



# Promotio Iustitiae

Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES), General Curia of the Society of Jesus, Rome, Italy

## **A Journey of Justice and Reconciliation: 50 Years and beyond**



# With gratitude to Former Secretaries of SJES



**Fr. Francisco Ivern SJ**  
(1969 - 1975)



**Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ**  
(1975 - 1984)



**Fr. Henry Volken SJ**  
(1984 - 1992)



**Fr. Michael F. Czerny SJ**  
(1992 - 2002)



**Fr. Fernando Franco SJ**  
(2002 - 2011)



**Fr. Patxi Álvarez SJ**  
(2011 - 2017)

# **A Journey of Justice and Reconciliation:**

## 50 Years and beyond



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General Curia of the Society of Jesus  
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## Editorial

**Xavier Jeyaraj, SJ**

I feel humbled yet privileged to write introducing this historic issue of *Promotio Iustitiae*, **A Journey of Justice and Reconciliation: 50 years and beyond**, to celebrate 50 amazing yet challenging years of the Secretariat. I feel humbled because it is not something that I have earned, rather it is a magnanimous grace received from God. I just happen to be here. It could have been anyone. Privileged because, through this issue I become part of a historic milestone in the long life of social ministry in the Society of Jesus. I feel like Mother Mary singing *magnificat*.

Fifty years of the Secretariat (1969–2019) is truly a historic moment, a *Kairos* moment as Fr. Arturo says, not merely for the social apostolate members but also for the entire Society of Jesus.

In the first part of this issue, we have some rich rumination, of four past directors of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, except Michael Campbell-Johnston, who is in the infirmary and Henry Volken who is blessing us from heaven. They highlight the most significant milestones reached, graces received, opportunities and challenges faced during their time as Secretaries. We are deeply indebted to each one of them for their reflection and contribution, particularly their thoughts on the future tasks for better implementation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP).

In the second part, we begin with a reflection from Fred Kammer, who takes us through the evolution of the mission articulation of *the service of faith and the promotion of justice* in 1970s until the present UAP. He begins from the two major events of the Church that give the dramatic turn to our social thoughts and commitments and leads us through the decrees of the five General Congregations that followed.

Following this introductory article from the viewpoint of the Church and the Society's GC decrees, we have eleven articles from six conferences. We asked the authors to share their reflection on four major areas from their conference perspective and the 50-year journey. They are:

- a) the most significant milestones/contribution or graces received;
- b) the biggest opportunities and challenges faced and major learnings in the past;
- c) present challenges and opportunities; and
- d) recommendations or ideas for the social apostolate to better implement the UAPs.

The journey has not been on a well-laid road, but a path made by walking--- walking together on a difficult terrain. Yet, such moments brought abundant graces within the Society of Jesus. Many of our institutions examined their work through the prism of the ‘option for the poor’ and even made radical changes in their policies and mode of functioning. Many Jesuits chose to go and be in solidarity with the oppressed poor and empower them to fight against injustices.

In these struggles more than 50 Jesuits along with many collaborators, both men and women, have shed their blood. Inspired by their prophetic actions and sacrifices, many more people, irrespective of their religious beliefs, have been empowered to speak truth to power and proclaim justice in spite of threats. The Jesuit mission has also inspired many other religious congregations to take up social work among the vulnerable poor and the excluded. For Jesuits, as Fr. Kolvenbach said, this option became “integral to our identity, to the awareness of our mission, and to our public image in both Church and Society.”

Reading the articles, I was deeply moved with feelings of *gratitude, hope* and *joy*. **Gratitude** for persons like Pope Francis, Father General Arturo Sosa and many of our committed Jesuits, religious, laymen and laywomen who have accompanied us on this arduous journey. I see all of them as the fruit of our social thinking and commitment over the past 50 years. Pope Francis is a prophetic leader today who with his life, action and teaching continues to stir the conscience of everyone, thus spreading hope, joy and peace. Arturo Sosa, as a leader of discernment and inspiration has guided the Society to draw up the UAPs for the next ten years. There are also many Jesuits and collaborators in every region of the world, sacrificing their comforts and risking their lives in leading many peoples’ struggles.

I feel *hopeful* because we have the UAPs to show us the light for discernment in common at local, regional and global levels. Especially when are facing many social, economic, political and cultural crises in the world. We Jesuits, cannot face them all by ourselves. We must not only study, do research and analyze the situation at every place and moment but also discern in common. The recent General Congregations and the UAPs invite and challenge us to *collaborate and network* with all people of goodwill. The obstacles we face are many. Some questions that we may need to ask ourselves are: how close are we to the poor and the vulnerable? Are we challenged to make personal, communitarian and institutional conversions of our attitudes, lifestyle, beliefs and opinions? Are we calling only our employed staff as ‘collaborators’ and ‘partners’ or are we genuinely becoming collaborators with everyone in a common ‘*missio Dei*’ where we are not the leaders but partners?

The third feeling that I experience is of *joy*. Because, as I visit the Provinces and conferences, I recognize the 50 years jubilee celebrations have generated a new energy and enthusiasm, particularly among our Jesuits in social apostolate and also among our lay collaborators. Many have taken this as an occasion to review their work, relook at the journey made; through organizing conferences, retreats and publications; to deepen the commitment to stand with the poor and advocate with and for their causes. I am also confident that our coming together in Rome between 4 and 8 November this year will not simply be a celebration per se but a moment to review, renew and recommit ourselves as a universal body.



My sincere gratitude to all the authors of the articles, the six Conference delegates of the social apostolate, Ted Penton (JCCU), Mario Serrano Marte (CPAL), Peter Rožič (JCEP), Charles Chilufya (JCAM), Stanislaus Jebamalai (JCSA), Adrianus Suyadi (JCAP), and the present SJES staff, Valeria Méndez de Vigo and Rossana Mattei for their dedicated work, commitment and support.

*Original in English*



## Fr. General's Inaugural Video Message to the Entire Society of Jesus on the 50 Years of SJES

**R.P. Arturo Sosa, SJ**

*19<sup>th</sup> December 2018*

It is a pleasure for me to greet each one of you during this season of Advent. Inspired by the words of prophets, we open our eyes to the signs of God in human history. In this way, we prepare ourselves to celebrate the incarnation, the decision of the Trinity to be born among us on this earth and to share our common home.

In the meditation on Incarnation in the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius invites us to see the broken and divided world through the eyes of the Trinity who sends the Son to initiate the liberating mission on earth to which we are also invited. We join in that redemptive mission of establishing 'His kingdom' - a kingdom of justice, equality, peace and reconciliation.

Deepening our experience of faith in this season of Advent calls us to share it with others and to join the struggles for social justice, human rights, ecological balance, the overcoming of poverty and the promotion of a dignified and safe life for all human beings. This is a call to collaborate with others, be it with those who share our Christian faith, or those inspired by other religious faiths or simply because they believe in human beings, in humanity, or believe in nature that invites us to be equal and live peacefully enjoying just relationships.

It invites us to do so through dialogue, a dialogue between cultures that is one of our riches as human beings. It invites us to build an intercultural world so that it can certainly be called a human planet in which we can all live joyfully.

In the month of November 2019, Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat will commemorate 50 years of its mission of promoting "faith that does justice". This journey began in 1969 when Fr. Pedro Arrupe, then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, appointed Fr. Francisco Ivern, our dear Paco from Brazil, as his first delegate in the General Curia to assist him and organize the promotion of social justice mission in the entire Society.

The journey of this mission over the last 50 years has not been a very smooth one. When Fr. Arrupe wrote his famous letter of Rio a little before, he already mentioned that taking this path would imply many human costs. We have gone through many turbulent, yet amazingly grace-filled years. The Lord has been good to us in this journey.

While some of our companions sacrificed their lives witnessing to their faith by standing with the poor against injustices, some others are living with the vulnerable in zones of heart-

breaking wars and conflicts, and some others have lived and do live their lives humbly with and for the poor in a tireless effort to jointly improve the conditions of all people.

Along this journey, we also acknowledge that a vast majority of Jesuits and collaborators have integrated the social dimension into their Jesuit identity and into their apostolic mission in all the fields where we are working: education, formation and social communications, in pastoral and retreat ministries. Our spirituality today cannot be understood without this social dimension, without this search for justice and ecological balance.

As Fr. Kolvenbach once said, "In many places, the concern for justice is an essential part of our public image in both Church and society." What is more important is that this awareness of the social dimension of our mission finds concrete expressions in our lives and mission. It calls for a constant collective faith discernment, to be more perceptive to undertake socio-political analysis, leading to reflection and renewal for a deeper recommitment.

The challenges we face today are far more critical and complex than what they were 50 years ago. We cannot forget that we live in a different moment in the history of humanity. This had been visualised by both the Second Vatican Council and Fr. Pedro Arrupe. Hence, "we cannot put new wine into old wineskin" as recommended by the Gospel. We first need a deeper faith, an experience of God who is actively working in the world today, in this fast changing world.

We have to keep our hope alive and trust in God. We cannot cry like Peter, in the midst of the storm, start screaming that we are sinking. He found the Lord and becomes speechless seeing the change.

When we find ourselves in such situation, we have to use all our knowledge, resources and energy to bring about reconciliation with God, with one another and with nature. Those three dimensions must necessarily go together. To deeply engage ourselves in this reconciliation mission has been the clarion call especially in the last two GCs.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an opportune and historic moment – a Kairos moment as expressed in the Bible - for all of us in the Society of Jesus, to renew our commitment to the challenging mission of our vocation: a faith that does justice and seeks the reconciliation between us, with nature and with God. This is not only a time of renewal for our institutions, social centres or for members of social apostolate. It is a moment that must permeate the entire Society of Jesus, all Jesuits and all our partners in the mission that we share with great joy.

I am very happy that the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, together with the six social delegates of the Conferences, have planned to celebrate this journey of last 50 years with this call to meet and search together once again, neither as an occasion of self-complacency to look at the glories nor to heal wounds, but in a true Ignatian sense, to make it a time of discernment and understand what more can we do to serve God and His sons and daughters in this complex moment of human history.

I am also pleased that the planning is done at three levels: in the Provinces, Conferences and at the level of the Universal Society, with a three-fold objective.

- First, *to celebrate God's faithfulness* along this arduous journey of promoting 'the Gospel justice' during the last 50 years and to gratefully acknowledge the countless blessings and graces received in each of our Provinces, Conferences and in the entire Society of Jesus through the dedication of so many brothers and sisters in this mission;
- Second, *to create and strengthen opportunities for collaboration and networking* in these connected fields of social justice and ecology. Here we have great opportunities and also great challenges. With the little we have, we can multiply the effect of our actions, and
- Third, *to discern the roadmap to implement the Universal Apostolic Preferences*. We all know that for the last 2 years, we have been engaged in the process of discerning the Universal Apostolic Preferences and that the Holy Father will entrust to us the preferences for our mission for the next 10 years.

I wish to encourage each and every one of you, to join in this mission of renewal and commitment to the social and ecology apostolate in each of the Provinces and Conferences in all the works, institutions, and apostolic units of the Society of Jesus.

Last time, such a common discernment of this magnitude was done in 1997 in Naples, when Fr. Michael Czerny was the Secretary. I was fortunate enough to be present in that meeting. The challenge, then, was to understand and articulate the characteristics of the social apostolate in the Society of Jesus. After 21 years, it is apt that we come together once again to listen to the Spirit with total openness and ask ourselves: What God is asking of us in this dimension of our Jesuit being? How can we better serve God, His people, who are also our people, and the world in the present context?

I ask the Holy Spirit to accompany the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat team and all of you, who contribute to make this journey with joy, depth and with an open mind and heart. May the Holy Spirit, promised by the Lord and who accompanies us day after day, make it possible that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Social Justice apostolate, is an occasion of gratitude and renewal of our commitment. May Mary, our Mother, accompany us since she knows how to reach Him, the Son, who pledged Himself till the end for the liberation of all.

Thank you and my blessings in this journey.

Video link: <https://www.sjesjesuits.global/en/index.php/50th-anniversary/about-50th/>

*Original in Spanish*  
Translation SJES Office



## The Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat of the Society of Jesus: Past and Future

**Francisco Ivern, SJ**

*First Secretary of SJES (1969 – 1975)*

In 2019 it will be fifty years since the foundation of the Social Secretariat of the Society of Jesus, today known as the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, by Father Pedro Arrupe, then Superior General. I was chosen to be the first person responsible for this Secretariat, beginning in 1969. Allow me to share some personal information to explain how this happened.

Formed in political and social sciences, first at the Gregorian University and then at the University of Louvain, I was assigned to work at the Indian Social Institute in New Delhi, India, beginning in 1962. At that time I, a native Spaniard, was a member of the Province of Bombay, India.

In 1965, already a member of the Indian Social Institute, I spent six months in Latin America to study the Social Centres for Research and Action (CIAS) existing in that region in order to see how that experience could help us to develop our Social Institute in India.

As I was returning to India, I passed through Rome and met Fr. Arrupe, who was the newly elected Superior General of the Society of Jesus. At that meeting we were talking about the Social Apostolate and the Secretariat he wanted to create in our General Curia to foster it. Later on, in 1967, I was in India and Fr. Arrupe, during a visit he made to that country, met me and invited me to go to Rome to take responsibility for the Social Secretariat. I could not go immediately to Rome because I was busy at the time directing a social project in Chotanagpur, Bihar, funded by Misereor, Germany. In 1969, at the end of that project, I went to Rome to finally take over the Secretariat.

It is important to stress that the way for the creation of that Secretariat had already been prepared by Fr. Jean Baptiste Janssens, who preceded Fr. Arrupe as Superior General and wrote the first letter on the Social Apostolate in the Society. It was Fr. Janssens who was responsible for the creation of the great majority of the already mentioned ICS in Latin America, with the help of his collaborator, Fr. Foyaca, to whom he entrusted the promotion of these Centres and the assignment of Jesuits to carry them forward.

Fr. Arrupe continued in the same direction: he strengthened the existing Centres and contributed to the creation of others.

## **First steps: the service of faith and the promotion of justice (GC 32)**

The first years of the Social Secretariat were marked by the leading role played by the many Social Research and Social Action Centres created in Latin America during the time of Fr Janssens and, later, Fr Arrupe.

There were already social centres in the Society, beginning with the "dean" of them all, L'Action Populaire of Paris, France, as well as Fomento Social in Spain, the Institutes of Social Order in Australia and other English-speaking countries. But the creation, in a few years, of numerous Social Centres in the Latin American continent, and the assignment of many Jesuits, with masters degrees and doctorates in economic, social and political sciences, to these organisms, would not fail to have a strong impact on the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus throughout the world. To a great extent, these Centers prepared for the promulgation of the 4th Decree of the 32nd General Congregation, in 1975, on the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

It should be stressed here, however, that the creation in just a few years of these Social Centres in Latin America, at a time when liberation theology was flourishing in many places, also contributed to creating a critical, and I would even say hostile, environment in relation to other institutions and ministries of the Society, particularly in the educational area: colleges and universities. There were serious tensions and even unpleasant conflicts between the Jesuits of the Social Centres and those other educational institutions.

The 4th Decree of GC 32, on the service of faith and the promotion of justice, contributed to clarify some points, but it was not enough to put an end to those tensions and conflicts in the social area, particularly in Latin America. The obligation to propagate justice as a consequence of our mission to serve the faith was sometimes interpreted, even by some "social" Jesuits, in a poorly integrated and I would even say "reductive" way. The result was that the way of promoting justice, by these Jesuits, was very close, not to say sometimes confused, with the way of promoting justice by persons and groups identified with ideologies of a socialist-Marxist nature.

Subsequent General Congregations, and in particular the 34th General Congregation twenty years later, strove to correct this reductionism and place the promotion of justice in a broader context.

## **The Promotion of Justice in a Broader and more Defined Religious and Cultural Context**

It was during the years that I directed the Social Secretariat and, later, still in the Curia, as General Councilor, that I witnessed and experienced the tensions and conflicts that an interpretation of the promotion of justice that was excessive and purely "sociological" and little integrated with faith and culture provoked, especially in Latin America. GC 34 recognized that, because of this reductionism and dogmatism and ideologies poorly integrated with faith, in some regions, particularly in Latin America, some Jesuits ended up being treated more as adversaries than as companions.

To correct those reductionisms and dogmatisms, GC 34 stressed once again that our mission to promote justice is rooted in the love and mercy that our faith demands. The promotion of justice cannot do without the cultural and religious roots that condition it.

For these reasons our mission at the service of faith and the promotion of justice, which GC 34 defined in its 4th Decree, should be extended to include as integral dimensions the proclamation of the Gospel, dialogue and the evangelization of culture (GC 34, D. 2, number 20). Thus we see that when GC 34 defines our mission as a continuation of Christ's mission, it is defined not in one but in four short decrees. In the first place, our mission as "servants of Christ's mission" (D.2); in the second place, our mission and justice (D.3); in the third place, our mission and culture (D.4); and finally, our mission and inter-religious dialogue (D.5).

We perceive that gradually the mission of a Social Secretariat, for whose direction I was first responsible, expands and embraces dimensions that go far beyond the purely social, economic and political spheres. This tendency to broaden the objectives, which would be the responsibility of the Social Secretariat at our Curia in Rome, continued. The next step was the inclusion of ecological issues among the responsibilities of the Secretariat.

### **Social Justice and Ecology**

GC 34 (1995) recommends to Father General that, given the opposition that is sometimes created between socio-economic development and ecology - we would say between social justice and ecology - a study be made to show how these terms complement each other and are very much in agreement with our spirituality and apostolic way of proceeding.

Following this recommendation, the General Congregations 35th (2008) and 36th (2016) treat this theme again under the title of "reconciliation with creation" and show how the socio-environmental perspective is very much in conformity with our Ignatian spirituality and, in particular, with the Principle and Foundation and the Contemplation to Attain Love.

In this field, however, the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis, "Laudato Si'" (2015), already cited by GC 36 in its Decree 1, entitled "Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice" was fundamental and decisive. It is not a question here of making a comment on that Encyclical. However, we do want to emphasize that, by stressing the intimate union between social justice and ecology, it justifies once again that the Social Justice Secretariat of our General Curia has changed its name to the "Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat".

The whole Encyclical underlines this intimate union between social justice and ecology, but in a particular way when it affirms that "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature" (n. 139).

By broadening the work front of the Social Secretariat of the Curia and including the socio-environmental problem, our General Congregations and the Holy Father himself invite once again the Social Secretariat of our Curia to a dialogue with other representative sectors of our spiritual life and apostolate.

## **The Future of the Secretariat in the Light of the Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus**

We will not repeat here what, with such propriety and richness of content, our Superior General Arturo Sosa, says to us in his letter of February 19, 2019, promulgating the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus for the next ten years (2019 - 2029). We would just like to highlight the important role that the Secretariat could play in the implementation of these preferences in the coming years.

In the first place, two of these preferences are already part of the work of the Secretariat: those that appear in the letter of the Father General under the letters "B" and "D". Allow me to mention them here: "(B) To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice"; "(D) To collaborate in the care of the Common Home", in the light of Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

In addition to the preferences that already constitute the tasks of the present Secretariat, there are others that can enrich this work over the coming years and further strengthen its relations with other apostolic sectors. I am referring to the preferences that appear under the letters "A" and "C" in Father General's letter: "(A) To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment"; "(C) To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future".

It is evident that, as we have already pointed out, the spirit of the Ignatian Exercises is already at the basis of the work of the Secretariat. However, this first apostolic preference invites us to strengthen the relations of the Secretariat with those sectors that represent this Ignatian spirituality more directly.

The other apostolic preference, that is, "to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future," does not add a new objective dimension to the work of the Secretariat, but rather highlights the preferential audience to which our efforts should be directed, because as we read in the letter of Fr. General, presenting this preference, "it is the young who, from their perspective, can help us to understand better the epochal change that we are living" and "young people are the bearers of this new form of human life that can find, in the experience of encounter with the Lord Jesus, light for the path towards justice, reconciliation and peace".

The Apostolic Preferences that the Society proposes to us for the next ten years broaden and enrich even more the work of the Secretariat in the future.

*Original in Spanish*  
*Translation Robert Hurd, SJ*





## 1992 - 2002: The Middle Years

**Card. Michael F. Czerny, SJ**

*Former Secretary of SJS (1992 – 2002)*

My time as Secretary, from 1992 to 2002, straddled the middle years of the half-century of the Social Justice Secretariat / SJS (as it was known in my time), and with 3 predecessors and 3 successors, I also happen to be the middle of its 7 Secretaries to date. From this particular vantage point midway, let me share some ideas and memories which I hope will interest the readers of *Promotio Iustitiae*.

But before tracing the SJS story and some of its precedents, I can gratefully mention the foundational experience of growing up a refugee -- our family of four fled to Canada from Czechoslovakia at the end of 1948. My parents with their facility in multiple languages and varied practical, artistic and cultural interests gave me a grounding for absorbing testimony and situations all over the world. And L'Arche of fellow-Canadian Jean Vanier was another privileged influence for learning first-hand and deep-down the conditions and protagonism of the excluded and the intrinsic dignity of every person.

Where did SJS 1992-2002 fit in my own path? Previously, after ordination in 1973, I founded and headed a Jesuit Centre in Toronto dedicated to "social faith and justice" (an expression perhaps worthy of being meditated on even today). Then for two years at the University of Central America in El Salvador, my main task was re-establishing its justice and human rights commitment that had been targeted by the country's military, assassinating eight cherished people: six Jesuit brethren, a woman on staff and her daughter.

Then, after 11 years as Social Justice Secretary, at the end of 2002 this Canadian went on to Africa to found and direct the African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN). Eight years later, I returned to Rome as advisor or counsellor to Cardinal Peter Turkson in the final years (2010-2016) of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP), which St Pope Paul VI had founded in 1967. Now in the new Dicastery for Promotion of Integral Human Development which began in 2017, I am co-Undersecretary of the Migrants and Refugees Section. And this year of 2019, I am serving as Special Secretary for the Bishops' Synod on the Amazon.

This whole itinerary, with its historical accidents and providential graces, provides my vantage point for celebrating the 50 years since our beloved Father Pedro Arrupe established JESEDES, the Jesuit Secretariat for Socio-Economic Development.

Called to Rome by Father General Kolvenbach in 1991, I asked him about his expectations and guidance. Our exchange went something like this. PHK: "Since my election in 1983, I have

spent eight years repairing bridges. The time has come to start moving and doing.” Me: “Moving where and doing what?” PHK: “If I knew, would I have called you here from El Salvador?”

I arrived in Rome in late 1991. From then on, sharing the path with me in the 2½ SJS offices on the third floor of the Penitenzieri (penitentiary? not in the punitive but in the penitential sense!) were Liliana Carvajal from Chile, and from Italy: Giacomo Costa S.J., Paolo Foglizzo, Francesco Pistocchini, Sergio Sala S.J. The sub-text of all that follows is my admiration and gratitude for them.

In fact, the first thing to do wasn't so much as Social Justice Secretary but rather as a team-member with Fr Jack O'Callaghan preparing for GC34 which was to take place in the first 3 months of 1995. And so right from the start it was about the mission of the Society of Jesus that I was asking, thinking, listening, writing and speaking and, within it, the place(s) and meaning(s) of the promotion of justice. Do you remember the famous (or infamous?) *Tabloids* of 1994, designed to stimulate discussion, reflection and prayer about the major questions facing the upcoming GC? One of the big chapters was about “The Social”.

Practically at the midpoint of the 50-year SJES history we're recalling, GC34 occurred about 30 years after Vatican II and 20 years after GC32. The challenge was to implement the Council and, specifically in this case, *Gaudium et Spes* and the subsequent 1971 synod document *Justice in the World*. The opportunity was to deepen the Jesuit mission as defined by GC32 and popularly entitled “faith and justice”. GC34 undeniably produced a more mature articulation of this mission, enhancing the social dimension of every Jesuit work no matter what sector it belongs to and deepening its evangelical and spiritual foundations. “The contemporary Jesuit mission is the service of faith and the promotion in society of that justice of the Gospel which is the embodiment of God's love and saving mercy.”<sup>1</sup>

With his classical clarity and simplicity, Father Kolvenbach remarked, “Ignatius and the first companions heard the cry of the poor in an entirely natural and, of course, spiritual way. They could not have imagined introducing themselves as companions of Jesus without assuming his preferential love for the poor.”<sup>2</sup> On this basis, Jesuits and their co-workers could confidently develop their local and regional responses to the many human, social and cultural challenges of the day.

For us Jesuits, then, and for those who work with us, “The goal of the 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,”<sup>3</sup> which I think remains the best expression of our faith and hope, exempt of ideology and undertaken with the limitless ambition of St Ignatius and Pedro Arrupe along with a disarming and realistic modesty.

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<sup>1</sup> *Complementary Norms* § 245, 2.

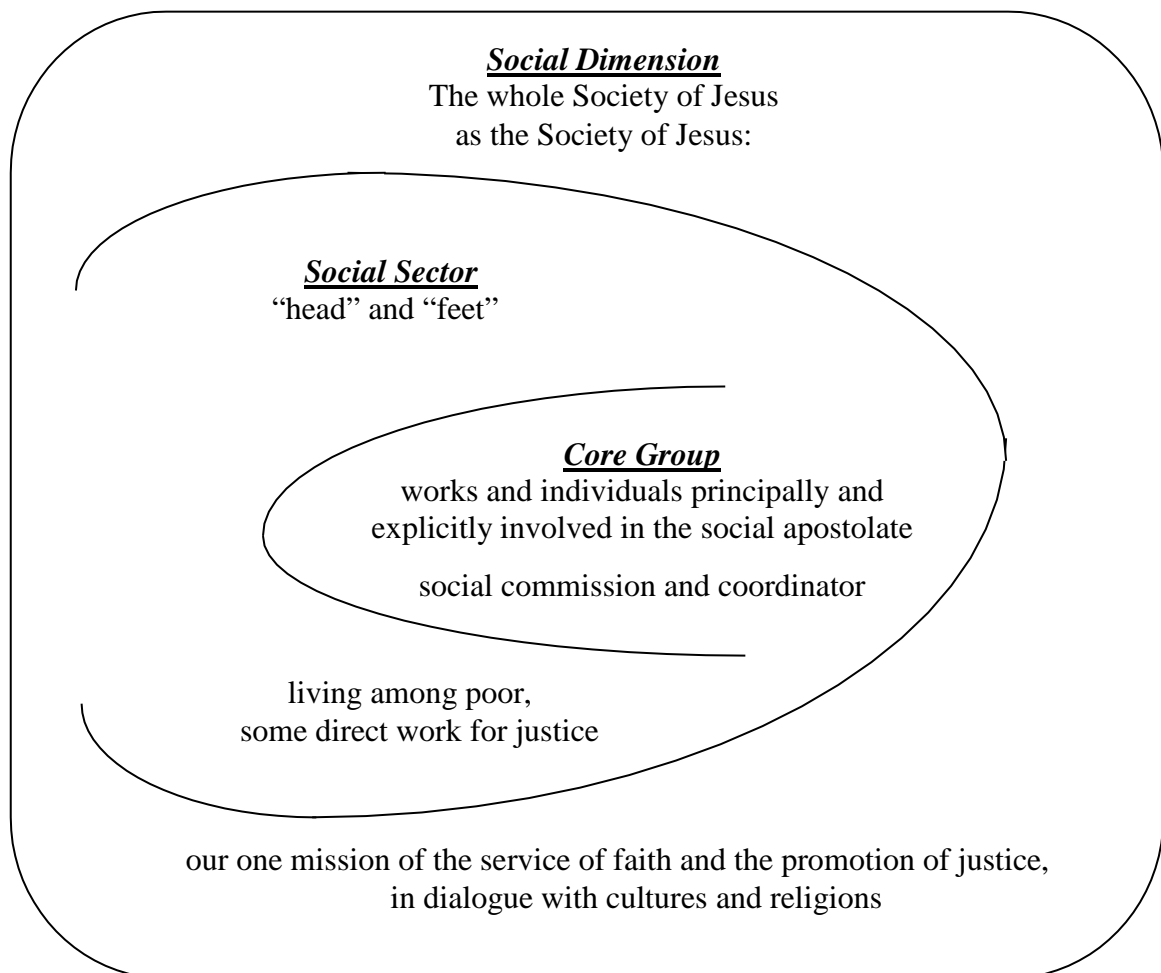
<sup>2</sup> Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., “A paschal love for the world,” Address to the International Congress of the Jesuit Social Apostolate, in *Promotio Iustitiae*, n. 68 (1997), 95-103.

<sup>3</sup> *Complementary Norms* § 298 quoting GC31 of 1965-1966.

Right after GC34, then, and with the full support of Father Kolvenbach, the Social Justice Secretariat launched a wide-ranging review of the social apostolate, 1995-2005.

In case Jesuits and colleagues of the 1990s might think that it all began with the “faith and justice” of GC32, *PJ* 66 (1997) re-published the great and nearly forgotten 1949 *Instruction* of Father General Jean-Baptiste Janssens on the social apostolate. Father Janssens identified “the desire for a more perfect reign of justice, equality, and charity in the world”<sup>4</sup> which expresses so well our radical spiritual motivation for every effort in the social sphere. Along with the *Instruction*, the special issue of *PJ* collected relevant excerpts of earlier General Congregations and letters of our Fathers General.

In June 1998, the Naples Congress took place, and I think it really succeeded in both appreciating and relaunching the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus. All that went into preparing for GC34 and for the Congress, and all that got shared and reflected during the 5 intense days in Naples, eventually found its way into the resulting *Characteristics*, published as *PJ* 69 (1998) which is distilled graphically on its page 73:



<sup>4</sup> *Instruction* § 10. [http://www.sjesjesuits.global//wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Janssens\\_eng.pdf](http://www.sjesjesuits.global//wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Janssens_eng.pdf)

Here you can see the effort to combine two great strengths of the Society, the deductive and the inductive, the intellectual and the pastoral, *theorein* and *praxis*. Each needs the other -- everyone is called to active thought "Don't just watch -- do something!" and to thoughtful action "Watch what you're doing!" The *Characteristics* "establish a common basis on which Jesuits and colleagues can meet, reflect and work more closely together in the mission entrusted to them."<sup>5</sup>

GC34 also gave the SJS a big task, as expressed in its brief Decree 20, which recommended to Father General that a study be made on issues related to ecology. After various studies and a special conference, "*We live in a broken world*": *Reflections on Ecology*, was published in 1999 as PJ 70 with a green cover and, congruently, on chlorine-free paper.<sup>6</sup> As Father General Kolvenbach wrote in the introduction, "It is a specific invitation to Jesuits and colleagues to continue the exchange and deepen the collaboration, for these are indeed the most indispensable features of our way of proceeding in the field of ecology. It is a broad invitation to Jesuits and those who share our mission to show ever more effective ecological solidarity in our spiritual, communal and apostolic lives." Happily there are many consistencies between *Broken World* and *Laudato Si'*, and I guess one earlier consequence was that SJS became SJES!

Another "best seller" was PJ 73 published in May 2000. It featured Father Kolvenbach's magisterial letter "On the Social Apostolate" written to mark the 50th anniversary of Father Janssens' *Instruction on the Social Apostolate*. It presents "why and how to strengthen the social apostolate, locally and beyond, so that the social dimension of the Society's universal mission may find ever more concrete and effective expression in who we are, what we do, how we live."<sup>7</sup> The issue opened with a sweeping history of the social apostolate in the 20th century which also appeared in the Yearbook 2000 of the Society of Jesus. "The social apostolate is a passionate enterprise. Reality, with all its contradictions and difficulties: this is where we live, engaged, in community and as a team, with the Lord Jesus in the Church his Body and with the poor. Our endeavour is to work for effective justice in culture and society, to work with people for possible changes, for justice which is of the Kingdom".<sup>8</sup>

Finally, in 2002, the SJS came out with a study on networking in the Society of Jesus, with "a shared appreciation of networking as 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, something reaching out beyond the borders of the Church."<sup>9</sup> Much seems to have been achieved, along these lines, and a lot of potential remains.

As for SJS's flagship publication, *Promotio Iustitiae* started appropriately as a newsletter because, in fact, many of the Jesuit initiatives in the areas of economic and social development

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<sup>5</sup> See *Characteristics*, pp. ii and 92.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/PJ\\_070\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/PJ_070_ENG.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/PJ\\_073\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/PJ_073_ENG.pdf), p.26

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/PJ\\_073\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/PJ_073_ENG.pdf), p.18

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Janssens\\_eng.pdf](http://www.sjesjesuits.global/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Janssens_eng.pdf)

(called, after 1975, “the promotion of justice”) were new and innovative and needed to be publicized. So as its name proclaims, *PJ* undertook to explain the promotion of justice to the body of the Society and to our collaborators, while at the same time nourishing those in social ministries and encouraging younger members to come in and get involved. But the style, format, multiple languages and publication 3 or 4 times a year made *PJ* less than agile and more apt for reflection than for news. Moreover, it seemed to reach those in the social area without at the same time finding much audience among those in traditional ministries.

But the Social Justice Secretary’s job description wasn’t just, or mainly, as a writer / editor / translator / publisher. It also included welcoming countless visitors to the SJS office and innumerable trips to all the continents to visit Jesuits involved in various social apostles and to support their very varied undertakings, projects, initiatives, works being born or already underway. To appreciate, to encourage, to meet and to link. Accordingly, the SJS gathered basic data and published the first Social Apostolate Catalogue in four fascicles: one on Social Centres and the other three on America, Africa and Asia, and Europe.

And coincidentally with the ever more rapid travel and more abundant information, the same 90s of the last century saw, not only the diffusion of the fax but soon thereafter the rapid installation everywhere of e-mail and then access to the internet. In this domain of “@” and www, SJS was the pioneer in the Jesuit Curia, first criticized and then taken for granted.

So, in the year 2000, while maintaining *PJ*, the Social Justice Secretariat began publishing the electronic *Headlines* on-line, with shorter news items and more immediate testimonies, to exchange social justice and ecology news, stimulate contacts, share spirituality, and promote networking. And for a while there was also *Points*, a bulletin of interchange amongst the coordinators or leadership of the social apostolate. And in the late 90s, the first SJS website. How have these publications evolved? What roles are played by various social media? A worthy topic for a full-fledged study of communication in service of the mission!

With the turn of the millennium, the SJS’s attention shifted from the Jesuit social apostolate and the social dimension of the Society’s mission to advocacy around the great issues of the day: human rights, people’s rights, migration, economy, ecology, development. But these are chapters of the story for my successors to tell.

So let me begin to conclude my reflection in this way. I started by observing that my 11 years as Social Justice Secretary were right in the middle of the Golden Jubilee we are celebrating. I have gratefully recalled some of the highlights of those 50 years. As seen from the vantage point of my own assignments and involvements, maybe I succeeded in suggesting where the SJS 1992-2002 fit in our path as the Society of Jesus?

Fast-forwarding to the now, the Society’s apostolic preferences invite us to be mindful, not only of beginnings and ends, of *theorein* and *praxis*, not only of social analysis and theology and pastoral action, but also of the usually hidden *fundamenta* or bases. “Foundations” might give the impression of something too heavy and solid to move, but here we seem to mean profound realities that are so basic that they need to “come along” as we move our way through history and, with God’s help, through Salvation History.

The Spiritual Exercises means that Jesus really is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and middle and end of all we are and all we do, *in actione contemplativus* according to the spirituality of St Ignatius and the Jesuits down through the ages.

The excluded, as Pope Francis never tires of reminding us according to the logic of the Beatitudes, must become not only the privileged of our charity but, more radically, the protagonists of the world's justice if there's to be any hope of real solutions. For myself, heading AJAN was quintessentially a focus on the most excluded, stigmatized, and thrown-away of contemporary society.

And our "common home" is the overarching name of God's gift and promise to us, responding to the apparently two-fold but finally single cry of the poor and cry of the earth. In the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, I was party to Pope Francis's launch of his revolutionary *Laudato si'* framing of the destiny of our planet as a "common home" marked by the essential interplay of the social and natural environments.

And all this adds up and finds expression, as we learned in the 2018 Synod on Youth<sup>10</sup> to which I was privileged to be a delegate, in the calling and vocation of the young, as Vatican II would say, the younger People of God. Not so much called from outside into the Church, as one might first think, but rather already included "inclusively" in the Church and called to be missionary witnesses in the world.

In this context, we meet with all four preferences -- Ignatian discernment; the excluded especially migrants and refugees, the displaced and the trafficked; our common home; and young people and future generations. Now in the 2019 Synod on the Amazon, an exercise of discernment in common, all four preferences certainly come into play. I am grateful for all these opportunities; I have faith that the orientations are correct, sound, life-giving and salvific; and I look forward to continuing to work in a spirit of joy and hope - that is, of *gaudium* as well as *spes*!

*Original in English*

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<sup>10</sup> *Christus Vivit* addressed to Young People and to the Entire People of God, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20190325\\_christus-vivit.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html)



## 2003 – 2011: Adjusting to a Fast Changing Context

**Fernando Franco, SJ**

*Former Secretary of SJES (2003 – 2011)*

### Introduction

I am grateful to those who invited me to write about my experiences at the Secretariat. I am also grateful to all those who accompanied me in that journey: the Assistency Coordinators, those working at the Secretariat, and others in the Curia who offered unstinted support. I remember those years. They were happy and creative

To talk meaningfully about my experience, I need to demarcate its boundaries, the context, time and place in which it happened. It would be presumptuous to talk of 50 long years when one has worked only nine in the SJES. It is from 2003 till 2011 that I would like to speak about my experiences,<sup>1</sup> acknowledging the subjective and incomplete character of this written account.

The years at the Secretariat were marked by a change of Generals. I served Fr Peter Hans Kolvenbach till GC 35 accepted his resignation on 5 January 2008 and Fr Adolfo Nicolas the last three years of my stay in Rome.

As the title suggests, I have emphasized the way the Secretariat and to some extent the entire Society, struggled to read the signs of a very rapidly changing time. It may seem that the article touches only on 'internal' changes. The close connection between the changes occurring in the world outside and their induced consequences to the SJES have to be acknowledged.

### 1. The Beginning of the New Millennium

The work at the Secretariat started with the new millennium. Among the significant changes during my term, I have finally chosen three that seem to characterise the activities of the Secretariat at that time:

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<sup>1</sup> My predecessor, Fr Michael Czerny, announced my appointment as director of the Secretariat in the PJ 76 published in 2002. It was on the following year, 2003, that I published my first editorial in PJ 77. I wrote the last editorial in 2011 for PJ 105.

### a. The Tension between 'Dimension' and 'Apostolate'

The Congregation of Procurators held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2003 at Loyola provided a crucial moment to reflect and assess the situation of the social apostolate and the role of the Secretariat. The Society had internalized over the previous 25 years the importance of the justice dimension in all our ministries. The vision of a faith that does justice had percolated and permeated all ministries. A cultural transformation had taken place in the global organisation called the Society of Jesus. This is no mean achievement. The false dichotomy between faith and justice which developed after GC 32 had given way to a general acceptance that 'justice' had to be a dimension of all our ministries.

The world of the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, characterised by the confrontation between various shades of Marxist (Left) movements and the capitalist forces was coming to an end. The dream of overcoming poverty was being realised; the welfare state promoted by social democratic parties became the ideal to aspire for. Liberation theology had started disappearing from the horizon of our scholasticates. Globalisation, and the common 'global village' were becoming buzz words. The focus on feminism and the second wave on counter- and post-colonial concerns came on to the stage.

This cultural change brought out however other disquieting effects. The effervescence of the social message that GC 32 evoked in many Jesuits and social institutions seemed to have reached a plateau. As some implicitly defended, once the social dimension had penetrated all our ministries, the hard core of social action (the struggle for justice) could well be pushed aside. There were many signs that this was happening. The social commissions of many provinces were non-existent. Jesuits who had been at the forefront of the struggle were retiring from active life and there were no replacements.

Fr Kolvenbach had strongly spoken of the importance of the service of faith and, as he used to repeat often, he did not like to speak about the 'promotion' but rather the 'struggle for justice'.<sup>2</sup> In a talk to the Conference Coordinators of the social apostolate in Rome, he clearly distinguished 'dimension' from 'apostolate' and defended the need for both.<sup>3</sup>

It was in his speech on *De Statu Societatis* at the Congregation of Procurators in Loyola<sup>4</sup> in 2003, that Fr Kolvenbach clearly stated that without a strong social sector (apostolate), the social dimension of the Society would not be able to survive.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Hans Kolvenbach, *The service of faith and the promotion of justice in American Jesuit Higher Education*, Santa Clara 2000

<sup>3</sup> "To be **FOR the poor** is the vocation of all Jesuits, but not all Jesuits can be committed to this struggle **for the poor** in the same manner. I repeat, everybody in the Society has to be **IN FAVOUR of the poor** and work **for the poor**. But only some Jesuits can work **WITH the poor**. To be **with the poor** is not the vocation of all Jesuits; it cannot be done by everybody. Fewer Jesuits still **can be LIKE the poor, work LIKE the poor**. Even among those who work **with the poor** not all may be able to work and live **like the poor**. To live and be like the poor is to be inserted among them. In short, all Jesuits must work **for the poor**; some (and they should not be a small crowd) must work **with the poor**; and some must be inserted and live like the poor. This, I believe, is our way of proceeding. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, *Father General in Conversation with the Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate*, Rome, 11 April 2003.

<sup>4</sup> 69 Congregation of Procurators, Loyola, 18 September 2003



On the assumption that the strength and development of a ministry (apostolate) in the Society requires an institutional component, the Secretariat, with the collaboration of all the Assistance Coordinators, launched a study to determine the nature and types of Jesuit Social Centres in the world.<sup>5</sup> A crucial way to assess the 'state' of the social apostolate was to analyse the institutional strengths and weaknesses of the Jesuit Social Centres. The study estimated that there were 306 social centres in the entire Society of Jesus. A substantial number of centres were weak, there was confusion about their character and their future appeared uncertain. Strengthening the social apostolate would imply a re-structuring of the Jesuit social centres.

#### **b. Networking and Collaboration**

The structural changes brought about by globalisation were becoming more visible. Post-modernity was already undermining the large narratives that had sustained people from the right and the left. The 'social' context became complex and identity issues started occupying centre-stage. Inter-religious and cultural dialogue became an integral component of our mission. It became quite clear that in order to respond to the new challenges, the social centres had to become spaces for collaboration among persons of good will, and they needed supporting each other across national and international networks.

The strong impulse to lay collaboration given by GC 34 coincided with a clear policy of the Secretariat to support this move. This approach was not new. My predecessor had also worked to attract to the work of the Secretariat many committed lay persons. The participation of lay people in the social apostolate was made visible in many meetings of both Assistances of Latin America. The same phenomenon could be observed in the US, Europe, the Asia Pacific and to a less extent in South-Asia. It is no exaggeration to say that a large number of dedicated lay women and men were responsible for the development of the social apostolate in many Jesuit centres.

Participation of the social centres in the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre, Bombay and Bahia strengthened the conviction that advocacy at the national and international level required networking. Building up a few international networks started in earnest. This task faced many obstacles before it acquired a certain institutional stability.

#### **c. The Intellectual Dimension of the Social Apostolate**

One of the most widespread and consistent traditions of the social apostolate was linking action and reflection. The contribution of Jesuit social scientists to develop what used to be called the 'social doctrine' of the Church is well known. The social commitment of the Society of Jesus in Europe and Latin America cannot be understood without the social and theological reflection that accompanied, for example, the Jesuits of El Salvador and many others. Meetings of the coordinators of Latin America and slowly of other parts of the world, could not start without a researched reflection on the socio-economic, cultural and political situation. South

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<sup>5</sup> Social Justice Secretariat, *Jesuit Social Centres: An Analysis of their Nature and Future Challenges*, Rome, February 2005.

Asia had already established the Indian Social Institute in Delhi and Manila saw the emergence of various social centres engaged in research and advocacy.

An important movement in the direction of strengthening this dimension was the growing number of instances of collaboration between Jesuit Universities and social centres. This collaboration developed strong linkages in Latin America and in the USA. It concentrated on some areas like environmental issues, migration flows and education. Cultural and identity issues were also taken up at a time when multi-culturalism was going through a golden run. All along, there was a sense that we were losing an important legacy of the past, while efforts at collaboration with Jesuit Universities opened up new opportunities. It was the linkage between activists, social centres and Universities what helped the Secretariat to embrace the issue of the 'environment' and add one 'E' to its name.

## **2. The New Context**

My reflections on the context have evolved during the last eight to ten years and emerge from my present location in the South Asia Conference, and more concretely in India. The context, as I see it, is characterized by a fragmentary, contradictory and disordered response to the challenges we face as members of the human family. We seem to be undergoing an opposite process to the one we lived at the start of the century: the collapse of the dream of globalization, the end of the ideal of the global village. The economic recession of 2008 has damaged irreparably this dream: social and economic differences have dreadfully increased; the search for the common good - for example care of the planet - is at a standstill; and the sustainability of the welfare state is seriously in question. Expectations have been shattered, and there are no simple and homogeneous solutions. In 2008 optimism was strangled. This crisis has left societies more fragmented and polarised. Even social protests are broken, the interests of the participating groups being often at loggerheads.

We find it difficult to perceive the underlying forces shaping events. More and more immersed in the local and the immediate, with little time for reflection and study, we often lack an understanding of the global forces shaping the world. We may have given up even the desire to look at it: it is beyond our control. This seems to be one of the pernicious roles played by the social media: it forces us to live the immediately perceived, and blocks our access to the huge mass of big data that is collated and manipulated by a few hidden agents.

In our rightful preoccupation to discuss various forms of populism, from the right and from the left, we have not been able, for example, to understand the transformation of China from a country that produced copies of any product, to a nation that has made momentous technological breaks. The common assumption was that China would perfect the technique of copying but never launch an assault to the technological primacy of the West. This assumption has been proved wrong and is generating geo-political tensions all over the world.

It is not easy to put 'order,' logical order, into this chaos of sentiment and passion. The populist drive, present on all the five continents, is constantly inviting us to respond with passion and sentiment. It seems providential that we have been recently called to a process of discernment and deepening the understanding our own selves and the world we are in.

### **3. The Future Challenges**

In the light of the context discussed in the previous section, there are some challenges we need to face and to which we need to respond. Following the two decrees of GC 36, one could look at the mission-challenges or at governance for mission. I have chosen the second.

#### **a. The Transmission Mechanism for Implementing UAP**

The Society's effort to discern the UAP has been unprecedented. It is a serious reflective response, in the right direction, to a fragmented reality. From a healthy plurality of ministries, it is an attempt to make our response more integrated and convergent. There are, however, some questions regarding the transmission mechanism that will ensure the effective implementation of the UAP. This issue is directly related to the problem of devising straight lines of accountability.

Who will implement, monitor and be responsible, in an integrated manner, for the UAP at the Province, Conference and universal levels? Will the Provincials be directly responsible to Fr General, to the Counsellor for Discernment and Apostolic Planning? What will be the role of the Presidents of the Conferences? How will the apostolic plans of the Conferences be linked, and aligned with the provincial plans? There is a further problem: should the apostolic plans be worked out ministry-wise or across ministries? Do we want a multiplicity of models and responses?

#### **b. Governance structures for networking and lay collaboration**

GC 36 has clearly emphasized networking as our way of proceeding. The Society is taking important steps in developing networks at the national and international levels. The question, however, of the responsibility of the networks, remains unresolved. How can Provincials be responsible for networks linking apostolic works of various Provinces and Conferences?

The participation of lay persons in the governance of the Society continues to be an unresolved structural issue. Competent and committed people do provide advice, even at the highest level of governance, but do not participate in taking decisions. We talk of being 'partners in mission', of both Jesuits and lay people participating of the same mission. At the same time, we Jesuits often give the impression of being merely outsourcing our work.

#### **c. The 'Diocesan' Syndrome**

For lack of a better word, I called this syndrome the persistent tendency among Jesuits to occupy physical places, to be rooted and located in local ministries like parishes; to explain moving to the periphery in terms of extending our work geographically, to expand territorially. This has been the typical approach of our mission ventures in the past and this image has remained engraved in the minds of many Jesuits.

Complementing or challenging this approach is one that looks at establishing quality institutions that create spaces for research, reflection and replication. To be engaged primarily in education may not necessarily mean to establish new schools, but to sustain networks that ensure the dissemination of new pedagogical ways. It is the change from quantity to quality,

from being physically present to operating in the 'cloud.' To put it in the context of the social apostolate: how is it possible that we do not have a global institution or network of high quality social and scientific research? How is it that our responses to the difficult issues have not been analysed in depth and, what is more important, have not been predicted? We have reached a situation when the number of institutions is going to become an increasing burden and we are going to miss the chance of having top-quality institutions and centres.

In conclusion, the UAP are clearly showing us the way to respond to the challenges facing the Society and the Secretariat. I feel that an in-depth scrutiny of our governance structures may be required to respond to the challenges ahead.

*Original in English*



## Remembering with Thanks to Make Way for a Future of Hope

**Patxi Álvarez, SJ**

*Former Secretary of SJES (2011 – 2017)*

Celebrating is always an exercise of appreciation. It is about looking back to remember our roots, reviewing our painful periods with integrity, remembering the faces of our loved ones, rejoicing for our shared friendships, recognising the Lord's presence in this journey and then returning to life and mission with our hearts inflamed. I think this is what we are doing in this 50th anniversary celebration of the Social Justice Secretariat.

### **Some of the Graces Received**

These past decades have been a time of grace. The first was the founding of the Secretariat itself. This was *Fr. Arrupe's* wish. He felt he needed someone at his side to accompany and advise him on the Society's social dimension. Thus was his will, and the first office was opened under the name "Jesuit Secretariat for Socio-Economic Development", which was staffed by *Fr. Francisco Ivern*. *Fr. Ivern* was a cherished colleague of *Father Arrupe*, who appointed him General Counsellor following General Congregation 32 (1975).

*Arrupe* understood that serving the poor and promoting justice were an essential aspect of the Society's mission. This was not a complementary or additional aspect, rather it encompassed something that had to be present in everything the Society did. *Fr. Janssens*, who preceded *Pedro Arrupe* as General, had given a crucial impetus to the so-called social apostolate, especially with his letter about this apostolate in 1949. In it, he called on all of the Society's Provinces to have some form of social centre and, with this impetus, social institutions were established at a prolific rate during those years.

But *Fr. Arrupe's* vision went further. He understood that this apostolate was crucial in the Society and that it had to permeate all apostolic activities. The promulgation of Decree 4 of General Congregation 32—a true creation which unlocked a new way of understanding our mission and which still affects us to this day—confirmed this in many of its earlier intuitions. *Arrupe* was not a General resigned to carrying out this decree so as to fulfil the mandate of the Congregation; rather he was at the forefront of its implementation, because in fact, before the decree was drafted, he had already been giving inspiration and paving the way.

*Pedro Arrupe* tirelessly encouraged the Jesuits to implement this decree and he endeavoured to have it animate all the Society's activities. In his conception, the mission was not divided into two tasks, a spiritual one (the service of faith) and a secular one (the promotion of justice);

rather he understood that these were two aspects of the same mission, which were mutually enriching. Unfortunately, many of his companions did not see it in the same way, and thus the years that followed led to conflicts and misunderstandings.

The year prior to the stroke he suffered exemplifies his dedication to the task of promoting the social apostolate. In May of 1980 he visited the Jesuits in Cuba, who were living in very difficult conditions. In June of that same year, he attended a meeting convoked in Rome entitled "The Social Apostolate in the Society Today"<sup>1</sup>, in which directors of social centres from different parts of the world came together to reflect on their characteristics and functions. Shortly thereafter, he summoned Jean Lacan and fifteen other Jesuit workers to Rome to listen to them and to dialogue with them about the Workers' Mission, and he would still have time to write a letter about their work, praising this most unique and significant commitment in the history of the Society. In November 1980, he drafted and sent the founding letter of the Jesuit Refugee Service, after several days of discernment in the Curia with Jesuits who had begun to care for refugees in different parts of the world. In December, he wrote a letter to the provincials about the Marxist analysis, after much consultation with Jesuit experts in the field. With it, he helped to counter unfair accusations levelled against some Jesuit companions. A few months later, on August 7th, 1981 suffered cerebral thrombosis that would leave him permanently bedridden.

It is difficult to find anyone else who has welcomed and promoted the social apostolate in the Society in such a determined, hopeful and open way. In fact, we are indebted to him and the members of the GC32 for making the Society what it is today, because they forged a path that, before their time, was not obvious. They created something new and we can only thank them for doing so. The Society has been shaped by that Congregation and by Pedro Arrupe. All that we can say is, "Thank you, Don Pedro".

A second grace has been *the closeness and service to the poor*. The social apostolate has brought us closer to the poor, it has opened doors into their lives and their causes. This life alongside the poor has been a true grace which, to the extent of our engagement in it, has transformed us from within. With good reason, in 1995, twenty years after Decree 4, General Congregation 34 said, in a sapiential tone: "Our service, especially among the poor, has deepened our life of faith, both individually and as a body: our faith has become more paschal, more compassionate, more tender, more evangelical in its simplicity" (D. 2, No. 1). And in another decree, it affirmed: "(the option for faith and justice) put us into such good company – the Lord's surely, but also that of so many friends of his among the poor and those committed to justice. As fellow pilgrims with them towards the Kingdom, we have often been touched by their faith, renewed by their hope, transformed by their love" (D. 3, No. 1).

Service and closeness to the poor, our friendship with them, has renewed our inner thirst for faith and hope and has given new tones to our following of the poor and humble Christ of the Gospel. Maybe this is the greatest gift we have received: having had the opportunity to be

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<sup>1</sup> The contents of what was shared in this meeting can be found in *Promotio Iustitiae* No. 18, July 1980, pp. 83-130.

welcomed by the poor. They give meaning to our inner life. At the same time, we must recognise that we still have many obstacles to sharing our lives with them. We prefer to be their servants than their companions. Living in poverty and sharing their aspirations and frustrations is always difficult.

These decades have also allowed us to transition from a time of conflict, in which the social apostolate seemed to be in competition with other classical apostolates in the Society, such as the educational or pastoral ones; to another in which there is a strong mutual recognition of the specific contribution of each sector. At the same time, today all the Society's apostolates have incorporated the concern for justice in their own fashion. We might say that it is a *dimension desired by all Jesuits and by all works*. This has consisted in an enormous transformation of the Order with a new way of facing reality – a process that has taken several decades to materialise. It is a new dawn for the Society today, with a more compassionate, tender and committed complexion.

### **New Opportunities**

Recent years have given rise to new possibilities. The Society has come to understand that *institutional collaboration and networking* allows us to improve our apostolic response. The present time is one characterised by collaboration. This is the breeding ground for increased creativity and dynamism. We have taken many steps, but they are still on unsteady footing and a long road lies ahead, although the course has already been charted.

Networks are emerging that work around social challenges. In the field of the social apostolate and at a global level, the GIAN (Global Ignatian Advocacy Networks) networks bear mentioning, which have been structured around migration, the right to education, ecology and mining. In another dimension, but in the same vein, other networks have been developed in the Conferences and in the provinces, for topics adapted to regional or local contexts.

Collaboration between sectors is more difficult, because we continue to have a very fragmented vision of the Society's apostolic activity. Given their potential, relations with centres of reflection in universities are very necessary to delve deeper into the topics, reach new syntheses and bring freshness to the response.

In fact, network collaboration can help us to develop a collective, interdisciplinary reflection that incorporates the contributions of academia, together with the insights of social action, which are always powerful and compelling. It will also allow us to advance our work in political advocacy, which prepares the ground for social transformation. Likewise, networks' activities can allow us to raise awareness across a broader spectrum, reaching more people and groups. To advance in these three fields of *reflection, public advocacy* and *awareness-raising*, networks are essential instruments.

The latest General Congregations imparted the *perspective of reconciliation* to our mission. This perspective sheds new light on the promotion of justice. It does not replace it but adds new nuance. The premise of reconciliation is that we live in a broken world, torn apart by many wounds; humanity is in convalescence and in need of healing. Christ is the great actor of reconciliation. This grace is granted by the Risen Christ, and we must ask and be thankful for

it. We collaborate with Him, making our small contribution. The task of reconciliation has to do with building bridges and restoring relationships between the 'included' of a humanity set in its ways, and the 'excluded' with their wounded human dignity. Reconciliation speaks of the torn social fabric that needs to be re sewn, to foster a new harmony. In any case, reconciliation puts the victims first. With them as a starting point, this reconciliation gains its full meaning. If we forget them, reconciliation becomes corrupted as a way to whitewash wrongdoings caused by social conflicts. In any case, reconciliation prevents us from adopting a dichotomous vision of our societies and our world. We are all necessary actors in the task of reconciliation.

In recent years we have become aware of the need to *take care of our common home* and protect creation which has been given to us. Throughout these years, the Secretariat has produced several documents to support us.<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, has given us an invaluable basis for our engagement in this cause. In a way, our own social commitment is re-scaling, preventing us from separating the defence of nature from the protection of the poorest in society. These are two concerns that have to go hand in hand, inseparably.

## **An Open Future**

In February of this year, Fr. Sosa promulgated the new universal apostolic preferences until the year 2029. Two of them are directly related to the social apostolate, such as caring for our common home and accompanying the poor. It is a renewal of the dual summons to take care of the most vulnerable in society and to protect the environment, because the social and human environment deteriorate as one.<sup>3</sup> This is the natural apostolic space in which the social apostolate develops.

Possibly in the near future these two preferences will facilitate more agile collaboration between different sectors, but we will have to work to structure models that support this, so that this collaboration and networking is viable and not merely an aspirational exercise. If universities, parishes and centres of worship, schools, media and the social sector align our efforts around these two preferences, as a Society we will have a far more significant impact. In addition, these efforts will give a new character to the Society itself.

Maintaining the union of these two preferences will be of vital importance. As Pope Francis emphasises in his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, they are inseparable, because, "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental"<sup>4</sup>. Otherwise, we run the risk of our initiatives taking the ecological track—a more urgent and newer one—while we forget the ever present and obscene poverty and inequality. We risk forgetting about the poor. It is likely that the social momentum towards the environment will be very strong in the coming years, and this is necessary; however, our focus is both on the vulnerable human beings and on the environment which they inhabit.

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<sup>2</sup> *We Live in a Broken World*, 1999 and *Healing a Broken World*, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> *Laudato Si'*, 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Laudato Si'*, 139.



The first of these preferences is about showing the way to God through the Exercises and discernment. It is quite remarkable how much the social sector has grown in its spirituality in recent decades. In reality, it has made a tremendous spiritual contribution to life in the Society. But we need to continue deepening in Ignatius' spirituality so that our service to the poor and the threatened creation is more authentic, freer from other unnecessary interests, and remains for us a source of meaning, inspiration, tenderness and hope. In the next few years it would be advisable to continue our efforts to better make the spirituality experienced at the margins and frontiers explicit in our reflection on another world and our work for structural transformation.

The only other thing to mention is the preference relating to young people: to accompany them in building a hopeful future. Young people are ahead of us in their hope, trust, generosity and faith in another world. We relate to many of them; we always acknowledge them as a grace. This is a space we have to nurture, but also a wellspring for us to renew our hope and faith, which are always threatened by failure and, in turn, the temptation to give up.

We can appreciate the many experiences in this path the Lord has given us. He has been truly great to us. In the service to the poor and the promotion of justice we have found ourselves alongside the Crucified Christ, but also with the Risen Lord who brings encouragement in history and promises us another future. It is precisely for this future that we work towards the goal today, which "will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all".<sup>5</sup>

*Original in Spanish*  
*Translation Nils Sundermann*

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<sup>5</sup> *Laudato Si'*, 243.



## Faith and Justice Rooted in the Church

**Fred Kammer, SJ**

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Jesuits articulated the mission of *the service of faith and the promotion of justice* dramatically in the 1970s, following two major Church events. The First was the Second Vatican Council, proclaiming:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

This sentence opens the document *Gaudium et Spes*, approved December 7, 1965, the last day of the council, by a 2,309 to 75 vote. This was three years after the council opened, the longest council document ever, and Vatican II's most distinctive proclamation.

The first line captured the message, placing the Church squarely alongside all humanity in common concerns. Some background can help us understand better. Pope John XXIII called the council "on January 25, 1959, less than three months after his election."<sup>2</sup> Three years of work began by commissions drafting proposed texts—*none concerned the Church in the modern world*.

One month before the council, on September 11, 1962, Pope John declared on radio: Where the underdeveloped countries are concerned, the Church presents herself as she is. She wishes to be the Church of all, and **especially the Church of the poor**.<sup>3</sup>

On October 20, 1962, ten days after opening, the council delivered this message to the world:

We urgently turn our thoughts to the problems by which human beings are afflicted today. Hence, our concern goes out to the lowly, poor, and powerless. Like Christ, we would have pity on the multitude heavily burdened by hunger, misery, and lack of knowledge. ... As we undertake our work, therefore, we would emphasize

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<sup>1</sup> Vatican Council II. (1965). *Gaudium et Spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> O'Malley, SJ, John W. (2008). *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Pope John XXIII. (September 11, 1962). Radio Address at [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/messages/pont\\_messages/1962.index.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/messages/pont_messages/1962.index.html). Accessed 5 May, 2019.

whatever concerns the dignity of the human person, whatever contributes to a genuine community of peoples.”<sup>4</sup>

*Gaudium et Spes* originated near the end of the first of four sessions when Cardinal Suenens urged the members to look outward and address the world’s needs. On December 4, 1962, Suenens explicitly cited Pope John’s September 11<sup>th</sup> radio address. As Fr. John O’Malley explains:

...Suenens asserted that what the council needed was a central theme that would lend it a basic orientation. Let that theme be, as the pope put it on September 11, “the church of Christ, light to the world”... That theme has two parts, the first of which looks to the inner reality of the church and asks the question, “What do you say of yourself? The second part concerns the relationship of the church to the world outside it, and asks questions about the human person, about social justice, about evangelization of the poor, about world peace.<sup>5</sup>

Asian, African, and Latin American bishops reflected worldwide concerns. Radical economic imbalances and threats to peace and humanity itself—the “joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties” —were very much on delegates’ minds.

Widely debated over three sessions, this most authoritative document in modern Catholic social teaching was inspired by John XXIII and urged by Cardinal Montini (later Paul VI) on the day after Cardinal Suenens spoke. Archbishop Karol Wojtyła (later John Paul II), as well as Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) participated in its development.

*Part one* taught about human dignity, social relations, essential needs, and the Church’s role in the world. *Part two* focused on four “problems of special urgency”: (1) marriage and family life; (2) cultural diversity and development; and (3) socio-economic life, including inequality, justice, duties of public authorities, and the common good.

The fourth section stressed the crisis of modern weaponry—that peace must be built on respect, harmony, justice, and love. It legitimated both nonviolence and conscientious objection, rejecting blind obedience to commands, wars of subjugation, and acts of war targeting population centers. The council condemned the arms race as devastation for the poor.

After the council, but before the second major Church event, Father General Pedro Arrupe established the social apostolate secretariat in the Jesuit Curia in 1969. The Secretariat of Justice and Ecology — its current name — is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary now.

Two years later, a second event also shaped our call to faith and justice. The key sentence from the Synod of Bishops in 1971 reads:

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<sup>4</sup> O’Malley, *op.cit.*, 99.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-58.

Action for justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.<sup>6</sup>

It is often summarized: "Action for justice [is] a constitutive element of the preaching of the gospel..."

The Church arrived at this sense of mission from Vatican II and the Synod in two ways. It saw that worldwide injustice denied, not only human dignity, but the very existence of the God who loves all people. In addition, the practical atheism of injustice was not just person-to-person, but structured into social, economic, and political systems: schools, prisons, food and agriculture systems, health systems, and economic systems greatly enriching some while leaving billions poor, increasing inequality globally.

The Gospel then must have, as constitutive parts, *denouncing unjust structures* as did the prophets and Jesus, and *announcing more just and life-giving ways of living together* as children of a loving God,<sup>7</sup> including societal structures. The U.S. bishops later explained:

Whether the problem is preventing war and building peace or addressing the needs of the poor, *Catholic teaching emphasizes not only the individual conscience, but also the political, legal and economic structures* through which policy is determined and issues are adjudicated.<sup>8</sup>

Connecting faith and justice committed the Church, Jesuits, and all Christians to work to eliminate individual injustices and change unjust structures.

### **General Congregation 32 [1974-75]**

Reading the same "signs of the times" as the council and the synod, the mandate of General Congregation 32 (GC32) to *serve faith and promote justice* pivots around three poles:

1. *The mission of faith and justice*: "What is it to be a companion of Jesus today? It is to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes."<sup>9</sup>
2. *The reality of social structures*: "There is a new challenge to our apostolic mission in a world increasingly interdependent but, for all that, divided by injustice: injustice not only personal but institutionalized: built into economic, social, and political structures that dominate the life of nations and the international community."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Synod of Bishops. (1971). *Justitia in Mundo: Justice in the World*, Introduction.

<sup>7</sup> Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education. (December 30, 1988, and released June 27, 1989). *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> National Council of Catholic Bishops. (1986). *Economic Justice for All*, 259, emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup> General Congregation 32. (1975). *Jesuits Today*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> General Congregation 32. (1975). *Our Mission Today: The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice*, 6.

3. *The call to solidarity:* “Similarly, solidarity with men and women who live a life of hardship and who are victims of oppression cannot be the choice of a few Jesuits only. It should be a characteristic of the life of all of us as individuals and a characteristic of our communities and institutions as well.”<sup>11</sup>

Jesuits and our colleagues, in solidarity with poor and oppressed peoples, must address individual injustices and those systems which allow, embody, or enforce structural evils.

### **General Congregation 33 [1983]**

GC32 launched us into what the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Congregation (GC33) called “an experience of grace and conversion,” persecution for Christ’s kingdom (59 Jesuits have been martyred around the world since the Synod of 1971<sup>12</sup>), difficulty in understanding “the Church’s recent emphasis on changing the structures of society,” and “tensions both in the Society and outside it.”<sup>13</sup> Granted these difficulties, GC33 confirmed the faith-justice mission and emphasized key future directions.

### **General Congregation 34 [1995]**

From the 34<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (GC34), we learned that this mission includes two complementary dimensions. *First, faith and culture.* In twenty years between the GC32 and GC34, we better understood that social and economic injustices are woven deeply within cultures. In the United States, for example, cultural myths of rugged individualism, manifest destiny, white racial superiority, and economic self-sufficiency are so deep-seated that they deafen many people to the Gospel call to community, stewardship, solidarity, and a special care for the *anawim*, the poor of God. To hear Pope Saint John Paul’s analysis of the diabolical role of the “desire for profit” and “thirst for power”<sup>14</sup> in our worldwide economy and culture requires a complete conversion.

Not understanding how culture promotes injustice or justice misses its subtle but profound role in promoting the Gospel and building the reign of God ... *or opposing those efforts.* GC34 wrote, “Justice can truly flourish only when it involves the transformation of culture, since the roots of injustice are embedded in cultural attitudes as well as in economic structures.”<sup>15</sup>

*Second, faith and religious dialogue.* GC34 required commitment to interreligious dialogue in our mission. The transcendent plays a central role in most cultures, so transforming culture to pursue justice requires attention to religion. With Christians fewer than 20% of the world’s population, the congregation wrote, “our commitment to justice and peace, human rights, and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>12</sup> Ignatian Solidarity Network. (2018, November 3). *Martyrs Prayer* at the Ignatian Family Teach-In includes the names of 59 Jesuits killed since Father Arrupe “warned that Jesuits and their colleagues would suffer greatly if they boldly engaged in the struggle for justice, which is a hallmark of our times.”

<sup>13</sup> General Congregation 33. (1983). *Companions of Jesus Sent into Today’s World*, 31-33.

<sup>14</sup> Pope John Paul II. (1987). *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: The Church’s Social Concern*, 37.

<sup>15</sup> General Congregation 34. (1995). *Servants of Christ’s Mission*, 17.

the protection of the environment has to be made in collaboration with believers of other religions.”<sup>16</sup>

This conclusion reflects both the *awareness* of religion’s key societal role and the *practical experience* of working with people of other faiths in promoting justice and peace. Experiences of terrorism and inter-religious conflicts also underscored religion’s critical role in world affairs and the duty to understand other religions and bridge religious divides to create a more peaceful world.

For GC 34, then, working for justice required transforming culture and dialogue with religions that shape cultures. As GC34 put it,

...this justice cannot be achieved without, at the same time, attending to the cultural dimensions of social life and the way in which a particular culture defines itself with regard to religious transcendence.<sup>17</sup>

### **General Congregation 35 [2008]**

The 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (GC35) enriched this commitment to faith and justice with a triple reconciliation – drawing on the image of Jesus in *Luke 4* as the bringer of Jubilee, the biblical call to unity with one another, God, and the earth dating back to *Leviticus*. GC35 called us to promote reconciliation with God, human reconciliation, and reconciliation with creation.<sup>18</sup> This means building bridges between rich and poor and advocacy links between the powerful and powerless [28], using new communications technologies and international networking [29], and advocacy and research to serve the poor and protect the environment [35].

### **General Congregation 36 [2016]**

General Congregation 36 (GC36) urged a “mission of reconciliation and justice.”<sup>19</sup> It developed the three dimensions of reconciliation from GC35, enriched by the 2014 letter on reconciliation from Father General Adolfo Nicolás<sup>20</sup> and the teaching of Pope Francis “placing faith, justice, and solidarity with the poor and the excluded as central elements of the mission of reconciliation” [3]. In reconciling humanity, GC36 emphasized the “shocking forms of suffering and injustice that millions of our brothers and sisters endure” [25]. It emphasized three groups: *displaced peoples* (refugees, immigrants, and internally displaced peoples) [26]; those *marginalized by injustices and inequality*, often caused by dominant models of development [27]; and *people suffering from the violence* of fundamentalism, intolerance, and ethnic-religious-political conflicts – urging us to work for peace [28].

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<sup>16</sup> General Congregation 34. (1995). *Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue*, 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Servants of Christ’s Mission*, op. cit., 18.

<sup>18</sup> General Congregation 35. (2008) *Challenges to Our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers*. Numbers in brackets refer to paragraph numbers in the congregation texts.

<sup>19</sup> General Congregation 36. (2016). *Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice*. Numbers in brackets refer to numbers in the congregation text.

<sup>20</sup> Nicolás, SJ, Adolfo. (September 8, 2014). “Reply to *Ex Officio* Letters 2014,” *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu*. Vol. XXV, 1032-1038.

Reconciliation with creation underscored the connection from Pope Francis between the environmental crisis and the world's social crisis [29]. We are to "hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."<sup>21</sup> The congregation urged us to change lifestyles, accompany the most vulnerable, and rigorously analyze causes and cures for the crisis [30]. As did GC35, the Congregation emphasized that, "All our ministries should seek to build bridges, to foster peace," [31] and do this as messengers of hope [32], deeply reflective [33], committed to reconciliation [34], widely collaborative [35, 36], and promoting personal and social transformation [37].

#### **Four New Universal Apostolic Preferences**

In October 2017, Superior General Arturo Sosa invited Jesuits and colleagues worldwide to provide input in developing "universal apostolic preferences" in all ministries for the next ten years. Local meetings surfaced key themes. These were melded with others within each province, then distilled with those of other provinces in assistancy meetings, and finally joined to form worldwide themes by Father Sosa and his team meeting with regional Jesuit representatives.

On February 19, 2019, Father General wrote:

At the end of the sixteen months that the process lasted at the various levels of the Society, I presented to the Holy Father four universal apostolic preferences:

- A. *To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;*
- B. *To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice;*
- C. *To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;*
- D. *To collaborate in the care of our Common Home.*<sup>22</sup>

Pope Francis endorsed these preferences. In April 2019, Father Sosa explained choosing the word "preferences" rather than "priorities":

We confirmed that preferences is really what we need and what we want to have. Not priorities, in the sense that priorities exclude: when you prioritize something you exclude something else. This is not a 'choosing' between schools, universities, or parishes. Preferences are vital orientations for focusing ALL of our apostolates in the next ten years.<sup>23</sup>

The preferences combine traditional and newer themes. Emphasizing the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* and discernment is vital to our way of proceeding, but the stress here is on widely sharing these treasures and their use by ministry leaders—Jesuit or lay.

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<sup>21</sup> Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si': Care for Our Common Home*, 49.

<sup>22</sup> Sosa, SJ, Arturo. (February 19, 2019). *Letter to the Whole Society*, 1, emphasis in original.

<sup>23</sup> Sosa, SJ, Arturo. (April 3, 2019). Remarks at a conference on leadership and discernment at a retreat house outside of Rome. Video of his remarks is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qk7wiOPXMWM>. Accessed 8 May, 2019.

Walking with those who are vulnerable, marginalized, and impoverished—including immigrants, refugees, and sexual abuse survivors—and challenging unjust structures is rooted in the Scriptures, the renewed emphasis from Vatican II until now on faith and justice, and developments in understanding mission from GC32 to GC36.

Emphasizing young people and their aspirations to “insert themselves into society, seek to give meaning to their existence, and realize their dreams” follows centuries of working with youth. In addition, Father Sosa explicitly referenced the October 2018 Synod on Youth in explaining this preference, recognizing that these are times of epochal change “from which will emerge a new humanity and a new way of structuring human life in its personal and social dimensions.”<sup>24</sup>

Lastly, care for our common home was inspired by Pope Francis<sup>25</sup> and flowed from the GC35 and GC36 emphasis on reconciliation with creation. This challenge cries out from the environmental destruction caused by dominant economic systems which affect the poor and vulnerable most acutely and inflict intergenerational damage that “conditions and jeopardizes the life of future generations.”<sup>26</sup> This awareness demands significant lifestyle changes and collaboration with others to construct “**alternative models of life that are based on respect for creation and on a sustainable development capable of producing goods that, when justly distributed, ensure a decent life for all human beings on our planet.**”<sup>27</sup>

## Conclusion

The Jesuit theme of the faith-that-does-justice emerges from the Catholic sense of mission from Vatican II, the Synod of 1971, and (while not described here) the legacy of strong Church social teaching during this entire period. GC32’s mission of serving faith and promoting justice later incorporated cultural transformation and interreligious dialogue. Then, in GC35 (2008) and GC36 (2016) the faith-doing-justice mandate was enriched with the perception that justice includes a call to reconciliation with God, one another, and creation—all flowing from the reconciling mission of Jesus announced in *Luke 4*, effected on the cross, and reflecting the Old Testament Jubilee. Finally, four apostolic preferences must be read against this evolving reflection on mission of the Church and the Society of Jesus.

*Original in English*

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<sup>24</sup> Sosa, Letter, op. cit., 4.

<sup>25</sup> Pope Francis, op.cit.

<sup>26</sup> Sosa, Letter, op. cit., 5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 5, emphasis in original.





## Doing Good in the Age of Prosperity

**Benecditus Hari Juliawan, SJ**

*Former Secretary for Social Ministries, JCAP*

Ms Ratna (not her real name) was busy chatting with another woman behind the counter of a foodstall set up temporarily on the pavement in Jogjakarta, Indonesia. These two ladies were sex workers who had seen better days in the trade. A few weeks earlier they had just learned how to run a business as alternative livelihoods and were now given a chance to practice the new skills. This was the initiative of Realino Social Centre, a small NGO established by the Jesuits in the city. It was clear that the apprentices were struggling. Only a few people came and the mosquitoes were busier.

Father Yohanes Adrianto started this project with high hopes but soon found out that it was going to be far from easy. These ladies were illiterate to start with, so they really had to learn basic calculation first before moving on to simple accounting. Ms Ratna's husband usually accompanied her for the evening rota but not that night because his other wife from the village was visiting and he obviously avoided being seen with another woman at all cost. It was not only challenging. It was complicated.

Being and working with the poor is unlike an office job. They are not our clients looking for solutions which we can dispense for a fee, all conducted within set working hours. Almost always we are involved personally, get hurt, bear the consequences if they have a brush with the law, but also cherish small victories with them. And all of this perhaps only concerns one person or one family.

Indeed most social ministries here are small. Their impact is limited and may affect the lives of only a handful of individuals. Take Realino again as example. It works with about 80 sex workers at most and this figure fluctuates greatly depending on some arbitrary life cycles beyond the control of the centre. There are young volunteers eager to join the project, but the stigma that often comes with this type of work deter some of them. Above all, this project does not make money; quite the contrary, it bleeds resources.

In the age when people talk about performance indicators, efficiency, impact and value for money, social ministries are viewed at best with nostalgia. They are a good thing but not a sensible one. Come social entrepreneurship to the rescue and social ministries look like a distant memory from the previous century. The Society of Jesus is not exempt from these sentiments.

## Asia Pacific

When the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat was founded in 1969, Asia Pacific was going through a turbulent time and the world was a stage to dictators and a battleground for the East-West ideological confrontation. Most countries in the region wallowed in abject poverty and lived under oppressive regimes. Marcos was gearing up for the second term, which would subsequently see the Philippines under martial law, while Indonesia's smiling General Suharto had just consolidated his power base after a genocidal anti-communist campaign. Ho Chi Minh died that year and the Vietnam War was at its bloodiest, prompting President Nixon to order troop withdrawals.

50 years on, Asia Pacific is a very different place. It has been dubbed the world's engine of growth and witnessed the largest social mobility that alleviated people from poverty in a single generation. Ideological divide has morphed into a struggle for dominance in political and especially economic fields. Democracy has gained traction in many countries while it is still elusive in some, all thrown in the mix where the rhetoric of Asian values and occasional threats of military coups are still very real.

Unjust structures however remain stubborn and have taken different shapes while continuing to marginalise certain segments of society. The relative prosperity that many people are now enjoying comes at a hefty price. Insatiable demand for energy, minerals, timber and palm oil brings in a lot of wealth for big multinationals and wreaks havoc on indigenous people and the environment. The gap between the rich and the poor has been widening as the economic structures favour those with capital. What have been our responses?

Ten years ago (2009) the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific organised a social mapping of all works that promoted justice, regardless of the institutions. Having surveyed 75 persons, Jesuit and lay, the mapping uncovered interesting facts. By 2009 only 30 out of 1680 Jesuits in the conference worked in social ministries. 32 institutions were dedicated to the work for justice and 20 percent of those had lay people at the helm. However, one third of those institutions were located in one province.

Almost all social centres in the conference started as a small initiative by one or two individual Jesuits or lay persons to respond to a very local problem. Some of them grew to become more institutionalised with resources to match, but many more remain to function at the level they started. Limited personnel and resources continue to haunt these organisations and constrain their reach and ambition.

That institutional profile may be dictated by necessity in certain contexts. Authoritarian or less democratic political regimes in various disguises are known to be allergic to critical voices and alternative visions coming from civil society. In the context where Christianity is a minority, Jesuit institutions are wary of being associated with foreign influences, whose condemnation is a national sport for many political leaders in this part of the world. In some other contexts, perhaps it is a vote of non-confidence in an apostolic sector that was run by people who were once described by Father Kolvenbach as "...sometimes discouraged and scattered, somehow lacking in collaboration and organisation." (On Social Apostolate, 2000)

In comparison, school works have flourished. New schools were started in Indonesia, East Timor, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar, each with serious institutional commitments drawn from the resources of the conference. Schools are indeed a model of doing good in the age of performance and impact. Education is a social investment all parents should make, a form of social engineering that is acceptable and even desirable by governments and development agencies, an opportunity to bring young people to God, a solution to all problems. And the Jesuits are very good at it.

### **The Call to be with The Poor**

So where does that leave us, when the Society calls us to “walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity have been violated” (Universal Apostolic Preferences, 2019)? Surely we can do that in our parishes, schools, retreat houses and institutions? Do we need social ministries or social centres?

In his letter for the inaugural World Day of the Poor in 2017, Pope Francis warned us not to see the poor as beneficiaries of our charitable actions or as a...to appease our conscience. Instead, we are invited “to draw near to the poor, to encounter them, to meet their gaze, to embrace them and to let them feel the warmth of love that breaks through their solitude.” This is in line with the message that Pope Francis delivered at Mass in Madison Square Garden, New York two years earlier, “go out and meet others where they really are, not where we think they should be.”

A true encounter with the poor where they really are is a unique contribution of social ministries. Educational, parish, spiritual works are often defined within a set parameter of performance. Their tools box contains instruments suited to the tasks that need to be performed. The human condition, however, especially at the margin of subsistence is notoriously elusive especially to people trained to work with strict timeframes and academic disciplines. In the age of prosperity, the poor may seem distant and partly to blame for the hardship that they are going through. Despite the lingering doubt, moved with compassion some would devise a variety of programmes to alleviate their suffering, but that might not be what the poor want and need in the first place. Only after careful listening and patient co-presence we may begin to understand their sense of dignity and violation. Social ministries are best place to create a space where this takes place and allow us to hear the cry of the poor.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat is a reminder of the importance of this work for the Society. GC 36 found consolation and joy in the image of the First Companions in Venice and reflected on their poverty of life and proximity to the poor as being central to their identity and mission. Perhaps we need to rekindle what brought our founders to come to that lifestyle and find its appropriate expression for our world today.

*Original in English*



## Jesuit Social Action amidst Indigenous Peoples of Central India during the Past Five Decades

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**Social action** can be generally described as an aggregation of efforts by concerned individuals to address what they see as the **social** problems in their time and place. Jesuits by their very vocation are expected to be 'socially concerned' persons. Jesuits in India as a whole and in central India in particular are aware of some of the significant 'People's Movements' during the past five decades in the country, namely

- 1) 'Save the Silent Valley Movement, 1973, aimed at the protection of an evergreen forest in Kerala from being flooded by hydroelectric project;
- 2) 'Chipko Movement', 1973, in north India which saw people protesting against deforestation by hugging trees to stop them from being cut;
- 3) 'Jungle Bachao Andolan', 1980s, which brought people onto the street against the govt replacing *Sal* trees with the highly valued teak trees in erstwhile Bihar;
- 4) 'Narmada Bachao Andolan', 1985 onwards, a protest, to express the views against a large number of dams being constructed near Narmada river, brought a large number of *adivasis*, farmers, environmentalists, and human rights activists together.<sup>1</sup>
- 5) Last but not least, 'Anti-Displacement Resistance Movements' among the Indigenous Peoples of Central-India, 1990s onwards, which saw some church personnel and Jesuits in particular involved with people's movements and their struggles. As this is the context of our reflection we need to dwell more at it at length.

### **PART I: Experiential narrative of the economic-social-political process taking place among the indigenous people of Central India and the role of Jesuit social intervention**

Nature's blessing of rich mineral resources has become the curse of the Indigenous Peoples of Central India.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thebetterindia.com/18248/most-powerful-social-citizens-movements-in-india/>

Jharkhand is witness of unending struggle for mineral resources as the state contains 40 percent of India's precious minerals like Uranium, Mica, Bauxite, Granite, Gold, Silver, Graphite, Magnetite, Dolomite, Fireclay, Quartz, Feldspar, Coal, Iron and Copper. Forests and woodlands occupy more than 29% of the state which is amongst the highest in India.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally the eyes of corporates are on these minerals and have succeeded in making the Indian govt an obliging partner. Mining Leaseholds, Major Medium & Minor Irrigation schemes, Major Industrial Units, Thermal Power Stations, Defense Establishments have forcibly taken over about 24 lakhs (2.4 million) acres of land and displaced about 19 lakh (1.9 mill) mostly indigenous people. Recently Jharkhand state govt declared the inauguration of 'Land Bank' by which any piece of private or common land where actual cultivation is not taking place amounting to 21 lakh (2.1 mill) acres of land is slated to be acquired for industrial & business houses to set up any and everything they wish in order to make profit. To make this possible, land acquisition laws have been amended and anyone resisting this can be prosecuted legally.

All this is done with the loud proclamation that modern industrialization is the only way to development and apart from public sector enterprises, private sector is the need of the hour. This will lead to accumulation of capital at national level in the form of Gross Domestic Produce (GDP) and through what is called 'trickle-down theory' it will percolate to the people at the bottom of the economic ladder. However, the experience of the past five decades reveal the trickle-downing has not taken place but instead the inequality between the few rich and the many poor has been growing enormously. India's top 1% of the population now holds 73% of the wealth while 67 crore (670 mill) citizens, comprising the country's poorest half, saw their wealth rise by just 1%. The tragedy of it all is most of this 'development' is taking place at the cost of the indigenous people of central India where most of the mineral wealth is found.

This type of growth brings about a serious disruption in the life of the indigenous people not only economically but also socio-culturally. The values which kept them as an equalitarian community, taking from nature what they needed and in return took care of and nurtured and protected nature now stand in danger of being ruptured. They see with their own eyes how the green hills and dales that was their home now is being denuded into arid brown deserts by the mining companies. And when they stand up to resist and protest against this devastation their young men are dubbed 'extremists', cases filed against them and thrown into prison. There are several thousand such young indigenous men & women languishing in the jails of the different states of central India. This is the torture and agony they are impatiently suffering.

This is the historic unjust situation in which the indigenous people of central India find themselves in and the Church and the Jesuits have to assume their social role precisely in this context.

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<sup>2</sup> Gladson Dungdung in 'Adivasis' Struggle Against Displacement In Jharkhand' in Counter Currents, August 2009

In order to assess the role played by Jesuits during the past 50 years, we may need to divide the past five decades into three phases / periods to understand the evolution of Jesuit Social Action.

### **Phase One: (1970 -1990) Relief & economic development**

This was the period of Public Sector enterprises with big industries, dams, called 'modern temples' meant to build economic infrastructures but the benefits were not percolating to masses down below. Poverty was rampant and vast majority of people lacking basic needs.

**Jesuit social action** takes the form of relief & economic development work among the most marginalized. It mainly consisted of distribution of relief supplies of food and clothes mainly from the catholic dioceses of the United States through 'Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) and 'Catholic Charities'. Each catholic diocese in central India had set up basic infrastructure to receive and distribute these relief supplies through the network of parishes. Practically all the hostels for boys & girls in catholic schools were dependent on these food supplies. Parishes undertook small individual and community development projects such as digging wells for drinking water and irrigation, land-levelling projects to make their hilly tracts of land cultivable. MISEREOR of the German catholics sponsored developmental projects especially to put up infrastructures. Such heavy was the hub of activities that the Jesuits involved in carrying out these project-related activities hardly had any time or opportunity to understand and act on the dynamics of the broader society. But there was a glowing feeling that we are doing great work for the poor.

### **Phase Two: (1991 - 2010) People's resistance to unjust displacement**

The period of Neo-liberalism opening doors to private investments for private profit leading to large-scale displacements paving the way to people's resistance movements. Innumerable agreements (MoU) were signed by state govts with as many industrialists signing off huge tracts of cultivable and forest land mostly belonging to indigenous people without their free, prior, informed consent. The colonial law of 1894 for land acquisition was applied and people's land was acquired forcibly. Naturally people started to resist forcible land acquisition. Mass movements by indigenous peoples took shape and several of them succeeded in halting projects.

**Jesuit social action** becomes supportive of sporadic mass resistances to specific projects. Jesuit activists were careful not to assume leadership role of such movements but enabled the traditional indigenous leadership to lead the movements. Jesuits rather became a dynamic force within them especially in doing an on-going analysis of the strategies used and the success or failure so as to plan future strategies better.

### **Phase Three (2011 ...) People claiming their constitutional, legal, judicial rights met by state repression**

The period of state repression leading to denial of fundamental rights to dissenting voices. A well-planned state action to forcible acquisition of indigenous land, forest, water sources and

sub-soil minerals has been in operation. The constitutional, legal, judicial provisions protective of indigenous people and their rights are being diluted or done away with. Poverty is deepening in rural areas and dozens of indigenous people have even died of starvation in the past few years. Understandably, some militant forces have attracted several young men to join them to fight the exploitative system. This has become an excuse for the ruling class to label all indigenous young men as suspects in the eyes of law. Indiscriminate arrest of thousands of innocent young men and some women has led to a sense of insecurity among the young even to remain in their homes. Hence, they find a way out by migrating to other states as casual, contract labour. They form a major portion of about 40 to 50 lakhs (4 to 5 million) in the southern states alone. Such is the economic deprivation and the consequent social marginalization of the indigenous people of central India.

**Jesuit social action** is no more setting up our own social centres, organizing programmes for activists in isolation. Rather, it assumes a clear socio-political dimension in conjunction with broader secular democratic movements / forces in view of deprived exploited classes asserting and claiming their constitutional, legal, judicial rights. Some such people's movements are related to the on-going displacements, working towards rehabilitation of those already displaced, enabling deprived sections to get access to their rights in education, health, taking up cases of human rights violations, legal intervention to remedy violations of specific rights such as illegal detention of young indigenous youth under the garb of extremism etc. It involves going out of the safety & security of our institutional structures and be exposed to the risks of standing up and be counted. Jesuits are not alone in this type of involvement. There are many concerned citizens who are similarly committed and are providing leadership. It is the challenge posed by people's struggles to regain and protect their human, democratic rights and be ready to face what is to be faced.

## **PART II - Some Significant Milestones in the Journey**

It is heartening to note that in all the three phases the Jesuits in Social Action [JSA for short] played and are playing a committed role. When the transition took place from one phase to the next, the JSA were able to perceive the need for it and were able to assume the new role. Some Jesuits have come, some have gone, but some have remained steadfast. They did not try to assume leadership but were able to work as equals with other socially committed citizens. And one consistent role they have tried to perform has been an on-going analysis of the struggles thus helping their confreres in struggle to critically assess the validity of the strategies that were adopted, the strengths and weaknesses thereof, and to change or adopt different /new strategies for future struggles. This implied undertaking formal researches / studies, write the reports, share the findings with their colleagues. Sometimes it also meant going to the print and electronic media so as to make the general public aware of specific issues. There have also been occasions which necessitated having recourse to legal action by filing cases at the appropriate level of the judiciary. There have been some successes as well as some failures, but all part of the overall process of the deprived people asserting and claiming their rights. Often it meant taking on the State power in open court and the consequent repercussions such as cases being filed by the State against activists on false charges. Then it necessarily leads to long drawn out legal litigations. A few JSAs have been

implicated in some such cases. This is to be considered as part of the price we all have to pay for the cause of justice.

### **Challenges and Opportunities . . .**

As the Gospel saying goes, 'the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few', so also the field of social action is vast and risky. Those who opt for it from the broader society, the Church and our own Society of Jesus are mighty few. Individuals are hesitant. Institutions / organizations are hesitant. The reason is not far to seek. Our country in general and indigenous peoples in particular are going through a very critical phase. Our Constitution assures a striving towards a sovereign secular socialist democratic republic. But the very fabric of nationhood is under threat. The rich mineral resources of central India which is the home of indigenous peoples are being coveted upon by national and international corporate houses. The governments at the centre and the state are vying with each other to welcome them and offer on a platter the land, the forests, the water sources and the mineral riches. Although there are clear constitutional, legal, judicial provisions to safeguard the interests of indigenous peoples, they are diluted, amended or even done away with when it comes to meet the demand of corporates. Land owners are given a pittance as compensation, no rehabilitation is done and are simply evacuated forcibly. Consequently, poverty even to the extent of starvation deaths are taking place. And when people are brought to the point of saying 'enough is enough' and resist alienation of their land and forcible displacement without any adequate rehabilitation, they are dubbed as 'anti-development' and 'anti-national'. Thousands of young indigenous men and women have been thrown into prison and are languishing for years without trial. Those human rights defenders, whether they are legal professionals, writers, poets, social activists who stand up to protest this injustice have become targets of state repression.

Added to these is the recently emerging 'majoritarian communalism' spreading its hate-filled fangs over the whole Indian society targeting minority socio-religious communities. Mob-lynching of individuals, groups has sadly become a frequently occurring phenomenon. The local law-and-order forces, civil administration and government have become tacit spectators to these cruel occurrences, sometimes filing cases on the victims rather than taking the perpetrators to task. All this is aimed to transform the Indian Secular State to a 'Hindu Religious State'. Anyone who challenges this concept is labeled as 'anti-national'.

The overall impact of above scenario is that a sense of 'fear' is palpable in the air and most citizens are affected by it. It leads to a feeling that 'it is better to play safe' and as long as it does not touch one personally or one's family, let life go on, why become a 'martyr'. As always and everywhere, the few who stand up and are counted, are paying the price for their conviction and forthright involvement.

Sad but true, for the members of religious groups including our Jesuit brethren, the above 'fear' is real and hence most have chosen to be silent. Added to this is the fact most Jesuits function in well structured institutions which offer economic and social security. Not easy to break out of the 'comfort zones'! So again it is just a handful of Jesuits in each Province who



venture out and join forces with other secular democratic forces and are ready to 'pay the cost of discipleship'.

**So near, yet so far!**

*Original in English*



## **A Journey of Justice and Reconciliation in South Asia: 50 Years and Beyond**

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### **Introduction**

The journey of Justice for Jesuits in the South Asian Assistency has truly been a remarkable one. It can broadly be classified into two major historical periods: pre- and post-General Congregation thirty-two GC 32 - in the early seventies). Although the period before GC 32 was marked by social outreach, charity and other works of mercy, in many ways it was GC 32's Decree on Mission (GC 32, D. 4) that marked a radical departure in the praxis of Justice. The Mission articulated by the GC has had a profound influence. "*The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. For reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another.*" (emphasis added). It goes on to add, "In one form or another, this has always been the mission of the Society; but it gains new meaning and urgency in the light of the needs and aspirations of the men and women of our time, and it is in that light that we examine it anew." Faith, in this formulation, is an inseparable part of the promotion of Justice. The decree was mindful of the rapid changes that had taken place in the world.

### **Highlights of the Contribution of the Ministry**

Jesuits all over the world responded to the call of GC 32 generously. Some pockets of resistance continued to exist but a lot was achieved in the ensuing 50 years. Jesuits surveyed the national scene and found that hunger and chronic malnutrition stalked the land, illiteracy and obscurantism was rampant and morbidity was on a large scale. The rigid caste system continued to hold sway resulting in the exploitation of the so-called lower castes. Development projects deracinated hundreds of thousands of people rendering them homeless and hopeless. Millions of children were out of school because the State could not, or did not want to, provide even basic education, and where primary schools existed they were in pathetic conditions. Primary health centres were too few and far between. Conditions of the poor were bad not only in the villages but also in urban areas. The gap between the haves and the have-nots was increasing.

Jesuits responded to this situation in various ways. In many Provinces, the Poor became the focus of the Ministry. The crucified Christ became the central symbol in the struggle for Justice and in the Liturgies. The range of services rendered were: primary health services, basic

literacy and skills, legal aid to fight cases relating to land rights, wages, exploitation, custodial torture and/or death. To meet the growing need and commitment to social justice, a number of social centres were established, which also enabled the Jesuits to have closer contact with the people. Two urban social centres had a national and international profile, which enabled them to take up bigger issues that needed more specialized inputs for advocacy work. Prominent among them were the two Indian Social Institutes (ISI) - one based in the capital city in Delhi and the other in Bangalore in the South. These have produced literature useful to grassroots activists as well as to policymakers. The work done by them contributed not only to the whole body of literature on the subject but also provided policy directions to governments. They also helped people's organizations understand the complexities of 'development-induced displacement' and other issues.

### **Social Centres and Reflections on 'Faith' and 'Justice' and Models of Intervention:**

The centres became sites of ongoing engagement with the social reality, analysis, and theological reflection. Scholasticates and Seminaries were influenced by the ideas and reflections emerging from the centres. There was greater realization that 'Faith' could not remain untouched by the lived reality of the poor, whose lives were miserable. The idea of 'Justice' also expanded to include, apart from social justice, economic, cultural and environmental justice. Social centres not only challenged oppressive structures and talked about Structural Sin but also critiqued and challenged the Society from within. Elite institutions came under intense scrutiny and were subjected to searching questions. Many institutions of higher learning began to take social justice seriously. Various 'models' of intervention were studied. The model that doled out money and material was considered unhelpful as it made people dependent on the parent organization. The development and empowerment models were more preferred. The empowerment model did conscientization and awareness building concerning rights and entitlements. It took the rights based approach. Protests to demand rights became an integral part of this model that was seen by some as confrontational and/or adversarial. The state always looked down on people's movements.

### **Social Justice in the Education Ministry:**

The Justice dimension entered the generally elite formal education system. Jesuits ran quite a few elite educational institutions where primarily the rich and well connected could go. This was manifest in various ways: admission policy, special attention to economically and socially backward students, opening up spaces and facilities for the poorer children of the neighbourhood to study, starting subsidized courses and departments for the benefit of the excluded. Several colleges have also started creative outreach programmes to alleviate the suffering of the people in the neighbourhood. They also serve to awaken and conscientize students to the lived reality of the poor and the condition of the natural environment. Student groups such as AICUF and several other federation of the youth took up subjects and tasks that served the interests of Justice. Some Jesuit colleges started compulsory modules of socio-cultural and economic and political analysis. The UCA of San Salvador is often cited as one of the finest examples of Universities promoting social justice through their academic-cum-social engagement programmes. The Salvadoran Martyrs remain a constant source of inspiration. More and more colleges are producing research helpful to advocate the cause of the poor.

## **Opportunities and Challenges in the decades gone by**

The mission of promoting Justice has never been an easy one as it entails conflict with the establishment and entrenched vested interests. Fr A.T. Thomas who was working for the land rights of the downtrodden people ("the untouchables") in North India was brutally murdered. 'Missionaries' (Catholic priests and nuns working among the poor) have been unfairly accused of converting tribals and dalits through force or fraud. They have also been branded as 'conversion terrorists'. The bogey of conversion has been frequently used to attack Christians and to legislate anti-conversion laws meant to harass them. Other serious charges include Sedition, paving the way for using the most draconian laws that deny basic human rights. Such a case was registered against Fr Stan Swamy, an 80 years old priest of the Ranchi Province, who was fighting for the rights of the adivasis for decades.

There have been difficulties from within the Society of Jesus. The ministry was not looked at by those in charge of governance as an important one demanding the best men and material resources. During financial allocation, this ministry would not get adequate support. Personnel from social centres were more easily moved out. Men in the social ministry hardly received formal training. In many Provinces, Social Commissions to help the Provincials govern better are set up but, except in a few cases, they are hardly functional. Their recommendations remain on paper. Also, there is hardly any corporate policy for the social apostolate. There is very little inter-ministerial collaboration. Accountability mechanisms do not exist. Institutions of higher education, especially management and engineering institutes hardly perform their institutional social responsibility and have hardly if ever assessed the negative impact of companies on the people and the planet.

## **Challenges and Opportunities for the Social Apostolate today**

There are several challenges in South Asia and in the sub-continent. On the economic front, the lives of the have-nots are getting worse as the pressure on land increases with lower productivity and lower incomes. Agrarian distress has reached such proportions that there have been mass suicides of farmers. There are loss of jobs and livelihood opportunities both in urban as well as rural areas. In the realm of ecology, environmental degradation continues to ravage the quality of life and livelihoods of eco-system people, and others. Climate change is taking a larger toll on the poor because they do not have the resources for adaptation. In the area of social life there are extreme tensions between peoples and communities that is only going to worsen due to extremist, sectarian and fascist ideologies that are more interested in power and hegemony than justice, peace and reconciliation.

The biggest threat to India is from communal-fascist forces. For them any means justify their nefarious ends. The colossal damage done to people, institutions, cultures, lives, truth and other values, is for them only incidental. Rightwing political ideologies are threatening democracy, Constitution and rule of law, as is also happening in many parts of the world. In India, majoritarianism is harming the people and the nation. Atrocities, such as rapes and murders of innocent, are being termed by writers as 'genocidal majoritarianism'. The road to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation seems far more tortuous and frustrating. This article is written against the backdrop of the massive electoral victory of India's right wing nationalist

political party which is openly hostile to the Muslims and Christians, and to other minorities. It is a time when the spectre of fascism haunts the country where the possibility of a prolonged low intensity civil war is not ruled out.

Nevertheless, there is hope on the horizon. When asked, "Do you not feel depressed when you see so much hatred, violence and conflict?", 'conscience keeper film-maker' Anand Patwardhan asked a counter-question: "Where is the luxury to feel so?" Noted intellectual and human rights activist Harsh Mander said after the massive victory of the BJP that "Despair is not an option". The journey of Justice for another decade, and beyond, begins now! There are so many men and women of goodwill in this country who are secular and who believe in the rule of law and democracy. There are so many people's movements at the local and national level. Their energies and goodwill have to be tapped. Networks and alliances have to be strengthened, even as new ones are sought to be built. The Universal Apostolic Preferences are announced. We need to discern how to go about implementing them.

### **Implementing the Universal Apostolic Preferences**

Some of the ideas for implementation of the UAPs came from the talks of Fr General to the Jesuits during his visit to India in March 2019.

#### **Discernment and the Spiritual Exercises:**

In a multi-religious country like ours, our language and approach should be different. In secular language discernment would mean doing 'social analysis' keeping in mind the interest of Mahatma Gandhi's 'last person' in mind. There is no getting away from doing such a kind of analyses if we are to meaningfully fulfill our mission today. Decisions should be taken with the most vulnerable person and communities in mind. When asked how to promote the Spiritual Exercises in a non-Christian and multi-faith context, Fr General said that we should meet others on the plank of Humanism, which is understood by all. He added that we should talk about values, which are commonly found in all religions and do our best to protect the Constitution.

#### **Walking with the excluded:**

Millions of Indians, chiefly those belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes, the nomadic and de-notified tribes are excluded from the fruits of development. The present economic order further marginalizes them making them more vulnerable. In the present political order, Christians and Muslims are being targeted and discriminated against. Propaganda and threats are used to intimidate and subjugate them. Building sustainable networks and alliances of people, at the local level and at other levels, including the international, is the way out. This will be a long journey and so will demand patience and forbearance. Enduring peace and reconciliation are based on Justice.

#### **Caring for our Common Home:**

Environmental degradation and climate change are taking its toll on the people, especially the poor. All over the world indigenous people and other forest dwellers depend on the natural

environment for their sustenance and well being. To bring about ecological balance, lifestyle changes and reduction in conspicuous consumption are absolutely necessary. The choice is for individuals and communities to make. *Laudo Si* must be studied and popularized. Ways and means of implementing it should be found. There are many initiatives that promote ecological balance. These have to be multiplied and scaled up. Every community should be accountable for its ecological footprint. There should be at all levels corporate policy on environment. Most provinces do not have any policy or sustained programme to combat climate change. There must be accountability mechanisms in place in all the Provinces. Unless this happens, our commitment to Ecology and the Poor will remain on paper.

### **Journeying with Youth:**

The tremendous goodwill and energy of youth should be harnessed. Consumerist and hate ideologies are influencing the young today who are vulnerable in many ways. In the recently concluded Indian elections, the youth voted for 'a strong and decisive personality' irrespective of the character of the person or his/her ideology and without regard to the short- and long-term consequences of war. This is a very disturbing findings of several analysts. Hence, a lot of investment in 'political formation or education' has to be made so that the youth are not misled and that they are encouraged to take up careers in the government and in civil society to promote the 'common good'. The need to promote the common good was emphasized by Fr Sosa. In our context it means the following: promoting respect for the Constitution of India and for the rule of law; protecting the environment and combating climate change; promoting peace and harmony among and between communities.

### **Conclusion**

Justice, Peace and Reconciliation need a conducive climate to flourish. Those working for the poor, for environmental protection and for human rights need a supportive environment. In India, and also in many parts of the world, right wing ideologies hostile to democracy, dissent, rule of law and constitutions have emerged. As a result there is flagrant violation of the rights of the weak and vulnerable. In the words of Fr General, Jesuits must contribute to the strengthening of democracy and the Constitution. A strong democracy is conducive to the promotion of justice, peace and reconciliation. Lack of democracy and the recurring threats to the Constitution has harmed the cause of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation in India. The electoral victory of the right wing nationalist government in India is a threat to the most cherished ideals and values enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The journey of Justice for the Jesuits in India and South Asia begins now. Discernment and Social Analysis should guide this journey. The importance of Collaboration and Networking should be underscored.

*Original in English*



## The Jesuit Social Apostolate in Africa: Genesis, Mission, Vision and Main Strategic Priorities

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### Introduction

In 2012, the Social Apostolate in Africa celebrated its jubilee. From June 24 to June 28 of 2012, one hundred Jesuits coming from Africa, Europe and America were invited by the Jesuit social apostolate in Africa to make an update and assess fifty years (50 years)<sup>1</sup> of commitment in social apostolate in Africa. This evaluation was also made in light of the 50 years anniversary of the independence of the most of African countries. As a matter of facts, in the 1960s, social centers were created to accompany the young African States after their independence. Hence, this fiftieth anniversary of the states corresponded with those of the social centers. This encounter brought together some of the pioneers<sup>2</sup> of the social ministry and the new directors, all Africans. During this international meeting, the participants reminded themselves of the genesis, the mission and the vision of the social ministry in Africa and identified its challenges and priorities for the future. In these few lines we propose to give you an accounting of this celebration<sup>3</sup>.

### 1. Spiritual Foundation of the Social Apostolate in the Society of Jesus

Based on Ignatian spirituality, Jesuits have criteria for commitment that are well defined. They respond to the most urgent needs, the more universal and to those that will benefit the most people. The 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (GC) redefined the Society's mission as "a service of faith" whose integrating principle is "the promotion of the justice of the Kingdom"<sup>4</sup>. And the social ministry constitutes one of the sectors of the Jesuit ministry whose mission is to ensure that "we build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common."<sup>5</sup> This sector reminds us that the characteristic of all Jesuit ministry is to promote

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<sup>1</sup> Read: METENA Simon-Pierre SJ, *Un jubilé d'or : Le CEPAS a cinquante ans, dans Congo-Afrique, n° 491, 2015.* DE SAINT MOULIN, Léon SJ, *Vers le 500<sup>e</sup> numéro de Congo-Afrique dans Congo-Afrique n° 491. Les 500 numéros de Congo-Afrique, de janvier 1966 à décembre 2015, Congo-Afrique n° 500, décembre 20015*

<sup>2</sup> Peter Henriot, Léon de Saint Moulin, Denis Maugenet, Richard Erpicum etc.

<sup>3</sup> This text is an abridged version of an article: « L'apostolat social jésuite en Afrique: genèse, mission et vision » published in *Congo-Afrique, n° 486, 2014.*

<sup>4</sup> Society of Jesus, 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, 2008, decree 3. §2.

<sup>5</sup> Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ, Letter to the Social Apostolate, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Paragraph 6

justice. The Jesuits working in that sector form a community straining to bring attention on critical situations affecting the poorest and require a special attention from the Society<sup>6</sup>. We have to translate into action the mission of the Church which is to be alongside the poor, to discern the justice of their demands, to contribute to the response and to be at the service of the common good<sup>7</sup> for the building and the coming of the Kingdom of God<sup>8</sup>. This spiritual foundation was already at work since the creation of the Society of Jesus<sup>9</sup>. St Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus, while living in Rome, was taking care of the homeless, the hungry, of repentant prostitutes and of the orphans. To those who were mainly exercising an intellectual or spiritual apostolate he was asking “to find the time to visit the poor and the sick”<sup>10</sup>.

## 2. Beginning and Evolution of the Social Apostolate

The term “Social Apostolate” and others like it: “social action”, “social ministry” came into general use around the time of the publication of the first social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (RN 1891) by Pope Leo XIII. That encyclical would influence in a decisive way the Church’s understanding of its role in the world.

*“We approach the subject with confidence, and in the exercise of the rights which manifestly appertain to Us, for no practical solution of this question will be found apart from the intervention of religion and of the Church... It is the Church that insists, on the authority of the Gospel, upon those teachings whereby the conflict can be brought to an end, or rendered, at least, far less bitter; the Church uses her efforts not only to enlighten the mind, but to direct by her precepts the life and conduct of each and all” (RN n° 16).*

Henceforth, the social apostolate is called to go deeper than mere Christian charity. “The entire Christian people is called not merely to acts of charity, but to reconstruct society: a task clearly beyond the scope of private piety or the personal exercise of corporal works of mercy”<sup>11</sup>. Traditional charity is no more sufficient in itself. We need to change the institutions and the structures responsible for the misery and the injustice. This required organized actions, a structured apostolate... “a social apostolate”.

Jesuits rapidly took ownership of this encyclical and already in 1903, they created social centers<sup>12</sup>, including among others the *Action Populaire* created in Paris to help the workers

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<sup>6</sup> GC 34, d. 3, n. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 39

<sup>8</sup> « Working for the kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God's activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms. In a word, the kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness». Jean-Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 15

<sup>9</sup> “From its very earliest origins, the preferential option for the poor, assuming various forms according to times and places, has marked the whole history of the Society.” Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, Letter to the Social Apostolate, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Paragraph 2

<sup>10</sup> On this topic, read the instructions he gave to Laynez and Salmeron while they were participating in the Council of Trent as the Pope’s delegates. *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> The ‘*Action populaire*’ (1903), first Jesuit social institute, founded in Paris by Gustave Desbuquois sj. Also, in 1923, the ‘*Institut d'études sociales*’ was created. In England, the Catholic Social Guild (1909) and the Catholic Workers College from Oxford in 1921. In Germany, Father Heinrich Pesch, considered by



learn about the social teaching of the Church and to get organized. The 28<sup>th</sup> GC of 1938 would officially integrate within its Decree 29, the following terminology: “*Social apostolate work ... is fully proper to the Society, should be commended to all, promoted everywhere and considered among the most important ministries of our age*”<sup>13</sup>. This GC would recommend, as an apostolic priority for the Jesuits, the most urgent creation of the ‘*centras actionis socialis*’<sup>14</sup> which required to relinquish other works in order to focus on this new priority: “*the Provincial and his advisors should take a close look to see what other works could be relinquished in favour of "a more universal good"*” (D.29, n.15). Father Janssens would also publish, shortly after being elected Superior General at the 29<sup>th</sup> GC, “the Instruction on the Social Apostolate” containing precise recommendations<sup>15</sup>. The election of Father Pedro Arrupe at the 31<sup>th</sup> GC would also mark another turning point for the social apostolate. That Congregation recommended that: “*in the entire course of Jesuit training, both theoretical and practical, the social dimension of our whole modern apostolate must be taken into account*” (GC31, decree 32, n.4b). Father Arrupe also undertook to define in a more distinct manner the nature of the social apostolate. In December 1966, one year only after his election, he promulgated the formal statutes of a social center and set its objectives.

The fundamental purpose of a social center (like the fundamental purpose of the social apostolate) is to transform minds and social structures to a greater awareness of social justice, especially in the area of popular promotion so that "every man may be able to exercise a personal sense of participation, skill and responsibility" in all levels of human life<sup>16</sup>.

To encourage the coordination of the social apostolate actions, he created, at the Roman Curia, the “Jesuit Secretariat for the Socio-Economic Development” (JESEDES), now the “Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology” to which he assigned clear tasks<sup>17</sup>. And this year we celebrate its jubilee.

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some to be the father of the Social Catholic Thought, published from 1905 to 1923 his work (in five volumes): the *Lehrbuch der Nazional Ökonomie* [Manuel of the National Economy]. In Spain, the ‘*círculos obreros*’ [workers clubs] and the Center ‘*Fomento Social*’ [social promotion] were founded in 1927. Father John La Farge, founded in 1934 the Catholic Interracial Institute and Father Louis Twomey founded the Institute of Social Order of New Orleans in the United States. *Idem*, p. 9

<sup>13</sup> Michael Campbell – Johnston, *Idem*, P.10

<sup>14</sup> « *Centrum aliquod actionis et studiorum Socialium* (Center for Social Actions and Studies).

<sup>15</sup> To spread awareness of the text and convene an extraordinary consult to evaluate the state of this apostolate. Report to the General.

<sup>16</sup> *Acta Romana* 14 (1966), 794-95, cf. CG 31, D.32, n. 1. (cit. Michael Campbell-Johnston, *Idem*, P.12)

<sup>17</sup> (1) to promote socio-economic work and doctrinal studies connected with it; (2) to foster closer contacts and the exchange of information among Jesuit social centers; (3) to ensure that, through the Society and its members, the Church be actively present in the main international associations and congresses concerned with development; and (4) to establish a close relationship between the Society and Church organizations such as the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace. Campbell – Johnston, *Idem*, p. 13

### 3. Development of Social Apostolate in Africa

The October 10, 1949 Instructions of Father Janssens on Social Apostolate requested from all the Provinces to implement this sector. It would also mark the beginning of it in Africa. In 1961, in Leopoldville, now Kinshasa, the magazine “Documentation pour l’action” is launched. In 1962, in Abidjan, the African Institute for the social and economic development is created (INADES). In 1964, the Center Silveira House opens its doors in Zimbabwe. In 1965, the ‘Centre d’études pour l’action sociale’ (CEPAS) will extend to Kinshasa the work of reflection of the magazine created in 1961. Today, beside the network AJAN (Africa Jesuit Aids Network) and JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service), the catalogue of the social apostolate in Africa<sup>18</sup> mentions over a hundred structures of ‘social apostolate’ working on a multitude of social issues in the majority of African countries.

The accomplishments of this ministry are many. Among other things these centers played a major role in the promotion of a social conscience following the advent of the independence of the African countries. Today they offer services much appreciated by the population and the local churches. The Jesuit Institute of South Africa (JICA) is active in the debates on social issues and national politics in South Africa; the Jesuit Center for Ecology and Development (JECED) is, in Malawi, on the front line when it comes to environmental issues and a decent life for the peasants. The Center for Theological Reflection in Zambia (JCTR) is the champion of the program “basic needs basket” that advocates for a just salary and fights for an affordable cost of living. In Kenya, the Jesuit Hakimani Center works at the grassroot level for the elections and democracy as well as for the food security issue. Elsewhere, like in Benin, Togo, Rwanda, etc. some Jesuit social centers are fully committed to promote “a faith that does justice”.

### 4. Characteristics of the Social Apostolate in Africa

Social apostolate is coordinated at the continental level via a coordination office and, since 2010, the social centers works within a continental network<sup>19</sup> that continues to expand. The June 12, 2012 Seminary<sup>20</sup> had established, among other things, the objective to open up ways of action and propose priority actions in the area of the social apostolate in Africa. It also had redefined the characteristics of the Jesuit social centers. The participants insisted that in order to qualify, all centers must answer to a set of criteria when it comes to its implementation, its operation and its choice of sectors of action. Among them: to allow itself to take hold of the sociocultural reality where the center is located, according to the principle of the Spiritual Exercises on the contemplation of the Incarnation; to be guided by a team of companions and

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<sup>18</sup> Society of Jesus Africa and Madagascar, social apostolate, 2014, 79 pages.

<sup>19</sup> Jesuit Africa Social Centres Network (JASCNET), Centre Arrupe (Madagascar), Centre Arrupe pour la recherche et la formation (CARF), Lubumbashi, Centre d’études et de formation pour le développement (CEFOD), Tchad, Centre d’études pour l’action sociale (CEPAS), RD-Congo, Centre de recherche pour la paix (CERAP), Côte d’Ivoire, Jesuit Hakimani Center (JHC), Nairobi, Kenya, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (Zambia), Silveira House (Zimbabwe), Umuri (Rwanda) etc.

<sup>20</sup> Assessment and Future of the Jesuit Social Apostolate in Africa, in View of 50 years of Independence: the Role of Jesuits Centers of Studies and Action, Nairobi, Kenya, 24 to 28 June 2012, in [www.jesamsocialapostolate.org](http://www.jesamsocialapostolate.org)

collaborators without distinction of gender and religion, to put the emphasis on “reflection and action”, to aim for competence, the “*magis*”, to sustain its work with research and publications, to promote faith and justice and to use a method of action that shapes both “mind and heart”<sup>21</sup>. In order to do so, the social centers must develop local actions and in solidarity with the people living in dehumanizing situations. (Preferential option for the poor). They must distinguish themselves in their local work through training and empowerment of the disadvantaged population, develop a strategic vision and project themselves into the future and also to be able to engage into advocacy.

## 5. Challenges and Priorities

The Nairobi Forum also identified the major challenges of social apostolates in Africa: - poverty triggered by a bad governance and corruption, - conflicts and violence creating more refugees, displaced populations and migrants, as well as a shameful lack of care for the younger population which today constitutes a majority in Africa. Hence, they proposed five courses of action. First, social centers, which constitute the main tool for this kind of ministry, should consolidate their operational capacity. Each center should mobilize the youth to make them a major agent of social change in the region where it operates. Secondly, the centers must develop a program of leadership centered on the issues of good governance and the common good. Social apostolates are called to implement the recommendations of the synods on Africa and commit themselves to peace, justice and reconciliation. They are also called, as a fourth course of action, to implement strategies for the management of the natural resources and the protection of the environment as part of their duties of stewardship towards creation. Finally, the social centers are called to support refugees, displaced people and migrants in Africa and outside of Africa. From then on, these avenues, some of which have been taken up by GIAN<sup>22</sup>, inspired the different programs of the social centers.

## 6. Social Apostolate in Africa and Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus

Out of four apostolic preferences of the Society of Jesus, three are already present on the roadmap of the social apostolate of Africa. Indeed, youth is its main target group since they make the majority of the African population. Many programs from the social center are in effect oriented toward the youth. From now on, in accordance to the ‘spirit’ of the *Universal Apostolic Preferences* (UAP), we need to make them actors of the desired social changes.

The UAP also pointed out the protection of the planet as being an emergency. Since 2012, the working group on ecology has identified priority areas: agriculture, drinking water, protection of the ecosystems including the forest of the Congo Basin. Today, the Society of

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<sup>21</sup> «To promote awareness and to help people to stand up for themselves, to wake up (resurrection), to take charge, to act in solidarity. In other terms, a Jesuit center implements the mission of the Society of Jesus: promotion of « faith and justice ». (Report of the Seminary)

<sup>22</sup> GIAN (Global Ignatian Advocacy Network). Jesuit social apostolate has the ambition to bring actions and advocacy at the international level through its GIAN network. GIAN focus on 5 themes of advocacy (Quality education for all, ecology, governance of the natural resources, migration, peace, justice and human rights).

Jesus in Central Africa is responsible, within the African Church<sup>23</sup>, for the coordination of the Ecclesial Network of the Congo Basin Forest (REBAC)<sup>24</sup>.

It was also recommended to build the social apostolate on the foundation of the Ignatian spirituality. Social action must be the fruit of a discernment enlightened by the sociocultural reality. Action, the mission flows from the contemplation of the Incarnation. Furthermore, concerning the UAP, the social centers in Africa should intensify their commitment to walk with the poor and the marginalized in a mission of reconciliation and justice; this is also a recommendation of the 36<sup>th</sup> GC. One way of doing it would be to develop programs centered on human rights, peace and reconciliation.

## **Conclusion**

Today, the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus offer, to the social apostolate of Africa, a chance to start from its roots and to consolidate the collaboration between apostolates. To be the way that leads to God. To walk with the poor and to make them the actors of the desired socio-political changes, to care for the migrants and the displaced people, to promote democracy, to mobilize the youth, to fight against the structural injustices and to see to the protection of the creation. The UAP demand a new conversion to work as one body beyond the apostolic sectors.

*Original in French  
Translation Christine Gauthier*

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<sup>23</sup> SCEAM (Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar)

<sup>24</sup> <https://rebacongobassin.org>



## Reimagining the Jesuit Social Ministries (JSM) in Africa: From JASCNET to JENA

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### Introduction

As we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) in Rome, reflecting on the faithfulness of God to the Society of Jesus we have also been paying attention to the summons of God to manifest new things that God is doing in our midst (Is 43:18-19). In the last 50 years, the Jesuit Social Ministries (JSM) in Africa has been growing stronger, undergoing development and reconfiguration in order to serve better the mission of Christ. The Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM), Justice and Ecology Office that runs the JSM for the Conference continues to follow the guidance of the Spirit in developing a social ministry that is robust, effective and impactful. In this article we reflect on key moments that describe those changes with more focus on the last 20 years.

### Origins

About fifty years ago Jesuits in diverse African countries founded many social ministry centres. These were launched by individuals and groups to respond to the needs of local societies for education, training, social service, health outreach, civic engagement, and research on social issues. Traditionally, each centre determined its own mission, under the leadership of Jesuits, and solicited its own grant-based funding, generally from Europe. A number of these Jesuit NGOs were often connected to some other Jesuit ministry, such as a parish, school, or retreat house. Later on, in the early 60s as the wind of change for independence from colonial domination swept Africa, independent Jesuit centres for social research and action started to emerge beginning with Silveira House in Zimbabwe in 1964 and the Centre d'Etude Pour l'Action Social (CEPAS) in 1966 in Congo. Over the years other Jesuit centres of social research and action were established all across Africa.

### Network

With the growing number of Jesuit social centres and in the wake of globalisation, in 2011, a decision was taken to form the **Jesuit African Social Centres Network (JASCNET)** to better coordinate their efforts and to fashion a shared mission for greater impact. The JASCNET (2012) Report states the original intention to set up a network of Jesuit social centres in Africa originated from a conclusion of the meeting of social apostolate coordinators in Monrovia,

Liberia, 25-30 October 2009. The indicative list of Jesuit social centres then numbered 30 or more but the following centres were selected to start the network:

1. Centre for Studies and Training for Development (CEFOD), N'Djamena, Chad
2. Centre Social Arrupe (CSA), Antananarivo, Madagascar.
3. Centre for Studies and Social Action (CEPAS), Kinshasa, DRC
4. Centre for Research and Action for Peace (CERAP), Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.
5. Jesuit Hakimani Centre (JHC), Nairobi, Kenya.
6. Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, (JCTR) Lusaka, Zambia.
7. Silveira House, Harare, Zimbabwe.

However, it was not until 2012 that JASCNET was operationalised and it set out on an ambitious pan-African strategy that sought to support Jesuit Social Centres, other allied partners of JASCNET and other stakeholders towards working for a self-reliant Africa that is democratic, peaceful, and responsive to the rights and development needs of its citizens. The pan-African JASCNET programmatic change goals were defined as follows:

- To help develop responsible and ethical leadership and governance in Africa;
- The promotion of peace, justice, human rights and reconciliation;
- To help develop mechanisms for the good governance of natural resources;
- To respond to the crisis of migration and its ramifications for human rights and development;
- To promote ecological sustainability;

JASCNET also developed operational goals that were meant to change the way the Jesuit social ministry in Africa was carried out in order to promote synergy and to enhance coordination and impact. So the following were JASCNET's operational goals:

1. To support social centres that did not have a strategic plan to have one;
2. To train social centre staff in the knowledge of the characteristics of the Jesuit social apostolate and Jesuit social centres;
3. To reinforce the operational structure of social centres in every Province and Region;
4. To promote networking around common themes;
5. To train social centre staff in advocacy and lobbying;

According to the JESAM Social Apostolate (2012) report the objective of the network set out by the Monrovia meeting was *"to better manage the coordination of the common mission."* Later on, after the establishment of JASCNET, according to the JESAM Social Apostolate Report (2013) the objective of the network was reformulated as: *"to initiate common network activities that can contribute to the improvement of the network and reinforce the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus in Africa."*

### **From JASCNET to JENA**

In May 2018 members of JASCNET gathered to develop a strategic plan to spell out the network's direction for the next five years and beyond. That strategy meeting spelled out the

mission of JASCNET as: “to eradicate poverty and to protect the planet.” There was a recognition that the mission of JASCNET should encompass in its entirety what we would refer to as the Jesuit social ministries (JSM) or Jesuit social apostolate and that goes beyond social centres. It was further recognised that in the Society of Jesus there existed institutions and individuals beyond the social centres that ought to operate as one strong effort or network in the fight against poverty. Therefore, a decision was taken to bring on board other units in the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM) that have a social orientation like the Jesuit Refugee Service, African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN), Fe Y Alegria, centres of social research and even individual Jesuit activists. Since JASCNET only provided for social centres, it was proposed that a more encompassing network be formed and hence the beginning of the Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network of Africa (JENA).

JENA is described as “a diverse community of faith-inspired Jesuit NGOs in Africa, some of them also known as Social Centres, related Jesuit Institutions with a social justice mission, individual Jesuit peace and development activists and scholars driven by a vision of a just, poverty-free, peaceful and ecologically regenerative Africa.

### **Goals to Change the Way We Work**

At the May strategy meeting it was acknowledged that the need for global change had never been greater than it was at that point and that there was tangible momentum for change. However, it was also recognised that for the emerging JENA to play the most effective role possible in the global movement for change, we also needed to change the way we organised ourselves and the way we work, by building on our experience and evolving rapidly. Building on previous efforts, the Network’s new strategy would also focus on building the strength of the network and would thus be structured around 4 main components: 1) Coordination and Synergy, 2) Capacity Building, 3) Communication and 4) Building capacity in advocacy. For each of these components, Specific Objectives were to be provided and would be linked to a chain of results.

### **Why was JENA Formed**

During the May 2018 strategy meeting delegates reminded themselves of why the network was formed. It was agreed that JENA formed for the following seven interconnected reasons:

- a) **Networking:** To create a web of Jesuit organisations, scholars and activists passionate and committed to fostering development, justice, peace and ecological regeneration. It is envisaged that this network will facilitate the establishment, extension, and strengthening of connections and relations among such organisations, scholars and activists from all over Africa, the world, across national and cultural boundaries and age barriers. It will help to enhance and realise the plans and proposals of projects for a better Africa and provide a home for these projects.
- b) **Collectivity:** To form an interconnected group or association or union of such Jesuit organisations, scholars and activists. We believe in the strength of numbers. That we will be more dynamic, prolific, and effective working together as a group than individually or separately.

- c) **Complementarity:** To bring together Jesuit organisations, scholars and activists with different skills, talents, experiences, and knowledges to complement each other in carrying out projects and activities.
- d) **Collaboration:** To promote collaboration on projects and activities among likeminded people who share common values (respect for human dignity, option for the poor, common good, egalitarianism, cooperation, inclusive, and culturally and ecologically sensitive) and vision.
- e) **Sharing:** To facilitate the sharing of resources, infrastructure (such as the web), knowledge, and track record (the accomplishment of a JENA member or group will serve to augment the track record of the whole Network).
- f) **Mutuality:** Through such collaboration and sharing, we envisage that the Network will nurture a strong sense of mutuality among its members. This is manifested in members supporting, assisting, encouraging, inspiring and enhancing each other's projects and activities for the benefit of everyone in the network as well as other stakeholders. On a voluntary basis, members' work collaboratively on carrying out the tasks of the network such as coordination, communication, promotion, advocacy, meetings/conferences, networking with other groups and organisations and even things like web design and maintenance.
- g) **Solidarity:** To foster a strong sense of solidarity among members of JENA. We work to strengthen the ties and relations among the members to create something like a close-knit family, with a unique and shared identity embracing the vision and values of JENA. We will then transform the house of JENA into a home for members and their projects to build a poverty free, just, peaceful and ecologically regenerative Africa.

Working collaboratively with communities whose voices and life-ways have been marginalised and who may experience an intersection of multiple forms of injustice, JENA member organisations are dedicated to fighting poverty and related injustices around Africa empowering marginalised voices, communities and groups, and facilitating policy innovation. Member organisations of the Network work together internationally to achieve a greater impact through collective efforts. In all JENA's actions, the ultimate goal is to enable people to unlock their potential, exercise their rights and manage their own lives.

### **A New Model and A New Theory of Change**

In the new model of African Jesuit Social Ministries (JSM), the JSM will work across sectors and will grow the network to collaborate with other Jesuit agencies like universities, schools, parishes, retreat centres all across the continent. In this way the reach and impact of JSM is even growing wider. Note that this network deploys highly skilled religious and educational leaders in some of the poorest countries in Africa. Jesuits in Africa are organized into 9 entities (7 provinces and 2 regions), and their work is coordinated by the **Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar** (JCAM). The Justice and Ecology Office (JEO) of the JCAM that directs JSM in Africa and hosts JENA seeks to reconfigure the network, developing social enterprise business models where relevant and applicable.



## Strategy

In early 2018 with the help of a consultants, the Jesuit Social Ministries developed a new strategic plan. An analysis of the centres, assessing their mission, programs, funding, and capacity, with the intention of providing a SWOT analysis of the network was conducted.

1. **Social entrepreneurship.** At this same meeting in May, Jesuits spoke about the potential of social entrepreneurship to advance the mission of their centres. The centre directors want to learn how to teach social entrepreneurship to youth, but also as a model to guide the business models of their centres, and the network itself. They share a strong desire to transform the mission delivery model of their social ministry centres. They want to evolve from serving their own agendas and those of their donors, but find new ways to initiate and fund programs that are more accountable to the communities they serve, using a social entrepreneurship model.
2. **A new theory of change.** The centre directors share a belief that something needs to change about Africa. They had a long and serious discussion about this: unless Africans have a different way of looking at the world, nothing will change. Many Africans are still stuck in a mental model of dependency. The Jesuits are one of the few groups that can initiate and lead efforts to foster greater agency and autonomy among young Africans using innovation and entrepreneurship. They envision developing the capacity to deliver these kinds of programs in their social ministry centres, and then sharing these with the 15 non-participating centres, and their extensive network of schools in Africa. They see this as a vocational calling for their network.
3. **Youth entrepreneurship.** At the May 2018 gathering of JASCNET, the strongest theme across these centres is the engagement with youth, and enormous challenges faced by youth in Africa. Up to 60% of Africa's population is under the age of 24, and up to 77% is below 35 and this could be a source of strength, but without education or employment, their future appears daunting. All over the continent, there is widespread frustration and agitation by and among young people over limited economic opportunities, growing corruption, rising unemployment, and limited opportunities for political participation. A youthful population is like a double edged-sword; it could be channelled into a dividend for economic and social transformation with the right investments. With Africa's youthful population, Africa is at a "tipping point." What we do going forward will ultimately decide the future of the continent. Thus, the JSM strategy meeting participants discussed how to unlock the potential of the people they serve, with a special emphasis on creating youth employment.
4. **A robust partnership in developing the social enterprise model.** Utilising the wider international networks in the Society of Jesus, JENA is in partnership with Miller Centre for Social Entrepreneurship of Jesuit University, Santa Clara University to develop its capacity to deliver social enterprise training programs, and to foster entrepreneurial approaches to the (impact and business) models of the centres and the network itself. This partnership would create and direct the "Jesuit Initiative for Social Innovation in Africa," bringing together the extensive and impressive institutional resources across the continent with the world-class social entrepreneurship programs

of Miller Centre. It would build upon five years of training Jesuits at Miller Centre through its Jesuit in Residence program.

**5. Initiative components:**

- a. In December 2018 and February 2019 Miller Centre team trained the the various JENA centre directors to understand Miller Centre’s social entrepreneurship methodology and to train others in this methodology. This would be staged over several years, with Miller Centre progressively providing less and centre directors providing more leadership in this regard.
- b. Miller Centre team and JENA and centre directors are to collaboratively adapt and deliver social enterprise training programs for their local contexts.
- c. Each of the 18 centre directors would write a plan (based on a template) to develop their own capacity for delivering GSBI programs to their local social contexts. These plans would address: staff training; assembling a team to present the programs; a marketing plan to reach existing social enterprises; strategies to access microfinance.
- d. Centre directors, with the support and mentoring from Miller Centre, are to explain this methodology to their own centre staff, and recruit local experienced mentors to help with social enterprise program delivery.
- e. Miller Centre matches Silicon Valley executive mentors to serve as coaches for the now 20 or so social directors in the network. These mentors would accompany the centre directors as they develop new skills to manage entrepreneurial organizations.
- f. Miller Centre staff and JENA develop business model templates to assist the centres to evolve more of an entrepreneurial approach. This would include new funding strategies, and earned income models. This transition would be carefully managed over time to minimise disruption of existing programmes.

**Conclusion**

For us in Africa, this year’s celebration of the SJES Golden Jubilee is indeed a joyful occasion and process. It is a moment to both look back in gratitude to God and to look to the future with hope; look back in repentance to do certain things better in the future and also look forward to the continued guidance of God. Trusting in the faithfulness and guidance of God, we shall continue to take bold steps to ensure that we do all we can in our power to serve the mission of Christ as best we can. We in the Jesuit Social Ministries in Africa are filled with hope that the God who has led us the last 50 years will continue to do so for more years to come.

*Original in English*



## A Journey of Justice and Reconciliation in Europe

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If you derive your ethics from philosophy when it comes to justice you are left with the dilemma of following Nozic (justice as fairness individual exchange, the basis of the free market and neo-conservative politics), or Rawls (justice as right, the basis of democratic liberalism) or a communitarian or collective approach in which Marx stands out. Hence the fear that your sense of justice may derive from ideology.

If you derive your ethics from the bible you will find the kingdom of God and covenant to be core symbols in the Old and New Testaments that lead more easily to the idea of God's work in the world, the idea of a covenant ethics of justice, righteousness, compassion and peace, and the conviction that there are no right relations without justice.

Not being well read in either approach I first lesson on the social apostolate came through a Protestant missionary who struck me as being more Ignatian than me. I wondered what it might mean when she prayed with me for the gift of the Spirit. In looking back over fifty years of the social apostolate I recognise that the general congregations and the development of social consciousness has been a gift of the Spirit in these times. Here I will attempt to describe how I saw it emerging.

### **The Social Question: Social Order to Development Goals**

My first assignment was to a Catholic Workers College inspired by the 29<sup>th</sup> General Congregation's (1947) call for 'centres of social action and studies' aimed at the working poor. In his follow up *Instruction on the Social Apostolate* (1949) Fr General Jean Baptiste Janssens understands "the social" to be about transforming the social order. He pointed out that the ideology of 'liberal materialism' led people to look for their particular interest rather than the common good and this was the cause of intolerable poverty. Our activities should be directed at the proletariat in order to promote the Kingdom of God - a kingdom of justice and peace.

It showed the commitment of the Society to the 'social question' which Pope Leo XIII had identified as the condition of the working classes in his letter *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Pius XI as social order and the organisation of work in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).

Following GC29 the Society opened many social centres, of an educational character and often connected to universities. The recent rise in populism suggest the need for similar social centres today but most have have drifted out of the Society's care and become agents of

management studies. I learned from them that the world of work is central to the organisation of society and the eradication of poverty. And I learned that the need for justice in the distribution of the rewards and burdens of work is still key in these days when the precariat has replaced the proletariat. In his *Diary of a Worker Priest*, Egide Van Broeckhoven writes 'I have become a friend to all these poor people, these workers, as the only authentic way by which the Kingdom of God is growing in this world today (1977:111).

## **Opening to the world**

The second Vatican Council brought a more incarnational vision of God working in the world through the people of God. The second session of the 31<sup>st</sup> General Congregation (1966) urged the provinces of the Society to promote Social Centres that would carry out research, social education, and social action to "build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life in common".

At the same time in Latin America, Liberation Theology was learning from the experience of the people and understanding salvation in terms of liberation from oppression. The Medellin Statement (1966) and the Synod of Bishops message on Justice (1971)

Many initiatives in social involvement were taken across the Society. French Jesuits began to live in *Quartiers Populaires*, in 1964, and backed it up with the analyses of *Ceras* and *Projet* from 1966 onwards. The Social Justice Secretariat was set up in 1969 to give strategic priority to the social apostolate in the universal Society. The stream of the social apostolate had begun to flow with the optimism of the time and of its Superior General Pedro Arrupe.

## **Integrating Faith and Justice: Creativity and Pushback**

Decree 4 of the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation, 1975 firmly placed justice in the context of preaching the Gospel. Problems such as hunger, poverty, inequality, and discrimination were not only social or technical problems but also "personal and spiritual" problems that required "the Gospel be proclaimed with fresh vigour". So "Our Mission Today" is "the Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice".

As a follow up Fr. Arrupe actively promoted the creation of Centres of Research and Social Action. The concept of social centres was moving away from the world of the academy and extending its field of action to the grass-roots and social movements. It was at this time, 1979 that Arrupe famously responded to the helplessness of the Vietnamese boat people by founding the Jesuit Refugee Service.

Many provinces decided to set up social centres such as *Centre Avec* in Brussels, 1981, the *Centre for Faith and Justice* in Dublin, 1981, and the *Centre Justice et Foi*, 1983, in Quebec.

## **The Great Pushback**

The mission of faith and justice encountered resistance within the Society as well as divisions between those in the social apostolate and those in pastoral and educational ministries. Some viewed the "promotion of justice" as an ideological option. The balance between faith and justice was hard to achieve and required much dialogue, clarification, and mutual respect

were to arrive at an integration. Arrupe had been aware, and said so, that in the political climate of the 1970s working for social justice would bring hardship and suffering.

In El Salvador a death squad threatened to kill all Jesuits in the country unless they abandoned their work with the poor. Assassinations were carried out on Jesuits (Rutilio Grande followed by six at the university), Archbishop Oscar Romero and many others. Over 50 Jesuits have been killed worldwide on the mission for the poor.

In 1981, Pedro Arrupe suffered a stroke. Pope John Paul II passed over normal procedures to appoint Paolo Dezza as his personal delegate and interim General of the Society. In 1983, Dezza called the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Congregation which elected Peter Hans Kolvenbach as Father General and avoided business on the social apostolate.

In the Irish Province in the 80s and 90s some of the Jesuits who left the Society were active in the social apostolate. This raised a question in the minds of some Jesuits about the social apostolate. The 1980s was a disheartening decade of Reaganism, Thatcherism and conservatism towards the question of justice. The conservatism in the Society came from a misunderstanding as to whether the idea of justice came from ideology or the Christian tradition. Perhaps too there was a lack of appreciation of a 'social' outlook as distinct from an 'individual' outlook. Sociology was not in the Polish curriculum when Karol Wojtyła was a student.

### **Confirmation and Further Creativity**

GC34, 1995 reaffirmed the mission of faith and justice and defined it with greater clarity. It confirmed and encouraged our work for structural change. It recommended that social centres dialogue with cultures as they are foundational to political and economic structures and with other religions because we were now sharing the same societies. It noted that collaboration with the laity was taking place in the social centres and that they needed to integrate faith into their justice work.

In a later letter Fr General Kolvenbach says that the social apostolate 'incarnates the social dimension of our mission' and shows it in social research and publications, in advocacy and human development, and in direct and social action with and for the poor. He observed, also that Social Justice Secretariat (SJS) had played an important role in keeping alive the social apostolate all over the world. Examples of SJS contribution are the Naples Social Week and the documentation of social centres.

SJS convened an extended assembly of social delegates from the provinces in June 1997 in Naples. Members of the Jesuit Curia in Rome also came. It turned out to be a key moment in the development of the social sector, giving it visibility, coherence and relevance. As an outcome it published the 'Characteristics of the Social Apostolate' which was a milestone in the development of a social apostolic identity.

In 2005 SJS carried out a study of Jesuit social centres across the world. Of the 324 examined 69% were involved in social action, 62% in formation, and 37% in research. With regard to the level of insertion with the poor, 61% described themselves as 'living with the poor', 22.7% as

'among the poor' and 16.4% as 'for the poor'. As regards collaboration, partnering was higher with civil society than with government or church.

There were significant developments in living with the poor in 2002. The Iberian provinces began 'communities of welcome' where marginalised people such as migrants were received to live in already established Jesuit communities. Loiolaetxea was dedicated to ex-offenders. But instances of inserted communities, especially in Northern Europe was approaching zero.

Meetings of Social Justice Coordinators from the Provinces began to take place take place at Assistancy level from 2003 onwards. Other inter-provincial groupings such as Mission Ouvriere and Eurojess had developed. The former had been instigated by Pedro Arrupe among Jesuits who had been interested in the Worker Priest mission. Eurojess was originally an association of Jesuit sociologists who met in conference biennially. They were the backbone of a well organised social week in Piestany, Slovakia in 2007. It gave the participants a strong sense of a European social apostolate where a diverse set of people shared a convergence of thinking, an identity and mission in common, and an ability to pray together. They reported an openness to exchange and a readiness to move from a dualism of social action and spirituality to integration. They felt confirmed in their work in communities of solidarity back home.

In that same year the bishops of Latin America met at Aparaceida where Bishop Jorge Bergoglio of Buenos Aires led the work of issuing a final document which show the origins of Pope Francis' *Gaudium Evangelii*, *Amoris Laetitia* and *Laudato Si'*.

The stream of social consciousness and activity in the Society had grown from a trickle to a strong flow.

### **The Challenges and Opportunities of Faith & Reconciliation**

The 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation elected Fr Adolfo Nicolas as Superior General in 2008 interpreted social justice in terms of reconciliation that called for the restoration of our relations with God, with others, and with nature (D.3). It formulated the mission of faith and justice in terms of reconciliation understood as the (re) construction of just relationships. It made the care of creation an essential component of our commitment to justice, joining it closely with defence of the poor.

Globalisation was a strong theme. Problems across the world were seen as interconnected. Hence the need for networking, because much can be learned from one another and because it constitutes the full response to apostolic challenges that must overcome the borders of sectors and provinces. Here the role of the Conference emerges as important. Crises such as poverty, social exclusion, the degradation of the environment are not to be seen as separate phenomena but as symptoms of something deeper: "the wrong way of organising our societies and economies".

## **The Social Apostolate at Conference Level**

In 2008 Europe appointed, for the first time, a Conference level social delegate. With about 21 provinces each with their own history, culture and language the integration of a social apostolate across Europe is a complex challenge. Nevertheless, at a social week in Brussels in 2010 the participants found common purpose and shared energies. They identified some priorities. Firstly, there was a strong concern and desire for living close to the poor and for the development of communities of solidarity. Secondly there was a concern to foster cooperation between the social centres and between social and intellectual centres. Thirdly there was need to find a way in which social delegates could come together more regularly. The decision taken to institute an annual or biennial meeting of province social delegates at conference level has worked out quite well and survived the reorganising of the Provincial's Conference and its functions.

## **SJS Level**

SJS convened social delegates regularly and one outcome was the design of Global Ignatian Advocacy Networks. They arose out of a call by GC 35 (d.3, n.28; d.6, n.29) for the building of bridges of justice between the poor and decision makers. It underlined the apostolic relevance of establishing networks in the Ignatian family that can offer coordinated responses to significant apostolic challenges at the local, regional and international level. Building on already growing relationships we drew up a plan for Global Ignatian Advocacy Networks of organisations working in the areas of: ecology; migrants and displaced peoples; peace and human rights, right to education; and governance of natural and mineral resources. They continue as a work in progress.

## **Local Level**

In 2009 I joined the inserted community of Iona (a symbol of peace) which was set up in 1981 to accompany a beleaguered neighbourhood in the Northern Ireland troubles. The Belfast Agreement (1997) with its section on human rights and equality had brought an end to violence and made way for peace building. Reconciliation, parallel to the South African experience, was an obvious need. But the word reconciliation was unacceptable to at least one side of the conflict because it elided the need for justice and assumed a prior harmonious co-existence. It was unacceptable to the other side because its requirement for truth telling was an impossibility following a dirty war. GC35's elaboration on the relationship of justice and reconciliation appear to deal with the former objection, and moreover provide for peace building. Our work with divided communities is more about stopping the killing than seeking reconciliation. Our peace building efforts involve, ecumenism, prisoner support and migrant care.

The decline in Province personnel is a challenge to the work. To arrange for its continuance we set up a registered charity separate from the Jesuit community.

An Ignatian organisation working for justice should, ideally, not only accompany and serve the poor but also engage in research and advocacy. As an inserted community our bias is towards accompaniment and service and look to other Jesuit organisations for research and

advocacy. Joining together might make for a more whole Ignatian organisation. A joining of provinces, which is a challenge for the Conference, might also make for a better deployment of resources in responding to the need in this area.

### **GC 36 and the Universal Apostolic Preferences**

GC 36 2017, Elected Fr General Arturo Sosa and asked him to develop apostolic preferences (UAPs) for the universal Society. They are four in number, namely, discernment, walking with the poor, caring for the planet and listening to young people. It is hoped that they will bring renewal to our way of proceeding. Through spiritual conversation and discernment, it is hoped that a process of apostolic revitalisation will take place at all levels of the life-mission of reconciliation and justice.

The UAPs may offer a way forward to Jesuit activity in Dublin's North Inner City. In an area that is arguably the most deprived in the country there are seven Jesuit (or strongly connected) organisations at work. Each works from its own property, for its own purpose, and in service of its own clientele. They include a primary, secondary and third level school, a church, social centre, mission office and JRS. To make significant impact on a neighbourhood that is hopeless and violent there is need for connection with the people and between the organisations. Already the Province has the vision of a 'hub'. The ten year process of the UAPs looks as just the right as an approach to this challenge.

### **In Conclusion**

The 50 years of social apostolate has been a long education for the servants of Christ's mission. Looking back and across the wider Society the growth in spirituality and action is quite amazing. Nevertheless, the UAPs are calling us, more to conversion than to 'doing something'. I take conversion to mean metanoia (change of heart) more than of 'paenitemini' (repent).

If I were to undergo formation again I would like to start with some changes of outlook. I would change my lens on reality from one emphasising the Aristotelian quality of substance to that of relationship. This might allow for an ecological conversion where I see my existence as part of an ecosystem rather than its separate master. It might also shift my paradigm of dominance and individualised salvation to one of service and communal awakening and the paradigm of our organisations from a managerial, competitive and individualistic one to a relational and mutually empowering one. Relationship, the UAPs tells us, extends to the deepening of collaboration among Jesuits and our companions in mission and among the ministries and apostolic units, other bodies in the Church, and all the persons and institutions that contribute to the inseparable realities of reconciliation among human beings, with creation, and with God.

I suspect that part of the resistance experienced by the mission of faith and justice was a conservative fear of supposed liberals. I would propose that the spirit of Vatican II, of the social teaching, and of the General Congregations, is an incarnational one that integrates the human and divine aspects of the body of Christ.



Working locally we need a better sense of 'the people' and a closer sharing of life. Relating internationally enables us to raise our viewpoint to that of the Trinity seeing whole.

*The challenge of the UAPs is to "a metanoia that empowers us to take part in a mission that makes possible the fulfilment of God's promise in human history" and the way to go is to recognise and respond to the movements of the Spirit in the puebla.*

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## The Seed of Growth of Social Apostolate in the Unified Europe

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### 1. Introduction: The Experience of Light out of Darkness

For many years Europe was divided as the consequence of the meeting in Yalta (February 1945) between Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt towards the end of the Second World War. Eastern European countries, which were under the Russian influence, were governed by the communist regimes<sup>1</sup>. The fall of the Berlin wall 30 years ago, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1989, was the beginning of new era. The fall of the Berlin wall symbolized a radical change in all the institutions, namely, societal, economic and political. In this part of the world, it meant a new chapter in our way of living and thinking. Things, which were unthinkable before started to be (again) possible. It was an experience of light and hope out of the darkness of the communist regime.

People were grateful for what had happened, even if the consequences of the past regime have been still present among some people, institutions and political structures. Even the Church had to face the consequences of the past<sup>2</sup>. It was not easy to redefine and to adjust its role and mission to the new democratic reality.

The democratization process went on in these countries and 15 years after the fall of the Berlin wall in 2004 some countries of ex-communist regime were fully incorporated into the

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<sup>1</sup> The majority of ex-communist countries in Europe were for many years members of the East European Assistancy. The Jesuits Provinces, which included in this Assistancy were Bohemian Province, Croatian Province, two Polish Provinces, Romanian Province, Slovenian and Slovakian Province and the Russian region. Baltic countries, Hungary and Albania were members of the other Assistancy. A few years ago, the Eastern European Assistancy merged with the Central European Assistancy, becoming one Assistancy, namely Central-Eastern Assistancy. Also, certain Provinces merged in Europe. For example: the new Euro-Mediterranean Province consists of Albania, Italy, Malta and Romanian mission. Slovenian province left the Central-Eastern Assistancy and from 2018 on, is the member of South European Assistancy.

<sup>2</sup> In some countries, the Church had to face a painful issue about the collaboration of priests and bishops with the communist regime.

European Union<sup>3</sup>. Europe was again united. It was and it has been a great happiness being part again of the great European family.

## 2. The Growing Seed of Social Apostolate

Because of the communist regime in many (Eastern) European countries, the Social Apostolate could not be developed for many years. The first organized beginning of Social Apostolate in this part of Europe, was a meeting in Prague, a capital of Czech Republic, in January 1996. It was prepared by Fr. Michael Czerny – the head of Social Apostolate in the Curia. It was for a first time that Jesuits had no difficulties in travelling, no one was afraid of being observed or controlled by the (in)visible ‘eye’ and or ‘hand’ of the police. It was an important meeting not only due to the contents of the meeting, but also for establishing personal relationships, for the companionship in Christ of Jesuits working in the social field. For many – myself included – it was for the first time we could freely share the suffering and the pain we had to experience for so many years, while working and living under the communist regime.

The meeting in Prague was a preparatory meeting for the World Meeting of Social Apostolate in Naples in 1997. The World meeting in Naples was an important event and decisive step of growth of Social Apostolate in our Provinces and for our Assistancy. I would say that the meeting in Naples was a very important grace for our Provinces. It was a unique opportunity for many delegates from our Assistancy to get in touch with the issues concerning faith and justice. It was an occasion to get to know what kind of different works the Jesuits are organizing round the world, what the Jesuit universities, social centres are doing, proposing regarding the social issues.

Important grace of Naples Meeting was that delegates from different Provinces decided to continue our meetings on the Assistancy level. A small Commission of Social Apostolate was established on the Assistancy level. From 1997 on for many years, the Commission – which I was part of – with the help of the Social Secretariat in the Curia prepared the annual meetings in order to develop social apostolate in this part of the world. These meetings – which were also a kind of pilgrimage through different Provinces in our Assistancy – were an opportunity to get to know these Provinces and to stimulate the reflection – action process on social issues for a more just society. In 2004 the social coordinators of Social Apostolate of our Provinces participated at the first European Meeting between the three ‘pillars’ of the Social Apostolate, namely, JRS, Mission Ouvriere and Eurojess. The second European meeting of Social Apostolate was in Slovakia in 2007.

Now, we have had regular annual meetings of Social apostolate not on Assitancy level but on the European level. These meetings help us to strengthen the connections among us also on the European level. In this way, we build also a new Europe based on dialogue, justice, solidarity and participation of all and every one. These European meetings are also a stimulus

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<sup>3</sup> Eight countries of Central and Eastern Europe – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – join the European Union (EU), finally ended the division of Europe decided by the ‘Great Powers’ at the Yalta Conference. Cyprus and Malta also become members of EU in 2004. This was the greatest enlargement in the European history.

for growing European dimensions of our social works in our countries. 'Europe' is at home in Brussels as well as in our countries. We need to overcome the division of Europe that had lasted for many years and build a more unified and strong Europe. The challenge is a great one. However, it is possible to build a unified Europe through small, but significant steps towards this goal. The annual European meetings are of great help towards this goal.

The seed of Social Apostolate was growing through numerous meetings. In our meetings, we had time to share our experiences, to reflect on how to promote and 'build' a social work or sector in each Province. At each meeting, there were always some special themes of general interest where lay people, sisters or the Jesuits were invited to participate. The issues we tackled in our meetings were as follows:

- Social analysis in order to receive some tools to observe and analyse the situation in our countries.
- Father General's letter on Social Apostolate for the Jubilee year (2000) as a stimulation and encouragement for our reflection and actions in our Provinces.
- The issue of sustainable development as a fruit of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2002.
- The use of the book "Characteristics of Social Apostolate" published by the Social Secretariat of the Curia to stimulate our way of doing the Social Apostolate.
- The issue of Europe as many countries were in the process of joining the Europe, which became reality in 2004.
- The migration issue. The issue is getting huge, since EU has become more and more a promised land for many people.
- The role of Society of Jesus in connecting links between the Church and civil society for a better world.

All the meetings were of great help in developing the Social Apostolate in our Provinces and were held with the blessing of our Provincials. The Provincials were well aware about the importance of Social Apostolate for the mission and life of Society of Jesus. For this reason, they gave us a full support.

### **3. The Future of Social Apostolate: the Risk of Disappearing?**

I was present at the Assistances meeting of Social Apostolate in Curia in 2003 where Fr. General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach<sup>4</sup> talked about the danger that social sector may disappear. I was quite surprised for his frank words. But then, I reflected and I must admit that he was right. After initial phase of enthusiasm, I have felt for years some kind of resistance, lack of creativity, certain tiredness and passivity in Social Apostolate in former communist countries in Europe. Let me explain.

In most of our Provinces there were social coordinators overburdened with the other tasks of missions given by the Provincials. A good number of Jesuits who were involved in Social

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<sup>4</sup> The same preoccupation pronounced Fr. General at the Assistances meeting of Social Apostolate in Curia also in 2004.

Apostolate changed their mission. They were asked by the Provincials to change it for various reasons. It is also true that in this part of the world, the Social Apostolate is not highly on the priority list among the Jesuits and Provincials. The fact indicates the consequences of the past, namely, that the Church is understood to serve only the sacramental needs of the people. Serving the social needs of the people, as service of faith that promotes justice, has not been developed and promoted enough. Also, some Jesuits who worked in Social Apostolate left the Society of Jesus. For some persons, this field is considered as to be too 'dangerous' to work in it. Probably for the same reason, there is certain resistance to involve more young Jesuits to work in Social Apostolate or to study social issues.

Among the Jesuits, I find certain passivity, lack of creativity in tackling new social issues. One can notice also a certain fear in dialogue with the civil society. Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has done a great work for the people who were inflicted by the war in the Balkan region. However, JRS is still the most 'visible side' of the Social Apostolate in this part of the world.

Let me underline that JRS is responding to the cry of the poor while meeting people in the detention centres in different parts of Europe. I have visited the detention centre in Postojna (Slovenia) once a week for more than 10 years. Every detainee has his/her own life story and hopes to share. However, when they were stopped by the police and sent to the detention centre it seems as if their life journey has been blocked. They are stuck in this center, which they consider it as a prison, and are controlled and restrained from movement. They do not know what to do as their lives were interrupted by restrictions they never expected. Some detainees are shocked, as they were so close to the country of destination, but could not reach it. The others are full of hope and say God will help them to overcome all these obstacles. They are forced to face the hard life in the detention centers, while they await for weeks or sometimes many months they would be free. Accompanying and serving such detainees in the midst of their sadness, fragility, discouragement, anger, failure in short a situation of complete vulnerability, has always been an enriching experience for me. I always find God while meeting the detainees in the detention center.

I would say that the challenge of Social Apostolate today is not to forget the cry of the poor and the planet in many places round the world. This attitude is the continuation of the degree 4 of 32 GK and the famous option for the poor, which was a special grace for the Society of Jesus and for the Church. Some Jesuits gave even their lives for this cause. Especially in today's complex time of globalization, we should be more aware of the new poor people among us as a result of many injustices in the world. I would also add that the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UPA) are a good and secure guideline for our work and life as Jesuits in the coming years.

I tried to write a personal experience how Social Apostolate started to develop in the part of Europe governed by the communist regime for many years. Now, fortunately, Europe is united and is facing new challenges like the migration, poverty, reconciliation, climate change and security if I mention the most important issues. I want to underline once again how it was very important for us social coordinators the meeting of Social Apostolate in Naples in 1997. For this reason, I look forward to the next world meeting of Social Apostolate in Rome in November 2019 to commemorate 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat.

I hope that this meeting will be a great encouragement and promotion for a new and creative phase of Social Apostolate worldwide for its renewal and recommitment. In this way, there will be no fear of Social Apostolate disappearing, but it will continue to flourish in many different ways round the world.

*Original in English*



## The Promotion of Justice and Jesuit Higher Education in Latin America: Notes on the 50 years of SJES

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### Some Highlights of an Historical Approach

The Association of Universities Entrusted to the Society of Jesus in Latin America (AUSJAL) has built its history, marked in large part by the search for the promotion of justice as a service of faith, within the diversified and challenging Latin American context.

My regular contacts with AUSJAL began in 1995 and, from that year on, encouraged by it, I became aware of my own horizon of academic involvement, without losing my connection and deep commitment to the social apostolate sector.

The first text I came across was *Challenges for Latin America and the Educational Proposal of AUSJAL*<sup>2</sup>. This text was the result of a long process of reflection that accompanied practically the first ten years of existence of the network. It was during this period that AUSJAL itself matured and arrived at its self-recognition and self-understanding as a network of Jesuit higher education in and for the Latin American context.

The history of AUSJAL begins in 1985, following an appeal by Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ - Superior General at that time - at the end of an international meeting of universities held in Rome. It was a definitive impulse. It created what would effectively become the first university network in Latin America. The network was formed after a long and challenging history of synergy, of sharing common strategies aimed at the educational and social transformation of the region or, in other words, at the commitment to sustainable social development.

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<sup>2</sup> AUSJAL, *Challenges for Latin America and the Educational Proposal of AUSJAL*, Columbia, AUSJAL, 1995.

In my personal reading, it is important that we situate the process of creation of AUSJAL and its first steps in the horizon of two paradigmatic events, apparently distant from each other in time, but very close in meaning for Jesuit universities in the Latin American context.

The first is the institutional positioning assumed by the Society of Jesus in General Congregation 32 (1974) in explaining its mission as *the service of faith and promotion of justice*, or more precisely: service of faith, of which *the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement* (D.4, n.2).

Fr. Pedro Arrupe SJ (Superior General), in his capacity as president of the session which approved this decree (D.4), expressed himself in this way:

*Are we well aware of what we have just voted for and approved? From now on the priority of the priorities of our mission is the service of faith and the promotion of justice. Because of this decision we will have new martyrs in the Society of Jesus*<sup>3</sup>.

The second event took place on November 16, 1989, when at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) in El Salvador, the rector and five Jesuit companions, along with a worker and her daughter, were murdered. The rector, Fr. Ignacio Ellacuría SJ, a philosopher of great stature and brilliant thinker, saw the university in its dimension of social commitment, with radical coherence:

*The university must be incarnated among the poor in order to be the science of those who have no science, the enlightened voice of those who have no voice, the intellectual support of those who in their own reality have the truth and reason, but do not have the academic reasons that justify and legitimize their truth and reason*<sup>4</sup>.

After briefly describing the events of November 16, 1989 and mentioning the names of the people murdered in that unforgettable barbaric act perpetrated in the UCA of El Salvador, the document *The Promotion of Justice in the Universities of the Society*, of the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology (SJES) of the Society of Jesus, concludes with the following comment: "*The universities of the Society have in them their own martyrs, because of their commitment to the 'justice that springs from faith'*"<sup>5</sup>.

A period rich in reflections on the meaning and breadth of the *promotion of justice* has left its mark on the Society of Jesus in recent decades. The history lived by AUSJAL in its process of establishment and consolidation has developed to a great extent in the horizon of this context of conceptual maturation. In its last General Congregations (GC), starting, as has already been mentioned, from GC 32 (1974) and highlighting, in a sequential way, GC 34 (1995), GC 35 (2008) and GC 36 (2016), the Society of Jesus has incorporated in the explanation of its MISSION of the *service of faith and promotion of justice* the complexity of our time, manifesting

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<sup>3</sup> Fr. Pedro Arrupe, in General Congregation 32, cf. [http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedro\\_Arrupe](http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedro_Arrupe) (27/02/2015). The quote in Spanish is taken from Quiri6n Weber SJ, *Pedro Arrupe: un jesuita universal*, at <https://bit.ly/2U1KwNI> (26/08/2019).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *The Promotion of Justice in the Universities of the Society. Promotio Iustitiae* 116 (2014/3), General Curia of the Society of Jesus, Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology, Rome, p. 29 (epigraph).

<sup>5</sup> *Promotio Iustitiae* 116 (2014/3), p. 7.



a special paradigm shift in what it says regarding the exercise of dialogue in cultural diversity, as well as regarding social and environmental commitment - or, better, socio-environmental - in a perspective of integral ecology.

The importance of Jesuit universities and higher education set the tone for many reflections and documents in the Society of Jesus during those years. The Superior General of the Society who stood out most for his written and spoken reflections on the importance of this apostolic front of the Jesuits was undoubtedly Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ. In his opinion,

*...every Jesuit center of higher education is called to live within a social reality (the one we saw in the "composition" of our time and place) and to live for such a social reality, to illuminate it with the intelligence of the university, to use all the weight of the university to transform it. Thus, the universities of the Society have stronger and different reasons from those of other academic or research institutions to address the present world, so entrenched in injustice, and to help remake it in the light of the Gospel<sup>6</sup>.*

We could recall many other reflections, both from the general government of the Society and from Jesuits directly involved in academic life. As far as I am concerned, I would like to refer to a name that profoundly marked my horizon in relation to the role of universities in Latin America. Xabier Gorostiaga SJ. Xabier Gorostiaga SJ. The path he took in the day-to-day life of the university and the role he played as executive secretary of AUSJAL made him a fighter in the transforming mission of the university in the Latin American context. Fr. Gorostiaga was personally committed to the mission of the university in favor of sustainable human development and the democratization of knowledge as one of the main axes in overcoming poverty and promoting citizenship<sup>7</sup>. As an economist, he believed in a new format of global society. He spoke of a globalization of solidarity, capable of extolling and understanding both cultural and ethnic pluralism and the defense of the environment.<sup>8</sup>

He was always optimistic and, after the disappointments he suffered with the Sandinista government, in which he participated, he was hopeful and used to summarize his personal position in three words: *humility, humanism and humor*. He knew how to keep alive the awareness of the value of education and the fundamental role of the university<sup>9</sup>.

Having made this brief and limited annotation, I conclude my quick review of the history of AUSJAL by calling attention to the terms that formulate the MISSION of this important network of higher education:

*To strengthen the network articulation of its associates in order to promote the integral formation of students, the ongoing formation of academics and collaborators, in the Christian inspiration and Ignatian identity, the research that influences public policies, in the themes that are proper*

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<sup>6</sup> "Discourse at the University of Santa Clara", California, 2000. An English version is available at <https://kolvenbach.jesuitgeneral.org/en/archive?view=archivo&id=12>.

<sup>7</sup> Xabier GOROSTIAGA SJ, "The Legacy of Experience. Central America, 1970-2000. Praxis, Mediations and Christian Options": <http://servicioskoinonia.org/relat/335.htm> (26/08/2019).

<sup>8</sup> Archivo J.U. Online: <http://www.unisinob.br/> (Accessed on 20/7/2001).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

to it as Jesuit universities, and collaboration with other networks or sectors of the Society of Jesus. All of this as the realization of the work of the universities in the service of faith, the promotion of justice and the care of the environment<sup>10</sup>.

### Three Guiding Questions for AUSJAL's First Strategic Plan

Among the legacies of Fr. Xabier Gorostiaga, SJ, is undoubtedly the mark he left on the text of AUSJAL's First Strategic Plan for the five-year period 2001-2005<sup>11</sup>. It formulates three questions as important markers for the management of a university:

In our university *work*, the first question must always be: *what society do we want?* It is emphasized that universities exist as a public service to society. We cannot lose sight of this. Whoever engages in this service must, in the first place, be accountable to society.

From there follows naturally a second question: *what subjects to form for this society we want? What education do we need?* It is emphasized that today, more than ever, it is necessary to cultivate in students values that call them to be subjects capable of responsibly assuming the construction of society. In order to do this, they must receive an effective integral formation among us.

And the third question leads us, consequently, to look at universities as such: *what universities are required to form these subjects? What universities are required to be coherent with the proposed education and the society sought?* Certainly, a profound rethinking of the relationship between the university and society is necessary.

These questions, well answered, should be the central content of the pedagogical political project of any institution of higher education. Within the MISSION of the Society of Jesus, *the society we want* will always bear the mark of the promotion of socio-environmental justice, that is, it will be oriented to the construction of a sustainable society, guided by the paradigm of integral ecology.

This also redoubles our obligation to help make our institutions *true universities* in the radical sense of making them spaces in which the various sciences and knowledge interact in a more fruitful and vigorous way, with an openness to what is new or what is often left out. Thus, Jesuit universities and institutions of higher education will increasingly try to be spaces for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary creation, environments conducive to the generation and development of professionals of both genders competent, aware and decisively committed to building a society aimed at rescuing the human dimension of existence and sustainability.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ausjal.org/acerca-de-ausjal>, box MISSION (26/08/2019).

<sup>11</sup> AUSJAL, Plan Estratégico 2001-2005, Caracas 2001. (Fr. Luis Ugalde SJ, of the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello de Caracas, contributed considerably to this process and led it during his presidency of AUSJAL).

## University Social Responsibility in AUSJAL

My participation in AUSJAL is mainly through the network of University Social Responsibility (RSU). This is how AUSJAL understands this concept:

*The ability and effectiveness of the university to respond to the transformation needs of the society where it is immersed through the exercise of its substantive functions: teaching, research, extension and internal management. These functions must be encouraged by the search for the promotion of justice, solidarity and social equity, through the construction of successful responses to meet the challenges involved in promoting sustainable human development<sup>12</sup>.*

This definition identifies five dimensions of academic life. They are five dimensions of the university that rigorously provide us with sufficient perspectives to visualize the totality (integrity) of the life of a university. Thanks to the exchanges within two forums created to implement and improve the system of evaluation of academic life from the point of view of RSU, I have learned the importance of paying attention to these five dimensions and to what extent this is part of the way of proceeding in a Jesuit institution.

These are five dimensions that, in their paths of interrelation, integration and articulation, can facilitate the concretion of the paradigm of integral ecology within this authentic "experimental ecosystem" that is academic life. These dimensions are: *educational (academic life in the teaching-learning process), epistemological and cognitive (academic life in the process of knowledge production), organizational (academic life in internal organizational and administrative management), social (academic life in its relationship with society) and environmental (academic life in its relationship with the environment)*. The evaluation of academic life will only be effective and complete when we manage to incorporate these five dimensions in an integrated way in the evaluation process itself.

In the university where I work, in recent years, an attempt has been made to create an evaluation model for RSU that transcends the five dimensions in order to identify, beyond all efforts at technical excellence, the treatment and cultivation of values and attitudes for the promotion of socio-environmental justice in interpersonal relations (rejection of prejudices and discrimination), in social relations (fight against social inequalities and in favour of socio-educational inclusion) and in relations with the environment (care for the gifts of creation).

What AUSJAL does to evaluate RSU can be an inspiring model for a broader evaluation of all university work and academic excellence.

## Conclusion

We know that AUSJAL is made up of 30 academic institutions, which in the meantime are a tiny part of the more than 200 Jesuit higher education institutions and universities spread across the five continents. Even though it is a small part, I believe in the specific contribution they can make to the reflection that concerns us here. It has always been strongly emphasized

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<sup>12</sup> AUSJAL, Políticas y Sistema de Autoevaluación y Gestión de la Responsabilidad Social Universitaria en AUSJAL, EDUCC (Editorial de la Universidad Católica de Córdoba), Córdoba 2014. p.15.

that AUSJAL must increasingly focus on the challenges of our time, on action for peace and on peace-building in Latin America and throughout the world. Its main challenge is to keep visible and vigorous, through academic life, the conviction that building *a more just world is not impossible*.

In this year (2019) in which we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology, we are invited to identify the best way to make visible and concrete the four Universal Apostolic Preferences that we have recently formulated. I believe that, together with the current fiftieth anniversary, we can also celebrate the promising and vigorous future that is consolidated by the conditions that have been created for an integrated and joint work between the so-called "*social apostolate sector*" and "*higher education sector*".

What I have related in a limited way from my personal perception within AUSJAL, in the network of University Social Responsibility (RSU), could surely be expressed in different ways from other multiple situations in the five continents. There is one thing I have no doubt about: the history we are celebrating in this fiftieth anniversary has been a fruitful journey of rapprochement and synergy between the two great apostolic fronts, centred on deepening understanding and commitment to *the promotion of justice* as a condition of *our service of faith*.

*Original in Portuguese*  
*Translation Christine Gautier*



## The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat: Latin American Experience

**John Montoya Rivera, SJ**

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This article brings together some reflections from the papers presented in Puente Grande, Guadalajara, Mexico, on June 6, 2019, when the fiftieth anniversary of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat was celebrated within the framework of the annual meeting of social delegates. This occasion was a valuable opportunity for Jesuits and collaborators to take a look at what we have built in our region in this time - strongly marked by violence, poverty and social inequality - and, at the same time, to consider the challenges of the common mission at the service of hope and life in our communities.

The reflection on the apostolate of social justice of the Society of Jesus in the last fifty years must consider not only the powerful moments lived within the Church, but also the context within which those moments occurred. One of the most important was, without a doubt, **the Second Vatican Council**; it helped us to connect with history and with the reality of the world. It made us incorporate into our mission social transformation, the defense of human rights, the fight against injustice. It invited us to value the laity more, to conceive the Church as the People of God and to develop the specific concerns of the Church. On the other hand, **the Rio Charter** concretized the impulses of Vatican II in Latin America and in the mission of the Jesuits, emphasizing that that particular moment of salvation history was called to attend to the social problem. In this document the goal of the social apostolate was the special solidarity with the world of the poor. Another important moment of the Church was **the Medellín Conference**. In this conference we were asked to consider Latin American underdevelopment as a situation of sin; it also identified impoverishment as a consequence of structural problems of society and States; and it launched the Church into the option for the poor and the struggle for social justice.

These strong ecclesiological moments took place in a context of profound social changes. One of the movements that most influenced the Society's Social Apostolate was what we know as the 1968 Revolution. This was the expression of a collective feeling of hope for a better world, manifested in the rebellion against the oppression of the dominant powers of the States, which was responded to by the public force with repression and violation of human rights. It was a time in which our countries went from being predominantly rural to being markedly urbanized with a high concentration of population in the cities and a reduction of inhabitants in the countryside. This change affected the parish model of the Catholic Church, thought

about primarily in relation to the rural world, which used to revolve around the parish. On the other hand, the expansion of the coverage of secondary and university education, the increase of the urban middle classes, the massive access of women to the professional and labor world, were modifying the traditional model of the patriarchal family and opening the way to a deep social secularization, especially in the middle and upper classes. There was also the appearance of a diffuse religiosity, expressed in multiple non-institutionalized forms<sup>1</sup>.

## 1. Significant Moments

The response of the Social Apostolate in Latin America marked - as mentioned above - by a context of injustice, inequality and oppression, but at the same time of faith, popular religiosity and grassroots ecclesial movements, has been significant. Some important moments that we consider to be contributions to the Social Apostolate of the universal Society are the following:

- The support of Latin America of Decree 4 of the GC 32. This Decree refers to the option of the Society for the promotion of Justice towards the poor, which placed it at the heart of the mission. To this end, a call was made to personal and community conversion, to change mentality and to adapt personal and community life to this option.
- The Rio Charter of 1968 invites us to create an open humanism with a place for social transformations anchored in human values, the transformation of lifestyles and social nuclei that help to create a just and equitable order.
- The Charter on Neo-liberalism (1996) expressed its ethical and religious concern for the neo-liberal model imposed by the developed countries on the poor countries of Latin America. These measures caused more poverty and inequality on the continent.
- The creation of Fe y Alegría (1960), an educational movement for children who did not have the opportunity to attend state or private schools.
- The GIAN (Global Ignatian Advocacy Network) (2008) on migrations and education created to respond to the most pressing needs of those who by force and violence must leave their place of origin to take refuge or move within the same country.

These contributions have had high costs. We have suffered the persecution and martyrdom of Jesuits and others linked to our social works or processes of accompaniment of communities.

We must also recognize that in this time we have also committed excesses, among others: the tension between the social and educational sectors, the absolutization of Marxism as a method of reading reality and the promotion of justice to the detriment of the service of faith.

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<sup>1</sup> González, Fernán (2012). "Una mirada a los orígenes: aportes a la reunión sobre la dimensión social como expresión de fe y justicia". ["A look at the origins: supports to the meeting on the social dimension as an expression of faith and justice"]The text has not been published.

## 2. Challenges of the Social Apostolate and Universal Apostolic Preferences

The social, economic, political and religious context of Latin America has changed in the last fifty years. However, the reality of poverty and the exclusion of millions of our brothers and sisters continue to challenge us. On the other hand, although we have become more aware of the care of nature, we still have a long way to go in its effective care. Most of the planet's water resources are in Latin America. However, there are already a high number of rivers without water due to the indiscriminate use of extractive mining.

Our social apostolate shares the same challenge of the mission of the Society of Jesus yesterday and today: we must maintain a deep connection of what we do with the reality of our people, especially those who for one reason or another are marginalized. The social apostolate rooted in Gospel values, enriched by Ignatian spirituality, in the face of the Apostolic Preferences should consider the following aspects of the Latin American context which are, at the same time, challenges proper to our continent:

- *Inequality and scandalous poverty.* It is not so much the numbers as the inhumanity behind poverty. The poor continue to be a sign that human beings have seriously disrupted the order of creation. This should move us to think seriously about our way of life and the accompaniment of the social demands of the communities most affected by poverty.
- *Crisis of Democracy.* Although beginning in the eighties of the last century, Latin America began a process of democratization of its governments in the hands of military regimes, our democratic systems have remained mere formalism and have become precarious social orders with manipulatable institutions, the emergence of *caudillismo*, abuse of constituent power and repression of social protest. This crisis, which in each country has its own characteristics, should move us to understand in depth what the problems of democracies are in our countries and to examine carefully the impact of our apostolate in the deepening of democracies.
- *The increasing reality of forced migration.* It is the first consequence of violence, inequality, poverty and the installation of new democratic authoritarianisms. What lies behind migration, its economic and political causes, its consequences for women and children are of particular concern to us.
- *The care of nature* marks a new *kairos*, which marks a new ecclesiology of unity in diversity: God is born in the peripheries of the world, from what we do not control. Taking care of nature implies recognising the identity of peoples and respecting their way of relating to their environment. This applies especially to the peasant and indigenous world.

An effective instrument that could help to convey the above four challenges could be education at all levels, including non-formal education, especially in the popular sectors. If we do not have long-term educational action, we will not be able to be transforming agents. It is our duty to promote the right of access to quality education. If we succeed, we could make a big difference and change structures in terms of equality, democracy and respect for human rights.

### 3. Recommendations of the Social Apostolate Today

In his address to General Congregation 36, Pope Francis told the assembled fathers: “We walk neither by ourselves nor for our own comfort; we walk with ‘a heart that does not rest, that does not close in on itself but beats to the rhythm of a journey undertaken together with all the people faithful to God’. Let us walk by making ourselves all things to all people by seeking out someone to help. This shedding of ourselves makes it possible for the Society to always have the face, the way of speaking, and the way of being of all peoples, all cultures, by inserting ourselves into all of them, into the specific heart of each people, to build up the Church with each of them, by inculturating the Gospel and evangelizing every culture”.<sup>2</sup>

The main challenge of the social apostolate is to walk with others, putting ourselves in the shoes of others, without losing the crucified Jesus on the horizon. This presupposes, first of all, a permanent attitude of **personal conversion**. This implies sharpening our capacity to listen to and respect others and learning to look at ourselves with a capacity for self-criticism.

Only in this way can we genuinely prepare ourselves for conversion before a world that expects spiritual depth from us. And this is only possible if it emanates from the joy of the resurrection.

Another important challenge is **the closeness to the poor and victims**. Father Arrupe said that where there is pain, there is the Society. It is necessary to promote the experiences of insertion, which are becoming more and more scarce. We Jesuits should be in the peripheries, running the risk of abandoning the security of institutions to go where no one wants to go.

In the midst of a context of cultural relativism and flexibilization of principles, we have the challenge of **not negotiating values**. In the 1970s and 1980s there was a tension between insertion and risk. That was a healthy tension. But... are we giving in on our commitments and values? Today we are afraid to take risks, we give in to the temptation to compromise. Tension is healthy and there is a critical sense between us. In the Society of Jesus we need more discernment.

In the midst of this Latin American continent, broken by violence and the practice of all kinds of exclusion, our social apostolate also has the challenge of serving as a bridge between all the children of God, especially the estranged. General Congregation 35 asks us to integrate **reconciliation** into apostolic actions, even beyond our own institutions.

Finally, we also have the challenge of redefining the **role of women and laity**. Are they workers or companions in our mission? We receive formation for more than 14 years and we ask the laity for the same results without facilitating that formation. The challenge for us Jesuits is not only to give words of thanks, but also a spirit of governance.

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis. “Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation of the Society of Jesus”. General Curia, Rome, 24 October 2016.  
[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20161024\\_visita-compagnia-gesu.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161024_visita-compagnia-gesu.html)



#### **4. Corollary**

These fifty years are a reason to thank the Lord for so much good received. The demands and challenges of the contemporary world invite us to revitalize ourselves, to change and to revise our effective and affective closeness to the impoverished of our continent. Increasing the radicality and integration of our ecological commitment in the promotion of socio-environmental justice, renewing our prophetic mission, improving and increasing the use of communication and new technologies, focusing and professionalizing our public impact are the main challenges of a social apostolate in today's context in working with men and women who share with us dreams and hopes of building a better world.

*Original in Spanish*  
*Translation Robert Hurd, SJ*



## **The Social Apostolate of Canada and the United States, 1969 to 2019 and Beyond: A Time of Integration, Networking and Collaboration**

**Tom Greene, SJ**

*Former coordinator of the social apostolate, JCCU*

I am delighted to be part of the group that will meet in Rome in November of 2019 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the social apostolate. As we gather, it might be good for us to consider what exactly *is* the social apostolate because it has evolved significantly since 1969.

In 2012, as Secretary for Social and International Ministries for the then Jesuit Conference of the United States, I attempted to put together a portfolio of the social apostolate in the U.S. I thought this would be a simple task. After all, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities had 28 universities in its portfolio and the Jesuit Secondary Education Association had 82 schools on its list, so I just needed to count the number of social apostolates. What could be easier! I quickly realized this was an impossible task because the social apostolate was a broad array of apostolic works and individuals – Jesuit and lay – serving in *all* apostolic sectors of the Society. Therefore, it is my hope that many sectors will be present at the celebration (higher education, secondary education, pastoral and spiritual apostolate, communications, etc.) because all sectors are actively engaged in the concerns and goals of the social apostolate.

No longer can, if it ever could, the social apostolate claim to be the sole apostolic sector tasked with serving and advocating for the poor. The prophetic mission of the service of faith and promotion of justice envisioned by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, and proclaimed by the 32nd General Congregation has taken root across all apostolic sectors. In the U.S. and Canadian contexts, what were once more clearly defined “stand-alone works” (e.g., social centers) and “stand-alone workers” (e.g., labor priests) have become more integrated and cross-sectoral. For example, we now have social centers located within our universities, an organic farm located on retreat house grounds and non-traditional schools designed to serve marginalized and economically poor communities. Stand-alone social ministries still exist, but there is a clear trend toward integration, collaboration and networking in which the social apostolate acts more as leaven promoting social justice issues across apostolic sectors of the Society.

In light of the above as we enter the next 50 years of the social apostolate, the primary task is to redefine and reimagine its role as a “both-and” apostolic sector – both a stand-alone sector with its own apostolic works and as a prophetic voice working across and within other

apostolic sectors, making sure that the voice of the poor and marginalized are heard and solutions to their plight are sought. This will at times require our prophetic voice to take on a more conciliatory tone as it continues to be a voice for the voiceless, but also seeks to weave communities back together as reconcilers. More so than in the past, the social apostolate must engage in communal discernment in order to decide whether to expose the wounds of racism, human trafficking, sexual abuse or to heal the wounds of those sins – to denounce or to dialogue. A deeper engagement with the Spiritual Exercises is key if we are to succeed in this challenge.

A primary means of carrying out the contemporary mission will be the emerging networks of the Society (such as *Fe y Alegría*, Red Jesuita con Migrantes and Global Ignatian Advocacy Network). Networks offer a wonderful opportunity **and** a concomitant challenge for the social apostolate. They allow for the exchange of information and formation of partnerships that leverage individual capacities and amplify the possibility of meaningful structural change. They bring people together from different parts of our world to unite on advocacy issues of mutual importance. Yet, networks also run the risk of becoming more curse than blessing if not properly conceived and utilized.

Networks without a clear common work focus or advocacy platform can become expensive gatherings that result in nothing more than social media posts and group photos. If the time and resources spent on travel, watching stultifying PowerPoint presentations or preparing redundant reports exceeds our time serving, accompanying and listening to the poor, then networks can be a temptation of the false spirit that diminish our mission. I have seen networks at their finest and their worst within the Society of Jesus. Fortunately, there are many more good networks than bad! Networks are a great opportunity for us, but they need to be held accountable and must be able to quantify how they are effecting change and providing benefits for its constituent members on the ground (i.e., direct service providers) and the poor themselves.

One example of the benefits of networking is the Kino Border Initiative (KBI). Located on the U.S.-Mexico border, KBI is a joint apostolic work of the USA West Province, the Mexican Province, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA, the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, the Diocese of Tucson and the Diocese of Nogales. KBI engages in direct service to migrants (food, shelter) and partners with U.S. universities (e.g., University of San Francisco, Santa Clara University), whose research is subsequently utilized by, among others, the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States for advocacy on behalf of migrants and refugees. This type of network is a clear example of the benefits of joining together across sectors.

Within this example lies the key to successful networks. The initial step was aimed at forming a bi-national partnership based on an issue of mutual concern (immigration). There is a tendency to jump too quickly to multinational projects, which cause the network to strain to find a common issue. This search for a common denominator issue weakens the network and bypasses important bi-national issues that have greater potential for effective results. The “slow and steady” approach recommended for the Universal Apostolic Preferences serves as a good reminder as the social apostolate forms and strengthens its networks. The slow and

steady formation of regional partnerships should take precedence over moving too swiftly to find a one-size-fits-all issue.

Another wonderful trend for the social apostolate (and other apostolates) is the increased presence of lay colleagues working in and leading our ministries. What a blessing to have such talented and dedicated women and men leading the mission. It is clear that many of these individuals feel called to serve in Jesuit apostolates, not simply as a job, but as a calling, and we need to recognize and encourage these companions as having vocations to the Society. A few years ago a film entitled “A Day in the Life without Mexicans” opened the eyes of many in the U.S. to the incredible contributions of migrants that make our daily lives possible. Perhaps we need a similar video for the Society of Jesus – “A Day in the Life without Lay Colleagues!” – which would show that almost all of the Society’s apostolates would grind to a halt without lay colleagues. Of course, as I write this I recognize that we, both Jesuits and lay, are collaborators in a common mission. It is not a Jesuit mission shared with lay colleagues, but Jesus’ mission in which we both share. I am grateful to so many lay women and men who have shown me the way to live the mission of faith and justice. As we move forward, key challenges regarding lay collaborators will be providing them adequate formation in our Ignatian charism and paying them just compensation.

In preparation for this article, I read a brief history of the social apostolate in Canada and the United States. There are many Jesuits and lay colleagues who have sacrificed and stood alone before hostile audiences, sometimes even our own Jesuit brothers. I am inspired by Bill Ryan, Michael Czerny, Patxi Álvarez, Fred Kammer, Joe Daoust, Mary Baudouin, John Sealey, Jenny Cafiso and so many others, and I look forward to where Xavier Jeyaraj will lead us in the future.

*Original in English*



## Fifty Years of Social Justice from the Ground Up

**Greg Kennedy, SJ**

*Spiritual Ministry, Guelph, Canada*

Fifty years of social and ecological commitment, learning, struggle, evangelization, collaboration, hope and solidarity merit celebration. Wherever two or three are gathered in a celebratory, Christian mood, a taste of Cana comes through, where Jesus unexpectedly initiated "the beginning of his signs and so revealed his glory" (John 2:11). That glory, however, was preceded by near catastrophe. What omen could augur more darkly for the loving longevity of a new marriage than the sudden disappearance of joy's sacramental drink at the nuptial feast? Mary's "*they have no wine*" rang like a death knell in the heart of the wedding.

For us also a bell tolls. Right in the swing of our festivities, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has drawn out Mary's pithy, pained declaration into 1,500 pages of disturbing detail. "*They have no wine*" comes to us today, on the golden anniversary of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) in these no-uncertain terms:

The rate of global change in nature during the past 50 years is unprecedented in human history. The direct drivers of change in nature with the largest global impact have been (starting with those with most impact): changes in land and sea use; direct exploitation of organisms; climate change; pollution; and invasion of alien species. Those five direct drivers result from an array of underlying causes – the indirect drivers of change – which are in turn underpinned by societal values and behaviours that include production and consumption patterns, human population dynamics and trends, trade, technological innovations and local through global governance. The rate of change in the direct and indirect drivers differs among regions and countries.

For terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, land-use change has had the largest relative negative impact on nature since 1970, followed by the direct exploitation, in particular overexploitation, of animals, plants and other organisms mainly via harvesting, logging, hunting and fishing.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> IPBES, "Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services", May 6, 2019.

[https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/spm\\_unedited\\_advance\\_for\\_posting\\_htn.pdf](https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/spm_unedited_advance_for_posting_htn.pdf), p.3. Accessed on May 20, 2019.

"*They have no wine*" is quickly becoming shorthand for they have no coral reefs, no old growth forests, no potable water, no climatic stability, no native biodiversity, no cause, no means, no right to celebrate.

"*Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.*" Strong words, spoken even at times by those of us who live and move in the overlapping circles of social and ecological justice. By founding the SJES, Pedro Arrupe announced that the hour had, in fact, come for the Society of Jesus to take seriously the dignity of creation, in all its human and non-human forms. Since love manifests itself more in deeds than in words, the Jesuit partners, professed and lay, got down to the work of providing more wine.

Of course, the results have been rather less than miraculous. Our transformations of the direct and indirect drivers of global, biological decline (even those found within our own spheres of influence, such as "societal values and behaviors; consumption patterns; human population dynamics and trends") still look and taste very watery. Since the birth of the SJES, "the human population has doubled, the global economy has grown nearly 4-fold and global trade has grown 10-fold, together driving up the demands for energy and materials."<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, wild vertebrae population sizes have declined by a global average of 60%<sup>3</sup>; a million species are at this very moment knocking on heaven's door, most to enter within decades; atmospheric carbon has risen over 20%; the mass of plastic waste dumped yearly now rivals the combined weight of every existent man, woman and child<sup>4</sup>; and for the first time in modern history, the average human lifespan in the United States has dropped rather than steadily climb.

*His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you"*. Over the last 50 years, the SJES and its partners have tried to listen both to her command and to his instructions. We, called to serve the outcast, the oppressed, the desperate and the abused, have apprenticed Jesus, who came not to judge but to save the world, because it is so divinely loved. This apprenticeship has become flesh in a myriad of forms throughout the richly diverse contexts in which we live and work. From journeying with refugees and migrants, to educating youth, to political advocacy, to nudging corporations towards ethical conduct, to standing beside our Indigenous neighbors, to meaningful sociological and ecological research, to pastoral care to people robbed of hope and opportunity, we have labored with Christ in the shadows of joy's shortfall across the Earth. Here in Canada, newly reunited into one province, our justice and ecological efforts have also been rich and varied. John McCarthy, SJ, has penned a brilliant and meticulous chronicle of the involvement of the former English Canada Province<sup>5</sup>. Any attempted repetition or reproduction of that fine narration in what remains of this article would be not only redundant but equally ridiculous. Instead I will focus narrowly on a single,

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid* p.4.

<sup>3</sup> World Wildlife Fund, London Zoological Society, "Living Planet Report 2018: Aiming Higher". [https://c402277.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/publications/1187/files/original/LPR2018\\_Full\\_Report\\_Spreads.pdf](https://c402277.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/publications/1187/files/original/LPR2018_Full_Report_Spreads.pdf). Accessed May 20, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Environment, "Our Planet is Drowning in Plastic Pollution." <https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/beat-plastic-pollution/>

<sup>5</sup> see John McCarthy SJ "Integral Ecology: The Emergence of an Idea" in Jacques Monet ed. *The Conscience of a Nation* (Toronto: Novalis Press, 2017) pp 231-269.

seemingly secondary contribution of Jesuit Canada to social and ecological justice in the field of agriculture.

Although viniculture is a subset of agriculture, I do not take up the latter now simply to stuff it into the guiding Gospel imagery here employed. Social, political and ecological relationships, both healthy and sickly, are all deeply rooted in the way we produce and distribute food. Other religious orders have tied their life and faith quite explicitly to farming. Keepers of the Rule of St. Benedict have from their beginnings discovered sanctity in manual labor, especially out of doors. The famed Trappist monastery in Oka, Quebec, for example, ran a reputed agricultural institute that trained generations of farmers in innovative practices. From the Paraguayan reductions of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to productive properties that fed both the coffers and the students of high schools in many provinces, to the vast estates that once surrounded novitiates, Jesuits have certainly had land, and have had it worked, but more often than not as an activity ancillary rather than central to its mission.

"*The road is our cloister,*" Jesuits have been telling themselves for generations. As one of our cherished mottos, it has shaped the way we think about and inhabit space. It resonates well with our proud availability for mission, our Ignatian indifference that keeps us rolling along free from the friction of gathered moss. In former historical contexts of social and religious stability, the capacity to stay footloose and deployable was countercultural, prophetic and effective. Today, however, with all the world rushing hither and yon, with tourism having become a threat to the integrity of not only removed localities, but even of major metropolises, with every worker willing to follow the money to just about any relocation, the world has entered a dire scarcity of stability. Rootlessness, observed Henri Nouwen, is today's signature malaise.

Agriculture is a powerful antidote to rootlessness. To work land is to settle, is to invest, is to entrust oneself to a specifically geographical future. It is no accident that the most highly mobile societies are also those most urbanized. Mobility offers indubitable benefits. But when everything starts moving at once, the human organism tends to suffer vertigo and nausea. In a world of incessant traffic and migration, our latest mission might just be staying put, setting roots and going "local." For the first time in centuries, the frontiers to which we are currently called could well be literal – that is to say, land-based – but this time in a decidedly non-colonial manner.

This consideration gains extra weight as the Society begins contemplating how to embody its four new Universal Apostolic Preferences. As for our Common Home, "displaced," industrial agriculture bears the brunt of responsibility for its dilapidation. The meat and dairy industry alone accounts for at least 14.5% of greenhouse gases<sup>6</sup>, 80% of current deforestation in the

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<sup>6</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Tackling Climate Change through Livestock*, 2013 <http://www.fao.org/3/i3437e/i3437e.pdf>. Accessed May 20, 2019.

Amazon<sup>7</sup>, and between 80 to 90% of fresh water use in the USA<sup>8</sup>. For young people, increasingly prone to the physical and spiritual symptoms of "Nature Deficit Disorder" due to their overly-built environment, a hope-filled future must certainly include real connection to untampered creation. As cities everywhere swell with youth forced out of rural areas by violence, lack of education, unemployment and economic impossibility, urban desperation spikes. The isolation sometimes born of remoteness has been supplanted by an anxious, ubiquitous alienation that often paralyzes people, particularly the young. Although Earthlings, many feel as if they inhabit a strange planet hostile to their being.

Finally, to walk with the poor means to keep contact with the ground. "Walk" is a very telling verb. Jesus walked a lot. So did Ignatius. By force they got to know their immediate geography because they covered it at most 20 miles a day. At the risk of appearing a literalist, I would hazard that our preferential option for the poor, reiterated now as universal and apostolic, should slow us down. How much walking with the outcasts does our jet-setting Jesuit culture truly allow us? Airports are not the first place one would normally go when looking for poor people.

Curiously, it was the Society's agricultural mission, howsoever understated, that first drew me to the Jesuits. Aspiring to be a small-scale, organic farmer, I heard tell of Ignatius Farm in Guelph, Ontario. After a brief stint in a Cistercian abbey, whose own industrial approach to farming ruffled my experience of monastic serenity, I found myself welcomed by the Guelph Jesuit community. The 600-acre farm here had entered a few years before into the latest of its incarnations. Having long nourished the English Canadian novices and juniors, it had transitioned into a L'Arche-inspired community when young Jesuits and the herculean brothers who ran operations grew scarce. The Farm Community, founded by Doug McCarthy, SJ, and Bill Clarke, SJ, in 1977, gathered people of all physical and mental abilities to work together to grow their daily bread, eggs, apples, meat and vegetables. Here the outcasts and wounded of the world discovered the healing power of tending to land, animals and each other. As time, consciousness and skill increased, the community integrated more agro-ecological principles and practices, which finally culminated in Ignatius Farm becoming certified organic in 2004, but not, to the great sadness of many, before the dissolution of the Farm Community in 2001 owing to financial constraints.

Fortunately, seed from the Farm Community was saved by two lay members, Martin Couture and Sally Benoit, who then planted them in Durham-Sud, Quebec. There Ferme Berthe Rousseau was raised in 1988 with a dual mission of welcoming those needy of respite from addictions, disappointments and hurts, as well as cultivating a productive but gentle relationship with the land. Much of the healing comes from the communion that happens at every meal, where the fruits of the earth are just outside the door, and the work of the same human hands holding the cutlery are shared and savored around one large, inclusive table.

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<sup>7</sup> The World Wildlife Fund, "Unsustainable Cattle Ranching" [http://wwf.panda.org/knowledge\\_hub/where\\_we\\_work/amazon/amazon\\_threats/unsustainable\\_cattle\\_ranching/](http://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/amazon/amazon_threats/unsustainable_cattle_ranching/). Accessed May 20, 2019

<sup>8</sup> The University of British Columbia, "Environmental Impact of Meat Consumption" <http://cases.open.ubc.ca/environmental-impact-of-meat-consumption/>. Accessed May 20, 2019.



On a homestead scale, Ferme Berthe Rousseau teaches by example how to walk with those whose dignity has been violated by collaborating with them in the agricultural care of our Common Home. The benefits of this have gone to town, where the Ferme has played an important local role in revitalizing rural, Quebecois culture, as well as helped implement ecological advances, such as community composting in the neighboring village.

Back in Guelph, the fields now vacant, Jim Profit, SJ, invited others to envision with him the next iteration of the now certified organic Ignatius Farm. A Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) model was adopted thanks to its pedagogical, logistic and financial advantages. CSA's share the risk of farm production by establishing a covenant between producer and consumer that is stronger than mere economic expediency. Members buy a share at the beginning of the season, agreeing to content themselves with their portion of the weekly harvest. In this way they not only provide the capital for farmers to buy seed and equipment when needed, but also learn about the intricacies and hardships of contemporary agriculture. Managed and worked by a crew of dedicated young farmers and interns (predominantly women), the CSA strives to cultivate vegetables, awareness, engagement, fun and alliances through their 14 or so acres of market gardens. Its constant need to innovate and adapt in order not to hemorrhage financially shows its solidarity with small farms in North America and abroad. Small-scale farmers are, without a shadow of a doubt, among the hardest working poor on the planet.

Today, the vast majority of retreatants who come to Loyola House experience profound spiritual connection with the land that makes up Ignatius Farm. Renowned for its fresh and wholesome fare, the Loyola House kitchen showcases with care and creativity produce from the land. Each dining room table sits adorned with a small but mighty sign that declares: "*In this food I see the presence of the entire universe supporting me.*" Every year the two ministries here, spiritual and agricultural, grow more integrated as each learns more deeply to appreciate the immensity of the shared gift of having so much beautiful land to pray on and so many people eager to do just that. Farm and retreat house feed each other in more ways than any of us can enumerate.

Spirituality, ecology and justice all converge most fertilely in agriculture, which, it hardly needs to be said, is the indispensable basis for nearly all surviving cultures on Earth today. So much of contemporary farming is unjust: exploitation of migrant workers; vertical integration and monopolies by multinationals; stranglehold contracts on patented seeds; expropriation of common or *campesino*-held land for pasture, industrial palm oil and sugarcane; ridiculously low remuneration; horrific treatment of animals, etc. So much of contemporary farming is anti-ecological: complete dependence on fossil fuels for fertilizer and machinery; atrocious soil erosion; unpardonable production wastage; sweeping deforestation and wetland destruction; absurd travel distances for goods and produce, etc. So much of contemporary farming is unspiritual: unconscionable corporate profit; unapologetic violence toward creation; the economic undermining of dedicated family farms; hyper abundance that erodes gratitude even quicker than soil, etc.

Jesuit partners have intuited the preferential significance of agriculture for some time, but only now is it becoming articulated and acknowledged. In 1974, Canadian Paul Desmarais, SJ, founded the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre in Zambia. At first an educational

institution schooled in conventional, chemical agriculture, Kasisi followed Paul's conversion in 1990 to fully organic practices and has successfully taught thousands of African farmers the rewards of low-input, ecologically intelligent Earth-husbandry. Similarly in India, Canadian Murray Abraham, SJ, established the St. Alphonsus Social and Agricultural Centre in 1978, dedicated to training local farmers in the art of cultivating the land in the most benign and mutually beneficial way possible.

Meanwhile in the early 1990s, Canadian Jesuits Jim Webb and Martin Royackers began seeding agricultural cooperatives in poor, rural Jamaica, helping small farmers organize and fetch more just compensation for their hard work. Canadian Jesuits International, formerly the provincial foreign missions office, has and continues to stand behind such projects, as well as help fund other agro-ecological initiatives from other provinces. Its partnership with COMPARTE, a network of Latin American Jesuit works focused on good farming and alternative economic processes, keeps us united with the growing, international movement of edible Earth-care.

The alarming fact that *they have no wine* has been an active concern for the Society of Jesus in Canada. Since the birth of the SJES, the Jesuit collaborative of Canada has instinctively recognized and addressed the apostolic importance of agriculture. Enriched by the new universal apostolic preferences, this ministerial fascination with farming will and should only increase. For, according to ecologists today, not only justice, but our entire fragile social fabric depends on a radical transformation of how we keep and till the garden of creation. In all our worthy activity, let us remember to stand still long enough to hear this Triune and terrestrial call.

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