



Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat of the Society of Jesus

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...to exchange social justice and ecology news, stimulate contacts, share spirituality and promote networking...

Narrative

An Unexpected Call: From Teaching to Serving Justice

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This is a short story of a relatively young and happy Jesuit scholar who did not plan to return to the social apostolate. After a period of joy and labor in the field of academia, education and coaching, I did not expect to receive the call to the coordination of social service and research in Europe and the Near East. The first response was a mix of interest and disquiet.

The Challenge of Sharing. Sharing faith and life is something we Jesuits do relatively often and with joy. But this time I found myself uneasy. I was asked to write a short narrative with the aim of being introduced to the people of the Social apostolate as the new delegate to the European Conference and the head of the Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC). I wondered how to write something relevant to so many of our brethren who toil among the

poor since I have not been involved in such work in some time. My experience with those who go unnoticed or are disadvantaged has been limited due to the constraints of the work in which I had been previously engaged. Yet, I could not to decline the invitation, for two reasons.

First, I can only share what I have been given. I cannot share what I would have wanted to have or possess but do not. While I may have feelings of inadequacy, I do trust the power and grace that come through accepting a mission and I believe in it. Moreover, while I find myself perplexed by the unexpected mission, I am eager to do my best to advocate for those

who yearn for justice and reconciliation in God and for those who labor to help satisfy this yearning. [Read more...](#)

Flashnews

Global - 'Welcome, Protect, Promote and Integrate migrants and refugees' says Pope



Pope Francis in his message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees on 14th January 2018 says, "I wish to reaffirm that our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: *to welcome, to protect, to promote* and *to integrate*." He further says, "Throughout the first years of my pontificate, I have repeatedly expressed my particular concern for the lamentable situation of many migrants and refugees fleeing from war, persecution, natural disasters and poverty. This situation is undoubtedly a "sign of the times" which I have tried to interpret, with the help of the Holy Spirit, ever since [my visit to Lampedusa](#) on 8 July 2013. [Read message...](#)

USA - Jesuit Network mobilizes in defense of DACA and Dreamers



In advance of an anticipated Trump administration reversal of a critical program protecting young immigrants who came to the U.S. as children from deportation, Catholic educators have mobilized forcefully. A [letter](#), signed by more than 1,200 Jesuit educators, sent to General John Kelly calls for the protection of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a policy that has protected approximately 750,000 young people known as "Dreamers". Fr. Timothy Kesicki SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference said, "There is no greater witness we can give as Jesuits, particularly in the United States, than in defending the Dreamers and the DACA program." [Read more...](#)

Honduras - Jesuits decry attacks on Jesuit human rights activist



Latin American Jesuits raised an alarm for one of their brother Jesuits, Fr. Ismael "Melo" Moreno, director of the Honduran Jesuit radio station, *Radio Progreso*, and the Honduran Jesuit social action centre. An outspoken human rights advocate in a country plagued by government corruption and violence, Fr. Melo has worked for years to promote dialogue while advocating for the marginalized. Last year when the national university, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH), was embroiled in student strikes, Fr. Melo sat at the negotiating table at the request of students. While agreements were reached between the students and the university, this year student strikes and protests continued, and in the aftermath many students have been injured at the hands of university-hired security forces and many more arrested. In addition, the recent murder of the father of a student activist, who was killed after attending the judicial hearing of his son, has created a climate of fear for those exercising their right to protest peacefully. [Read more...](#)

Africa - "Fe y Alegria wants to educate 42 million Africans"



In response to Pope Francis's appeal to work in the peripheries, [Fe y Alegria](#), a Jesuit social movement for the most disadvantaged, held an international meeting from August 28, to September 2, 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya. Fr. Mborong Etienne, SJ one of the coordinating members of Fe y Alegria in Africa spoke of the challenges that this "popular movement" faces in working for the poor. He said, "more than 42 million Africans do not have access to quality education." Inviting people to be generous in supporting the works of

Fe y Alegria, he added that "this 70 percent of Africans who do not have quality education concerns all of us." [Read more...](#) To listen to interview with Etienne [click here...](#)

India - Jesuit Theologians join peace journey amidst manufactured hate



Seven theology students from Vidyajyoti, New Delhi joined the civil society initiative of a month-long journey all over in India, which included visiting families of those who lost loved ones to hate lynching and mob violence. This peace journey (*yatra*) called '*Karwan e Mohabbat*' aims to declare that they stand with the Muslim, Dalit and Christian sisters and brothers who were worst affected by lynching. Mr.

Harsh Mander, a former civil servant and activist writer who initiated this Peace journey says that it is important to spread the message of love, peace and solidarity and stop the spread of hate in any form. [Read more...](#)

Canada - Canadian Jesuits and indigenous paddlers form bonds to 'last a lifetime'



Erik Sorensen, a Jesuit scholastic who directed the 26-day-long pilgrimage paddling in canoes on the St. Lawrence River dedicated to the cause of reconciliation with First Nations people in Canada, said "You realize how powerless you are when you are out in nature like that, how attuned and attentive you have to be to nature to be in

harmony with it." The group of about 50 paddlers completed the odyssey along a historic river-route travelled four centuries ago by explorers and Jesuit martyrs, including St. Jean de Brebeuf. They arrived Aug. 15 at a First Nations reserve near Montreal. Through shared struggles during their travels, a sense of camaraderie and understanding developed among the paddlers, said Kevin Kelly, a Jesuit scholastic and trip organizer. Being in a position of shared "vulnerability where you are struggling" helps people learn about each other and "understand how similar we are, even when we come from very different places," he said. [Read more...](#)

Japan - Working with Vietnamese migrant workers in Japan to help their country



Once a year, the lilt of the t'rung and the rise and fall of the sounds of the danbau transport audiences at a charity concert in Tokyo to the mountain regions of Vietnam. The performers are Vietnamese migrant workers in Japan, and this year's concert featured a choir called "Cecilia", that usually serves at the Vietnamese Sunday masses at St Ignatius Church next to the Jesuit Tokyo Social Centre. "The concert made our imagination fly to Vietnam and we enjoyed our stay there for more than two hours," shared Fr Ando Isamu SJ, head of the Jesuit Tokyo Social Service Centre Migrants Desk, who works closely with the Vietnamese migrants for the welfare of their own community and country. [Read more...](#)

Colombia - Launch of Garittea: An innovative and sustainable enterprise



Garittea, a social enterprise that includes agricultural organizations and business partners with the support of Universidad Javeriana Cali was inaugurated with the purpose of generating social, academic and business impact. Garittea is an innovative, sustainable and functional proposal based on social justice and agro-ecological production. Part of the commitment of the university is to care for the environment and the implementation of a live fair trade laboratory on the campus of the Universidad Javeriana Cali. This social project is carried out by the Pontifical University of Javeriana Cali, the

Instituto Mayor Campesino (IMCA), the Association of Organic Coffee Growers of Colombia (ACOC) and the Association of Small Coffee Growers (ASOPECAM). [Read more...](#)

India - Hundreds of activists and poor farmers in New Delhi for jobs



A 5-day protest rally demanding increase in guaranteed working days from 100 to 240 was held between Sept. 11-15 at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. Activists and farmers from 15 Indian states converged on the Indian capital calling for proper implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) protecting rural workers is at the heart of the dispute. Udayani, Calcutta's Jesuit social outreach, is behind the initiative and had mobilized around 155 farmers and women activists from West Bengal. Fr. Jothi, the director of Udayani says, "the central government has failed to fund budgets for individual states. The result is that in West Bengal there is a shortage in cash and work." [Read more...](#)

Africa - The First JESAM delegates' meeting on Child Protection held in Nairobi



Child Protection is an urgent challenge to institutions in many countries of the world and the church is not an exception. We are called to confront it and to take collective responsibility and action for child protection. Societal silence on child protection only shields perpetrators of abuse. We need to avoid the false narrative that the issue "is not an African problem" and be cognizant that it is a challenge for Africa too.

Addressing the 2-day gathering of JESAM delegates for Child Protection on Aug. 30-31 in Nairobi, JESAM President Fr. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator SJ, challenged delegates to think creatively and boldly, and globally and locally, so that our engagement with Child Protection may be rooted in our local context while taking into account the best universal practice. [Read more...](#)

India - Green Education Network: Educating the Educators



"Every subject should be taught through the lens of the environment" said Dr. Sunita Narain, an acclaimed environmentalist during the 2-days Regional conclave held at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. Around 700 students of St. Xavier's and 100 faculty members from 62 colleges and universities of Eastern and North Eastern regions of India participated in the Conclave. Dr. Narain spoke at great length about the crisis of Climate Change and said, "weird weather is the new normal." Blaming the rich for climate change, she said, "No country has learnt to get rich without emissions." The conclave was another ecological effort to keep the hope of Pope's encyclical *Laudate Si'* and the Society's mission for reconciliation with creation. [Read full report.](#)

Asia Pacific - Putting the person back into the dynamic cycle of life



"If you think climate change is bad, you're not prepared to live in this world at all," said Fr. Pedro Walpole SJ in an interview recently, pointing out that climate change is but one of nine factors that can push the earth out of circulation. The other eight are ocean acidification, biodiversity loss, land-system change, biogeochemical flows, stratospheric ozone depletion, freshwater use, atmospheric aerosol loading and chemical pollution. "One of our difficulties is that we're bound to a growth cycle that the world cannot possibly sustain because it cannot grow exponentially," explained Fr. Walpole who is the Coordinator of the GIAN - Ecology and the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific's Reconciliation with Creation. [Read more...](#)

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