

Yearbook of the Society of Jesus

2018



Jesuits







### **Cover**

*Students in a Fe y Alegría school in the Dominican Republic.  
Fe y Alegría arrived in the Dominican Republic on 8 December  
1990 with the signing of an agreement with the Ministry of  
Education for the establishment of public schools and colleges.  
See story on pages 32-36*

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Fax: (+39) 06-698-68-280 – Tel. (+39) 06-698-68-289  
E-Mail: [infosj-dir@sjcuria.org](mailto:infosj-dir@sjcuria.org)  
[infosj-2@sjcuria.org](mailto:infosj-2@sjcuria.org)

**Editor:** Patrick Mulemi S.J.  
**Secretary:** Caterina Talloru  
**Graphic Designer:** Gigi Brandazza  
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2018

# Jesuits

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## INDEX: IN THIS ISSUE



### EDITORIAL

*Patrick Mulemi, S.J.* ..... 6

### EDUCATION

DEM. REP. CONGO: Mwapusukeni Technical College in Lubumbashi  
*Max Senker Musam-Adia, S.J.* ..... 8

MYANMAR: Mission: Education at the edges  
*P. Dass, S.J.; M. Labuntog; J. Giuliotti, S.J.; Dunstan Vinny Joseph, S.J.* ..... 12

UNITED STATES: The New Face of Jesuit Higher Education  
*Ann Christenson* ..... 16

MALAWI: A Dream Becoming a Reality!  
*Peter Henriot, S.J.* ..... 20

DEM. REP. CONGO: A research centre at the service of agricultural entrepreneurship  
*Ghislain Tsbikendwa Matadi, S.J.* ..... 24

INDIA: A Dream Born out of a Nightmare!  
*George Joseph, S.J.* ..... 28

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: 25 Years of Education for Life  
*Jesús Zaglul, S.J.* ..... 32

### ANNIVERSARIES

HONG KONG: 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arrival of the Jesuits  
*Alfred Joseph Deignan, S.J.* ..... 38

VENEZUELA: A 100 Years of the Society of Jesus  
*F. Javier Duplá, S.J.* ..... 42

AUSTRALIA: Forty Years of *Jesuit Social Services*  
*Andrew Hamilton, S.J.* ..... 46

ITALY: St Stanislaus Kostka's life  
*Robert Danieluk, S.J.* ..... 50

### GENERAL CONGREGATION 36

Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás  
*Antonio Spadaro, S.J.* ..... 54

Dedication and discernment  
*Cipriano Díaz Marcos, S.J.* ..... 60

Re-reading my experience of the 36<sup>th</sup> GC  
*Hyacinthe Loua, S.J.* ..... 63

Community discernment can stand the test of interculturality  
*Ludovic Lado, S.J.* ..... 67

From Caracas to Rome: The Story of Arturo Sosa  
*Editor* ..... 70

AT THE FRONTIERS

LEBANON: A Spark in the Darkness of Damascus  
*Sandra Chaoul* ..... 78

RUSSIA: Tomsk – The City of Friends  
*Michail Tkalich, S.J.; Louis R. Hotop, S.J.* ..... 82

USA – MEXICO: Faith on the Border  
*William Bole* ..... 88

COLOMBIA – VENEZUELA: An apostolic region on the frontier (RAIF)  
*Dizzi Perales, S.J.* ..... 91

INDIA: Lok Manch: People’s Platform for Grassroots Leadership  
*Elango Arulanandam, S.J.* ..... 96

FROM THE JESUIT WORLD

EASTERN AFRICA: A Service of Joy  
*Diana Karua* ..... 100

BELGIUM: So are they still sending you to Brussels?  
*Henry Longbottom, S.J.* ..... 104

INDIA: Empowering Women to Fight to Extreme Poverty and Hunger  
*Sujata Jena, SS.CC.; Irudaya Jothi, S.J.* ..... 108

INDIA: Ears to the Ground  
*P.A. Chacko, S.J.* ..... 114

CANADA: Lawrence J. Kroker, S.J.  
*William Bole* ..... 118

SPAIN: Itineraries  
*Elena Rodríguez-Avial; Pablo Martín Ibáñez* ..... 122

JESAM – CEP: A Journey of Accompaniment  
*Ashton Mugozhi, S.J.* ..... 125

ARGENTINA: The challenge of forming leaders for a more just society  
*Mariela Sorrentino* ..... 129

TIMOR-LESTE: The needed space for forming potential leaders  
*Erik John J. Gerilla, S.J.* ..... 132

AUSTRALIA: A Missionary of Mercy on Wheels  
*Richard Shortall, S.J.* ..... 138

ZIMBABWE: Apostolates at Arrupe College  
*Thierry Manirambona, S.J.* ..... 142

FRANCE: *The Platform and the Society*  
*Christian Motsch, S.J.* ..... 145

INDONESIA: Bracing for the New Century  
*Heru Hendarto, S.J.* ..... 148



Patrick Mulemi S.J.

**Dear Friends in the Lord,**

“The Society of Jesus has always sought to know and to follow God’s will for us. We do so from the heart of the Church, but gazing upon the world that has been groaning in labour pains until now” (GC36 D. 1, n.1).

General Congregation 36 invited us to a contemplation of the world. The Congregation calls on us to stop and ask ourselves, “What does the world in which we live and serve look like today?” On the one hand, we live and minister in a vibrant world, a world bustling with youthful energy and vigour. A world in which we see the beauty of God’s creation. On the other hand, we live and serve in a broken world. We live with and minister to people who are humiliated, struck by violence, excluded from the common good, and left to pick up the broken pieces of their lives on the margins. It is a world of contradiction. Can we always find God in all things...?

In his address to members of GC36 on 24 October 2016, Pope Francis reminded us that the Society of Jesus is an international and multicultural body in a fragmented and divided world. Can we find God in all things in this fragmented and divided world? How can we minister to our brothers and sisters in this broken world today? Like the young man in the Gospel (John 6:1-14), all we have are five small barley loaves and two small fish. What can we do with so little, we ask?

“Discernment, collaboration and networking offer three important perspectives on our contemporary way of proceeding” (GC36 D. 2, n.3). We seek to know what the Lord requires of us. In humility, we listen to the voice of the Lord. We discern our mission in the Church. We discern the Lord’s invitation. We seek ways of responding.

We are Servants of Christ’s mission. We have only five small barley loaves and two small fish, which we are offering to Christ. Our discernment leads us to offer the five loaves and two fish to the Lord. His blessing leads us to distribute the bread and the fish.

In the Jesuit Yearbook 2018, we invite our readers to journey with the Society in serving our brothers and sisters in different parts of the world, in different situations in the world. We invite our readers to accompany us as we visit new education initiatives. We invite you to revisit with us the experience of many years of service in different parts of the world. We recall the experience of General Congregation 36. In the brokenness and darkness of Damascus, we find a spark of hope. It is service of pain, fear and uncertainties, but it is also a service of joy.

Yes, we have five small barley loaves and two small fish. Join us in offering them to the Lord. Accompany us in distributing the bread and the fish.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, filled with the grace and blessings of the Lord.

# Toward the Renewal of Our Apostolic Life

Our educational apostolates at all levels, and our centres for communication and social research, should help form men and women committed to reconciliation and able to confront obstacles to reconciliation and propose solutions. The intellectual apostolate should be strengthened to help in the transformation of our cultures and societies. (GC36, D.1., n.34)



# Mwapusukeni Technical College in Lubumbashi

The students we guide in formation become “men and women of right principles, personally appropriated, open to the signs of the times, to culture and to the problems of their entourage” (Pedro Arrupe 1980)

Max Senker Musam-Adia, S.J. – *Rector*  
Translated by Kate Marcelin-Rice

**Mwapusukeni Technical College in Lubumbashi** (CTM) is the most recently established of the eight colleges for which the Jesuits of the Central Africa Province (ACE) are responsible in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo). It is an educational work for primary and secondary studies. Mwapusukeni opened its doors on Monday, 2 September 2013, at the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year. In 2018, the Central Africa Province will celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jesuit’s presence (1893). Mwapusukeni is one of their most recent and important foundations.

Located in the southeast of the country, in terms of population Lubumbashi is the country’s second largest city after Kinshasa, the capital. It is commonly known as “the copper capital” because of the subsoil of the region, which is very rich in minerals, especially copper. As such, the Haut-Katanga Province, of which the city of Lubumbashi is the administrative centre, constitutes the country’s economic lung. The mining industries, which are set up there to extract the copper, call for technical skills.

This new educational enterprise of the Society of Jesus in Central Africa is the result of several years of discernment. The Jesuits of the province sought to respond to the intention expressed long ago by Fr

Peter Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, who wanted a more visible presence of the Society of Jesus in Lubumbashi. This appeal was accompanied by requests for the same thing by both the local Church and the people. Indeed, although Jesuits arrived in Katanga in 1959 and there were scholastics (Jesuits in formation) studying and Jesuit professors at universities, the Jesuits did not yet have an apostolate with outreach. Thus, Mwapusukeni will fill this gap.

By happy coincidence, in April 2011, Mr Moïse Katumbi Chapwe, then Governor of Katanga Province, and his wife, Mrs Carine Nabayo Katumbi, were planning to open a technical school in Lubumbashi.



# Education



Left: Provincial of Central Africa, Fr José Minaku (seated centre) with members of staff during a visit to the college. Centre: Students take their examinations in the school hall. Below: Students are given opportunities for hands-on practical experience. Bottom: Electronics students in the laboratory under the guidance of their teacher.

The mission of the school would be “to train technicians who can respond to the needs of the marketplace and in particular to the needs of businesses”. In order to realize their project, these promoters decided “to offer it to the Jesuits, whose quality of teaching and strictness no longer require any demonstration”, as Mrs Nabayo Katumbi declared at the official ceremony for handing over the College to the Society of Jesus on 23 November 2013.

A word on the name given to the new College: *Mwapusukeni* is a Bemba word, one of the important vernacular languages spoken in the Province of Haut-Katanga. It derives from the verb *ukupusuka*, which means, “to escape danger”. Mwapusukeni

is thus a formula addressed to someone who has escaped from an unfortunate situation—someone, for example, who has just been pulled out of or saved from water.

That a Jesuit college with a technical vocation should bear this name of Mwapusukeni represents both a challenge and a programme. The college is thus an institution which accompanies its students in the process of their apprenticeship for life, starting from the level at which they are admitted to the school. Thus by mastering the technical skills, the students so trained will have learned to earn their living and will also contribute to the development of the Province of Haut-Katanga and of the DR Congo.



## Mwapusukeni Technical College in Lubumbashi

*Below: Mr Moïse Katumbi Chapwe (then Governor of Katanga Province) and his wife, Madame Carine Nayabo Katumbi at the official handover of the school to the Society of Jesus. Bottom: Father Max Senker with some students of Mwapusukeni.*

Unlike the other seven colleges which have become public academic institutions and whose management was entrusted to the Society of Jesus following an agreement between the Church and the State, Mwapusukeni is a private Jesuit Catholic school. It is the first of its kind in the DR Congo of which the Jesuits have ownership. This gives us the ability to integrate our preferential option for the poor with a greater freedom to adapt the official school curricula. However, it also implies social charges, which are certainly no less weighty.

The motto of Mwapusukeni, “*semper ad excellentiam consequendam*”, which can be translated as “Always aiming for excellence”, has a part to play in this integral training for excellence, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of Jesuit education. Here excellence is synonymous

with high quality. It lies in the fact that the students we guide in their formation become “*men and women of right principles, personally appropriated, open to the signs of the times, to culture and to the problems of their entourage*” (Pedro Arrupe, 1980): men and women with and for others. In addition to this excellence the “*cura personalis*”, the care and attention which the whole educational community must show to each person who is learning throughout the entire apprenticeship process.

The College’s logo, designed by a Congolese Jesuit, Father Rodrigue Ntungu, is full of symbolism. Its basic colour is golden copper: what could have greater meaning for the “cupriferous Province” of Katanga? IHS (Ιησους-Jesus), in white, is the light that guides, brightens and orients our educational mission. The stylized roof, which covers a crossed flat spanner and hammer, symbolizes the technical training provided at the College. IHS: Jesus reigns over all things. This crest of the Society of Jesus, which surmounts the structure, is an expression of the Jesuit leadership exercised over the College. In this stylized form it was the logo used by the universal Society of Jesus on the occasion of the celebrations for



the Bicentennial of the Society's Restoration (1814-2014), an event which coincided with the opening of Mwapusukeni Technical College in Lubumbashi (2013-2014).

The technical formation provided at the college covers the fields of metal construction, industrial electronics and automobile mechanics. Practical training, provided by the Professional Training Sector in metalwork and welding, plumbing, electricity in new constructions and vehicle mechanics will soon be added to these three sectors, leading to post-secondary studies. This is with the view of responding directly to the local needs of the marketplace and in particular to those of businesses. It is in addition a participation in the fight against unemployment among young people and a support for promoting creativity in their areas of employment.

The college's overall capacity is 750 students. Mwapusukeni is progressing so well that the number of students in the current academic year is 561, of whom 111 are girls.

Blessed Miguel Pro, the Jesuit community which gives life to this College, consists of three priests, two scholastics and one Brother. With one woman religious and lay collaborators, the education team in its entirety consists of 47 members, of whom 13 are women. Mwapusukeni is thus a place of mission for both lay people and Jesuits.

The spiritual and pastoral life of the academic community of Mwapusukeni is supported by courses in religion and in life education, by class Masses and Masses celebrated during the important liturgical seasons, as well as by retreats. Following the tradition of the Society of Jesus, we integrate a time of retreat for senior students.

Mwapusukeni also has as its patron Blessed Miguel Pro (13 January 1891-23 November 1927). This is not only because 23 November, the day of his martyrdom and of his liturgical commemoration, coincides with the day of the official opening of the college but also because Miguel Pro was the son of an engineer. As a Jesuit, he looked after students in his country, Mexico, helping them to deepen their faith.

It would also be right to stress that the college is effectively a school for the local community. For apart from using the buildings during the week, at weekends



students take part in meetings of several Catholic groups who come for various spiritual activities: spiritual retreats, the young people's celebration of Christmas and Easter, and religious formation, etc.

Lastly, heirs to the Jesuits' legendary educational tradition, the Jesuits who are pioneers in this new mission at Mwapusukeni benefit from the favourable presupposition of which St Ignatius of Loyola speaks (Spiritual Exercises, no. 22). This team is thus at work, aware of writing in their daily lives the history of the process of the gradual implantation of the Society of Jesus in the Province of Haut-Katanga.

*Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* (For the Greater Glory of God)!

*Top: Open day at the College: a student explains to the parents the use of the technical materials at the workshop of Metallic Construction. Above: Metalwork students.*

MYANMAR

# Mission: Education at the edges

The return of the Jesuits for a third time to the country is mostly around the theme of education. The first time, though, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was mostly about accompanying the Portuguese, their progenies and their colonialist adventures.

Paul Dass, S.J., Mark Labuntog, Julio Giuliatti, S.J., Dunstan Vinny Joseph, S.J.



*Students in the school  
come from  
all walks of life.*

**The Cuban Missile Crisis** between John F. Kennedy (USA) and Nikita Khrushchev (USSR) in 1962 had for its United Nations go-between a Burmese. U Thant was Secretary General of the UN then, the first Asian at the post. It would have taken quite some calibre to get there, and the Burmese educational system had made it happen. The University of Rangoon (U Thant's alma mater) and the University of Mandalay boasted, in the 1950's and the early 1960's, the best medical and law faculties in the whole of the Far East. Many future doctors and lawyers-to-be from the

South East Asian region had flocked to Burma, now Myanmar, to get their higher education.

However, in the same 1962 of U Thant, Khrushchev and Kennedy, something took a turn for the worse inside the country. A military regime began to assert itself over and against a democratically elected government and started to exercise raw power. Gradually the system began to fail – fail its people, fail its social fabric, fail its institutions.

The military was afraid of the students. The first thing it did when it took over power was to bomb the Student Union building at the University of Rangoon. It disrupted the funeral ceremony of Dr. U Thant whom the students wanted to honour and hold up as a symbol of protest against military power. However, gradually, the students were shut down and dispersed across the country. Higher education has been on free-fall since then.

Moreover, not only higher education, but, generally speaking, all education as well.

The return of the Jesuits for a third time to the country is mostly around the theme of education. The first time, though, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was mostly about accompanying the Portuguese, their progenies and their colonialist adventures. But, the second time, as late as the 1950's and early 60's, was about Jesuits engaging with the queen of the sciences – theology. The major seminary of the entire nation was in their hands, but because they were Americans, because they were Jesuits of the famous Maryland Province, they were kicked out in 1962, precisely because they were foreigners. One by one, they left the country. Some are still alive today. Nevertheless, they left this terribly good impression on the first local seminarians of the post-Vatican II era that of those among them who became bishops, some came calling on Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach of



# U Thant

## MYANMAR

### Mission: Education at the edges

*The schools aim to educate children from the youngest age.*

gracious memory, asking him to bring the Jesuits back to Myanmar. So, 1998, and we set foot ashore again.

Immediately after setting up the novitiate, arrangements were made to have Jesuit candidates do a stretch of English, and so were planted the first seeds of two English Language Learning Centres, the first under the redoubtable patronage of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and the second under the equally formidable patronage of St. Edmund Campion. Aloysius Gonzaga and Edmund Campion, therefore, became the namesakes of the two educational institutions that the Myanmar Jesuit Mission houses. Both are just under twenty years



old, and positively flourished if only under the radar of a military regime that is ever watchful, ever vigilant. But even some army generals sent their children to us because they liked what we – Jesuits and Lay Collaborators – were cautiously offering.

The bishops have still been turning to us; every year, they allow their minor seminarians to go through the harrowing experience of having to pass the English Language Entrance Exam for major seminary studies that is set and administered by the Jesuits. More recently, the Cardinal Archbishop of Yangon, His Eminence Charles Cardinal Bo, has asked the Jesuits to set up a Myanmar Leadership Institute. Not easy. But, time to rise up to the inevitable, we think. If the military regime had been busy wiping out all forms of leadership in the country for the last fifty years, then, it is time for the Church to do something to make up for the deficit. Therefore, these days, are busy times, sometimes, anxiety-ridden times, to put this project together for its launch come September 2017. Georgetown University has a role in it, so everyone is terribly impressed. We look forward to MLI's long-loved longevity in its service of the local Church.

But, equally, even if less impressively



name-stringed, the bishops pressing at our doors, sometimes persistently, for Jesuit educational institutions in their dioceses. Again, not easy. Not enough personnel, not enough resources, not enough apostolic elasticity. Still, one hears. Still, one echoes. Too far from the frontiers even at the frontiers.

However, the special bit is Thinganyun. Literally, “robes of a monk on an island” – in an otherwise predominantly Muslim quarter of a semi-slum in Yangon. The social apostolate of the Society thought that this was a grand place to do some education, and since then, it has come to play some calculation on our part. Evening classes, English classes, children’s library and now, they are sending out their first young student to study Social Research, M.A., in Sophia University, Japan, no less. We admire and take our hats off to this.

The staid and steady guys remain, however; Edmund Campion and Aloysius Gonzaga. “Campion” prospers. He has a hundred odd students every intake three times a year to sit at his footsteps and learn some serious English. Even Queen Elizabeth the First had been impressed that first time around. A Jesuit Brother heads the institute and he has done a great job.

“Gonzaga” has his own compound to school (the others do not.) From English Language Learning, he has launched into Liberal Arts studies. The arts that liberate – that is what he thinks should work out as output for his students who literally spend the whole of their daylight at his school. There is also some grace-filled stuff going on like how students from a Catholic institution such as his should be found spending their whole weekend mornings teaching the English they had learnt to young children at Buddhist monasteries. And, of all things, with the help of the goddess Athena, or more properly, the “Ateneo” de Davao University, Gonzaga’s students are guided in their curriculum, their language studies, their social science and humanities studies and their teacher education studies, with the help of volunteer teachers all the way from this university in the Philippines, only to finally award them at the end of their studies with Athena’s own Diploma in Education. It has all worked out well so far, so why should we not be optimistic?

A striking feature in all this is how well Buddhists work with Catholics. Half of our staff, and our students, are Buddhists. But, their generosity, eagerness and belief in what we do, when they don’t have to, is sometimes overwhelming. How welcome we are at the heart of Buddhist society—the monastery—to teach their own very children. How believed in we are. It all makes perfect sense for a Jesuit mission. From the Paraguay Reductions to Matteo Ricci’s Mandarin Court to Myanmar Mission’s Monastic Outreach—the line should be unbroken? Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

The future augurs well for the Mission; three local (Jesuit) ordinations in the last three years, and some more waiting to happen. They (the young priests, brothers and scholastics) are set for launch. Orbital trajectories have been plotted with all systems go. And, spaces (within Myanmar) beckon.

# Thinganyun

The world's first Jesuit community college opened in August 2015

## The New Face of Jesuit Higher Education

Arrupe College is a junior college that's an extension of Loyola University Chicago and was created expressly to address the lack of accessible higher education for low-income families.

Ann Christenson

*This is an edited version of an article that appeared in the February 2016 issue of U.S. Catholic.*

**No one was more excited** to receive an acceptance letter to Arrupe College in Chicago than the mother of Jontae Thomas. "She called me," Thomas recalls. "Don't you get the notification today?" she asked. Indeed, he did. Thomas called his mother back to share the good news. "She screamed for joy," he says. But Thomas asked why his acceptance to Arrupe College was so important to her, when he'd also been accepted to other schools.

"I just like that school," Thomas' mother told him. Thomas understood why: Classes are small, and teachers know their students by name. They also serve as student advisers and "would always have their door open to us," Thomas says. Most attractive of all was the opportunity to earn an associate degree without incurring financial debt.

Arrupe College is a junior college that's an extension of Loyola University Chicago and was created expressly to address the lack of accessible higher education for low-income families. Arrupe College's founder, Jesuit Father Michael Garanzini, former president and current chancellor of Loyola University Chicago, hatched the idea as a timely, necessary way to improve the college's graduation

rates of students from challenged economic backgrounds. His concern was that the successful growth of Jesuit universities had created an elitist reputation.

Fr. Garanzini designed Arrupe College as part of a long-range plan to implement change, with the university absorbing the costs. He ran the proposal past administrators of various Chicago high schools, where it "was met with great excitement," says Jesuit Father Stephen Katsouros, the college's dean and executive director.

The school, with an eye toward students of limited financial means, would offer a two-year associate degree. Students would attend classes 40 weeks out of the year, three to four days per week, and each class would be eight weeks in duration, followed by a two-week break. The ongoing nature of classes without an extended summer break would help keep students engaged.

"If they're off, they're less likely to come back," Fr. Katsouros says. Class sizes would be small, with fewer than 30 students, to eliminate disconnect between the students and faculty. The goal is for students to graduate with little or no debt. They could live at home, commute to school and be encour-

# Arrupe College



*Left: Arrupe College students work on a group project in a Digital Media Lab course.  
Below: Jesuit Father Stephen Katsouros, dean and executive director of Arrupe College, with a student on the first day of class.*



## The New Face of Jesuit Higher Education

*Below: Arrupe College student Asya Meadows takes notes during Introduction to Christian Theology.*

aged to work part-time jobs to offset tuition costs and personal expenses. Students are required to apply for federal student aid and are expected to receive other aid and grants, which brings the per-year tuition cost down to approximately \$2,000 per year. Integral to the creation of Arrupe College was an available building, Maguire Hall, at Loyola's downtown campus. Here Arrupe College's classrooms, study halls and offices could be housed in one place.

The interest in Arrupe College was immediate and strong, according to Fr. Katsouros. The school's first-year class had 159 students, and 131 returned for their second year of college this past fall, along with a new incoming freshman class of 187 students.

Bringing faculty on board was not a burden either, thanks to the model's focus on teaching and advising. Each faculty member serves as an adviser to 20 students and sets aside at least 10 hours a week for office hours. "All [faculty] are really turned on by this program," Fr. Katsouros says.

The other key component was addressing the question: How to help these students flourish? The answer was to build a strong

support network of professionals — six full-time faculty, as well as a licensed social worker, two associate deans and a career coordinator.

Recognizing that many Arrupe College students face more roadblocks to success in terms of their personal lives — they might be helping support their families or facing a daunting commute to campus — this education model is tasked with addressing the whole person.

The fledgling school's commitment to evolving methods of cultivating a climate of success is critical. Yolanda Golden, Arrupe College's associate dean of student success, ponders that every day. She oversees the college's career counseling strategy, keeping students academically and socially on course. This formally began in July 2015, the month before Arrupe College classes were in session, with a three-week Summer Enrichment Program, which is mandatory for all students.

Besides a time to register for classes, meet the faculty and learn how to maneuver through the hurdles of financial aid, the summer program includes a two-day retreat



where students participate in team-building activities — such as a ropes course — that enable them to start building friendships with each other. The program isn't just social. Students take courses in digital media and math and a workshop designed to help decision-making with regard to majors and career choices.

The credits earned in Arrupe College's two-year program award students with an associate degree in arts and humanities, business, or social and behavioral sciences. Those credits are transferable to more than 100 four-year Illinois universities. "I think it's going to be a game-changer in higher education," says Fr. Katsouras.

The challenges faced by Arrupe College students should not define them, says associate dean Golden. It is one of the reasons for Arrupe College's intensive support system. "They're gifted. We have students raising children, helping contribute to their family households, and still going to classes four days a week and maintaining their grades," says Golden. "If that's not dedication, I don't know what is."

Students appreciate the net of professional support that is also just a classroom away in Maguire Hall. English professor Daniel Burke was attracted to Arrupe College's teacher-adviser model. Burke, who teaches writing and composition, is not alone. "No one made it onto the faculty who wasn't heavily, emotionally committed to the methodology," he says.

At Arrupe College, no one downplays the importance of a dedicated student mentor. When a student was losing ground in a first-semester statistics course and in danger of



failing, the faculty "pulled together to help this student succeed," says Jennifer Wozniak Boyle, associate dean for academic affairs. The student pulled his weight to earn a C grade. "It's a 'startup' so we're doing everything, but that's exciting and the staff worked as a team," she says.

Language is another issue the faculty has to consider. For more than 100 Arrupe College students, English is not the first language spoken at home. Spanish is the majority for non-English speakers, but Polish and Russian are also in the mix.

B. Minerva Ahumada understands the scenario quite well. When the Arrupe College philosophy lecturer came to the United States from her native Mexico to work on a master's degree in philosophy, she didn't have a mastery of English. Now with some ESL students in her classes, she says, "I identify with them a lot." The language issue helps her "understand how to be a companion to the students inside and outside the classroom."

"We're not reinventing the wheel," Burke says of his and his colleagues' teaching styles. But Arrupe College is about reinvention. When other models aren't working, try something new. It's a new idea in the Jesuit spirit of education and social justice.

*Above: Fr. Katsouras presents an award to a student during Arrupe's first convocation in January 2016.*

# Maguire Hall

# A Dream Becoming a Reality!

Since opening in September 2015, Loyola Jesuit Secondary School has been enrolling girls and boys in a very good educational institution inspired by the Ignatian pedagogy of preparing “people with and for others.”

Peter Henriot, S.J.

**A dream becoming a reality!** That’s what is occurring these days in Malawi, a southern African country poor in practicals but rich in potentials. Key to that occurrence in both public and church circles is Loyola Jesuit Secondary School (LJSS) in Kasungu. Since opening in September 2015, LJSS has been enrolling girls and boys in a very good educational institution inspired by the Ignatian pedagogy of preparing “people with and for others.”

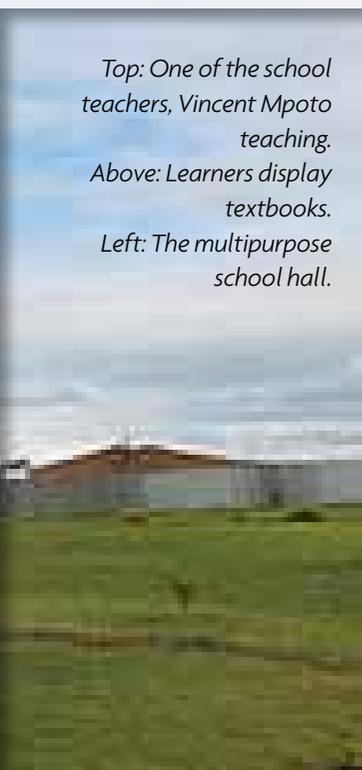
The 2013 issue of the *Jesuit Yearbook* featured an article describing the work of the Zambia-Malawi Province, “Welcome to the Warm Heart of Africa.” In the article were facts about the growing presence of Jesuit apostolic work in Malawi, a coun-

try closely associated with Zambia through colonial heritage under British rule, ethnic relationships among local peoples and geographic proximity in south-central Africa.

Loyola Jesuit Secondary School was described as a “priority commitment” made by the Zambia-Malawi Province, an “option for the poor” in a rural area of a country where most children lack schooling opportunities. Less than 35% of young Malawians (less than 30% of girls) have the chance to enter secondary school, and much fewer actually complete that phase of education. Yet it is widely acknowledged that no country can develop without educating its youth.

Once the decision was made to start





Top: One of the school teachers, Vincent Mpoto teaching.

Above: Learners display textbooks.

Left: The multipurpose school hall.

planning for this new school, then Zambia-Malawi provincial, Fr. Peter Bwanali, committed two Jesuits to get the project underway: Fr. Alojz Podgrajsek as Project Director and Fr. Peter Henriot as Development Director. Groundbreaking for the campus took place in September 2012 – on an empty 22 hectare field in the rural town of Kasungu. The building contractor hired 225 local people to assist in the construction basics – human labour that experienced both *earning* and *learning* possibilities!

When the first year was admitted in September 2015, three Zambia-Malawi Province Jesuits joined as staff: Fr. Simon Makuru, Head Teacher; Fr. Ken Simalalo, Chaplain; and Jesuit Scholastic Emmanuel Chisanga, teacher.

The first year began with Form One comprised of youth who had completed eight years of primary schooling. Good

gender balance marked a good start: 60 girls and 62 boys! Since then enrollment of 120 to 130 each year has maintained a fair gender balance. This is considered to be a strong priority of the school. Education of girls is central to sound and sustainable development. The girl who has the chance for education will marry later, have fewer children, more of her children will survive and attend school, and she will take part in community activities. “Educate a girl, educate a nation,” is the truth!

Malawi is classified as one of the poorest countries in the world (171 out of 186 on the United Nations Human Development Index, and third poorest on World Bank GDP per capita ranking). It is significant therefore that the Zambia-Malawi Province made the commitment to join with the Government of Malawi to make LJSS a “grant aided school.” This means that the Government pays the salaries of teachers – always the largest portion of any school’s budget.

With fees therefore much lower than in a private school, LJSS is designedly more accessible to families of lesser means. And an endowment fund, “Loyola Learners Assistance Programme,” has been established to help with scholarships and other financial needs.

LJSS learners (“learners” is the happy phrase applied to secondary school pupils in Malawi!) come from all across Malawi. But a serious challenge has to be faced to assure enrollment of girls and boys from the Kasungu district where the school is located. The primary school system there is so deficient that very few youth pass the exams required for entrance into secondary school.

The Zambia-Malawi Province is therefore making a special effort to improve the chances for Kasungu youth to become part of LJSS. This means attention must be turned toward assisting the primary school

# Kasungu

## A Dream Becoming a Reality!

*Below: Fr Alojz Podgrajsek, SJ, with new Form One students.*

*Below right: Father Makasa Chikwamo, SJ, celebrating mass with students.*

*Bottom: Girls' netball team.*

pupils to prepare for the exams – extra school time, additional text books, and so on.

From the start, LJSS has been a boarding school for all enrolled. Why? Because if the school were only a day-school it would face the challenge of pupils significantly hindered from devoting full-time to educational requirements. After school assignments would mean girls assisting in household chores and boys working in the fields and tending cattle. And most homes in the local area (indeed, throughout the

country) lack electricity needed for night-time studies. So the decision was made for the school to be only for boarders, thus providing a complete learning environment for all learners.

Good Jesuit pedagogy guides the educational experience of learners, teachers and staff. Yes, “women and men with and for others”! And a motto that expresses well the aim of the school: “Come to LJSS not just to learn to make a *living*, but to learn to make a *difference*!” Catholics, Christians of other denominations and Muslims



make up the student body. Religious services are available on weekends, and there is an early morning Mass offered each weekday – optional, but almost universally attended.

Two farm plots near the school's campus have been secured and are being developed under the supervision of Fr. Sebastian Malambo, SJ. Maize fields, local vegetables, and a chicken run and piggery will be providing both needed food supplies and some earnings from local sales.

Something that has both very much pleased the Jesuits and others associated with establishing the school in Kasungu and also seriously challenged future planning is the delight shown by parents, visitors and the learners themselves upon first visits to LJSS. The 22 hectare campus has been beautifully designed with attractive buildings laid out on rolling green lawns. Environmental protection has been promoted through use of soil-based bricks rather than kiln-burnt bricks. Office, classroom and hostel furniture is made by a local joinery that replants all trees cut for use.

Funds for construction and equipment of the school have come from a variety of local and international sources. The Government of Malawi has contributed in two significant ways: through exempting from local sales tax the construction materials and basic educational equipment, and through lifting custom fees on the many items that must be imported, especially through South Africa. Generous financial donations have been made by Father General, several Jesuit Provinces across the globe, Jesuit mission offices in various countries, foundations and individual benefactors from Malawi and internationally.

Indeed, a dream is becoming a reality in Kasungu, Malawi! And hopes are that this reality will significantly contribute toward fulfilling the dreams of Malawians for a country with true development for all.



*Above: Frs Alojz Podgrajsek, SJ and Simon Makuru, SJ, inspecting construction works.  
Left: Workers planting grass on campus  
Below: Vegetable garden at LJSS.*

# LJSS

# A research centre at the service of agricultural entrepreneurship

We have become accustomed to conjugating better verbs such as to give, to ask, to help, etc. Let us dare to learn to conjugate another verb: to engage in entrepreneurship.

Ghislain Tshikendwa Matadi, S.J.  
*Translated by Kate Marcelin-Rice*

**On Saturday, 20 February 2015**, the Provincial of Central Africa Province (ACE), Rev. Fr José Minaku, SJ, inaugurated the Centre for Research and Communication on Sustainable Development (CERED). As part of the Faculty of Agronomic and Veterinary Sciences (FSAV) of the Loyola University in the Congo (ULC), in addition to its research mission in the agricultural, ecological and social fields, CERED strives to promote agricultural entrepreneurship among young people and farmers.

Loyola University in the Congo came into being from the merging of the Higher Agro Veterinary Institute of Kimwenza (ISAV), the Faculty of Philosophy and two

other projects, and from their transformation into a university.

ISAV was created in 1994 by the Jesuits of Central Africa Province when they realized that hunger is a major problem in Africa. It was both necessary and urgent to create a training program to combat food insecurity. Destined to love the land and to create farming businesses themselves, it was envisaged that students of ISAV would thus contribute to producing sufficient quantities of good-quality foods.

An evaluation of the more than twenty years of ISAV's existence shows that few of its former students have in fact created small-scale agricultural entrepreneurships.





Alas, many of them are still desperately seeking employment. Hence the question: “Why do our former students not succeed in creating small-scale farming businesses in a country which has no lack of assets”?

One of CERED’s goals is precisely to help the final-year students of FSAV and other young people, men and women, whether or not they have diplomas, to create jobs themselves. Its strategy was developed progressively, based on the more or less successful experience of the Makala Project of Kinshasa for Sustainability (PMRK). Founded by the former ISAV in collaboration with the Alfred Campus of the University of Guelph, Canada, with

the purpose of establishing a business incubator for farming enterprises to benefit ISAV final-year students, the PMRK came into being in 2013. Its three objectives were: (1) to set up a business incubator for agricultural and forestry enterprises that would enable twenty ISAV graduates to be trained per year, four of them in Mongata (165 km from Kinshasa); (2) to increase the income of 200 farming households on the plateau by establishing an agricultural-forestry system of acacia-cassava-maize; (3) to combat food insecurity by increasing the productivity of the soils on the plateau and, lastly, (4) to achieve sustainable production of wood energy by planting aca-

*Above: Students in a classroom.  
Center: Fr Ghislain Tshikendwa Matadi, SJ, harvesting vegetables on the project field.  
Below: Sun drying cassava crop.*



# Mongata

## A research centre at the service of agricultural entrepreneurship

*Below: Reforestation is a major aspect of the project.  
Below right: Harvesting a crop of mushrooms.  
Bottom: Fr. Ghislain Tshikendwa Matadi in vegetable and maize fields.*

acias in the fields on the plateau.

The creation of an *Incubateur d'Entrepreneurs Agro-forestiers* [Business Incubator for the Farmers and Foresters of Mongata] (IEAM) is an important experience on which to capitalize because it aims to help final-year students of ISAV prepare for their professional lives by creating businesses of their own and making them as profitable as possible.

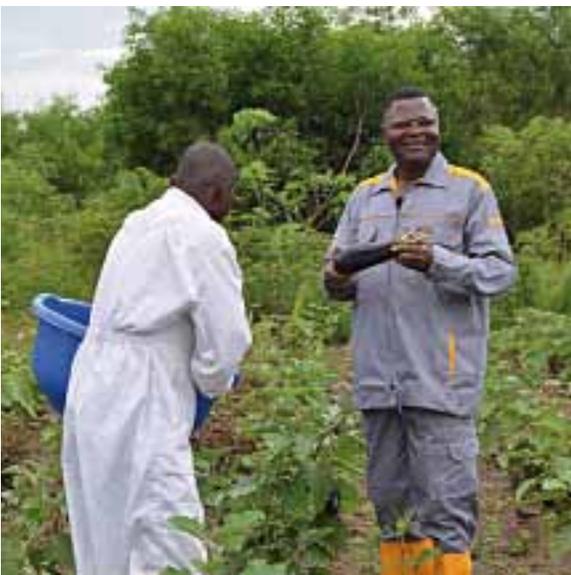
To this end, each incubated student received five hectares of land on which to plant crops for a two-year-period, thanks to a sum of US \$2,500 made available to them. On the land granted to them, each student planted cassava, acacias and several intercalary crops including cowpeas, maize, soya and peanuts. In addition to the

five hectares provided and funded by the project, each incubated student received from ISAV 2.5 hectares as a reward for the work done on its 125 hectares.

The incubated students say that they learned a great deal about agricultural entrepreneurship, especially in relation to the management of the workforce, and the management of time, material and finances. However, it has to be admitted that none of them succeeded in creating a small-scale enterprise.

When in 2015 PMRK came to an end, CERED took up the baton, broadening its aims. Its activities focused on four major axes, namely (1) scientific research, (2) ongoing qualifying training, (3) the initiation and management of projects and, lastly (4) communications and visibility (see [www.cered-ulc.org](http://www.cered-ulc.org)). In line with the agricultural and forestry aspects of the business incubator set up by PMRK, CERED developed its strategy for helping to promote agricultural entrepreneurship along four axes.

The first axis was to make the engineers Michelle Sangwa and Emmanuel Mwanan-



gulu, both of them former ISAV students who took part in the PMRK, true agricultural entrepreneurs. They have been chosen to manage CERED/Mongata and to educate the peasants and farmers of Mongata and the neighbourhood in agricultural matters. They are responsible for organizing training courses leading to qualifications, for receiving and supervising the students doing an internship at FSAV and other university institutions, to work, produce and sell in order to pay themselves as well as all their collaborators. A CERED team helps them in the planning of activities and above all in the efficient management of CERED/Mongata.

Stemming from this first axis, the second consists of promoting the development of CERED/Mongata and of creating the best reception and scientific work conditions for our students in order to enable them to come for brief stays during the academic year to take certain courses there (rural development, agroforestry, apiculture, etc.), and to remain there for academic internships of three to six months. The introduction of students into the concrete reality where the future of most citizens is decided is urgently needed. It is a matter of helping them to familiarize themselves with the peasants and farmers and opening their minds to the enormous possibilities of creating agricultural businesses for which the milieu in which they live offers wide possibilities.

The third axis consists of contributing technical and financial assistance to students in the creation of their small-scale enterprises starting from and in the heart of the faculty. Some experiences are promising: the setting up of a mushroom farm that benefits three students with masters' degrees in agroforestry and in food processing from the FSAV, of a bakery and of a restaurant. Our aim is to familiarize our students with the world of agricultural entrepreneurship starting from the faculty and to teach them to manage a small business and to work together in solidarity. Thanks to their work, these students are able to pay their academic expenses.

The fourth and last axis of CERED is the promotion of agricultural entrepreneurship through short-term qualificatory training courses in the different areas of ag-



ricultural entrepreneurship (food production and marketing; techniques for raising livestock and techniques for agro-food processing). These courses target young people, men and women, with or without diplomas, peasants and farmers, as well as all those who wish to devote themselves to working the land.

The 2016-2021 Management Plan cites four general objectives: (1) to take part in the creation of knowledge about climate change; (2) to produce the knowledge necessary in order to establish a framework of sustainable development, (3) to gather, encode and evaluate old African knowledge and (4) to disseminate all knowledge generated by the academic community.

The promotion of entrepreneurship is, it seems to us, one of the ways that endeavour to put the CERED into practice in collaboration with FSAV. Mass unemployment is a time bomb which no military force can succeed in defusing. We have become accustomed to conjugating better verbs such as to give, to ask, to help, etc. Let us dare to learn to conjugate another verb: to engage in entrepreneurship. The agricultural domain offers enormous possibilities to exploit in order to promote the creation of businesses.

*CERED promotes food production and marketing, techniques for raising livestock and techniques for agro-food processing.*

# CERED



Dr. Ambedkar Cultural Academy (DACA)

## A Dream Born out of a Nightmare!

Our ultimate dream for DACA is that it becomes a catalyst for the rebirth of villages from being cesspools of cruelty and caste prejudice to self-ruling human communities where social and domestic peace based on equality and justice flourishes.

George Joseph, S.J.

**It was an evening like any other** at the Institute for Development Education, Action and Studies (IDEAS), a social action center of the Madurai Jesuit Province. A few Dalit young men and women, under the auspices of the Dalit Christian Liberation Movement (DCLM), were rehearsing a street play on Dalit and human rights and the need of struggling against caste oppression and exploitation of Dalits, also branded as untouchables and outcastes by the dominant castes. The group was unaware that agents of the dominant caste were eavesdropping.

Night came and a violent mob from the

dominant caste, armed with deadly weapons gate-crashed and started shouting and abusing Dalits and targeting particularly Fr. Antony Raj, SJ, founder of DCLM, who had been spearheading and leading the Dalit liberation upsurge in secular society as well as in the Church. They threatened him with dreadful consequences if he did not apologize for the street play and quit IDEAS forever. Fr. Raj, who valued his self-respect and dignity, resolutely refused and asserted his and the DCLM's right to fight for the civil rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. The confrontation continued all through the night in



the presence of helpless police officers.

As even the police could not guarantee the personal security of Fr. Raj, his superiors thought it wise that he should move to a less hostile area. More than 25 years later, Fr. Raj remembers the events of that night as a nightmare that his people, the Dalits, have lived with for centuries and continue to suffer from in different forms.

Dalits are the original indigenous people of the soil. The Brahminic view and way of life, which advocated a social system of ranked inequality and hierarchy, were imposed by the dominant castes. As a result, the Dalits were forced to do menial and dirty jobs (such as handling dead animals, cleaning toilets, and so on) and back breaking agricultural labor with the stigma of being untouchables and outcasts. Thus, they were deprived not only of their human dignity but even the very right to be human. Their lives were marked by abject poverty, indignity, shame and humiliation, powerlessness and social exclusion. Today, they have discarded the many insulting nomenclatures that the dominant castes had given them and choose to call



themselves Dalits, meaning 'oppressed' or 'broken'.

India has a huge population of 200 million Dalits and most of them live as landless farm laborers in villages. If one in

*Top: Artistic dance by young*

*Dalit women.*

*Above: Hostel residents with founder.*

# IDEAS

## A Dream Born out of a Nightmare!

*Below: Diploma in Computer Application for unemployed girls.  
Bottom: Giving training to self-help group.*

every six Indians is a Dalit, in Tamilnadu one in every five Tamils is a Dalit. Sixty five percent of Tamilnadu Church is Dalits. Catholic Dalits' situation is even worse, as they suffer from manifold discriminations. This is because, besides the violence, indignities, discrimination and exclusion that they suffer with their Hindu brethren, they, without having the benefit of positive affirmation policies guaranteed by the Indian Constitution for the Hindu Dalits, meet with similar discriminations, humiliations and marginalization in the Church too. The Dalits are socially discriminated, religiously ignored, and politically sidelined. Even now in some rural areas, Dalits

cannot put up decent houses; they will not be served tea/food along with others; their dead-bodies cannot be taken to the cemetery through the main streets etc. Even in the Catholic Church often, one finds two separate cemeteries: one for the dominant castes and one for the Dalits. Even in death, they are untouchables.

The Doctor Ambedkar Cultural Academy (DACA) is named after Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a man who was not only the father of the Indian Constitution, but also a tireless advocate for the annihilation of the caste system.

For DACA founder, Fr. Raj, his childhood experience of searing poverty and caste-based humiliation had sown the seed of activism in his soul.

He realized early in life that only education could lead him out of this deadly trap. His studies and spiritual formation as a Jesuit gave a moral and intellectual edge to his spirit of advocacy. In 1987, Fr. Raj joined IDEAS in Madurai and worked as a scholar activist. As a social activist, he actively assisted the victims of caste riots and atrocities that were taking place during that period and was the initiator and leader of the Dalit Christian Liberation Movement (DCLM) and the Dalit Integration Federation (DIF), which was an umbrella organization for uniting and integrating the various Dalit movements and sub castes.

After that nerve-racking experience more than 25 years ago, Fr. Raj took some time off for reflection. During the course of his painful reflection, he realized that there was no thrust in his past efforts on the intellectual, character and ideological formation. It had been an emotional outburst against injustice and a rage against an unjust establishment. This became a basis of a rethinking on the strategy, which eventually culminated in the idea of establishing DACA as a people's institution named after Dr. Ambedkar.



Dr. Ambedkar once said, “My final word of advice to you is educate, agitate, organize and have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle”. For Dr. Ambedkar, as for Saint Ignatius, the starting point of social reform is education. Education trains the human mind to think and to take the right decision. The educated person gets enlightened and lives in a room with all its windows open towards the outside world. The motto of DACA is *Knowledge is power*. This power is imparted in and through education.

DACA, stands today as a proud symbol of Dalit assertion and empowerment. During the past 18 years, it has helped hundreds of young Dalits, chiefly girls, to recognize and develop their potential, recover their self-esteem and dignity through formal education, human and dalit rights training programs, skills training and various other activities. It has intervened at the time of caste conflicts and supported the victims. DACA has also reached out to 250 villages through evening study and supplementary education programs, besides forming a network of self-help groups of women, which have almost 8,000 women in its rolls. Inspiration for starting these self-help groups is the Grameen Bank for the poor founded by Nobel Laureate Prof. Mohammad Yunus and they engage in common and individual income generating activities.

Our ultimate dream for DACA is that it becomes a catalyst for the rebirth of villages from being cesspools of cruelty and caste prejudice to self-ruling human communities where social and domestic peace based on equality and justice flourishes and where eco-friendly values and technology ensure self-sufficiency and a healthy ambience.

This would be realized through the parallel process of multifaceted and holistic education and empowerment. We have a



blueprint of it in the self-help groups of women, which are on the verge of creating model villages.

One wonders whether the popular quote of Paulo Coelho “When you want something, all the universe conspires to achieve it”, applies to the dreams of the oppressed, the dreams of Martin Luther King, of Nelson Mandela, of Ambedkar or of the Man from Nazareth. We know the mills of God grind slowly, but they do keep grinding and that too surely in favor of the poor and oppressed. DACA hopes and strives to create a society where Dalits would realize their dream of equality and dignity. DACA dreams of making the Dalits, now at the periphery of the society, to be the leaders in the center of the society and the Church.

*Top: Girls from the hostel going for evening study. Above: Training of future teachers is a key component.*

# Tamilnadu

## 25 Years of Education for Life

A basic aim of our educational efforts is to contribute directly to the improvement and the transformation of the local communities.

Jesús Zaglul, S.J.

Translated by Joseph V. Owens, S.J.

***Fe y Alegría* (Faith and Joy)** was born in 1955 in a slum neighborhood in the western part of Caracas, Venezuela. A group of young students from the Catholic University, under the leadership of Father José María Vélaz, S.J. and in cooperation with the local community, opened the first school with 25 students on March 5<sup>th</sup> of that year. A workman named Abraham Reyes and his wife Patricia, the parents of eight children, made a symbolic founding gesture by offering their house with its land for the new educational effort. That gesture and the combined work and support of the whole community marked not only the beginning but also the style of what quickly became *Fe y Alegría*, a Movement of Integral Popular Education and

Social Promotion. During its 62 years of service to the most neglected sectors of society, *Fe y Alegría* has steadily spread to seventeen countries in Latin America, two in Europe, and two in Africa, serving more than 1,500,000 students in 3,000 educational centers. Since its start, *Fe y Alegría* has been coordinated by the Society of Jesus, but also collaborating in this work are 43,000 lay people and some 700 priests, brothers, and sisters (including 100 Jesuits) belonging to 165 congregations.

*Fe y Alegría* arrived in the Dominican Republic on 8 December 1990 with the signing of an agreement with the Ministry of Education for the establishment of public schools and colleges. The first four centers began their labors in the 1991-92



school year, under the guidance of four congregations of religious sisters. Since then, growth has been very rapid, giving evidence of the vitality of this undertaking. Twenty-five years later, *Fe y Alegría* runs 47 centers of formal education with 34,500 students and more than 1,300 collaborators; the centers exist in 16 provinces, stretching from one end of the country to the other. Half the centers are run by religious sisters belonging to 15 different congregations, and another nine centers are parochial schools. Five centers include nutrition programs and medical clinics, another five have work-training programs for the community, and four conduct radio-education programs for adults. Of the 47 centers, 31 are primary and pre-primary schools, and 26 are middle- and high-schools; of these latter, 13 are polytechnic institutes.

More important than numbers and statistics, however, are *Fe y Alegría's* community approach and its mystique of Popular Education, for these inspire and distinguish our mission to the people living "where the asphalt ends." That was how Father Vélaz referred to the marginalized, disadvantaged zones where he felt it was necessary to provide education of the highest quality. All our schools are located in poor areas, such as urban slums, hill country, swamplands, border areas, indigenous territories, and zones of conflict. Often the schools are situated in overcrowded neighborhoods that lack recreational space, suffer from environmental contamination, and lack good sanitation systems; they tend to be zones with high levels of unemployment, illiteracy, and family breakdown. Several schools are located in settlements of sugar cane workers called *bateyes*, and others in parts of the country where there are many Haitian immigrants. Most of our schools exist in an environment of violence, crime, gambling, alcoholism, drug trafficking, and criminal gangs. They are at the service of populations that are despised and rejected by mainstream society.

Starting "from nothing" and proceeding "with great faith," our educational work has from the start been struggled onward with meager resources. Most of our centers were born "outdoors," that is, with



*Students attending class at a Fe y Alegría school.*

minimally adequate facilities and many limitations. Here are the testimonies of three different school directors: "The people came to enroll their children, bringing one cement block per family. And for the Eucharist we celebrated in gratitude, the chairs consisted of blocks!" "We dared to begin from nothing. Father Tony said in 2010 that we would begin in 2011 even if it was under a tree, and so we found a suitable tree!" "We discovered God acting in the lives of the people. We didn't know how things were going to turn out, but we saw the center arise in the midst of the teachers, the staff, and the community. We beheld a God who does not trail behind us. Our great hope comes from seeing how God opens the way before us."

Ours is a faith that moves mountains. We give classes wherever we can find space: under trees, in tents set up in alleyways, in little sheds made of wood and covered with corrugated zinc, in sports clubs, in shipping containers, and even in rented evangelical churches. The students have no desks and sit on the floor, on blocks, or on paint cans. The classes are held in parish halls divided by cardboard or plywood partitions, with a minimum of educational materials. The teachers and staff are volunteers or receive very small rec-

# *Fe y Alegría*

IHS

## 25 Years of Education for Life

*Below: Fe y Alegría also gives students opportunities to learn and practice different arts.*

ompense, with the hope that they will be hired maybe two or three years later. Many of the children suffer from malnutrition. Nowadays the government invests 4% of GNP in education because of social mobilization that took place four years ago. As a result, the panorama has changed greatly, and there has been a tremendous advance in construction, staffing, pedagogical resources and materials, and nutrition for the students. Nevertheless, in many places we continue to experience serious limitations such as lack of space, overcrowding, construction delays, lack of trained personnel, and distressing poverty. Our desire is always to reach the most disadvantaged. “As we see all the pained faces that come to us, we experience something like the miracle of the loaves and the fishes which are multiplied in this service we provide.”

One of the most distinctive features of *Fe y Alegría* is putting the community at the center of our education and all our work. Most of our schools have arisen as a result of community concern, and for many of them the community is the most important source of support. One religious sister gave this testimony: “The neighborhood gains dignity by having *Fe y Alegría* in its midst.

With *Fe y Alegría* we don’t feel alone because we always work with one another. Without *Fe y Alegría* we could not create the realities we dream of, but we see how the community pitches in and contributes to the growth of our school. It’s a different way of providing an education.” Every center has a team responsible for school-community relations; its purpose is to strengthen the center’s ties with community organizations, churches, youth movements, local governments, and other social institutions. There is also the Association of Parents and Friends of the School, which organizes various community activities.

A basic aim of our educational efforts is to contribute directly to the improvement and the transformation of the local communities. Representatives of different communities commented as follows: “This is the only school in the area that is interested in knowing about the problems of the neighborhood.” “The school has changed the way people think by giving them participation and helping them to seek and find solutions.” “The educational center has succeeded in improving the conduct of the students. Now the neighborhood is more peaceful.” “The community is now more organized. There is more harmony and solidarity among the neighbors.” “The school offers formation in values.” Besides all this, *Fe y Alegría* by its hard work has a public voice that is respected, and its contributions to educational policies are highly valued by both private and public organizations.

At the national level, *Fe y Alegría* has been a pioneer in modeling new styles of participative management and pedagogical accompaniment. The directors of each educational center organize a *Management Team* which is responsible for managing and accompanying the economic, administrative, pedagogical, and community-oriented activities of the center. Members of the team include the director, the sub-



director or pedagogical coordinator, the psychologist or counselor, the president of the parents' association, the president of the student council, the pastoral coordinator, and the leader for student affairs.

The educational centers are related to the National Office but maintain their basic autonomy, which allows for greater responsibility, creativity, and effective action. In this way *Fe y Alegría* has been able to grow rapidly and expand its influence on public education. The National Office provides follow-up for all projects, and it also helps to implement the System for Improving the Quality of *Fe y Alegría* in its four basic areas: management, teaching and learning, social harmony, and social and community action. The National Office also coordinates relations with the Ministry of Education. At the same time, it promotes cooperation among the centers, insures fidelity to the principles and goals of *Fe y Alegría*, provides a sense of national unity, and establishes ties with the International Federation. This Federation makes *Fe y Alegría* a great network of interrelated centers that support one another and share their various gifts and resources. It shows us that "we are something much bigger than ourselves. ... The gift of *Fe y Alegría* strengthens us by making us a part of a larger team."

The goal of *Fe y Alegría* is to form persons who are truly active citizens working to transform themselves and their reality. Father Vélaz always insisted that education was a matter of joy and love. We seek to sow these seeds of joy and love from the very first years of education, even as we are teaching the children reading and writing. We assist the students in their *transition* from one educational level to another. Likewise, we help adolescents to break with social *stereotypes* so that they learn to value one another and become integrated persons. By working to heal their wounds, we help them to formulate a *Life Project*. In eleven centers we offer musical training programs which increase social inclusion and promote harmony and creativity. A Youth Philharmonic Orchestra has grown out of those programs. Other programs, such as the Organized Youth Initiative, provide the young people with tools for improving collaborative skills and for an-



alyzing social reality; they also help them to connect with youth organizations and community movements which are seeking to solve social problems such as violence.

The *Schools of Pardon and Reconciliation*, which involve all the staff at each center, allow us to work with the students in resolving cases of personal violence and in helping both victims and perpetrators. We teach the students healthy control of emotions, joint processes for reaching the truth, methods of conflict resolution, and the priority of restorative justice over punitive justice. In this way the students achieve a new and liberating understanding of pardon and reconciliation. In collaboration with Loyola College, four centers have undertaken a pilot project called *Pedagogy of Care and Reconciliation*. The project aims to organize all educational activity around the exercise of social harmony so as to enable the whole educational community (families included) to build a more peaceful society by caring for self, caring for others, and caring for nature.

This work we do for peace and against the prejudices that divide us extends to our borders and beyond, beginning with

Above: A young student makes illustrations on the chalkboard.

# Es.Pe.Re.

## 25 Years of Education for Life

*Most of our schools have arisen as a result of community concern, and for many of them the community is the most important source of support.*

our neighbors in Haiti. One school director gave this testimony: “The Ministry sent us a reprimand because we are accepting Haitians, and I asked myself: what would Father Vélaz do if he were here? The communities in the *bateyes* organized, studied the norms, and responded: ‘You cannot stop us from attending the polytechnic institute.’ This year they called me again from the Ministry to say that we cannot accept the Haitians. I went so far as to tell the Ministry that I simply pay them no mind. It would be easier to follow their dictates, but I thank God that, even though our struggle is uphill, we have made much progress.” Three of our centers have student bodies that are more than 60% Haitian, and the other centers accept Haitians impartially, though they are not the majority. We have also expanded our ties with *Fe y Alegría Haiti* by signing a two-nation agreement and by promoting youth congresses, professors’ visits, and cultural exchanges between the two countries. We also offer courses in Haitian Creole.

Forming young people for life also means forming them for work. Our thirteen polytechnic institutes give professional and vo-

ational training in carpentry, electricity, tourism and hotel management, nursing, art, agriculture and livestock, information technology, refrigeration, accounting. In both the polytechnic institutes and the other secondary school we offer training in life skills, human relations, assertiveness, teamwork, following rules, conflict management, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Such training is supplemented with courses on vocational aptitude, choice of career, internships, and insertion in the labor market. Students have also benefited from the possibility of gaining certification in Microsoft programs; this widens the possibility of employment after they finish their studies. Local businesses have joined forces with *Fe y Alegría* to find appropriate work for graduates. These businesses, along with other benefactors, contribute much to the success of our mission.

Our educational work follows not only the logic of competency but also that of inclusion. We don’t talk about what makes us different but rather seek to share our experience. This is true especially in our relationship with other public schools and with the diverse religious charisms that contribute to our mission. Two religious sisters shared these comments with us: “In the centers we run we are not trying to compete or to be the ‘best.’ Nor do we want to keep for ourselves the benefits our charism brings; rather, we want to make it available to others and so complete it.” “*Fe y Alegría* is a prolongation of our charisms.” The value of the contributions made by various congregations is especially notable in the attention given to our more complicated youngsters. Let me end with two more testimonies: “We have to suppose that we will be sent the most difficult students, the ones not wanted in other schools. This is a tremendous challenge for us, but we find ways to help them change, and we open up for them new opportunities.” “At once I was impressed by a child standing in the middle of the market. He looked at me, and his smile revealed to me the call of Jesus. At the school they call me the ‘bad students’ pal.’ These kids don’t feel rejected by me; they always seek a hug. They come from families with many problems. They’re not allowed to choose, but there they are, and there also are we in *Fe y Alegría*.”



## Men on fire with passion for the Gospel

Our First Fathers entered into such a rich discernment of God's call together because they had experienced the grace of Christ that set them free. Pope Francis urges us to pray insistently for this consolation that Christ desires to give. Reconciliation with God is first and foremost a call to a profound conversion, for each Jesuit, and for all of us. (GC36, D.1., n.17)



# 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arrival of the Jesuits

The first Irish Jesuits arrived in Hong Kong on the eve of the Feast of St. Francis Xavier and said their first Mass in the Cathedral on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Was this God's sign to us to be like St. Francis Xavier who had a strong desire to work in China?

Alfred Joseph Deignan, S.J.

*Below: (Front row left to right): Frs. Daniel Finn, George Byrne, John Neary (back row): Frs. Richard Gallagher, Daniel MacDonald and Patrick Joy.*

**When we reach the age of ninety** we often look back at our life history and marvel at how God has blessed us. We feel so grateful, as we recognize God's plan working through us as His poor weak instruments.

The first Irish Jesuits arrived in Hong Kong on the eve of the Feast of St. Francis Xavier and said their first Mass in the Cathedral on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Was this God's sign to us to be like St. Francis Xavier who had a strong desire to work in China? This mission was a new challenge to the Irish Province to work in Hong Kong and China. It was a new experience to work among poor people speaking a different language, the Cantonese dialect, with different food, customs and weather, often so hot and humid. So different from Ireland.

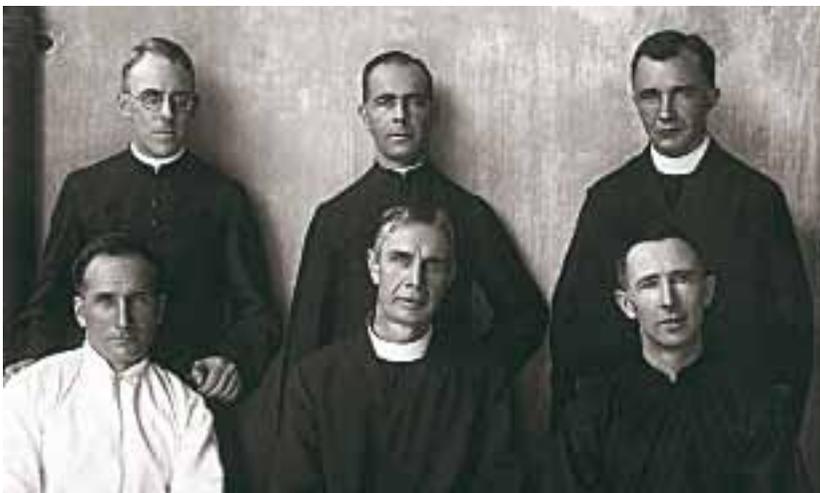
Bishop Henry Valtorta invited English speaking Jesuits to work in this British colony to build and run a residential hall of the University for Catholic students. He was worried about the danger to their faith, studying in the atheistic atmosphere of the University. So the early Jesuits opened Ricci Hall for Catholic students

in December 1929, three years after their arrival. At that time, there was only one University and the language of instruction was English. So English was an important subject in secondary schools. Fr. Finn became the first Jesuit University lecturer of Geography. He was an archeologist and he researched a site on Lamma Island, finding pottery and stone objects from the Chalcolithic period. Ricci Hall, a residence for the Catholic students of the University, was the first important apostolate undertaken by the Jesuits.

The second challenge came when the Bishop asked us to run and teach philosophy and theology in the Seminary for South China which had just been opened in November 1931 in Aberdeen. The seminarians came from the whole of South China. After the communists took over China, seminarians could not come to Hong Kong. We handed over the Seminary to the Hong Kong Diocese in 1964. We continue to teach in the Holy Spirit Seminary up till now. Fr. William Lo, Fr. Robert Ng, Fr. Marciano Baptista and Fr. Simon Wong are at present on the teaching staff.

The first Chinese Jesuit to join the Irish Province in 1934 was Fr. Albert Chan. He was an historian who did research on the Ming Dynasty. The first Past Student of Wah Yan College to become a Jesuit, who joined the Portuguese Province, was Dominic Tang. He became Bishop of Canton in 1951 under the communists. He was arrested and imprisoned in 1958 and spent twenty-two years in prison, with seven in solitary confinement. He was released for health reasons in 1980 and arrived in Hong Kong in 1981.

It is interesting to mention that in 1936



Fr. Thomas Cooney, an engineer, brought the Markree Observatory telescope from Ireland and set it up in the Seminary. It was the second largest refractor telescope in South China. The Irish Jesuits dreamed of working in China proper. So they accepted the request of the Bishop to run and teach in Sacred Heart School in Canton. Two Irish Jesuits were assigned there in 1928. The first tragedy of the Irish mission was when Fr. Saul and Fr. McCullough died in Canton from cholera. The scholastics learning Chinese in Canton were moved back to Hong Kong. Now the concentration was on our apostolates in Hong Kong. A Catholic layman, Peter Tsui asked us to take over his two secondary schools for boys, one on Hong Kong Island in 1932, the other in Kowloon in 1946. So three pillars of the Mission were set up in the early years i.e. Ricci Hall, the Seminary and the schools, which continue to this day. Fr. Stephen Chow is now the Supervisor of our schools making them more and more Ignatian. These could not have been possible without the generosity of the Irish Province which sent an average of four Jesuits to Hong Kong each year between 1926 and 1970, a total of 106 Jesuits.

When the Jesuits arrived for the first time in Hong Kong the people were very poor. There were many refugees from China. They lived in slums, in wooded huts on the hillside or on the roof tops. There was little welfare provided then. Fr. Howatson started the Poor Boys Club and a night school for poor boys in 1946. This initiative developed over the years to become today "The Boys' and Girls' Club Association".

In 1937 the Japanese invaded China. About 50,000 refugees poured into Hong Kong from China. Fr. Thomas Ryan and Fr. Donnelly set up the "War Relief Association" and got the students of Wah Yan to help provide them with supplies and medical care.

The Japanese invaded Hong Kong in 1941. The British surrendered. All schools were closed. Many people suffered from fear and poverty. Fr. Gerald Kennedy, a doctor, served the wounded in St. Paul's Hospital.

The Seminary was shelled and our Language School was looted. The Jesuits were



scattered, some went to Macau and set up a school there, St. Luis Gonzaga, so that many boys who escaped from Hong Kong could continue their studies. Some went to work in China. Of those who remained, two, Fr. Patrick Joy and Fr. Gerald Casey, were imprisoned by the Japanese. Fr. Richard Kennedy, who served as Chaplain to the British army was imprisoned in Singapore. These were difficult times but providentially all survived. In 1945 the Japanese surrendered and Hong Kong had to start the road to recovery.

Fr. Thomas Ryan was appointed Acting Superintendent of Agriculture. Many trees had been cut down as firewood. He reforested the hillsides, set up a wholesale

*Above: South China Regional Seminary 1930s (Seated left to right): Eugene Ward, Dan Donnelly, Joseph Garland  
Below: South China Regional Seminary, 1930s.*

# Ricci Hall



## 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arrival of the Jesuits

*Below: Community dinner (right to left): Maurice Headon, John Gannon, Alan Birmingham, Fergus Cronin, Gerald Kennedy, Jeremiah McCarthy, Patrick McGovern, Alfred Deignan, Laszlo Ladany, Peter Morris, Joseph McAsey and Derek Reid. Sitting opposite with profile visible is Richard Harris.*

market for farmers and helped found the Social Welfare Department and the Housing Society. In 1946 Fr. Jeremiah McCarthy started the cooperative movement in Aberdeen and a central market where fishermen could get a regular price for their catch.

In 1950 Fr. Michael Morahan taught in the Aberdeen Fishermen's School but then in 1960 he opened the Aberdeen Children's School. In the same year, he was appointed the first Welfare Officer of the Police and he arranged recreational, medical and welfare amenities for the fishing community.

In 1947, Radio Hong Kong broadcast Catholic Prayers by Fr. Richard Gallagher, 659 of them up to 1960. Fr. Thomas Ryan broadcast music programmes and, years later, Fr. Ciaran Kane broadcast Morning and Evening prayers, 2,200 of them, and had a weekly programme of one hour on sacred music called "Gloria" from 1996 to 1999.

In 1947, a language school was opened in Canton and there were 19 Jesuits living there. Some were learning Chinese. Others taught in the Sacred Heart Middle School. Two lectured in Chung Shan University.

When the Communists took over, the scholastics were moved to Hong Kong and later the priests were expelled. Our work in Canton came to an end in 1948.

The first Jesuit Port Chaplain was Fr. Michael Pelly. He was later followed by Fr. McAsey and Fr. Cunningham. They looked after the needs of the sailors and often said Mass on the ships.

In 1966 Fr. Collins formed the first Credit Union in Hong Kong and helped to found the Rehabilitation Society in 1959 to help the handicapped.

The Jesuits bought land and a house on the Island of Cheung Chau in 1952. Up to this day it is the only piece of land the Jesuits own, all our other sites are on leased land. The house became our language school, our novitiate and then a retreat house. Our apostolate of spiritual formation became the fourth pillar of our work in Hong Kong. Jesuits, Fr. Stephen Tong and Fr. Paul Goh give retreats and go into China to help in the spiritual formation of clergy and religious. Fr. Robert Ng has been going to different seminaries in China for over twenty years giving lectures in Moral Theology. It is back to work again in



the formation of the young priests.

When the number of Jesuits in Hong Kong reached about eighty we started a new mission in Singapore and Malaysia. We ran a teacher trainee hostel and two parishes one in Singapore and the other in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

In 1956 we had riots in Hong Kong. It was a rough time for police and people. Youth groups holding Mao's red book terrified people. Bombs were used. The schools closed as there was a scare that bombs were placed in the schools. A worrying time.

The first Jesuit to be ordained in Hong Kong was Fr. Frank Doyle. Scholastics usually went back to Ireland to study Theology and were ordained there.

Fr. Edward Collins started the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council in 1967 to instruct those who wished to follow the Natural Family Planning method and who sought counseling. He was assisted by Fr. John Russell, Fr. Peter Brady and Fr. Alfred Deignan. Fr. Alan Birmingham became the editor of the Catholic weekly called "The Sunday Examiner" and served for many years in this work. Fr. Seán Ó Cearbhalláin and Fr. Robert Ng formed Xavier Publishing to publish spiritual books and the Spirit magazine in Chinese - 108 in twenty seven years.

In 1997 Fr. Alfred Deignan with a group of lay people started the Hong Kong International Institute of Educational Leadership to promote basic human values. Fr. John Russell was appointed by the Bishop the Secretary General of the Diocesan Convention in 1969 and Fr. Patrick McGovern was appointed by the Governor a member of the Legislative and Executive Council of Hong Kong in 1976.

The Jesuit story of 90 Years had its ups and downs, its difficulties and challenges but God blessed our work. The story is interesting: We started as a Mission of the Irish Province. In 1966 we became the Vice-Province of Hong Kong; then in 1980 we were Vice-Province of Macau-Hong Kong; in 1983 the Province of Macau-Hong Kong. In 1991, we were a Region of Macau-Hong Kong, Chinese Province. In 2002 Hong Kong had a Provincial Delegate of the Chinese Province and in 2005 we ended up as the Matteo Ricci Commu-



nity. What a changing history!

We can see that besides the early pillars of hostel, seminary and secondary education a new pillar was added - spiritual formation.

Besides these we can see the extraordinary variety of apostolic services. Jesuits were always led by the MAGIS, the greater good. It is no wonder that we are filled with gratitude to God. We have now only six Irish left, one is 103 but God has provided us with 11 Chinese Jesuits to carry on the work of service to the Church in China and the people of Hong Kong. We ask for prayers for more vocations.

*Top: Golden Anniversary of Father Alfred Deignan's Ordination, 2009.  
Above: At Joseph Mallin's 100th birthday party on 13 September 2013, nine hundred of his students, colleagues, friends and family members showed up to celebrate the happy occasion.*

# Magis

# A 100 Years of the Society of Jesus

Another significant educational contribution was the publication of school textbooks for teaching reading and writing and for teaching primary school children. This was initiated by Br Ángel Díaz de Cerio in 1948 and millions of copies have been sold over the years.

F. Javier Duplá, S.J.

*Translated by Kate Marcelin-Rice*



*Above: Bishops concelebrating mass at La Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB).*

**The Jesuits came back to Venezuela** in 1916 after almost 150 years of absence. In 1767 they were expelled from Spain and its domains by King Carlos III. The governors of Venezuela in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mostly Freemasons and anticlerical, had prevented their return after the Society's restoration in 1814. Msgr Carlo Pietropaoli, Apostolic Delegate, and the recently appointed Archbishop Felipe Rincón González arrived when President Juan Vicente Gómez gave them permission to enter the country. "Let them enter, but they must not make a noise", said Juan Vicente famously in words characteristic of him. And three Jesuits entered the country in October 1916 to direct the diocesan seminary: Fr Evaristo Ipiñazar, Fr Miguel Montoya and Br José Usabiaga.

The Jesuits in Venezuela were rapidly

increasing in number, thanks to those sent from Spain, and were opening schools: San Ignacio in Caracas (1923), San José in Mérida (1927), the Gonzaga in Maracaibo (1945), the Javier in Barquisimeto (1953), the Jesús Obrero Technical Institute (1962) and Loyola-Gumilla in Puerto Ordaz (1965). However they did not limit themselves to educational work in those early times but were also involved in the religious formation of both seminarians and parish groups. From 1916 to 1953 they directed the Seminary of Caracas – soon to become an interdiocesan seminary. They also provided religious formation in the churches and parishes which they had established, above all through the Spiritual Exercises, especially when houses for the Exercises or for retreats were founded. There are three

houses dedicated to preaching the Exercises (Los Teques, Maracaibo and Mérida) and another three which alternate this apostolate with retreats and other activities.

In 1927 Jesuits accepted the religious apostolate in the famous Church of San Francisco, famous because it was in this church that Simón Bolívar was proclaimed “The Liberator” in 1813. It continued to be the most important church in Caracas not only because of its historical significance but also because of the richness of the religious celebrations in it, which various Jesuits took charge of. The most important contribution which the Jesuits made in this area of attention to worship was their foundation of various parishes in the Paraguaná Peninsula, a poor and barren region, where they worked from 1936 to 1995. Today they direct seven parishes, two of which are university parishes in Caracas.

A field in which the Jesuits have done much good work is that of the social apostolate. In 1938, together with Fr Víctor Iriarte, the well-remembered Fr Manuel Aguirre founded the *SIC Review*, which made a profound impact on the country, and later the Centro Gumilla for the social training of labourers, students, politicians and the general public. Today, in addition to the *SIC Review*, they also publish the Review *COMUNICACIÓN*, which exercises great influence in this most contemporary field.

In the education sector, in addition to the colleges mentioned, there are two initiatives of increasing importance for this field of the apostolate in Venezuela: the Andrés Bello Catholic University (UCAB), founded by Fr Carlos Guillermo Plaza in 1953, and the *Fe y Alegría* Movement, founded by Fr José María Vélaz in 1955. Thousands of students have graduated from UCAB, which at present offers fifteen degree and twenty post-graduate options, and it has had a permanent influence on the country, especially during moments of crisis such as those which Venezuela is currently going through. The *Fe y Alegría* Movement has crossed the country’s borders and has now expanded to 21 countries on three continents with a student population of a million and a half people studying at various levels and in various methods. As well as the UCAB in Caracas and Ciudad Guayana, the Society of Jesus runs the Catholic University of Táchira in

San Cristóbal. *Fe y Alegría* manages five university institutes in the country.

Another significant educational contribution was the publication of school textbooks for teaching reading and writing and for teaching primary school children. This was initiated by Br Ángel Díaz de Cerio in 1948 and millions of copies have been sold over the years, so many that one may estimate that more than half the Venezuelan population learned to read with them.

This history is a cause for thanksgiving to God for the good work done by the Jesuits over the past 100 years of their activity in Venezuela. It is also an opportunity for examination, in order to discern what our identity and mission are in these times and

Below: A conference at La Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB).

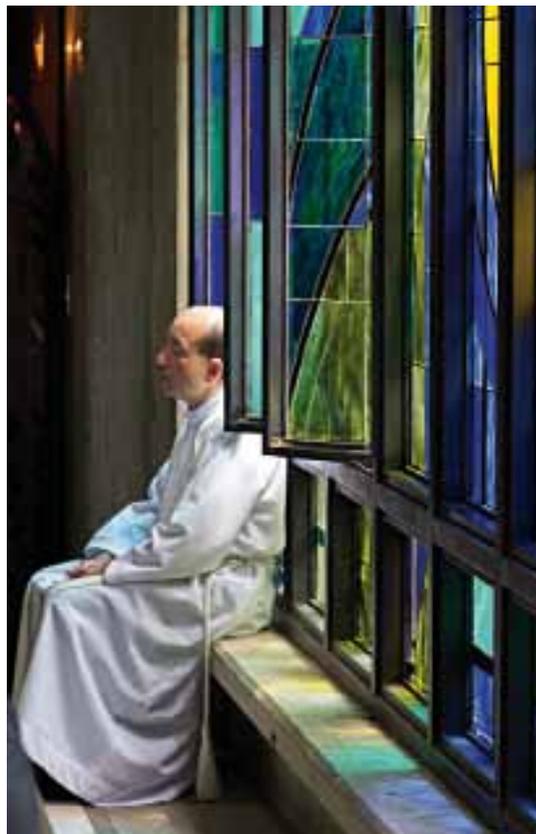
# Caracas



## A 100 Years of the Society of Jesus



*Above: Attending a conference at La Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB).  
Right: Attending mass.*



hence to see what are the major needs of this society that we can meet. Lastly, it spurs us to dedicate ourselves, with the grace of God, to Venezuela.

The main event of the centenary celebrations was held on 11 July 2016 together with the Venezuelan Bishops' Conference. It took place at the Catholic University and consisted of a forum chaired by Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino, Archbishop of Caracas. The forum was opened by Fr Arturo Peraza, Provincial Superior, and by Fr Luis Ugalde, who in his speech briefly reviewed the arrival of the Jesuits in Venezuela and what their work has meant for the country. "Following its arrival the Society of Jesus was to set in place three important lines of work: the strengthening of the Church with the formation of the clergy and of lay organizations, school education in the colleges and a contribution to building a more just society with a new Christian conscience in which faith, enlivened by love, leads to questioning the unjust socio-economic and political order and to building a more just society in accordance with the social doctrine of the Church".

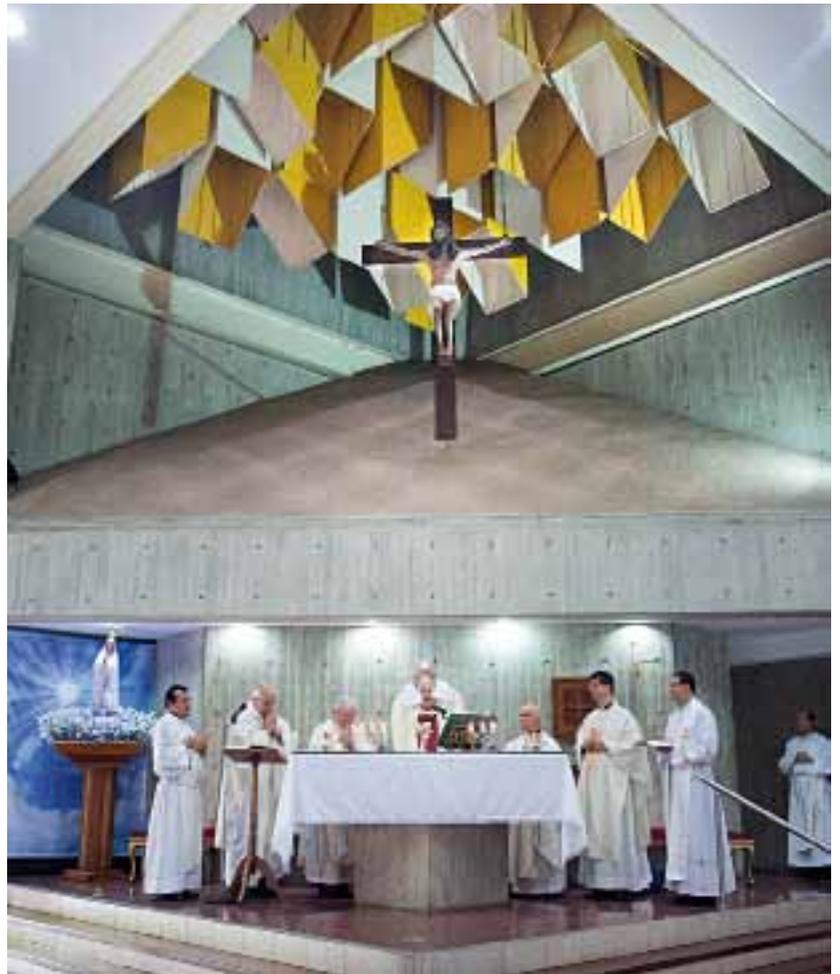
Cardinal Baltazar Porras Cardozo, Archbishop of Mérida, expressed his satisfaction with the work accomplished by the Jesuits

in close collaboration with the hierarchy, which did not exclude moments of tension between the more advanced currents and others, less well disposed to change in the Church and in the Society. And referring to the country's current situation he said: "The task of education encounters challenges and new emphases in its pedagogical and cultural specificity, but also, in addition, in the ethical and anthropological context. Moreover the sowing of intolerance, the violent mentality in language, the indiscriminate use of force, the criminalization of all dissidence, permanent recourse to lying, the manipulation of past and present history as a weapon for the domination and taming of spirits, the violent responses and the loss of identity lead to inaction and despair. Calming passionate spirits, taking the homeland upon your shoulders, in Bergoglio's words, carrying on without hatred or rancour, with the good and the less good that we have, is a titanic but necessary task". Another task in which the Jesuits have experience is that of tackling secularism, which elevates the self-sufficiency of the human and denigrates every reference to the religious, and in particular to the Christian, vision of life. Cardinal Porras encouraged the Society to undertake this task, as well

as to perfect the pastoral care of frontier zones, which are places in particular need of an evangelizing presence.

Fr Eloy Rivas, director of the Centro Gumilla, advanced towards the future, presenting seven fields of action with which the Society of Jesus can respond to the present challenges and move ahead towards a more Christian and more human society. "We are prepared to promote the culture of human rights with their corresponding duties, the culture of democracy in all the milieux of human coexistence and the culture of life, in order thereby to rid ourselves of every form of violence and its consequences which are so present today in Venezuela". These fields of action are the following: 1) the promotion of a good quality education for all; 2) the promotion of professionals with sound technical training, ethical principles, Christian conviction and a commitment to Venezuela; 3) cooperation in the formation of the new generations of priests, men and women religious and committed lay people; 4) pastoral and organizational guidance in areas and situations of both physical and human frontiers; 5) the impetus to coexistence and to the deepening of Christian spirituality through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises; 6) deepening the ecclesial connection of our work in the pastoral care of youth through the Huellas Christian Youth Movement as a specific contribution to the Church's pastoral care of young people; 7) our contribution to social investigation and action.

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino presided at the Eucharist, accompanied by Archbishop Aldo Giordano, the Nuncio, and more than 40 bishops. In his homily the Cardinal expressed his heartfelt thanks to the Jesuits for all the work that they have done in Venezuela during the past century and that they are carrying on today. He remembered the 231 Jesuits who died in the Province in recent years, and asked of us Jesuits today that we all confront the subject of secularism. "Today, in Venezuela and in the globalized world in general, we encounter the challenge to proclaim with joy, creativity and imagination, as well as with faithfulness, clarity, conviction and firmness, the message of salvation, the word of life and of happiness of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Church's treasure for the world. And



I believe that this is the greatest service that we men and women of the Church must render to our brothers and sisters in the world at the present time".

This past century which the Society has spent in Venezuela invites us, as Father Provincial Arturo Peraza said, to do three things: "To thank the Lord for these 100 years of our presence in Venezuela, looking back at our history, at people and at what we have done in the country; to strengthen our identity and mission as companions of Jesus; to actualize the responses we would like to make to the challenges which reality asks of us in the perspective of the Apostolic Plan of the Province, dreaming, together with other men and women, of the future that we are building together".

*Above: Concelebrated mass at La Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB).*

# 1916-2016

# Forty Years of Jesuit Social Services

Jesuit Social Services arose out of the regency of a Jesuit who helped young prisoners to reconnect with society after release from prison. He found them housing where they lived with mentors.

Andrew Hamilton, S.J.

*Below: Staff members of Jesuit Social Services with a refugee banner.*

**A legend says that** when praying, St Ignatius, like some other saints of his time, often hovered with both feet above the ground. That seems unlikely. But Ignatius did say that his followers should live ‘always with one foot raised, ready to hasten from one place to another, in accordance with our vocation and our Institute.’

In Australia, Jesuit Social Services (JSS) has made Ignatius’ image central in celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It catches the spirit of the organisation: one foot firmly grounded in the messy human reality of our world, and the other raised, ready to rush to people in the greatest need and to accompany them.

Jesuit Social Services arose out of the regency of a Jesuit who helped young prisoners to reconnect with society after release from prison. He found them housing where they lived with mentors. In Australia prisoners are vulnerable. Many suffer from mental illness; they are despised and condemned. As a result having spent time in prison is a stigma that makes it doubly hard subsequently to find work.

Jesuit Social Services continues to work with young offenders, and in all of its later projects it has similarly sought to reach out to the most vulnerable people in society and to help them connect with their community.

Through the commitment of about 230 staff and a further 280 volunteers its work has now expanded as it responds to the way in which changes in society affect the vulnerable.



In Australia, migrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable. Governments have stirred up antipathy to them and treated them harshly in order to deter people from claiming protection in Australia. Jesuit Social Services has sponsored homework programs for refugee children and provided places where refugee and migrant women can meet, often in playgroups with their children. They can learn English and local ways, and support each other.

In the face of widespread popular hostility to refugees and other marginal groups in Australia, Jesuit Social Services is now working to develop 'communities of justice', which will link advocates and supporters to change community attitudes. Most recently through the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum, it seeks to mobilise the resources of Catholic educational, health and welfare sectors. It also has a program to train speakers from vulnerable communities who can speak in parishes and schools. These small initiatives complement the work of Jesuit Refu-

gee Service.

In Australia, distressingly many people take their own lives. The stigma attached to suicide makes their deeply distressed and conflicted families and friends reluctant to speak about it and leads others to avoid them. The consequent silence fractures relationships and causes mental illness. The Support After Suicide program offers people a space in which skilled and sympathetic listeners encourages them to talk about their experience.

Many Indigenous Australians also feel themselves strangers in their own land. A much higher proportion of young Indigenous Australians suffers from physical and mental illness and addiction; are incar-

*Below: Staff members of Jesuit Social Services at Palm Sunday Refugee Rally.*

# Refugee



## Forty Years of Jesuit Social Services

*Below: An Aboriginal young woman in Fitzroy.*

*Bottom: Jesuit Community College participant at computer.*

cerated, unemployed and live in unstable families than their non-Indigenous contemporaries. They are highly represented in many programs of Jesuit Social Services, which have consequently taken on Indigenous staff.

Jesuit Social Services has also developed a presence in the Northern Territory, where photographs of young Indigenous men being hooded and apparently beaten by officers in a juvenile justice facility caused widespread outrage, and a commitment to reform the justice system. In outback Australia, too, many isolated Indigenous people suffer from renal diseases. Jesuit Social Services workers were able to arrange for dialysis machines to be brought to them, and so spare them very long and painful travel to hospital.

Apart from reaching out to more vulnerable groups of people, Jesuit Social

Services has also explored more effective ways of helping them connect to society. One of the most popular programs is the Artful Dodgers Studio, now celebrating its twentieth anniversary, which provides a safe and welcoming place to which disadvantaged young people can come, and express themselves in writing, music and art.

Some of these young people have great natural gifts. When they grow in confidence in themselves and the program, they can act as friends and mentors to younger people. They are also often in demand to talk to students in local schools and to perform for them. One of the most gifted is a young man from Burundi who was once a child soldier. He now has a growing reputation as a rap singer. He amazes school students when he tells them that as a young man his greatest wish was to wear a school uniform, just as they do, and to have the gift of an education.

Many vulnerable people, due to their limited language skills, pressures of work and cultural expectations, find it hard to take advantage of standard educational programs. Their lack of qualifications then makes it difficult for them to find work. So the Jesuit Community College was formed in 2011 to provide short educational programs that engage the students at their own level and for which they can receive credit. The range of courses is very broad, ranging from serving good coffee, cooking, working in kitchens and supermarkets, animal care, finding work and basic language skills. These complement the informal skills training offered by other programs. They include car driving lessons, bicycle maintenance and programs designed for particular cultural groups. The list of courses gives an idea of the wide range of interests and needs of the people who take them.

In recent years, Jesuit Social Services has expanded its resources in policy research and communications. In Australia



much of the care for the most vulnerable people in society is funded and regulated by Governments. But partly due to public ignorance and misconceptions about their lives and needs, often fuelled by populist media, they often fail to receive the priority governments should give them.

So it is important for Jesuit Social Services, with the authority that working with vulnerable people gives it, to educate the public about their experience and needs. It is also necessary to engage government with policy submissions that are based on evidence. For these reasons building a strong policy and media team is a continuing priority.

How effective this can be was seen in the Dropping Off the Edge research project. It brought together information about signs of disadvantage in Australia. It found that these were concentrated in comparatively few geographical areas, and also that people who were disadvantaged in one way were highly likely to suffer other forms of disadvantage. This suggested the need for governments to build long term, coordinated programs in these areas.

The policy team then arranged briefings for agencies working with disadvantaged people, including representatives of the relevant state government departments, and the media team ensured that the research won widespread coverage. In this way, a proposal that offers great benefit to vulnerable people is having great influence.

Jesuit Social Services draws on the Ignatian tradition to inspire, shape and guide the organisation and its people. As Australia is a secular society with rich diversity, this is an ongoing challenge. The organisation, including its contribution to the international Jesuit mining, ecology and prison networks is led by lay women and men, and among its staff are Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims and agnostics. All are inspired by the vision



that all human beings are precious and connected, and by the Jesuit Social Services mission expressed in the Ignatian key words: welcoming, discerning and courageous. Meetings at every level constantly reflect on how these values are expressed in the inner life, ministry and governance of Jesuit Social Services.

Along whichever path the future leads, Jesuit Social Services will be required to ready itself with one foot raised to go out in welcome to vulnerable people. It will continue to be called to read the world and its changing needs, and to be ready to bear the many costs of its commitment.

*Top: Indigenous performer at Mass. Above: Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum February 2016 at St Patrick's Cathedral with Bishop Long.*

# Social Services

In the light of the documents in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus

## St Stanislaus Kostka's life

St Peter Canisius sent Stanislaus Kostka to Rome with a letter of recommendation addressed to Father General, St Francis Borgia, in which we find the words *nos de illo praeclara speramus* ("We expect great things of him"), which later became famous and are often cited in accounts of Kostka.

Robert Danieluk, S.J.

Translated by Kate Marcellin-Rice

*Below: Examples of St. Stanislaus Kostka's signature in the documents testifying his entrance in the novitiate.*

**The life of St Stanislaus Kostka** (1550-1568) is sufficiently well known and there is certainly no lack of literature in various languages for those who wish to familiarize themselves with the young saint's history. Thus it is not perhaps necessary to recall it again on the occasion of this 450th anniversary of his death, although it is true that this saint is currently remembered a little less than he used to be in the past. This article intends to make a modest contribution to knowledge of St Stanislaus through the presentation of several documents concerning the saint which are in the possession of the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus. Some of these documents are well known and have even been published, while others have been through the sequence of events which clearly confirms the Latin saying *Habent sua fata libelli* (Books have their fate),

and almost all of them refer to the young Kostka's entry into the novitiate.

Born in 1550 at the family's property in Rostków (to the north of Warsaw) to an important family of the Polish nobility, Stanislaus, together with his elder brother Paweł and a tutor, was sent at the age of fourteen to Vienna to study at the Jesuit College. So it was that from 1564-1567 he stayed in the Austrian capital devoting himself to his studies, advancing in the spiritual life and nourishing an ever stronger desire to enter the Society.

Given that his father was completely against this project, Stanislaus, advised by the Viennese Jesuits to seek entry further afield because they did not dare to admit him in these circumstances, left Vienna secretly and in the summer of 1567 went to Dillingen in Bavaria. His exciting flight, including his change of clothes in order to be able to conceal himself better from his brother who was following him in order to stop him, was later to become one of the favourite subjects in the saint's hagiography.

In the Bavarian city the fugitive was received by St Peter Canisius, then Provincial of the German Jesuits. To ascertain whether his desire for religious life was serious, Stanislaus was sent by St Peter Canisius to do humble tasks in the college for several weeks. This was obviously a sort of trial for a young man who came from a noble family. The candidate nevertheless succeeded in this trial in a more than satisfactory manner. Saint Peter Canisius then sent him to Rome with a letter of recommendation addressed to Father General St Francis Borgia, in



which we find the words *nos de illo praeclara speramus*, which were later to become famous and are often cited in accounts of Kostka.

This letter (called by some the “letter of the three saints”), written by St Peter Canisius himself from Munich on 25 September 1567, is kept today in the Archives of the General Curia. A note by the Archivist, Fr Edmond Lamalle, written in 1986, testifies that the document was fortunately discovered by him after a long period in which all traces of it had been lost. Thus in addition to the copy of the letter exhibited in the Camerette of the saint at Sant’Andrea, we also have the precious original.

With this letter, in 1567 Stanislaus walked from Germany to Rome, together with two other young Jesuits who had been sent there to study. Having arrived in the Eternal City, he was received by the General, Borgia. The Roman novitiate was not yet located at the Quirinal and Stanislaus was to be one of the first lodgers at the Casa di Sant’Andrea. He therefore spent his first weeks between the Casa Professa and the Collegio Romano. Both these institutions then looked very different from what we are now familiar with, since neither the Church of the Gesù nor the house there existed as they are today, while the College had a different orientation and was not located in the impressive building that we see today in the square of this name.

Stanislaus’ entry into the novitiate is illustrated by two other documents which are worth mentioning here. They both contain the saint’s signature and attest to the fact that he too had to submit to the entrance examination like all the candidates who asked to enter the Society. It was not so much an examination in the academic sense as rather an interview during which his request for admission was evaluated and the absence of impediments ascertained.

The first document is interesting because it bears the date 27 October 1567, written by Stanislaus himself! It is a declaration in which he says he is ready to submit to this examination, signing with his name: *humilimus famulus Stanislaus Kostka*.

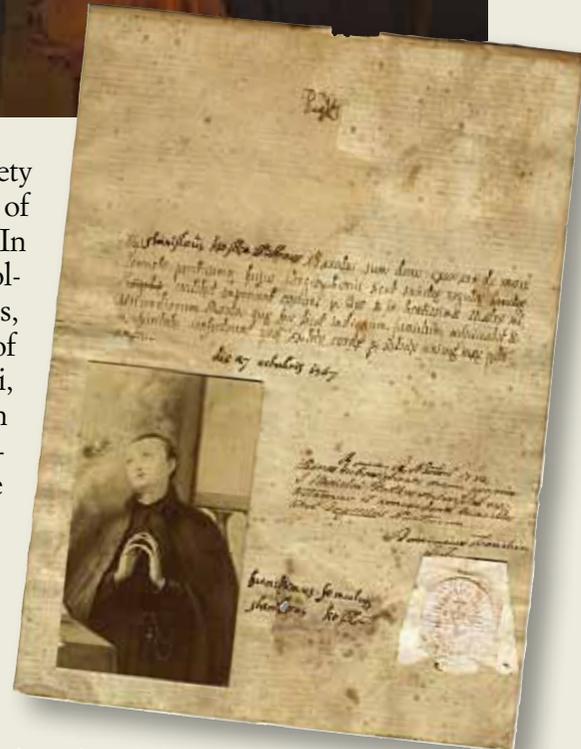
This document only arrived in our Archives in November 2009 as a gift from the Teutonic College in Rome, where it had been kept for reasons that are far from easy to explain (perhaps following the sorry vi-



cissitudes which the Society experienced from the end of the eighteenth century?). In the past, the Teutonic College belonged to the Jesuits, as is attested by the note of Fr Domenico Franceschini, Provincial of the Roman Province who in 1752 testified the authenticity of the writing, confirming it with his seal.

The second document is the annotation in the book of novices, which confirms the examination taken by Stanislaus at the time of his entry into the House of Probation on 28 October 1567. This document too bears his signature. The document gives little information about him or about his family; it does not provide any new elements with regard to what was already known; nevertheless its value as a proof, memento and relic makes this writing a precious document.

Stanislaus was thus accepted as a novice of the Society in Rome and was at last able to follow his vocation, which he had wanted to do for so long! He did so with all the enthusiasm of his eighteen years, which it



Top: Stanislaus Kostka is welcomed in the Society by Father General Francis Borgia.

Above: Examples of his signature in the documents testifying his entrance in the novitiate. This specific document was only given to the ARSI in 2009, so it is less known.

# Rostków

## St Stanislaus Kostka's life

*Below: An engraving showing the Saint Stanislaus Kostka as an important patron for Poland.*

is easy to imagine, devoting himself in the months to come to the religious formation offered to future Jesuits. Unfortunately, in the summer of 1568, he contracted malaria and after a brief period of illness died in the night between 14 and 15 August at the Casa di Sant'Andrea at the Quirinal, where he was later also buried. The Jesuits were soon engaged in writing his life, thereby initiating a literature, which was to go hand in hand with the fame of holiness, which Stanislaus immediately enjoyed.

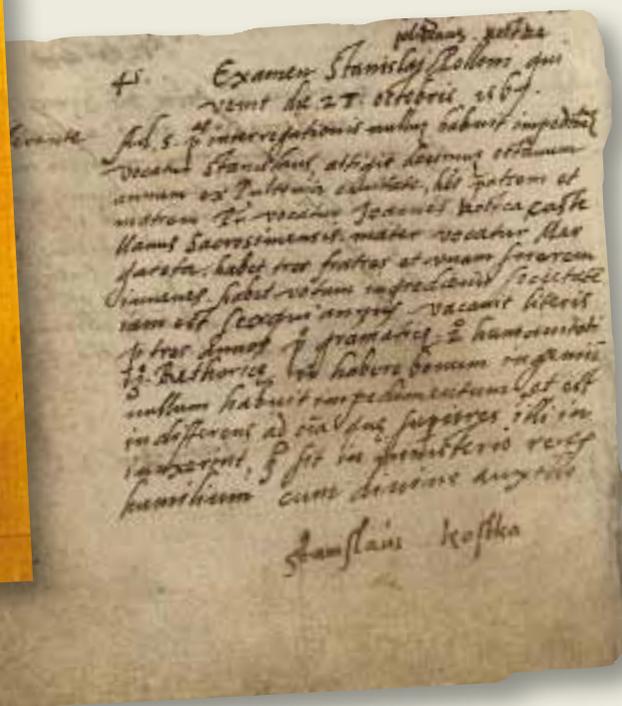
In 1605, Pope Paul V confirmed his public cult, permitting several events in the church annexed to the novitiate. This papal permission was later recognized as the equivalent of a beatification. In this regard Stanislaus

would be, together with Luigi Gonzaga, the first Jesuit to be raised to the glory of the altars. St Ignatius of Loyola, the very Founder of the Society of Jesus, was only beatified in 1609! It proved necessary to wait longer for his canonization, by Benedict XIII, which was to take place only in 1726.

In his country of origin, Stanislaus became known and venerated immediately. Already in the seventeenth century, the Poles considered him an important patron to whom to turn in the difficult circumstances of war, since during that period wars were not lacking. The engraving reproduced here testifies to such a devotion and to the faith in his intercession. Subsequently St Stanislaus Kostka was to be venerated as Patron of youth, while in the Society of Jesus he is considered to be the Patron of novices.

The archival documents presented here bear witness to his brief life, which was nevertheless sufficiently long to confirm the hope St Peter Canisius expressed in 1567. St Stanislaus certainly worked "great things", albeit in a way that was different from what the Apostle of Germany probably had in mind when he wrote to the General to recommend the promising candidate to him.

# Rome



## On mission with Christ the Reconciler

In preparation for the 36th General Congregation, Father General Adolfo Nicolás invited the Society to enter into a process of seeking to hear “the call of the Eternal King, and to discern the three most important calls that the Lord makes to the whole Society today.” Our Provinces and Regions, through the Province and Regional Congregations, responded to this invitation. The call to share God’s work of reconciliation in our broken world emerged often and powerfully. (GC36, D.1., n.21)



# Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás

Antonio Spadaro, S.J.

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

■ **Father, what is your state of soul at the end of your service as our Superior General?**

The usual one at the end of a mission. I have finished being useful in this capacity and, completely at peace, I can begin to look at what else I can do.

■ **What were the most significant moments for the Society during the years of your Generalate**

The Synods. The resignation of Benedict XVI. The election of Pope Francis. As always, there are no such things as “our” moments: the most important moments are those of the Church.

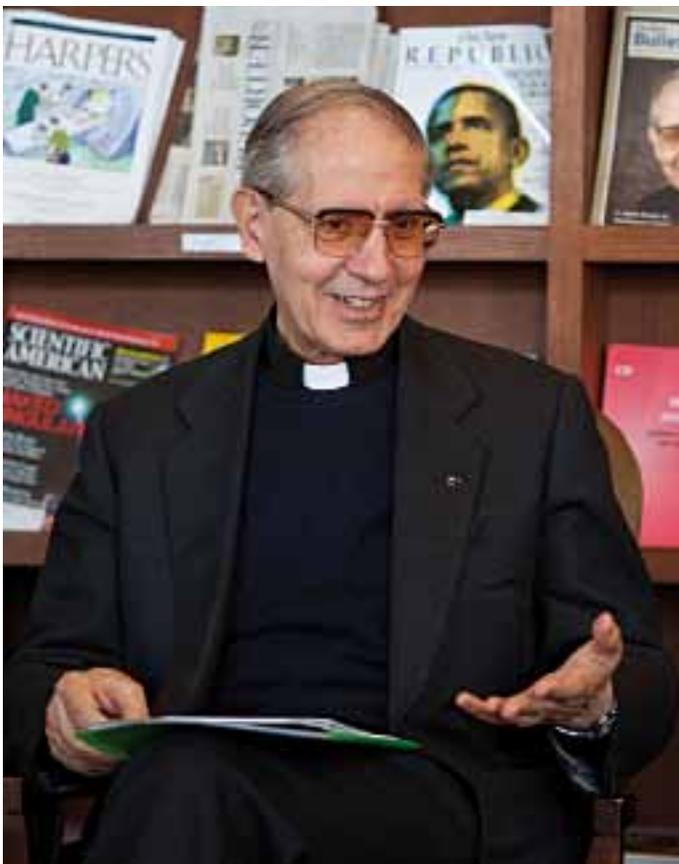
■ **In your experience as Superior General, you may perhaps have “taken the temperature” of religious life today. What do you think that “temperature” is right now? Are**

**you aware of a change with respect to when you were elected? Do you perceive tiredness, tepidity – or do you see clear signs of hope?**

I haven't perceived change. Religious life goes along well; there is a great desire to serve the Church and to respond generously to the challenges of our time. I also see a new hope generated by Pope Francis, who knows us very well and understands the place and mission of religious life in the Church.

■ **Pope Francis has defined Religious as sinners and prophets. How do you interpret these words of his? Is it important for Religious to see themselves as sinners? And what does it mean today to be a prophet? The Pope says that the prophet “makes a mess”. What does that mean?**

For a Religious it is important to feel oneself a “sinner”. We are no better or worse than other Christians; for that reason we cannot judge others. In the past, perhaps, every time we thought we were better, we discovered hidden sins, or sins that had been hidden -- which humiliated us. With the Pope we think that a Church which judges others shows little wisdom and usurps the place of God, the only One who looks into hearts. Regarding prophecy, I humbly hazard a distinction: there is a prophetic service coming from within the Church and reaches those who have faith. Everything that Pope Francis says about prophecy refers to that: it “makes a mess”, it creates a certain confusion, it makes people think. There is another service rendered to those who do not have faith. For them, prophecy makes little sense. What reaches them instead is the witness of another wisdom, humanistic, evangelical, capable itself of stimulating reflection and provoking remorse in the soul: “can this be true? Is it more human, more authentic? This is the function of Religious in many situations that are at, or beyond, frontiers in a world that doesn't share our point of view.



■ **But what is the prophetic language of today?**

I've always been struck by the fact that prophecy in Israel came to an end. In the Book of Daniel, the accusation is made that there is no more prophecy in Israel. When reasons for this are sought, the only plausible one is that the exiled people lost the faith: there is no longer any faith in Israel. Only a tiny remnant retains it. Prophecy can exist only within a community of faith. And many Religious today live in a frontier situation or in places where faith is not professed. What is the correct language for such places? It's interesting to note that, when prophecy disappears, wisdom emerges as the new language of God. Perhaps that's the language for a Europe which has lost the faith – wisdom. Maybe we need a new language, which can take either the wisdom of sages or the wisdom of ordinary people in order to speak in a language which the world is able to understand.

■ **Does this wisdom enable standing at the periphery, in the frontiers?**

Yes, and we have to learn a new way of looking at the world, of seeing things, and only then speaking. Sometimes it can be very taxing to go to the frontiers and see how the others, the ones beyond the frontiers, live. But it is also very interesting and attractive, because there is always a lot of good in other persons, other cultures, other religions. To do this, to go to the frontiers, there is need of people with a very profound faith, deeply rooted and carefully cultivated. People capable of speaking with wisdom, of making themselves heard.

■ **You've traveled a lot and have a broad vision of the world. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges in the world of today?**

Trying to respond to the question as to why so few Japanese became Christian, a Japanese bishop used to say: "Jesus said: I am the way the Truth and the Life. Most Asiatic religions are religions or spiritualities of the Way: Shintoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Kendo, Aikido, etc., but the majority of western missionaries have come to preach and speak of the Truth." In that sense, there hasn't been a true encounter with Japan. The more I travel around the world, the more I think that bishop was right: Asia is the Way; Europe and the United States are preoccupied with the Truth;



Africa and Latin America are Life – they keep alive values (friendship, family, children, etc.) which we've forgotten in other parts of the world. It's significant for us Jesuits that – if I understand rightly – St. Ignatius was more interested in the Way, that is, in how to grow and be transformed into Christ, than in other things. The challenge for us Christians is that we stand in need of everything, of all the sensibilities of all the continents, to come to the fullness of Christ – which is also the fullness of our humanity. This vision is present behind all the appeals of Pope Francis in favor of migrants and refugees.

■ **In your opinion, has the Society made its own the challenges of our time? How would you evaluate the actual state of the Society in its apostolic tension?**

I believe that we Jesuits – who, as everyone knows, are not without defects – are operating in a key apostolic moment. We are concerned with important realities like poverty, exclusion, a decent education for everyone.

■ **You love Japan a lot. What can mission in that large country, that culture, teach us today?**

Musical sensitivity. The Japanese are the most musical people in the world. Religion

# Frontiers

## Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás

is much closer to a musical sense than it is to a rational system of teachings and explanations. The Japanese – thanks also to the roots of Buddhism – live out a profound sensitivity, an openness to the dimensions of transcendence, of gratuity, of beauty, which underlie our human experience. But of course this is a sensitivity which today is menaced by a mentality purely economic or materialistic, which impedes our reaching deeper dimensions of reality. Our mission today in Japan and in Asia can help us discover, or rediscover, religious sensitivity as a musical sense, as a grasp and appreciation of dimensions of reality more profound than utilitarian reasoning or materialistic conceptions of life.

■ **But this also has to do with education. You educate a musical sense and thus educate a religious sense. Do the Society's educational institutions play a role in this?**

It would be tragic if our educational institutions were to limit themselves to retrace the rationality and self-understanding of the human being with regard to this secular and materialistic world of ours. In fact, the reasons for undertaking a process of education-

formation are completely different. We do not busy ourselves with teaching for purposes of proselytization, but of transformation. We want to form a new type of humanity that is, if I may put it this way, radically musical, that maintains that sensitivity to beauty, to goodness, to the suffering of others, to compassion. We offer a Christian education because we are convinced that Christ offers horizons beyond the limited interests of economy or material productivity; that Christ offers a vision of a fuller humanity, one which takes one beyond oneself in the name of care and concern for the other; that Christ offers, not only information of which the world is already too full, but a profound wisdom. The university – and we Jesuits have so many of them throughout the world – is a social institution with a specific function in society. Through our universities, we want to be of use to society in terms of its values, its vision and its ideals.

■ **You are European, but you have spent your life in Asia and will return there at the end of your Generalate. What does Asia represent for the Church today, but also for the world?**

A source of hope. Asia is diverse, and it has humanity's most ancient fonts of wisdom. If God has been present in every part of the world, if He has been active, "at work" in the world, as St. Ignatius says, certainly that has happened with particular effectiveness in Asia. We saw the fruits of that at the moment of the great earthquake, with the tsunami and the atomic threat north of Tokyo. The world has never witnessed such self-control, discipline, solidarity and selfless detachment as at that moment. And the most wonderful aspect of it all was that this was not the result of a politically orchestrated effort; it was rather the spontaneous reaction of a people educated, generation after generation, to the values which Japan demonstrated to the world. If Asia said something to the world on that occasion, I have no difficulty discerning a prophecy in that message.



■ **Let us turn to Europe. How do you see the situation of the Church in Europe? What are the challenges and the most severe tensions being experienced on this continent? What risks do we need to avoid?**

I am not an expert on European questions; the part of the world Europe occupies, though important, is very small. So it's hard for me to respond to this question. People who know more about it speak of secularization, of the crises of sense and of hope, of the lack of joy – along with the same problems that unfortunately beset other places, like poverty, unemployment, violence and so on.

■ **The problem of migration is emerging forcefully. What is the correct perspective from which to view this phenomenon?**

The Pope's perspective. There is a situation of suffering and exclusion; but we are humans, thus capable of solidarity and compassion and consequently we feel this situation to be ours and together we are looking for a future solution, which really helps all people. Facing partial solutions, we want anyway to share what we have. Until we find a complete and definitive solution, we can share, even though these responses are not easy.

We ought always to remember that communications between various civilizations happens precisely through refugees and migrants. The world we know developed that way. It was never a case only of joining culture to culture: what happened was a true and particular exchange. Religions were also diffused in this way. Migrant peoples have given us the world. Without them, we would be closed inside our own culture, living together with our prejudices and our limitations. Every country runs the risk of closing itself off within horizons very limited, very small, while thanks to migrants, hearts can open up, and a country can open itself to new dynamics.

■ **But doesn't this imply looking at the world in a different way?**

The moment has come when we must think of humanity as a unity, not as an ensemble of so many countries separate from each other, with their traditions, their cultures, and their prejudices. It's necessary to conceive of a human race in need of God and in need of a kind of depth that can come only from a union of all people.

■ **With the encyclical "Laudato si' ", the**



**theme of ecology has become an integral part of the social doctrine of the Church. In these last years the Society has taken this theme very much to heart. What was your personal reaction to this encyclical?**

I think the Pope's intervention was timely and the theme could not wait any more. It was truly urgent. We all need a new awareness to give a positive acceptance to the initiatives for safeguarding creation, which are appearing everywhere. I am struck, in particular, by the link the Pope sees between nature and the problems of poor people who are the first to suffer the consequences of our heedlessness.

■ **During your time as Superior General the first Jesuit Pope in history was elected. What did you experience when you got this news? What does it mean for the Society to have a Jesuit as Pope? If the General Congregation will accept your resignation, don't you see the election of a General of the Society as an interesting and very special situation, with a Jesuit Pope? In just what sense?**

First of all, we Jesuits believed that to have one of us elected as Pope -- just two hundred years after the Suppression and thirty-five years after the papal intervention into the

“Laudato si'”

## Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás

Society's governance-- was impossible. Once the improbable happened, the election of a Superior General under Pope Francis does assume a special significance. He is a Jesuit too, and as such knows many Jesuits. I have to say that, right from the beginning, he has shown himself always very respectful of the Constitutions and very much connected to the Way of Proceeding of the Society of Jesus – which is really his own.

■ **During the interview I had with Pope Francis in 2013 he told me that “a Jesuit ought to be a person of incomplete thought, of open thought”. What does this mean for you?**

It means something of great and profound importance. At base is the awareness – at times forgotten or fuzzy – that God is a mystery, and even more “the mystery of mysteries”. Evidently, if we believe that, we cannot consider ourselves in possession of the last word on God and on all the mysteries we debate: the human person, history, woman, freedom, evil, etc. Our thought is always “incomplete” – open to new data, new understandings, new judgments about truth, and so on. We have much to learn from the silence of humility, from simple discretion. A Jesuit, as I said one

time in Africa, has to have three smells: of sheep, that is, of the lives of his people and their communities; of the library, that is, of his own deep reflection; and of the future, that is, of a radical opening to the surprise of God. I believe that this is what can make a Jesuit a man of open thought.

■ **What is the place of the Eucharist and the other sacraments in Jesuit life?**

About the Eucharist, we have insisted so much and for so long on the Real Presence that we have forgotten many other aspects of it which touch and regard our daily life. The Eucharist is an exchange of gifts: we receive bread as our daily nourishment; we take a portion of this bread and offer it to God. The Lord transforms this bread and gives it back to us. So the Eucharist is an exchange of gifts which never ceases and which can change our life. The Eucharist helps us be generous, open. St. Ignatius lived this reality; he took his most important decisions as he celebrated the Eucharist. I'm struck by the way Pope Francis celebrates the Eucharist: with pauses, dignity, in a rhythm which invites to meditation and interiorization. Jesuits celebrate this way.

■ **In his homily at the church of the Gesù on January 3, 2014, Pope Francis said: “It is only possible to go to the limits of the world if we are centered on God!” What in your judgment are these peripheries today?**

I have always been convinced that the challenges of the Society of Jesus are simply those of humanity: poverty, discrimination, a lack of common sense, violence, the absence of joy. Our question is: how are we to address these challenges? And here comes into play the key factor, that is the religious factor, which includes this preference for “the other” and that kind of detachment which permits someone to shift toward where we lose the safeness and security to which we're accustomed.

■ **Pope Francis is much attached to the motto: “Not to be daunted by the greatest**



enterprise, yet to invest oneself in the smallest one, this is divine.” In your judgment, what does this celebrated burial epitaph of St. Ignatius mean?

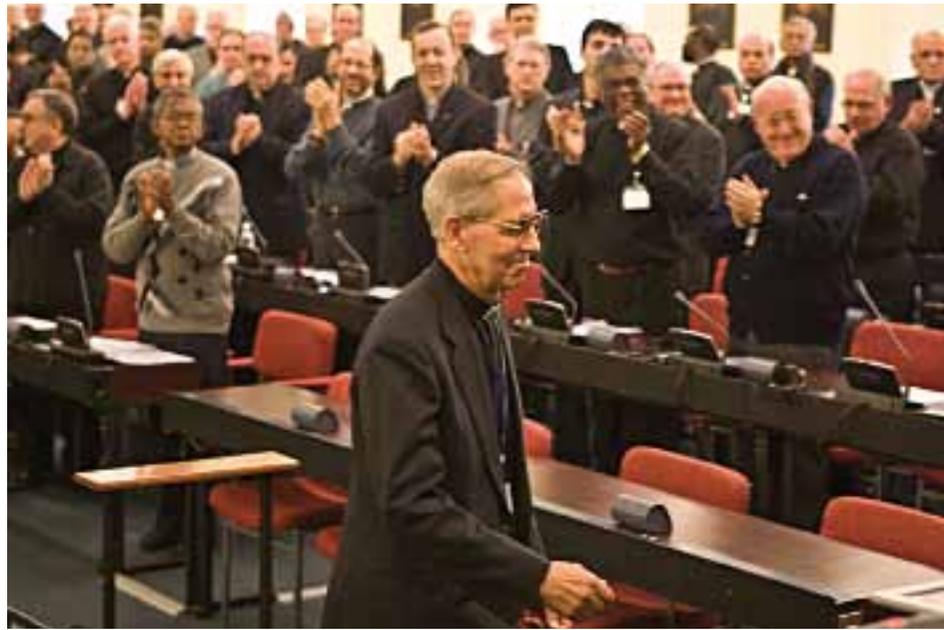
There are various theories regarding the text and its interpretation; for me, it’s an elegy to interior freedom – something St. Ignatius surely had in abundance. It’s not the work we do, neither its size nor its social impact. Nothing else matters except God’s will, and people are more than capable of joining themselves to that and finding contentment in knowing it and carrying it out. No one can pretend to know the will of God with certainty. We are all searchers and we are asked always to discern just what God’s will really is.

■ **What are you yourself expecting from the General Congregation? What are your personal desires?**

First of all, that a good Superior General will be elected – not too much to expect, given that the Society has survived me! I’m expecting the Congregation to discern how to better our religious life and our service to the Church and the Gospel in “helping souls” as St. Ignatius wished. So I hope the fruit of the Congregation will be a better religious life in the spirit of the Gospel, and a renewed capacity of imagination. Times have changed with respect to the last Congregation. We need audacity, fantasy and courage to face our mission as part of the larger mission of God for our world. Finally, I hope that the Pope will turn to the Congregation to present his feelings and his concerns.

■ **You are leaving your post, as Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach did. Should the rule of “General for life” change, then, considering that even Pope Benedict XVI decided to resign from the Petrine ministry?**

I thought that too, but Pope Francis has made me think that by now there is sufficient provision in the Society’s legislation to conclude our service the way our last three Generals have. The Pope also suggested that it



would be enough if the four Assistants chosen for this were to take a more active role in suggesting to the General that it was time for his resignation. In today’s world with medicine’s progress in prolonging life, it’s not possible that a group desirous of serving, and which must bring agility to that service, should be subject to the last three or five years of weakness of its Superior General.

\* \* \*

*I thank Fr. Nicolás, because it’s time for dinner. We linger at the doorway. I see that there is something that continues to draw his attention: the question about prophecy and wisdom. He tells me that this theme has been very much on his mind even during prayer. Today, in a world that has lost its faith, God remains active and at work. But how talk about Him? The language of mission is that of a wisdom which is the fruit of an open and incomplete thought and of a faith which knows how to recognize the Lord where he makes himself found, not where we habitually look for him. In this challenge I’m aware of a deep common chord shared by the Pope and the General. Perhaps it will be precisely on this level that the handover of witness between Fathers General will occur.*

# *In æterno*

# Dedication and discernment

The lamps of our communities have gone out after the conclusion of the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation. Now is the time for mission. The fire of our lamps is now in the heart of the Society.

Cipriano Díaz Marcos, S.J. – *Elector of the Province of Spain in GC36*  
Translated by Joseph V. Owens, S.J.

## A small lamp

**When I arrived in Rome** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 to take part in General Congregation 36, I was assigned to live in one of the eight communities that were receiving the delegates from abroad. Feeling a bit lost, I went to the chapel to calm the agitation of the trip as well as to prepare for the event that was about to begin. There was a small lamp on a low table before the altar, almost at ground level. I saw that flame as a sign of community spirit that would accompany the work of the Congregation. That little light relieved my tension and filled me with confidence. Since my arrival I returned every day, before and after our sessions, to that fragile light in the domestic chapel. There I prayed. Before the light I felt confident. Before the light I gave thanks for consolations and struggled with desolations. I am certain that the tiny lamps scattered about other Jesuit communities in the world illuminated the journey of those days.

## Key moments

The journey began more than a year ago in the various provinces and regional conferences. (The convocation came in December 2014. The Provincial Congregations took place during the spring of 2015, and the Conferences met in the autumn of that year.) The General Congregation was called to treat matters of our Jesuit life and mission but would first consider the profile of the new General of the Society, the election of whom would be a fundamental aim of the Congregation.

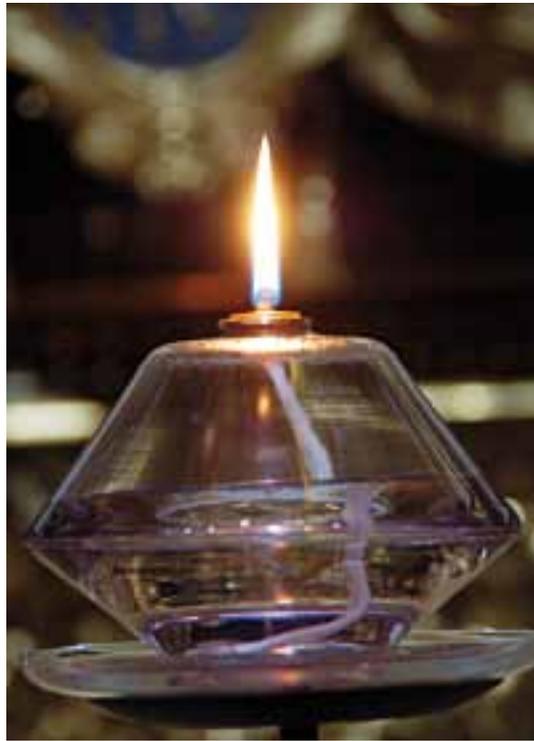
Now that the Congregation is over, my memory holds fast to special moments, beginning with the inaugural mass in the church of the Gesù. The presider was the Dominican Father Bruno Cadoré, Master of the Order of

Preachers and a good friend of Father Adolfo Nicolás. In his homily he urged us to be bold enough to attempt the incredible: “Say to this mulberry tree: Be uprooted and planted in the sea! ... An assembly such as yours, rooted in a tradition of such rich evangelization, will without doubt move between the duty of constantly calling the Society to dare the audacity of the improbable and the evangelical willingness to do it with the humility of servants.” By committing our lives to creating something more beautiful,

more just, and more solid, we will overcome death and give birth to new possibilities. The “boldness of the improbable” became a horizon for the Congregation. Father Cadoré’s homily was ideal for a group that wanted to look toward the future. That first Eucharist was full of desires even as it revealed to us the physical fragility of Father Nicolás. He spoke to us himself about that fragility as he presented his resignation in the main *Aula*. With the simplicity, humor, and cordiality that have always characterized him, he asked to be relieved of his function: “The time has arrived for me to see how I can continue serving in other tasks.” After his resignation was accepted, Father Federico Lombardi thanked him heartily, saying that he had blessed the Society with

“a serene wisdom that fostered coherence.” There was great applause. He then left the *Aula*, and the door closed behind him. Certainly the Lord will continue to lead his steps deeper into mission. He departed, but he left in all of us his spirit of understanding and universality.

The vacuum following his resignation gave rise to the *murmurationes*, the name given to the process leading up to the election of a new Superior General. It is a time when we converse together, two by two. During this time we are



asked questions and offer answers; we pose questions to others and listen to their answers; we request information and compare it to what we have heard. During a space of four days we talk, take notes, and pray about our conversations. We try to be free and transparent. The doors are kept closed and the meals are kept simple as we continue in conversation or seek out silence. Led in this way, we finally elected Father Arturo Sosa.

No sooner did Father Sosa take over the presidency of the Congregation as the new General than he explained to us the itinerary of governance that would guide our future. We were to row into the deep with “the boldness of the impossible.” That was the way he formulated it in his first homily as General, referring back to the words of Father Bruno Cadoré, and indeed going beyond them.

On Monday 24 October at nine o’clock in the morning we had a meeting with Pope Francis. He arrived unhurried, and early enough to share with us the morning prayer. We saw him become recollected and let himself be inspired by the prayer texts of our tradition, which he knows well. He joined us in praying and singing and keeping silence.

After the prayer the Congregation listened to his words with open ears and an attentive heart. He asked us to travel together in freedom, to be poor, obedient, and ready to labor on behalf of others. He urged us to make progress in “fervor” in order to initiate processes of faith and justice, of mercy and concern—and to know how to evaluate those processes. He told us to grow in the service of joy and consolation in order not to succumb—or let others succumb—to the despair and sadness of very complex times. He encouraged us to advance in our accompaniment of so many of our sisters and brothers who are carrying the heavy cross of Jesus. And all this we are to do with discernment and in a spirit of communion and service, mindful of the Church’s teaching.

Perhaps we were hoping that he would give us some specific mission, but instead he gave us something more: he offered us a horizon and showed us how to walk alongside God’s suffering people. We were moved by his simple fraternal intimacy, by his sense of humble service. During those days of our meeting we were impressed by his readiness to move us toward the “frontiers” of poverty, ecumenical dialogue, and the people’s movements—and to providing support for many groups. He has given us a good lesson in apostolic leadership. May God makes us his allies in reforming the Church! May we put on the sandals of the fisherman and row out into the deep, poor and free!



### Companions in mission

After those first days, in which we discussed the state of the Society, elected the new General, and heard the words of Pope Francis, the Congregation began to deal with the apostolic challenges and the calls issued by the Lord to the Society. It was a time for reflecting on our life and our mission. A draft prepared by a preparatory commission was presented in the Congregation and discussed in groups before being studied again in the *Aula* by the delegates.

After several revisions the decree was approved by the Congregation under the title “Companions of a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice.” The heart of the document states that we Jesuits want to participate in the great threefold mission of reconciliation among human beings, reconciliation with God, and reconciliation with creation. And we want to do so with our collaborators and as members of communities that live simply, and carefully discern their mission. We are to be “men of goodwill ready to go into the darkness of the world consoled and guided by the fire of Christ’s love.” We are to be men passionate for the Gospel and rooted in the spirituality of the Exercises.

There was also discussion about the Society’s ways of governance and its organizational structures, for these require discernment, collaboration, and networking. Decisions were made about internal questions of the Society, such as the governance of the international houses in Rome, the role and responsibilities of the General, the improvement and clarification of economic practices, and the internal life of our communities.

# Murmurationes

## Dedication and discernment

Finally, a letter was written to Jesuits living in situations of violence and armed conflict. Several companions had called the Congregation’s attention to the very difficult circumstances of these companions. A draft of the very moving letter was offered for the reflection of all the delegates. Letter writing is a “way of proceeding” of the Society that connects together those who are distant from one another and reinforces their bonds of affection. Just as friends converse to show their mutual love and care for one another, so we write to one another.

### Union of hearts and minds

Shared work requires mutual affection. Some say that we Jesuits care little about affection, but that is not true. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus speak about the “union of minds and hearts,” thus stressing the great importance of communication and social relations among us. GC36 brought together 215 delegates from many different places and cultures and had them live and work together so that they would appreciate one another as companions. Everything helped toward that end: the leisurely walk back to the communities, the rest between sessions, the events outside the meeting hall, the outings to share a pizza, etc. Many other Jesuits in Rome also offered their services, showing the delegates around and

helping them enjoy the beauty of this marvelous city so full of church history, art, and culture.

We received tremendous affection and support, and so we give thanks for the computer logistics team, the translators, the secretaries, the service personnel, and especially for the fraternal hospitality of the communities. We are especially grateful for the splendid work of the communications group, which served as a bridge to the many people around the world who followed the proceedings of this meeting and encouraged the delegates with their prayers and their messages. After urging us to be confident, Father General gave voice to the great gratitude we should feel to God, for we know that we can sow the seed, but only the Lord will give increase to all we propose.

I am done. The lamps of our communities have gone out after the conclusion of the 36th General Congregation. Now is the time for mission. The fire of our lamps is now in the heart of the Society. As the first companions said: “*Ite inflamate omnia*—Go forth to set the world on fire.” Let us now ignite new blazes, as our last few Congregations have encouraged us to do. The Congregation logo expressed it well with a cross and a flame, urging us to row into the deep. Let us keep faith with Father Adolfo Nicolás who summoned us to be “bold, imaginative, and courageous” when he convoked this Congregation.



Father General Arturo Sosa welcomes Pope Francis to GC36. Members of GC36 during murmuraciones.



# Re-reading my experience of the 36<sup>th</sup> GC

After the election the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation resumed its journey, “rowing into the deep” to study a certain number of apostolic questions being posed today.

Hyacinthe Loua, S.J.

*Translated by John J. O’Callaghan, S.J.*

**At the end** of the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation I would like to share some “fruits” of this unique experience – I’d call it “synodal” – for the universal Society.

From October 2<sup>nd</sup> to November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016, two hundred and fifteen Jesuits from the four quarters of the globe found themselves called to elect a new Superior General and to examine the “signs of the times” for the service of the Divine Majesty and the human race today. Concretely, the task was to reflect on the reality of our Jesuit life and, beginning from there, on the way we are to respond to the spiritual and temporal needs of the contemporary world. Besides that, we reflected on the question of leadership – or better, of the internal governance of the Society in a complex world and in the quest of

excellence. The Congregation took place in a context of cultural variety. Every Province and Region was represented by delegates, each wearing his cultural garb and bringing particular apostolic experiences rooted in the concrete history of the people of the Province or Region of his origin. What grounded that so prized union of hearts described in the 8<sup>th</sup> Part of the Constitutions was our common culture, our shared heritage as companions: the Spiritual Exercises which free us from our disordered attachments and dispose us toward discernment.

It was in this context of cultural variety where we find ourselves “friends in the Lord” that Father Arturo Sosa, a Venezuelan, was elected on Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 the 31<sup>st</sup> General of the Jesuits. After



## Re-reading my experience of the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation

*Below: Father General Arturo Sosa with delegates from Africa at GC36. Opposite page: Some members of GC36.*

Father Kolvenbach, the Dutchman who had worked in Lebanon, and Father Adolfo Nicolás, the Spaniard who was a longtime missionary to Japan, the Society of Jesus went well beyond Europe, urged by the Spirit and hearing the appeals of the Spirit, to search for a successor to St. Ignatius.

After the election the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation resumed its journey, “rowing into the deep” to study a certain number of apostolic questions being posed today. I would like to go back to one or other important point which could be an object of personal reflection/discernment.

### The situation of the Society in the world

A “composition of place” enabled us to review the sociocultural context in which we companions are carrying out the mission of God. The General Congregation recognized and reaffirmed that we live in a time of world crisis which does not easily identify its spiritual roots, a crisis which might be called a loss of the sense of God.

That’s how Father General invited us not to stop posing again and again pertinent theological questions and to deepen our grasp of the faith which we beg God to make grow in us, always in search of alternatives to ameliorate poverty, inequality

and oppression. The effectiveness of this work, according to Fr. Sosa, also depends on our collaboration with others inside and outside of the Church.

In other words, we were asked to go to intellectual, cultural and socio-economic frontiers, to each one’s personal psychological limits, spiritual frontiers which stop us from being closer to God and to forge links tending to overcome the limits of social class, the differences – ethnic, religious or gender – which prevent or hinder reconciliation between human beings. Our world, the context of our mission, “needs bridges, not walls” (Pope Francis).

### Discernment as a condition for mission

The Congregation underlined the importance of discernment as a condition for every apostolic activity. To accomplish the mission of Christ in the world or in the Church, we have need of the discernment of local communities with solid roots but at the same time openness to broad horizons. The local Jesuit community which exercises discernment is the natural place of meeting and sharing. It should be a ‘home’ where simplicity of life and openness of heart allow Jesuits to bring others together and share with them.

In the everyday life of our mission we are often called upon to make choices which engage the community, the Region, the Province, even the Society as a whole. These choices express our aspirations. But do we have the time to weigh the pros and cons of these choices before we move to action? The 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation hopes that its companions begin every apostolic activity with common discernment.

### The mission of reconciliation

The Congregation reaffirmed the centrality of reconciliation in the world mission of Jesuits. The decree on “Jesuit Life and Mission” was an object of discernment in small





groups as well as in the plenary. It reignited the desire to take part in the great ministry of reconciliation founded in justice, faith and solidarity with the poor which was already at the heart of our first companions' experience.

I know that certain communities, Regions, even Provinces already have experience of this mission of reconciliation. The Society sees the Spiritual Exercises as an instrument for it. As sources of inspiration they allow for comforting men and women who suffer conflicts, division, marginalization and injustice. The 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation encourages each Jesuit to take the part of those who seek and defend the common good and, at the same time, fight against religious fundamentalism, intolerance and every kind of conflict.

At the end of the day, the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation asked Father General to send the entire Society some directives for apostolic life which take account of the high-stake challenges of the Church today.

### **Governance in the Society**

Another point of particular discussion has to do with the internal governance of the Society (Renewed Governance for a Renewed Mission). The question was how to better the Society's governance at the universal level. Often the debate was about how to define the role and the place of Presidents of Jesuit Conferences in the hierarchy of the Society of Jesus.

Discernment on the role of these Conferences is in process and is being done through the experience of the daily life of each Region and Province. It is from this perspective that the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation asked Father General to pursue the

work which remains to be done for the renewal of the Society's governance, to study the governance of Jesuit networks, which cover areas outside of geographic 'conferences'.... From these discussions it came out once again clearly that discernment, collaboration, and the setting up of networks are key elements of our way of proceeding, and this in terms of both local and universal governance.

### **Is Africa an apostolic preference for the Society?**

This question did not receive a clear response – the more so since there was no evaluative document about our apostolic preferences. On the contrary, the Congregation asked Father General “to review or evaluate the progress made on our current apostolic preferences and, once that is done, to identify new findings and promote a greater solidarity of human, institutional and financial resources in the whole Society so as to arrive at greater apostolic effectiveness.”

### **Solidarity with our companions in areas of conflict**

The 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation heard the heartfelt cry of Ours who find themselves in areas of conflict. The delegates felt themselves loudly questioned by the situations of violence or tension in which our compan-

# Mission

## Re-reading my experience of the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation

*Below: Father General Arturo Sosa with Frs. Brian Paulson and Thomas Lawler at GC36.*

*Bottom: Father General Arturo Sosa with Jesuits from Central Africa Province, Jean-Pierre Bodjoko, Stanislas Kambashi, and Xabier Zabala.*

ions and their collaborators live and work. The destructive effects of all this violence are clear: forced displacement, refugees, sad emigration, human trafficking, drugs, war.

Acts of violence linked to fundamentalism or religious fanaticism are multiplying, dragging along behind fear, mistrust, and much loss of human life. Our companions who work in these areas face many risks. Many of them have already paid with their lives, like Fathers Patrick Gahizi, Chrysologue Mahame, Innocent Rutagambwa, Frans van der Lugt, Christophe Munzihirwa, the Salvadoran Jesuits and their collaborators, etc. To show the closeness of the entire Society, the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congrega-

tion decided to make an official declaration of support on behalf of our exposed companions and collaborators.

Besides these important questions about the life and mission of the Society, some other subjects were tackled and made objects of discernment: the administration of the International Houses of Rome, the effective handling of finances in the Society, institutional solidarity and the protection of minors.

It's important to note that all these different points mentioned in no way exhaust the effective action which each Jesuit is already accomplishing in his apostolate and his personal life. The last General Congregations defined our mission as one of service in the mission of Christ: an effective promotion of faith and justice, more and more at the frontiers. The Society is called right now to "row into the deep," in the hope of seeing with the very eyes of the Lord the beauty and the suffering of our brothers and sisters.

The 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation did not, then, do everything: the essential mission plays out at the edges, on the ground. The sown seed cannot truly germinate unless Jesuits recognize that their hearts beat in harmony with the heart of Christ, the only one to give it growth (1 Cor. 3.7). For St. Ignatius, great principles must be incarnated taking into account the circumstances of place and time and persons, for greater love and greater service (Spiritual Exercises, 230-234).

I would like to give thanks to God who was favorable to us in Rome as he was to the first Companions in the founding place of La Storta. The doors of the Aula of the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation are closed and the delegates have returned to the crossroads of ideologies and social trenches – where there always was and there is still confrontation between the burning needs of men and the eternal message of the Gospel – to be still present there and there to announce the joy of the Gospel.



# Community discernment can stand the test of interculturality

The universality to which the Society aspires is not a given; it is built continuously in a process of community discernment at the level of the provinces, conferences and general congregations.

Ludovic Lado, S.J.

Translated by Robert E. Hurd, S.J.

**I experienced General Congregation 36 (GC36)** as a long process of community discernment of the universal Society with a strong intercultural component at the same time of richness and challenge. It is true that I had already taken part in the Congregation of Procurators of 2012, but these were two different group dynamics even if they converged in their finality, that is, the search for the will of God for the Society of Jesus today.

One of the particularities of GC 36 was the putting into action of the new formula whereby the General Congregation begins at the level of the different Conferences called after the provincial congregations for the election of their representatives in the different preparatory commissions. The Conference of the Major Superiors of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM) organized two meetings of its delegates to GC36. I was elected at the first meeting to take part in the Life and Mission Commission charged with preparing a document based on the sorting of and synthesis of the postulates made by the *Coetus praeivius*. This phase of meeting at the conference level permitted the delegates of the conference to exchange views about the African perspectives of the GC36, because even if the Society is universal, we always



Above: Closing session of GC36.

look at the world from a particular anchorage. The universality to which the Society aspires is not a given, it is constantly being constructed in a process of communal discernment at the level of the provinces, the conferences and the general congregations. The condition to move effectively towards this universality is that each companion who undertakes this road accepts to go beyond his disordered attachments to the local perspectives to listen to the Holy Spirit, who also speaks through the companions from other horizons. This is not a given, and in an experience such as the General Congregation, it is a constant effort to be oneself in the meeting and in listening to the other who while being different from me is just as concerned as I am

# *Coetus praeivius*

## Community discernment can stand the test of interculturality

*Below: Brother James Edema (Eastern Africa Province) greets Pope Francis during GC36.*

(it must be assumed!) for the mission of the Society. It is a process.

The first great moment, practically the first two weeks, was the march in common towards the election of the new superior general. I was particularly struck by the simplicity of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, who presented very humbly the reasons for his resignation during the first few days. Later, he stood down to allow the General Congregation to find his successor among the 215 delegates representing the universal Society. In subsequent exchanges on the document *De Statu*, on the state of the Society today, a dynamic of intercultural groups began to facilitate the meetings and exchanges in the hope of developing a minimum of mutual knowledge.

Then came the four days of the famous *murmurationes*, which, in my experience, turned out to be very efficacious in making us aware of the potential successors to the general. On the day of the election, each obeyed his conscience before God and chose the one he thought to be the best to help the Society to continue to accomplish its mission today. The vote of the majority was accepted as the choice of the Holy

Spirit. Discerning in a democratic process the choice of God is striking. This first phase, up to the election of the general, is marked by a certain gravity.

Then comes the second phase, that of the study of the documents and of the election of the General's council. This phase was much more laborious with its moments of confusion in spite of the preparatory work of the different commissions. In the Life and Mission Commission, we were six companions: an Indian, an Australian, a Canadian, a Spaniard, an Argentinian, and myself, a Cameroonian--another experience of the search for the will of God in interculturality.

Producing by consensus a document, which contains the concerns and the hopes of the universal Society revealed itself to be a true journey. Where often you walk together without knowing where you are going, with only faith in providence as a compass, this is a journey which requires a great sense of interior freedom to open oneself to the spirit at work in the other companion especially in moments of disagreements, and these were not rare.

This freedom was also called upon as the document was submitted to the appreciation of the companions of the General Congregation which remains sovereign and could finally decide to adopt the document or not. All the documents passed through a fine-toothed comb of critical analysis by the companions, either in general session or in the groups, and one needed to be prepared for all types of critique, from the most bitter to the most constructive. Once again, the universality is never a given, and it is in the convergence of spirits (of which the final democratic vote on each important decision is the final indicator) that the Holy Spirit is discerned.

Just because a commission has spent months working on a document does not mean it will be adopted. In spite of the advantages of the new formula (which



I rather approve of) it appeared that the majority of the drafts of potential decrees prepared in anticipation by the commissions turned out to be of little use, either because of technical problems or because of their touch on questions of revisions of our law.

This was a source of considerable individual and collective desolation. The new formula is already being revised. The successive election of the four counselors *Ad Providentiam* and of the admonitor of Father General which occurred in the course of this second phase also had its version of the *murmurationes*, less dense than the preceding. This election takes an entire day and is a true test of patience, but takes place in a good environment of entrustment of these our brothers with this responsibility for the more universal good.

Another important moment of the commission was the visit of the Pope, and shaking hands with him was for me a strong experience of communion with the universal church symbolized by the Petrine office. He consecrated time to have free dialogue with the members of the congregation and in spite of the efforts of the companions to elicit guides for precise apostolic orientations, the Pope refrained from telling the Society what it ought to do on the apostolic field. He rather insisted on the importance of discernment in regard to the great challenges of the world.

The décor of the new *Aula* of the GC as well as the technology (the tablets) enormously facilitated the votes and exchanges relative to the documents and other decisions of this congregation which were carefully prepared by the companions who shined by their devotion.

The 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation was for me a great school of communal discernment in a situation of interculturality with its moments of consolations and its desolations. It was also a great exercise of democratic culture as a decision tool that I



would sincerely wish for our African countries which are still disturbed by civil and political strife.

It is also a unique occasion to appreciate the vocation of each companion, men of every race and culture looking, each one, to “love and serve in all things” for the greater glory of God. It remains only to pray that the new Father General, Fr. Arturo Sosa, and his new council will cooperate with the grace of God to help the Society on its different levels to renew itself in rediscovering the culture of personal and communitarian discernment. This demands of the companions great interior freedom, this key to openness to the Spirit which is never acquired once and for all but which is to be reconquered each day. I have great human and spiritual hopes. To God be glory given!

Top: Some members of GC36.

Above: Father General Arturo Sosa with the Major Superiors from Africa at GC36.

# From Caracas to Rome: The Story of Arturo Sosa

[Translated from Spanish]

## On being elected General of the Society

**Like all the electors**, I arrived at the congregation asking myself who would be the best candidates for the job of General, and obviously, I did not have myself on the list. The first day of *murmuratio* [The four-day period of prayer, reflection and one-to-one conversations about possible candidates prior to the election of the Superior General. Ed], I began to gather information about the delegates I thought were good candidates. The second day I began to sense that some delegates were asking about me or had asked about me. The third day I began to worry because the hints were much more direct, and the fourth even more so. In the final three days, I spoke with 60 persons, and many were already asking me about my health. Therefore, I began to get the idea, though I was still praying that the companions would take seriously, what Saint Ignatius says about entering the election without a predetermined decision. As I saw the votes on the date of the election, things became clearer to me, and I had the profound intuition that in this case I have to trust the judgment of the brothers because I could not trust my own. If they elected me, there was a reason, and I would try to respond the best that I can. In this election, I believe that importance was placed on my experience in both local and international work, and I have no doubt that these last years in Rome had something to do with that. However, more importantly, I understand that I am one of many Jesuits in the Society of Latin America who have tried to put into practice what the congregations of the last forty years have decreed. I understand this election as the confirmation of the direction that the Society began to take in the time of Fr. Pedro Arrupe. I understand the election as a confirmation of the need for us to continue on that path.

## I - Background

### Family

I was born in 1948, during the very scant period of democracy that Venezuela had in the first half of the

20th century. I was born on November 12, and on the 24th of that month there was a coup d'état against the first democratically elected president of the country since independence. My grandparents had lived in great poverty, but my father belonged to the generation that built the country.

We were a very extended family in which various generations shared the same space. Living so close together like that was very important for me. Our houses did not have walls fences; there was no distinction between one lot and another; we lived together. Our family was very Catholic, but we did not express our religious sentiment openly. In that setting I learned to see reality from the perspective of going beyond what appears to be; I learned that things are not necessarily the way they are. As I grew up, I was always fighting to go a little further beyond what was there to be seen.

In this regard, our family was well aware of the reality and was convinced of the need for study. They always encouraged me to get to know reality, to open up to the world, to study languages. My father was a very restless man who travelled a lot both within and outside the country. If in Venezuela at that time there were ten persons who read *Time* magazine, he was one of them. He was an economist and a lawyer, and twice he served in the government. Often he invited me to accompany him on domestic trips.

Right: Father General  
Arturo Sosa  
on the balcony of the  
Jesuit General Curia  
in Rome, GC36.



# Murmuratio

When we arrived in a city that was strange to me, he always said, "Let's go ride on the trolley," and we would tour the city while he explained to me what we were seeing. Such experiences were constantly opening my eyes to an ever-greater reality so that I would not remain enclosed in what I already knew.

## School

The other setting that influenced my childhood development was the Colegio San Ignacio in Caracas. I started there in kindergarten at age five and studied there for thirteen years, until I finished high school. My father had also studied at that same school. Those were the days when the Society's schools had many Jesuits, especially scholastics and brothers. For me it was a kind of second home. My mother claimed it was my first home since I was never in the house. There were activities from Monday to Sunday, the day when there was Mass at the school. To be sincere, I do not remember much of the chemistry or the mathematics, but I do remember very well that we formed groups within the school like the Sodality of Mary and the student centre. We had a lot of activity of that sort. This explains a lot about the birth of my vocation: I experienced there the great meaning that life has when you give yourself to others.

## II - Jesuit Journey

### My Vocation

I got to know the Jesuits at the college, and I never had any doubts about my vocation to the Society. I never even thought of it in terms of priesthood but just wanted to be a Jesuit. In reality, as I recall those days, the Jesuits who most impressed me were the brothers. There were many brothers in the Venezuelan Province.



Specifically, there were brothers who cooked, who fixed the buses, who drove them ... and there were brothers who taught. The primary school grades were taught in large part by brothers, and they were great pedagogues. The brothers and the scholastics were the ones really close to us students; we hardly saw the priests.

My interest in the Society arose in this context, but it was always nourished by my sense that we had to take a hard look at the situation of the country. I thought that I could do something to help the country, and the best place for me to do that was the Society. My generation was very conscious of the need to continue to build the country. My companions in the Sodality of Mary and other groups became doctors and lawyers, they went into the Amazon. There was a sense of commitment; we believed in the need to build the society and the nation.

### Time of the Council

The Second Vatican Council was very important for me. It was certainly great news, and we followed it like a TV serial. The Sodality of Mary was the place where we linked the social and the spiritual together in our reflections, and it was there that we read the documents, which nourished our weekly group reflections during those four years. We followed the Council closely, step by step...

Around that time there was the election of Father Pedro Arrupe, another breath of fresh air. Arrupe was elected when the boys in my group were deciding whether we should enter the Society. At the college we had a long relation with the missions of Japan and of Ahmedabad in India, so the election of a missionary in Japan was very symbolic and important.

Once in the novitiate, we had the book with the decrees of GC 31, and we read them more than we read Fr. Rodríguez [*Author of a manual used for centuries in the formation of young Jesuits in the Society*. Ed]. We studied them carefully. Then came the Letter of Rio [*in May 1968, Jesuit Provincials in Latin America issued a joint letter establishing the Society's position in defence of social justice*. Ed], coinciding with the conference of Latin American bishops in Medellín. What happened there was similar to what happened with the Council: we experienced very directly all the dynamics and reflections of that conference. Its preparatory documents were practically transformed by a dynamic movement from the ground up, which was a cry that demanded to be heard. The people themselves were saying that we have to change, and that meant a tremendous advance for the Church of Latin America and Venezuela.

It should be said that it was because of the fragile nature of the Venezuelan Church that the Council was so important for us. The Church in Venezuela was practically exterminated during the 19th century. Venezuelan society is much more secular, much less reli-

## From Caracas to Rome: The Story of Arturo Sosa

giously expressive, than say that of Mexico or Colombia. Besides, it has been badly maltreated and exploited by successive governments. That is why when the Jesuits arrived in Venezuela: they were asked to work in the seminary and to train the clergy of a poor, fragile Church, which had no vocations. It was in that context that Vatican II, Rio, and Medellín had meaning. It was as if to say: the Church has found its strength in the people; it has found its strength in the faith of the people; by that faith we must live, and by that faith we are going to build another church.

### Regency at Centro Gumilla

At that time, the Society was creating many centres for social research and action (CIAS) all around Latin America, and an effort was made to have Jesuits trained in the social sciences. Many of my companions were sent to study economics, sociology, anthropology, etc., and they began to form research teams and working groups. The first such centre in Venezuela was given the name Centro Gumilla, named after a Jesuit who laboured in the Amazon region and wrote many works about botany and anthropology. That centre began its work just as I was entering the Society; as novices we were asked to help set up the library there. Since I was very anxious to study the social sciences, that coincidence motivated me greatly.

Years later, the provincials began to consider possible regency assignments outside the colleges, and I had the good fortune of being sent as a regent to the Centro Gumilla of Barquisimeto. That centre worked mainly with small-farmer cooperatives in the various districts there. Other companions went to parishes. The province was open to offering young Jesuits apos-

tolic possibilities different from the traditional ones.

### Theology in Rome

I had to go to Rome, but I went reluctantly because in Venezuela there were no opportunities to study theology. We wanted to study theology in Chile or in Central America since at that time they were the places that were very alive with dynamic religious and political movements. Looking back, I am thankful that the superiors made me study in Rome since otherwise I would never have experienced the intensity of living together with Jesuits from thirty different countries. The people and the ambience were very alive. In Italy, I made good contacts with groups that formed Christian communities. Those years were crucial for opening me up to other perspectives of society, Church, and the Society.

To be sure, my group wanted to be certain that we could do our fourth year of theology back in Venezuela, and Fr. Arrupe, influenced by Fr. Cecil McGarry, was very understanding. After Centro Gumilla was set up, a complex of religious communities was formed in Venezuela with the idea of creating a theology faculty, so we had one year of an ad-hoc intensive seminary!

## III - Political Science

### Universidad Central de Venezuela

Since we always have to be busy with many things, we also worked during our final year of theology. During that time, I was involved in considerable pastoral activity. While doing theology studies that year, we lived in Catia, a neighbourhood where there was a parish of the Society, and I worked with another companion in a neighbouring parish in the valley. At the end of the year, I began studies in political science at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, which was the most important university in the country. In addition, there were Jesuit professors there, and we ran the university parish. For the Society, it was a very important work since we were seeking to maintain an apostolic presence not only in the Universidad Católica, but also in the Universidad Central, where there was a much greater range of ideological discussion.

### Centro Gumilla

After my theological studies I was assigned to Centro Gumilla. I began to work with the journal SIC



while doing my doctorate and giving classes at the undergraduate level. I worked at this centre from 1977. When Fr. Luis María Ugalde was made provincial, I was named director of the journal, and I was involved in that work for the next 18 years to 1996. The journal was Centro Gumilla's communication medium; it was responsible for publicizing the intellectual and investigative work being done directly by the Centre. The journal was called SIC, which means "yes" in Latin, because it had been born in the inter-diocesan seminary of Caracas many years earlier and was later adopted by Centro Gumilla.

In the journal we tried to give a monthly account of the social reality, and also to promote the socio-economic formation of students, parish groups, people's organizations, etc. We were also closely linked to the university, where all of us worked giving classes or collaborating with some research group. In Barquisimeto, we promoted savings and credit cooperatives in the city and farming cooperatives in the rural areas. Our times of shared reflection were very interesting. During those years, I dedicated myself to writing, reading, discussion, and participation in training courses.

#### IV - Jesuit Leadership

##### Period as Provincial

I became provincial in 1996, at a time when it was clear that, there were going to be strong social changes and that the province's identity needed to be strengthened. Everything was ready for a new growth of Venezuelan vocations within the province: not only of Jesuits but also of all the people who were committed to the different institutions, such as the universities, the colleges, *Fe y Alegría*, the parishes, etc. It was a very interesting time. We already had a large body of people working with us who had a strong sense of sharing in our mission. The idea thus arose of making a long-term apostolic project, until 2020, which is still underway. Those years were very intense. Many people, both Jesuit and lay, engaged in very interesting reflections where the provincial office was only the catalyst. It lasted several years and finally established the major orientations of the province.

The moment came when we were able to give meaning to the concept of the "apostolic subject." That expression, used by everybody today, was invented by us at that time in Venezuela. It was then, at a very personal level, that I had the intuition that the apostolic mission does not belong to us. The insight did not come from



Left: Father General Arturo Sosa during the interview in the Aula of GC36. Opposite page: Father General plays the drums (ingoma) on his visit to Burundi.

something I read; it was something I experienced as I encountered people who worked in the mission with greater dedication than oneself—and they were living in much more difficult situations. Even though we Jesuits are freed of many things in order to carry out the mission, there are many collaborators who carry it out at the same time that they are raising a family in very trying circumstances—and they don't for that reason lessen their dedication to the mission. This movement made us aware of the need to create conditions for promoting a sense of shared identity. Just as 20 years are needed to train a Jesuit—with studies, experiences, exercises, etc.—we considered how we might offer more systematic training and experiences for our lay collaborators. What emerged were new forms of offering the Spiritual Exercises to all social levels or to the "Footprints" movement, which is a youth formation program. The basic idea is that the Christian experience is an experience of formation in the faith and that it connects apostolic commitment with formation, spiritual life, and knowledge of the country.

##### Universidad de Frontera in Táchira

Táchira is a thousand kilometres from Caracas, almost on the border with Colombia, and there was no possibility of university study there. In the years before the Council, the bishop of Táchira saw that the way to keep the young people in the area was to offer them university studies. The Jesuits helped to set up an extension of the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Táchira, under the responsibility of the diocese. After twenty years, it became the Universidad Católica del Táchira.

When I arrived, the university was already more or less established, and there was a drive on both for institutional growth and mission development. We created a new campus, and the number of students grew, but what we emphasized most of all was putting the students in contact with reality. That was our key concept: integral formation that goes beyond the academic.

In Táchira, besides the university, we Jesuits are responsible for two parishes in the frontier region, a radio station, and five schools of *Fe y Alegría*. The Colombian part of the region also has institutions of the

## From Caracas to Rome: The Story of Arturo Sosa

Society, especially schools of *Fe y Alegría*. We therefore proposed to work together in a regional, inter-provincial project, since the border in that region is completely artificial. Of course, there are historical reasons for the border, but it's the same culture, the same people, and even the same families spread out on both sides. Since that is the most fluid border between Venezuela and Colombia, we proposed to take advantage of the strong sense of identity among the people by creating an apostolic area that would join the two nations together through the various works typical of Jesuits, such as primary, secondary, and university education; pastoral ministry, refugee work, etc. The work we did was extremely interesting because the students participated in the pastoral activities and the educational centres, and the other works used the university as a point of reference.

### Experiences of Latin American Integration

My time as provincial was also an opportunity to come into contact with the Church and the Society in Latin America. I will describe three outstanding experiences of joint building efforts in those years:

The Provincials Conference of Latin America (CPAL) was formed when I was provincial in Venezuela. It was already decided to maintain the two assistancies, but at the same time to create a single conference of provincials. The establishment of CPAL was a vote of confidence for integration despite the doubts of many people. We owe a lot to the stubbornness of Fr. Francisco Ivern. Latin America is very big and very diverse. From Mexico to Patagonia is a good stretch, and the Caribbean has little in common with Argentina. Our effort had to break with the long-established custom of letting northern Latin American and the Southern Cone go their separate ways. However, we decided to do it, and common projects began to emerge.

The other experience was the birth of the Association of Universities entrusted to the Society of Jesus in Latin America (AUSJAL). My experience of being part of AUSJAL's evolution into an effective network has been wonderful. We have gone from being a social club where the rectors would meet once a year and share experiences to being an organization, which functions as a body and in which the universities collaborate in many projects such as fighting poverty and promoting youth leadership. In this way the network

keeps developing. Given my experience of working in a small, isolated university on the border, AUSJAL supplied a breath of truth and opened up possibilities for new experiences; it made possible the exchange of professors, students, ideas, and projects. A new dimension was added to the importance of maintaining projects that were fragile but significant.

Another experience of the integration across provinces was the birth of *Fe y Alegría* and its transformation into an international network. With *Fe y Alegría*, my ties go back a long time. In fact, I have to say that I first got to know the barrios with the help of *Fe y Alegría*. That movement began when I was in the sixth grade at the Colegio San Ignacio, and after that we used to visit the barrios where *Fe y Alegría* was working. I loved biology when I was in high school, so my parents bought me a microscope as a gift. Very often I would visit one of the first schools of *Fe y Alegría*, Colegio Madre Emilio in the barrio Petares. When I entered the Society, my mother asked me, "What will you do with your microscope? Will you give it to the Colegio Madre Emilia?" Father Vélaz, the founder of *Fe y Alegría*, was well known in the circle in which we moved. Being able to help from where I was and seeing the growth of *Fe y Alegría* as an international network was a very joyful experience. The networks



are very important on the frontiers, where resources are quite scarce. It's a privilege to see how belonging to a network endows a school of *Fe y Alegría* in a very vulnerable zone with a strength that it cannot attain by itself.

### **Experience in the Society's Central Government**

General Congregation 32 (GC 32) took place while I was studying in Rome. I'll never forget what it was like to listen to Fr. Arrupe himself telling us youngsters living at the Collegio del Gesù [*A community of Jesuits in formation who are studying theology in Rome. It is adjacent to the Gesù Church.* Ed] about his experience in that congregation that was so important for our Society. My first experience as a delegate was at GC 33, to which I was elected when I was only 34 years old. I was the youngest delegate. It was a very intense experience with a complex movement that was not easy to understand. We reached consensus rapidly in electing Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, and that was a really inspiring experience. The new Father General did a magnificent job in managing that transition and in regaining the confidence of other sectors of the Church for the Society, while allowing us to go deeper into the great intuitions of GC 32. Later I also took part in GC 34, working closely with Fr. Michael Czerny, who was coordinator of the social justice commission. That is where I came to know Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, who was secretary of the congregation.

My involvement in the central government began at GC 35 when Fr. Nicolás named some non-resident assistants (others called us the "flying" or "fluttering" assistants). After he was elected, he told me that he wanted me to help in the government of the Society but not from Rome. They named Fr. Mark Rotsaert and me as non-resident assistants, and that was a very interesting experience since we took part in the general council but did not live in Rome. Basically, we attended sessions three times a year, during the *Tempo Forte* [*Week-long period of intensive reflection on key themes in the life and mission of the Society.* Ed], and we brought with us a voice and a vision that went beyond everyday concerns. It was a tiring period, but I learned a lot about keeping in contact with the universal Society at the level of governance instead of at deliberative sessions like the congregations.

Several years later the Regional Assistant sent me an e-mail asking: "How do you see the possibility of being responsible for the international houses in Rome?" I sent him the classical Jesuit response: "I entered the Society to do what they tell me to do, not what I want, but it seems to me ...." And I went on to explain all the arguments for saying No. Honestly, I had great peace of mind because I thought that the international houses in Rome were beyond my competence. But they didn't

even ask me. The provincial called me and told me: "I have a piece of news that I have a hard time telling you or even speaking aloud because I don't know what we will do with the university if you leave." And that was how I ended up coming to Rome for the second time.

I have to say that the experience of these two years has been very interesting. Being a student at the Gregorian at age 28 was very different from coming here at age sixty something and being responsible for 400 Jesuits who work in the international houses. This new perspective requires getting to know people well and understanding the dynamics of the institutions. I have to acknowledge the great efforts that have been done in years past to renew these structures. The great dream now is the establishment of a consortium among the three classical universities of the Society in Rome.

During the last two years, I have encountered Pope Francis four or five times, always on topics related with the international houses of the Society in Rome, and the relationship has always been very genial and lively, graced by the sympathetic kindness characteristic of this Pope. I believe that the message of Pope Francis in these last few years has worked to reenergize the Society in the work we are doing, both here and in many other places. Just as the discourse of Benedict was a critical moment in GC 35, now Francis is confirming the direction we are taking in the mission of the Society. Indeed, he encourages us to go even further, as if to say: "You are still way behind in what you're able to do." It is the Holy Father who by his example and his knowledge of the Society continually urges us on: "Head that way!"

## **V - And now... from the Spirit and from the heart**

### **Looking to the Future**

People ask me what I am like, and I always respond that I am calm. I am convinced that there is no Society if it is not "of Jesus." And this has two aspects: there will be no Society if we are not intimately united with the Lord; on the other hand, if the Society is truly of Jesus, we trust that He will help us take care of it. I think that is the most central, crucial thing for us: if the person of Jesus Christ is not before us, within us, and with us every day, then the Society has no reason to exist.

*Fe y Alegría*  
IHS 75

## From Caracas to Rome: The Story of Arturo Sosa

A consequence of this intuition is the certainty that the mission is “His.” The mission we share is that of Jesus, and we share it with all the others who have received this call. Therefore there are two themes that seem to me fundamental, and I touched on them in the homily at the Mass of Thanksgiving: collaboration and interculturality.

The emphasis on collaboration is not a consequence of our not being able to do the work ourselves. It is that we do not wish to work by ourselves. The Society of Jesus makes no sense without the collaboration of others. In this regard we are called to a tremendous conversion, because in many places we are still nostalgic about the days when we could do everything, and we regret that now we have no choice but to share the mission. I profoundly believe that it is just the opposite: our life is in being able to collaborate with others.

The other theme is interculturality or multiculturalism, which is part of the Gospel itself. The Gospel is a call to conversion of all cultures in order to uphold them and lead them to God. The true face of God is multicultural, multicolored, and multifaceted. God

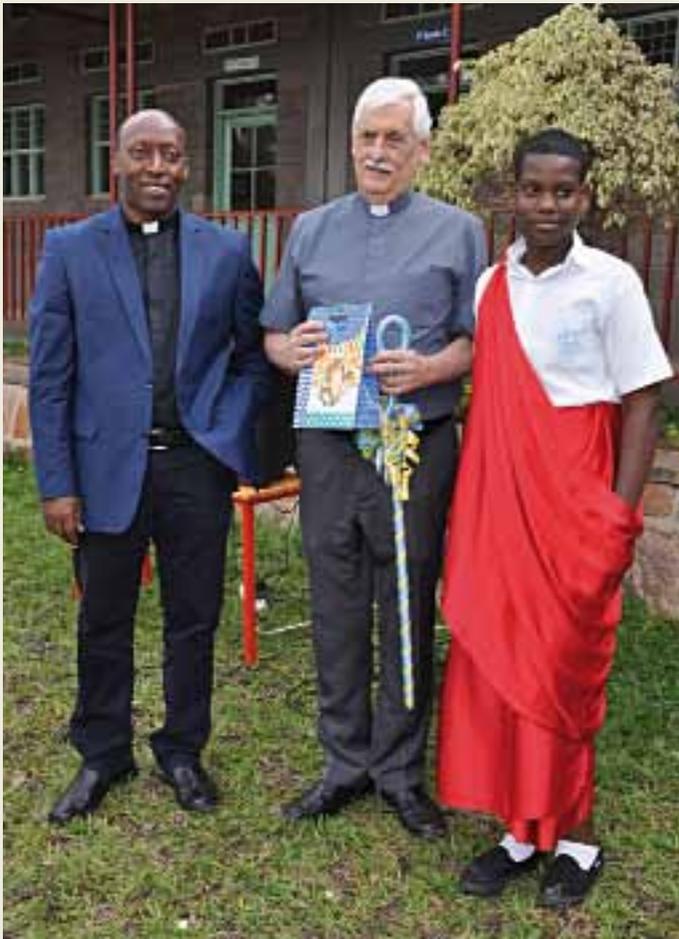
is not a homogeneous God. Quite the contrary. Creation is everywhere revealing to us diversity; it shows us how different things complement one another. If the Society succeeds in reflecting this diversity, it will become an expression of that fascinating face of God.

I believe that the Society has achieved this cultural variety since the Council. We have become rooted in all parts of the world, and from there have arisen vocations as authentic as any. You can find Jesuits, true Jesuits, in every region, in every colour, in every activity. I think that is a sign of the Church for the world. What unites us all in our diversity is our connection with Jesus and the Gospel, and that is the source of the creativity of the Society and of the people with whom we share the mission. It is incredible how so many people are able to give their own personal touch to the one and only message which is a message for everyone.

### Conclusion

I have great hope that this congregation will help the Society and the recently elected General to have a clear idea of where we must go and how we must get there. The Society does not have many doubts about the nature of its mission as formulated by GC 32; it was reformulated by the following congregations, and it has now become the blood of our people. We can say that we already know what we can offer the Church. The great challenge for the Society now is how to organize ourselves to be truly effective in this mission. That is why I introduced in my homily still another theme, that of intellectual depth, because it is not a question of copying models but of creating them. Creating means understanding. Creation is an arduous intellectual process. We need to understand what is happening in today’s world and in today’s Church in order to understand faith. That will give us the key for focusing the mission on the areas where we have found great consensus, and it will help us find the most effective ways to make it reality.

My impression is that the Society is very much alive and that there are many processes underway. We have to focus, and we have to fertilize, knowing that we can plant but the way things grow, we do not know—only the other knows that. God is at work. The key thing is to help, not get in the way. Our passion is founded on the certainty that we accompany the people with the guarantee that God is with us.



## A discerning community with open horizons

Thus, each of us should constantly desire that our own apostolic work develop, be stimulated, and helped to bear fruit, through the encouragement of our brothers. We always receive our mission from God in the Church, through our Major Superiors and local Superiors, in the practice of Jesuit obedience, which includes our personal discernment. If, however, our mission is not supported by the body of the Society, it risks withering. In our individualistic and competitive age, we should remember that the community plays a very special role since it is a privileged place of apostolic discernment. (GC36, D.1., n.8)



# A Spark in the Darkness of Damascus

I was struggling with the thought of facilitating discussions about personal freedom and purposeful leadership in a place where pain and fear were so predominant.

Sandra Chaoul

**This was my fourth visit to Damascus** in the past 6 months and my fifth workshop with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Syria. Had someone told me a year ago that I would be facilitating leadership sessions in Syria, I would have probably thought they were out of their mind. Yet, I find myself today, March 9, 2017, sharing this experience on the day of my birthday, under the starry skies of Saydnaya as distant bombing is heard from the direction of Dahiet el Assad.

The past year had been eventful on so many levels and carried a lot of grace, most of which I received during my first 8-day silent retreat, the Ignatian Leadership Program of the Conference of European Provincials (CEP), and finally during my visits to Syria.

I have been working in leadership for the past 7 years, facilitating sessions for groups and corporations and working in parallel with the Jesuits of the Middle East Province. When the provincial suggested that I participate in the Ignatian Leadership Program, I did not hesitate but never expected the experience to lead me where I find myself today.

If I can share anything about this journey, it will mainly revolve around finding light and hope in the middle of darkness and confusion, and finding God in the midst of silence and struggle.

When JRS Syria Country Director asked if it would be possible to organize a leadership workshop for the country team, I do not recall thinking about it twice. The invitation carried a deep sense of purpose and internal joy, mixed with some anxiety; not because of the danger of going there (I was surprisingly at peace with the idea, unlike my parents and friends in Beirut), but because of what it meant to talk about leadership and authority in a country torn by war and political conflict. I was struggling with the thought of facilitating discussions about personal freedom and purposeful leadership in a place where pain and fear were so predominant.

I went there carrying prejudices fueled by a long history of tension between Leba-





nese and Syrians. I came back with deep connections. I learned strength and resilience from the stories they shared. I was deeply touched by their desire and willingness to prepare for a brighter future even as news of explosions was received on their mobiles. Instead of emphasizing my helplessness in the face of their sorrow, the experience transformed it into an acceptance of our common vulnerability and an invitation to open a space for God to work in our group.

I can still feel the energy in the room as we started reflecting on our relationship to authority and the impact this had on our exercise of leadership. “Authority” discussions are highly loaded in the Syrian con-

text and carry a lot of fear and an equal amount of resentment. It is very unlikely to remain neutral when similar subjects are put on the table. Yet, as participants took the risk of sharing their stories and listening to others’, a space of trust was gradually building. As new concepts and questions provoked participants’ minds, God was transforming their hearts.

The days we spent together were much less about communicating knowledge, and more about creating an experience where we were all present to what was moving us, as we were engaged in group discussions. In formal terms, this leadership workshop aimed at creating solid bonds within JRS teams. It also provided an opportunity for

*Above left: Attending a JRS workshop  
Above: JRS activities.  
Below center: Destruction in Syria  
Below: Children are adversely affected by the war.*



## A Spark in the Darkness of Damascus

each one to look inward, grow in awareness and reflect on their leadership interventions in their personal lives, within their teams and in their communities. But if one could scan into the heart of our group, he

could see that what was happening was much more than a traditional training.

God's spirit was at work. He was present in our daily contemplations and the calm breezy mornings of Saydnaya. He revealed himself in our long empathy walks, silent reflection times and evening group sharing. He met us at our own pace, reminding us that we were called to live life abundantly. In silence, God spoke to our hearts carrying a consolation. Although participants came from various religious

# Middle East



*Above: JRS workshop.  
Right: A JRS staffer  
works with children.*



and ideological backgrounds, all shared a deep desire to reconnect with hope and life. This became the central focus of our discussions: A leadership that breeds life, a leadership anchored in values, purpose and authentic interactions with others.

Hadi, Maryam, Safir and Maha shared their experience below. They are part of the amazing JRS Syria family. Each one of them is a light in their own way, in a place that got used to darkness. They are the future of Syria.



**“The workshop’s interesting** approaches allowed a true and challenging self-evaluation. I was able to detect and address hidden issues in my way of thinking, rediscover my potential, and see leadership with new eyes. It was a wake-up call to take control of my life and live differently and more positively. The workshop’s experiential methodology shed light on many blind spots mainly in my interactions with others. Sandra did not just help me discover new concepts but empowered me to stand for new and upcoming challenges with a more open heart and mind. A new journey has already started in my life and I’m totally looking forward for a better future. This was a very special character-building experience for which I’m very grateful.”

**Hadi Nasser**, JRS Syria - Country Office

**“The Syrian society** is currently moving towards human development trainings to help people deal with the challenges they are living. I have to admit that it was difficult to think about leadership and authority without certain uneasiness, especially given what these two words mean in our context. Our experiences of authority and power profoundly shaped how we relate to these concepts. After going through the workshop together, these words started to carry a new meaning... The experience was difficult at first, especially when it came to sharing feelings not only with others but mainly with ourselves. It definitely opened windows that shed light on many areas we were unaware of, which helped us move forward.”

**Maryam El Mashreky**, JRS Syria - Country Office

**“I went to the workshop** thinking it will be just like any conference or course on leadership. But it was a different story that challenged my way of thinking. In my mind, leadership was about authority and control. It became a purposeful intervention in the lives of people we care about, to empower them to continue even when we’re no longer there. I used to focus a lot on the leader’s charismatic traits; but I found something deeper and discovered the power of purpose, character and values. I was expecting answers and technical solutions. I am grateful that what was offered was an invitation to look within. In silence, and through the grace of God’s spirit, I found answers that I held inside. I heard a lot about the Jesuits’ spirituality of accompaniment and wanted so much to live this experience but couldn’t. In this workshop, I am happy to have found a companion that reminded me, by their own light, that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. I am going back to Aleppo carrying the grace I found to my own team, so that God is glorified through our work.”

**Safir Salim**, JRS Aleppo

**“This experience has put** before us a lot of information and tools that affected me greatly in my search for myself and my awareness of others. It provided a lot of insights and concepts in several areas, be it intellectual, scientific, applied or spiritual. What touched me most in this experience goes in two directions: the first is the emphasis the workshop put on exercising leadership in the service of a higher purpose: a better life. The second is that it provided spaces that put me in front of myself, to re-examine and read my previous experience, and be able ultimately to find meaning in my life and make a difference in society.”

**Maha Kardouh**, JRS Syria - Country Office

Glory to God in Siberia

# Tomsk - The City of Friends

Siberia is a place of surprises. Many of the myths and mysteries about this exotic landscape are debunked within moments of arriving.

Michail Tkalic, S.J. – Louis R. Hotop, S.J.

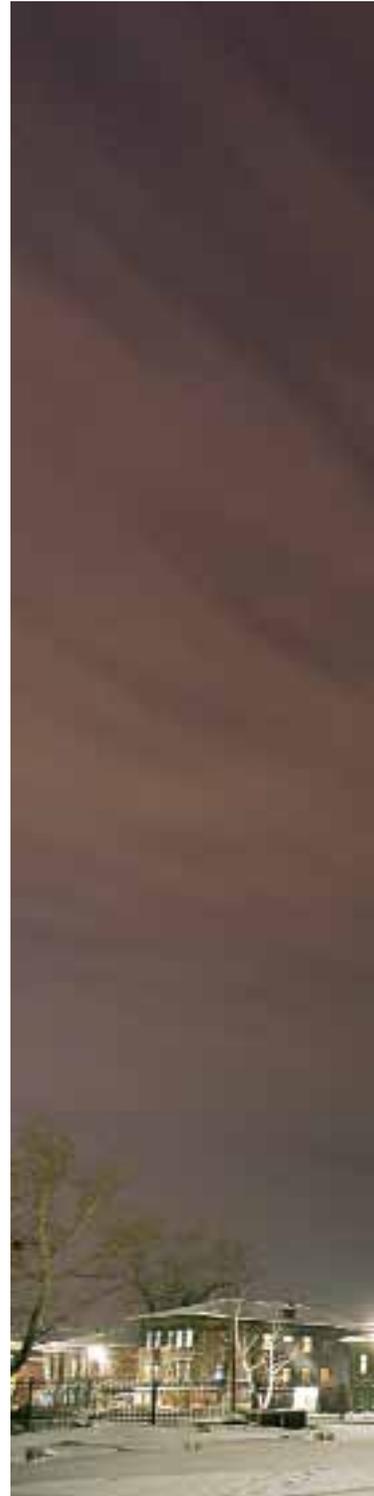
**There are different kinds of gifts**, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone, it is the same God at work. (1Cor 12:4-6)

We are created for the glory of God. The glory of God is, paradoxically, the source of our own glory and our own joy. If I had to express my experience of the two years of regency in Siberia it would be: overjoyed for the glory of God.

I was studying in Krakow and preparing for my final philosophy exams when my Regional Superior, Father Anthony Corcoran, SJ, revealed my next assignment. He told me that the Jesuits would be taking responsibility for a parish and school in the city of Tomsk in Siberia, and that he had decided to send me there to assist the pastor in the parish and to teach informational sciences at the school. In that moment I was very pleased with my new assignment - I had been to the city before and I had several friends there. Nevertheless, I did not imagine at that time what God had prepared for me.

My desire is to share with you my experience of regency in Tomsk and to show you the city where I spent two happy years between philosophy and theology studies.

# Siberia





*We are created for the glory of God. The glory of God is, paradoxically, the source of our own glory and our own joy.*



I want to bring Tomsk, as it was revealed to me, closer to you.

When someone who has never been to Russia hears that I was living in Siberia, they first imagine bitter cold and tundra. The second thing that usually comes to mind is a terrible history of labour camps and exiles. Others think of it as an exotic vast nothingness where only polar bears make their home.

Once, a group of Polish priests spent a summer with us in Tomsk. Like most people preparing to go to Siberia, they filled their suitcases with down jackets, winter hats, fleece sweaters and heavy boots. To their surprise, it was 40°C (104°F) without even an ounce of rain, let alone snow. There were no polar bears either!

Siberia is a place of surprises. Many of the myths and mysteries about this exotic landscape are debunked within moments of arriving.

Of course, sometimes it *is* cold in Siberia. In winter, it can be -35°C (-31°F), but such days can be counted on one hand. People learn to live with it, they dress warmer, put enough fuel in their cars when traveling, and learn to ignore the snow and ice. After living through these frigid winters for some time people eventually begin to enjoy it! Though the sun only appears for a couple hours a day and it is easy to get lost in a snowdrift, winters in Tomsk are magical. Every winter Tomsk holds the International Ice Sculpture Festival and the creations are truly breath-taking.

Yet, the best season in this part of the world is autumn. The taiga dresses up with unbelievable colours when Siberia ignites with shades of red, yellow, orange, green

## Tomsk - The City of Friends

*The city has a population of 570,000 with 10 universities, multiple research institutes, specialized economic institutes, and business incubators.*

and brown. It is impossible to convey all this beauty in words. There is even a legend that Alexander I, the Tsar of Russia, faked his own death to spend the rest of his life in the beautiful environs of Tomsk. It is difficult to resist its enchantment, especially when the wildflowers make their debut.

Tomsk is also known as a city of students. The city has a population of 570,000 with 10 universities, multiple research institutes, specialized economic institutes, and business incubators. According to the Charter of Tomsk, scientific and educational pursuits are at the heart of the city. Scientists who work in these universities and institutes regularly appear on mass media with new scientific discoveries and developments, to

be implemented all over the world.

Universities in Tomsk have students from all different countries – the US, Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, Poland, Germany, Britain, Australia, the Philippines, China, Korea, Vietnam, Algeria and Turkey. Foreign students often come to study the Russian language and to get acquainted with a real, non-capital city of Russia. This unique environment and amazing blend of cultures is what earned Tomsk the nickname, “The Athens of Siberia”.

Because the Trans-Siberian Railway never quite made it to Tomsk at the beginning of the 20th Century, the city was limited in its ability to participate in the technical and economic project of the Soviet Union. This, in the end, has been a blessing when considering the “Siberian Baroque” architecture. Large wooden long houses, churches, and government buildings that look as if they sprung straight from the earth speckle the city with their natural beauty giving it a majestic look and feel. Novosibirsk, located nearby, lost most of



these structures, which were replaced with the socialist realism of the time - large cubic menacing buildings and statues that sometimes frighten tourists.

Tomsk is an ecumenical and politically open city. It is a land of historical exiles and it now enjoys the plurality that comes with that part of its identity. Many families have difficult and uneasy histories. Many of their relatives disappeared; were executed; or were sent to labour camps. Still there is a generosity and an openness that cannot be matched. Here you can meet people from all over the political and religious spectrum. Orthodox, Catholics, Lutherans, Jews, Buddhists, and Muslims all occupy and thrive in this part of the world.

In 1806, a royal decree from the Tsar allowed a Catholic priest to lead the Catholic community in Tomsk. That priest was Father Marcellus Kaminski, SJ. This decree also marked the beginning of the Roman Catholic parish, Intercession of the Theotokos, Queen of the Holy Rosary. The church was built in 1833 and Catho-

lic and Orthodox donated money for the construction of the building. During the time of the Soviet Union the building was used by Soviet authorities as a warehouse and for various secular needs. When the Church was given back to the Catholic community, Bishop Joseph Wert, SJ reconsecrated the parish and began a new era of Catholic ministry in Tomsk. In 2014, the parish was again entrusted to the Society of Jesus.

Today, the parish is vibrant with people of all ages and many nations actively participating in the life of the Church. The beautiful polyphony of the choir and the welcoming atmosphere make it a place that many call home. In addition to the Jesuits,

# Tomsk



RUSSIA

## Tomsk - The City of Friends

two groups of religious sisters use the parish as a basis for their ministry, namely the Missionaries of Charity and the Servants of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

The parish provides retreats and summer camps in collaboration with local priests, religious and volunteers from different parishes and different countries. The parish boundaries cover a huge swath of land, 317,000 sq.km. That is larger than the country of Poland or Italy.

Since 1993, the Church has run a K-12 school through the parish. In 2014, the



# Taiga



*The parish is vibrant with people of all ages and many nations actively participating in the life of the Church.*

school was entrusted to the Jesuits when they returned to the city. The parish community and school, though small, has received great signs of God's favour through the great effort of active parishioners, the Jesuit community, and friends from all over the world. This distant city in Siberia even now has a reputation as a pilgrimage site for Jesuits, volunteers, and others from all around the world.

There are a few central graces of my two years spent in Tomsk. The first is the joy

and consolation of working with the parish choir. It was difficult work filled with long rehearsals, translating and adapting musical scores into Russian, and thrilling, yet sometimes painful, searches for the true meaning behind the music. It would all come together every Sunday at Mass in a brilliant flourish of musical colour and grace that is only found through God's grace and real dedication.

The second grace that I would point to would be the joy of working with the youth and young adult communities. Our relationships were real, alive, and present, and though things were sometimes difficult and there were disagreements, we all came together in our common aspiration to support the parish and to glorify God. This is what I will remember most about my time in Tomsk, being joined together by an invisible and mysterious rope, crossing, and knotting between the relationships we shared. This rope draws us closer to one another so that when we finally do reach our Lord in Heaven we can sing praises as a united force, a true community of friends!

My work as a teacher was not always easy, but it was through the help and guidance of my co-workers that I began to feel more comfortable in the classroom. It was a privilege to learn and grow as a person in this environment. To learn true patience and understanding with myself and others was something I've prayed for all my life, eventually I realized that this experience was God's answer. It felt like I was really becoming a contemplative in action. Just like everything I achieved in these two years, it was all despite my own imperfection. It had to be, in the end, a gift from God.

The people of Tomsk will always be in my heart. We shared many sunny and cloudy (and frigid) days, and I know that I was able to make true lasting friendships. It was an experience of true humanity in all its shapes and sizes and, in its own modest way, it resembled the Kingdom of God - a small kingdom, yet mighty, shared and beloved, in the middle of Siberia. Ours is a Kingdom of living stones. The Church here is not so much represented in massive monolithic structures and statues; it is found where it should be, in the people. Tomsk has become my second motherland, a city of friends that will always remain in my heart.



Jesuit and Partners come to the Aid of Deported Migrants

## Faith on the Border

“We’re there to remind them that they have a dignity that’s God-given. They matter to us and they matter to God...”

William Bole

**For Jesuit Father Sean Carroll**, who ministers along the United States-Mexico border, debates over immigration policy in the United States are not just political, they are personal.

Fr. Carroll is executive director of the Kino Border Initiative, an immigrant aid organization co-sponsored by six U.S. and Mexican church groups including the Jesuits. At Kino’s facilities in Nogales, Mexico, deported immigrants find refuge and friendship. They are served warm meals in the *comedor*, or dining room, and may find shelter in nearby apartments rented by Kino for deportees.

Since its founding in 2009, the Kino Border Initiative has been serving and advocating for immigrants and otherwise providing “a humanizing presence on the border,” Fr. Carroll explained. That mission became more challenging in the wake of President Trump’s January 2017 executive orders related to immigration.

“We’re there to remind them that they have a dignity that’s God-given. They matter to us and they matter to God,” said the priest, a Stanford University graduate and member of the California Province of the Society of Jesus.

Kino is a binational collaboration: founding partners include the California Province, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA, the

Diocese of Tucson, the Mexican Province of the Society of Jesus, the Mexican-based Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, and the Diocese of Nogales in the Mexican state of Sonora. With 17 staff members and droves of volunteers, in 2016 the organization served around 47,000 meals and provided other hands-on assistance to approximately 8,500 migrants. Most recipients have been deported after either living in the U.S. or trying to enter the country without papers.

The pastoral message of God-given dignity comes across in both tangible and less tangible ways.

“We look them in the eye. We listen to them. We pray with them. When they leave, they’re standing a little stronger. They’re a little more hopeful,” Fr. Carroll said, referring to migrants in a range of situations including those seeking help accessing the asylum process. “We can’t resolve every situation, but we could remind them that they’re God’s sons and daughters.”

Humanizing the border has never been easy. It was hardly so in the late 1600s when the organization’s namesake, Eusebio Francisco Kino — an Italian Jesuit explorer and astronomer — came to that region as a missionary and wound up defending the rights of persecuted indigenous people. In recent times, the task



# Kino Border



was far from simple even in the somewhat friendly political climate of the Obama administration. During those years, a record 2.5 million people were deported.

In 2015, the organization drew media interest with a report titled “Our Values on the Line: Migrant Abuse and Family Separation at the Border,” which found that more than a third of detained migrants experienced some type of abuse or mistreatment at the hands of U.S. border agents. These included theft, physical and verbal abuse, and inhumane detention conditions, according to the study.

During the past two years, Kino has filed dozens of complaints on behalf of Central American asylum seekers who say they were deported without being offered an asylum hearing—an apparent violation of U.S. and international law. Those migrants are among an increasing number who have fled gang warfare and other violence in Central America.

While the Obama administration focused its enforcement on the most serious offenders, his successor is by all accounts casting a wider net.

Referring to vulnerable migrants, a January 2017 statement by Kino said the Trump executive orders “will only make their situation worse” in part by dramatically boosting the number of border patrol agents and giving the agents far wider latitude in deciding who gets deported.

With these new challenges, Kino is expanding its services to include, for example, legal aid for those trying to navigate the asylum process. There is also an effort afoot to purchase property in Nogales that would allow Kino to shelter more migrants

## Faith on the Border

*We look them in the eye. We listen to them. We pray with them. When they leave, they're standing a little stronger. They're a little more hopeful.*

when they are deported. In addition, the organization is seeking to get more parishes, schools, and other institutions involved in migration issues.

Kino already has a lively network of friends and activists far beyond the border. In 2016, for instance, 63 groups traveled to Nogales for immersion trips that typically last for days and bring the visitors into the *comedor* to serve and converse with migrants.



Often the itinerary also includes walks into the desert where migrants journey on foot; visits to a Tucson courthouse where migrants are prosecuted; and worship with a community of ranchers in rural southern Arizona.

Most of the groups are from Jesuit schools (including high schools, colleges, and universities) as well as from parishes around the country.

Asked about the many who argue that undocumented immigrants have broken the law and should be punished, Fr. Carroll responded by turning the argument on its head. “The law is breaking them,” he said, referring to family separation, deportation back to life-threatening situations, and other dire results of harsh immigration-law enforcement. “The assumption is that if it’s the law, it must be just. But it isn’t.”

Much help is given, but those ministering on the border say the migrants give and teach them even more.

“They’ve have taught me a lot about resilience, love and sacrifice, trusting in God,” said Hung Nguyen, S.J., a member of the Chicago-Detroit Province who worked at Kino from August 2015 until June 2016. Like many other Jesuits in formation, he chose border ministry as one (quite literal) way of carrying out the Jesuit mission to stand with people on the periphery and borders of society.

“I never really left the border,” said Thomas Flowers, S.J., another Jesuit in training who served with Kino. “I carry the suffering and the hope and the amazing goodness of those people with me in all that I do.”

# Nogales

# An apostolic region on the frontier of Colombia and Venezuela (RAIF)

Our mission: to establish firmly a social subject transcending geographical frontiers and capable of sustaining a vibrant regional project aimed at overcoming poverty.

Dizzi Perales, S.J.

Translated by Joseph Munitiz, S.J.



Left: Jesuits Arturo Peraza (VEN), Manuel Zapata (VEN), Eduardo Uribe (COL), Libardo Valderrama (COL), Francisco de Roux (COL), Wilfredo González (VEN), Arturo Sosa (VEN), Gilberto Alejandro Rojas (COL) and Jesús Rodríguez (VEN) attend an Interprovincial Apostolic meeting on the Venezuelan-Colombian border in 2013.

**The frontier that separates** Colombia and Venezuela is remarkable for the richness of its human interaction. Family links and commercial interaction have built up a well-established historical and cultural tradition. Life comes and goes constantly across the frontier, encouraging communities and peoples to develop, even if at times political considerations intervene giving priority to territorial defence and favouring the economic status of each nation. However, human beings predate territorial limits and divisions, and over the years a network of traditions, roots, and ways of dealing with one another has been created.

The Jesuits first came to the Venezuelan *Alto Apure* district in the year 1975 when the parish of *Nuestra Señora del Carmen* was founded in Guasualito. Three years later, they arrived in the Colombian territory of Cú-

cuta, Norte de Santander, to take over the running of the diocesan Seminary of San José, and both the retreat house, *Casa de Oración Los Cujies*, and the Episcopal Vicariate for religious houses (male and female) in the diocese as well. They then began to found parishes, colleges, a university, schools run by *Fe y Alegría*, radio stations and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). Over time, some of these enterprises have had to close, but others are still functioning. What is important is that the Jesuits continue their mission while

# Los Cujies

## An apostolic region on the frontier of Colombia and Venezuela (RAIF)

*The frontier between Colombia and Venezuela has always been important for its role in the process of Latin American integration.*

making it new.

Several decades later, Jesuits and lay colleagues began to ask themselves if it would be possible to collaborate on an inter-provincial project aimed at building up a joint apostolic region. They were responding to an invitation emanating from the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation to go out to the apostolic frontiers of today's world. Moreover the Conference of Latin American Provincials (CPAL) had established a system of priorities within a Joint Apostolic Project. The two Provincials, Francisco de Roux for Colombia and Arturo

Peraza for Venezuela, set the process going by appointing Fr Arturo Sosa to be the main animator: the plan being to renew the mission, and face up to the challenges confronting the Church and our brothers there. There started a process of dialogue and discernment in which we felt confirmed in a new calling from God: we had to build bridges between ourselves, to envisage a common horizon, to discover new ways of working, of organizing ourselves, of creating a network of networks. We were invited to a conversion of mind and heart, a going out of ourselves, to see beyond our own works and to unite in a combined undertaking. This involved rediscovering that we share the same mission and seeing that this goes beyond our specific daily tasks. God never ceases to call us to discern what is our answer to his invitation. He was asking us to improve the way we carry out our evangelizing mission in this area with its twin

# Fe y Alegría



nationalities.

The process was a long one. Communities and works began to establish links. A number of assemblies were held, and an awareness deepened of what really lay ahead. Each side brought its own riches, hopes and pains, its dreams and preoccupations.

On 7 March 2012, after a series of inter-provincial meetings, the Provincials signed, in Caracas, Venezuela, a decree that set up the Inter-provincial Apostolic Region on the frontier of Colombia and Venezuela (RAIF). The process then began to work out a strategic plan that would enable us to fulfil our mission: how to establish firmly a social subject transcending geographical frontiers and capable of sustaining a vibrant regional project aimed at overcoming poverty.

The frontier between Colombia and Venezuela has always been important for its role in the process of Latin American integration. However, it has also been the scene of tension, political, economic and social, due to very diverse factors and to the uncontrolled influence of central governments. As an area of great natural wealth, it has, however, lacked strong political organization with inadequate local popular controls and an absence of state representatives. To make matters worse, the



mafia, both from Colombia and from Venezuela, are present and take control over society, bringing with them international criminal activity. Paramilitary groups also operate there bringing with them a history of violence, assassinations, kidnappings and extortion. The usual scenario involves corruption, where money and arms predominate, and where the



*The frontier has also been the scene of tension, political, economic and social, due to very diverse factors and to the uncontrolled influence of central governments.*

## An apostolic region on the frontier of Colombia and Venezuela (RAIF)

*In the various sectors - education, cultural activities, means of communication, defence measures, youth work, economic organization, research - cross-frontier projects were set up to prepare minds and hearts for the apostolic region.*

value of honest work is forgotten and human rights are no longer upheld. Add to all this the existence of important sources of energy and an immense biodiversity, but alongside them, a failure to reach international agreements that would ensure the safety of this shared environment.

RAIF has selected those works of the Society of Jesus which involve caring for parishes, schools and social works in the *departamentos* (administrative areas) belonging to Colombia - Arauca, Boyacá and Norte de Santander - which run alongside those of Venezuela - Táchira, Apure and Zulia.

At present, RAIF in the Venezuela section is responsible for six colleges run by *Fe y Alegría*, four radio stations of *Fe y Alegría*, the radio institute of *Fe y Alegría*, centres for technical training, JRS-Venezuela, a youth

movement called *Huellas* ("Footprints"), the parish of *San Camilo de Lelis* in El Nula, another parish, *San Simón y San Judas*, in Ciudad Sucre, the Catholic University in Táchira and the *Centro Gumilla*. In the Colombia portion, RAIF runs the institute known as the *Escuela de Paz y Convivencia Ciudadana* (School of Peace and Citizenship) that is part of the Centre for Research and Popular Education (*CINEP = Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular*), in addition to the Javeriana University, JRS-Colombia, and *Fe y Alegría* in Norte de Santander. All of these works are in touch with the local Church and the dioceses.

In order to draw up the strategic plan the Provincials appointed a coordinating team, which involved Jesuits from both Provinces, whose task was to initiate and oversee the process of designing and launching this Apostolic Region. The challenge the team met from the start and which continues, was how to make the most of the wealth of inter-relations, historical and cultural, to be found bridging the frontier. Only then could be established a solid foundation for the integration of the human, social and political spheres. The frontier had to be seen as something of value be-



cause of the people involved at both the local and the national levels. An honest picture was needed of a population that was productive and capable of carrying on commercial transactions while maintaining relations in other social and cultural areas. Different personalities needed to be able to work with one another in promoting the social, economic, political and cultural well-being of all in this frontier region. People needed to be encouraged to reflect together on how to strengthen this social entity in the practice of democracy. And finally, in the different works that operated here and in all their organizations, a realization had to be implanted in this apostolic region that they had something in common: they were all works “at the frontier.”

In the various sectors - education, cultural activities, means of communication, defence measures, youth work, economic organization, research - cross-frontier projects were set up to prepare minds and hearts for the apostolic region. Thus in the education sector a course on frontier questions was set up in the schools and colleges; volunteer teachers were recruited to improve education; study days were devoted to the frontier; meetings

of those involved in communication took place; and communal debate was encouraged. In the cultural sector, there was the “caravan” aimed at fomenting hospitality on the frontier; festivals such as *Conéctate y Convive con la Frontera* (“Be connected and Share the life of the Frontier”); also art workshops aimed at developing communities. Other projects focused on the peace process: study days on justice and peace; camps to serve communities; socio-political formation; work experiments for young people; research into the causes that produce violence and terrorism.

We continue to move forward buoyed up with hope, trusting that God will continue to inspire, unite and strengthen us so that we may improve our response to the mission we have been given.

# Huellas



# Lok Manch: People's Platform for Grassroots Leadership

Lok Manch envisions India as an egalitarian, just, inclusive, democratic, and secular nation. Its mission is to create a strong national platform for ensuring people's improved access to government schemes, and improving the quality of policies and their proper implementation.

Elango Arulanandam, S.J.

**India is the largest democracy in the world**, but only a few rule the roost. The rich and powerful use their influence to sway decisions and policies of the government in their favour, keeping the majority poor and without even the basic amenities like food, shelter and clothing. Government schemes and plans for the welfare of the people somehow remain mere pipedreams for illiterate villagers. The governments, both central and state, enact legislation and draw up schemes for the benefit of the people, but they seem to lack the will to ensure their proper implementation. They seem incapable or unwilling to develop, empower, and enrich the rural poor that constitute most of our population.

It was to deal with this fractured social delivery system that the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (JCSA), assisted by Jesuits in Social Action (JESA) and the Jesuit managed Indian Social Institutes of Delhi and

Bengaluru, launched a programme under the banner of Lok Manch (People's Platform in Gujarati) on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015, after several months of preparation. At present, the National Secretariat headed by the JESA Secretary directs Lok Manch. It is a people's movement for the development of leadership among *dalits*, *adivasis*, women, minorities, urban as well as rural poor, and other marginalized communities of various regions, religions, and cultures.

Lok Manch works on the principle of collaboration with like-minded organizations, persons, or agencies. This network consists of a hundred likeminded organizations covering 12 states of India. What makes it special is that people have owned it. "Lok Manch is a platform for marginalized people like us to come together to claim our rights, to fight for our rights, to live with dignity," observes 27 year-old Kanchan



# Dalits

Devi, a beneficiary of the National Food Security Act (NFSA). She comes from the Musahar community, one of the most deprived communities in Bihar. She has no land or livestock, nor does she have any income other than what she gets as a manual daily worker.

Lok Manch envisions India as an egalitarian, just, inclusive, democratic, and secular nation. Its mission is to create a strong national platform for ensuring people's improved access to government schemes, and improving the quality of policies and their proper implementation. This mission is carried out by discovering and training local leaders who will then lobby for the necessary changes in government legal provisions and social schemes. The leaders lobby for better access for impoverished households to entitlement schemes like the National Food Security Act (NFSA), Schedule Caste Sub Plan (SCSP), Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) and other Governments Schemes. These schemes are used as resources and tools to enlighten and empower the grassroots leaders.

The guiding core values of Lok Manch are liberty, justice, equality, fraternity, love, peace, commitment, gender justice, credibility, forgiveness, and excellence. These become operational under the principles of decentralization, participative decision making, transparent accountability, teamwork, and shared responsibility.

The entire country is divided into four zones, each consisting of 23 units, each unit having four organizations. Out of 100 organizations that act in partnership, 44 are Jesuit run. Each unit reaches out to about 12,000 households, in about 80 villages, with approximately 160 community leaders, and around 80 monitoring persons who can take up their issues. Al-



together, 5,520 such leaders will be empowered by the end of three years. They are chosen from among their own communities by the communities themselves, and they are trained to respond to the issues of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Their praxis is "action-reflection-action" that was articulated by Paulo Freire in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

A salient feature of Lok Manch is its core team. It functions as an advisory body to the national secretariat, which monitors the process to ensure that the Lok Manch goals are being met. The core team members liaise between zone, state and regional level partners and the Lok Manch National Secretariat headed by Ruby Mary and Fr. Stanny Jebamalai, SJ, the JESA coordinator.

The overarching theme of the 36th General Con-



*Above: Fr. Ed Fassett, Secretary for Collaboration (Rome) at a workshop at Lok Manch. Far left: A community leader interacts with people in Tamilnadu. Center: Interaction with school children at midday meal. Left: Community leaders' training in Jharkhand.*

## Lok Manch: People's Platform for Grassroots Leadership

gregation was “Rowing into the deep”. It instilled in the members of the congregation a strong desire to be audacious. Father General Arturo Sosa, SJ, reflecting on this put it well, when he said, “Our audacity can go even further and seek not only the improbable, but the impossible, because nothing is impossible with God. Could we then dream of things that never were? And I say, ‘Why not?’”

With this audacity of faith, we are called to ‘Row out into the deep water’ (Lk 5:4)”. Fr Edward S. Fasset, SJ, Father General’s Secretary for Collaboration,

at the end of the Second National Workshop of the Lok Manch, 23-25 November 2016, at Pune – Maharashtra, went to the extent of saying, that the Lok Manch has been marching much ahead of General Congregation 36 in “discernment, collaboration, and networking”.

Lok Manch, through its organization continues to, “intervene in policies and respond to social issues” affirms Fr. Denzil Fernandes, Director of the Indian Social Institute, Delhi. He goes on to add that it conscientizes people on communalism, caste-discriminations, and other negativities. Kanchan Devi joins thousands of the voiceless to highlight how building an egalitarian, just, inclusive, democratic, and secular society in India is possible when there is a collective effort as is through Lok Manch. Thus, Lok Manch is true to its motto: “together we make a difference!” Today, Lok Manch covers countless households and enables them to keep from starvation. This, according to Fr George Pattery, SJ, the President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, is the “unfinished task of the freedom struggle.”

Thanks to Lok Manch, people are organized to represent their concerns and grievances to their elected representatives and to government bureaucracy. The dream of Lok Manch is to translate into a national movement with people’s leadership being exerted from the bottom of the pyramid. As the leadership of Lok Manch will be taken up by the people, the Jesuits and other collaborators will play accompaniment and complementary roles as days go by and be willing to take orders from the leaders! Through Lok Manch, *gram sabhas* (village assemblies) are getting activated and strengthened so as to work and to rebuild a new home based on human values. Lok Manch has shown Jesuits and others a new way of engaging in social action in the country and spreading the theme of GC 36.

For more details and reports: [www.hamaralokmanch.net](http://www.hamaralokmanch.net)



Top: People travelling to a mass awareness meeting in Chattishgarh.

Above: Organize, Educate and Agitate (Gram Sabha- Odisha).

# Adivasi

## All is from God...

They were priests, both learned and poor. For the First Companions, life and mission, rooted in a discerning community, were profoundly inter-related. We Jesuits today are called to live in the same way, as priests, brothers, and those in formation who all share the same mission. As we reflect and pray on each of these elements, we do so knowing the intimate unity of mission, life, and discerning community, all afire with the love of Christ. (GC36, D.1., n.5)



## A Service of Joy

Working at the margins and true to the inspiration of St. Ignatius, the Eastern Africa Province continuously endeavors to bring hope and service to the people of God living and working at the margins of society.

Diana Karua

*Communications Coordinator, Jesuits Eastern Africa*

**The Jesuit Eastern Africa Province (AOR)** was established in 1986 and it currently consists of 187 ascribed Jesuits from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Although the Province is only 31 years since its establishment, the impact of its work is felt throughout Eastern Africa especially in the areas of education, social justice, communication, Ignatian spirituality and pastoral ministry. Education and Social Justice are the two overriding priorities of the AOR Province.

Jesuit education in the AOR Province and other parts of Africa is vital because it is holistic and it integrates elements of other apostolates such as Ignatian Spirituality, peace, justice and reconciliation, and pastoral ministry. The Province has 13 educational institutions: four primary schools, six secondary schools and three adult education programs. Our parishes in Tanzania also offer basic education programs to children and adults within their locality. Our teachers are well qualified and trained in Ignatian Pedagogy. Consequently, students in our schools are more aware of the environment around them and have concern for the poor.

In Kenya, St. Joseph the Worker Parish serves more than 40,000 Catholics located in the marginalized area of Kangemi. Here, the province runs St. Joseph Techni-

cal Secondary School, St. Joseph Dispensary, the Dolly Craft centre which tailor liturgical and religious vestments, the Upendo Orphans and Vulnerable Care program which supports the education of orphans and vulnerable children, and Uzima outreach program which aims at training women, affected or infected with HIV/AIDS, in self-reliant projects.

Kenya is also home to Mwangaza Jesuit Centre, a retreat centre located in Karen, and St. Aloysius Gonzaga High School, which mainly caters for the education of students who have lost either one or both parents to AIDS. St. Aloysius is located just outside Kibera slum.

St. John the Baptist Parish in Luhanga, Dar es Salaam runs a kindergarten, a primary school and an adult secondary school



# Gonzaga

education program aimed at giving the students a chance to join Advanced level studies. Dar es Salaam is also home to Loyola High School and Gonzaga Preparatory and Primary School.

Blessed Maria Ledochowska Parish in Dodoma, Tanzania, runs a youth centre, which provides vocational training in basic computer skills and tailoring. The parish also has a library, which is accessible to the local community. In collaboration with St. Gemma and Ivrea Sisters, the Jesuits in Dodoma run St. Ignatius Preparatory and Primary School and St. Peter Claver High School respectively.

St. Francis Xavier Parish in Mwanza, Tanzania, aside from normal parish activities, runs Nyashana Centre, which has a kindergarten and provides vocational skills training, especially to young women, in cooking and tailoring amongst other activities.

In Uganda, the AOR Province runs Ocer Campion Jesuit College located in Gulu town, Northern Uganda. Ocer Campion, established in 2010, aims to provide access to quality affordable education for disadvantaged children.

Working at the margins and true to the inspiration of St. Ignatius, the AOR Province continuously endeavors to bring hope and service to the people of God living and working at the margins of society such as South Sudan. To this end, Jesuits from



*Above: Father General Arturo Sosa distributes communion at Mwangaza Jesuit Center.  
Below: Pupils at St Ignatius Preparatory School in Dodoma, Tanzania.*

different parts of the world have ventured into South Sudan to bring God's word and attend to the mission of the Society of Jesus. Today, the AOR Province Jesuits continue to work in South Sudan, collaborating with other congregations, organizations and well-wishers to provide quality education, advocate for peace and justice and promote reconciliation, and spiritual accompaniment.

Loyola Secondary School, in Wau, South Sudan, was established in 1982 as the first Jesuit apostolate in the then Sudan. Due to the recurrent inter-community clashes, the school is continuously at risk of closure. For instance, the July-September 2016 clashes saw hundreds of students displaced some seeking refuge in the UN camps, while others moved to other towns



## A Service of Joy

*Below: Schoolchildren at Upendo Unit Center.*

*Bottom: Students of Ocer Champion Jesuit College in Gulu, Uganda, studying in the library.*

in search of safety. The Jesuit community at the school also faces numerous risks and challenges including insecurity and inadequate financial and material resources. Many students barely get a meal at home. To help them concentrate on studies, the school runs a feeding program that provides lunch to all the 540 students (256 girls and 284 boys).

Despite these challenges, strategic efforts are being put into peace and reconciliation as well as dialogue amongst the students and local community. The school also trains students to be self-reliant and to be conscious of the environment. A farm project was recently initiated to subsidize the feeding program and as a way of giv-

ing practical agricultural skills to the students. Amidst these challenges, the school has managed to maintain the top position of best performing school in South Sudan and even produce the best performing student countrywide. With support from well-wishers, a few scholarships for university studies are given on merit to needy students.

In Rumbek, South Sudan, the AOR Province runs St. Peter Claver Ecological Training Centre and collaborates with local clergy in pastoral services. The Centre provides vocational training skills to young adults in the areas of basic computer skills, electrical and solar installations, basic construction and water and sanitation. At least 100 young adults are trained each academic year, ready to work with the local non-governmental organizations, while others set up their own businesses.

Rumbek is also home to the Multi-educational and Agriculture Jesuit Institute of South Sudan (MAJIS), located in Akol Jal village. Established in 2010, MAJIS provides short-term courses in animal husbandry and modern agricultural practices to the largely pastoralist community, in effort to improve food security and to make the local community more self-reliant.

In Cueibet, the AOR Province in collaboration with the Diocese of Rumbek opened Mazzolari Teachers College in July 2016. Although Mazzolari is located amidst warring clans, there is hope in its growth; already 20 students (18 males, 2 females) have enrolled for the courses. In order for the College to be fully functional, more infrastructure such as classrooms, laboratories, library, staff room, and dormitories have to be constructed. The College envisions a yearly intake of at least 100 students once the necessary structures are in place.

In Ethiopia, the AOR Province runs Abay Mado Catholic Academy in Bahir Dar City. The school, established in

# Ocer Champion



2012, currently has 546 pupils (256 girls, 290 boys). Bahir Dar City is where the first Jesuit missionaries worked in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Ethiopia is also home to Galilee Centre, which was established in 1975 at Debre Zeit, to offer Ignatian retreats. In Addis Ababa, the Province runs Pedro Páez Centre since 2012. The Centre works to promote social justice and social development in collaboration with other organizations and individuals.

Social justice is a significant apostolic work given the sensitive political and socio-economic challenges faced by some of the countries that constitute the province. Despite these challenges, the AOR Province continues to be committed to social justice in war torn areas and at the margins of society. We are indeed encouraged by the words of Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, Superior General, during the final thanksgiving Mass of General Congregation 36, “Our discernment leads us to see the world through the eyes of the poor and to work with them so that true life may grow. It invites us to go to the margins to search for an understanding, about how to address globally the entirety of the crisis that prevents minimum living conditions for the majority of humanity and threatens life on the planet Earth, in order to open a space for the Good News”.

The Jesuit Hakimani Centre works to promote the study and action on issues linking faith and justice in the AOR Province. Established in 2001, Hakimani seeks strategic alliances and networks with institutions such as Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Catholic Parishes and schools in order to facilitate reconciliation and promote objective conversations for peace especially in war torn regions. Hakimani engages in producing radio and television drama programs aimed at advocating peace and justice. Furthermore, the centre runs the ‘Think Positive Alternatives Exist’ program, which empowers young peo-



ple to develop their creativity and to be innovative entrepreneurs.

Radio Kwizera, in Ngara Tanzania, is a community radio station founded in 1995 by JRS. Currently under the management of the AOR Province, it produces programs that foster a culture of peace, reconciliation, security and development in order to ensure communities and cultures peacefully co-exist in the same location. It has a wide reach of approximately 8 million people in North-Western Tanzania, Eastern Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

*Top: Students of Ocer Campion Jesuit College during a laboratory lesson.  
Middle: Jesuit collaborators' workshop.  
Above: Brother Elias Mokua, Director of Jesuit Hakimani Center at a press conference on Election Preparedness in Kenya*

# So are they still sending you to Brussels?

Would it not be something of an ironic joke to place an Englishman with the Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC), an organisation whose mission is to promote “vision and values for Europe”?

Henry Longbottom, S.J.

**The announcement in June 2016** of the United Kingdom’s referendum result regarding its future membership of the European Union sent shockwaves in many directions. Occurring a few months before the start of my regency in Brussels, the “Brexit” vote presented me with a very particular challenge. It was understandable that people around me wondered whether my superiors might now have second thoughts about sending me to the very heart of a political institution that 52% of my compatriots had expressed a desire to leave. Would it not be something of an ironic joke to place an Englishman with the Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC), an organisation whose mission is to promote “vision and values for Europe”?

I wondered too. I imagined my situation to be analogous to Ignatius and the first companions stranded in Venice. Just as their hopes of sailing to the Holy Land were dashed by the outbreak of a war with the Turks, the spectre of a Brexit thwarted my hopes of contributing to the building-up of a Christian presence within the European project. Perhaps Brussels would be my “Venice”. It would be a time in which, like those early Jesuits, I could take stock, exercise pastoral ministry, and ready myself for mission elsewhere.

Having arrived however, there has been a subtle change in my understanding of

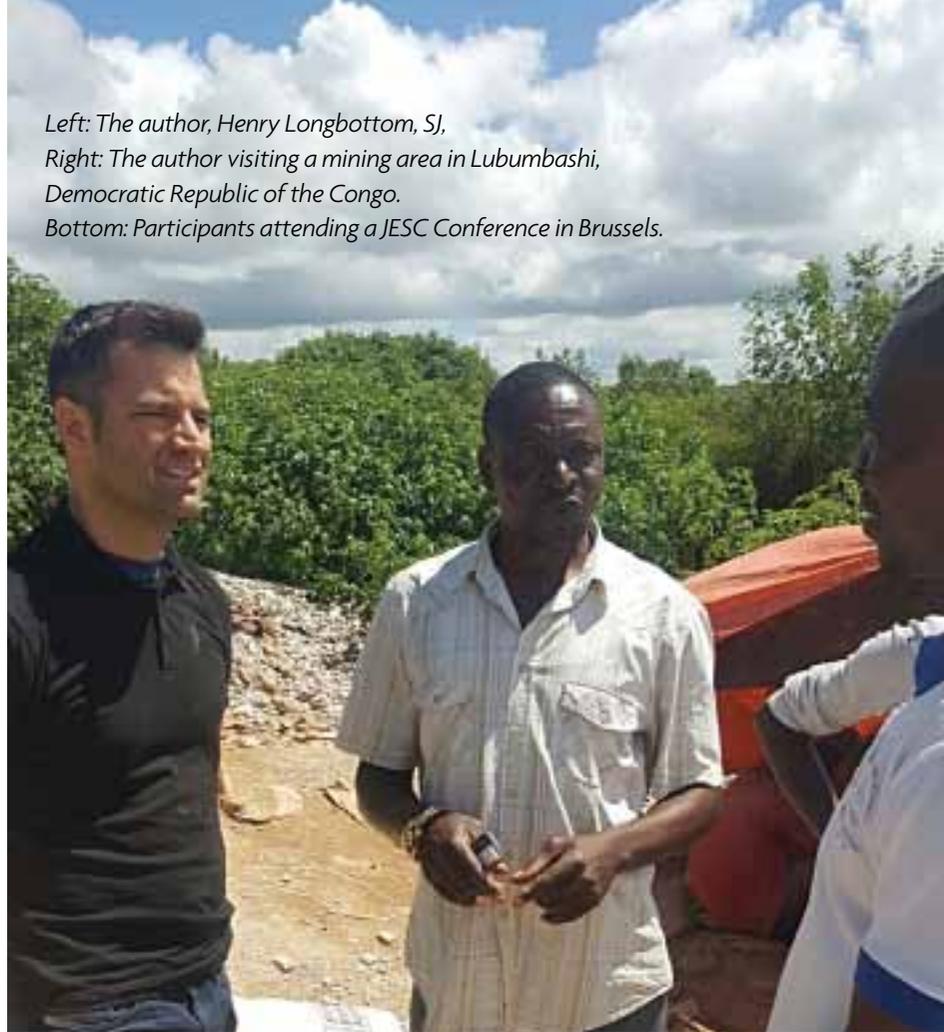
the possible role for an English Jesuit (or any Jesuit for that matter) in Brussels. As I experience my own ministries develop, I increasingly see the city as exactly the sort of “frontier” that Jesuit Congregations and Pope Francis repeatedly call us to go to. Brussels is a frontier because it currently sits on a fault line of how Europe seeks to define itself.

Facing existential crisis, the future of the European project hangs in the balance. Critical questions regarding Europe’s future abound. Do European countries wish to adopt “open” or “closed” attitudes when determining policies affecting the economy, refugees, security or the environment? What should be the response to the rise of populist politics and the ever-increasing economic disparities within and between European nations? Sadly, debates about these questions are characterised by polarisation, whether political, generational, or national.

As Jesuits, we know that where there are frontiers, there is a concomitant need for reconciliation. Through its work with political institutions, NGOs, faith groups, schools and individuals, the Brussels-based Conference of European Provincials (of which JESC is a work) attempts to facilitate such reconciliation. To use the language of General Congregation 36, we try to create spaces for reconciliation between



*Left: The author, Henry Longbottom, SJ,  
Right: The author visiting a mining area in Lubumbashi,  
Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
Bottom: Participants attending a JESC Conference in Brussels.*



## So are they still sending you to Brussels?



Above: Henry Longbottom at CEPAS, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

humanity. In the process, we hope to open up horizons for a further reconciliation with God and creation.

So what particular form does my own contribution to reconciliation at this “European frontier” take? As our director is fond of saying “at JESC we do many things.” The beating heart of JESC’s mission is its desire to provide competent and honest analysis of social realities in order to advocate for justice in European policy and political structures. We do so by engaging with the Christian faith, with particular reference to the rich tradition of Catholic Social thinking. In our outlook and agenda, we try to remain close to the poor.

Concretely JESC’s work broadly falls into two parts. Firstly, we engage in European affairs. This is JESC in its “Jesuit embassy to the EU” mode of existence. Through

interaction with groups and individuals, we seek to connect to the life of the European Council, Parliament and Commission. JESC therefore facilitates discussion and reflection on European issues by organising meetings, seminars, and engaging with the media. Our hope is to encourage ways of thinking that favour the common good. JESC works closely with the Commission of Bishops’ Conferences of the EU (COMECE), most visibly through the production of the online monthly journal *eu-rope-infos.eu*. This media platform aims to provide a distinctively European Christian perspective on global issues.

Secondly, JESC participates in a number of advocacy initiatives. A feature that quickly strikes any newcomer to the Brussels scene is the vast army of lobbyists working here. Representing regional governments, companies, trade associations and an array of NGOs, these slick experts in the art of persuasion vie for the attention of decision-makers. In a modest way, JESC joins this world of lobbying. We do so by collaborating with partner organisations, church-based or secular, who have similar aims to ourselves. Unlike most other lobbyists, our aim is to raise the voice of those whose concerns are too often overlooked, those in the world who cannot afford the services of paid representation. Having practiced as a commercial lawyer for a number of years prior to entering the Jesuits, I am aware of the tremendous contribution of Church-based groups in providing the economically disadvantaged with access to justice.

Over the past few years, most of JESC’s advocacy energy has focused on a campaign to introduce EU legislation on ‘conflict minerals’. Conflict minerals are commodities like tin, tungsten, and tantalum (all vital materials for the manufacture of electrical equipment), which are linked to the funding of conflicts and attendant human rights and environmental abuses. In partnership

# The mission

with a civil society network, JESC has assisted various advocacy strategies such as “MEP mapping”, to identify allies and areas of opposition. The advantage of belonging to such an advocacy network is that a common position can be sought that allows civil society to speak with a single voice. The experience of belonging to such a network is mutually enriching, and has its own reconciliatory dimension. Former suspicions and competition between NGOs bearing different ideological and political starting points are replaced by personal relationships and trust.

An aspect of the conflict mineral network I have been proud to develop is our relationship with Jesuits working in the field. Through deepening partnerships with the impressive work of social centres in Central Africa, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we have tried to communicate the experience and voices of communities directly affected by the exploitation of minerals. In doing so we seek to connect the local realities of life to wider issues. Corporate and consumer behaviour, as well as the implementation of international, European and national laws, are all interconnected.

Whether or not Britain stays in the European Union, there is still much for an English Jesuit to do in Brussels. Regardless (and indeed because of) Brexit, the challenge remains to convert – to “reconcile” – hearts and minds to faith in something transcending personal and narrow national or ethnic interests. Focus on protecting what is contained within narrow boundaries often overlooks promotion of the common good. JESC’s work in the area of conflict minerals testifies to the reality that in globalised economies, there must be global governance and accompanying ethical norms to protect the vulnerable. This all chimes with the message of Pope Francis. Upon receiving the prestigious Charlemagne Prize for Europe in 2016, he



*Left: On a visit to Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
Below: Visiting a mining area in Lubumbashi.*

spoke of Europe’s need to expand its capacity to integrate and dialogue in order to rediscover a new “European humanism”. An essential aspect of this new humanism is to protect the vulnerable by facilitating dialogue and reconciliation at the frontiers. JESC’s efforts in European affairs and advocacy attempts to do just this.



# Empowering Women to Fight to Extreme Poverty and Hunger

The Jesuit run Udayani Social Action Forum trains women in organizing rights-based movements. Along with like-minded non-governmental organizations and activists, Udayani is spearheading the national Right to Food movement.

Sujata Jena, SS.CC. – Irudaya Jothi, SJ.



**“Joining the Self-Help Group changed** my worldview once and for all,” says Pratima Das proudly. She is a mother of two girls in a traditional Bengali family in a remote village in Burdwan District of West Bengal state in India. She says that until she came in touch with the Self-Help Group, she never mixed with outsiders nor did she know anything about rights. It is through the many trainings for small groups of women, formed and sustained by Udayani Social Action Forum, the social center of Calcutta Jesuits, that she not only came to realize her rights and ways to demand them from the government, but she also became

part of peoples’ movements. Udayani is a Bengali word which means “awakening.”

The Jesuit run Udayani Social Action Forum trains women in organizing rights-based movements. Along with like-minded non-governmental organizations and activists, Udayani is spearheading the

*Below: Women working in rice paddies.*

# Udayani



## Empowering Women to Fight to Extreme Poverty and Hunger

*Below: At the village level, the women besides getting their due entitlements from administrations also are today respected and their voices are heard.*

*Below right: Mother and child.*

national Right to Food movement. The Right to Food movement is a national network, which for more than a decade now, has been spearheading people's food entitlements both through the nation's apex court and on the road along with rural and urban poor.

There has been a disciplined formation of rural tribal and dalit (in the Indian caste hierarchy they are outcaste and most deprived) women into small groups of around 10 women, called, Self Help

Groups. Around 10 Self Help Groups form a 'federation' for better administration and empowerment. The entry point was micro saving and inter-lending. While we still continue with the money-saving activity, we felt the need to educate women on the existing developmental and livelihood schemes. However, they could not see these schemes reaching them as corrupt officials and the politically powerful ate them up, leading to starvation.

Although the formation of Self Help Groups was the priority in 2000 when the province decided to register Udayani Social Action Forum as an NGO, we quickly moved into educating women on their basic rights since 2005. The Indian government then introduced a scheme, through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA), which promised

# Right to food





100 days of work in a year, and the government would pay a minimum wage. But this act did not reach these really deserving women needing work. At this juncture, teaching them about their rights and how they could demand them was a need-based response and the women found courage in their Self Help Groups to go and demand at the village administration level their rights. As the outcome of the recently concluded Thala Bajao Andolan (Beating the empty plates) and demanding work, Pallavi Mondal, a Self Help Group woman said, "I never realized that I have such power to make the administration answer to my questions." In the past, the politically powerful cadres controlled the development and most of the Governmental information was not disseminated to people.

These were the years of floods in one part of the country while in some other parts people suffered drought and starvation. At the same time there was good harvest and government granaries overflowing with grains and rotting under open space due to rain and water but the daily

wage earning laborers were left to starve. Many resented this dichotomy and some had the courage to approach the Supreme Court filing Public Interest Litigation. To everyone's surprise, the apex court took serious note and after pulling up the federal government, issued an interim order known as Supreme Court Orders on Right to Food 2001. It also defined eight welfare and food schemes to reach the hungry masses, taking care of them from 'womb to tomb'. However, the implementation of this order and reaching the schemes to the unreached were an uphill task for the court, which approached various organizations to collaborate and network in this mission. It appointed state level advisors to help the court Commissioner to disseminate the information among the people and report and monitor various schemes at local level. Udayani became a partner to the Advisor of the state of West Bengal in Eastern India.

The Self Help Group women now totaling around 500 groups with around 5,000 members have become more and more

*Above: The rural unlettered women were often rebuked, insulted and resented when approaching the local administration for their dues.*

## Empowering Women to Fight to Extreme Poverty and Hunger

active in the food schemes since they are the ones who shoulder the responsibility of feeding the family members. We at Udayani realized the need to network with other like-minded groups such as the Supreme Court Advisor in the State and other NGOs. Organizing the Self Help Groups was an opportunity for Udayani to become a leader in the State and as a member of the National team of this network.

The rural unlettered women were often rebuked, insulted and resented when approaching the local administration for their dues. The need to equip the women with skills and ways of protesting in peaceful and democratic ways were taught. This helped them to participate in the demonstrations, street corners, rallies and submission of deputations with chart of demands for immediate actions to the officials concerned. The women joined state level and national 'action week' with apt themes, such as, Thala Kholo ('open the locks' - of granaries), Thala Bhajao (beat empty plates) and Jantar Mantar Chalo (Go to Jantar Mantar – a democratic space near the parliament in the national capital, New Delhi).

The Self Help Group women became

aware of the situation of oppression and exploitation through the trainings and how their food entitlements were stolen and eaten by people at various levels. They also came in touch with the harsh realities of the poor in other parts of the country who came to New Delhi from other states.

At the village level, the women besides getting their due entitlements from administrations also are today respected and their voices are heard.

Since 2008, along with the network members and grass-root activists, the SHG women have collaborated in demanding legislation for food rights. In 2013, the women tasted victory when the parliament passed the 'National Food Security Act 2013'.

Since then the women have been demanding the implementation of the Act. To this effect, they have started Postcard and Signature campaigns to the Prime Minister and others concerned ministers and took out State level protest Rally while at the legislatures level they lobby among the different Political parties to get the Acts implemented with different schemes such as Maternity Entitlement and Public Distribution System.

*Although the formation of Self Help Groups was the priority when the province decided to register Udayani Social Action Forum as an NGO, we quickly moved into educating women on their basic rights.*



The women are best protectors and promoters of mother earth. We systematically help the women realize that the present world is moving in the direction of environmental disaster and the natural calamities are bound to affect them the most. Some trainings were introduced among the so-called semi and illiterate women.

Herbal garden, kitchen garden, mushroom cultivation, nursery and solar lantern assembling were some of the initiatives of Udayani to equip the women and help them to protect and promote nature. These trainings were aimed at enhancing their skills for promotion of the ecological system with which their lives are interweaved.

Basanti Soren, a tribal woman activist with Udayani for the past 15 years, was threatened with death for organizing women for their rights. However, the women gathered in numbers to support her, registered an official complaint with the police, and sought assistance.

She has become an indomitable leader in the area now and reaching to many people who are victims of the apathy of the

administration. Her rise proves the point of Mahatma Gandhi, 'first they ignore you, and then they laugh at you, then they fight you, and then you win'.

The women are demanding what is their constitutionally guaranteed rights and working in collaboration with like-minded individuals and groups has been a great source of inspiration and strength. The country is gripped by crony capitalism, which works against the interest of the downtrodden and the marginalized. The only way to resist this monster is to educate, agitate and organize, to quote Ambedkar, to demand one's rights.

This is the mission that Udayani is striving towards, translating the spirit and mind of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* and *Misericordiae Vultus* into concrete action.

# Tala Kholo



# Ears to the Ground

Our intervention has created a wave of enthusiasm in a community which, three decades ago, was drowned in despair, gloom and visionless future. It is the beginning of growth in a community that had been groping in the tunnel of darkness and gloom.

P. A. Chacko, S.J.

**The Malto (Paharia) community** is found in the Eastern part of India occupying mostly the Rajmahal hills. It is a very poor, illiterate, exploited but culturally rich community. It is here and among this shrinking population of exploited tribals that the Jesuits of Dumka-Raiganj Province decided

to work in 1983. Thus, towards the end of the last century, the province in our discernment process converged on to a decision to enter into an apostolic journey with this community. In 1983, it was a small step which, over the years, became like a banyan tree providing shade and succor,

companionship and comradeship to the Malto tribals who are also called Paharias or dwellers of the hills.

When I met Ghasi Malto for the first time, he engaged me into an informal conversation which turned into an abiding friendship over the years. Ghasi was the headman of Satia village. In our talks something must have clicked in him. Gradually, our talks climaxed in his invitation to us Jesuits to settle in his village to start our apostolic endeavour.

We accepted his generous invitation and Ghasi put an acre of land at our disposal. Soon there started a primary school with just seven children of the village to learn the mystery called alphabets. We guided them into the alpha and omega of their life's journey. It aroused in them a thirst to learn more. Soon their number swelled

into forty, sixty, two hundred, four hundred, etc.

Being the children of a forest dwelling community, they could not repress whistling birds' tunes even while negotiating with abstract numbers and static concepts. Their chasing butterflies or swing-

*Below: Paharia dwelling place.*

*Bottom: Hills of Rajmahal.*



## Ears to the Ground

*Below: Paharian women sell firewood for a living.*

*Centre: A Paharia tribal thrashing his paddy.*

*Opposite page:  
Different faces of  
Paharian peoples.*

ing on the branches of trees had a beauty and charm of its own. Such observations made us engage them in a process of environmental education as part of our school syllabus.

This exercise yielded rich results. Their notebooks were filled with their imaginations—sketches of trees, flowers, butterflies, wild animals, hills and valleys or a conversation between a caged bird and free flying sparrow. They staged skits depicting the story of their hills, describing the decimation of the forest by vested interests which brought misery into their sylvan life style.

This growing awareness of their situation brought a desire for a change and this desire sent a clear message to the local politicians and oppressors. As teachers, we

too understood this message and learned from them while we helped them with our guidance.

We are proud that this tribal community is on a march forward aspiring for the benefits of development. “Search and you will find”. We are happy to have contributed to their quest for a search through awareness building and conscientisation.

Notified as a diminishing tribe and numbering just over a hundred thousand, today they happily refuse to believe that they should remain ever marginalized. The sea change that has taken place since then is not due to our efforts alone. Many other NGOs came to join us and contributed their share too to put this tribal community to some semblance of development.

One of our efforts has been to open the eyes of the Government to the plight of these people. Today the government is compelled to move away from its age-old window dressing programmes for marginalized tribal groups to improved projects and programmes under watchful supervision.

# Pahari



In addition to education, our venture has branched off into propagating indigenous healing system, community building for tracking social issues, special attention to girl child for education and health and family upbringing.

Since the province has taken serious note of this apostolate among the Malto tribal community, two other centers have come up among them. The Bathbanga village project in Sahibganj district started off as a socio-pastoral apostolate and has education, health and pastoral work as main thrusts. The Bonpukuria village project in Pakur district runs a hostel for Malto children who attend government schools. We also do social animation among the Malto community and engage ourselves in pastoral works.

One is happy to note that our intervention has created a wave of enthusiasm in a community which, three decades ago, was drowned in despair, gloom and visionless future. It is the beginning of growth in a community that had been groping in the tunnel of darkness and gloom.



A Jesuit priest helps native people to reclaim their own spiritual traditions

## Lawrence J. Kroker, S.J.

Jesuits have a storied history in Canada, going back to the early 1600s when they began preaching among native people in the unexplored territory known as “new France.”

William Bole

**Canadian Jesuit Father Larry Kroker** is an honorary chief of a native tribe, or (in Canadian terms) First Nation — a rare honor usually reserved for heads of state and other dignitaries. The Jesuit holds that status in the Fort William First Nation of northwestern Ontario not because of the worldly power he wields, but because of what he and the Society of Jesus have done

spiritually for native people.

Jesuits have a storied history in Canada, going back to the early 1600s when they began preaching among native people in the unexplored territory known as “New France.” Fr. Kroker is quick to point out that the order and Western Christianity in general also have an ambiguous history with those communities. He notes that the

# Fort William



missionaries of old often frowned upon the traditional spirituality practiced by First Nations.

“It was taboo,” he says, referring to the attitude of European colonialists and many clergy who accompanied them. “It was seen as paganism.”

In modern times, however, Jesuits and lay pastoral workers have not only appreciated the distinctive native spirituality. They have helped native people reclaim it.

Liturgies offer a glimpse into changes that have come to predominantly native parishes operated or otherwise served by Jesuits. For example, phrases and gestures during Mass



are punctuated by solemn drumbeats, in keeping with the sacred ceremonial practices of native communities. Also featured in many liturgies is a purification ritual known as smudging. Medicinal herbs such as sage are burned, and feathers guide the sacred smoke across the congregation.

The seeds of these and other innovations can be traced to the Second Vatican Coun-

*Left: Father Larry Kroker, SJ, in 1971, the year he was ordained. Middle: Ceremony where Father Larry Kroker, SJ, was made an honorary chief of a native tribe, the Fort William First Nation.*



## Lawrence J. Kroker, S.J.

*Opposite page: Grace Esquega and Fr. Kroker at Kateri Church.*

*Opposite page bottom: Ceremony where Father Larry Kroker, SJ, was made an honorary chief of a native tribe, the Fort William First Nation*

cil (1962-1965), which called for an array of reforms in the Catholic Church, including greater roles for the laity. Fr. Kroker recalls that at the time, Jesuits inspired by the Council began asking, “Why shouldn’t the native people be spiritual leaders of their own communities?”

In the early 1970s, the Society began encouraging First Nation Catholics to take greater ownership of their parishes and ministries. A team of Jesuit priests — Fathers Michael Murray, Dan Hannin, and James Farrell, in addition to Fr. Kroker — went from village to village in northwestern Ontario. They offered training for the diaconate, an ordained ministry open to married men in the Catholic Church. Their workshops, which also involved the wives of would-be deacons, dealt with subjects such as Scripture, theology and pastoral ministry.

Eventually the scope widened. The priests began training lay men and women for other parish ministries, including how to teach the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. This form of spirituality puts the accent on “finding God in all things,” and has a striking affinity with the native way of seeing the Creator present in all of nature.

Fr. Kroker had grown up in Thunder Bay. His mother was French Canadian; his father, of German descent. During his years of Jesuit training (typically a decade), he was assigned a couple of times to teach Latin and English at Jesuit high schools in Montreal and Toronto.

“I came to realize that teaching high school was not my vocation,” the priest

says. “I was not a natural teacher in that context. And I guess it’s not why I became a priest.” Fr. Kroker’s formation program also included stints as a pastoral minister in native parishes, “where I seemed to fit in very well,” he recalls. About a year after his ordination in 1971, he decided that priestly ministry in that setting was his real vocation.

For many years, he bounced around parishes in First Nation communities. Fittingly, the aboriginal name that came with his honorary chief designation in 2011 was Aski Shabwaweshkang — “He who goes everywhere.” But long before then, Fr. Kroker had settled in as pastor of St. Anne’s Church, located in the Fort William First Nation territory adjacent to Thunder Bay.

Shortly after arriving there in 1988, Fr. Kroker had a conversation with a native lay woman that helped trigger what he calls “the next stage of my ministry.” The pastor had gone many times to Grace Esquega, asking for her help with different ministries and programs. But Fr. Kroker relates that on this occasion, Esquega told



# Thunder Bay

him: “Once we come to grips with who we are as a native people, you won’t have to ask us to do ministry and help out. We’ll come and ask you to help out.”

The notion struck him.

Fr. Kroker and others began thinking of ways to heighten the level of native leadership in Catholic parishes. The result of this discernment was, in 1996, the formation of Kitchitwa Kateri Parish in Thunder Bay, which serves native people who have migrated to or are visiting the heart of the city. The parish is dedicated to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, the so-called “Lily of the Mohawks” who was born in 1656, in what is now New York State, and canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012.

More to the point, native leaders of the parish now come to Fr. Kroker asking for his help with *their* ministries.

At Mass, congregants often sing the “Our Father” in Ojibway, the indigenous language of the Fort William First Nation. In addition to practices such as smudging and solemn drumming, the liturgies incorporate traditional native beliefs. For in-



stance, at the start of Good Friday services this past April, presiding priests made the ritual declaration: “Today we celebrate the death of Jesus on the Cross, the Tree of Life as it is called in the native tradition. The Sacred Tree ... is firmly rooted in our Mother Earth and draws nourishment from her. It reaches upwards to the Creator.”

Fr. Kroker says that other predominantly native parishes in the area — including St. Anne’s, where he remains as pastor — have gradually adopted these liturgical innovations. “They want to get back in touch with their spiritual traditions,” the Jesuit explains. “They’ve come to grips with who they are.”



# Itineraries

Will you connect me with God? A new way of giving the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in daily life. Bearing in mind how Ignatius and the first companions were giving the Exercises to ordinary people. A silent revolution that has become international.

Elena Rodríguez-Avial – Pablo Martín Ibáñez  
*Translated by Joseph Munitiz, S.J.*

**During the last few years** a new way of making the Exercises in daily life has become widespread in Spain, the so-called, “Itineraries of Initiation and Deepening in the experience of God”. The aim is to assist the retreatant to experience an encounter and union with God in his or her daily life. Given that the Exercises are a school of prayer, with this new method the experience becomes deeper and more fruitful, with greater repercussions on both the personal and social life of the retreatant.

In Spain, some 1,100 persons have been following the Itineraries during the past year. Not only Jesuits, but diocesan priests and members of other religious orders have been promoting this new system in their dioceses and apostolic programmes. They have functioned not only face-to-face, but also online, where as many as 600 requests are still waiting to be attended to.

Those who spread the method point out that the Itineraries help in the search for “a spirituality that does not isolate people from the world, but assists them to live in the world”. Thus, “inspired by an Ignatian spirituality and grounded on their own personal reality, a man or a woman can on the one hand experience how prayer transforms life, and on the other hand discover a new way of using all five senses, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and feeling. One discovers that life is played out on an ordinary day-to-day basis: in family relationships; in one’s work, in relations with one’s friends... in one’s way of living in the world.”



The Itineraries are being followed in many areas and cities. In Seville, where they already have eight years of experience, more than two hundred persons are involved. There are also groups in Alicante, Elche, Valencia, Vitoria, Madrid, Palencia, Salamanca, the Canary Islands, Asturias, Zaragoza, the Puerto de Santa María (Cádiz), Granada, Huelva, Malaga and Loyola.

In Segovia, where the Jesuits have no base, the Itineraries have been used in parishes thanks to the work of several priests and a team of laypeople. The same is true of Ciudad Real, where two groups supported by diocesan priests are following the first of the Itineraries; also in Cantabria thanks to the diocese and organized by a group of priests and laypeople; and similarly in Zamora. In the Balearic Islands, the sisters of the Purity of Mary are promoting them with the support of a Jesuit priest.

The Itineraries have also become international: in Vietnam, more than one hundred persons, divided into 14 groups, follow them and in Mozambique, there are three groups of eight persons in each.

## “To taste God in all things and in all persons”

One of the female retreatants has described her experience in this way: “I thought that this would not be for me; I felt nothing in prayer, in fact I would often be bad tempered when I had finished a time of prayer” - so much so that she found it very hard to enter whole-heartedly into

the Itineraries. “But now everything is different... Almost without knowing it, I look at situations in my life in quite a different way - my husband, my children... I would never have thought it! I feel very grateful.” Another woman describes it in another way: “It is as if you were preparing the soil for the sowing. From the beginning, it helps you to regain the use of all five senses and of all your heart (...) you’re helped in every way to acquire the habit of stopping and feeling the nearness of God. And that is not all: you learn a new way of looking and of living. This allows me to discover and taste God in all things, in the day-to-day, and in the persons that I meet.”

### The experience of those who guide

Reyes Terry, the person who has been organizing the Itineraries in Seville, explains that those who come are “people who are looking for God, who want to feel Him in their lives, and who try to accept the invitation that Jesus is making to us in the midst of our daily preoccupations: *Row out into the deep!*” In the case of group presentations, “they are not groups simply wanting to learn about prayer, or to reflect, or even to pray. There is something more. These are Ignatian Exercises that are inspired by the Exercises that Ignatius and the first

companions were giving. They have a clear aim: to achieve the personal experience of a relationship with God.” In order to do this, “the role of the guide is fundamental: to arrange the order of the meetings, and to explain the subject for the week. The guide is there to listen, promote, encourage, and help to recognize the presence of God.”

Inmaculada Romero, who has served as companion over many years, understands her mission as “a gift - that of bearing witness to what God is doing in these people - His work in each one of them. I try to join in that work, to be grateful for the gift the people I accompany have given to me: their trust and openness so that I may be a witness.” She is very positive about her experience. “I believe that these Itineraries are a means which adapt to the needs of individuals, no matter what each one’s human-spiritual process may be. They help people to grow as committed Christians. They bring people closer to a life of

# Exercises



Left: A group guided by Father Francisco Cuartero, SJ.

## Itineraries

*Below: Group discussion, guided by Father Francisco Cuartero, SJ.*

prayer, discernment, and Ignatian spirituality.” In her view, they are equally suitable for those who are already familiar with Ignatian spirituality as for those who know nothing about it.

There are Annual Meetings at the Spirituality Centre in Salamanca for guides and companions (Jesuits, monks, nuns, priests and laypersons), all involved in Exercises in Daily Life.

### Beginning and development

The process began in the Jesuit Spirituality Centre in Salamanca in the academic year 1999-2000. This was where the first Itineraries were invented and began to be put into practice. In 2006 at an inter-province meeting held in Salamanca the Provincial selected these new Itineraries as a new way of giving the Exercises in daily life.

There are five Itineraries in all, planned to take some seven years. The first two are an initiation; the next two are meant to add depth; and the fifth consists of the complete Spiritual Exercises. When they are made face-to-face, groups are formed

of about eight persons. They meet once a week under the direction of a guide. They analyse how things have gone during the week and how they have been following the prayer exercises suggested on the cards. These come in a File which has been prepared over about 16 years by the Centre of Spirituality team made up of Jesuits, other religious, and lay-people.

The Files are published by Sal Ter-rae, thanks to the Loyola Communication Group, and are now being translated into Basque, Portuguese, and Vietnamese. There has been a proposal in the U.S.A. to have them in English.

### The Itineraries on the internet

Those promoting spirituality (<http://www.espiritualidadignacion.org>) asked themselves whether, by making use of the Itineraries, it might not be possible to offer the Spiritual Exercises to a wider audience on the internet. Two years ago they began to make them available through Moodle, an online learning platform, where the retreatants could download their exercises week by week. Reports are made not by group meetings but by a weekly Skype interview with the guide.

Elena Rodríguez, who has three children and is busy with work both inside and outside the home, comments: “For me this was the only way to make progress in my prayer and to deepen my acquaintance with Ignatian spirituality and with the Spiritual Exercises.” She notes that her experience “has been most positive; I never thought I could make such progress in my relationship with God, nor that it would help me so much to find God in such a natural way in the day-to-day things of my life, in the situations that crop up daily, and in the people with whom I live constantly.”

The online version is now followed by 90 persons, a third of them in Latin America. However, the demand has been much greater and some 600 requests have had to be turned down for lack of guides. There are now 50 guides for the internet option in Spain and Latin America, of whom 11 are Jesuits, 26 lay, and 13 from other religious orders. The guides also can receive a continuous formation course by means of this online platform.

# Loyola



The Joint JESAM-CEP Project on Migration in Madrid

# A Journey of Accompaniment

It is in the sharing of a meal and drink, the sharing of experiences of the day and the different moments of pain and happiness where we find growth and connection in the interpersonal relationships. It is humbling to share our lives with the migrants.

Ashton Mugozi, S.J.



**At the turn of the century**, there was a realisation of a strong need for collaboration between the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM) and the Conference of European Provincials (CEP). In 2010, the JESAM-CEP project started with sharing of manpower between the two conferences in the area of migration. Today, collaboration is in five main areas: Refugees and Immigration, Networking of Social Centres, Formation, Jesuit Historical Institute and Seminar for Provincials. In the words of Frs. John Dardis and Michael Lewis, former presidents of the two conferences:

“The Inter-conference commission or

*‘Commissio Mixta’* is about building a Society of Jesus that is truly universal. It is a modest effort but has been gaining momentum over the years. Africa and Europe have to put the misunderstandings of the past behind us and move forward with trust and mutuality. We want to build a future that is brighter and different from the past – for both of our continents.”

Collaboration in the area of refugees and migrants is now in its seventh year of existence. It has its roots in Malta where the collaboration was intended to be located, with JESAM providing a priest and the CEP a scholastic. In this seven-year history, the collaboration has seen eight priests

# *Commissio mixta*

## A Journey of Accompaniment

*Below: Prison-like detention center where migrants are kept. Center: After a training course, the migrants are given certificates to assist them in looking for employment.*

and scholastics from Africa and Europe working together.

However, in 2016 the mandate of the project was moved from Malta and is now located in the Spanish capital, Madrid. Two Jesuit scholastics were sent as part of the project, Tomasz Lipa from the South Poland Province and Ashton Mugozhi from the Zimbabwe-Mozambique Province.

The common image that comes to mind for most people about refugees is a life in a refugee camp surrounded by tents. Our mission here is quite different. In Madrid the project has seen us working on the urban refugee and migrant situation. We are participating in the projects of *Pueblos Unidos* which forms part of the network of organizations that serve refugees and migrants called *Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes – España* (Jesuit Migrants Service – Spain).

The migrants who frequent *Pueblos Unidos* are from Latin America. However, recently there has been a surge of migrants from Eastern Europe and West Africa. *Pueblos Unidos* offers a space for

the reception of migrants and people who lack social, personal and family support, training and access to employment. *Pueblos Unidos* promotes personal autonomy among migrants and their active participation in society. We develop programs of legal, psychological and school support for children; housing programs; numerous activities that promote constructing a framework of intercultural coexistence, where different groups coexist in dialogue and attend to each one's own identity.

We participate in the universal mission of *Pueblos Unidos* whose aim is to accompany, serve and defend migrants through its various projects.

An important part of our job is related to receiving people. In the reception centre, we have our first contact with the migrants. During our initial interaction and subsequent meetings, we try to identify the needs of individuals and direct them to the relevant professionals like lawyers and social workers. We also use the reception centre to conduct various activities like discussions about different issues affect-



ing migrants or special international days like “Women’s Day” and “International Migrants Day”. By so doing, we create a space to share the variety of divergent cultural and religious traditions.

One of the key objectives of the organization is to help migrants to find jobs or related training courses to prepare for specific jobs. It is impossible for people without a job to live a life of dignity. We offer different courses that focus on professional development and training in interpersonal skills like identity, self-confidence, assertiveness and interaction. We use methods like coaching to help them to develop their capabilities.

We conduct visits to the detention centre for migrants in Aluche Madrid. In this place, one can really experience what it means to be on the frontiers. Here migrants are detained for visa violations, illegal entry, and lack of the requisite documentation as well as those coming from prison. The maximum detention period is 60 days while awaiting deportation. Volunteers of *Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes – España* in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia annually visit more than 500 people in the different detention centres.

There are two profiles of detainees: “newly arrived” and “those who have already spent some time in the country”. There are many pictures and videos on television showing arrivals of the groups of



*Above: The Jesuit Community in La Ventilla, in this community there are two African men who live with the Jesuits as they prepare to start living on their own.*

“newly arrived” on the coasts of Europe. Usually nothing is said about their first weeks in the “promised land”. The second group has spent some time in Spain. However, before they regularise their documentation, the police catch them. One needs to have stayed at least three years before regularisation.

Fr. Patrick Royannais, a diocesan priest from France, who has been visiting the detention centre for one year explains our intervention as follows: “Our objective is to bring a little bit of humanity to people who often haven’t got any idea about the reasons for their stay in the detention centre. Our role is to inform and help them to understand the current situation and explain the possible future outcomes. I think it is a basic human right, not something abstract, but a way of living with dignity. We are also like a compassionate brother who cries with those who cry and laughs with those who laugh.”

In some cases, the lawyers intervene to release those who are unfairly detained. We also collect data about unjust treatment and abuses that we have noticed. Every year we compile a report that has a great impact on the society and the government.

Baobab is a project that caters specifically for immigrants of African origin. The Baobab Project started 11 years ago in response to a situation of vulnerability that confronts young African migrants in their first three years in Spain. These men arrive with a very slim hope of finding work and making a living because they lack the necessary documentation. The project seeks to inspire hope in the lives of those it welcomes into its two residences by offering



## A Journey of Accompaniment

*Tomasz Lipa, SJ giving a session of coaching to immigrants about identity and self-worth.*

shelter, education, health and legal assistance for two years. After that, one can apply for a residence permit and have a chance in the labour market because of the training and integration programs he has received.

While the project provides much of the material and financial resources for the young men, accompaniment and integration is involved. It is this part of the work that we (Jesuit Scholastics) and other volunteers do. It is accompaniment with a view to helping the men integrate into Spanish society and helping them through a process of coming to terms with the trauma of the tortuous journey in the desert on the way to Spain. Our role is to be with the men, identify needs and try to give hope and consolation. The pastoral role includes sharing meals, accompaniment in times of bereavement, visiting the sick and just being there with them. It is a ministry of presence!

This project is quite similar to the Baobab Project; however, it is open to all the groups of migrants who are in situations of vulnerability. Its main thrust is the welcoming of refugees and also promoting a culture of welcoming among the Spanish people. Apart from welcoming refugees, the other aims are integration of refugees socially and economically, juridical and civil advocacy and sensitization to the refugee situation among different groups of people from schools, universities and the civil society. Despite the financial and material accom-

paniment involved in this project, there is another call for human-to-human accompaniment. We find ourselves in the midst of a different type of family that we journey with from their first contact with *Pueblos Unidos* up to the time they leave the project. We try to be there with these families and individuals, helping them to get along in the big city where they know no one. We are often the only family they have here.

Last, but one of the most important parts of our project, is our Jesuit community. We have responded to the call of Pope Francis to create a community of hospitality in which we have welcomed two African migrants. In line with the words of Pope Francis, we have also adopted a simple lifestyle to try to match the lifestyle of the people to whom we minister (“a shepherd who smells like the sheep”). This relates to the simplicity of our meals, which we prepare ourselves, not having satellite television, not having alcohol for meals and community recreation.

Above all, it is in the sharing of a meal and drink, the sharing of experiences of the day and the different moments of pain and happiness where we find growth and connection in the interpersonal relationships. It is humbling to share our lives with the migrants. Their journeys are often characterized by tremendous pain and difficulty, but afterwards hope and fortitude remain. This journey of accompaniment and ministry of presence presents us with a genuine realisation that God works in his people.

Some of the people we accompany are not Christian. Some non-believers know very little about our being Jesuits. That makes little sense to them. Nonetheless, though we may not be able to do anything but be there for them, we see change and happiness that gives us a sense of God working in silence. Lastly, though we accompany the migrants, their faith, hope and belief in seemingly hopeless situations urges us on our own journeys of faith and vocation.



# The challenge of forming leaders for a more just society

The Province of Argentina-Uruguay, utilizing the Center for Research and Social Action seeks to offer the education, support and sense of community needed to motivate talented young people to assume their role as political leaders in their society.

Mariela Sorrentino

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

**In Argentina today**, 40% of the people live in poverty and almost 10% are reduced to destitution. It's a country totally distant from the promised land it once was for first European, and then Latin-american immigrants. The chief instrument to transform this reality and put Argentina back on the path of economic and human development it once promised is political. Our country needs politicians with a vocation for service, formation and values, and many young people feel called to be promoters of a positive transformation. Nevertheless, the lack of concrete opportunities for an honest and successful politician causes young people who are very apt for leadership, and who feel a call to public service, not to enter politics and instead to opt for dispensing themselves from that obligation and joining the private world of not-for-profit organizations or academia.

In the face of this situation affecting the present and future of Argentina, especially of its most vulnerable citizens, the Province of Argentina-Uruguay is trying, with the help of its CIAS (The Center for Research and Social Action) to offer the education, support and sense of community needed to motivate talented young people to assume their role as political leaders in their society.

This was the context for our inaugurating in 2015 the School of Political Leadership of CIAS in Argentina. By means of an original program of formation and political coexistence we proposed to gather and promote a new generation of leaders in order to positively transform our country's institutions and inject new life into its development.



*Our country needs politicians with a vocation to service, formation and values, and many young people feel called to be promoters of a positive transformation.*

With this as our objective, we are articulating the Program in Leadership and Political Analysis whose purpose is to prepare students to work out a political career successful in three aspects:

- Vocation, values and community
- Technical know-how
- Political capital

In order for politics to consolidate its capacity for transformation, there is one fundamental prerequisite: that participants come from all the various backgrounds – political, social and partisan – existing in the country. That is a requisite and a challenge, which has proven to be successful on the road of dialogue and constructive debate. As one alumnus of the first version of the program put it: “Two factors stand out: a pluralistic formation which is both excellent and allows freedom of thought, and the opportunity of relating to a group which allows us to contrast our opinions in order to grasp a reality much more complex.”

The program runs for a year in which eight courses

# Leadership

## The challenge of forming leaders for a more just society

cover the following subjects: Coalitions of Government in Argentine Politics, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Political Communication, Leadership, The State and Public Administration, Media Training, and Negotiation. The founder of the school, Father Rodrigo Zarazaga, SJ, is its current director, and three other Jesuits are part of the faculty: Frs Rubén Strina, SJ, Rafael Velasco, SJ, and Gonzalo Zarazaga, SJ. The academic structure is the responsibility of Lucas Ronconi, a principal researcher of CIAS. The formation component we propose goes beyond the formal plan of studies to make room for different initiatives aimed at making political sharing a daily practice and ensuring that frequent interaction yields an experience of the country's reality.

With this in mind and to foster open reflection, we invite important figures from political, economic and social spheres to debate with our students. All the candidates in the recent presidential election of 2015 visited CIAS and engaged in dialogue with our students about key issues for today and tomorrow's Argentina.

In the same way, students make various trips to the interior of the country in hopes of interacting with the different social and cultural realities, which run across our extensive land. Particularly enriching are the student initiatives in towns and rural areas usually bypassed.

Through them, young people can critique preconceived ideas and come to a more accurate grasp of the circumstances which condition the most vulnerable sectors of the country. These initiatives, for which we count on the help of Fr Marcos Alemán, SJ, offer our students a new, more realistic and in-depth perspective which, in its turn, offers a better set of tools to outline public policies.

The program also looks for ways in which the students can expand their horizons through a global view that allows them to understand the situations of Argentina and Latin America in the world, and of

the world itself. For that, at the end of the academic cycle, CIAS organizes a trip for the most outstanding students to the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and Georgetown University in Washington D.C., in the United States of America. By means of this experience, made possible thanks to the collaboration of Fr Timothy Scully, CSC and Fr Matthew Carnes, SJ, our students have the opportunity to interact with internationally known politicians, functionaries, and academics. For going on this trip, participants are evaluated for their academic freedom, their attendance and their commitment to the ethical values of CIAS.

Thanks to the support of our benefactors, CIAS offers full or partial scholarships on the bases of economic need and academic merit.

Candidates for the program undergo a selection process whose objective is to recruit only those young people with the intelligence, ambition and integrity necessary for being leaders in the public sphere. Our students range in age from 23 to 35; some of them already participate in political parties or in public administration, even though such participation is not necessary for being admitted to the program. CIAS has no party affiliation and actively seeks students from the entire ideological and socioeconomic spectrum.

We ask and hope that our alumni transform Argentina with conviction, freedom and example.

Conviction to attain public power without the distortion of embracing politics as an end in itself; on the

# Zarazaga



contrary, they engage in politics precisely for others.

Freedom to choose the model of an inclusive country, so what they create will result in a better life for every single Argentinian, and they will not give in to temptations to imitate the self-centered interests that surround them.

Example of being genuine and credible, understanding that through those two qualities they will find a font of inexhaustible power.

With this trio of conviction, freedom and example, we are forming the CIAS community into something, which once they have finished the program, the participants join to strengthen the bonds of camaraderie and to continue with activities that are both formational and effective. The CIAS Community, coordinated by Jorge Monge, Executive Director of CIAS, is taking shape as a vocation for public service, with heterogeneous ideologies and homogeneous ethical values. It is about a permanent network of our students in their political careers, and about establishing authentic bonds between its own graduates and the graduates of our academic institutions, together with networks of like-minded people in civil and political society, on a level both local and international.

In March 2017, we began our third “edition” of the Program in Leadership and Political Analysis. We are aware that the transformation of a country is an enormous challenge, but the results we have realized up to now encourage us to go on working with those people who understand politics as service of others, and es-



*In order for politics to consolidate its capacity for transformation, there is one fundamental prerequisite: that participants come from all the various backgrounds – political, social and partisan – existing in the country.*



pecially the most vulnerable others. These are some of our achievements:

- There were 260 candidates for the first edition in 2015, 422 candidates for the second edition in 2016, and for the third edition in 2017, 736. In every case, we chose 30 candidates from the whole country to engage in the Program. The growing number of those interested in being participants of the School of Political Leaders of CIAS speaks of the demand of young people to generate a positive transformation of the country.

- 80% of the participants of the School of Political Leadership of CIAS today occupy posts in Public Administration, and their decisions have direct impact on economic and human development at the local, regional and national level.

- The most outstanding personalities in political, economic and social ambience find in CIAS a pluralistic space for reflection. That is how ex-presidents, presidential candidates, governors, ministers, quarter masters general, mayoral and social analysts visit CIAS to analyze the political or economic situation and the future of the country for the middle- and long-term.

- We impart 5,200 hours of theoretical and practical education.

- We mount seven trips to different places in the interior of the country to interact directly and connectively with the social, cultural and economic diversity of our land.

- The better students of version 2015 visited the Universities of Georgetown and Notre Dame to continue their formation. The most outstanding students of edition 2016 did that in April of 2017.

- We are carrying ahead 54 activities of integration directed at strengthening the bonds and stimulating the political coexistence of all the participants.

We have created a dynamic network of diverse persons united by a shared vocation to political life as an instrument of change and social justice. That is a wonderful beginning for the Argentina we hope for.

# The needed space for forming potential leaders

In order to promote more inclusion of rural students, the Jesuits devised a program to help bridge the capacity of these students and the standards of the school. Hence, the Ulmera Project was conceived to provide remedial courses for these students.

Erik John J. Gerilla, S.J.

**For a young country** like Timor-Leste, the education of the younger generation is crucial for the future development of the country. In a country where access to quality education is not guaranteed, especially in the rural areas, providing all the means and support for the education of young people is a significant contribution to the development.

Jesuits run two secondary schools outside of the capital, Dili. These institutions aim at catering for the educational needs of the local communities as well as deserv-

ing students from other areas. We have the Jesuit-run parochial school in the rural valley of Railaco, Ermera, Escola Nossa Senhora de Fatima (NOSSEF), an hour from Dili. The other school is a Jesuit junior and senior high school, Colegio de Santo Inacio de Loiola (CSIL), now in its fifth year of operation.

One of the challenges facing these schools is how to increase the number of students from the local communities and from the remote and disadvantaged villages. Every place faces its own unique





challenges, and so the Jesuits have thought of intervening based on the needs of each. In Railaco, a number of students have to tread sloping mountains and rugged terrain every day in order to attend school. They have to walk from distant villages ranging from 2-4 hours back and forth to the school located in the central village of Railaco.

Clearly, lack of sufficient rest means that the students are drained and cannot prepare well for school the next day. Their

potential to learn is not maximized. They become lackluster and unable to match the performance of their friends. This is a huge disadvantage, which often means a

*One of the challenges facing these schools is how to increase the number of students from the local communities and from the remote and disadvantaged villages.*

# Junior



## The needed space for forming potential leaders

*A higher number of local students are now entering the school. Their determination to improve themselves and the efforts of the Ulmera Project are bearing positive results.*

number of them dropping out of school. In order to find a remedy to this concern, the Jesuits have embarked on setting up a temporary boarding house to give shelter to students and ease their burden of walking every day. The results of the initiative are quite remarkable.

In the school in Kasait, Liquica, the number of students from the local community has been rather small since 2012. The reason appears to be the lack of preparation by the local students to compete favorably with the pool of talented and bright students from the capital Dili and the other districts. To secure a slot in the roster of successful candidates for Year 7 intake, the major hurdle is to pass the entrance exam or at least to secure a rank high enough to

get on the short list. Sadly, students from the local community of Kasait usually perform poorly on entrance exams and thus hardly make it. In order to promote more inclusion of rural students, the Jesuits devised a program to help bridge the capacity of these students and the standards of the school. Hence, the Ulmera Project was conceived to provide remedial courses for these students. The results have been remarkable. A higher number of local students are now entering the school. Their determination to improve themselves and the efforts of the Ulmera Project are bearing positive results.

In Railaco, the temporary boarding facility started receiving students in 2015. When Fr. Roberto M. Boholst, SJ, started it, the vision was to build a dormitory for students whose families reside in the far-flung villages. Because of limited resources, the solution was to build a temporary shelter.

The first intake was only 12 students but two years later, the number grew to 30. The condition of the place unfortunately

# Ulmera



has become less conducive for learning. Nevertheless, the students are unfazed about the shrinking living space. They have learned to forego the comfort.

One such student is Jose Soares. He is grateful for the facilities despite some discomfort of living in a crowded shelter. "I am grateful to the Jesuits for giving us this humble place where we can stay while studying. I am happy that I have improved my grades because I got more time to study since I don't have to worry about going home late or waking up too early." Another student, Nelson Alves da Costa, expresses his hope that the Jesuits will open more space because there are still more who need a place as they live in faraway villages, and still struggle to make it to school.

The school remains a diocesan parochial school and thus the Jesuits have no free hand to implement initiatives like this temporary shelter without, at least, informing the parish priest. The church in Railaco has gained a quasi-parish status but it remains under the helm of the parish



## The needed space for forming potential leaders

in Gleno, 7kms away from Railaco. An effort to build a sturdier dormitory is now in process. It is hoped that the Jesuits would be able to gather enough support to build the structure. The project is worth pursuing precisely because of the remarkable impact it has on the performance of the students. Actual school records show that there is a marked difference in the performance of the students before and during their stay in the temporary shelter.

As for Ulmera Project, Fr Joseph Raymond Patrick (Weyms) Sanchez, SJ, the former CSIL principal (2015-2016), says that the project grew out of the recognition of the challenges the children face in gaining access to the quality education the Jesuit school offers. These challenges

include their lack of preparedness to face the high standards of the school, their own or their parents' attitudes toward education, and their families' limited resources. Accordingly, the project aims to educate the parents of local students on the importance of education and to orient them on the opportunities for getting quality education. The opportunities include bursaries that they can apply for; supplements the instruction local students receive in their current schools especially in the areas of Portuguese, Mathematics and English, in order to increase their chances of passing the CSIL Entrance Test; and the provision of confidence-building activities so that the local students perform well in the interview phase of the application process.

To achieve these goals, a Supplementary Education Program (SEP) has been developed to help fifth to ninth grade students from a local government school in Kasait who have shown that they can meet the demands of study in CSIL. The lessons in these classes, which include Portuguese

# Senior





and Mathematics will help them become better applicants in the CSIL Entrance Exam and help them build the skills they need should they be accepted into the school. The second major program in the Ulmera Project, the Complementary Education Program (CEP), is designed for students currently enrolled at the CSIL. It aims to provide complementary lessons and activities designed to increase mastery of what is learned in school. The classes will cover English, Mathematics, Portuguese, and Personality Development and Values Education. This program will be held from February to December each year.

Clearly, there appears to be an improvement in the performance of the students from Ulmera Project and the indicators are sufficient for the school administration to pursue the project with added vigor each year. The target is to increase the student population from the neighborhood, as they are the ones with the greater need. CSIL is still far behind the 30% mark but

with a sustained effort to assist the locals through the Ulmera Project, the hopes are high that the numbers will be reached in due course.

Both the Temporary Shelter in Railaco and the Ulmera Project were conceived out of the realization that the Jesuits should contribute more actively to improving the quality of life of the community. One way to make that concrete is to provide access to quality education to the disadvantaged students from the rural areas.

The quality of education and formation of character that both the Temporary Shelter and the Ulmera Project are striving to achieve will rebound eventually to the benefit of their local communities. In the process, potential leaders are formed as Jesuit education offers formation of values and not just honing intellectual capacities. Without these provisions for shelter and remedial courses, these rural area students would have slim chances of getting Jesuit education and chart new path for a better future.

*The condition of the place unfortunately has become less conducive for learning. Nevertheless, the students are unfazed about the shrinking living space. They have learned to forego the comfort.*

# A Missionary of Mercy on Wheels

What a privilege it was to be given this mission. I felt a strong sense of connection with my brother, Francis, as I supported him in his desires for this Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Richard Shortall, S.J.

“**Father, I feel that** a great weight has been lifted from me”. These are words I often heard after sitting with a parishioner in the church during one of my community visits in the rural Australian diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. During the Jubilee Year of Mercy, twenty-nine communities in the diocese were given the opportunity for a daily celebration of the Eucharist and a private conversation with their Missionary of Mercy. In all of these communities there was a church, but in many of them there had not been a resident priest for many years. Visiting these communities

reminded me of the settler priests in the nineteenth century who rode around this diocese on horseback. Like them I would pitch my tent in a community for a week at a time. The difference between those pioneer priests and me was that my tent was not made of canvas but was a mobile home. Archbishop Fisichella, whom Pope Francis put in charge of overseeing the Jubilee Year, called me the *Missionary of Mercy on Wheels!*

This amazing ministry began in May 2015 when I was given a copy of *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis’ instruction about the Year of Mercy. The more I read his words, the more intrigued I became with what he had in mind. When I came to paragraph eighteen where he wrote: “During the Year of Mercy I intend to send out *Missionaries of Mercy*. They will be a sign of the Church’s maternal solicitude for the People of God...” I felt overwhelmed with the desire to be such a missionary in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese.

It was one thing to feel such a desire and quite another to imagine what being an Australian Missionary of Mercy would look like. I had a few ideas about what I wanted to do, but not how to do that. Later during a conversation with Mrs Teresa Brierley, the Vice-Chancellor for Pastoral Ministries of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese, she said, “I know what to do. You



Winnebago



can spend a week at a time visiting the parish communities which have a church but no resident priest living in a Winnebago". "And what is a Winnebago?" I asked in a state of puzzlement. Teresa told me that it was a brand of motor home! The Holy Spirit was clearly present that afternoon and before long, Bishop Bill Wright was lending his support to this project. Once Fr. Brian McCoy, the Australian Jesuit Provincial, had given me his support, I was able to submit my application to the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation. A month later, I received notification that my application had been accepted and that I was expected to join the other Missionaries of Mercy in Rome on Ash Wednesday to be formally commissioned by Pope Francis in St Peter's.

Despite increasing feelings of anxiety that I would struggle not only to drive the mighty beast, which would be my home for ten months, but also to survive my solitary life in it, I booked my flights to Rome. In the preceding weeks, I had often said to myself, "Why on earth did you open your big mouth?" At the end of January, Archbishop Fisichella issued a press statement describing the ministry of the Missionaries of Mercy. In one of the final paragraphs, I was amazed to read, "An interesting story may help to capture the pastoral interest that this initiative has garnered around the world. Father Richard from Australia will



visit twenty-seven communities in his rural Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle where there is only one church and no priests in residence. Travelling in a camper, he will journey from community to community as a 'Missionary of Mercy on Wheels'! This is but an example of the way in which the Jubilee is meant to reach all, allowing everyone to touch the closeness and the tenderness of God". Clearly, there was now to be no turning back!

On Shrove Tuesday, just over 700 out of 1,000 Missionaries of Mercy were able to gather with Pope Francis in Rome. We were received in the magnificently frescoed *Sala Regia* and this is what I heard him tell us in his usual softly spoken manner. As Missionaries of Mercy, we were to express the maternity of the Church. We

*Opposite page: The Mobile Home of the Maitland-Newcastle's Missionary of Mercy. Above: Fr Richard Shortall, SJ, was one of the Missionaries of Mercy sent by Pope Francis during the Jubilee Year of Mercy.*

## A Missionary of Mercy on Wheels

*Below: Fr. Richard Shortall, extinguishing the Year of Mercy Candle, Sacred Heart Cathedral Newcastle, Closure of the Year of Mercy. Opposite page: Fr. Richard Shortall preached to children as well as adults.*

were to see the desire for forgiveness in the other and give them space for this desire for God, which is the grace of the Spirit. He reminded us of the need to understand the language of gestures. When offering the sacrament of Reconciliation we were to be merciful. He concluded by assuring us that our service during the Jubilee Year was so precious.

The next morning during the General Audience in Saint Peter's Square I was moved to tears at the sight of Francis greeting a sick person lying on a stretcher. First, he gently stroked their arm, and then he lovingly caressed their cheek before sign-

ing the cross on their forehead. Later when I read his words quoted in *The Name of God is Mercy*, "God forgives us not with a decree, but with a caress", I remembered that moment in St Peter's Square. It was one of the stories of Pope Francis, which I told over and over during my community visits.

Once back in Australia, what was it like to move around a diocese in a motor home, which was parked next to a church and connected to that church's electricity and water supply?

First, I discovered that what I had undertaken was a manageable task. The motor home was not difficult to drive and the parishioners were willing to help me in all sorts of practical ways. Apart from one instance of vandalism when I was not in the motor home, I was never the object of mischievous or threatening behaviour, particularly during the night!

Second, the daily experience of sitting in the church engaged in what Pope Francis called 'the apostolate of the ear' was a profound, humbling and privileged one. Whenever I arrived in a community, I promised parishioners that I would sit in the church ready to listen with a merciful gaze, open arms, a welcoming non-judgemental heart to any story of pain, sorrow, disappointment, heaviness of spirit, which they brought to me. My hope was that in such a conversation they would experience something of God's closeness to them and God's forgiving acceptance of them.

Perhaps it was the fact that some of these parishioners' experiences of suffering mirrored similar ones in my own life which enabled me to provide a safe and caring environment for these conversations. During my initial reading of *Misericordiae Vultus* I became firmly convinced that what parishioners in Australia would desire most from the Year of Mercy would be the opportunity to tell their stories. Some would surely want to celebrate the sacrament of

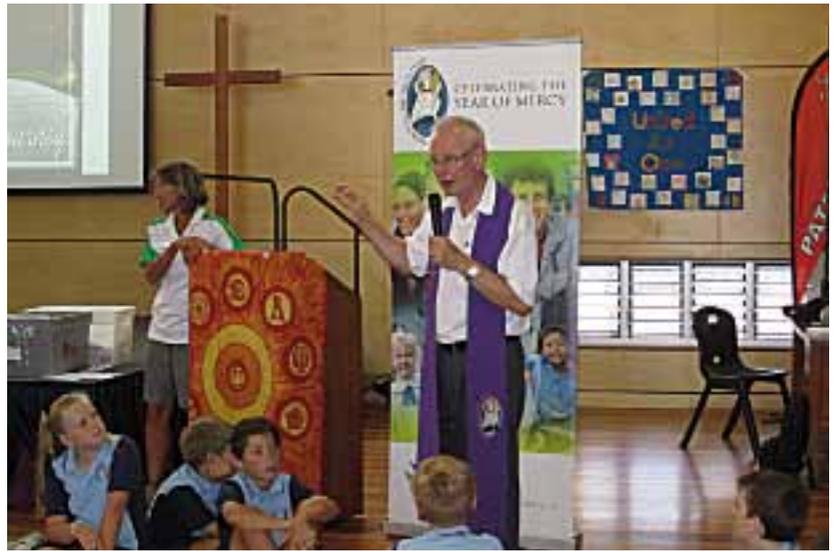
# Francis



Reconciliation, but not all.

So often, these conversations would begin with words such as these: “Father, I have a secret. It goes back to when I was....” “This is the sorrow of my life....” “Father, will God ever forgive me...?” “I feel embarrassed to admit this, but...” Sometimes as many as eight people would sit with me at length. After such full days of listening to such stories of pain, sorrow and deep hurt, I often found it difficult to sleep at night. Despite at times keenly feeling the weight of these stories, I remained faithful to the daily rhythm of celebrating the Eucharist and sitting in the church. If there were gaps in these times of sitting when no one came, I would sit, read, pray, knit.

What a privilege it was to be given this mission. I felt a strong sense of connection with my brother, Francis, as I supported him in his desires for this Jubilee Year of Mercy. It felt so humbling to be entrusted daily with the untold stories of so many parishioners and to be a witness to what happened as they told these stories to me. Many parishioners in this part of Australia were able to experience anew the mercy of God because of this creative initiative of Pope Francis.



# Apostolates at Arrupe College

Students at Arrupe College do a wide variety of apostolates.

Firstly, there are apostolates among the poor. These are very important.

Since the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation, subsequent Congregation documents have reaffirmed our commitment to the poor.

Thierry Manirambona, S.J.

**Arrupe College is a Jesuit school** of Philosophy and Humanities, in Harare, Zimbabwe. At Arrupe College, as Jesuit scholastics study philosophy, they are also sent for mission outside the College. Father Roland von Nidda, SJ, is the spiritual father. He shares his experience working with scholastics and helping to organize apostolic activities for them. In addition, four Jesuit scholastics studying at Arrupe College also share their experiences of apostolic engagement.

Jesuit scholastics and brothers are at Arrupe College to pursue studies in philosophy and humanities and to continue with their formation as Jesuits. Saint Ignatius wanted Jesuits to be contemplatives in action. God is the prime reality of our lives. When we are united with him in contemplation, we are inspired to go out to bring him (his life, his love, his Kingdom) to others.

Ignatius had a revolutionary view of the religious life of Jesuits. At his time, religious were largely confined to monasteries, priories and convents. Ignatius wanted his men to be on the move, bringing Christ to the people. That is what it is to be a Jesuit. Therefore, it is vital that a Jesuit in formation has an experience of service to people during his studies. The apostolates meet this important formation need. I am happy that the students take their apostolates seriously and derive joy and fulfilment from them.

Students at Arrupe College do a wide variety of apostolates. Firstly, there are apostolates among the poor. These are very important. Since the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation, subsequent Congregation docu-

ments have reaffirmed our commitment to the poor. Thus at Arrupe we have the Solidarity with the Poor apostolate, which works together with the Mount Pleasant SSVP organization (Society of Saint Vincent de Paul).

They assess the needs of the poor and assist them with food, medication, school fees and so on. During 2016 Advent, they undertook a project to assist displaced and destitute former farm workers with agricultural inputs, so that they can feed themselves. During 2017 Lenten Season, they did another project with these people to provide them with shelter. They also hope to venture out to a squatter camp near the Race Course (a residential area



in Harare), where they will assist with the education of children. Other apostolates with the poor are located at Mbare (the St. Peter's Social Project), Mother Theresa's Charity Sisters' work with the destitute in Ardbennie, the Zambuko project for street kids, the Shungu Dzevana home for orphaned children, and L'Arche community for physically and mentally challenged people.

There are also educational apostolates among the poor. Some scholastics teach children in Mbare, Hatcliffe Extension, St. John's and other places. Then there are apostolates of a spiritual and faith-based nature. For instance, Jesuits work with the CLC (Christian Life Communities), Catholic Chaplaincy groups at the University of Zimbabwe, Belvedere Teachers Training College, and the Harare Institute of Technology.

Others work in parishes (like Mount Pleasant, Mabelreign, Dzivarasekwa, Braeside) doing youth work, catechesis, helping with music and the choir. French and Portuguese speakers do pastoral work with the Harare French and Portuguese speaking communities.

On the whole, the feedback I get from the beneficiaries is very positive. The Jesuits do valuable work and their very presence makes a big impact on the people

with whom and for whom, they are working. People are impressed to see young men from different African countries who have committed their lives to God and the service of others. They like having the Jesuits there, and the scholastics bring joy, inspiration, and set a good example to those with whom they interact.

Denis Sawadogo, a Jesuit from Burkina Faso and member of the West African Province (AOC), works with the Christian Life Community (CLC) and teaches catechism within the Catholic community of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). Talking of his apostolate, Sawadogo says he is delighted to engage young Catholic students of UZ in the learning of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

He also finds joy in preparing those students to receive different sacraments. "It is a special grace and privilege for me to journey with them from the catechumenal stage to baptism and then confirmation". According to Sawadogo, this spiritual service to the youth of UZ helps him strengthen his own Christian faith. Moreover, he finds that teaching catechism is a taste of preparation for theology. "I learn to be more acquainted with the Christian Catholic doctrine".

With the CLC, I learn to deepen my Ignatian spirituality and to initiate young people to the different ways of living the Ignatian spirituality".

Silas Kipkorir Kemboi, a Jesuit from Kenya and a member of the Eastern Africa Province (AOR), teaches catechism at Belvedere Teachers College and Harare Institute of Technology. For Kipkorir, the apostolate is part of a holistic formation and integral personal development. "I get to develop and integrate my studies with the apostolate, which makes studies relevant. Besides, the apostolate makes me sensitive to the needs of people around".

Kipkorir shares a lesson he has learnt from the apostolate he is involved in, "By



Left: The city of Harare.  
Above: Outside the city, life is quite different.



# Harare

## Apostolates at Arrupe College

*Arrupe College,  
the Jesuit School of  
Philosophy  
and Humanities,  
Harare – Zimbabwe.*

sharing their joys and sufferings, I become more human”.

Hubert Niyonkuru is from the Rwanda-Burundi Region of the Society of Jesus. He says that his apostolate at the Centre of Charity run by the Missionaries of Charity at Mbare (a high-density residential area of Harare) constitutes one of the great moments he has experienced since he arrived at Arrupe. The time he spends there, he says, is a time of ongoing conversion and challenge. This centre is a home for old people. Many of them trace their roots in countries such as Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia.

The centre also accommodates several sick people. Niyonkuru affirms that besides the joy that the apostolate brings him, he also learns a lot from this apostolate: “Conversations with the people that

the Missionaries of Charity serve encourage me to make a step forward in living my vocation. Additionally, through their work and their availability to serve the Lord among his people, I see the light of God”. Niyonkuru adds that this apostolate helps him understand the meaning of the commandment of God “love your neighbour as yourself”. To the question about the importance of having an apostolate for philosophy students, Niyonkuru’s answer is very precise: “We need to build a solid mind and a soft heart”.

Forster Sallah is Ghanaian, and a member of the North West Africa Province (ANW). He plays the piano in the 7.30 a.m. English Mass at the Holy Name Catholic Church, Mabelreign.

Every Saturday, he goes for the choir rehearsals from 2.30pm to 5.00pm. Sallah says that the apostolate helps him live his passion and express his talent: playing the piano. The apostolate has also a spiritual meaning for him: “From my personal experience, music has a great quality of bringing the listener into deep reflection leading to an encounter with God at the deepest level.

When it is combined with prayer, the outcome is amazing. It has a calming effect in times of turbulence of soul, mind and body. It can be a useful tool in curing depression and tension. It is this spiritual and physical effect of music that impels me to continually improve upon my piano skills in order to help others and my own self to acquire its fruits”. For Sallah, nothing could be more rewarding and encouraging to him than being approached after the Mass with statements like ‘The music today helped me to pray better’. Also, he adds, calls for improvement such as ‘Brother, something wasn’t right about the music today; you may want to consider it’ reveal the need to continually improve upon his skills in union with the other instrumentalists and singers.

# Arrupe



# The Platform and the Society

The Platform and the Society (of Jesus) is a proposal for young adults, backed by the Jesuit church in Paris, St. Ignatius, for and by young men and women!

Christian Motsch, S.J.

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

**From the outset**, inspiration was not lacking, nor audacity. How does the Platform present itself? “Are you between 18 and 29 years old? Do you experience a bit of a contrast between an evening spent at a bar or a coffee machine and Mass on Sunday? As a student or a young professional, do you find it hard to center your life on what is really essential? Do you ask yourself how to be sure of what is important for you and how to make good choices at a turning point of your life? We have two bits of good news for you: 1. You are not the only one to pose these questions, and 2. Together with the Jesuits, we have devised some solutions to accompany you and to help you discover what is best for you.”

The Platform and the Society (of Jesus) is a proposal for young adults backed by the Jesuit church in Paris, St. Ignatius, for and by young men and women. What happened is that some fifteen young adults took responsibility for bringing to other young people the substance of the various initiatives proposed. That meant not only figuring out the needed logistics for that, but searching for ways to adapt them, with us Jesuits, to set up an innovative framework of accompaniment. Seven of them make up a core group, an animating team, which meets often, evaluates the first steps, and proposes needed adaptations. All the activities are renewed in light of the “Mission” of the Platform, formulated this way:

# Paris



“To permit young adults to find themselves and by that to discover their calling and their deep desires in order to serve freely.”

When you are between 18 and 29, you look for ways to harmonize your aspirations and your life. The Platform and the Society wants to become a place where these young people, searching for meaning, can be accompanied. There are several hundred people benefitting from these journeys in the course of a year, in various ways. This formation is very sought after. It’s not a case of simply giving out a pre-set itinerary organized in advance (multiple formation schemes already exist in Paris), but helping young adults to formulate their own existential questions and accompanying them in a personalized journey both intellectual and spiritual. It is a case of offering a place where each one can formulate, put out for discussion, and allow for adjustment or sifting through the questions that this brings up and the interaction with questions posed by others. To put it another way: “Is your

## The Platform and the Society

mind blinded by your studies, or on the contrary softened by your first steps in active life? Come feed it with a new, essential substance: the intelligence of faith. The Platform and the Society proposes that you plumb certain crucial questions about the faith and the world, which are posed to young people so that they may engage both better. Discover the themes proposed and come to form yourself, to debate and exchange ideas with us!”

The Exercises in Daily Life (EDL) have had an equally clear success: they unfold over five weeks punctuated by meetings

with the whole group of about 50 participants. Each week all participants receive a notebook with indications for their times of daily prayer. They will meet once a week with their personal “companion”, religious or lay. The weekly meetings include times of prayer, socializing and formation; they are a means which allows the participants to share with others what they are experiencing deeply as they seek to anchor their prayer in everyday life and to be sustained in their journey by the entire group. After four years of experience, we are already using our ninth version of this project.



A chance to give glory to God by ordering my life to this end. Learning to make my life an anticipation of the kingdom by tuning in to the Lord’s calls and responding to them. **Alexandre**

During EDL, a Jesuit priest said this to participants: “Why do you search for the living among the dead?” I have the impression that I was always waiting for this question. It set me in motion and invited me to choose a path. But nothing came all of a sudden; it was obviously a step forward which enabled me to welcome that question at that time. I was waiting without knowing what to expect, I heard... I didn’t hear only the priest, but a call. I don’t remember the context of that

phrase, but it was enough for me. The fruit was ripe and it had fallen... Is that the end? No, it’s only the beginning of a path of discernment, of listening, of encounters and a sort of very active passivity toward choosing a way and moving on. **Pedro**

“I would like to learn to be free” – those were the first words I said to my spiritual companion during our initial meeting. At that time I was trying to choose between two desires, both so deeply anchored in me that I couldn’t imagine renouncing either one. This time of discernment lasted a year. I still remember the great peace which enveloped me after each conversation. I also hold on to the “How so?” of my compan-

ion as she interrupted me when I was explaining that outside of my object of desire I saw neither a path, nor any light, to distinguish the idols which get in the way between God and us and which hide what is real. Because of her important responsibilities my companion was forced to stop our meetings after ten months, before I had come to a decision. Comprehending before I did that the decision was already ripe; she told me that I really had no need of her. And in fact, courage and a firm will to decide which I had never known until then had sprung up in me. **Florence**

To listen to the appeals to my heart enveloped as it is in an obscure night, caught up in the tumult and the brouhaha of active life. To render myself attentive so as to pick out the light breeze, the discrete murmur that comes to speak to me, to create a desire in me, to mold and fashion me. Discernment is letting oneself be carried by an elan, which leads, little by little, to choosing how always to love more

# Witnesses



*When you're between 18 and 29, you look for ways to harmonize your aspirations and your life. The Platform and the Society wants to become a place where these young people, searching for meaning, can be accompanied.*

and serve God and the world more freely, and so to become ever more what God calls us to be. "Our decisions manifest our values." We become continually more authentic sons and daughters of God though exercising our freedom, marked by God's infinite confidence in us and by his invitation to share his divine life. **Louise**

The EDL opened a new time of my life: from then on, I would move toward the future in a very different way. Graces were so numerous for me; they allowed me to get my life together. I understood that other people were not an obstacle, a threat to my freedom, but eventually companions in my searching. Today I have a deep conviction that, from the outset and before everything, my path is human. **Mathieu**

A desire for a better understanding of myself and of what animates my being, a lucid gaze on my existence, on what is in harmony and what is not, so as to choose concrete ways of being, to re-read

the past, to know the present, to orient the future. **Valentine**

To look upon God as taking part in our life: that opens us to discernment. It is an exercise of expression. It is the power to express what we experience and that to which I strongly aspire in light of what I experience. It is a continual process. **Marc**

Being on the alert to alter myself. To discern is to fix an accurate gaze on just how I live, and at the same time hold on to an

openness, a welcoming to accommodate because of an encounter, ready to be changed by a changing world. To discern is to circle around and reconnoiter, to come back to the source of life. It is a life-path through accompaniment that I find in the Platform: to let oneself be changed by what one experiences. It's also made concrete in my work as a medical intern: how do I position myself through relating to those I listen to, what is my attitude, what do I say, how do I lead my patients on their paths of life? **Guillemette**



90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canisius College Jakarta

## Bracing for the New Century

The mission of Canisius College is to prepare young people to be aware of these challenges, be competent and committed to help solve societal problems and lead the society to be a better one.

Heru Hendarto, S.J.

**Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** especially in Indonesia is and will be marked with radical changes in various fields. As Charles Dickens says paradoxically, “*Tis the best of times. ‘Tis also the worst of times*”. Today the technology of mass communication has made our planet smaller, rapidly narrowing the distance between different people and cultures.

Our world is becoming more and more interconnected. However, despite great advances made in science and technology, each day we see how much suffering there is in the world on account of different kinds of poverty, both material and spiritual, on account of the suffering of our environment and community life. Our times call for a new attitude to assist our neighbours in need.

In the Indonesian context, problems in this century include poverty, environmental damage, democracy and nation-building, civil culture disintegration, corruption, and religious fundamentalism. All these problems may be summarized into three areas. These are environmental damage, poverty, and threats to democracy as well as nation building due to religious intolerance. This situation has led to the need for the formation of more responsive, responsible, and caring young people to

give their love and talents, to be involved in serving others in need. The mission of Canisius College is to prepare young people to be aware of these challenges, be competent and committed to help solve societal problems and lead the society to be a better one.

In 2017, we celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canisius College. The school was established in 1927 as the “Algemeene Middlebare School” (AMS). The first director was the Dutch missionary, Father J. Kurris, SJ. On August 1, 1950, all the Dutch names of the school (ELS, HIS, HCS, MULO, AMS and HBS) were replaced with Indonesian names SD (Sekolah Dasar – Elementary School), SMP (Sekolah Menengah Pertama), and SMA (Sekolah Menengah Atas).

In 1952, the foundation of Canisius College was established “Yayasan Budi Siswa” as well as the establishment of SMP – as the Junior High School – and since that time, SMP became the integrated part of Yayasan Budi Siswa.

The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations were launched on January 6, 2017, with a special mass presided over by Father P. Sunu Hardiyanta, SJ – Provincial of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia. We launched all the activities, which would take place throughout the year in commemoration of the beginning of our school. This was followed by many different activities throughout this special moment of anniversary. First, there were several activities of deepening the characteristics of the Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm through several discussions on how to implement the core values,



# Canisius



## Bracing for the New Century

Canisius College Jakarta  
*is always abuzz with  
life and activity.*

namely “competence, conscience, compassion and commitment” into our education system in Indonesia and daily activities. What sort of best practices that can be shared with our teaching colleagues as well as their counterparts from many different Jesuit schools. The workshops took place on January 30, 2017 and August 7-8, 2017.

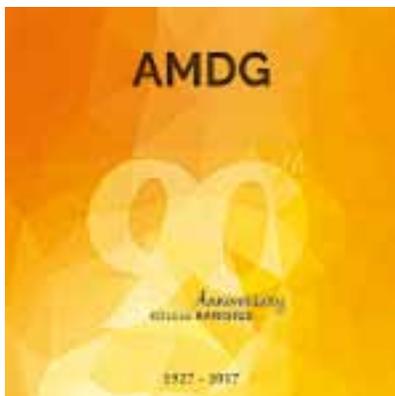
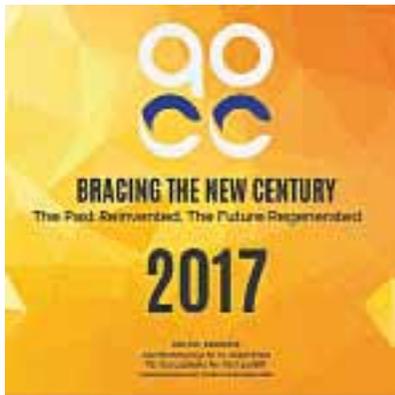
Secondly, we also invited our students’ parents to take part in short retreats, beginning on February 4, 2017. We hope that through gathering and reflection the

parents may learn from one another how to be a Canisian’s parent in a very fast moving world.

Third, we also had a special alumni day, which was held on April 29, 2017. Apart from a regular meetings, the alumni are also planning to engage in some form of community service. They will also hold discussions with other alumni/ae associations. The topic of their discussion will be “Canisius for Indonesia”.

Fourth, in line with the motto mentioned above we will also start with our project in Gn Putri, Karanggan for the Teachers’ Training Centre followed by the laboratory school, which will be part of the Training Centre. We are going to begin with the feasibility studies for both projects. Eventually we hope to send our proposal to Father General.

# Gn Putri





*The Jesuit Provincial of Indonesia presides at the Mass to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of Canisius College, Jakarta.*







