

COVER

A Kyrgyz in traditional costume.

Kyrgyzstan is a little known nation of Central Asia, born after the collapse of the Soviet Union. See our article on page 137 about the activities of Jesuits in this country.

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JESUITS

YEARBOOK OF THE
SOCIETY OF JESUS

2013

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Jesuit brothers and friends,

As Christmas and the New Year approach, you are receiving, along with sincere greetings of the Season, the latest *Yearbook of the Society of Jesus: 2013*. This year it has a new approach. It devotes most of its contents to two themes: the continent of Africa and the Society's ecumenical and inter-religious activities.

First of all, *Africa*: Taking advantage of the fact that last July's Congregation of Procurators was held in Nairobi, Kenya, we are presenting what I hope is a fairly complete panorama of the commitments and priorities of the Society on this continent.

It is a panorama which employs images rather than long articles – something made possible by the generous collaboration of both Fr. Michael Lewis, president of JESAM and Fr. Jean-Roger Ndombi, Father General's Assistant for Africa.

It's important to remember that Africa is one of the "preferences" of the Society today, and to keep in mind what the Africans present at the last General Congregation said:

"The delegates of the African Assistancy ...asked the Society to join their efforts to promote a better understanding of the continent. The negative image frequently presented by the media must be changed. We need to favor respect and unified action."

The second part of this book is dedicated to the *Ecumenical and Inter-religious Activities* of the Society of Jesus. Here too I'd like to refer to the 35th General Congregation's thought: "As [the] world changes, so does the *context* of our mission; and new frontiers beckon that we must be willing to embrace. So we plunge ourselves more deeply into that dialogue with religions that may show us that the Holy Spirit is at work all over the world that God loves" (GC35, d.2,24). To respond better to this invitation, Father General named, in May, 2010, eight personal Counselors for various sectors: for ecumenical dialogue with the Eastern and Protestant churches; and for inter-religious dialogue with Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, indigenous religions of the Americas, and traditional religions of Africa. We asked these experts for contributions to *Yearbook 2013*, and all kindly accepted the invitation. After each one of their articles we wanted to insert concrete experiences of dialogue coming from all parts of the world. The result is a very rich and varied – even if inevitably incomplete – panorama which illustrates the breadth of this commitment and the importance which the Society of Jesus today gives to this sector of its apostolic work.

The last part of the *Yearbook* is, as always, dedicated to apostolic experiences – some traditional, others particularly new – and to some anniversaries being celebrated in different parts of the Society.

As I wish everyone enjoyment in following these pages, I and all those involved in its publication repeat our warm greetings of Christmas, and hopes for a year of serenity and peace with the blessings of the Lord.

Fr. Giuseppe Bellucci, S.J.
Translated by John J. O'Callaghan, S.J.

CONGREGATION OF PROCURATORS



I membri della Congregazione dei Procuratori riuniti a Nairobi.

The “Procurators” are the delegates of the Provinces or Regions of the Society of Jesus who have been elected to meet with Father General and his consultants to examine the state of the Society in the world and decide whether it is time to convoke a new General Congregation. This meeting was held for the first time in Africa, in Nairobi (Kenya).



**A moment of the opening
eucharistique celebration.**

It is the Congregation of the Procurators elected by the Provincial Congregations, along with Father General and the general consultants.

The Congregation of Procurators had its origin in the 2nd General Congregation (1565), when St Francis Borgia was elected general. Because of an intervention regarding a decree which sought to decide upon a fixed period for holding General Congregations, that Congregation debated the matter and interpreted the Constitutions (679) as calling for a Congregation to be held every three years of all those who as procurators of the provinces were to inform Fr. General. In 1995 General Congregation 34 decided that the Congregation of Procurators should be held every four years (GC 34 d. 23, 2).

The Congregation of Procurators follows the guidelines laid down in the *Formula for the Congregation of Procurators*. The first version of the formula originated in the 4th General Congregation (1581), when the norms referring to the Congregation of Procurators were separated from those pertaining to the Provincial Congregations; a commission elaborated the formula, which was approved in decree 43 (*Ibid.*). General Congregation 30 (1957) ruled that the Procurators of the independent vice-provinces should also be summoned (AR 13 [1956-1960] 366). Only the General Congregation has the authority to change the Formula of the Congregation of Procurators.

The purpose of the Congregation of Procurators has changed in the course of time. In the beginning its task



The Procurators at work in the aula of the Congregation.

was to decide about whether or not to call a General Congregation and to provide information to Fr. General. General Congregation 31 (1965-66) decreed that, besides this twofold function, it should also treat of the state of the universal Society and other matters of universal import. It also decreed that the Congregations of Procurators should alternate with the Congregations of Provincials (these of new vintage) every three years (AR 14 [1961-66] 971-972). The prerogatives of the Congregation of Procurators were increased in General Congregation 32 (1974-75), where it was decided that the Congregation of Procurators should present a report on the state of the Society of Jesus and, in case of necessity, should suspend some decrees of earlier General Congregations until the next General

Congregation (AR 16 [1973-76] 422). General Congregation 34 (1995) suppressed the Congregation of Provincials (held only once, in Loyola in 1990), ruled that the Congregation of Procurators should be held every four years, and eliminated the need to prepare a report on the state of the Society.

The first Congregation of Procurators was held in 1568, and until the beginning of the 18th century the General Congregations and the Congregations of Procurators proceeded without any special novelty. For reasons of plague and sickness, those that were to be held in the years 1614 and 1631 were deferred, and one that was to be held in 1664 was postponed for a year. In the 18th century, nine were held and several were suppressed: that of 1703 was suppressed because of its



Nairobi (Kenya), monument to Jomo Kenyatta, father of the nation.

proximity to the 15th General Congregation (1706), and others were suppressed because of the epidemics of 1709, 1720, 1734, and 1743. The last one before the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773) was held in 1749; those which were to be held after that date were suspended with the papal approval.

After the restoration of the Society of Jesus several years passed before the Congregations of Procurators began to work again normally. The first one in the 19th century was in 1832, held after the General Congregation of 1829 insisted on their reestablishment (*Institutum S.I.*, 2:478). Political difficulties in Europe, and especially in Italy, prevented Procurator Congregations from being held in 1850, 1859, and from 1868 to 1886. General Congregation 23 (1883) insisted again on their being convoked and held (decree 13, no. 1, *Ibid.* 501), and from then until General Congregation 33 only six were suppressed: that of 1905 because of the sickness of Fr. General Martin; those of 1918, 1941, and 1944 because of war; those of 1936 and 1956 because of their proximity to General Congregations 28 and 30, respectively; and that of 1964 because of the proximity of the Second Vatican Council.

Two Congregations of Procurators voted to call a General Congregation: those of 1606 and 1693. As a result of the first, General Congregation 6 was held in 1608, once the *de auxiliis* controversy was resolved (*Ibid.*

289). The 1693 Congregation voted in favor of a General Congregation by only one vote (17 to 16), so that the validity of the decree was in doubt. Recourse was had to the Holy See, which declared the decree invalid, so that no General Congregation was held. As a result, General Congregation 14 (1696) specified that for a General Congregation to be called the positive votes should be two or three more than the negative ones, depending on whether the number of those voting is even or odd (the only such case in the Institute of the Society of Jesus) (decree 6, *Ibid.* 413f.). With the broadening of the attributions of the Congregations of Procurators, their duration has logically increased. Finally, all of them have been held in Rome, except those of 1886 and 1889, which took place in Fiesole (Florence) and those of 1999 and 2003, which took place in Loyola.

The most recent Congregation of Procurators, which was number 70 in the series, was held in Nairobi (Kenya), for the first time outside Europe. It began on July 9, 2012, and ended on July 15. It was attended by 84 Procurators elected by their Provinces and 13 others who participated *ex officio*.

J. A. de Aldama – I. Echarte
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.

AFRICA

AT THE FOREFRONT



“Aware of the cultural, social, and economic differences in Africa and Madagascar, but also conscious of the great opportunities, challenges, and variety of Jesuit ministries, we acknowledge the Society’s responsibility to present a more integral and human vision of this continent. In addition, all Jesuits are invited to greater solidarity with and effective support of the Society’s mission of inculturating faith and promoting more justice in this continent.”

(General Congregation 35, D. 3. No. 39).

Spotlight on Africa

INTERVIEW WITH FATHER MICHAEL LEWIS

Joys and sorrows of a continent

Father Michael Lewis is the President of JESAM, the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar. His task is to coordinate the apostolates of the Society of Jesus in the African continent. We have asked him some questions about the priorities, the difficulties and the challenges in this part of the world, where Jesuits have placed their "preference" today.

Almost two years ago you became the President of the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar. What are your impressions of the Jesuit presence in Africa?

I continue to be amazed and consoled by the vigour and diversity and at the same time the unity of the Society of Jesus in Africa and Madagascar. We live on a continent and large island of a thousand million people, more than a thousand languages, and fifty eight nation states. The last year has seen much growth and economic and political development in many countries of Africa. While there have been on-going wars and civil unrest in some countries, we have seen peace come to Ivory Coast, a new country came into existence in South Sudan. The continent is like a young bull elephant of huge potential gathering its resources to lead the herd, though is still somewhat slow and uncertain about its strength and capabilities. The peoples of the



continent are looking back at 50 years of recovery from colonial rule and development of our own systems and resources. Everyone knows that Africa has immense natural and human resources. The media gives the impression that everything in Africa is either a disaster or limps along in Africa. Good news does not sell newspapers but bad news does. The Society of Jesus is there in the thick of many of the happenings good and bad in Africa today.

There are about 1500 Jesuits in Sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar. In short, the presence of the Society of Jesus is gradually expanding and vibrant with many young men eager to spread the Kingdom of God. Although we have been working in

different parts of Africa for over four hundred years, there have been successes and failures in our various missions. The first Jesuit missionaries in Congo, Mozambique and Ethiopia went there soon after Ignatius Loyola died. There have been breaks, endings and beginnings in many of our missions in Madagascar and Africa. So it is good to divide the presence of the Society of Jesus in Africa into two, the early missionary ventures before the Suppression and the later nineteenth and twentieth century ventures. The latter part is significant because within a hundred years the Society has become indigenous and the vast majority of Jesuits in Africa are now from the countries of Africa from



■ Group photo of participants of JESAM (the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar) meeting, last April, on the terrace of General Curia in Rome. On the preceding page, a working session with Father General.

South Africa in the South, to Sudan in the North and from Madagascar in the East to Senegal in the West.

The indigenization of the Society of Jesus has been rapid and energetic. The works of the Society are many and varied. There are centres of tertiary education, secondary schools, centres for social research and reflection, institutes of spirituality and retreat houses, agriculture institutions; in addition we assist the local church in many parishes run by the Society of Jesus. At the moment there are four new schools being built. There are plans for universities in some areas. The majority of Jesuits in Africa are young and enthusiastic to serve the church and the people of Africa.

After fifty years of independence

and self-government in Africa one looks back on the extraordinary progress, political, economic and religious with admiration and thanksgiving for what has been done and a certain sadness at what has not been achieved. However this is a time to look forward, examine the methods of evangelisation we have used in the past. We need to learn from the past what works and what does not. The development of the Church in Africa is due to some degree to those methods, but modern Africa and Madagascar demand a far greater appreciation of the varied social realities in Africa today and the appropriate responses which are called for from the Society of Jesus. We need the courage and expertise to look for those ways and

means of bringing the Gospel to modern Africa.

It is commonly understood that Africa has much to tell the world of communitarian living and government. The age of imitating western democracies in their political, economic and justice structures and for that matter religious belief is coming to an end. Africa is slowly developing its own methods of political government, economic management and the delivery of justice to its people. The Church is recognising the new demands of evangelising the Continent with its multifaceted religious world and the members of the Society of Jesus are at the forefront of this increasingly challenging enterprise.



■ A break during the JESAM meeting in Rome.

Some African countries are still in turmoil. How the Jesuits are reacting to this situations and how much the political difficulties affects our work as Jesuits?

Africa is faced with many and varied problems of adaptation. The colonial borders are still in place and often cut across natural and ethnic boundaries. Structures which served colonial government do not serve the present reality. There has been an enormous clash of value systems to the detriment of many African societies. In the past the maintenance of social relationships in the family, tribe and nation was of prime concern. But the contact with cultures based on material wealth and aggressive achievement has moved financial materialism to the fore of human endeavour in Africa. This of course has opened the way for nefarious and corrupt practices. So we should not be surprised to see some measure of turmoil which will probably only after many decades emerge as balanced well-functioning societies both thoroughly African and fully participating in the global village. What is miraculous is that in spite of a torrid and difficult social past, the vast majority of the people of Africa get on with their lives in

peace and harmony.

The Jesuits share in the joys and sorrows of the people and have been involved in all the aspects of a developing and emerging continent. A good number of Jesuits, bishops, priests and brothers, have lived long and happy lives, while others have lost their lives serving the people they were sent to work and live with. It is significant that many Jesuits have been trained in the disciplines of ethics and human rights in the last three decades and teach in many tertiary education institutions. The entire mission of the Society is of course the service of faith and justice, both of which are needed and developing in Africa. So the Society is thoroughly immersed in the struggle for faith and justice.

What are the major challenges for the Society of Jesus in Africa in this moment, both from the political and the religious point of view?

The major challenges for the Society of Jesus are the same as those of the peoples of Africa and Madagascar. These are the overcoming of poverty, and the development of health, education and political systems which serve the people. These are primary

concerns of the people and Jesuits have the added challenge of finding ways to bring God to the people through the Christian message. The message is a strong support for the development of people in their love of God and their neighbour. The slow development of the concept of the common good in the political sphere is a primary need in order to root out corrupt and discriminatory structures and this is a concern for all Jesuits.

There are few atheists in Africa but by the same token there are many and varied ways of believing in God. Christianity and Roman Catholicism are both strong aspects the African societies. However the challenge for Catholics is to live in peace and harmony with other Christians, and with other faiths. This of course is a great challenge to our ideas about missiology and what it means to be an apostle of Jesus Christ in Africa and Madagascar today. The older models will not suffice in a world of instant media and globalization. How do we bring Christ and the message of the Gospel to the teeming masses of people in the cities of Africa and the millions in the plains and mountains of rural Africa? This message must speak to the people and their problems.

Which are the priorities for the Jesuit apostolate in Africa today?

The Major Superiors of Africa and Madagascar, together with the Jesuits of their Provinces and Regions, are all involved in the development of plans for mission for their particular areas of responsibility. There is a greater emphasis these days on the need to work together as Jesuits in Africa and Madagascar. The primary need for the Jesuit apostolate is a deep and thorough formation for all Jesuits working in Africa and



■ Father General meeting with the novices in Kisantu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Madagascar. At their meeting in 2011 the Superiors recognized the need for reconciliation, justice and peace in all our works in Africa. Naturally this is in line with the Holy Father's Post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Africae Munus*. Furthermore they see the need to work together with others for just and effective governance in Africa in the fight against corruption. Finally in a continent where more than 50% of the population is under 25 years of age it is clear that one of the most important aspects is the service of youth. At the moment the Society is responding to these priorities with our more than 29 schools, seven social centres, and an important Aids Network. There are exciting plans on the drawing boards to develop the present tertiary education institutions into

universities to serve people in various parts of Africa.

The Houses of formation are very important for the future of Jesuits in Africa. Are you happy with the present set up and what you would like to adjust to respond better to the needs of the future?

The Houses of formation where the future Jesuits of Africa have been trained have been established for fifty years in Congo, twenty five years in Nairobi and more recently Antananarivo, Harare and Abidjan. The Society of Jesus was quick to see the need for African philosophical and theological institutions. These institutions are vital for the growth of the Society in Africa and Madagascar, the Provincials of Africa are well aware of this and realising the greater demands being

made on younger Jesuits by the church and civil society they commissioned in May 2011 a strategic action plan to examine and propose the way forward for our five houses of formation.

The Houses were set up some time back, now there is a growing need for thorough deep and African pastoral, spiritual, human and academic formation for Jesuits from all over the Continent. The aim of the present research and planning is to equip the modern young Jesuit with all that he needs to face the challenges of a virile, dynamic and complex reality which faces the Church; we wish to serve, in Africa.

**Edited by
Giuseppe Bellucci, S.J.**

Formation Houses

The five Formation Houses of the African Assistancy (the two Theologates: Hekima College in Nairobi, Kenya, and ITCJ in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and the three Philosophates: St. Paul in Antananarivo, Madagascar, Canisius in Kimwenza, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Arrupe College in Harare, Zimbabwe) have successfully negotiated the initial stage of being established, and of providing academic degrees which are recognized by civil and/or ecclesiastical universities. Led by a generation of African Jesuits, the five Formation Houses are training around 300 young Jesuits. The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for these Formation Houses is an attempt to make them more responsive to the new challenges of the continent, the needs of the Church, and the new guidelines of the Society of Jesus. The proposals for action cover the following areas: the need for a prospective plan for staffing the Formation Houses; the strengthening the formation component; the development of guidelines for the future academic development of the Colleges; clarifying the internal governing structures of the Houses; and ensuring their financial sustainability.



AFRICA



◀ From top to bottom: the theologate in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), the philosophate in Kimwenza (Democratic Republic of Congo), the theologate in Nairobi (Kenya)

➔ The scholasticate in Harare (Zimbabwe).

⬆ The scholastics at *Arrupe College* in Harare (Zimbabwe) during a celebration.



Education

In all projects of the Provinces and Regions of the African Assistancy, education is increasingly being referred to as one of their apostolic priorities, and as the sign of manifestation of the Society of Jesus. Jesuit missionaries once considered education as the privileged means to evangelize. Today, for African people, education is their key to access to the "global village", and to their ability to meet the various challenges of the new world.

Jesuit education in Africa is not only a means of instruction, of the acquisition of knowledge, or of evangelization, but it is also a meeting place of cultures and religions, of the promotion of justice, and of collaboration with others, etc. Across Africa, the Society of Jesus works for the education of over 24,000 young people, ranging from primary to high school level. For example, Jesuits operate 31 colleges at the secondary education level: the Society owns 24 of these, and the other 7 are entrusted to it.

In many African countries, the state handles education. But, because of financial difficulties and administrative policies, almost all African governments have repeatedly failed to meet the demands for quality education for all. The concern for quality education and the preferential option for the poor continuously create a tension for our institutions which is difficult to resolve.

Often, the teaching staff in our Colleges are unable to live on the salary they receive. This precarious economic pressure is a serious obstacle to both the importance given to collaboration with others and to the idea of education as a ministry and apostolic mission. Jesuits in Africa must invest more in education at all levels. This is also a challenge for the universal Society, which sees Africa as one of its apostolic preferences. Is not raising Africa out of ignorance, perhaps, one of the primary challenges which should concern the universal Society?



AFRICA



← Training in information technology in Mozambique; *Loyola College* in Abuja (Nigeria).

↑ *St. Ignatius School* in Dodoma (Tanzania).

→ *Saint Michael's* in Antananarivo (Madagascar).



Social Apostolate

The social apostolate in the African Assistancy is undergoing redevelopment. In fact, after about fifty years of activities of some social centres of the Society of Jesus, we are today witnessing a reorientation of the commitment – in practice, there is a change in perspective. When, in 1962, the French Jesuits founded the African Institute for Economic and Social Development (INADES) in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), its mission was to study and to teach the Church's social doctrine and to train future leaders of Africa. For many years, it also offered courses on development and agriculture for the middle class. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Centre for Studies and Social Action (CEPAS) has published the magazine Congo-Afrique for over fifty years. Currently, in the light of the fifty years of independence of many African countries, a number of Jesuit social centres are re-orientating themselves in order to adapt to the present situation and respond to current needs. Therefore, we are witnessing changes in a number of the earlier centres: INADES has become CERAP (Centre for Research and Action for Peace). And the Centre for Studies and Training for Development (CEFOD), Chad, now focuses on the good management of oil resources, as CEPAS does on those of mining.

The Society's most recent social centres, such as the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflexion (JCTR), established in 1988, or Hakimani Centre founded in 2001, favour a different model of social centre. They are smaller and concern themselves with those new themes (peace, democracy, good governance, reconciliation, public debt, domestic economics, etc...) which are very important for the continent. Since 2010, the African Assistancy has launched a "Network of Jesuit Social Centres in Africa" (JASCNETWORK) to face these new challenges, and to make its social ministries more obvious and effective. The Network includes the following seven centres: The Arrupe Social Centre in Madagascar, the CEFOD in Chad, the CEPAS in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the CERAP in Ivory Coast, Hakimani in Kenya, the JCTR in Zambia, and the Silveira House in Zimbabwe. One of the purposes of this network is to promote the synergy of various centres. The Network aims to accompany the redevelopment and reorientation of the social apostolate in the continent, and it proposes to be a force to mobilise and coordinate of the various efforts in the revival of Africa.

Besides these formal social centres, Jesuits in all the Assistancy's Provinces and Regions are also actively working with street children, in prisons, or in centres that teach arts and crafts. The main purpose of these initiatives is one of solidarity with the underprivileged, and to express the preferential option for the poor.



AFRICA



← Two views of the Fonte Boa agricultural project in Mozambique.

↑ The Bishop Munzihirwa Centre for street children in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

→ The Social Center in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.



AJAN: African Jesuit Aids Network

AIDS remains a deadly threat to millions of people, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. There, in 2002, Jesuits have set up the African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN) after identifying AIDS as a shared priority. The AJAN's vision is to "empower individuals, families and communities, and to work towards an HIV- and AIDS-free society, and towards the fullness of life." This is realized by Jesuits and their co-workers as they reach out daily to the people with HIV, to their families, their widows, and their orphans. They defend their dignity and rights of people who are affected by AIDS, people who are often threatened by the stigma and discrimination of the infection, and by the lack of care, treatment and opportunities which they need to live life to the full. The services which the Network provides include pastoral counseling, home-based care, income-generating activities, as well as educational, medical and nutritional support. The prevention of HIV through value-based education and through testing services is crucial, especially among young people. The team at AJAN House in Kangemi, Nairobi, offers a number of support services, which include communications, capacity-building, and help to set up new projects.





AFRICA



◀ Initiatives for developing awareness about AIDS at *Loyola Centre of Hope* in Lomé, Togo (photos by Roland Batassanga).

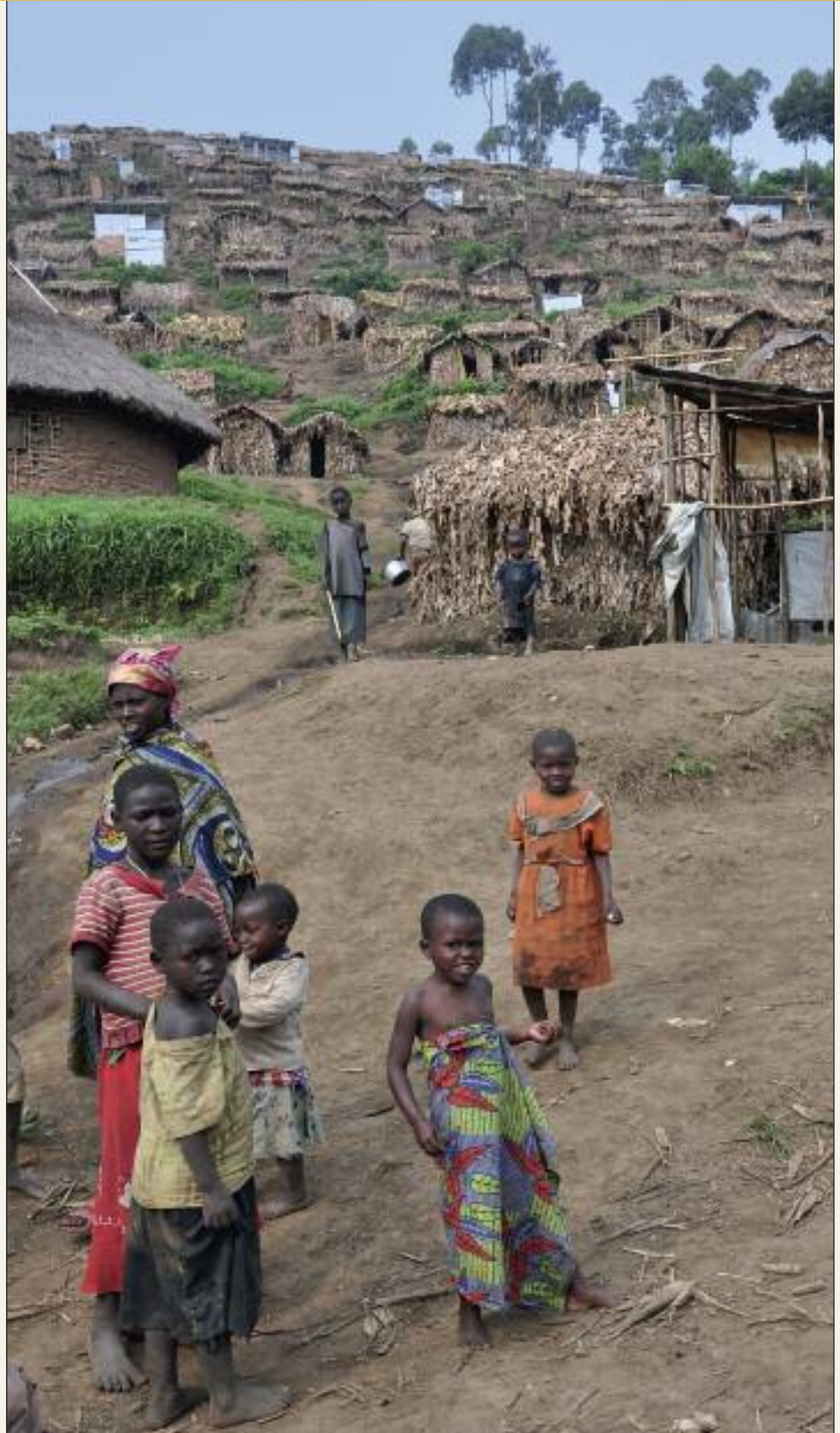
↗ Other initiatives for developing awareness in Burundi and Kenya (photos by Jenny Cafiso).



Jesuit Refugee Service



In Africa, JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) has large projects which help to rebuild the education system: JRS supports teachers in kindergartens, primary, and secondary schools, and conducts programs of adult literacy in Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi, the Central African Republic, and Chad. JRS also carries out a holistic service for urban refugees, assisting them with activities which generate income, and provide health care and education (South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Angola). Moreover, in the North Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo), JRS provides formal and informal education and support to vulnerable people, with a particular emphasis on the issue of protecting women from violence. JRS continues to offer services which build peace through ministry and advocacy – its presence always has a strong communitarian emphasis.



AFRICA



Views of the refugee camps in Africa where the Jesuit Refugee Service is working.

◀ The Mai-Aini camp (Ethiopia) and the Masisi camp (Democratic Republic of Congo).

⬆ The Mweso camp, also in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

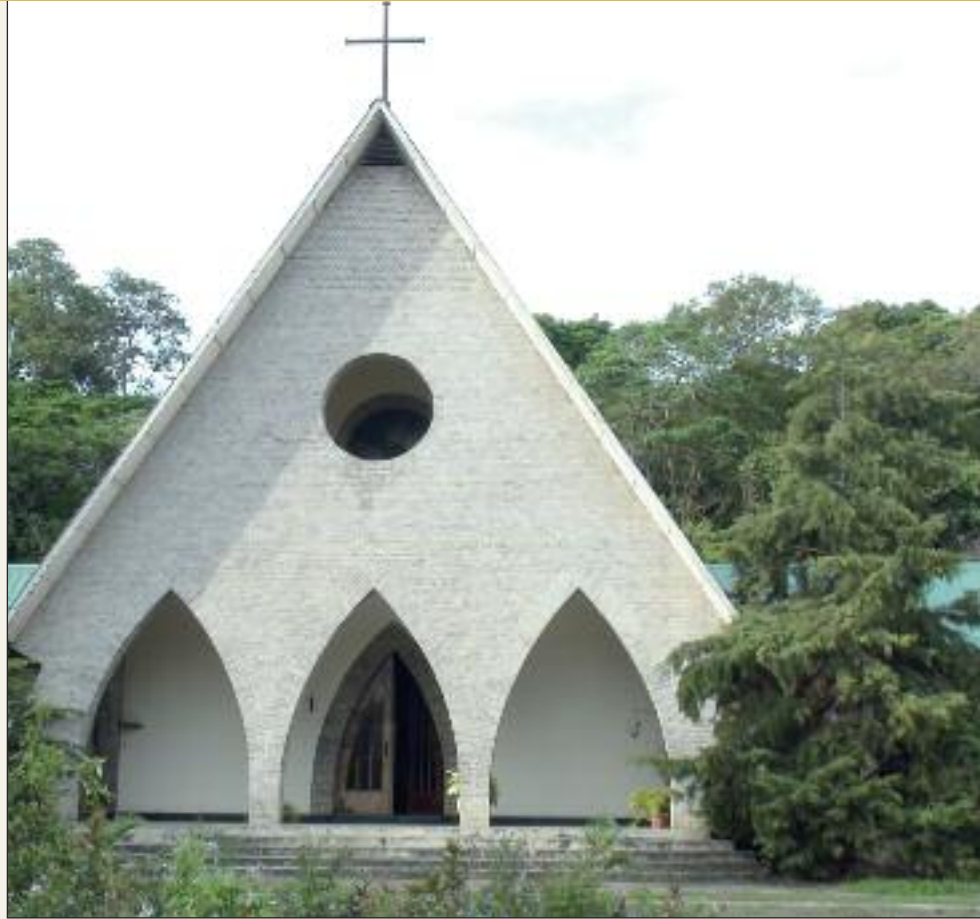
➡ Once more the Mai-Aini camp.



6

Spirituality Centres

The spiritual centres and the retreat houses in Africa are part of the Ignatian tradition of helping souls through the Spiritual Exercises. They are used mainly by the clergy, associations of the faithful, and groups of Christians of all denominations. These centres also organise other professional and formative training sessions for people. The local Churches are grateful, and appreciate the work done by the centres in the places where they exist. However, the impact and influence of these centres on the everyday life of society or on the people in position of leadership are minimal. We must encourage greater collaboration between the spirituality centres and other areas of the apostolate of the Society of Jesus: these would include, for example, community centres and the schools of theology in which future preachers and helpers of souls are trained. The fees which these centres ask from participants is often so high that they are out of reach of middle class people, and so they cannot benefit from the services that we offer. It would seem that many challenges have yet to be addressed if these Jesuit spirituality centres and retreat houses are to provide a general and more widespread service in Africa.



AFRICA



↗ The Manresa Spiritual Centre in Kimwenza (Democratic Republic of Congo).

↖ Fr. Okwuidigbe, director of the spirituality centre in Benin City (Nigeria).

↗ The retreat house of Mwangaza (Kenya).

→ The Ambiatibé Centre (Madagascar).

Parishes

The parish apostolate was closely linked to the missionary activity of evangelisation in building up the local churches in Africa. This is clear when we look at what happened in Chad, Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, etc. Today the parish apostolate continues to embrace all classes of people at all levels of society. On the one hand, parishes have become places of contact and direct service to the poor and the minorities, to intellectuals and cadres, to prisoners and the sick, to refugees and migrants, to young and the elderly. On the other hand, parishes have become places of collaboration and ever greater integration into the local Church. Our parishes are also generally engaged in dialogue at various levels of faith (ecumenical and inter-religious with the traditional African religions), and with the issues of inculturation.

In the past, Jesuit missionaries established mission parishes. The number of diocesan priests is currently increasing, and the Society is gradually handing parishes back to bishops, beginning with those which correspond less to our way proceeding, particularly with regard to their spiritual, social, and missionary dimensions. Today, in their service of Africa, Jesuits still administer 80 parishes, 14 of which belong to the Society, and 66 are entrusted to us by the bishops. Of the 729 Jesuit priests in Africa, 134 are engaged full-time, and 89 part-time in the parish ministry.



AFRICA



Photos of activities in
some parishes in Africa

➤ Lusaka (Zambia).

➤ Outdoor catechism class in
Liberia.

➤ Eucharistic celebration in
Nigeria.

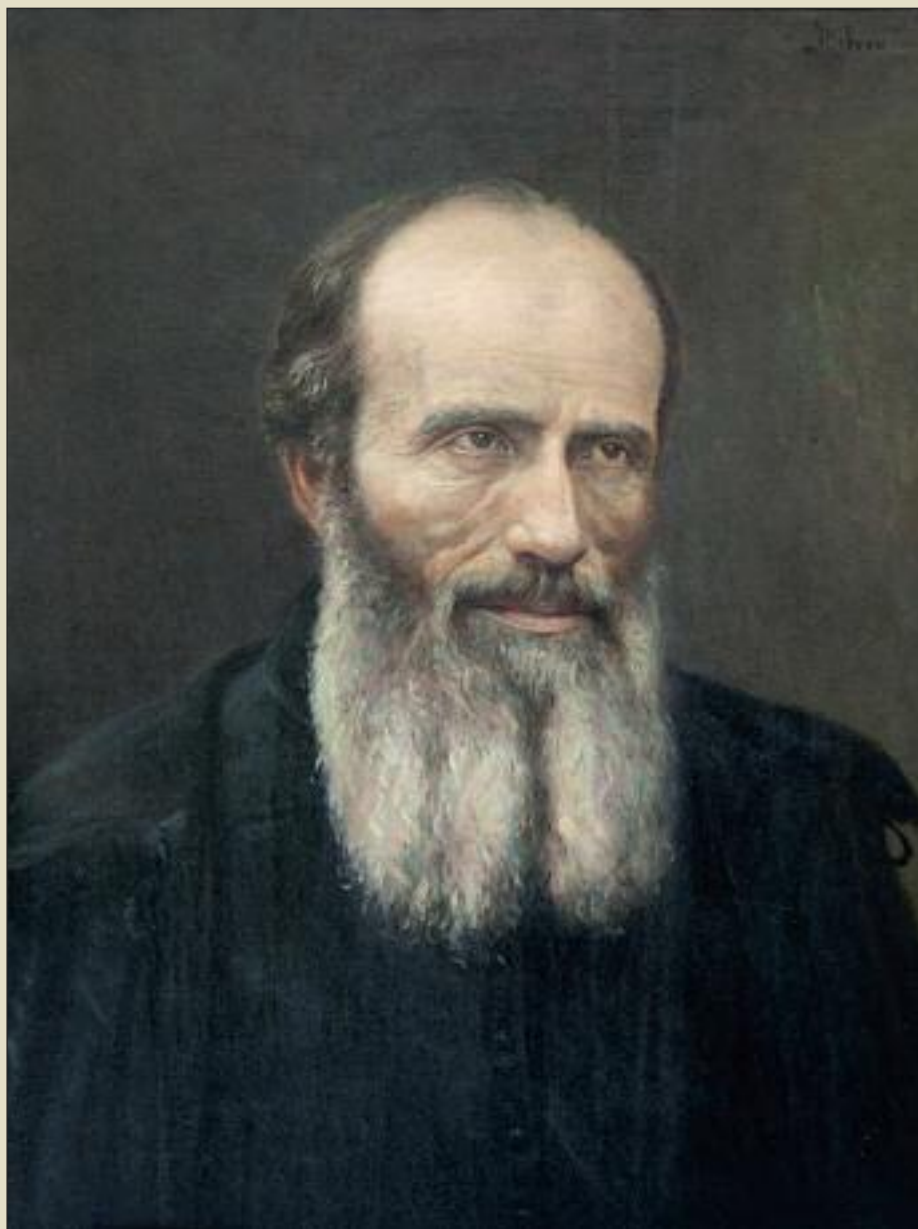
➤ People leaving Sunday
Mass in Mozambique.





Saint Jacques Berthieu

The Good Shepherd of Madagascar



On October 21, 2012 Pope Benedict XVI canonized Blessed Jacques Berthieu, French Jesuit and Missionary in Madagascar, who gave his own life for his sheep, in line with the Gospel's Word.

Did he die for the faith of the Catholic Church or because of the political stance of a colonial power? In our day, with a more acute sensitivity for the cultural, economic and political factors of the history of salvation, this will be one of the first questions asked when the subject arises of the violent death of French Jesuit Jacques Berthieu in the Madagascar of 1896.

It is true that his missionary life was dominated by the politics of his mother country, and it is a fact that his death occurred in the midst of the second war waged by the people of Madagascar against France, which had broken out just two years previously. But it's no less true that Fr. Berthieu sought only the Kingdom of Heaven. In 1873 he wrote, "I don't want to possess any land but a little heart to love people in the divine heart of Jesus." And that's what happened.

In that very year Pere Jacques Berthieu entered the Society of Jesus. Born in Monlogis (Alvernia) in 1838, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1864 and worked as a modest and contented associate pastor for a good nine years before joining the Society with the request to be sent to the missions. Two years later he told one of his fellow scholastics, "I am destined to become a future apostle of the Malgash people." He certainly did not think that he would become their proto-martyr. In fact, the qualities already noted in him as a novice – good, faithful, smiling, serene – would continually develop in the image of Jesus meek and humble of heart, the "good shepherd who gives his own life for his sheep" (John 10.11).

It was not politics that were the

cause of Fr. Berthieu's death but, as Pope Paul VI said at his beatification in 1965, his "passion for souls — his love for people which showed itself the more lofty and boundless, the more those whom he approached in a free and friendly manner were distant, unknown, difficult to reach because of language, customs, shyness, blindness of judgment or interest, and almost closed to the message of the Gospel."

Naturally, the beginnings of his missionary life were not easy for this 37-year-old Jesuit. Climate, language, culture were all totally new things which made him exclaim, "My uselessness and my spiritual misery serve to humiliate me, but not discourage me. I await the hour when I can do something, with the grace of God." On the island of St. Mary, his first work-assignment, Fr. Berthieu gave himself totally to teaching catechism, visiting the poor and the lepers, baptisms, preparation for First Holy Communions and regularizing marriages. At the same time he helped the native people cultivate their fields in an effective way – from which he was able to draw the means to sustain his school for children. But in 1881 a decree from the French government expelling religious forced him to leave his mission. "My poor little



people," he wrote in his diary, "May the good Lord watch over you in his mercy and soon give you other shepherds to save your souls." That sentiment, full of love for his Malagash people and with no lamenting his own situation, could serve as the refrain of the following years in which he would be chased from one missionary station to another. Jacques Berthieu went first to Tamatave and then to Tananarive until his superiors sent him to the far-off mission of Ambohimandroso, near Betsileo.

But the outbreak of the first French-Hova war in 1883 forced him to depart. After a stay in Ambrositra of five years, he went to Andrainarivo in 1891. This post was northeast of the capitol Tananarive

and had eighteen mission-stations to look after, situated in the most remote and inaccessible places. Here, as elsewhere, he tried to make himself 'everything for everyone.' He wrote, "Evenings and mornings I teach catechism; the rest of the time I dedicate to receiving people, or visiting everyone in the vicariate, friends and enemies, to gain them all to our Lord." The faithful flocked to him, just to have contact with a truly religious man. They said of him: "He was a father who never abandoned his children." To Christians he was fond of repeating, "Do not fear those who kill the body, but those who can kill the soul." Or, "Even if you were to be devoured by a crocodile, you would rise again."

In 1894 the second war against France broke out, and once again Fr. Berthieu had to leave his dear Malgash people, returning only after a year but in time to be able to share their worry because of the news of the violence of the rebels directed not only against the French authorities but also against missionaries. The latter, because they bore Christ, could deprive idols and amulets of their power! So the Fetishists planned to eliminate once and for all the bearers of Christian religion.

In March, 1896 the village where Fr. Berthieu lived was evacuated by the French army as indefensible. The Jesuit, then almost 60 years old, remained in the midst of his "good Christians" who were, he wrote, "happy for my presence ... and ready to die with me, if necessary, in order not to be untrue to their conscience." Tired and sick, he

■ On this pages, portrait of the new saint; the sanctuary built in his honor in Ambiatibé, near Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar; the first station of the Way of the Cross close to the sanctuary.



reached Tananarive at Easter time and recovered his strength there, passing long hours on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament. But he could not stay far from his flock and he returned to them on May 21st. On his return to the residence, he confided to a Sister, "I don't know what awaits me, but whatever happens I am ready. I made my retreat as if it were to be my last."

Two weeks later the missionary again received notice of the need to evacuate the place. The refugees now numbered some 2,000. Preceded by French soldiers they began the trip to Ambohimila. As the march went on, little by little the file was strung out: the soldiers had the lead but the sick, old and children fell always further behind their protectors. On horseback Fr. Berthieu was trying to encourage them by his presence, and it was because of that he took the decision – one completely in accord with his good shepherd's heart – which would prove fatal for him. One of the mission's employees, no longer able to walk, cried for help; profoundly moved, the missionary gave him his horse and continued the march on foot. Going ahead that way, he completely lost sight of the soldiers. When some groups of the rebels rushed them, Jacques Berthieu fled with some Christians to the nearby village of Ambohibemasoandro. He spent the night there and celebrated Mass the next morning, June 8th. It would be his last Mass. Some hours later the

rebels invaded the village and captured the compassionate and courageous missionary.

Fr. Berthieu was struck by axes on his shoulders and chest and fell onto his knees. But then he rose and wiped off blood with his handkerchief saying, "Don't kill me, my children, I have good things to say to you." Every time he tried to say something he was struck again with the axe. Some wanted to kill him right away, but the majority preferred to take him to their camp some 15 kilometers distant to present him to their leader. Outside their village they stripped the Jesuit of his cassock, and seeing the crucifix he wore around his neck, one of the officers yanked it off him crying, "Here is your amulet! It's this that serves you to hoodwink our people!" Then they asked him, "Will you continue to pray and make the people pray, yes or no?" Fr. Berthieu replied, "I will certainly continue to pray, right up to my death." And seeing his horse cut to ribbons he went on. "I do not hope that you let me live. If I assented to what you say, I would be the one to kill myself, but if I reject your words I will live."

As if the violence and the sacrilegious words of the rebels weren't enough, the missionary who had dedicated himself for a good twenty years to his Malagash flock was abandoned by all of them. When the troop arrived at Ambohitrya, a village which Fr. Berthieu had converted, it was raining. "My

children," he begged, "would you give me a blanket to cover myself? I'm cold!" But the villagers didn't dare to help him. Passing in front of the church where he had administered the Sacraments countless times he asked to be allowed to enter, but he was refused. So he knelt down at the door and said the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*, holding a rosary in his hand and kissing its cross. His captors made fun of him and his "amulets", and when he said that the crucifix represented the Savior of mankind, they were enraged and hit him with their rifle butts. The march was taken up again, with insults and curses.

Evening was upon them and some of the groups wanted to go home, as they arrived at a large rock called Farovoay. "What should we do with him?" they asked, "it's almost night and the prisoner is exhausted. Who will stand guard over him?" The easiest solution was to kill him. They stripped him of his last clothes and threw him to the ground, while the leader made six men armed with rifles come forward. Fr. Berthieu asked to be able to pray for his killers. "Renounce your evil religion," was the response, "Don't hoodwink the people any more and we will take you with us and make you our chief and our counselor, and we will not kill you." He replied. "I absolutely cannot agree to that, my son; I prefer to die." A first and second shot, each fired by two men, missed; even a fifth shooter did not succeed in killing him. Then the captain went up to him and fired a shot into his neck. It was the *coup de grace*.

For fear of the French soldiers the murderers threw the cadaver into the nearby river Mananara, infested with crocodiles. It vanished forever. In that way the words so often repeated by Jacques Berthieu in his catechesis of his dear Malagash people came true: "Even if you were to be devoured by a crocodile, you would arise."

Marc Lindeijer, S.J.

Translated by
John J. O'Callaghan, S.J.



■ The Mananara River, where the martyr's body was thrown.



Ambozontany Publishers

A mbozontany Publishers is one of many Jesuit works in Madagascar. Over the last sixty years it has published some four hundred books in Malagasy and French, ranging from a 16-page brochure to an 1800-page dictionary. Its publications cover many fields: catechetical and pastoral, liturgical and spiritual, hagiographic and religious, technical and cultural, linguistic and literary, lexicographic and school text.

About 85% of the books are in Malagasy and 15% in French. Malagasy is the native tongue of Madagascar, with its various dialects of course, and French is the principal language used with foreigners. That is why in 1657 the *Catechism of Saint Francis Xavier* was translated and edited in a bilingual version, Malagasy and French, for the initial evangelization of the South of the Grand Island. This was in fact the first document published in Malagasy, using Latin script. For apostolic reasons the Jesuit missionaries who came later worked hard to learn the Malagasy language and culture. Some of them, such as Fathers Webber, Callet, and Malzac, were “giants” who succeeded in publishing some monumental tomes which even now are considered authoritative in Madagascar.

Nevertheless, official instructions issued as soon as the country was colonized by France in 1896 made it clear that the new administration intended to secure the absolute supremacy of French language and culture. It was only on the eve of independence, achieved in 1960, that there was renewed interest in and appreciation of the importance of



The mission of Ambozontany Publishers is to continue the editorial traditions of the Jesuits in Madagascar in service to the mission of Christ and the Church.

teaching Malagasy language and culture. From that time to the present, a number of Jesuit priests, along with their collaborators, have worked unreservedly to promote studies and publish books on Madagascar and in the Malagasy language. This work gave rise eventually to Ambozontany Publishers.

The key person promoting this undertaking was Fr. Giambrone. As the director of a Jesuit educational center, he became convinced that Malagasy children should be educated in their native tongue, but suitable school texts were needed to do that. With this underway and with the help of collaborators, he has, since 1952, edited many

important works, including the first large dictionary totally in Malagasy. Working in the same line was Fr. Navone, pastor of an urban church and theology professor, who had a keen interest in the Malagasy language and culture. With the help of Ambozontany Publishers he produced 27 works on cultural, religious, pastoral, and catechetical topics. Last year the Society of Jesus and many of its friends in Madagascar celebrated the first centenary of the birth of Fr. Rahajarizafy S.J., another pioneer, who was honored for writing ten books which preserve and promote the value of traditional Malagasy cultural riches.

The publication and distribution of all these books in Malagasy, as well as their continuing value, are guaranteed by this “crucial work,” and this is the case likewise for all the manuscripts of Jesuits and their collaborators yet to be published. As a result of these labors, a large public is able to benefit from the fruits of the research done by a very limited sector. This also explains the richness of the “editorial landscape” of Ambozontany Publishers, a true expression of the diversity of the apostolic endeavors in which the Jesuits are engaged in Madagascar.

One of the greatest services of this work was the conception and realization of the collection called *Lovako/My Heritage*, published from 1995 to 2003 as an aid for teaching Malagasy at all school levels. A complete series of this sort is unique in Madagascar and thus contributes implicitly to the formation of the new generation throughout the island. A similar contribution is made by the best-selling *Hasina/Homage*, a manual of religious songs, and by the large French-Malagasy linguistic dictionary *Vitasoa/Benefit*, the fruit of



■ Above, some copies of the journal **Lakroa**. On the preceding page, some books from **Ambozontany Publishers**.

ten years' hard labor, with the participation of seven university professors and the considerable assistance of five other collaborators.

The mission of *Ambozontany Publishers* consists, in a word, in continuing the editorial traditions of the Jesuits in Madagascar, making use of their different resources and their erudition in service of the mission of Christ. Their future-oriented spirit will be sustained by the place that is accorded them in the apostolic project of the Province, and also by the valuable support offered them by their benefactors, whose generosity allows them to obtain the services of good equipment at modest cost. Also, the program contemplates the creation of new series of books on religious, literary, historical, and educational themes.

Giustino Béthaz, S.J.
Guillaume de Saint Pierre
Rakotonandratoniarivo, S.J.
Director of
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The Journal **Lakroa**'i Madagasikara (The Cross of Madagascar)

In 2012 the Journal **Lakroa**'i Madagasikara, known commonly as **Lakroa**, commemorated its 85th anniversary. Its journey alongside the Malagasy people has been a long one, with many ups and downs. **Lakroa** began as a diocesan publication before being turned over to the Society, even while remaining a property of the Malagasy Bishops Conference. Its first issue came out on Wednesday, July 20, 1927, produced by a layman who so admired the French daily *La Croix de Paris* that he literally took it as his model. This event is symbolic of the important place held by the laity in the implantation of Catholicism in Madagascar, beginning with the emblematic figure of Blessed Victoire Rasoamanarivo (1848-94), a very committed lay woman, one of two Malagasy blessed.

Lakroa has been published as a weekly almost without interruption, especially since the 1960s. A quiet revolution has taken place in the course of the years: **Lakroa** began modestly with a 4-page format and then grew to 6, 8, 10, and finally, since 2006, 12 pages. It started out in "monochrome," then moved to two colors, and since 2005 has been published in full color. For some years now an on-line version has been available at www.lakroa.mg. Like every journalistic publication, **Lakroa** has had its share of major ruptures. One of the most noteworthy occurred in the critical year 1975, when a ban was placed on the publication of its "twin sister," *Lumière*, edited entirely in French. That event gave rise to the bilingual character of the journal. Despite these changes, for the most part inevitable, **Lakroa** has moved forward even while attempting to preserve its original spirit and style.

One attractive feature of the journal is without a doubt the special literary genre that has been established in it over the years. Varied as to form but solid as to content, the articles in **Lakroa** are mainly aimed at educating the public and so may put off readers who are not forewarned. Joining information and analysis, **Lakroa** does not fail to instill a good dose of civic consciousness and education in responsibility. There is no important area (social, cultural, religious, political, etc.) that escapes this incisive "treatment," which has gradually become the journal's "trademark." This particular literary genre has been shaped in part by events themselves. The experience of censorship during the socialist period (1975-91) produced satirical articles in which writers caricatured the social reality since they could not freely express their criticisms. The small notes of a provocative nature are simultaneously shocking and comforting. The reports denouncing injustices make readers grind their teeth.

Lakroa adapts to history but avoids compromising its conscience. It pays close attention to events but maintains its lucidity. A constant feature of **Lakroa** is the denunciation of injustices of all forms. One of the most appreciated sections of the journal is the Readers' Mailbox, in which people recount the misfortunes and wrongs they have suffered and tell of their encounters with the many forms of corruption and abuse of power found everywhere in the country. This airing of problems is not always free of difficulties, but the results are encouraging: some *fokonolona* (village communities) may become aware of their rights before a dishonest official, a poor family may have its case brought to the tribunal, or a functionary may be transferred after years of incompetence. The journal has also made it a point of honor to castigate the great structural or political injustices, a practice which has often provoked the wrath of the authoritarian regimes. Some readers will remember the entire pages blanked out by the fierce censorship exercised when the socialist regime was at the height of power.

In brief, **Lakroa** continues through the years without great illusions but always maintaining hope in its role as a privileged witness of contemporary Malagasy history. The changes in the journal's form in recent years have perhaps upset certain mentalities, but they do not mean a real change in direction. Well established on a firm foundation, the house of **Lakroa** innovates without changing. Present-day reality remains its raw material: the journal observes that reality from its unique perspective, highlighting the essential information about the life of today's men and women, in Madagascar and elsewhere. Going out to meet people, it does its best not to be overwhelmed by the pressure of the mass media, all the while resisting the temptation to howl with the wolves.

Although it is sometimes difficult to do so because of financial constraints, **Lakroa** rejects simple solutions and easy answers. It therefore does not paint reality over with gaudy colors. It supports people of good will who are committed to changing society or simply to creating good relations in their immediate vicinity. Imbued with the social ethics of the Church, **Lakroa** believes that those who seek to give meaning to events are not naïve visionaries out of touch with the times; rather they are in touch with the spiritual dimension of persons and events, which helps to understand them better. **Lakroa** seeks after peace, not after conflict between personalities and institutions. For **Lakroa** firm convictions are not incompatible with good information, rigorous thought, or intellectual honesty. **Lakroa** cannot sustain this venture of being different without help from its readers, new ones as well as old, who we hope will always be numerous. **Lakroa** needs them.

Mamy Wilson Randriamanantena, S.J.
Editor in chief of Lakroa
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.



Dassanech: *A new mission*

“This new mission has all the characteristics of a mission ‘ad gentes,’ that is, a mission of first evangelization, since the Dassanech have never before been evangelized by any Christian denomination and have not yet received the Good News of Jesus Christ”.

The Dassanech tribe is one of 16 tribes that inhabit the Omo River Valley in the extreme southwest of Ethiopia. They are a relatively small tribe, with about 20,000 members, living mainly on the delta of the Omo River, whose waters flow into Lake Turkana on the border with Kenya. The Dassanech live on both sides of the border, but the majority are on the Ethiopian side. Anthropologists consider these people to be among the most primitive in the world since they have lived for centuries apart from any civilization. They do so partly by their own choice, but also because they inhabit very remote regions which have little means of communication with the

rest of the country. The Dassanech have their own language and culture, and like other tribes they have their own territory. The members of the tribes in this region do not mix with one another easily.

Although some of the Dassanech living closer to the delta of the Omo cultivate grains, they are basically a pastoral people. Cattle and goats are their main economic capital, but they are also symbols of prestige and social standing. The Dassanech nourish themselves by carefully extracting blood from the veins of the live animals and mixing it with milk. On festal occasions they sacrifice the older animals and eat meat. They do so also during the dry

■ Market day in the village of South Omo.





season, when good pasture is scarce. The hides are used for making houses, beds, water flasks, and women's clothing.

The main concentration of the Dassanech is in a small urban center called Omorati, which is also the official immigration post on the Ethiopian side of the border. The town has about 3,000 inhabitants, and some of its buildings are made of concrete. It is situated on the banks of the Omo River, precisely at the spot where a bridge is being built for a highway which will unite Ethiopia and Kenya. As a result, Omorati will play an important role in the future relations between the two countries. The Dassanech people are now experiencing something which will change the course of their history, for the new highway will run the length of the Omo River Valley and will naturally bring business activity and a flow of tourists to the region. There have also been announcements of large-scale investment in the cultivation of cotton. A popular saying has it that "the development of roads is the road toward development," and there may be some truth in this, but there are questions about this new highway. We know well the ambiguity of the term "development" because of its undesirable consequences, especially

for simple peoples like the Dassanech, who are not prepared for such a drastic change in their way of life.

For this reason, the Dassanech elders, in a display of ancestral wisdom, have asked the Catholic Church to begin a mission in Omorati. Knowing that the Dassanech still practice their traditional African religion, I asked them why they specifically requested the presence of the Catholic Church. Their answer was clear: *"Because we know that the Catholic Church is interested in the education of young people. Now that this development is coming upon us, we don't want our children to be as unprepared for this change as we are."* This response came from people who are illiterate, but intelligent and wise!

We have accepted their invitation and are studying the possibility of building a nursery school in Omorati. The pioneer in the project is Fr. Goesh Abraha, a young Ethiopian diocesan priest. Without waiting for the construction of the nursery, Fr. Goesh has already begun gathering the children under the shade of a tree and is training a local teacher while a more permanent program is developed. For the first time in their history, Dassanech children will not spend the whole of their days looking after their flocks of goats,

searching for firewood, or hauling water from the river. Now they will have the opportunity to develop their minds and their spirits under the direction of a teacher. The word "school" is making its way into the Dassanech dictionary!

For our Apostolic Vicariate of Soddo this is a clear call to mission, but at the same time it is a challenge: the region is 450 kilometers distant from Soddo, means of transport are scarce, and telephone communication is poor. Moreover, the climate is hot and semi-arid, and malaria is widespread. The only water available is the reddish-yellow water of the crocodile-infested river, and the nearest hospital is 100 kilometers away.

Apart from these physical difficulties, we are very conscious that we are coming into contact with a people quite uncontaminated by civilization. We have to use much discernment and tact so that the educational process doesn't destroy their native values but rather integrates them and helps the people to maintain their cultural identity and to resist the temptation to succumb to a superficial consumerism. This is a case where inculturation is a particularly important value.

It is clear that this new mission has all the characteristics of a



■ Above, catechism class outdoors. On the preceding page, Father Goesh Abraha with a group of Dassanech neo-catechumens.

mission “ad gentes,” that is, a mission of first evangelization, since the Dassanech have never before been evangelized by any Christian denomination and have not yet received the Good News of Jesus Christ. The key question that comes to mind is obvious: “How is this people to be evangelized? Where do we begin?”

Fr. Goesh has lived for a year now among the Dassanech, and his experience has provided us valuable information for choosing a starting point. Like all pastoral peoples, the Dassanech are warriors, and they have to be such for two reasons. First, they have to defend their livestock from neighboring tribes since stealing livestock is one of the traditional ways tribes have of increasing their herds and the corresponding prestige. Second, during the dry season they are often obliged to take their livestock to other territories, and this always occasions violent conflicts with neighboring tribes. The robbing of livestock among the tribes originated out of physical necessity, but it has become a cultural feature; it is now a sort of local sport or competition which unfortunately involves dead and wounded combatants in each confrontation.

We believe that as long as there is no peaceful resolution of this

practice and this mentality, now accepted as normal in the culture, it is useless to begin to speak to these peoples of sacraments and liturgy. We need to begin therefore with a pre-catechesis based on the biblical revelation of the dignity of the person and of the respect due to human life. Evangelization based on the principles of justice, peace, and reconciliation is the starting point and the solid basis for religious instruction. To achieve this we will have to offer at the same time alternative technical solutions, such as cultivation of pastures, simple forms of irrigation, and other farming techniques that will contribute to greater economic and social stability. This will benefit not only the Dassanech people but also the neighboring tribes, since it will be necessary to begin this same process with the nearby Hamar tribe if we wish to succeed in the undertaking.

There are other challenges as well. The Dassanech practice polygamy, which has been a frequent obstacle for Christianity in Africa. It is clear that there is no way for a structurally polygamous society to change all of a sudden. What is needed is education for the new generations so that they will become part of a church community in which monogamous matrimony is accepted

and respected. For the near future, then, we cannot expect mass conversions or group baptisms. It will be a slow process, but if the Dassanech achieve peace and justice in their social relations, we believe that they will not be far from the Kingdom of God.

I first arrived in Africa in 1964, when I was still a Jesuit student. Since being ordained, I have worked in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Kenya, and now for 14 years in Ethiopia. In all my work until now I was connected to established Catholic institutions, so that I never came across “pagans to be converted.” Now, after so many years of missionary life, just as I was beginning to think of a peaceful retirement, I find myself facing this new mission as bishop of this Apostolic Vicariate of Soddo, and I welcome this great pastoral challenge of evangelizing for the first time non-Christian peoples.

Fortunately, the mission is a labor of the Church, not the task of any individual. We are therefore hopeful that the church community, both within the Vicariate and without, will help us to respond effectively to this call of the Dassanech people. We feel sure that it will also soon extend to the other 15 tribes in the Omo River Valley region.

+ **Rodrigo Mejía Saldarriaga, S.J.**
*Vicario Apostólico de Soddo -
 Etiopía*
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.



EGYPT

JESUITS *in the Upper-Egypt*

“Soon after their arrival in Cairo (1879), the Fathers began thinking of how to help the Coptic Christians scattered throughout Upper Egypt. After a series of retreats given by missionaries coming from Syria, it was decided to open a mission in Minya. The first to arrive, on 15 October 1887, were Fr. Joseph Autefage and Br. Nicolas Melhem, and they were soon joined by two other companions.” (Henri Jalabert s.j. *La vice-Province du Proche-Orient de la Compagnie de Jésus : Égypte, Syrie, Liban*, Beyrouth, 1960. p.50). This year, 2012, the community of Minya therefore celebrates the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the Jesuits in the City of Minya.

The original mission of the Minya community was teaching catechism and promoting education. Needless to say, there were both highs and lows in the history of the community. The enthusiasm of Fathers like Emmanuel Rolland made the mission flourish and primary schools were opened first in surrounding villages and then very far down in the south. [ibid., p.51] The number of their schools in the countryside of Upper Egypt kept rising: in 1912 they were responsible for 43 schools. However World War I and the post-war years brought severe financial difficulties, causing them to close more than half of their schools. Another sad incident was the poisoning of the Fathers’ drinking water by a servant who disapproved of the transfer of some Egyptian Sisters to Lebanon. The superior, Fr. Jean Habib, and the community cook, an oblate, both died of this poisoning.

The long treks for inspecting their schools and for preaching, eventually slowed down



“Soon after their arrival in Cairo the Fathers began thinking of how to help the Coptic Christians scattered throughout Upper Egypt. ” On 15 October 1887 Fr. Joseph Autefage and Br. Nicolas Melhem arrived in Minia. Therefore this community celebrates the 125th anniversary in Minya.

considerably, due to the rise in the number of educated secular priests and the founding of the “Catholic Association for Schools in Egypt” [by Fr. Henry Ayrout, in 1940] which took charge of most of the Jesuits’ schools of Upper Egypt. The running of the Primary school at the Residence, still directly dependent on the community, would have easily taken up the entire Fathers’ time, but they were also teaching catechism, hearing confessions, giving spiritual and pedagogical help in other schools run by female Religious Congregations near and far and taking part in various

ecumenical meetings. [ibid., p.52]

The mission of the community, therefore, took on a new orientation between the two World Wars, with more attention given to the flourishing City of Minya, and help offered to many female Religious congregations spread out over the Upper Egyptian countryside. A further development came in the 1970’s when Fr. Mounir Khouzam turned his attention to the disquieting number of poorly educated and often unemployed young people, little interested in Church rituals and with no one to turn to for help.

A dormant Association of former pupils of our school was re-animating and reorganized to accept other members, not necessarily former pupils of our school, but who were in contact with the Jesuit community. The new "Jesuits' and Brothers' Association for Development" was to support the ministry and various activities of the Jesuits and work in close cooperation with them. It was like the extended family of the Residence, and its members were very active and intent on living the Gospel in daily life, inspired by the same Ignatian Spirituality lived by the Jesuit Community.

Youth ministry thus becomes an established activity of the community. This led to social awareness as the young people in their turn sought ways to serve others: literacy classes, handicapped programs, supplementary studies for poor students, informal education especially through scouting, ongoing adult formation and much more, all this with the indispensable help of the Association. In a predominantly Muslim country, it is obvious that all our activities, except those specifically Christian, are open to everyone, without any religious or any other distinction.

Over the years, many changes have taken place within the perimeter of the Residence property. Sections of the original private gardens were transformed into recreational grounds for the use of the young people and others from the surrounding area, and even beyond. A number of buildings have also been built in order to accommodate so many activities.

In addition, a number of "branches" outside the main property have been added. Br. Selim Chamaoun started his mission and his Centre in the poor neighborhood of Gad-el-Sid. The Handicapped Sector of the Association hires a flat which is used as a clinic and meeting point for handicapped persons from the villages, and the Social Sector has a small Social Centre in a village not too far from

the city. The Association has also undertaken an ambitious agricultural development project in Komombo in the far South, helping the displaced Nubians and other Egyptian farmers cope with a difficult environmental situation, bringing the name of "the Jesuits" to this distant corner of the country. And recently, the community has acquired a piece of desert land, where we hope to have accommodation for Retreats and other youth groups in formation.

This means that the community has "discovered" and lived through two important recent intuitions: cooperation with lay people who assume real responsibility in many areas of the community's activity, and the informal and non formal extracurricular education at all levels: children, youths and adults.

One may still meet some old person who remembers Fr. Henry Domon, who came to Minya in 1909 and rendered innumerable services to one and all for 48 years, until his death in 1957. But the apostolic needs of the city of Minya, and the administration of their School, which is one of the best in Minya, did not suppress the Fathers' zeal for the spiritual needs of the neglected population of the Egyptian countryside. There have always been Fathers like Jean Faure

and Hans Putman, followed by others up to this day, who selflessly answer calls for help from village parish priests, sisters' religious communities and youths, giving conferences, spiritual direction, retreats, giving catechism, animating the "Young Eucharistic Movements" and the "Christian Life Communities".

To this day, more than 165 Companions have lived in the Minya Jesuit community, of these more than 80 Priests, 35 Brothers, a dozen during their regency and about 40 who were here for their novitiate. About 15 of these are buried at Minya.

The world goes on and society keeps evolving. The technological and electronic revolutions are rapidly changing the life style of the younger generations, even in poor neighborhoods and in the outlying villages. This gives us new challenges, and demands new ways of meeting them in order to proclaim the Gospel effectively. Perhaps the January 2011 Revolution is the occasion for a new reassessment of our options and the threshold of another change of orientation for our priorities at Minya.

Anthony Fenech, S.J.

■ Below, young people during a course; on the preceding page, New Year celebration with primary school children.





CAMEROON

Libermann College: *sixty years at the service of education*

Libermann College was found 60 years ago at the initiative of Pierre Bonneau, the first bishop of Douala. Initially run by the Spiritan Fathers, it has been entrusted to the Society since 1957. Between 1952 and 2012 the College went from being a school with only 19 boys to being a coeducational school with 1852 students. It is presently run by a team of 8 Jesuits.

Libermann College celebrates this year, 2012, sixty years of existence and fifty-five of Jesuit presence. The College was opened in 1952 in Douala, Cameroon, at the initiative of Bishop Pierre Bonneau. This noble mission was entrusted to a team of Spiritans (colleagues of Bishop Bonneau) and Dominicans under the direction of Fr. Gabriel Boulanger, who died this past January 12th in the course of the sixtieth-anniversary celebrations. The college has for sixty years been providing intellectual, spiritual, and human formation for the youth of the country, and not only Africans, but also Westerners and Asians, since the College is a melting pot of nationalities, reflecting the universality of the Society of Jesus itself.

The year 1957 marked a major turn in the history of the College, for that is when the first Jesuits took control of it, at the request of Bishop Bonneau, who wanted to keep the direction of the College to be in the hands of a religious community. The first Jesuits to arrive were Fr. Luc-Antoine Boumard as director, Fr. Jean Geli as Prefect of Studies, Fr. Charles

Jacquet as Spiritual Father, and Frs. Bureau, Fr. DeRosny, and Bro. Venard as teachers. Their mission was to carry on the work begun by the first team.

With regard to the students, the College began progressively, with only the first cycle at the start and the second cycle in 1956. The first class graduated in 1960, 100% of those in Philosophy track and 46% of those in the Mathematics track. At this stage, only boys attended the College. It was not until 1968, with the arrival of Fr. Meinrad Hebga as the first African director, that girls were admitted to the College, though only in the second cycle. Only in 1975, at the instigation of the third director, Fr. Vincent Foutchantse, were girls admitted in the first cycle. Sisters Martine Henric and Antonnetta Van Winden of the neighboring girls' school, Holy Spirit College, helped with the integration of the girls. That same year, the boarding school, which had been opened a few years earlier, was closed for lack of qualified personnel and to avoid the very high costs which boarding involved.

Throughout these years the College has seen its enrolment increase, above all the number of girls. The fact that there are now more girls than boys today creates a new challenge to the College's pedagogy, which must take into account this new situation, especially since the education of girls requires that certain factors be integrated into the curriculum. Among the many girls in the school, certain ones are distinguished in their active commitment to the life of the College. They play leadership roles in the classes, the clubs, and other groups. We thus see a potential for feminine

Years	Girls	Boys	Total
1952/1953	/	19	19
1960/1961	/	317	317
1979/1980	249	523	772
1982/1983	342	471	813
1994/1995	495	473	968
2001/2002	719	689	1408
2004/2005	851	780	1631
2009/2010	979	849	1828
2010/2011	1003	826	1829
2011/2012	978	859	1837

leadership which should be encouraged and given a place within the College.

The College is presently run by team of 8 Jesuits, with a staff of 36 permanent teachers and about 32 temporary teachers, as well as 25 lay workers who collaborate in administration and maintenance. Since the College follows the tradition of Ignatian pedagogy, the educational team seeks to impart an integral formation which opens students up the reality of others and to God while respecting different human and religious traditions. In view of the great diversity of nationalities and religions (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist), the College seeks to transmit the message of Jesus Christ as a human model for each student, even while respecting the same diversity.

The spiritual formation of the students takes place in the course of Human and Religious Culture, which is above all a space where the various religions found in the College can come together and engage in dialogue. Other aids to spiritual formation include a training session in Ignatian pedagogy at the start of the school year for all the new teachers, the weekly celebrations of Eucharist by class, the monthly days of recollection for each class, the catechesis for students wishing to receive the sacraments,

and of course the annual retreats for the students in their final year. Besides this spiritual dimension, the College also tries to awaken in the students sensitivity to the poor; to this end students in their final year visit the central prison of Douala, whereas second-cycle students help out at various orphanages in the city. This human formation is a very valuable part of the education received in the College, and it is complemented by cultural formation, since there is a great interest in national languages in the school. Thus, there are classes in Douala, Bassa, Go'mala, and Ewondo, so that students can become familiar with some of the local languages.

Closely joined to the spiritual formation is the moral formation, which stresses the awakening and development of conscience, the sense of truth and justice, respect for others, social solidarity, the common good, personal and collective responsibility, and initiation into responsible freedom. Our objective is not to turn out imitators but rather to produce thoughtful persons who make deliberate choices and act responsibly. To attain these objectives, we place the accent on method, rigor, and discipline, convinced that "it's not enough just to have a good spirit – the main thing is to apply it well."

In carrying out this vast educational project, the Jesuits receive much assistance from the Association of Parents of Students of Libermann College and from the Alumni/ae Association. The formation of the parents and their involvement in the school are taken seriously, which is why a space called "parents' school" is dedicated to them.

As we move into the future, we do well to draw lessons from the sixty years of Libermann College's existence in order to improve what was undertaken in 1952. In this perspective, a synergy of the whole educational community of Libermann College needs to be put in place in order to reinvigorate the college at all levels. For example, on the human level, the former students of the College should be organized to exchange ideas and support this noble educational work, which should not be the concern only of the Jesuits, their fellow teachers, and the rest of the administrative personnel, as is seen in the formation in certain families of father, son, and grandson. An effort such as this will allow the challenging mission of Libermann College to attain a prosperity worthy of a renowned establishment.

Saturnin Tsayem, S.J.

Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.



■ A class in Libermann College. Academic formation is combined with human, spiritual, and social formation, according to the pedagogical tradition of the Society of Jesus.



MALAWI

Welcome to the Warm Heart of Africa!

This is what the tourist posters say, with inviting pictures of rippling lake shores, fields of sturdy maize stalks and rows of smiling school children. We Jesuits have both felt that warmth and contributed to it since the early 1970s. There certainly are many challenges today in this beautiful country. As our presence increases here with the growth of the Zambia-Malawi Province, we are cooperating with the Church and others to meet these challenges.

Although Malawi was not until 1992 formally incorporated into the then Zambia Province, Jesuits had been engaged in a variety of ministries in the country for several decades. A significant contribution to the local Church was made by Jesuits who were teaching in the major seminaries of Kachebere and St. Peter's for many years. And Jesuits were involved through the Jesuit Refugee Service in the work with Mozambican refugees in the large UNHCR camp along the southern border of the country in the early 1990s.

In 1993 the Society opened a community in Lilongwe, the capital of the country, providing pastoral services through assistance in parishes, ministry to student groups, cooperating with church media institutions and work with family life services. In 2000 we took charge of a very large parish, Kasungu, in rural Malawi, where today a vibrant centre of pastoral, education and development work flourishes.

A British colony for several decades until Independence in 1964, Malawi is a country of very great contrasts. Now with a population of

There are certainly many challenges today in this beautiful country which is Malawi. As our presence as Jesuits increases here with the growth of the Zambia-Malawi Province, we are cooperating with the Church and others to meet these challenges.



nearly 15 million, the people are squeezed into a narrow slip of land bordering a huge inland body of water, Lake Malawi. Rich primarily in agriculture resources, the country faces serious poverty challenges. More than 85% of the people live in the rural area and the country is ranked 153 out of 169 on the human development index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

There is a significant Muslim presence in the country (at least 15%). The majority of Malawians are Christians, with about 55% Protestant and 25% Catholic. The pastoral work of the Catholic Church is centered around the *mphakati* or small Christian community. The *mphakati* meets each week for prayer, scriptural reflection and pastoral and social works. All parishes promote these groups, so that it has been said that the Sunday gathering for Eucharist is the "community of communities."

Our parish in Kasungu is typical of the vitality of the local church, with a central church and over 74 "outstations" attached and served largely by lay leaders. Two Jesuit priests and four lay catechists work with the leaders of the small Christian communities in these outstations. Special services for families touched by HIV and AIDS are carried out by a team of professionals: doctor, nurse, educationalist and nutritionist. Accompanied by volunteers, the team reaches patients in villages at their homes, providing assistance and raising hope in desperate situations.

In the Archdiocese of Lilongwe,

■ On this page, a moment of relaxation and a mathematics class at Dzaleka refugee camp. On the preceding page, the “window of hope,” in expectation of being able to go to school.

one Jesuit priest provides pastoral care for students by serving as chaplain in the five constituent colleges of the University of Lilongwe. Jesuits also assist in some of the parish works of the Archdiocese.

It is in the field of education that the Jesuits are making new contributions to the development of the country. This contribution takes many forms. In the southern city of Blantyre, a Jesuit medical doctor teaches in the Medical College of the University of Malawi and is involved in the work of the major hospital there. In Kasungu, our parish has renovated 13 of the government-sponsored primary schools, to provide improved educational opportunities to youngsters in the rural areas.

But an ambitious priority commitment for education in Malawi has been made recently by the ZAM Province. This is to establish Loyola Jesuit Secondary School, a co-educational boarding school for 500 students. This is considered to be a real “option for the poor,” to give hope to youth in a very poor educational system in a very poor country. Less than 35% of young Malawians have access to secondary education, with less than 30% of girls entering into that phase of education. Less than 44% (boys 48.7%; girls 36.2%) of students completing secondary school actually pass the final exams.

We are locating Loyola Jesuit Secondary School in Kasungu, a poor rural area 120 km outside the capital city of Lilongwe. (In the capital there are many schools available.) Our school will be operated as a “grant aided” school wherein the Government of Malawi will pay the teacher salaries. This means that fees will be lower and the school can attract families of





■ Fr. Peter Henriot, author of the article, with some young Jesuits in formation and some future students of the school.

modest means. Gender equity will be promoted from the start, something so necessary for future development of the country. And both staff and students will be required to provide service to the local community, especially assisting in the primary schools.

Another significant educational effort has been undertaken by the Jesuit Refugee Service in the huge refugee camp at Dzaleka in the centre of the country. Close to 15,000 refugees live in Dzaleka, coming largely from conflict regions of the Great Lakes, of Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo. JRS has established primary schools for over 3,000 children and a secondary school for 500 students, drawing large numbers of the teachers for these schools from refugees who have educational training. Scores of the students attending our JRS schools have consistently ranked very high in the national exams.

Also in the Dzaleka camp is the distance learning centre, "Higher Education at the Margins" (HEM).

This innovative programme provides certificates and diplomas to students using on-line educational materials provided by several universities in the United States of America. Areas of study include liberal studies, medical services, business and entrepreneurship preparation and development training.

Our Jesuit scholastics have served in different places in Malawi over the years for their regency period. This has included teaching in the JRS camps and also assisting in a church-sponsored shelter for homeless children living on the streets in Lilongwe.

Malawi, like all countries, faces serious environmental challenges. To meet some of these challenges, the ZAM Province has set up in Lilongwe the Jesuit Centre for Ecology and Development (JCED). The Jesuit lawyer who directs the JCED has put a priority on facing the ecological problem of deforestation. This is being done through a very practical programme of training

residents of low-income urban areas to make burnable briquettes from local refuse materials instead of relying on charcoal which requires the cutting and burning of the diminishing national forests.

Malawian Jesuits have served in various official capacities, including rector of the Assistancy's English-speaking philosophate (Harare, Zimbabwe) and the first African provincial of the Province. And as our ZAM Province grows each year with local vocations, we have been blessed with an increasing number of Malawians entering the novitiate. Those who come from the "Warm Heart of Africa" surely will be warming the Province for the future, assuring continued service in this beautiful and hope-filled country!

Peter Henriot, S.J.

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AND THE INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE



“Thus as this world changes, so does the context of our mission; and new frontiers beckon that we must be willing to embrace. So we plunge ourselves more deeply into that dialogue with religions that may show us that the Holy Spirit is at work all over the world that God loves.” (GC35, d. 2, 24).



On this and the preceding page, two views of the inter-religious meeting on 27 October 2011 in Assisi, promoted by Pope Benedict XVI.

This section of the Yearbook was done in collaboration with *Popoli*, the international magazine of the Italian Jesuits.

The 34th General Congregation of 1995 requested that Father General “explore the feasibility of setting up a Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue to promote and coordinate Jesuit initiatives in this area.” (Decree 5, n. 18) In response to this invitation, Father Kolvenbach, by his letter dated June 29, 1996, established the Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue, entrusting it to Father Thomas Michel, of the Province of Indonesia. Father Tom had extensive experience especially for dialogue with Islam, and from 1981 to 1994 he was consultant to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican and later became the Secretary for the Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC).

To the new Secretariat Father General assigned the task of making the Society of Jesus aware of the importance of the interreligious apostolate, helping in the formation of young Jesuits to enable them to exercise a more effective role in the Society of Jesus and the Church. Moreover, it also strived to foster communication and cooperation between the Jesuits and non-Jesuits involved in the interreligious sector and worked in promoting the religious dimension in all forms of the apostolate of the Jesuits by coordinating the activities of this sector across the Society.

Father Tom Michel did an outstanding job for nearly thirteen years while he was at the helm of the Secretariat; however, he realized the great variety of challenges in the field of dialogue and the need for different approaches. The 34th General Congregation itself did not ignore these challenges, while saying: “Though inter-religious dialogue is an integral element of Jesuit mission, the forms of its practice depend on the concrete situations of our life and work. Indigenous religions and the great world religions, the new religious movements and the fundamentalist groups invite us to a dialogue that is proper to the perspective and challenge of each.” (Decree 5, n. 9)

The 35th General Congregation not only focused specifically on interreligious dialogue but also reiterated its importance with these words: “During the past years, the fruitful engagement of the Society in the dialogue with people belonging to different cultures and religious

traditions has enriched our service of faith and promotion of justice and confirmed that faith and justice cannot be simply one ministry among others; they are integral to all ministries and to our lives together as individuals, communities, and a worldwide brotherhood.” (Decree 3, n. 4).

In response to this variety of situations, Father General Nicolás, in May 2010, appointed as his personal Advisers for the various different sectors:

1) For the Ecumenical Dialogue:

- With the Oriental Christians: P. Milan Zust (Slovenia), who is already working in the area of the Eastern Churches of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity;

- With Protestants: P. Thomas Rausch (U.S.A.), professor of theology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

2) For the inter-religious dialogue with other religions:

- With Judaism: P. Jean-Pierre Sonnet (Belgium), professor of exegesis of Old Testament, in the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome;

- With Islam: P. Christian Troll (Germany), professor emeritus of Islamic- Christian Relations at the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology Sankt Georgen (Frankfurt);

- With Buddhism: Aloysius Pieris (Sri Lanka), a leading international expert in Buddhism and the director of Tulana, a center for research and Dialogue in Colombo;

- With Hinduism: Noel Sheth (India), professor of Indian philosophy at the Njana Deepa-Vidyapeeth, the Faculty of Theology of the Jesuits in Pune;

- With indigenous religions of the Americas: Xavier Albó (Bolivia), member of CIPCA (Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado) of La Paz;

- With traditional religions of Africa: Kemboly Mpay (The Democratic Republic of Congo), professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Kinshasa (Kimwenza).

Father General writes: “These advisors constitute the *Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue* of the Society, replacing a single Secretary in the Curia. The Secretariat will be a consultative group conversant with the ongoing dialogues among diverse faith communities. Each advisor will remain in his present work and location rather than moving to Rome. All the advisors will gather in Rome once a year to meet together with Father General for discussions on developments in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue and the Society involvement in them.”

We have asked each of these experts in different sectors for contribution to the *Yearbook 2013*, adding to their articles some practical experiences on dialogue in different parts of the world.

Giuseppe Bellucci S.J.

ORIENTAL CHURCHES



*"The very rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches should be known, venerated, preserved and cherished by all. They must recognize that this is of supreme importance for the faithful preservation of the fullness of Christian tradition, and for bringing about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians."
(Vatican Council II: Unitatis Redintegratio, n. 15).*

Indeed, one of the most scandalous divisions in our world today is that between Christians themselves: in fact, our Lord Jesus Christ came to unite the human race, while we who call ourselves his disciples, remain divided among ourselves and continue to divide ourselves. On the other hand, this is just one more proof of how much we need Christ and that his mission of reconciliation remains very real.

The first conflicts between Christians were noted already at the time of Christ and the beginnings of the Church. The “enemy of the human race” as St. Ignatius would say referring to the devil, has tried from the very beginning to oppose the work of Christ, and his divisive action continues today. For that reason, the Lord, who has broken down the wall of separation, prayed to the Father “that all may be one” [see John 17:21] and commissioned his first disciples to work for reconciliation and communion, without which there is no true life. This is also today, or at least ought to be, the first responsibility of pastors, whether bishops or priests.

The foundation of the communion of Christ with his first disciples was his love for them, the confidence in their relations, expressed even to the sacrifice of the cross, when all had abandoned him. It is thanks to this unconditional love that the first disciples had experienced pardon. They came back together after his resurrection and have drawn so many others to

following him. This strong love between Christ and disciples has sustained them in spite of the great diversity of origin and culture.

Indeed, because of this variety there were created, especially in the East, different Churches with their own language, rite, and mode of expressing the same truths of the faith. As long as the foundation was the love of Christ and mutual trust, the differences were not causes of division. With time, however, also under diverse political influences and egotistical interests, the Churches went further away from each other, eventually leading to true divisions. The so-called Eastern Orthodox Churches divided from the others already in the 5th century, after the Council of Chalcedon (451,) while the division with the other Orthodox Churches, of byzantine tradition, began with the “great schism” of 1054. In the course of history there have been diverse efforts on both sides at overcoming these schisms, but without true success. In truth, during the second millennium, some parts of the Oriental Churches united with the Church of Rome (Catholic Churches of the Oriental Rite,) but this created new wounds and further reasons for conflict with those who remained on the other side.

Currently there are 14 autocephalous or independent Orthodox Churches, which are in communion among themselves: the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia, and the Orthodox





Churches of Cyprus, Greece, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Albania. Among the Eastern Orthodox Churches, on the other hand, there are to Coptic Patriarchate of Egypt, the Patriarchate of Ethiopia, the Syriac Patriarchate of Antioch, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Syro-Malankara Orthodox Church, and the Church of Eritrea. A special place is occupied by the Assyrian Church of the East.

As was already said, the zeal for the unity among Christians has always been present, even if in different ways. A very significant step in this sense, was made by the Catholic Church with the Second Vatican Council, especially with the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* and with the creation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (since 1988 The Pontifical Council.) The first president of this Secretariat was Cardinal Augustin Bea, Jesuit; still to this day, there has always been in a collaborator within the structure from the Society of Jesus.

In the last few years significant steps have been taken by various parties, both from the Catholic and from the diverse Orthodox Churches and the Eastern Orthodox. Besides these particular gestures, such as the meetings of the heads of the Churches, especially the meeting of Pope Paul VI with the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in 1964 in Jerusalem, there have been many other

Above, the meeting between Bishop Jurkovič, the Apostolic Nuncio to Moscow, and Patriarch Kirill. On page 47, at the beginning of the article, Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and at his right Fr. Milan Žust, author of the article. On the preceding page, the meeting between Patriarch Kirill and Cardinal Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians.

meetings at diverse levels. For more than thirty years there has also been a theological dialogue among the Orthodox Church as a whole, and for some years also with the Eastern Orthodox Churches and with the Assyrian Church of the East. Several documents have been produced in common which demonstrate a degree of progress.

At the same time, however, one often hears of a chilling of these relationships, of a certain fatigue in the dialogue, and also of new conflicts, originating from one side or the other.

In spite of everything, as far as I succeed in following the current situation, I can say that the dialogue is still going forward, although very slowly. This is understandable, because after so many centuries of divisions it is difficult to arrive at reconciliation in just a short time. Many have been the wounds which some



have received from others; the memory is full of negative experiences. All this has created so many prejudices that are still rooted in the conscience of the faithful and of their pastors. And even if the true theological questions that divide us are few, because of these prejudices and the lack of confidence, each difference seems to be a problem and an obstacle in the way of reciprocal understanding.

An essential aspect in the road towards the ever fuller communion in Christ is, therefore, the search for reciprocal understanding, especially through the searching for different occasions for meeting one another. It is necessary to take the first step towards the other, for only in loving him can one come to truly meet and know him. By offering trust to the other we come to know each other better and so the diverse expressions become ever less an obstacle. On the contrary, which is different becomes ever more a richness for the other, opening new horizons. Without having to give up one's own tradition, one can learn much from the others and enrich one's own tradition with the treasures of the other, through the "interchange of gifts" as John Paul II invites us to do in his encyclical *Ut unum sint*.

Milan Žust, S.J.

Translated by Robert E. Hurd, S.J.

Group photo taken on 26 January 2011 of the Commission for theological dialogue between Catholics and Eastern Orthodox.



JESUITS AND THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

RUSSIA

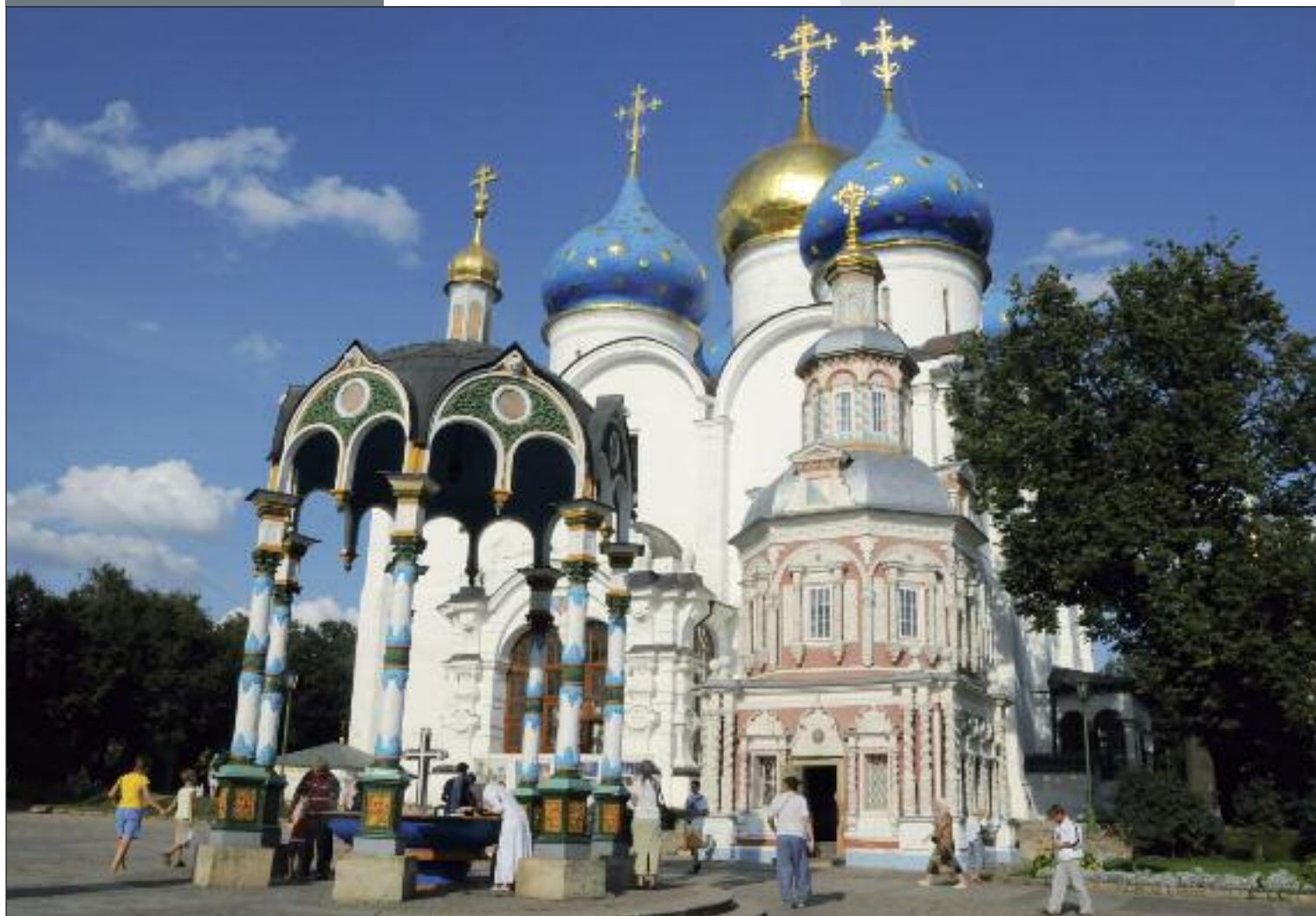
During his visit to the Jesuits of the Russian Region in 2010, Fr General Adolfo Nicolás invited the Jesuits to work constructively towards building better relations with the Orthodox Church.

In an overwhelmingly secularised country with a small Catholic population, ecumenism is challenging and difficult in Russia. Our relation with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) demands a deep knowledge of, respect and love for Orthodox Christianity.

Even during the soviet times Jesuit involvement in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate has been active. In the 1960's and 70's and later in the 90's Jesuit Fr Miguel Arranz, (1930-2008) a well-known byzantine rite liturgist taught at the Leningrad's Spiritual Academy of

the Russian Orthodox Church. If I am not mistaken, he is the only Jesuit and a priest from the Latin Catholic Church to defend a Master's thesis on the theme "How the Ancient Byzantines Prayed to God" at the same seminary in 1975. Through him personal contacts with the Russian Orthodox Church especially in the person of Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad continued uninterruptedly. In one of

The Cathedral of the Assumption in Sergiyev Posad, the "holy city" of the Russian Orthodox.





the interviews Fr Arranz said, 'only through personal contacts and positive opinion one could do some kind of dialogue with the Orthodox Church'.

The restoration (registration) of the Society of Jesus in Russia took place in 1992 with the establishment of the Independent Russian Jesuit Region. In fact, the Society remained incognito or *absentia* officially since its ban in 1820 under the Czar Alexander I.

It would be difficult to write here that Jesuits in Russia had a strategic ecumenical plans or worked towards articulating this anyway, but have been proactive in this sphere whenever an opportunity came up. This dilemma is due to several reasons. There are three generations of Jesuits in Russia. 1. Jesuits who were prepared during the Soviet times either in Rome or in other European countries to work in Russia, in other words, those who studied Byzantine liturgy, Eastern Churches, and their history and language. 2. Jesuits who were born and brought up in the Soviet Union, mainly the German Jesuits from Kazakhstan. 3. Jesuits who were sent or volunteered to go to Russia since

the religious freedom was allowed in the territories, but who had very little knowledge either of orthodoxy or of the language and culture. The first generation of Jesuits unfortunately a small number entered Russia, but many of them quickly returned to home provinces seeing what they imagined or studied was different from the reality in 1990's. Those who enthusiastically arrived into Russia survived and are now either dead or gone back to their mother provinces. The second and third generation of Jesuits are the currently working Jesuits of the Russian Region.

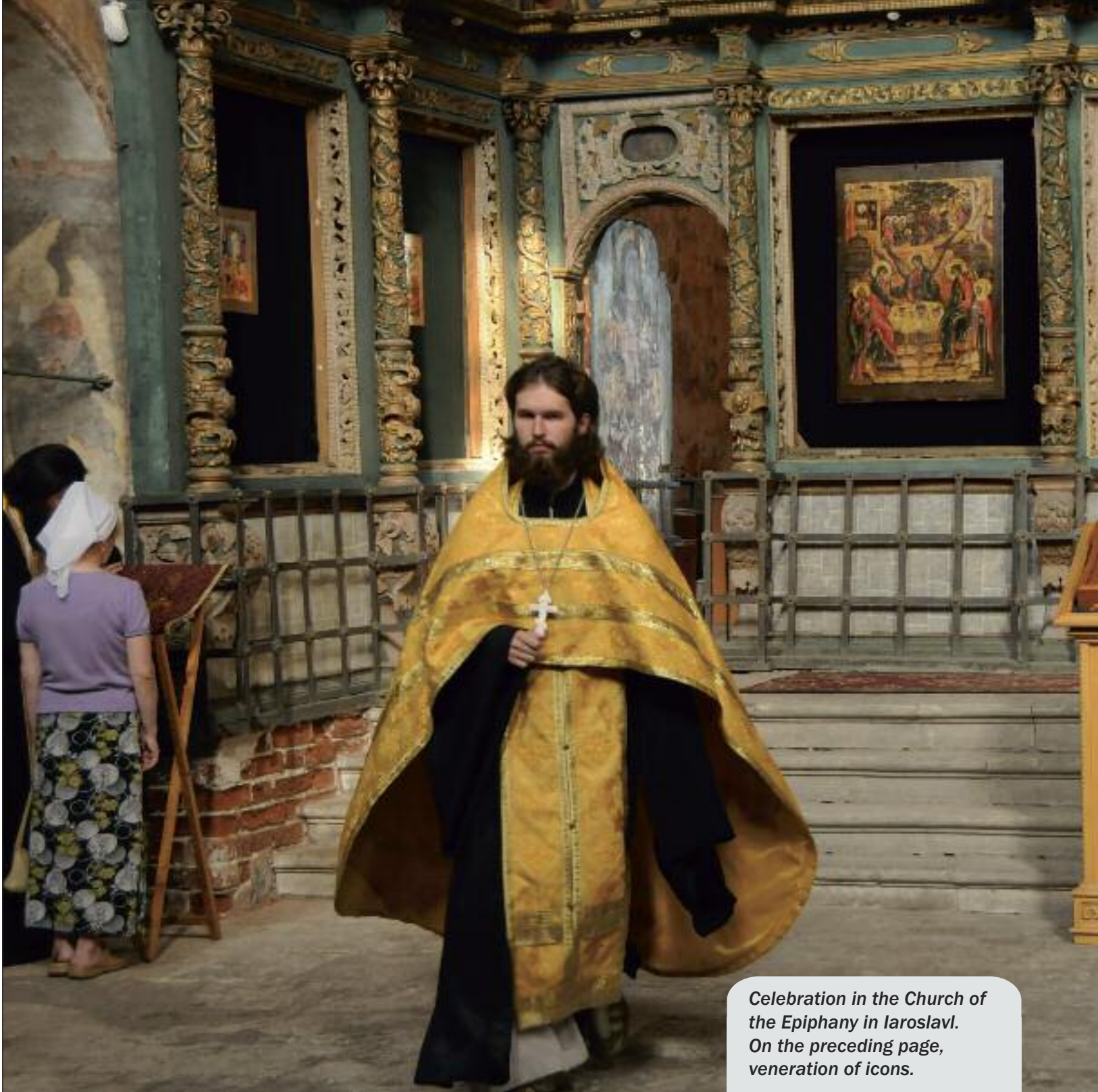
History remembers the past and Jesuits are not exception to this phenomenon. The very presence of Jesuits in Russia runs into complexities. Firstly, the word "Jesuit" in Russian language carries with it a mixed bag because of their history especially with Polish-Russian cultural and political past, secondly Protestantism during the Czars vehemently downplayed the image of Jesuits in spite of the special protection from Czarina Ekaterina II and Czar Paul the I. Thirdly, this downgrading of the image of Jesuits continued in the

Russian literature, especially in the writings of Fyodor Dostoevsky as inquisitor and later in Soviet literature as *Ciornaya Guardia* or Vatican spies. This historical and literary victimization of the word "Jesuit" is difficult to erase from the memory of the Russian mind even 20 years after the fall of communism.

When a Jesuit works in Russia, one has to keep in mind the historical past even though one has personally nothing to do with it say example an Indian Jesuit works in Russia. Instead of using the word 'Jesuit', if one would say 'I am a member of the Society of Jesus'; it serves better in communicating one's identity as a Jesuit among the Russian public.

What is our involvement with the ecumenical dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church? Even though Russian Region has not evolved an ecumenical policy in its working, Jesuits involve themselves positively towards this Universal Catholic Church's endeavour. Our work in Moscow and Novosibirsk engages our concrete personal contacts with the people and hierarchy belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). In Moscow alone, the *St Thomas Institute of Philosophy, Theology and History* is a meeting place for various Christian confessions. The teaching and student body consists of people belonging to various Christian Churches including the ROC. The library of the institute which is free to use, is open to public. It is visited by people belonging to the various Christian Churches.

The Jesuits themselves have personal contacts with *Moscow Spiritual Academy* in Sergey Posad and other few individuals who work in the Russian Orthodox Church. The Catalan Jesuit brother Emilio Benedetti worked tirelessly in procuring 60,000 books from various Jesuit institutions in Europe and giving them to the library of the *Moscow Spiritual Academy* in Sergey Posad. In the last decade, Jesuits have been generous in offering their help to the ROC in preparing the



Celebration in the Church of the Epiphany in Iaroslavl. On the preceding page, veneration of icons.

people for the China Mission. The publication of Fr Miguel Arranz's five volume works into Russian through our Moscow Institute has been widely received and appreciated by the ROC. Of and on, people belonging to the ROC seek spiritual help through the Jesuits. A recent photo exhibition on the stars during Christmas 2011 brought

together people of various confessions.

The experience of most Jesuits is positive in regard to interaction with Orthodox Christians on these different levels. Of course, the overwhelmingly majority of people with whom we interact everyday – on a formal as well as more simple level – consider themselves to be

Russian Orthodox. We notice that at least in the past, Russian Orthodox leaders seem to have felt more comfortable engaging in direct interaction with Roman Catholics outside of Russia. Now, this phenomenon seems to be changing.

Olvin Veigas S.J.

RELATIONS BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND ORTHODOX

As small as Lebanon is, it is a country of baffling complexity. It has no less than twelve Christian churches, including six that are Catholic (Maronite, Greek, Armenian, Syrian, Chaldean, and Latin), which despite their unity vary greatly in their history, their liturgy, and their spirituality. The work of “ecumenism” among the Catholic churches is just as important as that which seeks to unify Catholics and Orthodox! The five Orthodox churches (Greek, Armenian, Syrian, Assyrian, and Copt) can be sub-divided into 1) those which do not recognize the Council of Chalcedon (Syrian, Armenian, and Copt); 2) the Greek Orthodox Church, which recognized the Council but has been separated from the Catholic Church since the schism of 1254; and 3) the Assyrian Church, which did not recognize the Council of Ephesus. Finally, there are the Protestant Churches, united together in a federation, but within which there is even further diversity.

The dogmatic differences concerning the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ have today

The following table gives some idea of complexity of Christian traditions.

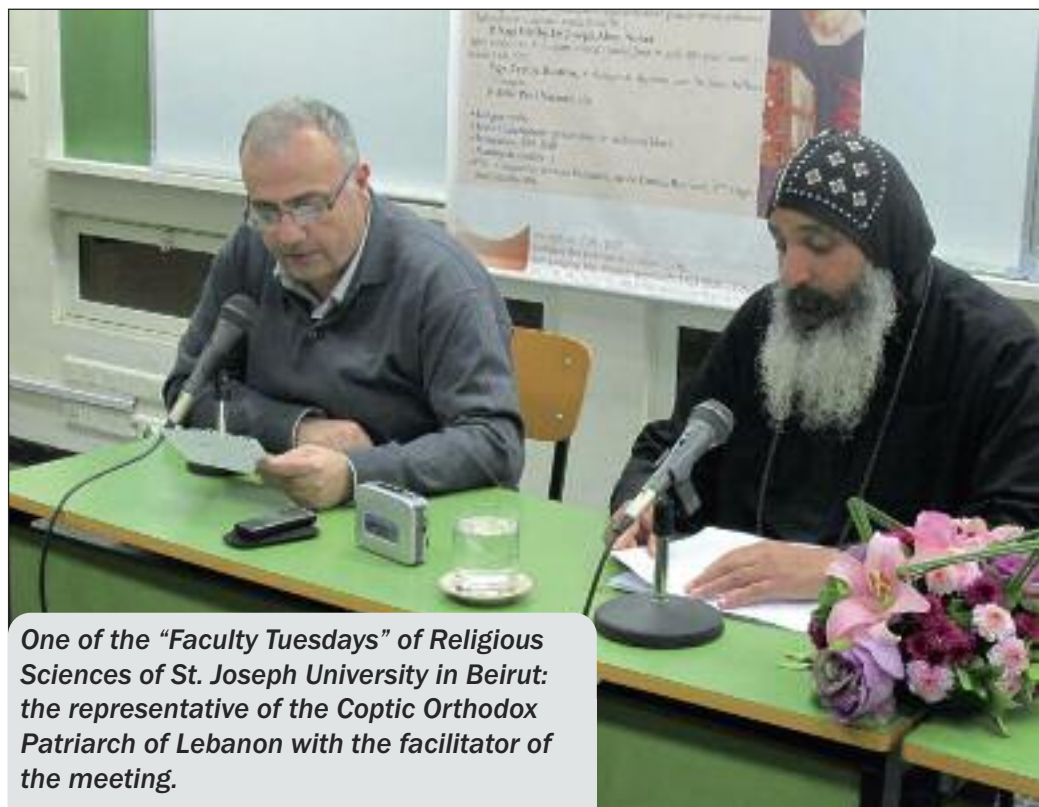
Working to promote unity among the Churches involves improving relations. Lebanon has the advantage of being a small country: everybody knows everybody else. These personal relations are very important and can contribute to breaking down the walls of separation.

Oriental Traditions	
Syrian Eastern	Assiri
	Caldei
Syrian Western	Syrian
	Syrian Catholics
	Maronites
Byzantine	Greek Orthodox
	Greek Catholics
Armenian	Apostolic Armenians
	Armenian Catholics
Coptic	Orthodox Copts
	Catholic Copts
Western Tradition	
Latin Catholics	
Protestants	
■	Protestants.
■	Assyrians, often called “Nestorians” since they have not recognized the Council of Ephesus. They call themselves “Eastern Orthodox Christians”.
■	Catholic churches, in full communion with the Church of Rome, while belonging to different traditions.
■	Churches which have not recognized the Council of Chalcedon. They have long been called “Monophysite”.
■	Churches which recognize the Council of Chalcedon but are separated from the Roman Church since the 11th century.

lost much of their importance since extensive theological work has shown that each of these churches has sought to express one common faith, even while using diverse expressions. That does not mean that unity has thereby been realized, since other differences and conflicts have arisen from the long history of isolation and strained relations. Ecumenism in our day means recognition of the history of each church, with all its strengths and weaknesses.

What can Jesuits in Lebanon do to try to promote unity among all these churches? It goes without saying that this is not a task for just one or two persons. The Faculty of Religious Sciences of Saint Joseph University (run by the Jesuits), seeking to contribute to this effort, has organized a two-year program called "Faculty Tuesdays." The idea is simple: the first Tuesday of each month a conference is given by a spokesperson for one of the churches, most often a bishop. A major cause for the division among the churches is ignorance: Christians often have poor enough knowledge of their own church, and they are completely ignorant about the history and tradition of the others. Unfortunately, these conferences do not have great attendance, but the Faculty plans to publish the proceedings in a book which will allow a larger public to profit from them.

Within the framework of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), which brings together all the churches of the region (Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, the Holy Land), there exists a special organism for students and teachers of theology, called the Association of Theological Institutes of the Middle East (ATIME). It attempts to create friendly bonds among the students and professors of the different training programs in the region. Our Faculty participates actively in these activities, which allow members of different churches to get to know one another directly. Such activities are often more helpful than bookish



One of the "Faculty Tuesdays" of Religious Sciences of St. Joseph University in Beirut: the representative of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Lebanon with the facilitator of the meeting.

studies since they permit us to discover both what we share in common (a lot!) and what divides us.

A course on church diversity, with particular attention to the sociology of minorities, allows students to understand and to analyze the specific behaviors of the hierarchies, institutions, and faithful of these churches. Concern for unity among the churches is one of the motive forces of this course.

The Faculty plays an essential role in the publication of a specialized journal in French, *Proche-Orient Chrétien*, which began in 1950 at Saint Anne's Seminary in Jerusalem, run by the White Fathers. In 1967, after the Six-Day War and the occupation of Jerusalem by the state of Israel, this seminary closed. The journal thus lost the support of a theology faculty, but its publication has continued despite the difficulties. Since the 1980s a second editorial committee has been set up in Beirut, under the auspices of the Faculty of Religious Sciences and in collaboration with the committee in Jerusalem. This arrangement gives greater exposure

to the journal and once again provides it with the support of a university. Nowadays the administration of the journal and a good part of the editorial work are handled by our Faculty and the committee in Beirut. One of the valuable contributions of this journal is the chronicle. Since the founding of the journal, each issue has contained a chronicle of the churches and of the countries of the region, so that readers now have access to 62 successive years of the chronicle. In this way *Proche-Orient Chrétien* makes it possible to follow the history of these churches, their exchanges, their evolution, their difficulties, and their research. The aim is to offer to those who desire it a means for obtaining information and getting to know one another better. It goes without saying that priority is given to articles which cover any type of ecumenical encounter.

It is worth noting that Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, before he became Father General of the Society of Jesus, had formed part of the theological commission for relations between the Catholic

Beirut seen from the Jesuit residence: the two Cathedrals, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic, are hidden by the imposing mosque.



Church and the Orthodox Church. In fact he had belonged to the commission since its founding, after the meeting between Pope Paul VI and the ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Jerusalem, when the two churches lifted their mutual excommunications. Once elected Father General, he had to leave this work, but he never lost interest in the commission.

In the end, working to promote unity among the Churches involves improving relations. Lebanon has the advantage of being a small country: everybody knows everybody else. In the various meetings, seminars, courses, or celebrations, personal relations are woven tightly together. These personal relations are very important for creating networks in which information can be exchanged, mutual understanding and sympathy can develop, and the walls of separation can be broken down.

In this complex of activities, the Jesuits of Lebanon have their place, but obviously we are not alone. All this work of improving knowledge and relations is carried out by many persons belonging to other congregations, other universities, and other churches. We Jesuits are only a few persons among many others who desire to promote good relations among the churches and take our place in the movement toward the unity which is desired by Jesus Christ.

Thom Sicking, S.J.
Translated by
Joseph Owens, S.J.

PROTESTANTS



“Although the ecumenical movement and the desire for peace with the Catholic Church have not yet taken hold everywhere, it is our hope that ecumenical feeling and mutual esteem may gradually increase among all men.”
(Vatican Council II: *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 19).

General Congregation 34 (1995) broadened the Jesuits' understanding of their mission to include the proclamation of the Gospel, dialogue, and the evangelization of culture. It also asked Jesuits to pay special attention to the concerns of women in the Church. In many ways GC 34 could be called the congregation of dialogue. Quoting Pope Paul VI, it said that "Dialogue is a new way of being Church" (Decree 5, no. 135). Given that Jesuits carry out their contemporary mission in a world of ecclesial and religious pluralistic, a narrow focus on Catholicism will no longer suffice. Thus the fathers of the congregation said in their documents that "ecumenism . . . is a new way of being a Christian" (Decree 12, no. 328) and that "To be religious today is to be interreligious" (Decree 5, no. 3).

The Protestant world is enormously diverse, from the confessional churches stemming from the 16th century Reformation, the Lutheran, Reformed / Presbyterian, Anglican / Episcopalian, and Free Church traditions on one side, to churches like the Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Adventists, and Disciples of Christ which emerged later in history, to the more recent evangelical and Pentecostal churches at the other end of the spectrum. Some are sacramental, liturgical churches, gathering regularly for Eucharist and often sharing a common lectionary. Others are more exclusively churches of the Word, stressing preaching, testimony, and exuberant, non ritual worship. Today especially Pentecostal congregations are growing, constituting what has been called a third wave in the history of Christianity after the ancient and Reformation churches. Pentecostals in their different forms—classical, charismatic, and Neo-Pentecostal—some 500 to 600 million Christians, together with over one billion Roman Catholics, constitute close to 75 percent of the total number of Christians in the world. And Pentecostals continue to grow.

Jesuits have been involved in ecumenical relations with Protestants from the earliest days of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (now called the Pontifical

Council for Promoting Christian Unity), founded by Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea in 1960. Most Jesuit theologates offer courses in ecumenism, and some, for example in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States, are located in ecumenical consortia or at universities where students can cross register for courses with faculty and students from different Christian churches. Jesuit scholars have long brought their theological expertise to encounters with Protestants. They have written on ecumenical questions, served as visiting faculty at ecumenical centers like the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, and taken part in national and international ecumenical dialogues, among them the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, the Lutheran-Roman Catholic International Commission, the Dialogue between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Roman Catholic Church, the Roman-Catholic Pentecostal Dialogue, the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue, the Joint Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, and the *Groupe Des Dombes*. Last year one of the giants of Jesuit ecumenical work, Michael Hurley (HIB), died at the age of 87. Father Hurley founded the *Irish School of Ecumenics* in 1970, the only academic institute in Ireland dedicated to the study of ecumenism. He also helped establishing the *Columbanus Community of Reconciliation* in Belfast, an experiment in ecumenical community living that for twenty years brought Catholics and Protestants together.

In some parts of the world progress towards reconciliation remains challenging. In Africa Catholics and those from mainline churches—Anglican and Lutheran—often cooperate, but Pentecostals and those from the African Instituted Churches too often remain suspicious of Catholics. The same is true in Latin America, where relations have improved with those from historic Protestant churches, while most Pentecostals are reluctant to enter into dialogue or work towards more cooperative relationships. In China, where the government sees Catholicism and Protestantism as separate religions, there is little cooperation between them. In Western Europe and the United States differences over sexuality have strained relations, leading even to schisms.

But the positive far outweighs the negative. Some significant signs of progress. More than forty-five years of dialogue have found surprising agreement on previously divisive theological issues, among them Eucharist, ministry, and the doctrine of salvation. One of the most significant signs was the 1998 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, signed between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church. Finding "a consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification," in light of which "remaining differences of language, theological elaboration and emphasis" in the understanding of justification were deemed acceptable, the agreement witnessed to a





The September 2011 meeting in Los Angeles of the committee for Catholic-Evangelical dialogue. On the preceding page, a moment of prayer led by a Catholic priest and a Protestant pastor at the ceremony in which theology diplomas were presented to students at Seattle University, U.S.A. On page 57, prayer led by a woman pastor.

consensus on the basic issue which originally divided the churches in the 16th century. Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry is a model for ecumenical pastoral formation; with seven Roman Catholic and six Protestant fulltime faculty members and numerous adjuncts from different Protestant traditions, the School forms pastors for at least ten different Protestant denominations as well as Roman Catholic lay ministers. At Marquette University in Milwaukee, evangelicals constitute a surprisingly large number among the graduate students. But what is most significant is that in most countries the whole climate has changed. Catholics and Protestants no longer view each other with hostility, but see each other as friends, as brothers and sisters in Christ. Ecumenism always begins with friendship.

If full communion between Catholics and Protestants remains a more distant goal, some churches have already entered into full communion. Lutherans and Anglicans in the United States and Canada, as well as the Anglican churches of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland and the Lutheran churches of Scandinavia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Iceland are in full communion, which means the possibility of common celebrations of the Eucharist and the exchange of ministers. Anglicans and the Moravian Church in the United States have entered

into full communion and Lutherans in the United States are considering doing the same.

Recently in Latin America there have been some significant steps taken towards cooperation between Catholics and Pentecostals. For example, at the Fifth General Meeting of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America (CELAM) at Aparecida in Brazil (2007), Chilean Pentecostal Juan Sepúlveda gave a plenary address on Pentecostalism to the bishops gathered with Pope Benedict and was able to participate in all the discussions throughout the meeting. The Pope challenged Catholic pastors to build bridges with the new groups and denominations through a healthy ecumenical dialogue. Another important sign is a new interest in "spiritual ecumenism." Delegates to the 21st Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists meeting at Bucharest in July 2011 heard reports that Christians from other traditions and even non-Christians were seeking spiritual direction or making the Exercises in Britain, the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, and the United States. So ecumenism remains an important Jesuit work.

Thomas P. Rausch, S.J.

THE IRISH SCHOOL OF ECUMENICS

When visitors come to Dublin, the capital city of Ireland, they almost always pay a visit to *Trinity College*, the 400-year-old University of Dublin that is situated in the heart of the city and enjoys a very high ranking among academic institutions world-wide. As in any large institution – *Trinity* has 17,000 students and a total staff of almost three thousand – there are jewels to be found within it that express its excellence and contribute to its sparkle. One of these is the *Irish School of Ecumenics* (ISE), which has enjoyed an association with the university for many years and, in recent times, has become fully embedded within it while retaining its own unique identity and ethos. The ISE, as its title suggests, is devoted to study and research in the field of ecumenics, which today includes not only inter-church but also inter-religious dialogue. Writing in 2007, Father Michael Hurley, S.J., who had founded the School in 1970, said, at the age of eighty-four: “An ecumenical vision, it now seems to me, must mean being able here and now to see other churches and other religions no longer as opponents but as partners at all levels in the cause of promoting unity and peace everywhere.”

Unity, peace and reconciliation lie at the heart of the work of the ISE and are reflected in the three taught masters’ degree programmes that it offers: Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies, International Peace Studies, and Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation. Over eighty students are pursuing these degrees (or, in some cases, postgraduate diplomas) and an additional forty are engaged in preparation for Ph.D and M. Litt. research degrees. These students, bright, international, male and female, young and more mature,

“An ecumenical vision must mean being able here and now to see other churches and other religions no longer as opponents but as partners at all levels in the cause of promoting unity and peace everywhere.”
(Fr. Michael Hurley).

coming from different Christian or, indeed, varied religious backgrounds, some ministers of religion and some not, constitute one of the most interesting and enthusiastic student-bodies that one is ever likely to meet! And, committed in their various pursuits to the School’s overall vision, they are both academic and firmly rooted in the ground, speculative and practical, ready for study and ready

for action. This reflects the ISE’s commitment, since it was founded, not only to university-level reflection but also to programmes in adult education at community level, particularly in Northern Ireland where divisions between the Protestant and Catholic communities were, for many years, a source of the greatest concern and, still today, warrant sensitive care and up-to-date ecumenical expertise. Today, the ISE has a location also in Belfast, in Northern Ireland, where its masters degree programme in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation is offered.

As you read these words, you are forming an image, I hope, of a School with a vision, vibrant and flourishing, energised by the Lord’s great prayer that we ‘may all be one’ (*John 17:21*). This image is accurate, but do not imagine that the *Irish School of Ecumenics* arrived easily at this point; not at all! From its beginnings in 1970 until the present it has travelled a bumpy road, meeting many obstacles and encountering much opposition. At the start Fr Hurley, although supported by the Irish Jesuit Provincial, Fr Cecil McGarry (and encouraged by Fr General, Pedro Arrupe also), found that his ecumenical vision – and he himself! – were not equally welcomed everywhere. As a young professor of theology at the *Jesuit School of Theology* at Milltown Park in Dublin, he had given his first ever lecture on the movement for Christian Unity in 1960, only doing so because nobody else could be found who had worked up the topic. This lecture was so well responded to that Fr Hurley received multiple invitations to speak about ecumenism during the 1960s, initially in Ireland and then further afield. But his prophetic ideas did not always meet with approval, either within the Catholic



Church or among the other Christian denominations.

Following the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism in 1964 and from his own growing ecumenical involvement, nationally and internationally, during the 1960s, Michael Hurley became convinced that an ecumenical institute was needed – independent of each of the Christian Churches but involving them all – to further education in, and the development of, the impulses towards Christian unity that Providence had awakened in many Christian hearts at that time. And so in 1970, with the support of his Provincial, limited funds from a variety of sources, Catholic and non-Catholic (some of which would not materialise later), the ISE was formally inaugurated on November 9, 1970, under the patronage of – but not as an official institution of – the various Christian Churches in Ireland. Its first Director was Fr Michael Hurley S.J. and the inaugural lecture was delivered by the General Secretary of the *World Council of Churches* (WCC), Reverend Eugene Carson Blake. At the time, inter-church relations were the focus of the new School, but, as the years passed, this was broadened to include inter-religious relations also. Each is now a flourishing dimension of ISE's academic, educational and research work.

The *Irish School of Ecumenics* is a vibrant institution today, committed to the study and promotion of dialogue, peace and reconciliation not only in Ireland but around the world. But it became all this in the face of many obstacles, large enough that they might have caused many to lose hope along the way. I have mentioned some; but chief among the obstacles were financial problems. From its beginnings until its full incorporation into *Trinity College* as an academic institute in 2001 (which enabled it, for the first time, to secure government funding for its academic programmes), its financial circumstances remained highly precarious. If it had not been for the generosity of many donors, some of them on a repeated basis, it



Unity, peace, and reconciliation are the basic principles of the “School of Ecumenism” in Dublin. Above on this page, an interreligious meeting; on the preceding page, a “forum” with the participation of the faithful of different Christian confessions.

would simply have gone out of existence.

People, particular men and women, are the real heart of the ISE. Competent, dedicated people have always been its greatest treasure, from its inspiring and determined founder through its six succeeding directors, drawn from different Christian denominations (with two of them serving twice). The School has been blessed through them all; each has left an indelible mark on it, as a book recounting their stewardship, published in 2008, wonderfully illustrates. There was never a Jesuit director after Fr Hurley, but the Society of Jesus enjoys a special and ongoing relationship with the School.

To conclude: Fr Hurley would not wish that this article should focus too much on him. He always knew that the ISE depended on God and on all the good people God sent its way over the years. He himself resigned as Director after the first ten years. But he always remained committed, interested, supportive. And he was ever-conscious that religion itself, such a good thing, could also be a source of division. Thus he combined realism and the dream of unity in equal measure. On his death, aged 88, a prayer that he had written at the beginning of the

previous year seemed perfect for summing up what made this man's heart beat: “We pray for the New Year which has just begun. We pray that this New Year may bring us much closer to overcoming the divisions of the second millennium. We remember especially the troubled parts of the globe where religion is so obviously part of the problem: above all we remember the Holy Land where Christians continue so tragically to dwindle in number. We pray that in the power of the Spirit the Churches and the religions may everywhere become more part of the solution than part of the problem. We pray that we may look forward with more confidence to an ecumenical second spring. And may there be respect for the earth, peace for its people, love in our lives, delight in the good, forgiveness for the past and from now on a new start.” The motto of the ISE is: *floreat ut pereat* (may it flourish in order to perish). It flourishes now, in the cause of unity, reconciliation and peace, and in the hope that it may one day perish, perish because it is no longer needed.

James Corkery, S.J.

ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY WORKSHOP

The Ecumenical Theology Workshop began in 1973 in Geneva as the result of efforts by Jesuits, committed Catholics, and members and pastors of the Protestant Studies Center. More than 400 years after the Reformation took hold in the “City of Calvin” (1536), interdenominational tensions had ceased, but Protestants and Catholics frequently had only stereotyped ideas about one another.

Until the 1960s Geneva was the Protestant city par excellence and most of its inhabitants were Protestant. With the massive arrival of workers from southern Europe and other regions of Switzerland, the religious balance of the city tilted in favor of the Catholics. The founding of the Ecumenical Theology Workshop was due largely to two church events: the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and the synod of the Swiss dioceses (“Synod ’72”), which invigorated the Catholic Church in our country from 1972 to 1975. During this very creative period, the Jesuits and their partners spent more than a year comparing their theological and pedagogical positions. A wonderful unanimity evolved concerning the shape of the project: the Workshop should not be a substitute for academic theology, nor would it simply present the convergence of both confessions. The name “Ecumenical Theology Workshop” sought to be programmatic.

It was a “Workshop” which provided participants the means for formation and helped them reinterpret their experience and question their religious certitudes. It was “Ecumenical” in that it helped participants to understand better the convictions of other Christians and

The Ecumenical Theology Workshop serves the Christian Communities of Geneva, forming men and women who are engaged in it or soon will be.

to discover the richness of different traditions. And finally, its purpose was to do “Theology” together while seeking to refine our conceptions of God and humanity and to reflect on our involvement in this world. From the start, both Catholic and Protestant church leaders in Geneva encouraged the venture.

Since 1973 more than 1,600 persons have participated in the Workshop, many of whom have since served the Church in various ways (parish councils, teaching catechism, chaplaincies, etc.). More than half of the lay pastoral workers commissioned in Geneva by the bishop have received this formation.

Even today, 40 years after the workshop was launched, the formula continues to be on target, and that may be surprising. In reality, the “world” of 1973 and that of 2013 have little in common (politically, socially, religiously, etc.). Nevertheless the process of dialogue and freedom proposed four decades back continues to interest people. The desire of the 70 present participants to renew their faith (and their doubts!) bears witness to this.

One reason for the “success” of

the Ecumenical Theology Workshop is that we try to understand the Christian faith in the full diversity of its sources, its history, and its present expressions, while resisting the widely felt temptations of either a close-minded response or, inversely, a syncretism that ignores all differences. Another reason for the success of the Workshop is that, in view of the de-institutionalization of belief, both the contents and the pedagogy used in the Workshop encourage each participant to reappropriate his or her life of faith. In this way, the Workshop seeks to be a true “school of freedom” (Benedict XVI, homily of June 3, 2006).

While the majority of the participants are Catholics or Protestants, others participate as well in the program, such as Orthodox Christians, Evangelicals, and even men and women who claim to belong to “no church.” Our ecumenical openness is attractive not only to committed Christians, but also to persons who place themselves “on the threshold” or at some distance from ecclesiastical institutions. The participants thus form a colorful *mélange*, and the diversity of their personal stories makes our Workshop a place in the church where we really desire to hear one another’s voices. An attitude of total acceptance, on the part of both participants and teachers, is therefore required (Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, no. 22)!

Nine Protestant and Catholic theologians are presently teaching in the Workshop. Some of them are sent by their churches, while others are retired pastors or professors. Two Jesuits are teaching in the



Two participants in the course of the ecumenical workshop of Geneva, reading and studying the Bible together.

Workshop, one of whom is also co-director, working in tandem with a Protestant co-director.

Concretely, the course of the Ecumenical Theology Workshop lasts two years, with meetings taking place once a week (Monday 2-4 p.m. or 7-9 p.m). These meetings are organized around three pillars:

a) courses given by a pair of teachers (always one Catholic and one Protestant) who reflect the confessional differences – they are sent two by two like the disciples (cf. Lk 10:1);

b) monthly meetings in small groups of eight persons with a

teacher and an animator, to discuss the contents of the most recent courses;

c) two personal works. During the first year the participants reflect on the “spiritual path” of their lives: What have been the forceful moments of my journey? What hopes sustain me today? The participants then each have the opportunity to share (for 30 minutes) whatever they want of their “faith story” in the group of 8 persons. This exercise allows each one to reformulate the little story which gives meaning to his/her existence. The second year program also requires a personal work: the participants study in depth a theological question that causes them concern and then present the results of their research to the small

group. Three times a year the participants in the afternoon meetings and those in the evening meetings come together for a Saturday afternoon to discuss a theme in depth and to share in a celebration.

In the first-year program the Bible has priority: we (re)read together the great texts of the New Testament and then go through those of the Old. Since the participants sometimes claim to be a little frustrated at not finding major discrepancies between the denominations, the second-year program devotes more time to the differences between Catholics and Protestants (sacraments, ecclesiastical organization, forms of devotion, etc.). The two years end with a course on Christian behavior



Singing is part of the formation and also creates fraternity among the students. Below, the distribution of diplomas at the end of the courses.

(ethics) and a survey of the Church's historical stages.

Participation in the Workshop reached 80-100 persons during the first years (1973-95). The numbers went down during the years 1995-2010, but we currently have about 70 persons involved in the program (September 2011-June 2013). The average age of the participants is about 55, and their occupations are quite diverse (students, workers, housewives, retirees, etc.). Most of the participants want to find a place where they can gain more knowledge and also talk with others about questions of life and faith. Considering the participants' goals, two years are none too much! Moreover, the length of the course and its continuity seem to us necessary to help them acquire a more global vision of the Christian way of life.

At the end of each course, the Workshop gives the participants a list of places, chaplaincies, groups, etc. where they can continue their reflection or make use of what they have learned in ways that will bear

fruit. This continuing involvement is for us evidence that the Workshop is not an end in itself: our institution seeks to serve the Christian communities around Geneva by forming the men and women who are engaged in it or who soon will be.

To end with an image: the Workshop is similar to a "train station." It is first of all a place of passage where no one stays permanently, a place where people spend a relatively short time (two years!). It is also space of arrivals and departures: we help the

participants reach a point where they can envisage a new direction for the future. Just as a train station is full of movement, so also is our lot as teachers and students when we agree to open ourselves, be provoked, and let ourselves be interiorly unsettled. A train station is also a place of dreams, for the departing trains evoke a sense of the "beyond." In this sense, the Workshop is the site of an ecclesiastical experience in which the encounter with others – and with the Totally Other – helps us discern the horizon of an encounter that is "beyond real tensions thanks to a common search that is sincere and disinterested" (Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 June 1975, no. 77). Our dream is the hope of accomplishing the prayer of Jesus, that one day we will be "all united together in God" for his everlasting glory (cf. Jn 17:21).

Like a train station, then, the Workshop seeks to be a place that provides a service to travelers by contributing to transform our wanderings into pilgrimages.

**Alain Decorzant S.J.,
Catholic Co-director
of the Workshop**

Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.



HEBREWS



*"To enter into a sincere and respectful relationship with the Jewish people is one aspect of our efforts to "think with and in the Church."
(CG34, d. 5, 12).*



Dialogue between the Society of Jesus and Judaism is a story at the same time ancient and new. A new story which reached a highpoint in 1995, at the time of the 34th General Congregation. The members of the Congregation together in Rome took note of a significant reality: the world in which Jesuits pursue their mission is a world ever more marked by ecclesial or religious pluralism. The response of the Congregation was to accent the dialogical dimension of our mission. Of ecumenism it was said that it was “a new way of being a Christian” (*Decree 12;*) “to be religious today” another decree adds, “is to be interreligious” (*Decree 5.*) Such openness is not a question of opportunism or a fad: it is our proper rootedness in Catholicism which then brings us to the frontiers. Following the lead of the 34th General Congregation, new initiatives were undertaken, notably in the direction of Judaism, about which I will speak in an instant. But the link between the Society and Judaism is also an old story, because the earliest Society counted numerous Jesuits of Jewish origin in its number.

The year 2012 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Diego Lainez (1512-1565,) the successor of Ignatius of Loyola, and so the second Superior General of the Society. Lainez was of Jewish ancestry and one would hope that this anniversary will be the occasion for a commemoration in this regard. Within the flood of vocations which swelled the ranks of the Society at its birth there were dozens of candidates with Jewish ancestry. Besides Diego Lainez, a companion of Ignatius from their days in Paris, one could mention others by name: Pedro Ribadeneira and Juan Polanco, Manuel de Sa and Diego de Ledesma, the redactors of the *Ratio Studiorum*, as well as Francisco de Toledo, the first Jesuit Cardinal. All these were from Jewish families which had

converted to the Christian faith. Lainez was thus, it would seem, a “New Christian” of the fourth generation. Still, the condition of such families was not an enviable one in the Church at that epoch. For towards the end of the 15th century, there began to spread, beginning in Spain, the doctrine of the “purity of blood” (*limpieza de sangre*) which maintained that a true Christian was an “Old Christian” of “pure” blood. Any mixture of Jewish or Moorish blood, made one a “New Christian.” The genuineness of the faith of the *converso* of Jewish or Moslem origin was widely doubted. This doctrine gradually excluded *conversos* from the Church and the Society.

Ignatius of Loyola adopted, where he was concerned, the reverse attitude: he opened wide the doors of the Society to candidates of Jewish ancestry: “We Jesuits take pleasure in admitting those of Jewish origins” declares Jerome Nadal. The freedom of Ignatius in this matter was astonishing; he declared in public that he would consider it a divine favor to be of Jewish ancestry: “To be the relative of Christ Our Lord and Our Lady the glorious Virgin!”

Nevertheless, and despite a similar openness on the part of the two Generals who succeeded Ignatius, Diego Lainez and Francisco de Borja, the Society did not maintain for long the height of its founders’ viewpoint. Less glorious lobbying led to the decree *De Genere* of the 5th General Congregation in 1593. Contradicting the practice of the first three Generals, this decree proclaimed that having any Jewish (or Moslem) ancestry, no matter how long before, constituted an insurmountable obstacle towards admission to the Society. The decree of 1593 was not abrogated until three hundred years later, in 1946, by the 29th General Congregation.

The maintenance of this discriminatory measure up until the Second World War is paradoxical, since, during that dark period, many Jesuits were distinguished by their efforts in favor of the Jews. One of these heroic figures is Fr. Rupert Mayer, whom John Paul II beatified in 1987. In Munich, during the years 1920-1930 this Jesuit became the leader in the Catholic resistance to Nazism. To the figure of Rupert Meyer, one could add those of the 12 Jesuits who were officially recognized as “Righteous among the Nations” by *Yad Vashem*, the Israeli institution responsible for the memory of the six million Jews killed during the Shoah. One of these twelve is the Belgian Jean-Baptiste Janssens, who was the General of the Society from 1946 to 1964.

Along side Rupert Meyer it would be necessary to evoke another German Jesuit, Cardinal Augustin Bea, who permits us to make a link with the Second Vatican Council. Augustin Bea was the Provincial of the North German Province at the time when Rupert Meyer took his strong stands against Nazism. His own engagement on behalf of dialogue with Judaism is linked with his vocation as a biblicist. It was to him that Pope John XXIII confided the task of preparing the text of the Second Vatican Council concerning relations with Judaism. The



On the preceding page, a young Jew absorbed in the reading of the Torah, foundation of the supreme law of life and of human attitudes toward God and the world.

text elaborated by Cardinal Bea would become the fourth paragraph of the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (1965) which concerns relations of the Church with non-Christian religions. This paragraph marked a decisive turn in the history of relations between Catholicism and Judaism.

Since 2001, a center of Jewish studies has been instituted at the heart of the Gregorian University in Rome. It received—very logically—the name of the pioneering cardinal. At the heart of Catholicity, the *Cardinal Bea Center* plays a symbolic role to say the least. If it permits the Catholic students to be initiated in the living tradition of Israel, it also offers Jewish researchers and teachers the opportunity to teach in Rome, which is extremely significant for them.

The dialogue with Judaism is marked by a certain asymmetry: the Church “needs” the Jewish people to understand itself (as *Nostra Aetate* reminds it: “Sounding the depths of the mystery which is the Church, this sacred Council remembers the spiritual ties which link the people of the New Covenant to the stock of Abraham.”,) while the Jewish people do not need their Christian interlocutors to understand their origins. However, things change, as a document published in 2000 in the *New York Times* proves. This text, entitled *Dabru Emet* (Speak the Truth”), signed by more than 220 rabbis and intellectuals of all the branches of Judaism, merits a citation: it opens in the following manner: “In recent years, there has been a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations. Throughout the nearly two millennia of Jewish exile, Christians have tended to characterize Judaism as a failed religion or, at best, a religion that prepared the way for, and is completed in, Christianity. In

the decades since the Holocaust, however, Christianity has changed dramatically. An increasing number of official Church bodies, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have made public statements of their remorse about Christian mistreatment of Jews and Judaism. These statements have declared, furthermore, that Christian teaching and preaching can and must be reformed so that they acknowledge God’s enduring covenant with the Jewish people and celebrate the contribution of Judaism to world civilization and to Christian faith itself.” Here is a text which marks a turn: some Jews recognize and salute the Christian interlocutor and “understand themselves” historically along the road from one to the other.

Another illustration of the implication from the Jewish perspective is the work *The Sorrowful Verses*” published in 2008 by one of the professors at the Bea Center, Rabbi David Meyer, with two co-authors, the Moslem Soheib Bencheikh and the Jesuit Yves Simoens. The intuition of David Meyer, from the book, is both simple and courageous: there will be no authentic interreligious dialogue, beyond pious wishes, unless each recognizes the “sorrowful verses” of their own tradition in relation to the other or other religions. Meyer goes straight to the “violent” verses of the book of Joshua, but also of the Talmud, when the latter speaks of Christians and Moslems, and the two other authors do the same in their respective foundational texts. Their work is not unlike those of landmine deactivators: they have come back to dismantle the landmines.

The essential point is to not lose the spirit created by the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council. In the last years, the reception of this heritage has known highs and lows—the lows were often caused by initiatives of the Vatican which were insufficiently explained and by overly sensitive reactions on the part of certain Jewish protagonists. But the irreversible



A soldier prays before the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The Society of Jesus has a long tradition of relations with the Jewish world.

dimension of the spirit has been perceptible to all in the words of Benedict XVI at the Great Synagogue of Rome of January 17, 2010. The Pope notably declared: “The event of the Second Vatican Council gave a decisive impulse to open an irreversible road of dialogue, of fraternity, and love, a way whose course has been precise and developed in the course of these forty years by steps and gestures of a significant importance.” Among these important steps and gestures must be remembered the very concrete steps and gestures which marked the visits of John Paul II and Benedict XVI in the Holy Land.

Benedict XVI is particularly attached to this dialogue. It was he who in recent times gave his rhythm to these theological “overtures” which recognize his attention to the uniqueness of the Jewish people. Thus in his interview-book *The Light of the World* (2010) Benedict XVI reexamined the definition of the Jew as an “elder brother,” an expression created by John Paul II during his historic visit to the Great Synagogue of Rome April 13, 1986. Certain people, both from the Jewish side and the Christian side, have pointed out that such an expression carried with it some disobedient connotations, because in the Hebrew Bible the “elder brother” does not always have the good role to play and is often the one who is rejected. Sensible to these remarks, Benedict XVI prefers the expression “fathers in the faith” which, according to him, better expresses the relation between Jews and Christians.

In his two volumes *Jesus of Nazareth* (2007-2011,) Benedict XVI manifests in different ways his theological attention to the question of the Jewish people. He addresses the passages of the New Testament which have fed Christian anti-Judaism throughout the centuries. There is, for example, the use of the word “Jews” in the recitation of the passion, notably in the Gospel of John. In the fourth gospel, the expression “the Jews”, writes the

Pope, refers to “the Temple aristocracy: and “does not designate in any way the people as such”. In a similar manner, regarding the verse Mt 27:25: “And all the people replied ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’” Benedict XVI explains that such a wish could be read as a prophetic benediction: without knowing it, the people calls down upon itself the benediction which is contained in the blood of *this* man, Jesus, the Messiah of God.

But it is particularly in reference to Romans 9-11 that the Pope surprises by the openness of his interpretation. In Romans 11:25-26, Paul announces: “Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved.” On his part, Jesus announces in Mark 13:10: “And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.” (the “nations” are here the pagan nations, distinguished from the Jewish people.) From these two passages, Benedict XVI shows one temporal parameter which ought to be attached to the mission of the Church in regard to the Jews: it should be preceded by an evangelistic mission to the Nations. In other words, in these times of ours, the Jews should walk the way of fidelity in their faith, parallel to that of the Church (even if certain of them ask to enter into the Church;) God and his Messiah will meet both of them at the end of history. The Pope opens here new trails to be pursued in theological dialogue as well as in the dialogue of life.

Having said this, our work often brings us to Israel. How ought we to link our religious dialogue to attention to questions of justice and peace? And how are we to do this as persons of faith, and not merely as political actors? Many of us have contacts with Israeli non-governmental organizations engaged in the defense of civil rights in Israel and in Palestine. We also need to support our Jewish friends engaged in a properly religious reflection in matters of justice and peace. In other words, our support goes to these Jews, notably Israelis, who know better than we do the price of peace and who take such risks on its behalf.

The most important thing is to work as a network, uniting Jesuit companions spread throughout the world. Similar networks exist in the Society now in regard to Islam and other religious traditions. In 2007, an excellent meeting took place at Georgetown (Washington) of the network of Jesuits engaged in dialogue with Judaism and the network of those engaged with Islam. We will have another meeting in the United States this year, on the occasion of a conference which took place at Boston College, July 9-13, 2012. The title was “The Tragic Couple: Encounters between Jews and Jesuits.” The word “tragic” is there for the difficult periods—notably in regard to the Jesuits of Jewish origin. But it also speaks of the happy “fatality” which drives Jews and Jesuits to understand each other.

Jean-Pierre Sonnet, S.J.
Translated by Robert E. Hurd, S.J.

There is a very special and evident (even if not always historically simple) bond which joins the city of Peter and Paul to the place from which the two apostles came: Jerusalem. It is a bond which the last Popes, particularly John XXIII, took very seriously, creating and developing visible, official relationships between the Catholic Church and Jews at a level never reached in previous centuries. But there is also a particular relationship which joins the identity and mission of Jesuits to the Jewish faith, for which the *shul* (school) itself has become synonymous with its place of cult, the synagogue. In fact, soon after the founding of the Society, Jesuits saw education as a sphere of very high priority for developing the Christian faith.

That found happy embodiment, for the first time in 1978 when future Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, then rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, created a place of study there for Christians and Jews, and then in 2001, when the Cardinal Bea Center for Jewish Studies (CCB) was founded at the university. In the following year it received an official mandate from the Holy See to become “the Catholic Church’s most important project for Jewish Studies” (Letter of the Holy See of November 14, 2002).

By its very name, the CCB expresses its solidarity with the farsightedness of Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea, principal designer of

the declaration *Nostra aetate*. With that declaration the Church Universal during the 2nd Vatican Council recognized that the Sinai Covenant retains its validity: the Hebrew people remains the Chosen People. It was a change of consciousness for the Church about the meaning for her of the ongoing presence of Jews. The fact is that in the Jewish-Christian dialogue *Nostra aetate* is always cited as its “birth-certificate,” so to speak. This was underlined recently by the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, Lord Jonathan Sacks, in a conference held at the Gregorian on December 12, 2011 on the theme *Has Europe Lost Its Soul?* Not surprisingly, the conference was organized by the Cardinal Bea Center.

In light of this fundamental affirmation of *Nostra aetate* it is easy to see how vital for the Center’s identity is the commitment, not only

“Since Christians and Jews have such a common spiritual heritage, this sacred Council wishes to encourage and further their mutual understanding and appreciation” This affirmation of the Second Vatican Council is the principle inspiration of the Cardinal Bea Center.

Cardinal Augustin Bea was one of the chief architects of the Church’s new attitude with regard to other Christian confessions and other religions during the years of Vatican II.





Professor Isaiah Gafni in conversation with Fr. Thomas Casey at the end of a conference at the Cardinal Bea Center for Jewish Studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

to further the awareness of Jewishness, but to do that by means of direct collaboration with members of the Jewish community. From its outset, thanks to the vision and support of Adegonde and Hubert Brennkmeijer-Werahn, the Cardinal Bea Center has been able to count on an agreement between the Pontifical Gregorian University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem which enables a regular, reciprocal exchange of professors and students. Further, the CCB has witnessed involvement in the educational sphere of various rabbis coming from the Italian community, from other European countries, and from the United States.

At the beginning of its activity the CCB focused its reflection – as it had to – on our common patrimony: questions regarding the books of the Old (or rather the First) Testament. As the years went on, this interest was expanded to take in so many other expressions of the Jewish faith beginning with rabbinic writings and coming up to contemporary Hebrew thinkers. For certain, from the explicit recognition of the “never revoked validity of the First Covenant” has grown the awareness

that, for Christians as well, the divine will cannot be accomplished without taking into account the interpretation which Hebrew faith has given and continues to give to the Covenant it received.

Today the program of the CCB is moving ever more toward a three-dimensional commitment which it expresses, in chronological terms, as a kind of pilgrimage across past, present and future, or perhaps also in “Augustinian” terms (in homage to Augustin Bea for whom the Center is named) referring to the three faculties constitutive of the human person: memory, understanding and will. This includes, specifically:

The task of Memory, directed toward the past. The CCB sees itself dedicated to cultivating an integral historical memory. This means, with regard to the history of salvation, the full integration of the Old Testament into our theology, and a particular attention to expressions of “religious pathology” as possible consequences of the first huge separation between Christians and Jews which brought with it ignorance, rejection and aggression.

The task of Understanding, directed

toward the present. With a methodology taking inspiration from Jewish pedagogy (in some ways resembling Ignatian pedagogy) which favors direct exchange between teacher and student, the CCB pursues a double objective for its own students or for those coming from other faculties and institutes of the Gregorian University. This double objective holds out a real challenge for study and research: on the one hand, to deepen the knowledge of Judaic Studies (Talmud, Medieval Commentaries, Qabbala, etc.) and on the other hand, to explore the meaning of Jewish-Christian relations with the intention of embracing ever more the potential they contain.

The task of Will, directed toward the future. One of the principal tasks of the Cardinal Bea Center is to create a Place of Encounter in the heart of the Gregorian University between Catholics and Jews, in order to promote an attitude of trust which can bring to birth friendships capable of taking on the task of giving testimony, in a kind of symphony, to the fidelity and love of God in the face of the challenges of various epochs.

The Cardinal Bea Center is certainly not the only entity trying to realize this vision, and in any case it could not do it alone. It can count today on the increasingly interdisciplinary character of the programs of study and the activities of various faculties and institutes of the Gregorian University. It can also count on the vitality and effectiveness of the many other centers of Jewish-Christian dialogue in the world, not a few of which are connected to educational institutions of the Society of Jesus. That this kind of vision has found a special seat in Rome can indeed be a motive for hope.

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ISLAMISM



“The experience of Jesuits who have approached Muslims with preparation, knowledge and respect has often shown that a fruitful dialogue is indeed possible...

To face such situations, Jesuits need great faith, courage and the support of the rest of the Society.” (CG34, d. 5, 13).

Ignatius and his first companions understood the importance of reaching out to the frontiers. Jesuits were sent to the newly discovered world to announce the Lord to peoples and cultures that did not know him yet. This included the concern to go among Muslims. "One year after their formal approval by the Pope [i.e. in 1543] Ignatius of Loyola [...] opened the *Casa dei Catechumeni* in Rome, which was designed to provide instruction for Jews and Muslims who desired to embrace Christianity. In 1554 Ignatius directed that the houses of the Society purchase Islamic books and that Jesuits study the Qur'an in order to be prepared to enter into religious discussions with Muslims.[...] An Arabic-speaking house was set up in Messina, Sicily, and an Arabic studies program introduced into the college there. Another Arabic college was begun at Monreale, also in Sicily, as well as an Arabic studies program for the Jesuit College on Malta. Ignatius laid plans for founding colleges in Beirut and Cyprus. At the invitation of the

Sheikh of Djerba (in modern Tunisia) plans were made to open the first Jesuit college in a Muslim land."

However, Fr. Thomas Michel concludes this fascinating piece of historical information by remarking that "Of the early efforts begun by Ignatius, none stood the test of time." This explains why these efforts of his were almost completely forgotten in subsequent Jesuit history. Early Generals, such as Laynez, Borgia, and Aquaviva, instructed Jesuits to refrain from proselytizing or entering into polemics with Muslims, but rather to direct their attention exclusively toward offering spiritual service to Christians living in those regions. It was important not to provoke disputes with Muslims, which might compromise their pastoral service to the Christian population. Nevertheless, from the time of the first generations, some Jesuits became proficient in Arabic, Turkish and Persian and produced both descriptive and controversial writings on Islam. Whereas the earliest of these writings grew out of involvement and experience, later writings were more polemical in tone.

From the time of the foundation of the *Université Saint Joseph* in Beirut in 1881, Jesuits in the Near East began to undertake more systematically the study of Arabic language and literature and the study of Muslim faith and practice, past and present. The purpose of this effort was to support the Christian Churches that existed in predominately Muslim countries. After the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and inspired by the example of papal encounters with adherents of other religions throughout the world, several General Congregations of the Order have encouraged Jesuits to become involved in intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, Superior General from 1965-1983, nominated a Jesuit in Rome to be his counselor in matters pertaining to interreligious dialogue. In 1995, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach implemented a recommendation of the 34th General Congregation and established a Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue in order to coordinate activities and organize appropriate formation programs for Jesuits world-wide. The Secretariat also published a Bulletin called *Jesuits among Muslims. Jesuits in Dialogue*, which facilitated the exchange of experience and stimulated theological reflection. In 2009, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, replaced the Secretariat with a small group of advisors who meet annually in Rome to share and discuss various perspectives on dialogue.

Over the years, Jesuits working among Muslims (JAM) have met regularly. This network of Jesuits does not only include those Jesuits involved in Islamic Studies but also Jesuit theologians, pastors, social activists and scholastics, whose work brings them into close contact with Muslims. These meetings have taken place in Rome, Cairo, Granada, Tanail in Lebanon, Istanbul and in other places.

Jesuits who live and work among Muslims feel the need to deepen and enrich their reflection by getting additional information and by hearing from the



experience of fellow Jesuits in the field. Whether a Jesuit is a specialist in Islamic Studies or works as a spiritual counselor in a Muslim country, he will feel the need to reflect together with other Jesuits about the beliefs and customs of the Muslim people among whom he is living.

During the past decade or so, Jesuits have become more aware of the enormous variety that makes up the Muslim world. In order to discern our best response to this variety of expressions of Muslim faith, Jesuits working among Muslims must engage in on-going discernment.

For example, how could Jesuits working among Muslims best respond to the aspirations and the questions that Muslims have?

How could Ignatian spirituality lead Jesuits to a deeper understanding of the Islamic approach to life?

How could Jesuits include Muslims in retreats based on Ignatian spirituality?

What could we learn from contemporary Muslim spiritual movements?

Would Ignatian spirituality lead Jesuits to adopt certain approaches to dialogue and cooperation with Muslims in preference to other approaches?

Thirty-seven Jesuits from five continents met last year in Rome to discuss these issues. They chose as the theme of their meeting: *The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and Islam*. Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, the President of the Pontifical Council for interreligious Dialogue, drew much wisdom from his wide experience of interreligious dialogue to encourage us.

Why did we decide to dedicate a three-day meeting to the topic *The Ignatian spiritual exercises and Islam*? First, there is a practical reason. The Jesuit Order was founded as an apostolic group called to go where the needs were more universal and more urgent, and to frontier situations. In this mission, Jesuits are motivated by the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, which are characterized by openness to the working of the Holy Spirit in and around us, including the persons, groups and religions outside the visible confines of the Church.

How can Jesuits living and working among Muslims be motivated and inspired by the basic insights of the Spiritual Exercises and by the example and teachings of Ignatius?

Fr. Patrick Ryan, the chief speaker at this meeting of Jesuits, tried to answer the fascinating question: "If a Muslim were to write a book about Ignatius of Loyola and the spirituality of the Ignatian tradition, what elements in it would he or she find most interesting, most compelling?" Over the years, Fr. Ryan has lived and worked in West Africa, as well as more recently in the United States, so he has had many opportunities to discuss various aspects of the Ignatian tradition with Muslims. Fr. Ryan said that the Muslims he encountered were impressed by the way Ignatius describes the basic human vocation as a call to give greater glory to God (*ad maiorem Dei gloriam*); by the way Ignatius goes on to stress that, since human beings have been created by



Above, during the meeting of Jesuits working with Muslims, which took place at the Gregorian University in Rome in September 2011. On the preceding page, the interior of a mosque.

God, their natural response to God should be that of total obedience to their Creator. The Muslims Fr. Ryan encountered were impressed by Ignatius' concern to help people make the right choices in the course of their lives by the constant practice of spiritual discernment. Lastly, they were impressed by Ignatius' ideal of spiritual struggle by using the weapons of Christ, such as humility, service and non-violent engagement. All these things reminded these Muslims of the Islamic teaching about 'the greater jihad'.

Fr. Ryan also dwelt upon the significance of what has been called the *Praesupponendum* in the preface to the *Spiritual Exercises*: "Any good Christian has to be more ready to justify than to condemn a neighbor's statement. If no justification can be found, one should ask the neighbor in what sense it is to be taken, and if that sense is wrong he or she should be corrected lovingly. Should this not be sufficient, one should seek all suitable means to justify it by understanding it in a good sense." (*Sp. Ex.* 22) Although, as Fr. Ryan suggested, "Ignatius only extended that presupposition to 'any good Christian,' by which he probably meant any good Catholic", [...] "in the wake of the Church's documents on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue since the Second Vatican Council, some of the same generosity of spirit should characterize our approach as Jesuits and Catholics to other Christians and the adherents of other forms of faith." This includes Muslims.

Christian W. Troll, S.J.

IGNATIUS AND THE MUSLIMS

Early in September of the year 1523 a group of Christian pilgrims, recently disembarked at the port of Jaffa in what is now Tel Aviv, arrived on foot within sight of the Ottoman-ruled city of Jerusalem. One of those pilgrims, Iñigo (later Ignatius) López de Loyola, was a limping Basque soldier turned penitent. More than two years earlier, in May 1521, he had suffered a serious leg injury in battle at Pamplona. Recovering from that injury in his ancestral home, this hitherto rather careless Catholic pined to read the late medieval romances that had previously fired his imagination. But the only two books available in the noble household of Loyola at the time proved to be a life of Christ and a collection of the lives of the saints. Reading the two books available changed Ignatius' own life, implanting in him a desire to exchange a career of knightly derring-do for the life of a penitent pilgrim, "going to Jerusalem barefoot."

Two men on mules. After several months of recuperation at Loyola, but before he undertook that pilgrimage, Ignatius left the Basque country on the back of a mule heading south and then east towards Catalonia and the monastery of Montserrat. By chance Ignatius fell into the company of another man on a mule who turned out to be a "Moor," the usual word at that time for a Spanish Muslim. Until the death in 1516 of King Ferdinand, *Mudéjares* ("domesticated" Muslims continuing to live in Spain after the *Reconquista*) had been tolerated in Aragon. But the toleration of Muslims in Aragon was not to last much longer. Forced conversions of Muslims in Aragon began in 1525 under Ferdinand's grandson,

Though it may look strange, there are quite good number of connections with Muslims in the life of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. Here are some hints.

Charles I of Spain (later Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire). Ignatius probably met the "Moor" with whom he entered into discussion as he passed through Aragon on his way to Catalonia in 1522. The "Moor" took a tremendous risk in admitting his religious identity to the unknown Basque knight riding towards Montserrat. The Muslims of the Basque area had been forcibly converted to Christianity in 1516.

Ignatius narrates his encounter with the Moor as a cautionary tale, "so that people can understand how Our Lord used to deal with this soul: a soul that was still blind, though with great desires to serve him as far as its knowledge went." Ignatius entered readily into discussion and eventually debate with this Muslim companion on the road. In the process he discovered that Muslims also revere Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a virgin, although his Muslim interlocutor denied that Mary continued to be a virgin after giving birth to Jesus. Ignatius, newly devout but still a soldier fired with

the ideals of the *Reconquista*, imagined the Moor's theological opinion a slight to the mother of Jesus.

"Despite the many arguments which the pilgrim [Ignatius] gave him, he couldn't dislodge this opinion. At that the Moor went ahead, with such great speed that he lost sight of him as he remained thinking about what had passed with the Moor. And at this there came upon him some impulses creating disturbance in his soul; it seemed to him that he had not done his duty. And these caused him anger also against the Moor; it seemed to him he had done wrong in allowing that a Moor should say such things of Our Lady, and he was obliged to stand up for her honour. And thus there were coming upon him desires to go and find the Moor, and stab him for what he'd said." (All quotations from Ignatius in this text come from Joseph A. Munitz and Philip Endean, *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, London: Penguin Books, 1996, unless otherwise noted).

Confused as to what course of action he should undertake, the immature Ignatius left the election of whether or not to pursue the Moor to his mule at a crossroads. "And if the mule went along the town road, he would look for the Moor and stab him; and if it didn't go towards the town but went along the main road, he'd leave him be." Thinking back thirty years later on this way of making an election, Ignatius noted with some relief that "Our Lord willed that . . . the mule took the main road, and left the one for the town behind."

One cannot understand Ignatius without remembering the fact that he was born around the time of the final conquest of the last fortress of



Procession and historical re-enactment on the feast of St. Ignatius in the parish of La Storta (Rome), in front of the chapel of the vision.

Muslim Andalus, Granada. The *Reconquista*, the retrieval of Spain from Muslim rule over several centuries, had marked the imagination of every Spanish Christian born in that era and for some generations after. In that context, it is interesting to note that Ignatius cites his reaction to the encounter with the Moor in 1522 as an example of how he was “a soul that was still blind, though with great desires to serve him as far as its knowledge went.”

Ignatius at Manresa 1522. Despite the later disavowal of his immature and murderous anti-Muslim sentiments on the road to Montserrat,

Ignatius was definitely a man of post-*Reconquista* Spain. How did his cultural proclivities as a man of his times in Spain manifest themselves? Given the importance of the experiences Ignatius had at Manresa in 1522, we can look to the much later final text of the *Spiritual Exercises* crystallized from that Manresa year to provide us with some clues as to how the imagery of the *Reconquista* remained with this former knight. But it must be noted that the *Reconquista* imagery is much transformed, much spiritualized. The battle envisioned by Ignatius was not a *Reconquista* of Christian lands from Muslim occupiers but an internal battle that took its historical and cultural pattern from an idealized vision of the Crusades.

In the exercise that bridges the first and second week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, usually called “The Call of the King,” Ignatius cites the example

of an earthly Crusader king who seems almost a Holy Roman Emperor, “a human king chosen by the hand of God Our Lord, to whom all Christian leaders and their followers give their homage and obedience.” Very different from most Holy Roman Emperors, the ideal king of Ignatius summons his knights to a field of battle in which he himself takes the same risks as his soldiers.

Ignatius and Jerusalem. Twelve years later, as their studies were coming to a conclusion in Paris, Ignatius and his first companions vowed themselves to do what Ignatius himself had done after his year of spiritual battle in Manresa: go to Jerusalem. (i) What had Ignatius done in Jerusalem the first time in 1523? (ii) What did he and the first companions hope to do there after the vow at Montmartre?

(i) 1523. The first reality that

needs to be taken into account about the pilgrimage to Jerusalem made by Ignatius in 1523 is its brevity. Ignatius and his companion pilgrims only disembarked at Jaffa on August 31 of that year. They spent about three weeks in Jerusalem and departed from the Holy City for Jaffa on September 23, eventually sailing to Cyprus on October 3.

Tensions between the Ottoman Sultanate and European Christian powers, especially the Habsburgs based in Vienna, the Most Serene Republic of Venice and the Papal State, were mounting in the early sixteenth century. Selim the Grim had conquered Egypt in 1517 and arrogated to himself the role of Caliph at that time, a title not previously claimed by any Sultan. In 1520, on Selim's death, his son, Sulayman the Magnificent, began his long and powerful rule (1520-1566). In the years just before the pilgrimage of Ignatius to Jerusalem, Sultan Sulayman himself had led his victorious armies in the conquest of Belgrade (1521) and Rhodes (1522). Ignatius alludes to the latter event when he remarks that "although that year many pilgrims for Jerusalem had come [to Venice], the majority of them had returned to their homelands on account of the new situation that had arisen as a result of the capture of Rhodes." The brevity of the pilgrimage of Ignatius and the tensions hinted at in his account owe much of their force to these external circumstances.

Ignatius had wanted to prolong his stay in Jerusalem and he tried to persuade the Franciscan Guardian of the Holy Places to allow him to stay behind in Jerusalem after the three weeks of pilgrimage: "His firm intention was to remain in Jerusalem, forever visiting those holy places. And, as well as this matter of devotion, he also had the intention of helping souls. For this purpose he was carrying letters of recommendation for the Guardian. He gave him these, and told him of his intention to remain there out of devotion, but not the second part—his wish to be useful to souls—because this he wasn't telling

anybody, while the first he had often made public."

Some have suggested that "helping souls" for Ignatius in 1523 would have been a desire to evangelize the Muslim majority in Jerusalem. This may have been the reason why the Franciscans did not want Ignatius, a solitary ascetic with hard-to-define religious motives, to stay there in 1523. But the autobiographical memoir of Ignatius makes no mention of this specific intention. In any case, the Franciscan Provincial turned down the request of Ignatius based on past bad experiences of such permanent pilgrims: "For many people had had this desire, and then one had been taken prisoner, another had died, and then the [Franciscan] order had been left having to ransom the prisoners."

Even though it was the eve of his departure, Ignatius gave in to "a great desire to go back and visit the Mount of Olives again before he left." The shrine on the Mount of Olives that Ignatius wanted to revisit had been a Byzantine Church of the Ascension that later became a Muslim mosque commemorating what Muslims consider the ascension of Jesus, his escape from death on the Cross (Qur'an 4:157-158). Within that structure, markings on a stone in the floor were said to be the footprints Jesus left behind on his ascension. Ignatius wanted to revisit that shrine before ending his pilgrimage.

As in his account of his desire a year earlier to murder the Moor whose estimate of Mary's virginity he considered inadequate, this story is meant to underline the religious naiveté of Ignatius in 1523 in his post-conversion but pre-education mode. When the Franciscans discovered that their pilgrim guest had gone missing on the eve of his scheduled departure, they sent one of their servants to retrieve him and bring him back to the Custody. This duty the servant, "a Christian of the cincture" (Jacobite), accomplished with some severity. Ignatius, always sensitive to God's grace in every circumstance, no matter how

embarrassing or degrading, felt, as he was being marched back under arrest to the Custody, that "he was seeing Christ always over him."

(ii) 1534-1537. Six years after Ignatius came to study in Paris, where he had gathered six companions, he and they vowed at Montmartre on August 15, 1534, to join together as apostolic companions or at least as fellow pilgrims to Jerusalem. No text of the vows of Montmartre survives; Ignatius emphasized one or possibly two elements of what they vowed that day. "They were all resolved on what they were to do, namely, to go to Venice and Jerusalem and to spend their lives in what was beneficial to souls." They gave one year to pursuing the possibility of journeying to Jerusalem, but they seemed to realize already in Paris that their plan might not come to fruition, given the earlier experience of Ignatius in Jerusalem and the tensions that continued between the Ottoman Sultanate and the Christian powers of Europe. Thus, even in Paris, Ignatius and his companions had an alternate plan: "If permission was not given to them to remain in Jerusalem, they were to return to Rome and present themselves to Christ's vicar, so that he would employ them wherever he judged to be more for the glory of God and the good of souls."

It is often said that Ignatius and his first companions intended to evangelize the Muslims of Jerusalem at that time, had they been given the opportunity to go there in 1537. Juan de Polanco, the amanuensis of Ignatius from 1547 until Ignatius died in 1556, claims that Ignatius and his first companions planned "to go to Jerusalem, and then preach, if opportunity allowed, to the infidels or die for the faith of Jesus Christ among them." (*Polanco as quoted by Dalmases*). Were the 'infidels' of that statement by Polanco necessarily Muslims? Ignatius used the term 'infidels' for all non-Catholic Christians and usually called Muslims 'Turks.' Thus, in the 1540 Formula of the Institute, the fully professed in the

Society are bound by a special vow “so that whatever the present Roman Pontiffs and others to come will wish to command us with regard to the progress of souls and the propagation of the faith, or wherever he may be pleased to send us to any regions whatsoever, we will obey at once, without subterfuge or excuse, as far as in us lies. We pledge to do this whether he sends us among the Turks or to other infidels, even to the land they call India, or to any heretics or schismatics, or to any of the faithful.” (*Formula of the Institute*, 1540, § 3).

The apostolic concern of Ignatius for Christians in the Ottoman Sultanate not in union with Rome as well as for other Christians far from Europe was an abiding theme in his life.

The personal interest of Ignatius in Ethiopia focused on the possibility of bringing that Monophysite Christian Empire into union with Rome and succoring the Christians there in their struggle with Muslim competitors for domination of the Horn of Africa. Ignatius in the 1550s wanted to go on that mission himself, but his responsibilities as Superior General, as well as his age and declining health, obviated such a move. He advised the Jesuits he sent to Ethiopia to approach the anomalous elements of Ethiopian Christianity gently, but when they arrived there (shortly after the death of Ignatius) they did not always succeed in following his advice.

In conclusion, I do not think that Ignatius envisioned the possibility of a mission to evangelize Muslims in either Jerusalem or any other part of the Near East or Africa. In Part IX of the *Constitutions*, Ignatius writes that the Superior General “may send [Jesuits], for example, among the faithful in the Indies and among unbelievers where there are Christian inhabitants. In some cases or urgent necessities he may even send them where there are no Christians; but he should do this only after much previous deliberation.” (*Constitutions*, no.



Manresa: the old bridge over the Cardoner River, and in the background the Jesuit Spirituality Center, which surrounds the grotto where St. Ignatius withdrew to do prayer and penance.

750). Several of the Superior Generals who succeeded Ignatius - Laynez (1556-1565), Borgia (1565-1572) and Acquaviva (1581-1615) - kept to the same tradition, urging Jesuits not to provoke disputes with Muslims and to concentrate instead on serving Christians in those domains. Francis Xavier, starting off his missionary work among ill-instructed Christians in India, eventually expanded his apostolate to places where there were no indigenous Christians at all, especially in Island Asia and Japan. This apostolate of Xavier may have persuaded Ignatius and his successors as Superior General to send Jesuits into previously unevangelized territories, but this was not the original intent of Ignatius. Ignatius was much more concerned about people like the Jacobite Christian

(“Christian of the cincture”), a servant of the Franciscan Custody, who had corralled Ignatius and brought him back to the Franciscan custody on his last full day in Jerusalem. That concern of Ignatius has continued in the work of Jesuits to the present day in Muslim-dominated parts of the world. “Christ’s vicar,” as Ignatius put it, has more than once decided to “employ [Jesuits] wherever he judged to be more for the glory of God and the good of souls” in those parts of the world, whether “among the Turks or any other infidels.”

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ISLAMIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION

The Catholic Church in India is keen to establish and strengthen relations with Muslims in the light of the teachings of Vatican II. This desire is reflected in the different seminars and workshops that the Catholic Church organized in the years that followed the Vatican II. The first one was the *All India Seminar* (Bangalore, 1969). This seminar insisted that "that scholars be set aside to study the Muslim religion, social life and culture in India, hoping by this means to come to a better understanding of this great people." This desire had an echo in the *All India Consultation on Evangelisation* (Patna, 1973). Here a whole workshop was devoted to evangelisation and dialogue with Muslims. The members of the workshop submitted a Report that once again insisted on the importance of the dialogue with Muslims. However nothing was realized on the ground. It was in the general context of the felt need for the Church to reach out to Muslims that a Consultation on Dialogue with Muslims was held in Agra from 28th till 30th March, 1979. The Islamic Studies Association (ISA) was born.

Islamic Studies Association was born in 1979 to work towards harmonious relations among Muslims, Christians, Hindus and other religious and social communities in India.

ISA aims to work for communal harmony and national integration in India. The Constitution of ISA notes: "In the name of God and His ever greater service, to promote national integration of all Indian cultural, social and religious groups and support Government programs for this purpose", and to "work towards harmonious relations among Muslims, Christians, Hindus and other religious and social communities in India". This broad desire is focused on the first specific step: "To promote study, research and teaching regarding the history, religion, culture, socio-economic conditions and other aspects of Islam".

Teaching Christian-Muslim Relations and preparing men and women to reach out to Muslims ISA promotes dialogue between Muslims and Christians and prepare Christians for the mission of reaching out to Muslims through the various activities of the members of ISA.

Paul Jackson is one of the founder member of ISA along with Christian W. Troll and many others and known to many of the members of JAM (*Jesuits Among Muslims*)

group. His Provincial's words aptly summarize his mission. It is worth quoting it here. "Fr Paul Jackson is an inspiration for me as I see him cycling towards Khudabaksh Library in Patna every day without fail. The work in Khudabaksh Library is not very enjoyable for an ordinary person. But Paul considers it his mission and with that missionary zeal he does the translation of Sharafuddin Maneri's manuscripts into English. It was the first time someone brought out the translations of the works of Sharafuddin Maneri into English. Today the treasures of such a great mystic is available to any ordinary reader."

The credit goes to Fr Paul Jackson for introducing younger Jesuits into the process of inter faith dialogue. The lived-in experience among Muslims is a much appreciated program for the Jesuit theology students. It helps us to open our eyes to a great reality of the lives of the ordinary Muslims of the state. I myself benefited from such experience". The present writer shaped his vocation among Muslims under the benign guidance of Paul Jackson.

Desiderio Pinto is the professor of Islamic Studies at, the Jesuit school of theology in Delhi. He teaches 'Introduction to Islam, Christian-Muslim Dialogue, and Sufism' at *Vidyajyoti* and many other centers of theology in India. His work on Pir-Muridi relationship was published. He is also the Librarian of *Vidyajyoti* Library that houses a huge collection of books on Islam and Christian Muslim relations. Thanks to Christian W Troll for building up this particular section of library while he was in Delhi.

Pushpa Anbu, a Divine Word





Above and on preceding page, two views of meetings promoted by the Association of Islamic Studies of India.

missionary is the secretary of ISA and holds a doctorate from Jamia Millia Islamia (a central university in New Delhi) on Sufi Studies. He teaches Islam and Christian Muslim relations in many seminaries in the Central and Eastern India.

ISA organizes a bi-annual convention during the annual general body meeting. This two-day convention brings together Christians and Muslims. On the first day a number of Muslims from different walks of life share with the Christian hearers how their faith challenges them to be live an authentic Muslim life. These personal stories of Muslim brothers and sisters have a telling impact on the hearers. The Christian participants felt that a great joy to come to know Muslims better.

Muslim speakers too interact with the Christian participants and listen to their stories of life as Christians. On the second day, the Christian participants visit Muslim service institutions in the city where the convention is held. There is mutual openness in such interaction that give rise to that dialogue of life which makes it possible for both Muslims and Christians of the same country to support each other in serving the common good

ISA is active also in the field of publications. *The Muslims of India: Beliefs and Practices* was edited by Paul Jackson SJ and published by the Theological Publications in India for ISA. *Salaam* is the quarterly journal of ISA. This journal imparts both scholarly input as well as experience-based articles. In the words of Paul Jackson SJ, "these (articles) are mostly from India itself they act as a stimulus for readers to 'go and do likewise,' for most of these articles are not the work of specialists but of students for the

priesthood and sisters."

To sum up, ISA is an important venture born in the quest for translating the teachings of the Vatican II on Christian-Muslim relations and to build bridges between Christians and Muslims in India. One of the important characteristics of this venture is to build this relationship through personal discovery and giving witness to the good that Christians find in Muslims and Muslims find in Christians. Thus the bridge that is built is not based on ideas but on real human and religious interactions. It continues to inspire a few Christians to commit themselves for the mission of Christian-Muslim dialogue. ISA remain a small organization, perhaps like leaven in the dough.

Victor Edwin SJ
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«TOGETHER AROUND MARY, OUR LADY»

Existing as it does in a country where Christians and Muslims coexist, the Alumni Association of Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour has always promoted frank and sincere dialogue among the different elements which make up the Lebanese nation, with the hope of bringing people closer together in mind and heart. His Holiness Pope John Paul II understood well the importance of our country in these eastern lands where most people are

On March 25, 2011, at Collège Notre-Dame of Jamhour (Lebanon), the 5th Islamic-Christian encounter was held on the theme, "Together Around Mary, Our Lady."

Each year testimonies, prayers, and hymns make this encounter a national event that is broadcast live on television and watched by many hundreds of thousands of viewers in Lebanon and other countries.

Muslims. He called Lebanon a "message-country" and dedicated an apostolic exhortation to it, published on May 10, 1997.

In this context and aware that Mary holds a privileged place in Islam, the spiritual commission of the Alumni Association has for the last five years organized an Islamic-Christian spiritual encounter around the Virgin at the church of Notre-Dame de Jamhour on March 25th, the feast of the Annunciation.

The main organizers of these encounters have been Mr Nagy el-Khoury and Dr Mohammad Nokari. Mr el-Khoury, Secretary General of the Alumni Association, has always worked to promote Islamic-Christian dialogue, and he dreamt of the day when Muslims and Christians of different communities can pray together. Dr. Nokari, a judge on the Sunni religious tribunal of Beirut, has always believed that Mary could play the role of common denominator between Muslims and Christians.

There are also two outstanding persons who have from the start taken part in the work of the organizing commission: his Excellency Dr. Ibrahim Shamseddine, former minister and son of the late former Shi'a imam, and Fr. Fadel Sidarouss, S.J., former superior of the Mid-East Province.

Each year testimonies, prayers, and hymns make this encounter a national event that is broadcast live on television and watched by many hundreds of thousands of viewers in Lebanon and other countries.

In 2007, the principal guest was Sheikh Khaled el Jundi, preacher of Al-Azhar University in Cairo (Egypt). He is an important figure in Sunni Islam.

In 2008, we were honored by the presence of Sayyed Mohammed Hassan el-Amine, one of the principal Shi'a Muslim dignitaries.

In 2009, the guests for our encounter were Bishop Salim Ghazal, president of the bishops' commission for Islamic-Christian





Above and on preceding page, two views of the meeting between Islam and Christianity during the visit of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, to Lebanon.

dialogue, and Sheikh Amr Khaled, an important preacher in the Islamic world, based in London.

In 2010, the principal guest was Lech Walesa, former president of Poland and founder of the trade union *Solidarnosc*. He testified to the importance of the Blessed Virgin for the Polish struggle.

In 2011, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, Superior General of the Society, was present and talked about the need for dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

In the talk he gave at the beginning of the ceremony, Father General spoke of how much in keeping this encounter was with the aims of the Society of Jesus: *"Dialogue with other religions belongs to our mission. The first Jesuits, as they set out to evangelize the world, discovered the richness of the cultures and religions of the peoples to which they were sent. They quickly understood that they could not carry out their mission only by preaching the Gospel; they also had to enter deeply into dialogue with the sages and religious persons they met, relying on God for the*

conversion of hearts. Well-known examples of this approach are Matteo Ricci in China and Robert de Nobili in India. ... The dialogue with other religions gives evidence of the many values that we share. These values come from our Holy Books, the Bible and the Quran. We recognize our common concern for justice, especially social justice and the welfare of our neighbors. We pay special attention to the poor, the humble, the weak, and those who have had to flee their own countries and seek asylum among us. We recognize also that we share a common respect for Creation. These shared values allow us to work together in joint activities. This is especially true in the field of education. Many Muslim parents entrust their children to our Jesuit schools, such as St. Joseph University and the colleges and schools of Jamhour, Beirut, and the Beka'a Valley, because they know they will be educated according to our shared values. The secondary schools students at the Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour on occasion organize encounters with Muslim youths of different schools with the aim of getting to know and

understand one another better. And our Muslim alumni are happy to meet together each year during Ramadan at the traditional iftar to which they are invited by their Alumni Association and the Jesuit community. ...

... Perhaps we do not practice the same faith, but we are in agreement regarding the way we should relate to God: through spiritual dialogue. We share ways of praising and adoring the Creator; we give thanks for his gifts and the spirit of adoption which come from God; we who are sinners have confidence in his mercy; we respect his decisions even when, like Abraham and Job, we don't understand them. Year after year you meet together here around Mary, Our Lady, the humble servant of the Lord, to honor her. She brings us together today in common supplication."

The ceremony began inside the church with the ringing of the bell and the muezzin's call to prayer. A moment of great emotion. Then two religious leaders chanted, one after the other, verses from the Gospel and from the Quran before the altar, a dialogue showing how much in agreement the two religions are concerning Mary, "blessed among all women." After Fr. General's talk, Dr. Nokari, representing the Sunni community, insisted on "the modesty



"This logo presents the profile face of Mary in the sky blue color of her veil. The lines of her face suggest both the crescent moon of Islam, as well as the image of the Mother who bends in protection for all of humanity."

of Mary, who received the announcement of the angel with humility." He was followed by Druze and Shi'a speakers, who spoke of how Muslims worldwide consider Mary to be blessed among all women. This common heritage of our faiths was magnificently expressed in music by various Muslim and Christian choirs. The

assembly was moved by several singers, especially a young alumna of Jamhour who came all the way from France to sing an Ave Maria, softly accompanied by two Muslim chanters. And of course, we'll never forget the whirling dervishes from Tripoli, who celebrated the glory of Mary in their own unique way.

This was an hour and a half of fervent devotion and great spiritual joy, which ended with a common prayer recited around the altar by representatives of seventeen communities of Lebanon, who begged in a single voice for the Virgin's blessing on Lebanon and the world. These were moments of great emotion such as only a country like Lebanon could arouse, for it is, as the Secretary General of the Association expressed in his words of welcome, a country that hopefully will inaugurate a new "civilization of love."

Considering the great success of these five encounters, which have expanded with each passing year, the organizers were encouraged to ask the National Committee for Islamic-Christian Dialogue to cooperate with them in having the feast of the Annunciation be

declared a national Islamic-Christian holiday. On February 16, 2010, the organizing commission, accompanied by the two secretaries general of the National Committee, visited Council of Ministers President, His Excellency Saad el Hariri, to launch the project. Two days later the Council decreed that the feast of the Annunciation would be a national holiday so that it would have greater impact on all citizens of Lebanon. Taking advantage of his visit to the Holy See on February 20, 2010, the President of the Council spoke of that decree with his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, who was delighted by the initiative. Moreover, his Holiness was very interested in this development, which can contribute to greater harmony between Muslims and Christians.

The news was very well received by both local and international press, which gave the events extensive coverage. Several articles and testimonies have also appeared in this regard.

This initiative has given risen to a new Islamic-Christian Marian culture, which finds expression in painting, music, poetry, song, and various publications, both within Lebanon and elsewhere.

One ambitious future project of the organizers of the Islamic-Christian encounter is the creation of an Islamic-Christian Marian center in Beirut. It will be located near the Museum plaza, which during the war was the symbol of the split between the eastern and western regions of the capital, but which henceforth will be a place of convergence for Islamic-Christian Marian culture, providing a meeting space for different associations and initiatives to come together as they work to promote dialogue among all the Lebanese communities.

Jean Dalmais, S.J.
Translated by
Joseph Owens, S.J.



INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

LEBANON



In its Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, on the relations of the Church with non-Christian religions, the Second Vatican Council established inter-religious dialogue as an integral part of the Church's mission, especially the Islamic-Christian dialogue. The Holy Father has several times asked the Jesuits to make inter-religious dialogue an apostolic priority for the third millennium (John Paul II, Address to the Provincials of the Society, 27 February 1982; Homily to the 33rd General Congregation, 2 September 1983; Address to the 34th General Congregation, 5 January 1995, no. 6).

Fr. Issam Abi Khalil and Sheikh Muhammad Zaraket during a dialogue on Christian and Muslim doctrines.

These orientations illuminated the way toward the creation of the Department of Islamic-Christian Studies at Saint Joseph University, which was set up in October 1977. A few years later, in 1980, this Department became the Institute of Islamic-Christian Studies.

The idea for the Department was born in the course of the two-year *civil war* which ripped Lebanon apart and where the confessional

The Institute of Islamic-Christian Studies at Saint Joseph University in Lebanon is a space where Christians and Muslims can meet together and share their faith experience and thus reinforce the peaceful coexistence of the two religions.



aspect was predominant. The cruelty of this war demonstrated how little the Muslim and the Christian communities knew one another. Those who personally experienced these events and reflected on them thought it urgent that a space be created where Christians and Muslims could meet together and share their faith experience without any apologetic bias. The aim was to reinforce peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims and to work for improved reciprocal knowledge, mutual understanding, and recognition of the other *as other*. To kick off this “crazy idea,” as Fr. Dupré La Tour called it, a four-person founding committee was organized, consisting of two committed Christian believers and two committed Muslim believers. The numerically equal representation of Christians and Muslims on the founding committee was a conscious choice, reflecting a principle on which the coordination of programs would be based. All courses would be given from the start in two voices, one Christian and one Muslim, each presenting his or her own tradition before a mixed public.

The Institute has as its goal an approach to Islam and Christianity which starts out from the basic truths that characterize the two traditions. Moreover, it attempts to present the cultural heritage of Islam and Christianity faithfully and sensitively, even while employing contemporary language.

As a result, differences in beliefs

will inevitably emerge. Indeed, no one is seeking to minimize the existing differences and so arrive at a syncretism that would deny the originality and specificity of each religion. To the contrary, the Institute seeks to maintain the differences out of respect for the truth and to safeguard religious authenticity, for it is only when we recognize and respect our differences that we can envisage genuine collaboration among the professors and the students present here, and by extrapolation among the multi-confessional members of Lebanese society.

Given this perspective, the Institute seeks to promote knowledge of the other instead of ignorance, careful scientific research instead of vain and sterile polemic. This knowledge of the other derives especially from the convivial encounters and the ties of friendship and confidence that flourish within the Institute. All members of the Institute personally desire direct contact and good relations with those of other traditions. Moreover, they are desirous of closer contact with the Other, the Totally Other who, despite our best theological explanations, surpasses all our knowledge and remains indefinable.

In one of his speeches Fr. Dupré La Tour S.J. stated: “In reality, the recognition of difference leads us to recognize the legitimacy of otherness: if the other religion is different, then it is *other* than my religion, and I recognize it as other instead of wanting to assimilate it or

to fall into syncretism. Accordingly, because it is *other*, I also recognize its originality and the legitimacy of its vision of God and the world. I therefore admit its original way of solving human problems, its particular conception of human values, and the meaning which it seeks to give to human life. In other words, I try to recognize the other such as he is and such as he wishes to be. In so doing, I place myself before the other, such as I am and such as I wish to be recognized myself.”

The societies of the Near East have in fact a long history of coexistence among Christians and Muslims, and they have known blessed moments and difficult moments. The question that arises today is how to manage this age-old diversity, not only with a view of living together, but in such a way that it becomes a source of mutual enrichment in diversity. It is evident that what is needed from the start is to give due recognition to this diversity, which is the key for transforming our societies into spaces of justice, freedom, peace, and democracy, since the right to be different is an essential element for creating a dynamic of development and progress.

That is why a dialogue in truth should work along two axes, identity and otherness. Our recognition of otherness is fundamental in the sense that it helps us to recognize that others are adorers of the same God and brothers and sisters in the same humanity. It also helps us to discover our own identity and originality, even as we make a detour through the truth of the other’s difference.

The educational and academic mission of the Institute is thus inscribed within this perspective: we assume the differences among the different religious traditions and we learn to manage this diversity so that it becomes, not a cause of conflict, but a source of mutual enrichment. But this mission, as noble as it may seem to be, would be inconceivable if it were not for the

relations of friendship and respect which develop throughout the course of studies.

There has always been one great challenge for the professors: how to avoid using a double language! Since in the course of the centuries prejudices and stereotypes have characterized relations between the communities, this has produced an often negative internal discourse about the other and a benevolent external discourse adapted to the circumstances. For that reason, the professors themselves are the first to be trained, for they have to speak before a mixed public without embellishing their teaching. Each one must use the language proper to her religious tradition, giving an uncompromising explanation of her faith without disparaging or harming the other. Certainly, this disposition of spirit assumes that the teacher has made progress in the truth with respect to herself and to others.

In sum, we can testify that both sides have experienced a broadening of horizons as they open up to the universe of the other and discover their own universe in the encounter with the other. This is the gateway to infinite riches that opens up to those who take part in a course at the Institute.

Presently the Institute provides five programs of formation: 1. A three-year licentiate degree in Islamic-Christian studies focusing on three areas: spirituality, morality, dogma. 2. A master's degree in Islamic-Christian relations, which can lead to a doctorate. This program is given in Arabic or French. 3. A university diploma in Islamic-Christian spirituality and mysticism. 4. A certificate of initial formation in Islamic-Christian dialogue is offered for one semester to religion teachers in the schools, university students, and university graduates who are interested in this formation. This program is offered not only in Beirut but also in the regional centers in the Beka'a (Zahle); in the north, especially Tripoli; and in the south, in partnership with the sociocultural



Above, the first master's diplomas in Islamic-Christian relations, awarded in July 2011. On the preceding page, lively dialogue between two students of the Institute.

center of the Greek Melkite Catholic Bishopric of Sidon. A certificate of advanced formation in resolution of interreligious conflicts is also given for a course that studies the doctrines of both religions and trains participants in methods of conflict resolution and in attitudes fostering communication and mutual respect. 5. A certificate in introductory Islamic-Christian culture.

The language used for teaching and research is Arabic. A new master's degree in Islamic-Christian relations, offered in French, was begun in the academic year 2011-12, in collaboration with the University of Lyon (France).

Recently the mission of the Institute has also extended to reach the secondary schools, helping them to promote a culture of dialogue and to manage diversity well. This program promotes and develops dialogue among the young people of the different communities through sessions which encourage discussion and foster friendship among students of different religions. In this way the wall of fear of the other is broken down, and the students' ability to "live together" in civic peace is consolidated.

This program, called *Christian*

Islamic Living Together (CILT), has so far been given to more than 800 students, and the aim is to reach 1,800 students throughout Lebanon in 2011-12.

Worthy of note is the fact that several hundred young people who have participated in the CILT program have volunteered to continue active in the program. Moreover, CILT has undertaken to produce a book on the moral values shared by Christianity and Islam, aimed at students in their final school years. The book will be published and distributed gratis in 2012.

The Institute has several publications.

The Institute has a Center of Documentation of Islamic-Christian Research (*Cedric*), which works basically to establish a collection of documents covering everything relating to Muslim-Christian relations around the world. The Center intends to make its documentation available on line for researchers, students, and others interested in this area. You can access this data base by entering the site of the Institute, clicking on *Cedric*, and following the "data base" link; or you can simply enter the Center's blog at <http://hiwar.blogs.usj.edu.lb/> and follow the "Publications" link.

Aziz Hallak, S.J.
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.

A COMMON HOUSE FOR ALL BELIEVERS

Indonesia is one of the largest archipelagos in the world, with more than 17,000 islands that together amount to almost 2 million square kilometres. It has a population of 237.6 million, according to the 2010 national census. The people are predominantly Muslim. According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (2000), 88.22 % of the population identify themselves as Muslims, 5.87 % as Protestants, 3.05 % as Catholics, 1.81 % as Hindus, 0.84 % as Buddhists, and 0.2 % as 'others', which includes those who follow traditional-indigenous beliefs.

There are differing views on when Islam came to Indonesia and how the people were converted to this religion. Some argue that Muslim cosmopolitan traders entered Indonesia from Gujarat (Cambay), India, or from Persia, in the late 13th century; some other argue that Islam came directly from Hadramaut, South of Yemen, in the 7th century. Conversion is believed to have come about through marriage,

Within the Indonesian Province of the Society of Jesus, many apostolates directly or indirectly come into contact with Muslims.

the fusion of political and economic interests, and the harmonious nature of the Javanese society.

Christianity is said to have been in Indonesia since the 7th century, when there was supposedly a Nestorian community in Fansur (Barus) in North Sumatra. However, no record or trace of such a community remains. The first significant evidence of Christian activities in Indonesia coincides with the arrival of Portuguese traders in

the 16th century. Between 1546 and 1547, Francis Xavier arrived in the Moluccas and introduced the Catholic faith to the people there. With the arrival of the Dutch in the early 17th century, Protestantism began to spread.

Until independence in 1945, Christian-Muslim encounters in Indonesia were coloured by economical and political interest. Islam was sometimes raised as a banner in the fight against the Dutch and, because Christianity was associated with colonialism, some considered the fight against the Dutch to be almost identical to a struggle against Christianity. However, Indonesian Christians and Muslims did collaborate for independence. Christian and Muslim leaders such as Kasimo, a Christian, and Natsir, a Muslim, worked together to keep Indonesia a common house for all people living in archipelago. Mgr. Soegiyopranoto S.J., the first native Catholic Archbishop in Indonesia, is remembered to have said that Indonesian Catholics should be





"100% Catholic and 100 % Indonesian".

The Indonesian Constitution gives every citizen the freedom to practice his or her faith (art. 29). The first of the five core principles (*Pancasila*) – belief in one supreme God – recognizes the role of religion in public life without legislating a national religion.

The government began promoting interreligious dialogue in 1967 with a programme called *Musyawarah Antar Agama* ("Interreligious Encounter"). Over the years, the country has seen several violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians. From 1994 to 1996, for example, there were violent confrontations between the indigenous peoples of East Timor, Flores, and Borneo – whose people are predominantly Christian – against Muslim migrants.

Indonesia has seen major terrorist attacks that have killed many people, for example in Bali (2002 and 2005) and around Jakarta (2003 and 2004). At one point, many bombs were also exploded in the houses of worship. One of the more disturbing aspects of the sectarian violence that engulfed areas of Indonesia after the fall of President Suharto's New Order regime is the emergence of armed and seemingly well-trained militant groups. These groups are committed to implementing a more extensive version of *sharia* through public

policy, issue by issue. From 1999 to 2009, in fact, *sharia* regional regulations increased significantly to the current 151.

The most challenging problem for the Indonesian people today can be seen in the results of a survey conducted by the Center for Islamic and Society Studies at the State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, in 2008. The survey of 500 Islamic studies teachers throughout Java revealed that 67.4 % felt more Muslim than Indonesian, and only 3 % said they felt it was their duty to produce tolerant students.

Pope John Paul II said, "Catholics in Asia are a 'small flock'.... [In a] context that is multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural, one in which Christianity is often perceived as foreign, dialogue is typical of the life of the Church in Asia." This exhortation to the members of the post-Synod Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops for the Special Assembly for Asia in 1998 applies to the Church of Indonesia as well.

Interreligious dialogue should not be seen as simply a strategy to prevent the disintegration of the nation, or a reactive effort to deal with people of other religions in a given context. It is primarily an opportunity to manifest faith in daily life. In recent years, a paradigm shift on interreligious dialogue has taken place in

Jesuit scholastics singing with Muslim students at the farewell party for the immersion programme in a pesantren. To the left, the immense Indonesian archipelago.

Indonesia. Some foundations have sponsored movements to promote interreligious dialogue as social critique that can fight against poverty, injustice and fundamentalism.

The Catholic Church has been also active in promoting interreligious dialogue as social critique. Through annual pastoral letters, the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia has called for solidarity with all people of the nation. The pastoral letter of Easter 2001, for example, spoke out against the violence throughout the country by urging believers to be tolerant and not destructive towards other ethnic groups or religions. The death of a young Muslim while protecting the parishioners of a church in East Java during Christmas 2000 is both proof and memory that encourages all believers to work with one another for harmony in Indonesia.

The solidarity of the Catholic Church with the suffering of the people is also realized through the work of the *Crisis Center*, which tries to respond the challenges of the nation by collaborating with anyone



A session of interreligious dialogue between students of different Indonesian universities.

of goodwill, regardless of their religion. For example, the response to the tragedy of the *tsunami* disaster in Aceh in 2005 – emergency relief, rehabilitation and education – was executed without rising up a Catholic banner. In addition, the desk of interreligious affairs in the Bishops' Conference tries to make personal contact with decision makers in the hope of enlisting their support when problems related to laws or regulations arise.

At the level of the diocese, the Church promotes interreligious dialogue through programmes, such as the training conducted in the diocese of Amboina to encourage non-violence among youth, and raise awareness of problems related to HIV/AIDS and women trafficking. In doing so, they work with all elements of society from different religious backgrounds. After the eruption of Mt. Merapi in Central Java in 2010, the movement to help the victims included a group of students from various religious backgrounds. One of the activities is

an effort to plant trees for replacing those destroyed by the volcano lava.

Within the Indonesian Province of the Society of Jesus, many apostolates directly or indirectly come into contact with Muslims. The library at the theologate, St. Ignatius House of Studies, with its collection of more than 180,000 books, is widely used by Muslim students in Yogyakarta. The Jesuits also conduct training on interreligious dialogue for lay people, scholastics, youth and university students. Among these is the immersion programme done by eighteen Indonesian Jesuit scholastics, in 2009. During two weeks, they lived in an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), in a small town in Central Java, where they had an opportunity to have open conversation, direct encounters and discussion with Muslims living in the *pesantren*, including also a visit to Islamic institutions in the area.

Another programme is called the *Asia Pacific Theological Encounter Programme* (APTEP). This is one of the responses of the Jesuits within the Conference of Asia Pacific to the challenge "to plunge ourselves more deeply into that dialogue with religions that may show us that the Holy Spirit is at work all over the

world that God loves" (GC 35 decree 2-24) and "to strengthen and support those Jesuits and collaborators actively involved in the fourfold dialogue recommended by the Church and to build bridges linking individuals and communities of good will" (GC 35 decree 3-22).

The first APTEP programme was conducted in 2011 with 11 participants from the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Peru and Indonesia. After the six-day immersion in the *Tebuireng pesantren*, in East Java, the last part of the APTEP, one of the participants said, "I truly experienced how Muslims live the faith, I have seen their faith and how they truly live the faith. My experiences at the *pesantren* were really a great impact into my disposition towards my Muslim brothers and sisters. That was truly my religious experience."

Every interreligious encounter, even difficult ones, contributes to the development of faith. We ask ourselves 'Is it possible for us to use the religious plurality in Indonesia as a *locus teologicus* to build a contextual Theology, Christology and Ecclesiology?' This thought certainly corresponds to the challenge of GC 34: "It (i.e. theological reflection) has to explore the meaning of the Christ-event in the context of the spiritual evolution of humanity articulated in the history of religions". It also responds to the call of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences: "Therefore we commit ourselves to take every opportunity to make Jesus Christ and his message known in a way that is acceptable to Asians, presenting him to them with an 'Asian face' using Asian cultural concepts, terms and symbols! If the Asian Churches do not discover their own identity, they will have no future."

**J.B. Heru Prakosa, S.J.
Greg Soetomo, S.J.**

HINDUISM



“In the context of social discrimination and revivalist movements, partly the result of religious ideologies, Jesuit involvement in dialogue between Hindus and Christians becomes a great imperative.” (CG34, d. 5, 14).

The Hindu mosaic appears in a constantly changing kaleidoscope of patterns and hues. At one moment Hinduism may seem highly extrovert through its complex ceremonies, colourful festivals and boisterous fairs. At another instant it may strike one as deeply interiorised and centred through its introspective wisdom and its meditational practices. It displays strong folk elements in its exuberant mythology and legends, but also shows itself to be profoundly philosophical when dealing with sublime insights and abstruse ideas. It advocates the renunciation of the world and also urges one to be involved in the world. It can be silent and still or break into ecstatic song and dance. Although there are some common practices and beliefs, such as the result of one's actions (*karma*), Hinduism, more so than in the case of Christianity, is not a single religion. Hindus hold divergent views regarding the name and nature of the Supreme Being, the nature of human beings and the world, and the relationship between these three.

Over 80% of the population of India is Hindu. However, in recent years, there has been a steady stream of Hindu immigrants from India to other countries. So, while relations with Hinduism are more concentrated in India, they are not totally absent in the diaspora.

There are four types of interreligious relations. Firstly, relations on the level of life take place everywhere, since people in India talk and share a lot and do not isolate themselves. Some Jesuits build personal relationships with individual Hindus and families, especially through a shared meal. This helps break down prejudices and builds friendship which overcomes hatred and violence based on religious divisions and prejudices.

Secondly, quite a few Jesuits engage in interreligious action with Hindus to establish harmony, justice and social upliftment. When Hindus call for a protest procession (*morcha*) or shut-down (*bandh*) for a just cause, Catholics and Jesuits are not very much visible in such activities: one reason could be that they fear reprisals, since they are a miniscule minority. On the other hand, when there is a natural catastrophe, Jesuits are quick to join hands with others in bringing relief and solace to the

affected. In certain areas of high tension and even persecution, some Jesuits both conscientize people for justice and human dignity and also work towards developing mutual understanding, harmony and peace. I remember an incident when I, as the president or rector or principal of our ecclesiastical academic institution in Pune, called *Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth*, had sent Jesuit and other ecclesiastical students to render relief work in a serious earthquake that had struck the State of Gujarat. A group of radical and nationalistic Hindus also happened to come there to render service. The initial tension was quickly dispersed by one of our students going over and embracing the leader of the other group. From that moment on the two groups shared their meals, and worked and joked together as the best of friends.

A third form of interreligious relations is focused on spirituality or religious experience, which is of primary importance in Hinduism. Some Jesuits and Hindus have a respectful and enriching sharing of religious experiences as well as insights they have gained by practising the spirituality of their own traditions. There are some Jesuits who spend their whole life in an *ashram*, i.e., a place where seekers of religious experience live together, under the guidance of a *guru*, live a simple life and emphasize either contemplation or contemplation and action. Still others take part in interreligious *live-ins*, i.e., living together for a short period (e.g., a week), sharing their experiences with one another. It is indeed paradoxical that, Hinduism, in which the soul has only a mistaken, apparent relation with a body, gives so much importance to the body, not only in rituals, but also in meditational techniques. On the other hand, in Christianity, in which soul and body are intrinsically united to form one being, the body is not taken sufficiently seriously: especially in Latin Catholicism and Protestantism the body is involved so little in rituals, meditation and prayer. There is an increasing controversy in certain quarters in India and abroad about the use of yoga and other Hindu forms of meditation and prayer by Christians. Without going into a lengthy discussion of this issue, I would like to point out that it is important to distinguish a technique or method from its underlying philosophy or theology: the same technique can and is used by people of different traditions to help themselves in the spirituality of their own tradition.

Relatively very few Jesuits engage in the fourth kind of interreligious relations based on theological exchange because it requires expertise. Through such encounter one understands one's own tradition more deeply. For instance, one discovers that some Hindu schools accept the doctrine of many and repeated incarnations of God because Hinduism has a cyclic worldview, whereas mainstream Christianity accepts only one incarnation since it has a non-repetitive, linear worldview of all things moving towards a final goal. One interesting but incipient development in this area is a Hindu reading of the Bible by Christians. This is done in different ways: e.g., reading the biblical text in the light of Hindu



methods of interpretation, or paying attention to specifically Indian concerns such as poverty or caste, or, e.g., reading the Exodus from a *dalit* (oppressed) standpoint. Some Jesuits have attempted to develop certain aspects of an Indian Christian Theology. The Church cautions people to avoid syncretism and relativism.

There are a number of issues which prove to be obstacles to the process of interreligious relations. A good number of Catholics and Hindus tend to live and move in their own ghettos and harbour a number of prejudices against each other. Catholics, especially in urban areas and North India, are regarded as foreigners, not belonging to this land and its culture, and many in certain urban areas are frequently ignorant of the local languages. Our Catholic liturgies often fail to use the officially permitted local symbols and gestures, and so are considered alien to Indian culture.

Certain Christian groups resort to aggressive evangelization, which is blatantly provocative and insensitive to the religious sentiments of Hindus. The concept of conversion to Christianity is abhorrent to many Hindus: it is interpreted in political terms and as a departure from one's own culture, language and nation. Sometimes even interreligious dialogue is seen as a subtle ploy to convert Hindus. In this context, certain theological expressions like "planting the Church", "harvesting of faith", appear threatening and offensive to Hindus. Some Hindus with vested interests often oppose Catholic efforts for justice and conscientization, and interpret these efforts as strategies to convert Hindus to Christianity. It often happens that, at a Hindu-Catholic wedding, Hindus find it very difficult to understand why they are denied Holy Communion, especially since they freely offer their liturgical offerings to people of all religions. Most of the time there is a curt, blunt announcement, without any explanation, just before Communion, prohibiting Hindus from coming up to receive the Eucharist. When a proper and sensitive explanation is given, Hindus not only do not feel hurt but even feel respected.

There is a growing fundamentalism both among some Christians and also some Hindu groups. There is an excessive nationalism (India should be a Hindu nation) among certain Hindu groups and political parties. This has also led to violent and hateful persecution of Christians in certain parts of India, with occasional retaliation on the part of Christians. This has its repercussions on the interreligious processes because both sides tend to become aloof and even wary of the other.

In the diaspora, especially in those parts where there are many Hindus, there are some laudable efforts made by some Jesuits who engage in interreligious relations at various levels. The academic study of Hinduism in Jesuit-run institutions and courses in yoga and other forms of Hindu spirituality help develop a positive and appreciative approach to Hindus. A few institutions organize immersion visits to India for their students.



Above, pouja, a Hindu ritual ceremony. On the preceding page, interreligious group dialogue between Hindus and Catholics, organized by the Pontifical Council of Rome in Pune, India, in November 2011.

These encounter trips not only break down the barriers of prejudice but also build bridges of understanding and appreciation. In some countries there is hardly any engagement with Hindus or study of Hinduism: in these areas, at least in some cases, Jesuits are understandably more involved in interreligious relations with Muslims. In some instances, Hindus endeavour to present Hinduism in terms that can be better understood by the people in those countries. On the other hand, there are pockets of fundamentalists both among Hindus as well as Christians and their attitudes and remarks hurt mutual sensibilities.

In spite of rising Christian and Hindu fundamentalism and Hindu nationalism, the great bulk of Hindus and Christians are open to one another and want to live in peace and harmony. This bodes well for the future of interreligious relations. Our Jesuit General is also urging Jesuit superiors to improve the formation of Jesuits in interreligious relations and to also initiate on-going interreligious formation for Jesuits involved in other apostolates.

Through genuine interreligious relations we can work together to build bridges of friendship and harmony and heal our broken world. If we are able to join our hands and heads and hearts to build a better tomorrow, we will gradually but surely progress towards that distant goal of experiencing the truth of the Sanskrit adage that indeed the whole earth is but one family: *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*.

Noël Sheth, S.J.

For many centuries, European societies have been largely identified with the Christian tradition. In this situation of a rather homogeneous “Christendom,” those who believed “differently” scarcely belonged to ordinary social life: small Jewish communities led an unobtrusive existence in certain quarters of the cities, while the Islamic universe, on the far side of the Mediterranean, closed off the horizon of the world of Christian Europe. From the Middle Ages to the 19th century, there was little awareness in Europe of distant religions that were quite different from Christianity. On the other hand, a Christian child in the Near East or in India could hardly be ignorant of the existence of neighbors and fellow citizens who had different ways of believing. Even if his knowledge was incomplete and he had little interest in learning more, still he would know that there were other calendars of feast days, other places of worship, other dietary rules, etc.

In Europe a child or even an

adult had very little experience of such differences. When the situation rapidly changed, people found themselves without guidelines or orientation. And the situation did indeed change rapidly: the wind came about. Scholarly studies on Asian cultures and religions have proliferated since the 19th century, but they reached only a limited audience. It is only since the Second World War that our images of the world have been transformed. Many countries of Asia and Africa have attained political independence. Despite the vaunted superiority of Europe or the West, the founding of UNESCO symbolizes the full recognition of all cultures and civilizations, as well as the will to encourage exchanges among them as equals. Even the pretensions of superiority on the part of Christianity were likewise called into question.

For mostly commercial, economic, or political reasons, Asian families gradually established themselves in Europe. An influx of refugees was provoked by wars and

other catastrophic situations. In terms of religion, the Hindus and Sikhs were found essentially in Great Britain; the Buddhists, coming mainly from Vietnam and Cambodia but also from Laos and other countries, were spread out in France, Belgium, and almost everywhere in Europe. These migrants needed

In their daily work throughout Europe, Jesuits come into contact with Asian families and individuals who belong to other religious faiths, above all Hinduism and Buddhism.



mainly economic and social assistance in their host countries since they are generally very (perhaps excessively?) discreet regarding the cultural and religious life of their communities. In their daily work among refugees and asylum seekers, Jesuits all over Europe are in contact with Asians who often profess a different religious faith.

Of course, it is clear that European interest in the spiritual traditions of Asia goes beyond the presence of immigrant Asian populations. Probably because of a certain political isolation and a lack of freedom of initiative for private individuals and groups, the Chinese wisdom traditions and spirituality, such as Confucianism and Taoism, are still not very evident in the European landscape. It is toward Hinduism and especially Buddhism that Europeans have been looking until now. As regards Hinduism, small groups of Europeans often gather as disciples of a particular guru, but more often the influence of Hinduism is diffuse and does not

lead to the formation of organized communities; it takes the form, for example, of the practice of yoga or the Gandhian model of non-violent action. It is clear that Hinduism experiences some difficulty in separating itself from Indian society and culture.

In contrast, Buddhism in Asia has long manifested its will and its ability to traverse the frontiers of language and culture, ranging from India to Japan. This movement of diffusion and expansion continues today in the West and elsewhere in the world. Most of the Europeans interested in Buddhism belong to a particular school (Burmese, Tibetan, Japanese, etc.), but discussion is being carried on about the "inculturation" of Buddhism in the West.

Some Christian Europeans find in certain teachings and practices of Buddhism and Hinduism inspiration and guidance for their own reflection or for their daily lives. Moreover, many Europeans who are no longer (or who never were) Christian seek in the traditions

of India and the Far East a spiritual dimension or a source of meaning which they don't seem to find in the realms of science, technology, or economic competition. They are helped in their search by the arrival in the West of gurus, monks, and spiritual masters from the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. It is like an inversion of the Christian mission movement, which for centuries radiated out of Europe toward other continents.

At the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), these questions were scarcely being broached. However, one of the most innovative documents of the Council, the "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to the Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*), contributed greatly to helping Catholics develop their reflections in a spirit of dialogue and collaboration. In the wake of Vatican II, the Society of Jesus was soon led to make interreligious and intercultural dialogue one of its priorities. Naturally, the questions are not raised in Spain and England in the same way that they are in India or Korea. Jesuits in Europe were not especially well prepared to meet these challenges. And most of the European Jesuit missionaries in

Here and on preceding page, two views of the activities of the interreligious camp of the "House of Encounter" in Switzerland, which is directed by Fr. Rutishauser, at the right in the photo below.





Asia were so busy proclaiming the gospel message that they were hardly able to promote knowledge and appreciation of the Asian religious traditions in their homelands.

Nevertheless, several of these missionaries did make important contributions in this regard. German Jesuit Fr. Hugo Lassalle was initiated in the Zen school of Buddhist meditation in Japan; through his publications and retreats he directed, he was a pioneer in making Zen spirituality known in the West. He tried hard to show that this practice is compatible with a life of Christian prayer and might actually be shown to help it. The retreat house at Bad Schönbrunn in Switzerland is one of the places where this tradition is firmly entrenched. Similarly, Fr. Yves Raguin, a French Jesuit active mostly in Taiwan and Vietnam, has introduced many Western Christians to the spiritual traditions of Chinese Buddhism and Taoism through retreats, spiritual direction, conferences, and books.

Other Jesuits preceded them, of course, and they are worthy of remembrance. In the 1920s the Luxembourgian Pierre Johanns and the Belgian Georges Dandoy were missionaries in Calcutta. Their many publications on Hindu religious

thought, while aimed at Christians and non-Christians in India, also stirred European Catholics to an appreciation of these doctrines. In more recent years Bernad Senécal (Paris, then Seoul) and Javier Melloni Ribas (Barcelona) have brought closer together the methods of Asian spiritualities and the *Spiritual Exercises*.

In a cosmopolitan city like London, which hosts numerous communities of Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists, the study of the religions of Asia cannot be separated from concrete encounter and dialogue with these communities. At the Heythrop College school of theology, a small team is actively developing programs of study and training in this area. In Brussels, the "Ways of the Orient" center, where the writer of these lines works, has for thirty years been trying to sensitize westerners to the spiritualities of India and the Far East. The center is particularly interested in introducing European Christians to these traditions by way of reflection and practice. Also, every three or four years, all-European gatherings have been held there, bringing together Christians from many European countries to discuss topics such as the body and its languages, "double belonging," energies, etc.

The multiplicity of religions – Judaism and Islam, certainly, but also Hinduism, Buddhism, and still others – poses serious questions to the faith of Christians: what place and what value might these religions have in the history of salvation? what relation do they have to Christ and to the Church? how should we understand and live with the tension between proclaiming the gospel and interreligious dialogue? Before and immediately after Vatican 2, Jesuits like Henri de Lubac and Karl Rahner made significant contributions to this "theology of religions." More recently, Jacques Dupuis, who worked for many years in India before teaching at the Gregorian University in Rome, was one of the most important voices in this debate, which is still going on.

The study of Hindu and Buddhist doctrines, the concrete exploration of Asian spiritual practices, the encounter and dialogue with their disciples in Asia and Europe, the accompaniment and formation of Christians who discover these spiritualities: these are all important tasks and are recognized as a priority, but they have not really led to the founding in Europe of specialized institutions or groups of Jesuits. Nevertheless, whether by teaching or publishing, whether in cultural or social spheres, whether at the level of theology or spirituality, Jesuits all over Europe – from Spain to Poland, from Britain to Italy – have made their small contributions. Taking advantage in various ways of the links they have with their brothers working in Asia, they have been able in turn to organize other Christians and other believers into networks of collaboration. In a world where identities or "ways of belonging" are becoming ever more fluid, this presence and this work, not always highly visible, is more necessary than ever.

Jacques Scheuer, S.J.
Translated by
Joseph Owens, S.J.

BUDDHISM



*“Dialogue with Buddhists enables Christians to join hands with them to face the basic frustration so many feel today and address together problems of justice, development and peace; in addition it invites Christians to rediscover the contemplative riches within their own tradition.”
(GC34, d. 5, 15).*

Buddhism, the world's first *missionary* religion, evolved from a *monastic* nucleus. It was the blend of missionary zeal and monastic witness that accounts for its initial success in Asia, where it has sunk deep roots in about twenty political territories. What the Benedictine monks did in Europe much later was anticipated by the Buddhist monks several centuries earlier in Asia. The first Eastern Rite Churches, the earliest missions to Middle Eastern and Far Eastern Asia, had realized that *monasticism* was the key to the Asian soul. Medieval European visitors to the Far East such as Marco Polo and William of Rubruk would have been astonished to notice how closely the Nestorian missionaries resembled the Buddhist monks in diet, dress and demeanor.

Against this background one realizes that the inter-monastic dialogue, which Thomas Merton triggered off at Bangkok in 1968, was something long overdue in the Roman and other Western churches working in Asia. The Cistercian Monk Bernard de Givé (a former Jesuit) has proved that monastic life is the most fertile ground for the seed of Buddhist-Christian dialogue to grow and flourish. With his spiritual immersion in Tibetan Buddhism he has demonstrated that non-negotiable doctrinal differences between the two religions could be transcended in a monastic pro-existence between monks of both religions, who would together offer a *healthy alternative* to the consumerist and wasteful life-style now spreading even in Asia.

The other most significant focus of dialogue is the strong emphasis that both Buddhist and Christian Scriptures place on *mindfulness* as a central spiritual praxis. Here even non-monks can participate in sharing this common heritage. Watchfulness is a key word that recurs in Buddhist spirituality as much as it does in the eschatological discourses of Christ and in the Old Testament's central teaching on the covenant of mutual 'remembrance' between YHWH and the People. Becoming incessantly mindful of God who is ever mindful of us is the basic attitude of prayerfulness recommended in the Bible, as St. Basil has reminded us. The profound insights on the practice of mindfulness found in Buddhist teachings (unsurpassed in the history of religions) are a providential gift to Christians who are called to be in continuous prayerful awareness of God's Word addressed to us.

Christians who live in a Buddhist ethos and do not absorb this unique spiritual praxis would resemble a spoon that never tastes the curry in which it lies, to borrow a simile from the Buddha's teaching. We are happy that a few sensitive Jesuits who have tasted this spirituality have invited us to join them. The better known among them are Enomia Lasalle (RIP), Kaichi Kadowaki, Thierry Robouam and Jerome Cusumano in Japan, and Ama Arokya Samy in India. More names are mentioned below.

The third field of fruitful Buddhist-Christian dialogue is the confluence of the core spirituality of Buddhism and



Above, Buddhist monks teaching the faithful the doctrine of the Buddha. On the following page, the upper part of a Buddhist temple with banners blowing in the wind, symbols of the prayers which the faithful address to the Buddha.

the *beatitudinal spirituality* advocated by Jesus. The Buddha spells it out as *appicchata*, being happy with the minimum necessary, and equates it with *santutti* (contentment, satisfaction, joy, absence of anxiety) and opposes it to accumulateness or "storing goods" (*bahubandika*). He has thus anticipated by centuries the happiness (beatitude) which Jesus associated with evangelical poverty, a life without hoarding ('gathering in barns') and without 'anxiety', in the manner of the birds in the air. A return to the simplicity of the gospel on the part of church in Asia is to discover the commonest platform on which Christians can dialogue with Buddhists, who too need to be reminded of their Master's call to that same spirituality. A mutual encouragement in the practice of this common spirituality is more than mere dialogue; it is a species of mutual evangelization.

This same sphere of dialogue has also a socio-economic and political dimension to it. Here a more radical form of Buddhist-Christian collaboration is called for. According to Jesus, the absolute trust in creatures (hence "hoarding") and lack of trust in God (hence "anxiety") are a direct violation of the first commandment: *God alone, no other gods*. It is *idolatry*. In Col 3:5 Paul identifies *eidololatria* (creature worship) with *pleonexia* (greed), which is what Buddhism calls *tanha* and recognizes as the root of all evil. The institutionalized greed, transposed into Christian terms, is organized idolatry; this constitutes the most challenging task for Buddhists and Christians today. For we are dealing with global capitalism or Mammonolatry which despite having shown its feet of clay in recent times, still remains a common obstacle for Buddhists and Christians to allow their common spirituality to *transform* humankind into an eco-friendly community of equals.

The sporadic efforts by many inter-religious groups to create 'mini social structures' wherein the waste by the greedy and the want of the needy are reduced to the minimum have been tried out without any dramatic effect on the national or global economy. But such experiments are worth trying and worth failing too, like the early

BUDDHISM IN ITS VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS

Siddhartha Gautama (566-486 B.C.), later known as Buddha, began the practice of self-denial at the age of thirty five, but the impact of Buddhism grew stronger to become a world religion only after the intervention of emperor Ashoka the Great in the 3rd century B.C. The numerous schisms and movements under the broad umbrella of Buddhism came about mainly because of the absence of any specific doctrinal outline from Buddha himself to define his movement as a new religion, thus allowing his followers to adopt different perspectives and practices. However, the essential principles of all the Buddhist schools centre on the classic teachings of Buddha about the existence, cause and elimination of *dukkha* (suffering) depicted in “The Four Noble Truths”: 1. Suffering is universal. 2. The cause of suffering is desire. 3. Suffering can be eliminated. 4. There is a path to the cessation of suffering. The *astanga marga* (eightfold paths) recommended by Buddha, for awakening individuals to move towards *Nirvana* (freedom from the wheel of Karma and rebirth and enter eternal Bliss) are, 1. Right view (*samma-ditthi*), 2. Right resolve (*samma-sankappa*), 3. Right speech (*samma-vaca*), 4. Right action (*samma-kammanta*), 5. Right livelihood (*samma-ajiva*), 6. Right effort (*samma-vayama*), 7. Right mindfulness (*samma-sati*), 8. Right concentration (*samma-samadhi*). Among the various schools, Theravada (sometimes referred as Hinayana or Southern Buddhism) is the oldest surviving Buddhist school founded in India and remain closely related to the original teachings and practices of Buddha and thus the term Theravada refers to “The Teachings of the Elders”. The countries where Theravada Buddhism is practiced include Sri Lanka (70% of the population), Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, southwest China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia. Mahayana originated much later, probably around the 1st century C.E. in India. Mahayana means ‘great vehicle’ in contrast to the Hinayana, which means ‘small vehicle’. Some portray Mahayana as an evolution of Buddhism with greater insights than Theravada, but the notable teachers of Mahayana, like Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, discourage this attitude. In course of time, Mahayana Buddhism spread from India to various other Asian countries such as China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, and Mongolia. Major traditions of Mahayana Buddhism today include Zen/Chán, Pure Land, Tiantai, and Nichiren, as well as the Esoteric Buddhism (also known as Tantric Buddhism, Tantrayana, Mantrayana, Secret Mantra, and the Diamond Vehicle), Tendai and Tibetan Buddhism. The diversification of Buddhism is also due to the socio political impact on it in different localities. The Newar Buddhism practiced in Kathmandu, for instance, is a non-monastic type originated from Mahayana tradition and practices a unique caste system, whereas in India, many of the anti-caste system activists embraced Buddhism as a revolt against caste Hindus.

Edited by Roy Sebastian Nellipuzhayil, S.J.



Christians attempt at communal life, because they bring a salutary awareness of the need for dreaming of a future free of greed or idolatry. For we can never dream the impossible. Hence the attempt of some Basic Human Communities, where Christians and Buddhists live and work together, trying to project a realizable future that is marked by universal “sharing” or *samvibhaga* (the Buddha’s antidote to greed), is not utopian.

One of the more specific areas of dialogue, for which not all are called, is *scholarship*. An academically profound understanding and an empathetic appropriation of the primary sources of Buddhism on the part of Christians is a precious contribution to mutual understanding. Unfortunately many Western Christian scholars of the last two centuries studied Buddhism in order to depreciate its teaching and show the superiority of Christianity. This species of apologetics had done more harm than good for Buddhist-Christian relationship, leaving a bitter memory about “Christian scholars of Buddhism”. Some Jesuits have tried to undo the damage and make reparation through a scholarship that is dialogical rather than polemical.

One of them was the late John Lock, an American Jesuit and specialist in Nepal Buddhism in Nepal, with Gregory Sharkey, also from USA, now following in his footsteps. The French Jesuit Eugene Denis (RIP) was a Pali scholar who was a popular friend and counselor of Buddhist and Christian youth in Bangkok. The Thai Jesuit Paul Kriangyot Piyawanno and the Indonesian Jesuit Petrus Puspobinatmo are equipping themselves to fill the vacuum left by his death. In Japan Heinrich Dumoulin, a German Jesuit (RIP) had made a singular contribution to the scholarly understanding of Zen Buddhism. Today two Koreans, Mark Koo Chung-mo in Japan and Johann Young-Seog Lee in Korea, joined by the Canadian Bernard Senecal in Korea are engaged in research and study, while Joseph In-gun Kang also from Korea is specializing himself academically for work in Buddhist Cambodia. On the Chinese side we have Christian Cochini and Thierry Meynard soon to be joined by Joseph Ng Swee-Chun and the Polish Jaroslaw Duraj who are now specializing in Chinese Buddhism to continue the pioneering work begun by the late Yves Raguin and Albert Pullet-Mathais.

In Sri Lanka the Methodist scholar Dr. Lynn de Silva (RIP) and his inseparable collaborator Aloysius Pieris, S.J. worked together to inaugurate and sustain a long standing intellectual exchange with Buddhist scholars, publishing an international journal *Dialogue*, now in its 38th year. India has Noel Sheth and Rosario Rocha, while Lawrence Soosai is undergoing training. The Indonesian Paulus Agung Wijayanto and the Philippino Aristotle Dy have also joined the Jesuit band of Buddhism specialists.

There is also a second area of dialogue which is more delicate, namely that of comparative studies. A Christian is called also to discover and share possible affinities and discrepancies in such a way as to respect the unrepeatable identity of each religion. The exercise requires great acumen to discover and preserve the *uniqueness* of each religion rather than dilute it through false irenics.

Uniqueness, however, does not mean absoluteness or superiority. The author of this article has initiated what has come to be known today as cross-scripture reading or inter-textual study. This demands a thorough immersion into the primary source of each religion through the mastery of the original scriptural languages and a familiarity with the different socio-historical contexts as well as the exegetical traditions of each religion. Easy equations and odious comparisons have to be carefully avoided. This effort has brought about a mutual understanding and appreciation among the specialists in the primary sources of each religion.

There is yet a third area of dialogue, which however is fraught with many risks. There are adventurous Jesuits who dare to plunge into the depths of Buddhist spirituality and think out their own religious beliefs within the Buddhist thought and experience. The Indian Jesuit Ama Samy’s ‘Buddhist Christology’ illustrates this effort. Early Nestorians missionaries in China had made some inroads into this particular field of dialogue; their motive was conversion of Buddhists to Christianity. But what motivates persons like Ama Samy is not conversion but a conversation with the Buddhists about a Christ who has never been and never will be a threat to them.

Finally the *Tulana Centre for Dialogue and Encounter* in Sri Lanka has replaced the Church’s traditional missiology of telling Buddhists who Christ is with the missiology of inviting the Buddhists to tell us Christians who Christ is. This dialogue takes place in the course of studying the Christian Scriptures together with the Buddhists. We have today a gallery of paintings, sculptures, and murals and also two dramas created by Buddhists. In these works of art they have revealed to us what *they* think is unique in Christ and Christianity. It is always *the other* who discovers for us our own identity.

Furthermore they have taught us the proper idiom in which Jesus communicates his own self and his message in the continent of his birth and also the apt language which we must appropriate before we speak about him even to ourselves. A highly acclaimed Buddhist scholar has produced a Passion Play which the State’s Cultural Ministry published after inviting us to edit it; the same Ministry has distributed it free of charge to all the libraries in the country! A Christmas play was also composed by the same Buddhist scholar in compliance with our request and its lyrics have been set to music, again at our request, by the most renowned Buddhist folk musician in the country. These two plays constitute a new species of Christian literature that has introduced a new Christian vocabulary to transmit the person and the message of Christ in an Asian wavelength. This is a species of dialogue in which we are their grateful beneficiaries and they our revered tutors in Asian Christology.

Aloysius Pieris, S.J.

WITH THE BUDDHISTS OF CHINA

I I discovered the importance of Buddhism in 1961-63, while I was studying the Chinese language in Taiwan. This discovery coincided with the Second Vatican Council and the opening of the Church to the world. The need for dialogue with non-believers and non-Christians was for me evident, and it provided a sure compass for my activity in China, despite inevitable

The author of the article, Fr. Christian Cochini (on the left), with the venerable Daoci, abbot of the Buddhist temple in Putuoshan, China.

misunderstandings. Over the years I often had the opportunity to visit temples in Taiwan, Japan, mainland China, and other countries of Asia. I became progressively more familiar with the Buddhist world, although my knowledge was still not very deep. At Sophia University in Tokyo, where I lived during the 1990s, I had the chance to spend time with Fathers Hugo Enomiya-Lassalle and Henrich Dumoulin, two Zen specialists of international renown. I also got to know other Jesuits expert in Buddhist studies who indirectly encouraged my interest in Buddhism, and more particularly in interreligious dialogue.

The author of this article is a French Jesuit who has made China his second homeland. He presently lives in Hong Kong and devotes himself to relations between Christians and Buddhists, especially in China.



Nevertheless, it was only after leaving Japan and returning to China that circumstances allowed me to devote myself entirely to that task. Thanks to the sponsorship of the Ricci Institute of Macau, I was able to undertake at the end of 2003 a survey of the situation of Chinese Buddhism, which has seen a spectacular renewal since the policy of reform and openness inaugurated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. There were more than 13,000 temples in mainland China, and I had to make a choice. An official list of the most important ones had been published in 1983 and served me as a roadmap. Thus in the course of four years I visited 157 major monasteries of the Han nationality, moving around China from north to south and from east to west. By interviewing monks at each place, I collected abundant documentation which helped me write a *Guide to the Buddhist Temples of China*, the French edition of which appeared in Paris in 2008. An illustrated English version followed in 2009, published by the Ricci Institute of Macau.

In the course of this long survey I learned many things, the most notable of which was that interreligious dialogue in China was not only possible but greatly desirable. I admit that I began my visits with some apprehension, wondering how I, as a foreign Catholic priest, would be welcomed by Buddhists in a country ruled by the Communist Party. My fears were dissipated from the first contacts, for I was always received with much sympathy and cordiality. This warm welcome encouraged me not only to continue with my survey but to forge bonds of friendship with monks and nuns and to deepen my knowledge of the history and the doctrines of Buddhism. I am convinced that sincere friendship with the Chinese people is the key today, as it once was for Matteo Ricci, for opening wide the doors of dialogue.

I also learned through my work

that Buddhism is an essential component of Chinese culture. Along with Confucianism and Taoism, it forms an inseparable trilogy. The dominant ideology is still Marxism-Leninism, but China has moved beyond the Cultural Revolution and is once again proud of its millennial heritage. Like the ancient Middle Kingdom, it honors its traditional culture even as it seeks to expand its economic and cultural influence internationally. As a result, the Chinese government has promoted Confucian institutes around the world and has made considerable investment in restoring and building sumptuous Buddhist temples, such as the world-renowned sites at Dunhuang and Yungang. Buddhism, now officially recognized as part of the national cultural heritage, will soar to great heights in many countries on the wings of the Great Power which China is becoming. Dialoguing today with the Buddhists of China is an urgent and vital mission of inculturation.

A third important thing I learned was that for Chinese Buddhist intellectuals and officials Buddhism is undeniably a form of atheism, founded basically on the negation of a creator God. Even so, interreligious dialogue can still be carried out on the ethical level, for the sublime morality of Buddhism has numerous similarities, and even profound agreements, with Christian morality. The phrase which sums up the teaching of the Buddha – and which is inscribed on the walls of most temples – resonates with the Gospel: “Do good and avoid evil. Purify your spirit and your heart. Therein lies the whole of Dharma.” All of Buddhist ethics is thus a call to go beyond oneself. We might wonder whether this going beyond oneself is not, in its highest forms, a search for the absolute whose trajectory moves beyond the limits seemingly imposed by atheism. Does it orient Buddhists toward a “Mystery”

whose name is still unknown to them?

I would like to recount here briefly some of my most recent encounters.

* On July 14, 2010, I was invited to give a conference in Longquan Si (the Dragon’s Spring Temple), one of the principal Buddhist monasteries in Beijing. The abbot there is the Venerable Xue Cheng, vice-president and secretary general of the Buddhist Association of China and also prior of four monasteries. Nervous but delighted to be able to address in Mandarin a community of more than 300 Buddhist monks and lay people, I thanked the Venerable Xue Cheng for his warm welcome. After introducing myself I stressed the importance, as I see it, of carrying on a dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity: “I am not a Buddhist, but have been a Catholic priest for more than 50 years. There are differences between our two religions, but I have great respect for Buddhist morality, which is quite sublime. My survey has made me realize the extent to which Buddhism is an integral component of Chinese culture. Of the five major religions of China, Buddhism is clearly the most important. Taixu, the great reformer of Chinese Buddhism, said that he had a dream in which he saw all the different civilizations, ancient and modern, western and eastern, fused together into a world civilization...It is necessary for all religions to work together in harmony for world peace. In the West Christianity is the most important religion, whereas Buddhism is the most important religion in Asia. We should have mutual respect for one another, dialogue in a friendly manner, and collaborate for a better world. You often say, ‘The harmony of a society begins with a change of hearts’: I would also stress, ‘Interreligious dialogue begins with friendship,’ for friendship banishes misapprehensions, prejudices, and

everything that hinders mutual understanding... It is necessary for us to be mutually 'open' to one another, for the sake of world peace and the progress of global society ...” After my talk, warm applause and the appreciative commentary of the Venerable Xue Cheng assured me that I was understood. The next day, the publication of my talk on the Longquan Si website was an even more certain sign that I had made the grade. I left the monastery that day amid gestures of genuine friendship, feeling fortified in my commitment to the cause of interreligious dialogue in China.

* A week later I paid a visit to the Venerable Ru Rui, Abbess of the Institute of Buddhist Studies of Wutaishan, in the province of Shanxi. As co-foundress and director of the Institute, this remarkable woman is known for her work in the field of religious formation as well as for her social involvement with poor children and the elderly. A Swiss association had chosen her as a candidate for the Nobel peace prize in 2005. I have known her for some years now and hold her in the highest esteem. When I arrived, she led me into a large hall where more than 300 young *bikkhunis* (nuns) were already assembled, all in gray robes; they were separated into two groups on either side of the hall. As in Beijing the week before, I began by describing my interest in Buddhism and then spoke at length of the need to develop friendly relations between religions, especially between Buddhism and Christianity, with a view to contributing to the harmony of society and to world peace. Since I was speaking to a feminine audience, I insisted also on the prominent role that women are called upon to play in today's society and on the importance of the training that these young Buddhist women were receiving in their Institute. I told them: “I am celibate, a religious like you, and I consider



Buddhist faithful at prayer before a temple.

women as my sisters. Harmony begins with the heart, which means the heart of all, Buddhists, Christians, and others, united by the same ideal and the same love.” The Venerable Ru Rui reaffirmed my statement and then went on to emphasize union of hearts in this world which is growing ever smaller thanks to better communication. She then invited questions from the audience, and there were many.

*Last June I journeyed to the province of Henan to visit the Venerable Yongxin, abbot of the famous Shaolin temple, well known as the ancestral temple of Zen Buddhism and the cradle of the martial arts. The Venerable Yongxin is the president of the Buddhist Association of the province of Henan, a representative in the National People's Assembly, and a member of the National Youth Federation. As one of the most visible monks in China, he is a controversial figure and is exposed to the risks of commercialization. He

is well known internationally, but success such as he has had inevitably attracts critics. A man very open to dialogue, he hopes that relations between China and the Holy See will soon be normalized. He holds in high esteem Cardinal Etchegaray, who visited China a few years ago. I told him that in my humble opinion China would have everything to gain from establishing cordial relations with the Holy See, for the Pope has immense influence around the world. He was quite in agreement with my view.

It would be desirable for meetings to take place between the Buddhists of communist China and the Christian organizations that are engaged in dialogue with the great world religions, such as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue or the many monastic or lay societies that exist in Europe and the US. This does not seem possible for the moment, but meanwhile private conversations such as those I have just described can be useful for creating bonds of friendship, dispelling prejudice, and moving toward ever greater mutual openness.



Fr. Cochini, in the center, with young aspirant monks in the temple of Shaolin.

I would like to stress again the importance of friendship in developing our relations with China. Matteo Ricci understood this, so that he did not elaborate an abstract strategy of inculturation of the faith. Rather, he let himself be guided by events, encounters, and experiences, and he treasured each friendship he made as a precious revelation. He remains for us today a model of sincere friendship proved by deeds, which is a prior condition and the indispensable setting for fruitful encounters in a society where the Confucian virtues are still very much alive.

In view of the fact that Buddhism is an essential component of Chinese

culture, our dialogue will involve an effort of inculturation which touches Chinese culture as a whole. Such an effort requires us to take more seriously the Buddhist contribution to Chinese culture than was the case in Ricci's day. The dialogue with Buddhism will not only contribute to raising the moral and spiritual level of Chinese society itself, but will also help to diffuse Chinese culture in international exchanges and to promote in some way the new world civilization desired by all those working for peace and universal fraternity. At the end of the Ming and beginning of the Qing dynasties, the Jesuits were pioneers in the exchange of knowledge then taking place between China and Europe; they contributed to China their knowledge in many fields, including mathematics, astronomy,

and cartography. The role of their successors in the 21st century will perhaps be the reverse: helping the Christian West to reinvigorate itself through values imported from the best sources of Chinese culture, and so of course from Buddhism.

"Non coerceri maximo, contineri minimo, divinum est," was a saying of Saint Ignatius. In order not to lose sight of the original project, we need to work daily, as far as possible, to weave together modestly the bonds of friendship which slowly build the future.

Christian Cochini, S.J.
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.

THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS



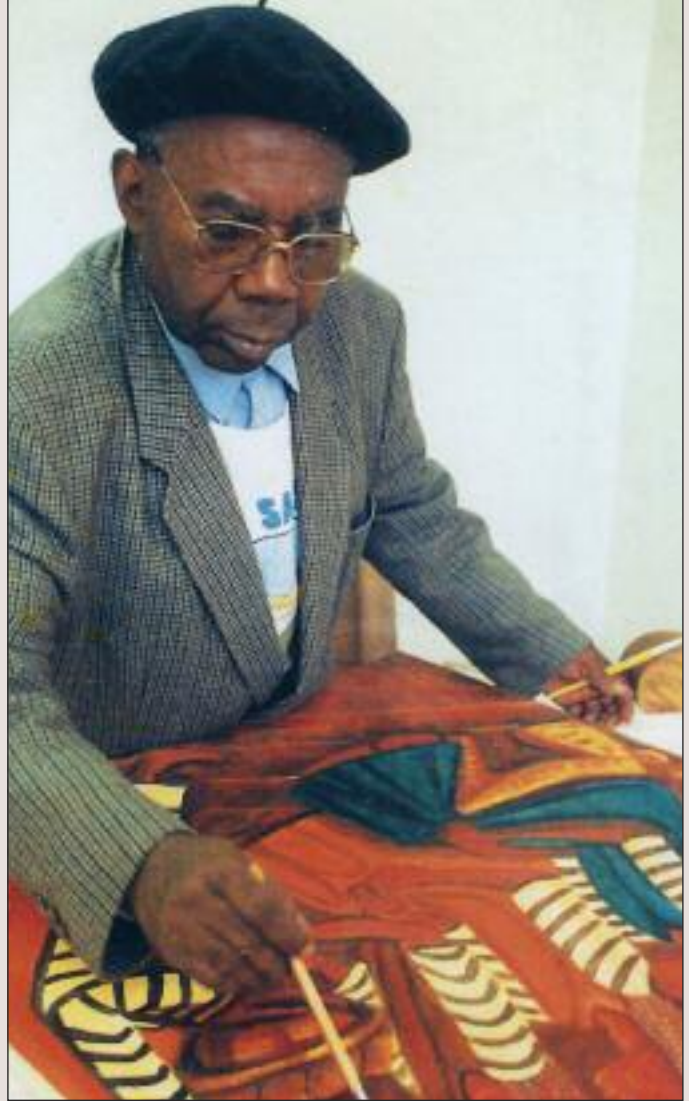
For countless centuries the traditional cultures have profoundly influenced the spirituality of Africa. Mpay Kemboly, a Congolese Jesuit, explains the meaning of the Christian encounter with these beliefs and the involvement which the Society of Jesus has for years had in this domain.

Before treating the question of dialogue, let us first describe in summary fashion African traditional religions. (1) African traditional religions originated in a continent that has a millennial history and great diversity. These religions are what carry us Africans forward and what we carry deep within us. They determine our way of being in the world, our way of relating to beings, to things, and to words. (2) The roots of African traditional religions are so significant in mystical confraternities, diverse religious movements, and Africa's independent churches that all of these can be considered in different degrees to be mutations or survivals of the traditional African religions. (3) Some archetypes of the African traditional religions are present in African-American religions. (4) The African traditional religions are numerous, but they can be categorized according to the aspects which they have in common. They are present to a greater or lesser degree in Africa, in the Americas, in Europe, and wherever else African peoples live.

It is with these religions that the Church of Africa has been in dialogue since the beginnings of Christianity. We will treat here the recent forms this dialogue has taken, influenced by the Second Vatican Council and the synodal assemblies for Africa held in 1994 and 2009. As regards the Society of Jesus, we make mention of General Congregations 34 and 35.

The Church of Africa gives priority to inculturation as a form of dialogue between Christianity and African cultures or religions (*Dialogue et Annonce*, 45 ; *Ecclesia in Africa*, 59 ; *Africae Munus*, 36). Thus the African Church is involved in a great deal of theological and pastoral exploration, some of which is worth noting here. (a) The "Congolese rite" of the mass was approved by Rome in 1988. In this "rite" the priest sometimes wears a leopard skin during mass, which shows that he is the guardian of his community, one who is already initiated, and a master of spiritual initiation and discernment of spirits. Adoration is thus experienced as also a type of body language.

(b) The Church of Burkina Faso created the Moore



Above, Fr. Engelbert Mveng, who promoted an African style of religious life. Below, a worshipper in a "trance," a phenomenon interpreted as a sign of possession by the evil spirit, which makes exorcism necessary.



ritual of the sacraments of Christian initiation, based on the rites of passage and initiation of the Mossi culture. Similarly, the Church of Nigeria has Christianized the ceremony of giving a name to the Christian new-born, using for inspiration the traditional Yoruba model. Also in Nigeria, the traditional *Igba Ndu* rites of the Igbo tribe have been Christianized as a way of restoring personal and social relations when they enter into crisis.

(c) In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cardinal Malula (1917-89) began a religious congregation, which was given canonical status in 1967, in order to form religious who were authentically African and truly Christian. African garb was adopted as the religious habit, and the religious formation drew inspiration from African initiation tradition. In 1975 Bishop Matondo Kwa Nzambi, CICM, (1932-2011) created the *Bilenge ya Mwinda* movement, using the traditional Ngbaka initiation as a model for forming young persons passionately committed to Christ.

(d) The Center for Study of African Religions was established in 1967 at what is now the Catholic University of the Congo. Abbot Barthélemy Adoukonou set up the *Sillon Noir* in 1970 with a group of Catholic intellectuals in Benin. It is a bold project which draws on the traditional initiation of the Aja-Fon culture of Benin and Togo. (*Editor's note: Sillon Noir is a movement of inculturation which seeks to present the gospel message more effectively to the people of God by linking it to the ancestral African traditions.*)

The Society of Jesus takes a modest part in this dialogue through various ministries. We mention here only some of the more outstanding Jesuits involved.

In Cameroon three names stand out. Fr. Engelbert Mveng (1930-95) worked to promote a type of African religious life that drew inspiration from traditional African religions, and he also created Christian art based on African motifs. Fr. Meinrad Hebga (1928-2008) was on the front lines of the combat against evil and its various manifestations. Fr. Eric de Rosny (1930-2012) also involved himself in the struggle against evil by entering into dialogue with traditional African therapy.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fr. Boka di Mpasi (1929-2006) founded the theological journal *Telema* in 1975 and engaged in African theology. Worthy of note are the research and the teaching carried out at the Jesuit faculty of philosophy of St. Peter Canisius de Kimwenza. Fathers René De Haes (1923-2005), Léon de Saint Moulin, and Johan Allary have contributed to the works of the theological school of Kinshasa and to the dynamism of the Church of Kinshasa. In 1970 Fr. Nghenzi Lonta elaborated the *W'athu* rule of Christian life. Fr. Matungulu Otene (1946-99) eagerly sought to make religious life coherent within the context of Black African spirituality. Fathers Alain van der Beken and Hubert Van Roy have assembled materials on the culture of the Yaka people.

Fr. Claude Sumner has long been involved in research and teaching about the ancient culture of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In Madagascar, we can point out four Jesuits. François Xavier Tabao (1927-1999), bishop of Mananjary, attempted to inculturate the faith by using his talent as musician and composer. Fr. Adolphe Razafintsalama (1930-2000) created a complete vocabulary indispensable for Malagasy anthropology and worked at developing an inculturated Christian theology of ancestors. Fr. Robert Dubois has carried out major research projects in a region hardly exposed to Christianity. Fr. François Noiret, like Fr. Dubois, studies and teaches Malagasy anthropology.

In Réunion Fr. Stephane Nicaise is currently engaged in study of and dialogue with creole religion, while Fr. Arul Varapasadam, founding member in 1999 of the Group for Interreligious Dialogue, dialogues with Christians of that island who are of the Hindu tradition.

Very few young Africans are following in the footsteps of the illustrious Jesuits already mentioned. Fr. Ntima Nkanza (DRC) searches out African ways of doing



A mask which in the Yoruba tradition of Nigeria represents the ancestors.

Christology and develops an understanding of the quest for the divine in Africa. Fr. Orobator Agbonkhianmeghe (Nigeria) draws on African literature and symbolism to create a relevant African theology. Fr. Ludovic Lado (Cameroon) studies the ministry of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in its struggle against the world of sickness and darkness. He is also a keen observer of the paradoxes of the African cultures. Fr. Lusala (DRC) studies the prototypes of local African religions in the light of Christianity.

All the abovementioned efforts are in large part the result of the process of inculturation. This effort has not only involved liturgy and culture, but has touched also on other important questions. The work must be continued at a deeper level in order to reach the hearts of persons, communities, and cultures and confront them with the radical newness of the Gospel, even to the point of reaching different levels of irrationality and lack of awareness within us.

Besides, it is in the crucible of this paradigm of inculturation that other forms of dialogue with the



The leopard-skin chasuble worn by this priest makes its wearer the protector of the community and a master of initiation.

uninterested in them and so discourage or ridicule those who do show interest. As a result, the adherents of some traditional African religions or the members of African religions movements or mystical confraternities accuse African Christians of treason.

It is therefore important that those who are interested in dialogue with the traditional African religions be knowledgeable, virtuous persons who exercise good judgment and know how to discern spirits. They should work in teams to provide themselves with mutual supervision and to give greater visibility of their apostolate. In view of this, we plan to organize soon a pan-African meeting of Jesuits engaged in the dialogue with African religions and cultures.

We hope the Society of Jesus will prepare and encourage more young African Jesuits to acquire the formation needed for this ministry of dialogue. The creation of a multidisciplinary center of African studies in the near future or the establishment of a specialized

traditional African religions take place, above all the interpersonal dialogue and the dialogue of life within families.

The dialogue with traditional African religions is not an easy task, especially at the level of theological exchanges and religious experiences. The difficulty has to do with the nature of these religions and other factors, such as the tendency of many people to reduce all traditional African religion to certain esoteric aspects that are disconcerting, or to demonize it completely. Some persons engaged in this work are so insanely desirous of an intimate knowledge of these religions that they run the risk of becoming deluded and disenchanted. Other Christians, aware of these risks but similarly reducing African religion to its obscure features, become terribly frightened of engagement and cut off all contact with the religions. Some people are simply ignorant of these religions, while many others seem to be quite

program in African religions and cultures in our institutions of higher learning would help the Society of Jesus to make a valuable contribution to this dialogue.

We also hope that the Society of Jesus, especially in Africa, will become ever more convinced that the African traditional religions are alive in a good portion of humanity. It certainly would not be just to ignore this humanity, since God is also carrying on a permanent dialogue with it (GC 34, 133). Indeed, "interreligious dialogue is an essential element of our mission today" (GC 34, 137), including in Africa.

Mpay Kemboly, S.J.
Kimwenza, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.

GOD WITH AN INDIAN FACE



Xavier Albó, who has spent many years in Bolivia, explains the secrets, the beauty, and the difficulties of the encounter between the Christian faith and the indigenous religions of Latin America.



Fr. Xavier Albó S.J., born in Spain and sent to Bolivia as a Jesuit novice, is now a Bolivian citizen. As an anthropologist and linguist, he works mostly with Quechua and Aymara populations. In 1971 he was co-founder of the Center for Peasant Farming Research and Promotion, an institution promoted by the Jesuits of Bolivia. Its main activity now is defending the rights established for indigenous peoples in the Constitution of 2009. Fr. Albó works also with *Quarto Intermedio*, a journal of socio-political analysis published by the Society of Jesus. In order to understand better what the indigenous religions are like and how we can dialogue with them, we asked him some questions.

First of all, can you explain the meaning of the term "indigenous religions of Latin America"? What are their principal characteristics? How widespread are they now?

The indigenous ethnic groups of Latin America number more than 300, and they include about 20 million persons. In some countries, like Guatemala and Bolivia, the indigenous peoples make up a majority of the population, both in rural areas and in many urban centers. At the other extreme, such as Brazil, the ethnic groups are diverse and scattered about, many of them having less than a thousand or as few as a hundred members. Also there are perhaps a hundred small groups which so far have not had any contact with modern society.

Within two centuries of the arrival of the Europeans, the great majority of the people living in the heart of the areas conquered and occupied by the Spanish and the Portuguese had already accepted baptism. Some did so as an inevitable part of the colonial situation, which included as one of its ideological components the conversion of the indigenous peoples; others were baptized thanks to the presence of exceptional missionaries who worked to curb military force. A good example is the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, who worked among the Mayan Indians in Chiapas and Guatemala. Later on, the Jesuit missions of Paraguay and many other efforts in peripheral regions developed a constructive model, as shown, for example, in the movie "The Mission" (1986).

Since the end of the 19th century the presence of evangelical missions has been felt in Latin America. They offer a wide range of activities, and some have had notable impact, especially among the Mayan Indians of Guatemala. Some native peoples, such as the Mapuches of Chile and many Guaranis in the Chaco region of Bolivia, put up fierce resistance against both conquest and evangelization, until they were finally subjected by arms at the end of the 19th century.

Evangelization has had less of an impact on many of the minority groups that were contacted later, some by Catholic missionaries, but many others by evangelical groups, including those that specialize in this area, such as the New Tribes missions and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Until the middle of the 20th century both



Above, offerings made to Mother-Earth and to the ancestors. On the preceding page: Chichicastenango (Guatemala), an aged Mayan woman burns incense outside a church.

these mission organizations used a proselytizing and “civilizing” style which included boarding schools designed to help the younger generations not only to be Christians but also to live in a “civilized” way.

Dialogue with the indigenous religions involves speaking about a process which began, rather traumatically, with the “discovery” of the Americas. What is the situation today as regards that process? What are the positive and negative aspects?

The indigenous peoples who were Christianized early on experienced all the traumas of being Christian within a colonial and then neo-colonial situation. Among them we find an intense process of syncretism, not only in religion but in all aspects of life. Their community life and their internal governance, for example, adopt and combine elements from both their ancestral traditions and the Spanish models. Their expressions of communal indigenous identity frequently coincide with religious celebrations which reflect the early evangelization, but they are reinterpreted in function of their own ancestral worldviews by means of a variety of syncretistic forms. One example among many is the frequent identification in the Andes of the Virgin Mary with Mother Earth or “Pacha Mama.”

Among indigenous peoples with more recent contact with Christianity, the previous model of boarding schools was called into question by the missionaries themselves. As a result, it either disappeared or underwent significant changes, which allowed greater recognition of native values. For example, in the Salesian mission among the Shuar of the Amazon region of Ecuador, the graduates of those reformed boarding schools went on in recent

decades to become the principal leaders of social development for their people. At the same time, we have seen the brutal penetration of big landowners and large corporations into native territories in order to take possession of them and of the natural resources they possess. But this ruthless exploitation has called forth the Good News of a wave of solidarity with these peoples. As a result the Society of Jesus has already had several martyrs, such as Fr. Brunier and Brother Cañas in the Amazon region of Brazil.

Whether the indigenous peoples were evangelized centuries ago or more recently, they continue to be marginalized and subordinated by the dominant society or many neo-colonial sectors of the Church. Many of these peoples have had their ancestral lands taken away by landlords and agribusiness, or the lands have suffered environmental degradation as the result of mining, oil-drilling, or other types of exploitation.

In this midst of this darkness there are two main bright spots, both promoted by the Second Vatican Council at a worldwide level. One is greater public consciousness about the need to promote justice for these marginalized and exploited peoples; the other is greater openness regarding their unique ways of living and believing.

What is the difference between dialogue and inculturation?

In its fullest meaning, dialogue means mutually sharing and learning with those who are different, with neither side renouncing its identity or trying to impose it on the other. Among the many ways of understanding inculturation, I use the one most common among missionaries who arrive from another culture. It means

becoming inserted among the people to whom one has been sent and adopting their culture and language, along with their values, their joys, their dreams, and their anxieties. Inculturation means being born again in that new culture, even though we are adults. When inculturation reaches deeper levels, it will also include a profound inter-religious dialogue. But the mere fact of adopting the language and the manners of a particular people does not fully guarantee that there will be an attitude of dialogue with them. It may simply be a strategy to win them over to the “sole” truth of the missionary. Paul’s saying about “becoming all things to all in order to win some for Christ” (1 Cor 9,22) can be interpreted either way.

You are well known for your writings and reflections on “indigenous theology.” Can you explain to us what indigenous theology is?

I prefer to call it “Indian theology,” in the Latin American sense of indigenous. It was born above all among the indigenous peoples with a long Christian tradition, such as in Mesoamerica and the Andes. At first it was spoken of in the singular, because of its obvious association with the theology of liberation. It is clear that all indigenous peoples continue to be oppressed, not only in the political and socio-economic spheres, but also in their religious and cultural practices. Even within the Church their role tends to be more subordinate and receptive than active.

But gradually we have come to esteem more and more the particular ways in which each people lives and practices its own spirituality and worldview, including the syncretistic elements adopted from European culture as a way of expressing and codifying their Christian faith. In the process, the diversity of the indigenous religions has assumed more importance, and more peoples have become part of the reflective process. As a result, we now speak of Indian theologies, in the plural. At the same time, we have become aware of how these indigenous worldviews can make important contributions to the Church and to humanity. In the words of one of their principal theologians, the Zapoteca priest Eleazar López, of Mexico, we are moving “from protest to proposal.”

Obviously theological reflection and missiology bring us back to the old debate about how to reconcile the one and the many: the one faith and its varying local expressions. In this regard, dialogue becomes more important than proselytism. We need to ask: what is our primary role on this continent with its tremendous religious diversity and richness? Is it more important to spread the beliefs, devotions, and religious practices codified and brought from Europe, or should we rather, as equals, listen to and learn from these traditions?

How is Indian theology presently viewed by the official Church and by the popular Church?

There is a wide range of views, as is evident from what happened in Chiapas, Mexico. That region has a strong indigenous presence, but it has long been exploited for its natural resources. In 1960, when Samuel Ruiz (+2011) was named bishop of Chiapas, he had little

knowledge of the Mayan peoples, but he allowed himself to be seduced and evangelized by them. They in turn accepted him as their *tatic* (father) and were likewise evangelized by him. They shared meals and spoke in their languages, sharing with him their dreams and their problems. The bishop provided them a solid religious and social formation, from which there eventually grew a vast network of married deacons. Some sectors of society criticized Ruiz for his closeness to the Zapatista movement which arose in 1992, and they pressured Rome to have him removed. But at this crucial moment everyone needed the *tatic* Samuel, so that he became the principal negotiator between the government and the Zapatistas.

In 1995 Raúl Vera O.P. was named auxiliary bishop with right of succession. He had a more conservative pastoral approach than Ruiz, but he soon began to understand and accept the transformation that had taken place in the diocese. Thus, in 1999, when the resignation of Samuel Ruiz was finally accepted, Vera did not take over as his successor but was sent to another diocese in a distant part of the country. Ruiz’s successor in Chiapas was instead Felipe Arizmendi, who has undergone a similar but even more accelerated process of conversion. He supports the abovementioned Fr. Eleazar, whom other bishops wished to remove from the leading role he has in Indian theology.

Could you give us a practical example of the experience of dialogue between Catholicism and the indigenous religions?

A very common experience is what is called “the evangelized evangelizers.” My fellow Jesuit Pepe Henestrosa (+2004) practiced it intensely, starting from the time he became inserted among the Aymaras in 1972. He could advance only so far in his efforts, however, partly because he never mastered the Aymara language, despite repeated attempts. In the end he consoled himself by reflecting that his limitation allowed the Aymaras themselves to find their own way in the dialogue. As he recorded in his diary, he reflected on how to help them share fully in the profundity of the Eucharist, and how they might be truly Aymaras and at the same time Jesuits.

After several years, members of the community of Qurpa invited him to one of their own rituals. The principal celebrant (the *yatiri*) had Pepe sit by his side, and he explained to him the meaning of each gesture and symbol. Pepe’s diary gives evidence of how impressed he was by that experience. From that point on he gradually learned to “borrow” elements from indigenous spirituality and faith, even when he did not understand everything. Years later, when several married deacons were being ordained, he prepared for them one of the traditional rituals so that they would also feel the protection of Mother Earth and their Achachila ancestors as they assumed their new office. After his death, one of them remarked to me: “He really understood us.”

Xavier Albó, S.J.
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.

FROM THE JESUIT WORLD



“In a world that overwhelms people with a multiplicity of sensations, ideas, and images, the Society seeks to keep the fire of its original inspiration alive in a way that offers warmth and light to our contemporaries” (GC35, d. 2, 1).



Jesuits at the Second Vatican Council

"A surprising peace of news!" was the laconic and unexpected comment by French Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac on his being named by Pope John the 23rd as a *peritus* (*Expert*) on the Preparatory Commission for the 2nd Vatican Council. A surprise on his part because it signified for him a rehabilitation of his theological theories and his defense of the thought of Teilhard de Chardin. It was, in a sense, the end of an exile and of the censuring of his writings by the Church and the Society.

Being designated as an expert at the Council, after the implicit condemnation of many of de Lubac's writings by Pope Pius XII's

encyclical *Humani generis*, represented above all the validation of his style and his way doing theology, and of his rediscovery of the Fathers of the Church. It was a rehabilitation looked on with suspicion by the Holy Office, especially because of his work *Surnaturel*. His was a situation very similar to that of another exponent of the so-called *New Theology*, Yves Marie Congar, a French Dominican and a friend. Also under a ban of silence, he was nonetheless also named *peritus* by Pope Roncalli.

Probably this "surprising piece of news" about a Jesuit named *peritus* at the Council aroused the same state of mind and the same trepidation in the

more than 35,000 Jesuits spread throughout the world, led at that time by the Belgian John Baptist Janssens. They were called from that moment on to pray and prepare themselves so that this epoch-making ecclesial event would be a successful change-agent, as hoped by the reigning pontiff, John the 23rd.

The opening of the Ecumenical Council on October 11, 1962 surely meant for the Society a small Jesuit "assembly", given the many priests and even bishops of the Society called to participate in it. Together with the Dominicans, the sons of St. Ignatius were among the most numerous, but they were above all the "ghostwriters" – providers of

On the 50th anniversary of the 2nd Vatican Council We want to remember what was for the Society of Jesus a very important reality: that many Jesuits were called to participate in it as experts or consultors and were able to contribute to the production of particularly significant documents.



drafts, preparatory outlines or documents among the most important of Vatican II, as for example *Gaudium et Spes*, *Nostra Aetate*, and *Dignitatis Humanae*.

Thus it was that the bishops of the Council recruited many priests of the Society from Catholic universities like Louvain, Fourvière (Lyons), Innsbruck, and S. Georgen (Frankfurt). They arrived in the course of the four sessions to live up and down the two sides of the Tiber. They were great names of the so-called and swiftly defined “avant-garde theology” of that time: from Jesuits Jean Daniélou, Karl Rahner, Gustave Martelet, and Henri Rodet to Dominicans Marie-Dominique Chenu, Edward Schillebeeckx, to the Redemptorist Bernard Häring, to the Swiss Hans Küng, the German Joseph Ratzinger, and the Belgian Gérard Philips. A “theological center of infection” as the historian Giuseppe Alberigo felicitously named it, which aimed at the rediscovery of patristic and biblical fonts, the re-launching of the ecumenical movement, and the end of a certain Roman intransigence in the field of doctrine.

As protagonists in the doctrinal commissions of the Council, obviously, were the great exponents and champions of Roman theology in the magisterium of Pius XII like

Sebastian Tromp, a Dutch Jesuit of the Gregorian and secretary of the theological commission who was the trusted advisor of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, or his Spanish fellow Jesuit Ramón Bidagor, an expert in Sacramental discipline and the trusted advisor of Cardinal Benedetto Aloisi Masella.

In those days the Gregorian, like the Biblicum and the Oriental Institute, represented a privileged reservoir for the recruitment of experts destined to offer their scholarly service for the development of many documents: from Charles Boyer to Belgian Edouard Dhanis, consultant of the Holy Office (strongly critical of De Lubac’s theology) to the German canonist Wilhelm Bertrams (chosen by Paul VI to redo the *Nota praevia*



Above, Fr. Henri de Lubac, shortly after being made Cardinal, with Cardinal Lustiger. On the preceding page, a view of the Second Vatican Council in St Peter's Basilica in Rome. On the following page, Fr. Karl Rahner, another great theologian of the Council.

for the proposed text *De Ecclesia*) to the Canadian scripture scholar Roderick MacKenzie, to the Italians Paolo Molinari, Alberto Vaccari and Paolo Dezza.

The Ecuadorian Jesuit Pablo Muños Vega took part in the Council first as an expert (he had been among other things rector of the Gregorian) and then as a Council Father when named coadjutor bishop of Quito by Paul VI in 1964.

Contributions during the Council of Jesuits from other universities than the Roman ones came, for example, from Christologist Alois Grillmeier or Friedrich Wulf (principal “ghostwriter” of many speeches by Cardinal Döpfner) or the Chilean Juan Ochagavía.

In the area of communication, particularly for journalists and specialists, a privileged and authoritative source for understanding the real dynamic of the conciliar work (from the voting on preparatory schemes, to discussions or sketches of texts made by the bishops) were the chronicles written for *Civiltà Cattolica* by Giovanni Caprile or those edited in French for *Etudes* by Robert

Rouquette. Jesuit Roberto Tucci, then director of *Civiltà Cattolica* and expert at the Council, undertook direct reporting to the Italian and international press during all four of the Council’s sessions. The experts’ contribution during the conciliar years 1962-65 was broad and many-faceted in various areas of the magisterium. It gave voice and space to the varied entreaties of the Council Fathers who were divided, in a certain sense, between the innovators and those opposed to the renewal asked by John XXIII and Paul VI. Think of the role Fr. Tromp played in establishing the outline *De Ecclesia*, or that of Fr. Rahner for *De Fontibus Revelationis* where, also due to the urging of the German episcopate, questions relative to the relation of Scripture-Tradition emerged which enlisted a fruitful collaboration between Joseph Ratzinger and the 60-year old Jesuit from Freiburg.

It has been ascertained from the research of many scholars that the dogmatic constitution on divine revelation *Dei Verbum* has theological fingerprints of both Rahner and de Lubac. The strong inspiration of this



latter, according to many scholars of the post-conciliar period, is evident in another document fundamental to contemporary Church history, *Lumen Gentium*.

The signature of another Jesuit, Jean Daniélou, was applied to the drawing up of *Gaudium et Spes*. His expertise was fundamental for the elaboration of "Draft XIII." The influence of this French academic and future cardinal was due, many said, to his having injected a personalist understanding into the final text of this pastoral constitution thanks to his great competence in the field of biblical anthropology.

And once again it was a son of St. Ignatius, John Courtney Murray of the United States, who filled a key role in the drawing up of the declaration on religious liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*, of which he was the chief author. This was the most discussed and controverted

document in the Council. Protagonists in the argument were the Spanish bishops and the Cardinal of Genoa, Giuseppe Siri; its chief backers were members of the episcopacy of the United States, fatherland of religious pluralism. It was certainly no accident – in the thinking of Cardinal Agostino Bea as reported in 1965 by Alberto Cavallari of the *Corriere della Sera* – that *Dignitatis Humanae* represented a turnabout because for the first time it dragged the Church of Paul VI into the "unknown territory of freedom."

It was biblical scholar Fr. Agostino Bea who, during the conciliar sessions, wove the intricate diplomatic tapestry of dialogue in the ecumenical field and with the Jews. He did this through his role of first president of the Secretariate for the Unity of Christians. More concretely, he was indefatigable in being the "ambassador of unity" for

Christians, particularly for the orthodox Churches and the Anglican and Protestant community at the Council — we need only think of one of the most eminent figures of this group, Oscar Cullman. The influence of the Jesuit cardinal was important as well in the drawing up of the conciliar decree *De Oecumenismo*, but the masterpiece of Bea was above all the imprint he left on the declaration *Nostrae Aetate*. In it, among other notable things, every form of anti-semitism was condemned and the Hebrew people were implicitly freed from the accusation of Deicide with regard to Jesus.

For Jesuits, the Council also marked the transition of the guidance of the Society from the Belgian John Baptist Janssens (1964) to the Basque Pedro Arrupe (1965). It would fall to the newly elected General to speak in the conciliar hall on September 27, 1965. His intervention was interpreted by the press as "too Papist" and centering on a war without quarter on atheism carried on by the Church and in particular by the religious orders. But – outside of the fantastic reconstructions of journalists and certain critiques like those of Yves Marie Congar — it was approved and weighed within the session of the Council with great respect for its profundity, and noted by de Lubac in his diary as "rich and opportune."

The great legacy of Vatican II – this was the final reflection of Fr. Henri de Lubac at the conclusion of his "diary" (*Carnets du Concil*) — consists above all in the "necessity to ground the updating" of the Church (and, by implication, of the Society) "on the two great dogmatic constitutions: *Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum*." De Lubac's is a forward-looking warning which is totally contemporary and correct even today for the tasks awaiting the Society of Jesus in the Third Millennium.

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Integration of the Provinces



Above, a group of young people of Magis, a youth organization of the European Jesuits that participated in the world youth days in Spain in 2011.

“From five to one?” Those who know the Society of Jesus and how it is organized might find almost unthinkable the plan of the Spanish Jesuits to make no fewer than five Provinces disappear and join them into one single Province. It doesn’t help being told that the new Province will take several years to become a reality. The doubts persist: “How are they going to coordinate the more than one hundred apostolic institutions in Spain – including primary, secondary, and professional schools, universities, and works of the social apostolate, youth ministry, and service of the faith (sacramental ministries, spirituality, faith-culture dialogue, mass media, etc.)? Is it possible for more than a thousand Jesuits to unite their forces together? What plans are there to accompany the thousands of collaborators who play an important role in all these apostolic activities?”

Such a major project has not been the fruit of a sudden brainstorm. It has been evolving over a long

period. In 1989 and again in 2004 there were instances where Spanish Provinces were fused together, but that affected only a few of those existing at the time. Those partial fusions made it clear that it was necessary to continue along the path toward an ever greater and more definitive integration. This was seen as necessary both as a result of conditions internal to the Society, above all the persistent shortage of vocations, and as a response to external factors, especially the Spanish Church’s becoming increasingly a diaspora in a society with a long Catholic tradition.

Before Fr. General would allow us to begin the journey toward a single Province, it was necessary to present him with several instruments that would convince him. Fr. Nicolás warned us that not everything was possible and that we could not proceed in just any way. He laid down one condition: our integration had to be a “restructuring with Spirit.” The new

The new Province will not be a reduced photocopy of all that the present Provinces are and do. It will have to be something really “new,” with that newness that the Spirit makes possible, a reality beyond what is deducible from the present.

Province would not be a reduced photocopy of *all* that the present Provinces are and do (the provinces are Aragón, Andalucía, Castilla, Loyola, and Tarragon.) It would have to be something really new, with that newness that the Spirit makes possible, a reality beyond what is deducible from the present.

Given those premises, we decided that the first bridge toward the future would be a common apostolic project for the five Provinces. The second bridge, just as important as the first, was a joint program of spiritual, community, and apostolic renewal which would prepare both the Jesuits and our collaborators to face the challenge before us. Along with that, we designed a structure of government that would be suitable for a very large Province which felt called to involve itself in Spain's extraordinary social diversity. Finally, we set a time-line for the process. Only after all this was done, in 2010, did Fr. General allow us to undertake the venture of establishing ourselves as a single apostolic reality. He gave us a time limit of six years: in the year 2016, at the latest, would be the launching of the Province of Spain.

Since Fr. General gave his approval, the Provinces have been moving along an unexplored trail, as if on a pilgrimage. Each step along the way provides new opportunities for learning. Even though we still do not have a roadmap for arriving at the goal of a single Province, the journey itself is revealing to us realities that we had not foreseen.

That fact is that we gain a clearer vision of the path to take only by daring to make certain options; there is no other way. One of the first options was made in 2010, when we saw that it was necessary to start building from the foundation up. Accordingly, all the Jesuits in the different stages of formation came to depend on the Provincial of Spain. The future of the Spanish Society was thus placed in the hands of a common governing structure. Furthermore, there is a discernment process which is determining the ministries of the Jesuits who will assume many of the responsibilities in the new Province, all this being done with due anticipation and according to criteria dictated by the united apostolic effort.

Another important option was transferring leadership over several apostolic sectors to the Provincial of

Spain. The responsibility for education was turned over to him in 2011. This is the largest sector we have, with 68 education centers serving 150,000 students. The Provincial has also accepted responsibility for youth ministry. By the time this yearbook is published, the network of university centers will also be under the aegis of the Provincial of Spain. The social apostolate and the various types of pastoral ministry—Ignatian spirituality, Faith-Justice-Culture, and university ministry, among others—will be successively transferred when the time seems appropriate.

But the goal is to not just reorganization of the Society at the level of sectors and apostolic works, nor simple reinforcement of existing Jesuit and Ignatian services, each one specialized and independent of the others. In other words, our concern is not simply to make the new Province capable of, say, making a college function well in its pastoral and educational work or helping a retreat house offer an innovative program of Ignatian spirituality. We want to achieve something more than that.

We are restructuring so that the Society of Jesus will be seen as a vital apostolic body in the Spanish Church and in the society which the Church seeks to serve. Our principal *business* as Jesuits is bearing witness to the Gospel through our personal, community, and apostolic life, as this is shaped by the Ignatian charism. Our religious and cultural context requires us to infuse a deeply evangelical tone into our apostolic actions, whatever they may be, both within our institutions and beyond. Moreover, it also requires that we share our spirituality with others, that we develop networks among our Jesuit ministries, and that we collaborate with other church workers.

We believe that this whole undertaking is possible if within the new Province we create meeting spaces—local, regional, and even territorial—for all the diverse activities in which the Society of

Below, the welcoming page of the new website of the Spanish Jesuits, who will soon be reorganized into a single Province of the Society of Jesus. On the following page, the entrance of ICADE, the Institute of Business Administration and Management of the University of Comillas.



Jesus is involved, directly or indirectly. We want to build a new Province in which our apostolic ventures are bold enough to relate to one another, see where they can work together, and discover how they can be mutually enriching. The integration of the Provinces is not motivated by a concern to *do still more*, but by the desire to respond, *with the reality that we as an apostolic body are today*, to what God asks of us in the way of greater service to those in greatest need. Perhaps that will mean that we end up doing *less*, but in any case we have to do it *together*. This last point is the essential one.

We have called these meeting spaces *apostolic platforms*, and they may be local or territorial. They are not vice-provinces, nor are they regions. Juridically we will remain *one* Province, but we will promote intense networking among Jesuits and collaborators, among communities and apostolic works, among apostolic sectors and individual initiatives, etc., precisely in the city, zone, or territory where they are working apostolically. In order for this to become something more than a dream, it will be necessary to create a map with a limited number of *apostolic platforms*. And this must be ready when the new Province starts up.

A change as profound as this needs time to be thought out, understood, and above all implemented. As a result the Provincials have made a serious effort to encourage discussion of the integration process among all Jesuits. We are witnessing the transition in Spain toward a Society of Jesus quite different from the one that now exists. We are frequently afflicted with a sensation of vertigo, and we have to resist the temptation to draw back from the challenge. Spanish Jesuits are being offered many opportunities to become involved in the process, such as Spiritual Exercises on an inter-provincial level and days of reflection presented by the Provincials themselves. The aim is not only to make known the



organizational details of the integration process, but to communicate an experience of the community and apostolic *spirit* by which this process will make more effective the assistance we give to others.

The discussion of the integration process has to go beyond merely announcing it. It will be necessary to clarify several organizational aspects of the new Province, especially those which are more difficult to conceive or comprehend. It will be necessary to stress how the dimension of service is the central focus of the whole corporative effort in which we are involved; we need to explain the integration process to our friends and collaborators; and we should design an effective communications policy.

We will become more aware of the complexity of the integration process as we enter more deeply into it. There is no shortage of questions which will be posed and which will demand simultaneous attention. Discernment will be required to

maintain a proper balance between competing elements: between the organizational and the apostolic, between certain sectors, between local interests and sectorial concerns, between the institutions and the non-institutionalized apostolic works, between the continuity of apostolic activity and the sharp decrease in the number of Jesuits, etc. We need to take account of the diverse dimensions of our mission and make the inevitable hard choices about ministries and works. Nevertheless, it is also true that in the midst of all this complexity the integration of our Provinces is being aided by grace. It is the grace that God sees fit to grant us as he moves us to embrace without reserve our own limited circumstances. What is paradoxical is that God succeeds in showing us that those same limitations are his way of *calling us*.

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Translated by
Joseph Owens, S.J.



Fifty Years of Jesuit Presence

The Jesuit Province of Sri Lanka celebrated this year (2011-2012), its Golden Jubilee, reminiscing the years since it received the status of a Vice-Province in 1962. On 26th August 2011 the Jubilee year was inaugurated at *Fatima Retreat House*, Lewella, Kandy with a threefold purpose: 1) Thanking God for all the opportunities of the Province; 2) To evaluating our present life and works at this crucial juncture in the life of Sri Lanka and continuing the Province Apostolic Discernment and Planning of August 2009, to grasp where God wants us to be; 3) Renewing our commitment by understanding our charism and vision to become better instruments in God's hands. On this occasion several activities have been realised including a team spearheading a visioning process towards the future of the Province in the spirit of continual discernment and a 19th annotation of the Spiritual Exercises for the entire Province that has already begun in all earnestness.

This was a grace-filled occasion and a moment of renewal for the entire Province. The past fifty years have not been easy. The challenges encountered by the people of Sri Lanka in political, economic, social, ethnic and religious areas have always been a concern of the Jesuits. It has motivated and fashioned the Jesuit response in most crucial times. Missioned to love God in our brothers and sisters, the Jesuits endeavour for a sustainable and equitable economic growth and development, a transparent political rule, a spiritual renewal of the faithful and care for the desperate and the marginalized. Through the signs of the times God has moved the Province to search God's Will and has called the Jesuits here to embrace new vistas of mission and

service to God's people who need us most. Therefore in this context, the Jubilee celebration was on the one hand to recall and cherish the faithfulness of God to us in the history of this country and on the other, to remind ourselves of the mission that awaits us.

The Vice-Province of Sri Lanka was created on 15th August 1962, even though the first arrival of Jesuits in the country, then known as Ceylon, goes back to the time of St. Francis Xavier. The second Jesuit era began with the establishment of the Papal Seminary in Kandy and the contemporaneous founding of the two dioceses of Trincomalee-Batticaloa (East) and Galle (South). The responsibility of administering the two newly founded dioceses was entrusted to the Society of Jesus and the two dioceses were manned by Jesuits from two independent European Provinces (Champagne-France and Belgium respectively). These two mission Provinces, though they later exchanged their responsibility with two other Provinces (New Orleans-USA and Naples-Italy respectively) were amalgamated into a Vice-Province in 1962, which eventually became the Jesuit Province of Sri Lanka.

Decades prior to the creation of the Province we witnessed a steady flow of missionaries from several parts of the world, especially from France, Belgium, USA and Italy working in Sri Lanka. They worked in various mission stations and Jesuit institutions in the country. The composition of the Province was multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-national. The wisdom and the far-sightedness of the Jesuits then of creating one united Province rather than keeping the two missions apart provided the Jesuits with an opportunity of becoming radical

witnesses for unity, peace and harmony. Today we consider this a God-given opportunity and a call to work for peace and reconciliation.

From the time of the establishment of the Vice-Province, Jesuits in Sri Lanka had been engaging in various ministries serving a multitude of people. The Ministry of Education was firmly established and was a major apostolic involvement of the Jesuits in Sri Lanka. In the Diocese of Galle, *St. Aloysius College* was established which became one of the finest schools not only in the South, but in all Ceylon. In the East, *St. Michael's College* was established and it excelled in scholarship, in sports and boasted of a science laboratory that was the envy of other schools in the island. These and *St. Joseph's College* in Trincomalee were among the more admired Catholic schools in the island which turned out many

The past fifty years of our Province have not been easy. The challenges encountered by the people of Sri Lanka in political, economic, social, ethnic and religious areas have always been a concern of the Jesuits.

distinguished scholars who served the country in the political, educational and social spheres of the country. In 1970, mostly due to financial strain, the three Jesuit colleges, which held the Province closely knit, were handed over to the State. From then onwards there had been a standstill regarding formal education apostolate of the Jesuits in Sri Lanka. However, some Jesuits continued even after the hand-over of the colleges to be lecturers and chaplains of government universities in Peradeniya, Jaffna and Batticaloa. Even though the Papal Seminary was shifted from Kandy to Pune (India) in 1955, Jesuits continued teaching in the newly-established National Seminary as a contribution to the formation of the clergy in Sri Lanka.

Although the Jesuits had given up their schools, there were several initiatives started in terms of

technical education and English Academies. The *Cholankanda Youth Training Centre* (CYTC) was established to guide and train the youth who find it difficult to pursue higher education. The Centre aims to equip the students with vocational training and help them in employment. The rural Sinhalese and the plantation Tamil youth who stopped their formal education due to various reasons are the beneficiaries of this institute. The Academies in Galle, Batticaloa and Trincomalee and the *Eastern Technical Institute* (ETI), Batticaloa, vision to empower the poor and rural youth for better employment through training in the English language and computer. In 2010 the Province initiated the process of starting a Jesuit High School in Galle. After obtaining the necessary permission and approval, *Mount Calvary High School* began its first

academic year with 36 students in the first grade. The different grades of the school will be increased as the first batch of students progresses ahead annually.

One of the shame-filled injustices that polluted the life of the country was the blatant callousness which surrounded the Indian Tamils on the tea plantations. Their plight was pathetic. All citizenship rights refused to them, they lived like animals in the miserable cooley-lines in the plantations. They received a daily pittance as wages. This shame had to be erased. Several Jesuits worked among the Tamil labourers helping them to become aware of their human dignity and live as human beings. Thanks to the heroic pioneering work of the Jesuits on the plantations, the living conditions of the plantation workers have slightly improved. Schools and recreation centres have been set up, which will

The inauguration of the Province Jubilee on 5 August 2011.



eventually help to draw the younger folk out of the shame and misery their lives were shrouded in. *Sathyodaya*, Encounter Centre, took up the cause of the plantation outcasts and with a committed team set up centres in the different parts of the province that worked efficiently towards the alleviation of the workers and for the increase in their standard of living.

The *Centre for Social Concern* (CSC) Hatton, visions to empower the plantation poor through education, health programmes, peace building, networking and advocacy. The *Centre for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights* in Trincomalee aims at providing legal assistance and social service to those deprived of human dignity. The *Shanthi Community Animation Movement* is meant for the dwellers on the banks of the Wellewatte-Dehiwala canal. The impact of the movement centered on improving the standard of living attending to the education of the children, providing medical care and sanitation facilities and conscientizing the people for community building. These social centers target the marginalized poor, victims of the war that include the widows, youth and children and the politically and environmentally affected people. The *Jesuit Frontier Mission* in the South and in the North has reached out to thousands of people who are in desperate need. They work with Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus as well as Christians, helping them in areas like education, monetary assistance and pastoral care.

The Province maintains two retreat houses: *Fatima Retreat House* in Kandy and *Manresa Retreat House* in Batticaloa. The various programmes the Jesuits conduct in these retreat centres aim at the total and integral development of the person. In view of promoting Buddhist-Christian dialogue, the *Tulana Research Centre* was established which carries on the work of reconciliation among the Buddhist and Christian at the highest level of inter-faith dialogue.

In the field of intellectual apostolate, Jesuits are involved in lecturing at the university level and publications continue to come out on various issues. The 17 volumes containing the translations of documents pertinent to the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods in the Church history of Sri Lanka is a monumental contribution.

As early as in 1956 the Sri Lanka Jesuits were blessed with the opportunity of having a residence in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. Initially the residence served those lecturing at *Aquinas*, a school for higher studies which was eventually granted university status. The residence eventually became a Service Centre for all the Jesuits in the Province who needed to travel to the capital for various needs. Our presence recognized in the Arch-Diocese enabled us over the years to enter into different fields of apostolate and until recently the residence also served as the Provincialate which is now shifted to Negombo about 30 Km away from the capital.

During the decades of ethnic conflict another initiative the Jesuits launched was the *Lilies of the Field* in Batticaloa. It became a home to several ex-combatants who were in the process of rehabilitation. This centre provides those traumatized youth and children an opportunity to get back to their homes and live a normal life. Another pioneering work among the war-affected children is the *Butterfly Peace Garden* established as an independent venture where the Jesuits work. The children who have benefited from the programme are numerous. It attempts to work with children affected and traumatized by the conflict. A professional psychological counseling centre in the city of Batticaloa also serves the traumatized children after years of war.

Pakistan Mission was entrusted to the Province of Sri Lanka on 22nd April 1988. By then there were two Sri Lankan Jesuits working in Lahore engaged in pastoral activities. The Pakistan mission was

the responsibility of the Australian Province but due to lack of personnel the Australian Province decided to close down the mission. It was then that Father General passed on the administration of this mission to the Sri Lanka Province. Out of the four educational institutions established then, two of them are active to this day. As the years passed, the education apostolate became one of the important works of the Pakistan Jesuits. The Jesuits have realized that in a country like Pakistan where the Catholics are a minority belonging to the lowest stratum of society, education is a powerful instrument to bring about change and stability to the Church and to the families. A further, significant contribution is the scholarly library on Islam to foster Islam-Christian dialogue. It is not mere coincidence that the Pakistan Mission too celebrated this year its Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the first Jesuits from Calcutta Province.

The task ahead of the Jesuit Province of Sri Lanka is great and tremendous. Sri Lanka needs leaders who can guide its people towards the values of the kingdom, justice and peace. It requires total dedication and unwavering commitment. The question that we need to constantly ask ourselves is whether we are ready, or rather willing to sacrifice and dedicate our lives to a task which is crucial for the well being of people and a means of setting right our broken relationship with God, neighbour and nature. Moreover, we can in no way be satisfied with the glories of the past. What we have achieved so far as a Province will motivate us for the *Magis*. Moreover, our collective and individual failures need to reawaken us from our blindness and slumber. The Golden Jubilee seems to be an appropriate moment for this for the Greater Glory of God.

Sri Lanka Jesuit Province



Research for Social Justice

The mandate of the North Eastern Social Research Centre of Guwahati (Assam) is to combine intellectual pursuits with networking with field activists and researchers in order to change policies in favour of the poor.



Flooding is a recurrent catastrophe in this area and is often disastrous. In this photo the inhabitants of the flooded villages are rescued by the army.

The 33rd General Congregation extends the mandate of social justice to every apostolate. That was a challenge to the Jesuit run *Indian Social Institute*, New Delhi, where Walter Fernandes worked for 22 years before coming to Guwahati in Assam to open North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) on March 1, 2000. The tribal (indigenous) communities had become the main victims of development. Industry had turned forests, their livelihood, into a raw material for profit. They are 8.2 percent of India's population but are 40 percent of the estimated 60 million persons displaced for development projects since India's independence in 1947. *Dalits* (former untouchables) too are impoverished by such development for the benefit of another class. Women of these communities are the worst affected.

To be meaningful to them research and intellectual pursuits

had to become tools of justice. A search showed that no study had been done on the role of forests in tribal life. Hardly any data existed on the number and type of displaced persons. Mobilisation of the communities, networking and advocacy for their land rights was required but it had to be supported by a serious database. The response was to create a database on forests and tribals, the role of tribal women in the forest economy, the number and type of persons deprived for development projects and the impact on them. Civil society used these studies for advocacy for a new forest policy and a rehabilitation policy for displaced persons.

That process continued when Walter Fernandes moved to

Guwahati to open NESRC, the North Eastern Social Research Centre of the Kohima Jesuit Region. Its mandate is to combine intellectual pursuits with networking with field activists and researchers in order to change policies in favour of the poor. Its priority is tribal, gender and livelihood issues to which land is central. Displacement by land acquisition that was a threat to the weak has got intensified with globalisation. Over half of the 25 million hectares from which 60 million persons have been displaced was community owned, much of it tribal habitat. But the law recognises only individual ownership. Most *dalits* sustain themselves by providing services on land owned

by others. While acquiring that land the state does not include them among its losers. Also other rural poor communities like fish and quarry workers do not own land but lose their sustenance when their area is acquired. Its result is their impoverishment.

NESRC is in the process of studying all displacement from 1947 till today in 21 out of India's 28 states. It combines the studies with publicity in the media and workshops that bring together representatives of the poor, civil society, social and legal activists and researchers to reflect on "What type of development can support the poor?" and dialogue on it with administrative and political decision-makers. It publishes both low cost professional reports for researchers and popular reports to provide analytical material to persons threatened with displacement. An alliance of displaced persons, social and legal activists and researchers uses both of them for advocacy. The well equipped library and documentation based on newspaper cuttings and other material of twelve years supplements this effort.

Another major area is the orally transmitted tribal customary laws of Northeast India. They are accorded legal recognition in only a few cases but they condition tribal life to a great extent. Justice under them is easy to administer, is inexpensive and reconciliatory, not litigation-centred. But most of them are patriarchal and deny land rights and political power to women. NESRC tries to understand the system, uses professional reports for advocacy for their recognition by the state and popular reports for advocacy through reflection with the tribal leaders in order to encourage changes for gender and class equity.

Climate change is another area of involvement. Northeast India is in the fragile Eastern Himalayas that face the threat of melting glaciers, floods and landslides but awareness of the issue is low. The focus of NESRC is more on climate justice than on climate change – on the poor



Above, the transfer of the directorship of the Centre from Fr. Walter Fernandes to Fr. Melvil Pereira. On the following page, a demonstration for human rights.

who do not leave their carbon footprints behind but pay a high price of the changes caused by overconsumption by the rich in India and in the West. Melvil Pereira the present director is involved in a Bangladesh-India study on the impact of climate change on food security. NESRC also organised awareness building sessions for school teachers and the youth and is involved in action against major dams and other schemes that destroy the environment in general and biodiversity in particular. North East India is No. 6 among the world's 25 mega-biodiversity zones.

The Region has witnessed nationalist struggles and ethnic conflicts linked to identity and land shortage caused by encroachment by immigrants, erosion and floods. Amid shortages, every community rewrites its history to present itself as the first inhabitant of a given area and claim exclusive rights over it. Amid the consequent tension, killings and economic blockades NESRC is involved in peace and conflict studies especially around land that is central to the conflicts. It also facilitates a dialogue between leaders in Manipur where an economic blockade by one group led to a major crisis. It does not always succeed. Other ways have to be found. When the dialogue failed, the

leaders asked for help to do a study of a plot in the state capital where many communities live in peace but are threatened with eviction for a five-star hotel. They think that a common struggle is more constructive than a dialogue. Under the guidance of a senior Jesuit Alphonsus D'Souza, NESRC helps peace activists to study their traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and update them to suit present needs. The booklets based on them in English and the local languages provide analytical material to peace activists. Popular reports for use by the people are produced in other areas too. For example, the report on the land laws and tribal land alienation was published in eight tribal languages.

Collaboration is basic to its work. The displacement studies are done together with university departments and civil society groups. The work on climate justice is done with the Indian Network for Ethics and Climate Change. Also follow up is collaborative. After the displacement study in Assam NESRC held a press meet supported by *Panos*, a media group. It became the main news item in all the local papers. Some wrote editorials, two TV channels had discussion on it and questions were asked in the federal and state legislatures. The Student Union and the Farmers' Movement heard about the extent of displacement for the first time and contacted NESRC. Today they are in the forefront of opposition to the 48 dams proposed to be built in the region this decade and 120 more later. Most land they use will be tribal commons that the laws consider state property.

One has to go beyond opposition to search for non-destructive alternatives. Investment in jobs is low in the region and land loss to immigrants is high. So it needs development but not the type that results in impoverishment. That is the objective of the workshops of displaced persons, social activists, researchers and administrators to reflect on development alternatives that protect people's livelihood

while investing in low-cost employment generation projects.

There has been some success in this work but the impact is not immediate. In 2007 the Government of Assam drafted a water policy with thrust on major dams and put it in the public domain with a request for feedback. Dr Gita Bharali of NESRC continued discussion on it for a year through district level meetings and got a team to prepare an alternative to it. The state accepted around 60 percent of its suggestions including people's right over the commons but did not abandon major dams. 25,000 landless persons from all over India held a demonstration in New Delhi in January 2008 to demand land rights. In response the Government of India constituted a National Committee for Land Reforms and a Council for Land Reforms with the Prime Minister as the chairperson and Walter Fernandes a member of the latter. Gita Bharali's paper on

land in the Northeast became the basis of the report of the Committee. However, a meeting of the Council has not been convened till 2011. So it may or may not make a difference but it is a step in the right direction.

On June 22, 2011 three persons were killed when the police opened fire on people demonstrating against their eviction in Guwahati. The leaders of the families threatened with eviction approached NESRC for assistance to prepare a database on their legal and social status. NESRC supplemented it with a booklet summarising all the land laws and policies that are relevant to them. In 2002 the Total Literacy Mission of Assam requested NESRC to do a study on the education of the children of the estimated nine million tea garden workers of Assam, who are the most exploited community in the region. But a breakthrough was difficult because of a high vested interest in their poverty. Two reports of the Planning

Commission of India use the NESRC studies to show that the Maoist struggles in Central India result from land acquisition and displacement. Also the federal Minister for Rural Development quoted these studies in a speech.

NESRC is not field based but is an institution supporting field activists on livelihood, gender and tribal issues to which climate change, the customary law and land are basic. Its objective is to make a difference on the issue of the livelihood of the poor, particularly of the tribes. The above instances show that it is recognised as a research centre dedicated to it. It does not claim to have achieved much but the work has to continue if it is to make a contribution to justice and people's right to be human.

Walter Fernandes, S.J.





INDIA

Fifty Years with the Marginalized

The story of *Indian Social Institute*, Bangalore (ISI-B) is indeed the story of the Jesuit spirit at its best: the option for the poor and the search for *Magis*. Inspired by the founder Fr. Henry Volken's daring spirit and sustained by a series of Jesuit leaders and lay collaborators, the Institute completes fifty years of its accompaniment of the marginalized. Today, the Institute declares itself 'as a Rights-based Resource organization in partnership with other like-minded people and groups to accompany the marginalized to claim their entitlements for a dignified life towards an equitable society'.

Looking at the past 50 years of the life of ISI-B, (1963-2013), the dream that has led its team is the 'emergence of a just social order'. Document after document and programme after programme have re-affirmed this commitment of the Institute to Justice. Articulating her commitment ISI-B, already in the 1980s and re-articulated many times hence, declared that the social order that we are working for is a 'universally just social order' comprising the whole universe.

The beginning of ISI-B was as the training unit of *Indian Social Institute*, Delhi, a far sighted and visionary initiative of the Indian Jesuits in 1951. The leadership had come from Fr. Jerome D'Souza S.J., a renowned educationist, remarkably active in the civil society of the days of Independence. He had the kind of acceptance to mediate between the Vatican and Nehru about ending Portuguese control over Indian churches and was a member of the Indian Constituent Assembly and

four times India's delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. He dreamt along with other Jesuits, that we can contribute in the emergence of the newly independent India as a full grown democratic and equitable nation.

Thus training of professional social workers became a priority. Along with other Jesuit centers across the country ISI-B became a hub for training of social activists. Led by Fr. Henry Volken S.J., Fr. Stan Lourduswamy S.J., Duarte Baretto, Fr. John Descrochers, Br. Archibald Cordeiro S.J. and many others, batches of youth and middle aged lay religious thronged the Institute. They spent up to three months learning the process of Social Analysis and skills of social mobilization. The result was unimaginable.

Dozens of action groups that emerged in the four southern states of India had all men and women

The Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, inspired by the founder Fr. Henry Volken's daring spirit and sustained by a series of Jesuit leaders and lay collaborators completes fifty years of its accompaniment of the marginalized.

trained by ISI-B. A notable example was the Fishermen's Movement in Kerala, which created a ripple in the dialogue between liberation theology and action for justice in the 1980s. The leaders of the movement had learned their lessons in the precincts of ISI-B. Today, as we traverse the action groups around the South of India, invariably we hear this: 'ISI-B taught us the basics of social action'.

The strength of the Institute has been and continues to be its



ideological base, analytical skills and touch with the most marginalized across the states even after its autonomy in 1993. The Institute now functions with its thrust areas as Human Rights, Gender Equity, Livelihood issues, and Secularism and Ecological issues. The priority groups for the ISI-B are *Dalits* (the most marginalized in India constituting the indigenous people, lower castes and economically most marginalized, constituting almost 30 per cent of India's population). ISI-B operates through various Units: Training and Human Rights Units, Women's Unit, Research Unit, Library and Documentation and Outreach programs in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu. Over the years ISI-B has been part of a large network of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), People's Organizations, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Networks, individual NGOs, Universities, Research Centres and other Civil Society Organizations. A major focus in the activities of the Institute has been to maintain its secular character. Plagued as India is by caste and gender discriminations, ISI-B consciously attempts to keep its doors open to all religions, all castes, and avoids all kinds of discrimination in its operations.

Presently, the Training Unit continues the tradition of ISI-B, training social activists from around the various states of India and occasionally from Sri Lanka and Nepal. The flagship programmes are Socio-cultural Analysis, Capacity building training for *Dalit* youth and training in the Rights-based approach in development activism. The Human Rights Unit organizes regularly programmes to empower Women Domestic Workers, a course on Legal Resources for social action and empowerment, a Lawyers' collective, workshops on Advocacy, lobbying and networking, Seminars on Migrants and their issues. Women's unit focuses on Training of Trainers programmes on Gender Sensitization, workshops on Women and legal rights, Workshop on women, food and nutritional



Above, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, visiting the Social Institute of Bangalore. On the preceding page, the present Superior General, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, planting a tree in the courtyard of the Institute.

security, Gender sensitization programme for college students, Capacity building for elected women representatives and others.

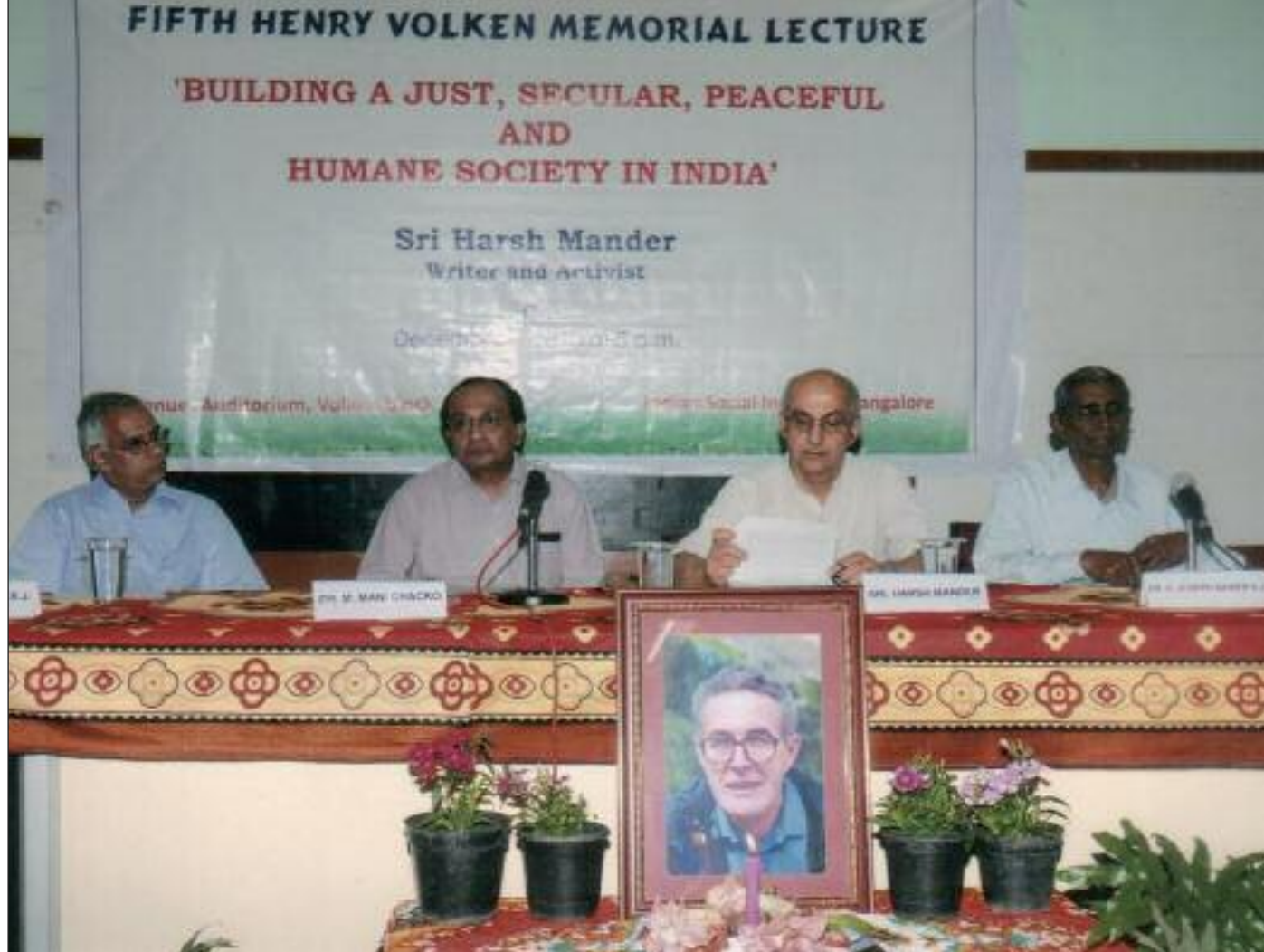
Documentation has been one of the priorities of Indian Social Institutes. Under the leadership of late Fr. Paul de la Gueriviere S.J., ISI had developed a strong documentation unit, sending out regular 'dispatches' of materials on social analysis and social action. Even after Fr. Paul moved to ISI-Delhi, ISI-B has continued the documentation centre providing materials for training and research. The specialized library caters to the same needs. Publication of a regular newsletter, occasional books and booklets on issues that are relevant for social activists continue to be a priority for ISI-B.

The Research Unit is a relatively new initiative. Demands from the trainees and activists for research skills have persuaded us to initiate a series of trainings in Social Science Research Methodology with particular focus on Advocacy. A recent publication on 'Communalism and role of state in Karnataka' (2011) was based on a

study conducted by ISI-B under the leadership of Fr. V. Joseph Xavier S.J., especially in the context of increasing attacks on Christians in the state of Karnataka. Similar studies in the pipeline will serve the needs of activists for research based knowledge for intervention for social transformation. One of the earlier publications, 'Development-Induced Displacement' (2003) is an example of how current reality of the people prompts our studies and reflection.

ISI-B has been self critical in its growth. In 1980 and 1990 two statements were prepared which helped the Institute to re-vision and re-charter its growth. In 2006 there was an external evaluation and in 2011 a Strategic Planning workshop. Together these documents reveal two facets of ISI-B: readiness to look at ourselves critically in relation to our mission 'to build a just, humane, democratic and secular society' and to re-orient our activities and programmes in accordance with the insights. And that brings us to the question, where do we go from here?

Two major contradictions



The conference of Sri Harsh Mander on the need to build a more just, more humane society in India; the conference was held on the occasion of the fifth encounter in memory of Fr. Henry Volken, founder of the Indian Social Institute.

confront us as we go along. First, the present global order driven by market-ushered neo-liberalism has generated an expansion of boundaries on the one hand and on the other the disintegration and dislocation of communities. There is a *Shining India*, marked by almost double digit economic growth and a *Dark India*, characterized by almost 30 per cent of its population living below poverty line. The second contradiction is that the politics in this country is promoting the interest of the elites, dominant castes and classes. This results in religious

fundamentalism, communalism, consumerism, competition, individualism, Naxalism, digital divide, caste and gender divide and different forms of discrimination and atrocities.

ISI-B and their collaborators are aware of the complex socio-political reality that is emerging in this country. How do we confront and intervene in this confusing and challenging scenario? We believe it is only by promoting a culture of critical reflection on the processes of growth and development, of politics and culture and by facilitating the formation of a cadre of workers to mobilize people to fight the forces of injustice. Research, advocacy and lobbying become essential to generate critical insights into the reality. Re-conceptualizing, re-visiting and re-visioning the various categories, thoughts and ideologies and transforming these as socio-political tools for action-reflection-

action in the Ignatian Paradigm will be our strategy to reach our vision.

Rev. Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, during his visit to the Institute in 2011, symbolically planted a tree in the campus of ISI-B, and he challenged us to become ever more responsive to the socio-political and cultural context of the country and respond with vigour in the true spirit of the General congregations and the mandates of the Society of Jesus. We feel challenged and confirmed in our mission as we enter the 51st year.

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A bridge between the Church and the Youth

In this year 2013, a very special event will take place for all young people around the world. It will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. For a number of young people, those associated with the Society of Jesus, the word “Magis” will come to mind. “Magis” is that Ignatian program of pastoral and personal experiences which will engage young pilgrims from Jesuit institutions in the lead up to World Youth Day (WYD).

World Youth Day gathers together young people from all over the world. They come together to

celebrate and deepen their faith. It is held every three years in a different city. WYD has become the prime event at which the Church reaches out to young people. Through WYD, the Church proclaims the message for faith to youth, and expresses her concern for them. Pope John Paul II initiated WYD in the 1980's, and the present pontiff has continued the tradition.

Dynamism, movement and energy have always characterized the activities and attitudes of youth. In 2011, Father General wrote on “Youth” in his response to the 2010

Since 1970 Jesuits are in Surakarta (Indonesia) for serving the youths who are studying in various universities. The St. Francis Xavier Student Centre tries to focus its attention on intellectual and spiritual formation and in friendship.

A meeting in the Centre of Surakarta, Indonesia. The Centre underlines three fundamental aspects of formation: intellectual, spiritual, friendship.



ex officio letters. He asked the question: how can we Jesuits become mediators, real “bridges”, between the Church and young people? The Society’s main contact with youth is through her educational institutions. But Father General also highlighted the challenge and concern of many: “many in the Church do not speak the language or understand the culture of the young, and vice versa. How we can be more present to the young, how we can share the gift of the Gospel in ways that really speak to them to their experience and their search for meaning, direction and love . . .”

In the 1970’s, as part of the agreement between the Indonesian Province and the Archdiocese of Semarang, a number of Jesuits were missioned to the “St Francis Xavier Student Centre” in Surakarta City. The Centre tries to hone in on three core aspects of formation: intellectual, friendship, and spiritual formation. Initially, the Centre had a social work focus, concentrating on health clinics and advocacy. But after a number of years, the above three-fold dimension came to the fore in relation to students.

The Centre has always been the locus for discussion and debate. In earlier times, its well-known library was known in the city as *Perpustakaan Mahasiswa Surakarta* (*permata* means “jade” in English). The library housed overseas magazines and journals, as well as a range of newspapers. There was a saying: “Come to the Student Centre if you wish to find or confirm any social reference”. Some teachers also sent their students to the Centre to prepare their “book reports”. Access to the library was not restricted to university personnel, but it was open to everyone. Teenage school students used the library, not to borrow books, but to ask help with their school and home work from their seniors. Young children came with their parents to learn how to read. The more elderly used the library to keep up with the local and international news.

Today, there are four core

department of the Centre: Catholic Lecture, Radio, Multimedia and Art, and the Library (noted above). The development of friendship and spiritual formation is implicitly nurtured in all of the above four. The Jesuit priest, who is chaplain to the students, has a main tasks in the area of “Catholic Lecture”. He presents the “Catholic Religion” course, one of the basic courses in the *Sebelas Maret University*. This university is one of the top-ranking public universities in Indonesia. This course takes place every Friday afternoon, while the Moslem students have their *shalat*.

Because of the significant numbers interested in this course, the chaplain coordinates a number of Catholic teachers and other students who volunteer their services in presenting the lectures.

Before the start of the semester, the chaplain and his assistants meet in conference to discuss and prepare the module which will be presented during the semester. The module is based on the “Basic Guidelines” of the Archdiocese of Semarang, a document which is revised every five years. During the course itself, there is constant reflection and evaluation. At the end of the academic year, a three-day student retreat ends this “Catholic Lecture” activity.

Another task of the student chaplain is to coordinate “Catholic Information” in approximately ten private universities around Surakarta City. Every semester, about twenty teachers gather to jointly prepare for, and evaluate the materials for this formation.

In connection with the service rendered by the Radio Department, the students go for two private radio broadcasts in the city. For several years now, there have been on these stations “Spiritual Programs” which have originated in the Centre. Again, the archdiocesan “Basic Guidelines” are used for these broadcasts. Some of the radio presenters become assistant lecturers in the “Catholic Information” activity, and their radio and lecture material co-extends. This module forms

presenters to be good communicators who are able to get their point across.

Students and youth have to be familiar with all kinds of multi-media and the equipment of information technology. In the “Multi-Media and Art” activity, students practice how to operate hand-held cameras, and how to prepare an effective digital sound or picture “bite”. They cooperation with the “Catholic Information” activity to prepare multi-media (power points and short movies) elements for the lectures. The short video clips which they prepare enhance these.

The “Multi-media and Arts” students also involve themselves in theatre and music. They practice how to express themselves better in song and action. Frequently, their efforts have a social reflection and analysis theme. There are many other activities based around the Centre. For the students, the Centre has become their “second home”. A number of alumni/ae of the Centre are now working in social research departments, as well as in youth initiatives in a number of dioceses. The Student Centre has now become a dynamic base for young people in Surakarta City.

Surakarta City itself is well known for its cultural heritage. It is sister city to Montana (Bulgaria, since 2007), Bilbao (Spain), and Algiers (Algeria, since 2011). Surakarta City is also commonly called “Solo”, with the catch-phrase: “Solo: The Spirit of Java Island”. In 2006, Surakarta City became a member of the Organization of World Heritage Cities.

Vincentius Haryanto, S.J.

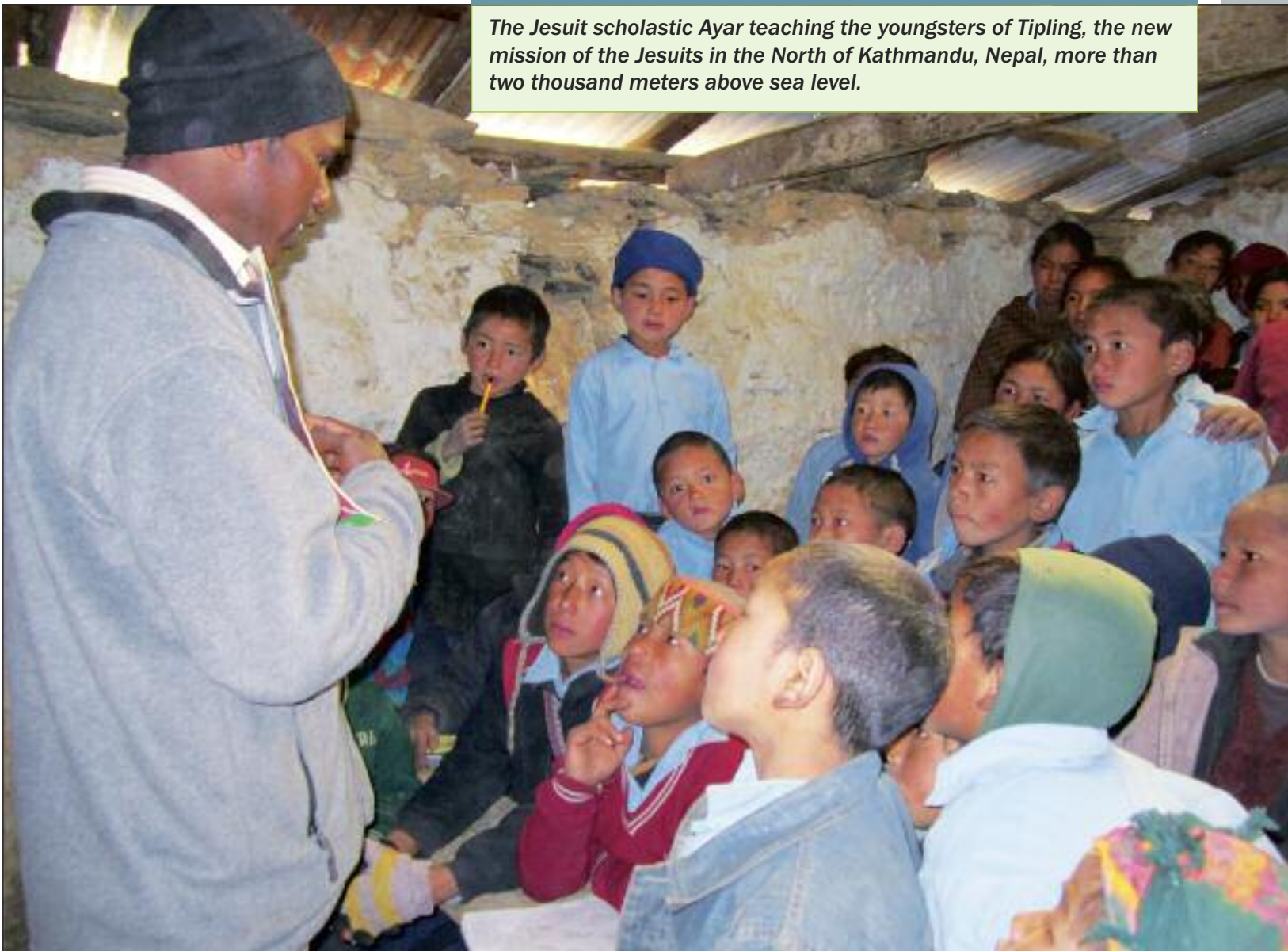


The Tipling Mission

It was a month after our arrival in Tipling. Jiju and I were heading up to the local government school where we had started teaching. A weather-worn man in his late 70's stopped us on the middle of the trail and enquired, "So, Fathers, how long are you going to stay with us?" Fascinated by his toothless grin, I asked him in my fledgling Tamang, "How long do you think the Fathers

"And what they should especially seek to accomplish for God's greater glory is to preach, hear confessions, lecture, instruct children, give good example... so as to move as many as possible to prayer and devotion"
 (Ignatius of Loyola
 to the Jesuits at the Council of Trent).

The Jesuit scholastic Ayar teaching the youngsters of Tipling, the new mission of the Jesuits in the North of Kathmandu, Nepal, more than two thousand meters above sea level.



should stay?" His warm smile widened, "As long as you can pray over our sick in the village and educate our children here," he answered.

I haven't seen that wise man on the trails again, as he, like many of the able-bodied men and women in the village, stays in the *goth* (mobile cattle shelter erected on four poles and a tarpaulin sheet) most of the year tending to the household cattle and sheep. But I was grateful to him for summing up the reasons for our presence in Tipling, one of the most rugged parts of Nepal.

Tipling lies to the north of Kathmandu and along with its four sister villages Lapdung, Phyang, Puru and Lingyo, sprawls at an elevation of 6500 to 8000 feet, in the shadows of the breathtaking Ganesh Himal massif. Although the straight-line distance between Kathmandu and Tipling is only about 50 miles, to get there one must first endure a four-hour bus ride to Dhading Besi

and then from there, a two-to-three-day walk depending on the size of the load and the season. In the dry season, one can make use of a dangerously cut mountain jeep trail, reducing the walk by half a day.

Tipling is the original home of one of the most north-western groups of Tamang (the largest tribal-ethnic community in Nepal). Presently, there are around 463 households, making up a population of approximately 3500 people. Largely untouched by modernism, the villagers are subsistence farmers, living a hand-to-mouth existence. The potatoes, corns and beans that they grow and consume keep the fire going in their homes for most of the year. Rice, the cheapest and most common food in the rest of Nepal, is a delicacy here, something that only a few 'richer' families can afford once in a while.

The relationship of the people of Tipling with the Jesuits is a relationship that began when

Fr. Casper Miller trekked up to Tipling for his anthropological research in October 1987. There he found a group of ethnic Nepalese receptive to the Gospel, even though for centuries they had been practicing a kind of Tibetan Buddhism. Given the political and social conditions at that time, Fr. Miller, fondly called *Meme* (grandfather) by the villagers, witnessed to his faith largely through a loving and compassionate presence for over two years.

After returning to Kathmandu, Fr. Miller found that many people from Tipling had semi-migrated to a suburb called Baalaju and were eking out a living for themselves as day laborers. Their desire to practice the Christian faith prompted us to take pastoral interest in them at a time when conversions were constitutionally forbidden.

In the mid 1990's, we began a study-hostel for the children of these migrants who were attending the local government schools to pursue their education. Within a decade we built a multi-purpose hall where regular masses and other catechetical activities were held for these families in Baniyatar on the outskirts of Kathmandu. Hundreds of people came seeking our pastoral care. In 2005, the Baniyatar mission was declared a quasi-parish under the patronage of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Four years later, Fr. Sanjay Boniface Ekka, S.J., then pastor-in-charge, was brutally attacked with knives and left to die by a group of disgruntled hostel students who were under our care. The incident was an eye-opener.

Fr. Sanjay survived and the blood that he shed did not go in vain. While his attackers were still at large, the mission continued to flourish but with a different approach. We closed the hostel but persisted with our commitment to the education of these students realizing that it was preferable to go to their homes in their village for greater effect. And so the Tipling Mission was born.

When Fr. Jiju first set foot in





Above and on preceding page, young men and women carrying heavy stones for the construction of a house. Many young people work after class to earn some rupees in order to buy what they need for school.

Tipling on May 27, 2011, even before entering the house where he was to stay, a mother carrying her infant rushed up to him and requested him to pray over her child. This incident, in a way, has defined our presence here. People, whether Buddhists, Protestants or Catholics stop us on the bi-lanes, invite us to their homes and call upon us night and day to pray over them.

Our pastoral care is extended not only to the handful of Catholics who have kept up their faith despite the absence of a priest or sacraments here since they embraced the

Christian faith. It is also to all the others who have been turning out in big numbers to attend our daily masses and other faith activities in the evenings. These activities take place in one of the stone-built houses in the village where we live. This house is also the epicenter of the outreach programs for the youth that we conduct in the village.

The grueling work schedule demanded by village life and a lack of study atmosphere in their one-room houses cause most of the students to drop out of school by the time they are eleven years old. In an

effort to support their education, we have invited these youngsters to our house and offered them our rooms with sufficient light to sit and study in the afterschool hours. Besides instilling in them better study habits, this initiative has kept the students from mischievous activities to which they are very vulnerable in a place where the nearest police post is a good two-hour walk away.

We have also begun a small reading room, *The Meme Cap Pusthakalaya*, in our house which is open until 10 at night. We hope this will provide an alternative educational time environment to the crowd of dropout youth who prowl the village at night. We raised the money to start this library through carol singing during the 2011



Outdoor mass with the Himalayas in the background. Suman, a 12-year old boy, does the reading. On the next page, Fr. Jiju directing the morning assembly before the classes.

Christmas season which was a first time event in the village.

We also run a very basic medical clinic at our house. We distribute medicines to treat common illnesses. Though there is a primary health care centre run by a private agency in the village, people prefer to come to our house because they know that besides providing them the tablets we will also lay our hands on them and pray for them.

There is a government school in the village which was established about 35 years ago. Like most of the other government schools in the country however, there was little taking place as far as educational activities were concerned. All three of us volunteer in the school for no remuneration; two of us teach in grades six to ten and Scholastic Ayar, teaches in the primary school. Our involvement in the school has made a great impact. In addition to teaching a subject in a classroom, we mold young minds and hearts, and

enable them to discover their true worth and capabilities, even if it is as simple as giving courage.

Prem Ghale's story is an example. Prem, a grade seven student, appeared at our house one cold morning. She asked to see her class teacher, Fr. Jiju, unsuccessfully trying to veil her face with her *saal* (a piece of cloth tied at the waste) that is wrapped around her. Jiju noticed tears trickling down her cheeks. Alarmed, he asked her what was wrong. "I can't come to school today...my *abe* (father) wants me to go to *goth* today," sobbed Prem. Prem, who used to attend school only once or twice a week before our arrival, now cries because she can't attend school for a day.

Education is no longer a pastime that the students engage in when they were relatively free from the unsympathetic demands of the village life. Instead, education is becoming an important activity, if not the most important activity. As a

result, youngsters have begun to dream of a future beyond the boundaries of the village and their traditional occupations of subsistence farming and cattle grazing.

They have already proven that, given opportunities, they are capable of great achievements. Four months after our arrival here, we selected a group of twenty boys below the age of eleven and trained them in football (soccer) for two months. Many of these kids were playing it for the first time in their lives as the school has no grounds; none of them had seen a proper football match in their lives. We taught them the rules on the blackboard, drilled them in basic techniques using a thirty meter plot below the school and showed them videos of Messi and Ronaldo on our laptop. After two months, we took them to Kathmandu to participate in the Father Moran Memorial Invitational Football Tournament organized by the Jesuits; the only one of its kinds in Nepal for boys under eleven.

The boys had a dream run, knocking out three top teams with three wins in a row and topped their group with nine points, one of only two teams to achieve this feat. Even though they ultimately got eliminated in the quarter finals, they bagged the Most Promising Team award, and won many hearts, with the local newspapers hailing their unbelievable achievement.

More than football skills, what impressed us most was the character formation that these boys went through in the two months under our guidance. Many of these boys have become leaders in their classes and role models of discipline, cleanliness, regular attendance, respect to teachers and elders and hard work in school.

As far as the future of the mission here is concerned, we anticipate a rough but promising road ahead. We expect to continue teaching in the government school, for at least three more years before we start 'building' anything of our own; we desire to establish a better learning



environment, thereby enabling the students to develop to their greatest capacity.

At the same time our main focus is faith formation. We hope to form a catholic community, share our Christian values and teachings with the young boys and girls who are coming to our services and establish some Catholic religious practices in the community. Having a church of our own would help us greatly. However, as of now, we have no immediate plans to construct a church building. Our first priority is to build a strong faith community that practices its beliefs uninhibitedly and fearlessly.

In the meantime, we are looking for ways to assist a group of young boys and girls who are school

dropouts. Many of the boys are involved in destructive activities, and have become a liability to their families and to the village. We want to help them by sending them to skills-based trainings. The girls, on the other hand, are often forced into marriage and child-rearing as young as 14. We want to start a self-help group for them, educate them about their rights and empower them to stand against social pressures that are unjust to them. Because this empowerment of women is most effectively carried out by other women, we have sent a couple of village women to Kathmandu for training in this area.

Though we have high hopes for the future, we know that it is the ministry of presence that has the

greatest impact. People here never imagined that we would come and live among them because of the hard life that they endure. Our simple and communitarian life style, an alternative to their own family lives, has pleasantly surprised them and shocked them. "How could these men leave their families and home and come and live among us, as one among us, work for us, and ask nothing of us?" Are questions that we have heard whispered in many houses here. As Father Ignatius wanted, their hearts have been moved to prayer and devotion. That is our greatest fulfillment.

Fr. Jomon Jose, S.J.



The Mother of God of Lasting Things

The first and only icon of a Coast Salish Madonna and Child in the entire world—and it almost never got written! When iconographer, Mary Katsilometes was asked to write (paint) an icon of Mary as a Native American, she said, “No!”

The Jesuits of the Oregon

Province and Archdiocese of Seattle had big dreams for the little parish of St. Paul that serves the Swinomish Reservation of the Coast Salish People who live around the Puget Sound near the city of Seattle in the state of Washington in the United States. The Jesuits and the Archdiocese of Seattle had already

This is the story of an icon of the Madonna painted in the style of the culture of the Indians of Saint Paul’s Parish on the Coast Salish and then entrusted to the Jesuits of the Oregon Province (United States).



begun to dream that St. Paul, Swinomish might one day become a center of Coast Salish inculturated Catholicism.

St. Paul, Swinomish was already the only Catholic parish in the world where the endangered Coast Salish language, Lushootseed, could be heard at every celebration of Sunday Mass: the Sign of the Cross, Lord Have Mercy, Memorial Acclamation, Sanctus and Hail Mary. At Funeral Vigils, the Hail Mary was prayed in the ancient language.

So, when Seattle Archbishop, Alexander Brunnet, asked all the parishes of his archdiocese to participate in a national Catholic evangelization program, Beverly Peters, the Native parish administrator and Fr. Jerry Graham, S.J., looked at the project as an opportunity for inculturation. They both decided the Coast Salish needed their own, more inculturated form of evangelization.

Fr. Graham then asked the master iconographer Mary



Above and on the preceding page, two views of the enthronement of the image of the Virgin in St. Paul's Parish of the Coast Salish. The icon is painted in the cultural style of the local Indians.

Katsilometes to write an icon of the Virgin Mary as a Coast Salish maiden. But she feared that perhaps it was "presumptuous for a Greek Catholic to be doing something with Coast Salish spirituality." So, her answer was, "No!"

But then she had a dream. In her dream she was inside her own house when she heard a knock at her front door. She opened the door to find a young Coast Salish woman with blue-black hair and holding a young boy. Both were dressed in brilliant earth-tone colors. Tears were streaming down the Indian girl's

cheeks as she asked Mary to give her canned goods. In her dream, Mary went to her cupboards and emptied them for the young woman and her child.

When the iconographer woke up, she wondered what it could possibly mean to be asked for canned goods by this girl. As she prayed, what came to her was that canned goods were things that were preserved. So, she finally decided that what the young Coast Salish maiden had asked her for was something that would last, something that would never be lost, something that could

not be taken away. So, she called Fr. Graham and told him, "So I guess I'm supposed to do this."

The Jesuit then gave her a three foot high stack of books on Coast Salish art, culture and history so she could begin to research their symbols, art and the traditional ways: like the sacredness of the salmon and the cedar tree. She delved into the Coast Salish tradition of weaving that had mixed the hair of a special species of (now extinct) long-haired dog, along with the tufts of fur from shedding mountain goats that got stuck in the



Opposite, a detail of the image of the Virgin; above, the artist-painter. The photos are by Cec Shoeships

bushes the goats walked through. She also studied how the soft inner bark of cedar trees was pounded to make it softer and more pliable so that thin strips could be sewn into long skirts and capes. She paid special attention to traditional and contemporary images of the sacred salmon.

After that research, Mary was able to “write” a simple prototype image to present to the St. Paul Swinomish community after Sunday Mass. She told Fr. Graham, “I am fully prepared for the people to say, ‘We don’t want you messing with our imagery.’” Still, she explained to the people how the process of

writing an icon is a process of prayer, and that she was there to ask them to help her bring forth this image through their prayers. The people responded by giving her some suggestions for changes that would make the image more authentic. She was also given a photograph of Beverly’s granddaughter, Hilary, to use as a model of the facial features of a Coast Salish girl. And then, Beverly’s daughter Darlene blessed Mary’s hands and sent her back to complete their icon.

To finish the icon required Mary to apply 30-40 layers of egg tempura paint—along with much prayer over

a six month period. The last step in the process was to giving the icon its name. Mary decided the name of the icon would be, “The Mother of God of Lasting Things.” The Virgin Mary in the icon is a young, barefoot Coast Salish maiden with blue-black hair holding an Indian child Jesus. The mother and child are wrapped in traditional earth-tone clothing. The Mother wears a long skirt made of cedar bark strips. Both are wrapped in traditional blankets woven of dog and mountain goat hair. They are both surrounded by moving water and leaping salmon. The Mother of God of Lasting Things was unveiled and blessed by Fr. Jerry Graham, S.J. and the St. Paul, Swinomish community at a joyous Pentecost Mass on May 23, 2010.

Northwest Jesuits still have big dreams for St. Paul, Swinomish, The Shrine of the Mother of God of Lasting Things. Mary Katsilometes is now working on a seven foot tall icon of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha—which they hope to take to Rome when she is beatified.

Jerry Graham, S.J.



A drop in a vast ocean

K yrgyzstan is not the most well-known country in the world or even in Central Asia. Created suddenly after the destruction of the Soviet Union, this beautiful country has influence from Russia, the USA, China, Turkey and the Islamic world. The country is changing very fast, but it is hard to say in which direction.

There is a mixture of Soviet, Western European, nomadic and Islamic culture that you can observe every day. Two revolutions and one ethnic civil war took place in the past few years, and these events have

The Catholic Church in Kyrgyzstan is extremely small: about 500 people in a country with a population of five million.

In 1997 the Pope asked the Society of Jesus to take responsibility for this Church.

And, today we have five Jesuits, one diocesan priest and four nuns.



shown deep social, economic, human and spiritual problems. From the nineteenth century, Kyrgyzstan was under complete control of Czarist Russia and, after the Bolshevik revolution, was under the Soviet regime. In fact, this latter transfer of power was not such a big change because Russians had always been on top: in the army, administration, education and in industry. Toward the end of Communism, the Kyrgyz people made up not more than 10 percent of the population in the country's capital - Frunze (now called Bishkek) – now it is more as 50 percent. After the fall of Communism, most Russians left the country, especially educated and skilled people. Today the Kyrgyz people constitute 65 percent of all residents and they supervise all aspects of life: political, administrative, police force, etc. Never before had they had their own state, and they are not always prepared to organize and direct it. This scenario is similar to post-colonial times when Europeans pulled out of many countries,



leaving the native people alone with their problems.

It is very difficult to organize a contemporary state when most of the people are so strongly dependent on the tribal mentality. Many Kyrgyz people think only about the welfare of their immediate family and relatives. Although they talk a lot about patriotism, generally they care only about their own family using every opportunity to get money – a big cause of total corruption and lack of responsibility. Police men, university teachers,

doctors . . . everyone can use his or her position to require a bribe. You can finish best in your class in US or Japan, but without connections you are nobody after returning to your homeland. Education and skills are not as important as family connections and friends, particularly when you want to get a good job in the public sector. The largest degradation is observed in education. You can meet students who after 5 years of studies in the Faculty of English can say only simple phrases like: "Good morning" and "Thank you very much." I have met students who even can't say properly the name of the University and faculty where they were studying, because they paid the teacher (through various friends) so that they wouldn't have to attend class more than once a year. As a result of this crisis, probably more than 20% of the population (mainly young ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek) left the country to work in big, rapidly developing Russian cities, where they can only perform simple, hard labor. Many of them are seeking Russian citizenship, which is a very bad sign for the future of Kyrgyzstan.



Opposite, a young Kirghiz ready for the horse race. Above, families that were victims of the civil war in Djalalabad in 2010. On the next page, Kirghiz youth.

The Catholic Church in Kyrgyzstan is extremely small: about 500 people in a country with a population of 5 million. Fifteen percent of the people are Orthodox. However, for most of Russians, the Orthodox Church is more a symbol of national identity than religion. The last twenty years, many Protestant churches (mostly from the US and S. Korea) began activities in Kyrgyzstan; they have been very active in evangelism and continue to see many conversions among the native people.

Catholics (German, Polish, Ukrainian, Korean etc.) were first sent to Kyrgyzstan by Stalin as a result of persecution. Toward the end of the 1950s, Fr. Shishkavichius, a Jesuit from Lithuania, made the first attempt to establish a regular

parish in Kyrgyzstan. Very quickly, he and the more active parish members were arrested. In the beginning of 1970s, P. Michail Keller, former prisoner of a Soviet concentration camp, officially built a little chapel in Bishkek. Until the beginning of the 1990s, parish members were only German. Since then, the German parishioners have left Kyrgyzstan, and now our Catholic communities are multi-national. The community was under the total control of Soviet secret police and the Communist administration. The parish priest and community were isolated from the Universal Church and didn't accept the Second Vatican Council. Fr. Nikolay Messmer, a young Jesuit born in Kazakhstan, came in the late 1980's to Bishkek as a parish priest

and started slowly to make changes in the liturgy. Now, he is a first Bishop of Kyrgyzstan. In 1997 the Pope asked the Society to take responsibility for the Church in Kyrgyzstan. And, today we have 5 Jesuits, one diocesan priest and four nuns. Fr. Janez Michelcic, our superior, is living in Bishkek and teaching Japanese. Fr. Alexander Kahn is also alone being a parish priest in Talas – isolated city in west Kyrgyzstan.

In 2005, I came with Fr. Krzysztof Korolczuk to south Kyrgyzstan to start a new parish in Jalalabad and Osh – the two biggest cities in Kyrgyzstan after Bishkek. At the time, there were only a few German and Polish families visited by a priest from Bishkek every few weeks or even months. First, we lived at





Fr. Krzysztof Korolczuk and Brother Damian Wojciechowski, author of the article, both doing apostolic work in Kyrgyzstan, a mostly Muslim country. Below, a panoramic landscape of this very beautiful country.

our friends' place: the house of a mixed Catholic-Muslim family. Later, we rented a house to finally have our own building. The most difficult challenge in the beginning was that you have nothing to do, nobody needs you. Sometimes, for Sunday Mass only one person was attending. We started with charity work, visiting houses for handicapped adults and children, orphans, elderly people and prisoners (working with drug and alcoholic addicted people). After the civil ethnic war in 2010, we visited together with Missionaries of Charity more than 1400 families who lost their homes and even relatives. Through this charity work, we showed people what Christianity and the Catholic Church really is.

Still, charity work is very important to us, but we understand that this work can be done by UN agencies, the Red Cross, and other





Fr. Stephan Lipke celebrating mass in the summer school camp for Catholic students of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

organizations. The social and economic problems here are the result of a moral crisis, and this morality is related to spirituality. The most important thing that we can do here is to preach the Good News, which can change the hearts of people and, through this, change the country.

Even if most of the population of Kyrgyzstan is Muslim, we have many possibilities for some sort of evangelization. We started different activities with the youth, such as English courses. Young people are very open and interested. In 2010 we finished construction of the Spirituality Centre, which is a wonderful retreat center for young people at lake Issyk Kul – a marvelous lake with beautiful scenery. This center gave us possibilities to organize summer

camps not only for Catholic youth, but also for Muslim students, orphans, and disabled children. Last summer we had 700 participants. This work at the retreat center has been made possible only through the help of Jesuits and volunteers coming from all over the world. For many of the Kyrgyz people, these camps or English classes are their first contact with Christianity.

Another important work that we do is building relationships with the native Protestants. They are very good Christians, but they lack a deeper formation and theological knowledge. In some little Protestant communities, you can observe strange teachings or internal conflicts. Slowly, we came to know more and more pastors who step by step became more and more interested to visit us, to talk or

partner together for charity work. Quickly they forgot their bad opinions about Catholics that they had before.

The biggest limitation for our work in Kyrgyzstan is the lack of Jesuits. Another limitation is inside of us: after so many years of studies, we are not prepared to evangelize people - something Protestants start doing a few months after being baptized. All of our liturgy, traditions, and mentality is European and has nothing to do with native cultures and traditions – this is one of the reasons that we have so few Kyrgyz Catholics in our communities. So, Kyrgyzstan is still a challenge for us, Jesuits.

Br. Damian Wojciechowski, S.J.

Philatelic page



■ **MONACO.** To celebrate world astronomy year in 2009, the principality of Monaco chose to feature Fr. **Francesco Maria Grimaldi** (1618-1663) on a stamp issued for this occasion. An Italian Jesuit from Bologna, Grimaldi is one of the eminent astronomers whose names are inscribed on the map of the moon: the “Grimaldus” is one of the largest lunar craters (410 kms in diameter), as this stamp shows us. As a man of science, however, Grimaldi was more a physicist than an astronomer. Optical science is indebted to him for the observation and precise description of the phenomenon of light diffraction. His treatise, *Physical Knowledge of Light: the Colors of the Rainbow*, published in 1665, secures for him a place of honor in the history of optics. Isaac Newton rendered him homage in his 1704 work, *Optiks*. But why does an Italian Jesuit figure on a stamp from Monaco? Probably by association with the Grimaldis who are the rulers of that principality.

■ **CROATIA AND VATICAN CITY.** While his nationality is sometimes debated, his stature as an eminent scientist has never been put in doubt. **Roger Boscovitch** (1711-1787) (or Ruder Bošćović, or Ruggiero Boscovich...) was born in Raguse, on the Dalmatian coast, in what was then an independent republic (today it is “Dubrovnik” in Croatia). After entering the Jesuit novitiate in Rome, he soon was a professor of mathematics and astronomy at the Gregorian University. An engineer, he was invited by Benedict XIV to verify the stability of the cupola of St. Peter’s Basilica (1742). A philosopher, he got Copernicus’s writings removed from the Index (1757). A traveler, he covered all of Europe between 1759 and 1763, being elected as a member of different scientific academies (St. Petersburg, London, etc.). When the Society of Jesus was suppressed (1773), he moved to France and, as director of navy optical works, became a “subject of the King of France.” This great European and peerless man of science died in the course of a scientific mission in Milan. The stamp is a joint Croatian-Vatican philatelic venture which commemorates, on the third centenary of his birth, the work Boscovitch did in stabilizing the cupola of St. Peter’s.



■ **INDIA.** In 2008 **Saint Joseph Boys School** of Bangalore celebrated its 150th anniversary. In 1854 Clément Bonnard, bishop of the ‘Paris Foreign Missions’, opened a seminary school in Bangalore. It became affiliated to the University of Madras after the latter was founded in 1858, so this is considered its date of foundation. In 1937 the college was entrusted to the Italian Jesuits of Venice. The Indian Jesuits of Karnataka eventually took it over, and under their direction it developed into two separate institutions: St. Joseph University (7783 students) and St. Joseph College (2778 students). Curiously, all the Jesuit provinces of India have at least one college dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, with Karnataka being the only exception. There it is Saint Joseph who takes preeminence.

■ **ECUADOR.** The city of Quito (Ecuador) became in 2011 the “American capital of culture,” an occasion for it to make known its seven wonders. Among these was the **church of the Society of Jesus**. Ecuador has been generous regarding Jesuit philately, having already twice featured the church’s façade, in 1947 and 2001. The 2011 stamp shows us the transept under the cupola, giving only a faint idea of the opulence of the walls and pillars covered in gold-leaf. The church forms part of a complex with a college and a university (St. Gregory), including a 20,000 volume library. For two centuries it was at the center of Jesuit apostolic activities in Latin America. Under construction from 1605 to 1765 (160 years!), it is a remarkable example of Baroque style and integrates many aspects of local culture into its decor.



■ **LITHUANIA.** The Church of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, located in the historic center of the city of Vilnius, has been classified as part of the world cultural patrimony. An ancient Gothic church built in 1387 was entrusted to the Jesuits when they opened their college in Vilnius. The church was rebuilt in 1571, its interior space being adapted to the requirements of the liturgical reform of the Council of Trent, especially as regards the renewed importance of preaching. A bell tower (not seen on the stamp) was added at the beginning of the 17th century. The college quickly became a university (1572), and its church was used for a great many solemn ceremonies: philosophical and theological debates, defense of theses, canonizations, etc. Its prestige gave it a quasi-official character, and it frequently received the sovereigns of Poland and Lithuania. While it continued to serve the university after the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773), it was made into a “Museum of Science” by the Soviet regime. Returned to cultic use in 1991, it is again served by two Jesuits who are university chaplains.

■ **VATICAN CITY.** **Christophorus Clavius (1538-1612)** was one of the most brilliant mathematicians and astronomers of the Renaissance. Of German origin, **Christoph Klau** was a professor at the old Gregorian University (the Roman College) when, in 1579, Pope Gregory XIII asked him to undertake the reform of the Julian calendar, which at the time was some ten days behind the astronomical year. In the year 1582 ten days were suppressed from the calendar, allowing for a transfer to the new “Gregorian calendar,” which was based on the movement of the sun. When this calendar celebrated its fourth centenary in 1982, Germany and the Vatican paid philatelic homage to this eminent man of science and great servant of the Church, who was also an invaluable support to Galileo.



■ **IRELAND.** The hundredth anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, the greatest naval catastrophe of modern times (1912), brought out of oblivion **Francis Browne** (1880-1960), an Irish Jesuit and excellent photographer. Equipped with his photographic apparatus and a ticket paid for by his uncle, Browne boarded the Titanic in April 1912 and sailed from Cherbourg (France) to Cobh, near his native city of Cork in Ireland. When a wealthy American couple offered to pay his passage to New York, he cabled his provincial to ask permission. The response was short and blunt: “Get off the ship. Provincial.” Thus obedience

saved the life of a Jesuit ... and preserved for posterity a large and unique collection of photos of life on board the Titanic! Against the background of the city of Cobh (with its cathedral), the stamp shows us the famous ship and at the left (without naming him) the portrait of Fr. Francis Browne with camera in hand.

Étienne N. Degrez, S.J.
Translated by Joseph Owens, S.J.