual motions
- in prayerful confirmation of the choice or decision made.

At stake in discernment is not good rather than evil, but rather "What does the Lord ask of us?": the greater good or the *magis* in these concrete circumstances. The apparent good usually shuns examination, avoids evaluation, rejects change.

➤ *On-going Tensions (4.2)*

A community or group discernment is a serious proposition and is undertaken with care and respect for the needed spiritual wisdom, and it begins by determining what exactly is to be discerned. For the Jesuit social apostolate does not invent its own mission but receives it from the Society of Jesus, and similarly a community or group receives its apostolic orientation from the Province. Therefore a formal discernment centres on the Lord's will regarding a major decision which falls within the scope of the group or community.

The *examen* as a regular prayer of discernment is also a pattern of the *Characteristics*. With the personal experience of the presence of God (section 1.), we give thanks for everything we are, live and do (2.), we re-read or examine the situation of the poor (3a.), our action or labour (3b.), our stewardship (3c.), discern in the interior experience of consolation and desolation where God is leading us (4.) and entrust our renewed efforts to His grace (5.).

Both the 32nd and 34th General Congregations show that discernment is central to the Jesuit way of proceeding. "It is the Ignatian method of prayerful discernment, which can be described as "a constant interplay between experience, reflection, decision and action, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being 'contemplative in action'" (GC32, d.4, n.73). "Through individual and communal apostolic discernment, lived in obedience, Jesuits take responsibility for their apostolic decisions in today's world. Such discernment reaches out, at the same time, to embrace the larger community of all those with whom we labour in mission" (GC34, d.26, n.8).

Freedom

No matter how good our original choice of apostolic orientation we will not be true to that orientation unless we live attentive to the prompting of the Spirit along the way. Discernment is the attuning and exercising of this essential attentiveness of the heart.

Once errors are made in social action, inner freedom and honesty are needed to admit the mistakes and seek forgiveness, pull back from them and start out again in simplicity. The *examen* lets God help us learn from our mistakes and rectify what is harming others and ourselves, rather than leave them concealed beneath a false light. Evaluation is like listening to conscience when assessing if we did things right or not in the past.

➤ *Planning and Evaluation (3.8)*

Ignatian indifference is a high spiritual ideal with an enormous relevance to the work of social justice. True detachment from power and powerlessness, riches and poverty, success and failure helps us to avoid the trap of blindness or even corruption by the apparent good. Discernment is not an added extra, but central to fulfilling the broader public political role of our apostolate.

The *Spiritual Exercises* turn around the great theme of freedom, though not in the form of human rights or political liberty, as the Bible treats great themes of divine and human justice without applying the categories of modern society and culture. Discernment is seeking freedom in daily living and working and in major decisions — to free us in the social apostolate to love God more, to show deeper compassion with those who suffer, to serve better the most vulnerable among our neighbours.

Questions

1. Starting a new community, considering a change of location, or planning an expansion involves choices regarding the neighbourhood and the building. Is there an example of a communal discernment made on such issues? What can be learned from the experience?
2. The location and architecture of buildings that house our social centres and projects also involve significant choices. How do these benefit from discernment?
3. Evaluation is like listening to conscience while going back over "what I have done and what I have failed to do." What are important affinities and links between the *examen* and evaluation (see chapter 3.8)? What are basic differences between the two brought out in the present chapter?

4.2 On-going Tensions

Having learned from experience that "the path has many and great difficulties connected with it," the first Jesuits learned the art of spiritual discernment in order to make their way.

Some of "the many and great difficulties" faced by the Jesuit social apostolate over the years are not to be overcome or resolved once and for all, but are rather to be subjected to continuous dialogue and discernment. These are on-going *tensions* and they are found at different levels in our life and work.

Tensions involve two or more good things which are difficult to keep together, which cannot be resolved by reasoning (logic) or overcome by blending into something new (dialectic), which require discernment, dialogue and continuous re-adjustment, and which tend, if lived prayerfully, towards the greater good asked of us by the poor and by God.

Practically every tension applies to "me" and to "us": the tension in "me" engages my preferences and inclinations and keeps nudging me to grow in integrity; the tension in "us," given the kind of work and community we are in, has us continually checking the emphases we both make and neglect.

We can hardly help favouring one side and neglecting the other. In fact, at the risk of talking psychology: where one feels resistance, may be where one is to find what one needs. This would be true of a community or working group too. What follows are some tensions that are typical of our Jesuit social apostolate, briefly sketched to help an individual, community or working group identify which tension they are called to live better.

Visibility and hiddenness

Giving witness of our faith in the social apostolate is both valid and necessary. We may, like "light of the world," explicitly use religious words or symbols or, like "salt of the earth," we might not. But such adaptations according to "persons, times and places, with their contingencies" is not the same as systematically keeping our faith, our religious consecration or our priesthood private (Father General at Naples). Nor does giving witness mean using social action, which has its own human and evangelical value, to meet a hidden agenda of proselytism.

➤ *Religious Reading (3.5)*

There is the "light" model of giving witness, and the model of "salt" or "yeast." The tension consists not so much in deciding which one to use as in noticing when a change in circumstances ("persons, times and places, with their contingencies") requires a change of emphasis.

This indeed is a challenge of the Initiative taken up by the social apostolate, it is a challenge of this Congress. It would be a mistake to wish to suppress these tensions. We must receive them and contemplate them: how are they going to be a source of energy for us? How can they help the body to move ahead? (Naples Congress)

A social apostolate community, inserted in a poor area or neighbourhood, may be pulled between a visible "light" and a hidden "salt or leaven" style of presence. The Christian nature and Church connections of some social justice projects may be essential to their work — for example, of advocacy or public education — while others need to witness in a very discreet manner.

"Head" and "feet"

"Feet" stands for the dimension of direct contact with lived reality, insertion, closeness, in tension with "head" as the intellectual, reflective and theoretical dimension. The promotion of justice here and now, concretely, politically, may be in similar tension with the socio-cultural analysis of the causes of injustice. For example, "We were a group of very active Jesuits and we plunged into a social action, but without the support of factual analysis and critical reflection in common."

➤ *Cooperation and Networking (3.7)*

No matter the type of social ministry, each staff tends more to "head" or "feet," and the tension is to grow in the other. Everyone is called to active thought ("Don't just watch — do something!") and to thoughtful action ("Watch what you're doing!"). In community but especially in the project or centre, the tension is an obvious challenge to teamwork.

While each work has its proper emphasis, the team can ask where growth is needed towards a greater breadth and integration and more effective service. Similarly, within the social sector of a Province, there are usually works of different types; each type should be represented in dialogue and make a real effort to complement the others.

Charisma and institution

People want to put their competence, strengths and creativity to best use. The tension is between doing so on one's own terms, individually, and putting them at the disposition of others according to the disciplines of teamwork. For an administrator, this takes the form of a tension between work which achieves its own goals and work which makes it possible for others to work. Many Jesuits, when young, vow to work as a team but, once formed, do not and even cannot. So: it's a tension!

From the work or project viewpoint, the tension seems to take the shape of charisma versus appropriate form of institution. A project consolidates, for example, and becomes an NGO so that it can better serve the people, but the institutional process absorbs time and energies which were used earlier in direct contact with the people. Thus a more structured approach is in tension with one of accompaniment, and both are pursued for the sake of effective service.

The tension seems connected with different phases in the development or evolution of the project and perhaps with earlier and later moments in the life of the founder.

The charisma, creativity, initiative and responsiveness often associated with a pioneer are in tension with the stable institutional values, clarification of roles and professional management which make teamwork possible.

➤ *Administration (3.9)*

Tension in where we're located

Insertion among the poor and direct contact with their daily life and suffering are very important for our life, work, spirituality and vision.

Our community in a simple house in a poor area, a lifestyle marked by hospitality, the time we spend with our neighbours, may be in tension with a quiet house conducive for rest and prayer, in a stable neighbourhood close to the work. Whichever the choice, the tension consists in seeking the important values of the other. Similarly the place of work, if inserted among the poor, facilitates a privileged reading of socio-cultural reality, a base for organising action, a credential or warrant for speaking out in public on issues of justice. A centrally located set-up is usually more accessible to the staff, provides a good working environment, allows wider contacts.

Tension in what we do

Another tension in the social apostolate is between the other treated as a "you" interpersonally, and others treated as "everyone" structurally.

The work itself may be one of "being there and apparently doing little" or giving assistance: direct services, pastoral activity, accompaniment of refugees, care for the marginalised (moving from the "you" towards the "everyone"). The work may be analytical, organisational, developmental, structural; advocacy for change or alternatives in structures or institutions at various levels. All these efforts are made so that others are treated as "everyone" is or should be: equally, fairly, respectfully.

**If the poor are not under our eyes, they gradually grow distant from our hearts as well. How can we keep alive nearness to the poor and solidarity with them in our daily reality? Why is it so difficult to grapple with the themes of poverty, justice, culture and dialogue in our works and in our communities?
(Naples Congress)**

The expressions *charity* and *justice* used to be in a polemical opposition of "treating symptoms" versus "changing causes or structures." The Good Samaritan did not treat symptoms but the suffering man with his wounds and bruises. To love your neighbour is *both* to stop and help the man who was mugged going down from Jerusalem to Jericho *and* to do something about the brigands operating along the road.

Charity and justice are not the same thing, but they both come into the Jesuit social apostolate, and the tension consists in attending to the values which cluster around each.

Do they come down to a basic tension?

To live deeply inserted among the poor, to work connected with grass roots, to apply all our intellectual and organisational resources: the tension consists in keeping different levels together, along with counter-cultural values of simplicity and solidarity.

"Apostolic efficiency and apostolic poverty are two values to be held in an on-going tension," said GC32 in 1975 (d.12, n.9). At the Naples Congress, Father General elaborated on the tension between working competently and effectively for justice and working with poor means in an attitude of simplicity:

If our promotion of justice is to be evangelical, that is, if it is to express the Good News and to be marked by the New Commandment, what should we say about the other hallmarks of Jesuit apostolate like competence based on long training, "learning" and professionalism, and effective planning and strategising? Is not all this in open contradiction to our ideal of following the man Jesus, the poor man, who worked with the means available to the poor, who preached in poverty? Is it not in contradiction to what St. Ignatius expects of us?

Perhaps the basic tension is stated even more deeply, again by Father General at Naples, between working for justice as good news and working for justice as effective social change:

The true paradox of our social apostolate is found in the tension between work for justice which is socially and culturally effective and work for justice which is evangelically expressive of the Good News.

We are to combine intelligence, efficiency and fidelity to our vocation:

With our best possible understanding of today's society and culture, to grasp how to pursue a commitment to justice for the poor in a way which would be both effective and deeply Jesuit.

The opening sentence from the *Formula* with one word changed — "By experience we have learned that the path has many and great *tensions* connected with it" — becomes an acknowledgment of gratitude for being stimulated to grow into a freer, more effective, more radical social apostolate.

Questions

1. What are good examples of change or transformation of structures today? Is a structural focus always appropriate in our work?
2. What are the most important and widespread tensions which we live? Which ones, true of the social apostolate, can be extended to other Jesuit ministries? Which ones are specific to the social apostolate alone?
3. If "individualism" means an isolated and self-centred manner, contrary to both community and team, it is always pejorative. Are many gifted, well-trained and hard-working people in fact — inevitably — individualistic? Is this a cultural question, too?
4. What happens when a tension is neglected and only one value is favoured? Have one-sided emphases in the past given rise to frictions, conflicts and divisions in the social apostolate, in the Society?
5. Is there anything one can do to favour growth rather than polarization in the face of tensions? Under what conditions do tensions usually prove fruitful?

5. *Why do we hope?* — Vision

Ignatius of Loyola, inspired by Jesus Christ and the saints in their poverty, exchanged his nobleman's cloak for the tunic of a beggar. Putting all his trust in God, he set out on a lifelong pilgrimage in which interiorly he became ever poorer and always remained close to the poor until in Rome, his travels over, he worked with the prostitutes and the homeless while serving as General.

The same inspiration could have motivated the pilgrim Iñigo to imitate Christ and the saints in their itinerant poverty and remain a holy mendicant. But he wanted even more to serve Christ his Master and, as he liked saying, "to help souls." The initial inspiration gave rise to decisions, and the ensuing changes and events transformed the original desires and became the story of the pilgrim Ignatius and the early history of the Society of Jesus.

Inspired by Jesus Christ, St. Ignatius and others, we plunge into situations of poverty, suffering and injustice which become intensely our own situation too. In a thousand different ways both direct and reflective, we carry on a social apostolate of struggle to alleviate suffering, overcome injustices and reconcile conflicts. The odds are daunting, the failures frequent, the triumphs occasional and rarely definitive. Why bother? Why carry on?

We are particularly influenced by the vision of the African Synod (1994): an integral evangelisation that demands justice and peace and dialogue with cultures and builds a Church after the model of 'family of God.' (Africa)

"Give an account of the hope that is in you!"

Immersed in human suffering and social injustice, we are always running into sin, which in its multiple disguises always corrupts, excludes and destroys. "We see that oppressive poverty breeds a systemic violence against the dignity of men, women, children and the unborn which cannot be tolerated in the Kingdom willed by God" (GC34, d.2, n.9). The sins of the powerful and the comfortable, the sins of the poor against their own and, hardest to recognise, our own sins and complicity "reach in our time a pitch of intensity through social structures which exclude the poor — the majority of the world's population — from participation in the blessings of God's creation." Calling sin by its name is a sound basis for hope and a step towards the conversion of heart which is at the root of real cultural and social change.

When Jesuits do articulate their visions of social ministry, the language typically refers to "building the kingdom of God." It resonates with Ignatius' meditation on the Incarnation and reflects the "Catholic love affair with the world." It serves the collaborative nature of our work since it resonates meaningfully with all Christians working to build the reign of God here on earth. (United States)

To be bluntly critical regarding sinful reality is not pessimism but means joining in Christ's struggle against sin with complete generosity of heart. "We are called to go all the way in our openness to the world, our 'yes' to man.... If our social commitment is authentically Jesuit, that of a companion of Jesus, then it will share with Christ all his faith in man and his world, all his loving Divine regard for humanity in this world" (Father General at Naples). We regularly witness instances of people's goodness, endurance, generosity and comprehension whose value endures beyond the moment.

The Society of Jesus is called upon to rebuild hope by initiating and collaborating with popular movements, grassroots or alternative movements of the marginalised and the like. Whatever the right approach to these challenges, the present social malaise is clearly a result of man-made unjust social structures and relationships. In order to empower the powerless, the Jesuits need to be motivated by a people-oriented spirituality, rooted in the culture and indigenous technology of the people with whom they live and work. (South Asia)

Faith in Christ is the beginning of the social apostolate; compassionate love is what we try to give along with competence for social change; and a resulting gift not of our own making is the real hope we feel for human beings and their world.

"Now present in all who suffer, all who are oppressed, all whose lives are broken by sin" (GC34, d.2, n.4), the crucified and risen Lord Jesus is actively at work where the human family is most damaged. The signs are perceptible, tangible, convincing. A group recovers its dignity, a conflict is reconciled, a loss is mourned without despair, a triumph is celebrated without vindictiveness, generosity sets an injustice right. We know a different life is possible because, especially among the poor, we have experienced it.

Christ performs the signs he always did: the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. We too try to be present in compassion and effective solidarity. The concrete things we do and live each day convey in effect and in the local idiom and culture the proclamation of Jesus: God is our loving Father, and the Kingdom prepared for us, in which we can really be brothers and sisters to one another, is very near at hand.

**We are moved to find ways and solutions according to the style of Jesus, out of close accompaniment, shared poverty and inculturation, out of research which opens new trails to hope, out of action which, like that of Jesus, sows signs of the Kingdom among us.
(Latin America)**

The daily tasks in our project or centre, as well as communal and spiritual life, are elements of an apostolate bringing the justice of the Kingdom to society and culture. They require a dialogue of life and action in collaboration with others. They include our witness to the beatitudes as religious in consecrated life, our ministry of deacon serving the poor and promoting justice, our priestly ministry of preaching, consecrating, reconciling and building community.

The goal of our social apostolate is "to build, by means of every endeavour, a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common." This charity and justice of the Kingdom are *not yet* here, but at the same time, do *already* come about thanks to God's grace and many human efforts including ours. "The men and women of our time need a hope which is eschatological, but they also need to have some signs that its realization has already begun" (GC32, d.4, n.16). The Kingdom is not only within reach and ready to be tried; it is already here and being lived.

To talk about hope, by itself, may not be credible; to work hard, even with occasional good results, does not necessarily go beyond the project itself. We work for what we hope for, but we hope for far more than work alone can accomplish. What seems convincing is the effort to keep combining the two, to keep making the ideal concrete, to keep making hope possible. Competent analysis, rigorous thinking, careful planning, sensitive communication, long-term projects and far-reaching alliances: these somehow continually "work over" our faith and inspiration and, all together, keep generating a hope that is possible.

This possible hope finds expression in "community" and "solidarity." Community is a structure to live, pray, think and work in together — as in the biblical images of wedding feast and holy city. Solidarity means assuming another's situation, making it our own and following through — as Jesus took on our human condition of poverty, suffering and death. The 34th General Congregation was inspired to combine the two in the fruitful image of communities of solidarity. Community and solidarity are both "already" and "not yet."

Community of solidarity points to a reality for which we work and pray — "a world order of genuine solidarity, where all can have a rightful place at the banquet of the Kingdom" (d.3, n.7) — and it denotes experiences which we already have. It is a living parable of the Kingdom.

Just as our faith sends us out to work for justice, so too our solidarity and search for justice send us 'back' to preach the Gospel message of faith within our cultures. The Gospel prompts us to challenge the value priorities and behaviour of those who have responsibility within unjust structures. We believe that it is only the Gospel message that goes deep enough to bring about the conversion of culture needed to create and sustain justice (Europe)

Community of solidarity is a way of living and a means of working. As a way of life it sustains its members involved in the social apostolate and welcomes others, especially the poor, the wounded, the weak and the weary. As a means for working it suggests building up inclusive community in which people care for one another, seek the truth, welcome the poor without excluding anyone, work together for justice marked by charity.

We need a commitment so great that it includes the willingness to surrender one's own privileges. This was the commitment that Jesus had, and it led him to the loss of everything on the Cross. We need a 'martyrdom of spirit' together with, of course, the hope that inspires all martyrs. (East Asia)

Basically my call as a priest is to be a man of peace and hope amidst conflicts and struggles. (A.T. Thomas, before his ordination in 1981)

Our possible hope stretches out into networks of cooperation with many other groups pursuing similar objectives. "Full human liberation, for the poor and for us all, lies in the development of communities of solidarity at the grass-roots and non-governmental as well as the political level, where we can all work together towards total human development" (d.3, n.10).

Our possible hope runs as deep as our very faith. "Being 'friends of the Lord,' then, means being 'friends of the poor,' and we cannot turn aside when our friends are in need. We are a community in solidarity with them because of Christ's preferential love for them" (d.2, n.9).

Being friends every day means translating the good news daily into working ideals, real promises, possible hopes. It sometimes means — as it has recently for some forty Jesuit martyrs from Rutilio Grande (1977) to A.T. Thomas (1997) — paying the price of the cross, a silent yet most eloquent characteristic of the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus.

Questions

1. How does the account given here help the social sector in a Province, the staff of a project, or a community to "give an account of the hope that is in you"?
2. Is "possible hope" a good expression for what our apostolate does offer, or would like to? Are we in fact more hopeful, or do we convey more hope, than at times we feel? What are some differences between an impossible dream or utopia and possible hope?

Appendices

A. Putting the handbook to use

The *Characteristics* reflect the experiences and concerns of the Society's social apostolate, state its purpose as a basis for dialogue and collaboration, and mean to foster its renewal and development. The *Characteristics* are not primarily descriptive, doctrinal, speculative or legal, but an instrument for examining and discussing and developing our social ministries.

Others are most welcome to make use of these pages, but the text assumes that the reader is involved in the social apostolate or well acquainted with the Society of Jesus and its mission. Those less familiar will benefit greatly if an experienced person could introduce them to St. Ignatius, the *Constitutions* and the *Spiritual Exercises*, the social teaching and praxis of the Church and the Society's recent General Congregations (abbreviated GC).

Like the book of the *Exercises*, the *Characteristics* are a series of exercises meant to be *applied* and *used* especially in team and community meetings, study days and days of recollection, workshops, training sessions or courses of formation as well as for personal reflection.

The structure and flow of the *Characteristics* are explained in the "Preface." The chapters are short to facilitate thoughtful consideration and especially group discussion. An arrow ➤ refers to the fuller development of a point in another chapter.

Each chapter includes a few boxed texts, usually taken from the materials prepared in the Assistancies of the Society for the Naples Congress. These quotations illustrate the point being made and give a sense of concerns as they are felt in different areas of the social apostolate.

The *Characteristics* are exercises for paying attention to what we are doing and where, how we do it, why we do it. They help us to examine the concrete, practical implementation of our mission. They help us to ask how faithful we are to our calling in work and community. They help us to test the motivation which energises and orients the social apostolate and the comprehension of what with God's help our ministries seek and strive for.

At the end of each chapter, several questions are suggested. These need to be improved and adapted to the particular group, community or team to stimulate a helpful reflection which does not remain at the level of words or text but eventually moves to decision, action and change. One or two questions per meeting or session will usually suffice. After each participant has read the chapter or shorter passage selected, a small-group exchange (with as few as two or three in each group) allows opinions to clarify before entering into general discussion.

When reading or presenting a chapter, it is very important to keep in mind a particular work or community, or the social sector in one's Province, and constantly refer the points made to it. Real conditions differ considerably from place to place, and so the words used may need to be adjusted to fit local circumstances. With the same generous spirit which St. Ignatius recommends at the beginning of the *Exercises*, please be eager to put a good interpretation on each statement.

B. The Social Apostolate Initiative

The *Characteristics* handbook forms part of a process of reflection and renewal called the *Social Apostolate Initiative 1995-2005*. Reasons for undertaking such a process include the following:

- More than twenty years ago, GC32 defined the mission of the Society of Jesus as the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. How have we done this? What have we learned? We are ready to take stock, and we also need to.
- Everywhere in the world, society itself is changing — radically and rapidly and relentlessly. How do we Jesuits and colleagues comprehend what's happening in the vast area called "society" which is the proper locus of the multi-faceted social apostolate?
- In 1995, GC34 not only reaffirmed the service of faith and the promotion of justice, but added dialogue with cultures and religions as integral dimensions. How do these fine ideas fit together, in practice, in reality, in social ministry and other ministries, in community life and in spiritual life?
- Decree 4 struck many, both Jesuits and others, as very prophetic and maybe too radical. But the notions of social change and social justice are less current now, less fashionable, than they were in 1975! By contrast, the rather soft-spoken Decrees 2-5 of GC34 are actually very counter-cultural, very radical. Very sound as they seem, they are more suggestive than programmatic.

Granted that the social apostolate needs serious review and re-thinking, an apparently simple question was posed to initiate the reflection, as if by a person of good will but without our background:

How do you Jesuits in social ministry bring the Good News to society? Please describe your vision, the work you do, the life you lead.

This got us started in the work of self-evaluation and reflection on our manner of dealing with problems that are at once economic, political, cultural and religious. In some thirty meetings and workshops in the various Assistancies from July 1995 until April 1997, the initial question was faced in more articulate forms such as:

What do you think is happening in society? How do you respond? What's evangelical, Jesuit, priestly about your response? Why do you do such work? What do you hope to achieve? How do you evaluate your efforts and institutions: what counts for success, for failure?

The debate led to discoveries and initial answers began emerging. These were sent to Rome and given to a small preparatory commission or *coetus* (March 1997) which identified the major themes and decided on the dynamics of the Social Apostolate Congress in Naples.

The Congress in June 1997 brought together 160 Jesuits from nearly all Provinces for a week of joyful encounter and spirited exchange. The purpose was to contribute to the renewal of the social apostolate as a vital sector of the Society's mission. The key concerns which converged at Naples are expressed in this handbook, and in the video, *Social Apostolate: Why?* Both are instruments for use in the *Social Apostolate Initiative* in the new decade.

C. Feedback

The present text of the *Characteristics* (1998) is neither finished nor final but a *draft version* distributed among Jesuits and colleagues to be tested in personal reflection and group discussion. The important thing is to use the various chapters in order to confront the reality of the social apostolate — what we do, where, how, why — with honest and critical reflection which passes from words to action.

Taking any characteristic statement made in the handbook and applying it to a particular work or to the social sector of the Province, one might ask,

Does the affirmation fit? What reflection does it stimulate? What new perspectives does it open? what is the next step to take?

If in this light a statement causes disagreement, please try to reformulate it; if an expression poses an obstacle, try to recast it; if a point seems missing, bring it in and develop it. In all these cases, try to pursue the consequences of the addition or reformulation.

Any reading or discussion of the *Characteristics* will probably move people's spirits and generate comments of both appreciation and criticism. Such comments and suggestions, communicated to the Social Apostolate Secretariat, would be of great use in revising the *Characteristics* and making them a more accurate and useful instrument.

Three other kinds of input are also warmly requested:

- Any successful *approach or technique* employed in a meeting or workshop, which would contribute to a *pedagogy* of the *Characteristics*.
- An *incident or experience or slice of life* which illustrates a point made in the *Characteristics*.
- A topic of *Ignatian spirituality* (for example, a meditation of the *Spiritual Exercises* applied to the socio-cultural realm, or an innovative use of the *examen*) which enhances or illuminates something in the *Characteristics*.

Feedback received by June 1999 will be useful in revising and improving the present draft text. Early in the new decade, Father General hopes to promulgate a definitive edition of the *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus*.

Please send any comment or input to the Social Justice Secretariat by mail, fax or e-mail (address below).

D. Resources

- The present working draft of the *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus* is published in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish (other language versions may become available) by *Promotio Iustitiae (PJ)*, the bulletin of the Social Apostolate Secretariat at the General Curia in Rome.
- Several articles which explain the background of the *Characteristics* have appeared in *PJ* in English, French and Spanish. The **Social Apostolate Initiative** is first described in *PJ* 64 (June 1996) and further

explained in *PJ 67* (May 1997). In *PJ 68* (September 1997) there is a description of the Naples Congress and some of its conclusions, along with addresses by Cardinal Michele Giordano, Archbishop of Naples, Fr. Vittorio Liberti, S.J., Provincial of Italy, and Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach.

- A history of the Jesuit social apostolate, "From *Rerum Novarum* to Decree 4," is traced in *PJ 66* (February 1997), especially the 1949 "Instruction" of Father General Janssens; this issue is also available in Italian.
- For a detailed Province-by-Province overview of the Jesuit social apostolate, please see the *Catalogue of the Social Apostolate*, published in four fascicles *America, Africa and Asia, Europa* and *Social Centres* in 1997, with the *Europe* volume updated in 1998. The *Catalogue* presents, in a simple systematic format, a great deal of information about the social sector and social dimension within each Province. The *Catalogue* may be borrowed from the Provincial Curia or requested from the Social Apostolate Secretariat.
- The video *Social Apostolate: Why?*, partly filmed at the 1997 Naples Congress, introduces viewers to Jesuits facing some of the basic questions of the social sector today. The video, accompanied by its *User Guide*, is available in English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Slovak and Spanish, and in the required VHS system: NTSC, PAL or SECAM.
- For information about the "sjsocial" discussion group by electronic-mail, please contact:
sjsocial-request@sjsocial.org

The resources listed here are available on request. A donation to help defray expenses, while not necessary, is always cheerfully accepted. Please contact:

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