

Promotio Iustitiae

SPECIAL DOCUMENT

Renewing our commitment to a faith that does justice

Social Coordinators of the Conferences



**Social Justice and Ecology
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Thank you, Father Arrupe

Dear Father Arrupe,

We are told that, just a few years after you were elected Superior General by GC 31 in 1965, you became convinced of the need to call another Congregation. You were confident that a new congregation would allow the Society to complete the process of adaptation that the Second Vatican Council wanted religious orders and congregations to undertake.

Many of the Jesuit theologians who had taken part in the Council were elected as members of General Congregation 31, where they were able to apply to the Society the new vision provided by the Council. Later analysts says that that congregation represented a major reorientation for the Society, but a few years later you felt it was still insufficient. You believed it necessary to take a further step.

The Council had brought about a veritable revolution within the Church. Deepening her faith in the mystery of Christ and the Trinity, the Church came to a new understanding of herself and her relation to the world. She looked on the world now not with severity but with mercy. She beheld a world overwhelmed with afflictions before which she could not remain unmoved.

You too felt the world's pain, Father Pedro. You contemplated the world with the compassion of those who see it with the eyes of God. From the days of your youth you were drawn to the places where the poor people lived, and your calling as a medical doctor brought you close to the suffering of the sick. The catastrophe of the atomic bomb and its countless victims found you there at the center of the horror in your beloved Japan. On many occasions you shared profound experiences with other Jesuits committed to the cause of the impoverished. You always supported and were moved by their generosity. Your heart was in tune with theirs.

You were clairvoyant in your vision of a world that was approaching a historical crossroads. You foresaw that major transformations were underway that would affect every part of the world, something that today is obvious to us. You were especially dismayed by the fact that humankind possessed the means to do away with hunger, underdevelopment, and war but that it lacked the will to do so. You had no doubt that the Society needed revamping.

Father Kolvenbach once said that you had climbed up the crags of the highest peaks and from there could behold the far horizon with utter clarity. You became a great guide for the Society because you listened to the voice of the Spirit and you never lost sight of the "pillar of cloud" by which the Lord led his people through the desert.

Finally, you called General Congregation 32, which began in the year 1974. It was not free of conflict. Viewed retrospectively, it was the scene of creative debates that allowed the power of the Spirit to infiltrate the body of a Society that was ready to receive it. This Congregation was responsible for providing a new formulation of our mission: “the mission of the Society of Jesus today is service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement.”¹ The promotion of justice meant working so that the Kingdom of God might dawn ever more brightly in the complex reality of this world. Contemplating the world as an undivided whole, the Congregation expressed a compassionate desire to heal all its wounds and to have the Society do all it could to help toward that healing.

Decree 4 of GC 32 had somewhat explosive effects throughout the Society. It gave some Jesuits the energy to work with total generosity, even to the point of giving their lives. It caused others to draw back before what was novel and unknown and to wonder whether the legacy of the first companions was being betrayed.

You personally suffered the outrage, the accusations, the incomprehension, and the suspicion of those who previously had placed great trust in you. Nevertheless, you never let go of the rudder, nor did you turn it in a different direction. You were convinced that the Spirit was inspiring the Society in that historical moment, and you wanted to be faithful to that Spirit. As Saint Ignatius expected of the Superior General, you showed the “magnanimity and fortitude of soul” that allowed you to “bear the weaknesses of many, initiate great undertakings in the service of God our Lord, and persevere in them with the needed constancy, without losing courage in the face of the contradictions.”²

We will never be able to thank you enough. What you accomplished has placed us in good company, that of the poor and of so many friends who are working for world that is more beautiful and more just. When we are with them, we discover the face of the poor and humble Christ of the Gospel.

We lost many companions along the way. You learned of the deaths of some of them when you were incapacitated and unable to communicate. You couldn’t tell us how you felt, but certainly you experienced great grief. You may also have realized that those deaths were a confirmation of the call the Society had received, and you were consoled that the body of the Society was able to accompany the Christ who “suffers in his humanity” (SpEx 195).

The world today is no more just than the world you knew. It has become smaller and more connected due to improved means of communication. But it continues to seethe with injustice, hunger, war, and violence. The mission affirmed in that now famous Decree 4 has become more urgent and important than ever, and it no longer arouses conflict among us. Rather, this mission now shapes our reading of the Scriptures, our preaching of the Gospel, and our understanding of the faith, for we understand that it is the mission of Christ himself, in which we are invited to take part.

We Jesuits are fewer on the ground than we were in 1975, and our numbers are still declining. Our Society today speaks many languages and has many hues – it is more diverse. You would still enjoy meeting your fellow Jesuits. You would be delighted by their diversity and by seeing in them the same spirit of Ignatius, which was also the spirit that gave you life. You have been for us a splendid example of how the Ignatian tradition helps people to grow both in their humanity and in their intimacy with God.

¹ GC 32, D. 4, n. 2.

² Constitutions, 728.

During April of this year 2015, as we were celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Decree 4 and preparing for General Congregation 36, which will take place next year, the conference coordinators of the social apostolate met in Rome to dialogue about how to renew our ardor for the justice that is born of faith. We then expressed the substance of our dialogue in a document about the spiritual sources of our commitment to justice, the changes that have taken place in the Society and the world, the challenge of fostering greater solidarity in the Society today, and some concrete recommendations that will help us move forward.

We want to address this document to our Jesuit companions and to the lay associates who share the mission with us, but we are also hoping that it will help the many other people who form part of the Ignatian family.

With this document, we want also to offer you a small homage, in the form of a pledge to continue the Society's commitment to serving today the poor and humble Christ of the Gospel.

Conference Coordinators of the Social Apostolate³

³ William Kelley SJ (North America), Roberto Jaramillo SJ (Latin America), José Ignacio García SJ (Europe), Rigobert Minani SJ (Africa), Stanislaus Jebamalai SJ (South Asia), Benny Juliawan SJ (Asia/Pacific). They were joined by Tom Greene SJ (North America), Denis Kim SJ (Asia Pacific), and Xavier Jeyaraj SJ (South Asia). The meeting was chaired by Luis Arancibia (Entreculturas, Spain). The coordinators were convoked by Patxi Álvarez SJ, Secretary for Social Justice and Ecology (Rome).

1. Spiritual roots and fruits

Our commitment to the poor and to the transformation of this broken world grows out of faith that does justice. Our faith inspires us to serve and nourishes the roots that bear fruit in our works, and in turn our efforts on behalf of justice enrich our faith. Our closeness to the poor and our sharing in their struggles is a place of grace; it is a place where we encounter the poor and humble Lord of the Gospel, a place that has brought us many spiritual fruits.

Feeling a need to delve deeply into this spiritual experience, we dedicate this first section to reviewing the roots we have discovered, to considering the creative dialogue between faith and justice and to presenting some of the fruits of faith that our work for justice has produced. We will also point out some challenges what we need to face in this regard.

1.1 Spiritual roots

The experience of these past decades shows us that when our mission is supported by deep spiritual roots, our service to the poor becomes a place where we encounter God, where our failures are experienced in a horizon of hope, and where we learn to interpret the signs of the Kingdom as true gifts of God. Our spiritual roots help us to take the side of the victims and to share with them “their joys and their hopes, their griefs and their anxieties.”⁴ In the sad instances when we are not nourished by these roots, we find that our motivation becomes contaminated by alien interests and our perseverance falters.

It is therefore important to identify these roots and to cultivate them both individually and in community. They are a source of solidarity with the poor and with the victims of history. In what follows we spell them out, in the hope that we will let ourselves to be nourished by them and so renew and reinforce our commitment to justice and to those who are the least and the last.

a) The Scriptures issue an urgent call to care for the outcasts. They represent the millennial tradition of a people that experienced God as a friend of life (Wis 11,26), a God who showed compassion on those who suffer. Certain scriptural passages are especially meaningful for us:

The first pages of Genesis echo the question that Yahweh put to Cain after he had killed his brother Abel: **“Where is your brother?”** (Gen 4,9). The God revealed in Scripture does not forget the abandoned but reminds us of their great value. The God of the Bible makes us responsible for other human beings. The question posed to Cain reaches all the victims of history, restoring to them their wounded dignity. Being concerned for other human beings as brothers and sisters, part of our own family, is at the heart of our Judeo-Christian tradition.

Seeing the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt, Yahweh declared: “I have seen the misery of my people; I have heard their cry because of their oppression; I have know their sufferings” (Ex 3,7). YHWH is a compassionate God who is neither distant nor unfeeling but draws close to his people and shows them mercy. He is pained by the suffering of humanity and feels each person’s anguish as his own. He does not close his eyes to our ailments and our anguish but shares them with us. He is Emmanuel, “God with us.”

Through his ministry Jesus made the loving compassion of God the Father into a program of life: “The Spirit of the Lord... has sent me **to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release**

⁴ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1.

to the captives, to restore sight to the blind, and to free the oppressed..." (Luke 4,18). Jesus came to give dignity to the forgotten and the excluded, and he dedicated his life to them. For the desperate people of his time, Jesus was the Good Samaritan (Luke 10,33-34): moved by mercy, he rescued the outcasts from the gutters and the ditches; he cleaned and tended their wounds. His ways of seeing, feeling, and acting were like those of the father of the prodigal son (Luke 15:20).

As followers of Jesus, we are invited to do the same on behalf of our suffering sisters and brothers, for Jesus has identified himself with them: **"Whatever you do for one of the least of these sisters and brothers of mine, you do for me"** (Matt 25,40). Imbued with the spirit of these words, many Christians find profound consolation in serving the neediest, seeing in them the Lord still crucified.

b) **The contemplation of Jesus**, our beloved Lord, produces in us an internal knowledge of his feelings and attitudes, a knowledge that shows us how to live as he did. As we calmly contemplate his life and are amazed by it, we enter into the heart that moved him into action, and we learn to serve those who suffer and to share in their lives.

Our loving relationship to Jesus and our affection for his person move us to be his companions in mission, being always aware of those who suffer, sympathizing with their situation, and serving them faithfully. The attraction we feel to Jesus increases our *desire* to live as he did, to follow in his footsteps, particularly in the way he related to the poor.

c) The **social teaching of the Church** is another source of encouragement and support for our service of solidarity. Over the last fifty years the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) of the Second Vatican Council has served as a platform for subsequent development of this body of doctrine. *Gaudium et Spes* has been followed by numerous encyclicals and other official documents that have consolidated its social teaching and given it coherence. As a result, this teaching is fully recognized and accepted within the Church even if it is not well known by all Catholics. Paul VI, Saint John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis⁵ have all contributed to this effort.

Reading these documents and taking them to prayer has motivated us in our mission to serve faith and promote justice. It would be nearly impossible to comprehend our present commitment without this ecclesial framework that gives it meaning, orientation, and support.

d) In these last few decades we have rediscovered that **living with the poor and serving them is for us a profound religious wellspring**. When we are among them, we experience the compassionate action of the God of Jesus. Thanks to their many qualities and the energy they arouse within us, the poor have the ability to evangelize us.⁶ They incorporate us into the logic of the Gospel. Living with them is for us a source of consolation; it increases our "faith, hope, and charity" and gives us interior peace and joy in the Lord.⁷

Going forth to encounter the poor has meant for us a true experience of God. Many of our companions have felt the need to reflect theologically on the meaning of living among the

⁵ The most important encyclicals are *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) of Paul VI; *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) of Saint John Paul II; and *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) of Benedict XVI. Benedict has also repeatedly referred to the need to care for the natural world. A key document from this period was *Justice in the World*, issued by the Universal Synod of Bishops in 1971. Pope Francis has recently published his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium* 198.

⁷ Cf. SpEx 316.

poor, giving testimony of their experience in a **theology of liberation**. Their considerations help us to delve deeper into the mystery of the compassionate God who is ever active among the impoverished; they give us meaning and hope and strengthen our desire to stay strong in our commitment.

Living with the poor has also enabled us to **gain a more incisive knowledge of the world in which we live**. Our social reality does not look the same when we view it from the other side of history, from the side of the victims. By drawing close to the victims we have discovered the injustice of the opaque structures that oppressively entrap the poor.

The reality experienced by the poor **exposes the profound dynamics of injustice**, especially its contempt for human dignity and its exclusion of those deemed “unworthy.” Among the poor, many things suddenly become crystal clear; the poor provide us intuitive insights that spare us long reasoning processes, and they transmit to us a gut-level knowledge that moves us toward commitment.

The poor have also helped us to **know ourselves better**: our fears and suspicions, our ways of reacting to injustice and poverty. Their manner of facing life challenges us, especially their capacity for celebration, their joy and their hope in the face of adversity. They force us to question our own deeper motivations. When we draw close to the poor and let ourselves be impacted by their situation, we are forced to face life with greater seriousness and resolve, and in doing this, it is important not to fall into ideological dogmatisms.

e) Our way of giving the **Spiritual Exercises** has also changed as a result of our new understanding of the present historical reality. This transformation took place at the very same time that Jesuit scholars were making serious efforts to improve our knowledge of the original sources of Ignatian spirituality. The First Week of the Exercises now opens us up to consideration of the structures of sin. The Second Week leads us to contemplate the ways in which Jesus sought out the poor, the sick, and the outcast in order to heal them, and it encourages us to feel the way Jesus felt. The Third Week gives us a better understanding of the dynamics of evil, and it helps us to cope with the failures that the poor experience in their struggles and the ones that we experience when we live alongside them. The Fourth Week opens us up to the hope of the Kingdom that God has promised us, the Kingdom that has already captured the hearts and the minds of so many people.

f) We have come to know many other persons – both believers and doubters – who dedicate their lives to building a kinder, more humane world. There are countless persons who, in the diversity of their traditions, make manifest the labor of God on behalf of the Kingdom. Their example and their testimony give us much encouragement and energy in our own work for justice. They make clear to us the meaning and the beauty of a life devoted to helping the least and the last, and they convince us that many more such persons are needed. We have also learned how necessary it is to collaborate with them in the great common task we share.

We therefore feel ourselves to be fellow pilgrims with the poor and with those who work for justice: “we have often been touched by their faith, renewed by their hope, transformed by their love.”⁸

⁸ General Congregation 34, D. 3, n. 1.

1.2 The creative dialogue between faith and justice

a) The mission spelled out in Decree 4 of GC 32 has been a great grace and gift for the Society, for it helped us to become friends with the poor and with those who work for a more just world. Through them the God of life has become truly present for us. This mission has therefore been not so much a moral obligation incumbent upon us but rather our attempt to respond to the benefits we have received.

Recognizing that all this is grace, we have become more conscious of our limitations and therefore more humble. This mission is God's work; he carries it forward and invites us to share in his work. We are simply "servants of the mission of Christ" (GC 34, D. 2). We do not have the power to resolve the problems of this world; rather, they overwhelm us. The transformation of human hearts and social structures can come about only by the logic of grace.

b) Decree 4 established a **mutual reference between faith and justice**. It understood the promotion of justice to be a requirement of faith (n. 2). It also declared that problems such as hunger, poverty, inequality, and discrimination were not only social or technical problems; they were also "personal and spiritual" problems that required that "the Gospel be proclaimed with fresh vigor" (n. 21). Faith and justice need one another, each complementing the other.

The balance proposed by the decree was not attained in practice. In some provinces a deep division arose between Jesuits who in social justice work and those in pastoral and educational ministries. The result was misunderstanding and conflict. In other provinces the "promotion of justice" was seen as an ideological option. Many institutions found it difficult to make a preferential option for society's outcasts. This mission, therefore, encountered resistance.

In order to achieve a true integration of faith and justice, there was need for much dialogue, clarification, and mutual respect. This integration was partially achieved during the deliberations of the following General Congregations, especially GC 34 and GC 35, which reaffirmed the mission of faith and justice and defined it with greater clarity.⁹

GC 34 confirmed and encouraged our work for structural change, but it stressed also the need for dialoguing with cultures and helping to transform them, since cultures constitute the base on which political and economic structures are built. The Congregation also pointed out the importance of dialogue with other religions and working together with them in the construction of a more just and more humane world.

GC 35 interpreted our work for justice in terms of reconciliation and called for the restoration of our relations with God, with others, and with creation (D. 3). It made the care of creation an essential component of our commitment to justice, joining it closely with defense of the poor.

As a result, our understanding of justice has taken on rich new meanings: it is experienced as an expression of faith in the Father's mercy, of faith that dialogues with other creeds and other cultures, of faith that defends creation and restores relations.

⁹ GC 34 treats of this mutual relation between faith and justice in Decree 2, nn. 14-21. The Congregation creates a single, overarching mission by combining service of faith and promotion of justice with intercultural dialogue and interreligious dialogue.

But it is not just a matter of conceptual clarification. Tall walls of incomprehension have been brought down by **the solidarity among companions, the mutual appreciation of one another's work, and our gratitude to God** for the mission of other Jesuits. These qualities have helped us to perceive the unity of our mission in the great diversity of our works and ministries.

After several decades, it is generally accepted today in the body of the Society that our commitment to justice derives from our faith and not from an ideological option.¹⁰ We are therefore firmly united in a common belief that our mission consists in "the service of faith and the promotion of justice."

c) When faith and justice become intimately intertwined, **our mission acquires these unique characteristics:**

- *Creativity*, resulting from our desire to respond in more effective and transformative ways to the God who works for the sake of his poorest children. Creativity is a fruit of the love that is born of faith. It is also an expression of the Ignatian *magis*.
- *A holistic and global perspective*. Our activity, no matter how locally focused it may be, should express concern for the world as a whole and should awaken a desire to transform it. This perspective is prefigured in the Contemplation on the Incarnation in the Spiritual Exercises: the Trinity "gazes on the whole sphere of the earth," sees the suffering of humankind, and determines to save it (SpEx 102).
- *Long-term projects* with processes that respect the timetable of God and the pace of human communities. The building of the Kingdom is an enduring task that will come to fulfillment only by God's action at the end of time.
- The practice of *discernment*, which seeks to discover in our always ambiguous reality the presence of the Spirit who is moving history ever closer to fulfillment.
- The combination of *compassionate attention to persons* and *activity that transforms structures*.
- The understanding of persons and communities as *creators of their own history* and not mere recipients of our services. This understanding leads us to recognize their dignity and to help them be protagonists of their own growth and development.

The greater the integration of faith and justice in our mission, the more the mission will have these very characteristics.

1.3 The fruits of our commitment to the justice born of faith

We can identify some definite fruits for the Society that have been born of our commitment to justice.

- We have incorporated the spirit of the commitment to justice into all our ministries, and we have understood better its reach and its possibilities. We now realize that *this mission belongs to the whole body of the Society* and cannot be considered as exclusive to any sector.

¹⁰ Pope Benedict XVI stated this in his "Address to General Congregation 35" (n. 8) in reference to the option for the poor; he said that "the preferential option of the poor is implicit in the christological faith in a God who has made himself poor for us. ... For us the choice of the poor is not ideological but is born from the Gospel."

- GC 32 issued the prophetic warning that working for justice would require us to pay a price (D. 4, n. 46), and Father Arrupe repeated the warning in his speeches after 1975. Since then *more than fifty Jesuit companions have suffered violent deaths* in the places where they were working.
- Today we feel much more *humble* as we face the problems of humankind. Realizing how little power we have before them, we are more conscious of the need to collaborate with other persons and groups that share our mission. We recognize the need to create networks with them and to contribute from our own rich resources.
- Today *we share our faith* with men and women of our time and walk alongside them. We make their hopes and disappointments our own, and we seek to share with them the hope born of our own faith in the universal, unconditional love of God.
- Our relationship with others enables us to *draw closer to the problems in all their complexity*. It allows our minds and hearts to raise questions about degradation of the environment, discrimination against women, the need for a multicultural perspective, etc.
- At the same time, we recognize that *our faith has become purified and enriched* in our service to the poor. As GC 34 stated, "Our service, especially among the poor, has deepened our life of faith [so that] our faith has become more paschal, more compassionate, more tender, more evangelical in its simplicity."¹¹
- We now understand that our *vow of poverty* is closely linked to the option for the poor.¹² It is a sign of evangelical solidarity and a condition of our credibility. Our friendship with the poor helps us to understand the meaning of the vow and to live it with greater authenticity.
- Our *prayer* has also become more concerned with the needs of the poor.

1.4 The specific challenges of our commitment to faith and justice

We have also recognized some specific challenges on which we need to work. We ask the following questions:

- *How can we share our spiritual tradition with the poor, with non-Catholics, and with the indigenous peoples?* There are already some successful experiences, but there is still much more that needs to be done. Since Ignatian spirituality helps people to become protagonists of their own history, it can be especially beneficial for the poor.
- *How can we enrich our liturgy and other celebration with our experience of service to the poor so that our mission makes sense to them and is enriched by them?* Understanding this will also help us to recapture the dimension of mystery that is part of the promotion of justice.
- *How can we make Jesuit formation a time that encourages in young men the foundational experience of service to the poor and instills in them a desire to transform and humanize our social structures?*

¹¹ GC 34, D. 2, n. 1.

¹² This is treated in Decree 9 of GC 34.

Questions to discuss in group:

- What are the spiritual roots that motivate you to work for faith and justice?
- What are the characteristics of our mission that help us to reinforce the mutual enrichment of faith and justice?
- How has your faith been strengthened by serving those who are excluded?
- In your opinion, what are the most important challenges for us (at both the personal and the community level) if we want to integrate faith and justice?

2. The novelty of our present context

Many realities have changed since 1975 both in the world and in the Society. In this section we want to treat some of these changes and point out the challenges facing us in this new historical epoch. We will first present in summary form a few of the transformations that have taken place in the world.

2.1 The new international realities

We single out three global realities that were already evident by 1975. First, the Sixties witnessed the **decolonization of Africa** and the birth of many new nations that were seeking their path toward national identity and economic development. The process of building new states was long and complex, especially since these nations were at the same time being pressured to form international alliances according to the logic of the Cold War.

The second reality, then, was the **Cold War** resulting from the confrontation between the capitalist and the communist blocs, which included most of the countries in the world. These two great forces seeking world hegemony represented very different social, political, and economic models. Most armed conflicts during those years were highly influenced by this geopolitical conflict.

A third, less evident reality in 1975 was the Western world's option to limit further expansion of the welfare state, which had been the model of growth and development adopted in the West after World War II. The economic crisis of the Seventies called that model into question and paved the path to the **economic globalization policies** promoted in the Eighties by Thatcher in the U.K. and by Reagan in the U.S.

Among the many events that played a key role in the following years, we mention just three:

- In 1979 *the Chinese economy took off*.¹³ In the following years it experienced exponential growth which vastly increased its international influence.
- The year 1989 saw *the fall of the Berlin wall*, which led to the collapse of the communist bloc and the subsequent discrediting of the whole Soviet system. The countries most affected by the collapse experienced great tensions, which often gave rise to armed internal conflicts, especially between ethnic groups. Many international borders were changed. Since Western capitalism seemed to be the only viable option left for economic development, corporate globalization was given a strong boost. For a time it looked as though the whole world shared a common destiny.
- In September 2001 extremists launched *the attack on the Twin Towers in New York*, which unleashed a campaign against Muslim-inspired international terrorism, including especially the war in Afghanistan (2001) and the invasion of Iraq (2003). These conflicts severely eroded the Muslim world, which was already convulsed as a result of the long years of conflict with Israel and the brutal war between Iran and Iraq (1980-88).

¹³ The decisive third plenary of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party took place in December 1978. With that plenary began the reform processes under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

The world in which we find ourselves today is very different from the world of 1975. Concretely, it is much more globalized, so that many events affect all nations simultaneously. But they affect different countries, different social strata, and different ethnic groups in very different ways.

We have mentioned here some of the events that are now deeply affecting the lives of millions of persons and are directly influencing the communities and persons being served by our social apostolic works.

2.1.1 Economic globalization: growth and exclusion

The economic globalization that began in the Eighties was promoted by large international organisms such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).¹⁴ These entities determine the international economic agenda and are equipped with the mechanisms needed to carry it out.

Some of the measures advanced by these entities are the liberalization of markets through suppression of tariffs, lowering of barriers to foreign investment, privatization of state enterprises, and deregulation of markets. Their overall objective is to create a broad international market in which all countries seek to specialize in the production of goods that they can profitably export, while importing goods that can be produced more cheaply elsewhere. Such globalization allows financial markets to grow even faster than the real economy.

At the same time, **structural adjustments** are imposed for the purpose of restructuring debt or managing economic crises; these adjustments usually have very negative consequences for the poorest people in the affected countries. The liberalization policies also generally open the borders of the countries to the investment of foreign capital.

These measures have produced a strong **increase in international trade** and **sustained economic growth** in most regions of the planet. The growth slowed only after the economic crisis of 2008, though not in the same way for all countries.

Since economic growth in developing countries has been greater than that in the wealthy countries, **the large gap existing between rich and poor nations** has in general diminished.

Meanwhile, during the last thirty years a billion persons have ceased to live in a state of extreme poverty, which means they now have an income of more than \$1.25 per day per person. About 700 million of these persons are Chinese. A large part of the reduction in poverty was achieved by providing direct or conditioned subsidies for the poorest people, especially those in regions like Latin America. On the other hand, the number of persons living in a situation of poverty (with per capita income between \$1.25 and \$2.00 per day) has hardly changed; it remains at about 2.4 billion. Also, many more children are going to school, and life expectancy continues to improve.

Subsaharan Africa merits a particular mention. It was very much affected by the debt crisis of the eighties. From 1980 to 2005, the number of people suffering extreme poverty there doubled, from 200 million to 400 million. This trend started to change in 2008, when a meagre 12 million people rose out of extreme poverty. This was the first time when fewer than half of

¹⁴ The WTO exercised great power until the Doha Round (2001), when the differences between the rich countries and the developing countries began to hamper the work of that organism.

Africans lived below the poverty line.¹⁵ It was mainly the result of sustained economic growth. In the last decade, this growth has been 5%. The challenge that Africa now faces is how to continue its struggle against poverty when, by 2050, the population is estimated to double, from 1.1 billion into 2.4 billion.

Despite the decrease in the extent of extreme poverty, there has been a **notable increase in economic inequality**; this increase was observed in most countries starting in the Eighties¹⁶ and has been confirmed by several reports published since 2011.¹⁷ An increasing gap exists between technically trained workers and those with only a general education, with the result that a dual labor market has been established. There is also greatly increased inequality of wealth between the richest and the poorest. In times of low economic growth the wealthy generally fare quite well, while those who work for wages experience diminished income.¹⁸

Not only is the inequality growing; it is becoming scandalous. In 2007 the richest fifth (20%) of humankind received 83% of all wealth produced while the poorest two-fifths (40%) received only 3% of global wealth.¹⁹ Some 1.3 billion persons live without electricity, 2.6 billion lack sanitary facilities, and 900 million have no ready access to safe, drinkable water.²⁰ In 2014 some 800 million persons suffered malnutrition²¹ while at the same time 1.9 billion were overweight.²² The **economic exclusion** that we are witnessing on the planet today is especially lamentable since it is quite within our power to eliminate it.

Some human groups especially suffer the effects of exclusion. In most countries, for example, **women** occupy a subordinate role in the home, in civil society, and in religion; they are exposed to domestic violence, and their salaries are lower than those of men doing the same work; schooling of girls is inferior to that of boys; and in some countries there is an extensive practice of aborting girl babies.

Among the excluded are also many **young people**, who often have great difficulty in finding remunerative work. As a result, their future prospects are limited, giving rise to possible social upheaval, such as happened during the Arab Spring, in which young people played an important part.

The de-localization of businesses and the outsourcing of production to low-wage countries has provoked increased **labor insecurity** and deterioration of working conditions. The

¹⁵ The Economist, *Global poverty. A fall to cheer*, 3 May 2012.

¹⁶ The exception is Latin America, which has seen inequality diminish thanks to policies aimed at correcting this imbalance. Nevertheless, the initial levels of inequality were greater than in most other regions of the planet. Despite the general tendency, Mexico and Chile have seen an increase in inequality.

¹⁷ A decisive report was that published by the OECD in 2011, *Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising*; it indicated a significant increase in general awareness of the growth of inequality. The OECD published a new report in 2015, *In It Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All*, which stresses the benefits of greater equality.

¹⁸ This is the basic thesis of Piketty's 2013 book, *Capital in the 21st Century*, which argues that the constant growth of inequality can be reversed only by levying larger taxes on the wealthiest persons.

¹⁹ UNICEF, *Global Inequality: Beyond the Bottom Billion – A Rapid Review of Income Distribution in 141 Countries*, at <http://goo.gl/xWepsQ>, accessed September 2015.

²⁰ World Bank, 2012, *From Growth to Inclusive Green Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development*, at <http://goo.gl/MKA8K5>, accessed September 2015.

²¹ FAO, 2014, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014*, at <http://goo.gl/Liibq7>, accessed September 2015.

²² WHO, 2015, *Obesity and Overweight*, at <http://goo.gl/pgRYph>, accessed September 2015.

number of **poor working people** is growing throughout the world; they are people who have a job but whose wages do not cover the basic needs of their families.

Pope Francis has criticized this type of economy, calling it an “economy of exclusion and inequality.” It is an economy in which the excluded persons are not even “exploited” but are considered “useless trash.”²³ “Injustice,” he declared, “is the root of all these evils.”²⁴

2.1.2 Migration

Internal migration within countries has resulted in **rapid urbanization**. It is estimated that the year 2010 marked the first time in history that the world’s urban population exceeded the rural. This phenomenon has been accompanied by an increase in sprawling slums inhabited by poor people who suffer extreme exclusion and discrimination. It is expected that this exodus toward the cities will continue in coming decades.

Around the world there has also been an increase in **forced migration** due to violence – wars, insecurity, expropriation of lands, presence of armed groups – or due to environmental degradation – deforestation, droughts, contamination of soil and water. There has been a proliferation of organized criminal gangs that exploit undocumented migrants as they make their way toward wealthier countries. The Mediterranean, the Central American corridor, the U.S.-Mexico border, and the Andaman Sea have all become borderlands of death. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide has now reached a total of 51 million,²⁵ the greatest number since World War II.²⁶ Of this total, some 38 million are **internally displaced**, the most there have been in the last ten years.

Many other persons leave their countries seeking better living conditions and trying to help their families in their countries of origin. Today more than 200 million persons reside outside the countries of their birth. This fast-growing phenomenon is changing the cultural and ethnic composition of many nations, making them much more diverse. **Diversity is a sign of our times**; it can be experienced as opportunity, but it is also often considered a threat.

At the same time, nations are increasing the criminal penalties for irregular migrants, who often are deported or locked up in detention centers. In many countries these centers function as prisons. Meanwhile local populations are becoming more **negatively disposed** toward migrants, and some political parties even exacerbate these sentiments in order to obtain more votes.

This concern has brought the Society to develop a large variety of activities that respond to the needs of refugees – through the Jesuit Refugee Service – and migrants. In recent years, a Global network of Ignatian advocacy for migrants has been created. This tries to promote an integral and international response of the Jesuits who work in this field²⁷.

²³ *Evangelii Gaudium* 53.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 202.

²⁵ UNHCR, at <http://goo.gl/H64qkA>, accessed 2015. This number has grown since the Social Coordinators met in April in Rome, due to the refugee crisis that Europe is experiencing, with people mainly arriving from Syria and Afghanistan.

²⁶ UNHCR, 2015, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2014*, at <http://unhcr.org/556725e69.html>, accessed September 2015.

²⁷ A description of the realities this network is responding to can be found at [Promotio Iustitiae 113](#).

2.1.3 Environmental degradation

By the year 1975 there was evidence of an incipient awareness of the problem of environmental degradation and its consequences. Concern for climate change grew in the following decade as people began to study what its long-term effects might be and what it might cost to prevent a major calamity.²⁸

In 1997 the industrialized nations signed the Kyoto Protocol, by which they agreed to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases.²⁹ The agreement became effective on February 16, 2005.

In the course of the last 40 years further evidence has accumulated of the deterioration of our planet's environment: global warming, deforestation, fresh-water contamination, toxic and non-toxic waste, loss of biodiversity through extinction of species, etc. In all these areas there is the possibility of catastrophic events in the future if we continue to produce and consume in the way we do now: the average global temperature would increase by 2° C, sea levels would rise dramatically, armed conflicts would be waged to control water supplies, and the sixth great extinction of life would take place on earth. The good news, though, is that we still have time to ward off the worst of these ruinous changes.

Mining activities are causing conflict, expropriation of lands, and contaminations of soils and water. In effect, they are practicing and extending a predatory model for exploiting the natural world. Mineral extraction has reached historically unprecedented levels, presenting serious problems for the communities affected by it.

The poorest human groups are the ones most vulnerable to environmental deterioration and the consequences of mining activities. Especially harmed by these activities are the **indigenous communities**, many of which we Jesuits accompany as they struggle to counter the effects of this situation. Sadly, a great many indigenous groups around the world are being exposed to these dangers.

Fortunately, there is also constant growth of **environmental consciousness** and a significant increase in the number of groups in civil society that are taking measures to confront the reality of ecological deterioration. Many social organizations and movements are accompanying communities, raising people's awareness of the problems, and pressuring politicians to pass legislation that will stop abuses. They are also proposing lifestyles that are less committed to consumption and more respectful of the environment.

The Society has recently published two documents that help to throw light on the situation in which we find ourselves: [We Live in a Broken World: Reflections on Ecology](#) (1999) and [Healing a Broken World](#) (2011). Both documents call attention to environmental problems and invite everyone connected to Jesuit communities and institutions to reflect on them. General Congregation 35 (2008) also made a contribution when it presented Creation as one of the realities with which we need to be reconciled (Decree 3).

²⁸ The first meeting of the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) took place in November 1988. The concept of climate change had in fact been receiving serious attention since 1965, when U.S. President Johnson received a report from his Scientific Advisory Council pointing out that "climate changes resulting from an increased concentration of carbon dioxide could be very harmful from a human perspective."

²⁹ They agreed to diminish their emissions at least 5% between 2008 and 2012, taking as a reference point the levels of 1990.

We in the social apostolate are aware of the need to offer our own contribution, and in this regard the various Conferences have made many significant efforts. The webpage [Ecojesuit](#) informs us of the many reflections and experiments that the Society is realizing in this area, with ever greater effectiveness.

We have also launched a network for the governance of natural resources and minerals,³⁰ with the aim of accompanying and protecting the rural and indigenous communities threatened by the dangerous practices of present mining operations.

2.1.4 The emergence of a multi-polar world

The strong growth of **China** in the last four decades has transformed that country into a key world player. A major geo-strategic realignment is resulting from China's colossal economic and demographic dimensions, its investments in almost all parts of the world, and its manufacture products that reach markets everywhere.

China practices what is called "state capitalism," which is seen by some as an alternative to the liberal capitalism of the West. In China the state exercises strong leadership in the economic sphere and is the most important actor in bringing about economic growth. China has begun to offer this model to other countries, especially in Africa, where it has become the most important international investor.

An important factor in the growth of the Chinese economy is the massive exodus of rural workers to the cities. They are now estimated to number 200 million, and many of them, lacking official migratory documents,³¹ are deprived of the rights that other urban residents have.

Together with these nations, China is experiencing a process that can be called **compressed modernization**, which is rapidly and directly affecting the Chinese nation as a whole. The more traditional sectors are being rudely shocked by the swift changes, and even the general population is severely challenged.

Finally, evangelization in China presents a great challenge to the Church. There is an opportunity to expand the message of the Gospel, but doing so will be very taxing and delicate work.

The **Islamic world** is passing through a historical period of serious internal tensions and conflicts. Many countries are suffering the ravages of war, terrorist attacks, and other armed conflicts. The Middle East is the scene of a complex struggle for control of the region, a struggle in which the Sunni and the Shiite Muslims play a decisive role. The very large number of young people in the region have poor prospects for future employment and welfare, and their discontent was one of the main reasons for the recent explosion of protests known as the Arab Spring. In other parts of the world as well, Muslim communities are experiencing a variety of cultural and political tensions.

Islamic terrorism has extended in recent years outside the region. The impact of Islamic fundamentalism on Western nations has been one of the causes of the wars waged by international coalitions in this region; it has also fueled negative Western attitudes toward the

³⁰ Information about this network may be found in [Promotio Iustitiae 118](#) and [Promotio Iustitiae 110](#).

³¹ Migration toward the cities is regulated by a system called *hukou*, which dates from the time of Mao. Only persons who have official permission (*hukou*) are considered regular internal migrants with a right to due social protection. All the rest have only temporary permission and lack such protection.

Islamic world. Armed fundamentalist groups are attracting many young people to their ranks and are destabilizing even nations that are majority Muslim.

Within the Society we have many examples of fine collaboration and friendly relations with Muslim communities in most of the countries where we work. This is a source of hope. Moreover, we feel called to join with persons of other creeds, including Muslims, to work for a world that is more just and more humane.

We mention China and the Muslim world because they are two non-Western realities with global impact. They are eclipsing the dominance of the Western powers, especially the European nations, which in 1975 still exercised a decisive influence in most parts of the world. The economic crisis of 2008, which was especially devastating in Europe, forced Western nations to attend more to their own internal problems.

2.1.5 The cultural impact

The modernizing processes that were already underway in 1975 are now reaching nearly all societies of the planet thanks to expansion of markets, improvement in communications, massive migration, and the influence of the new information media and social networks.

The **indigenous and traditional cultures** have been especially affected and threatened by these modern transformative forces. The historical continuity of their cultures hangs in the balance. Many make an effort to defend themselves by trying to preserve their languages, their customs, their cosmovisions, and their institutions. Nevertheless, modern culture and its many allures are often a powerful attraction for the younger generations, causing a generational split and a loss of the traditional culture among the young. These communities are constantly struggling with questions of cultural continuity.

Many strong traditional cultures, often supported by a robust religious creed, are defending themselves by returning non-critically to their sources in an effort to reinforce their sense of identity. Sometimes these efforts produce a type of nationalist or religious **fundamentalism** that excludes and mistreats minorities that do not identify with it. Many countries are experiencing forms of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist fundamentalism, which tend to defend the identity and status of the dominant groups and to oppose any kind of diversity. Religion is used by those groups to strengthen their economic and social power, and it serves as a vehicle for enlisting the masses in power struggles.

At the same time, the extensive development of **information technologies** that were hardly imaginable in 1975 is transforming people's practices and customs. Knowledge is being democratized but also splintered; the worlds of finance, production, consumption, and labor are being reconfigured; and the foundations are being laid for information societies whose future forms we are still unable to discern.

Without a doubt, then, the questions we are discussing are of global dimensions. We live in a single, united world that is undergoing vertiginous changes. Every region of the planet is experiencing similar phenomena even though they manifest themselves in very diverse ways. Our world today can be characterized as one of **exclusion** and **unsustainability**. We as Jesuits feel called to work for inclusion – both economic and cultural – and for sustainable societies.

2.2 New characteristics of the Society

It is not only the world that has changed. The Society itself has changed in important ways in recent decades. We refer to its new aspects in what follows.

2.2.1 Some general characteristics

First of all, we point out our **growing awareness of being a universal body**, a single body for which we are all co-responsible. Stronger currents of mutual support and solidarity are flowing among us. We are growing in the conviction that the problems that affect some of us are the same ones that affect all of us.

In this regard the existence of the **Conferences** is a great help for they promote collaborative discernment among the provinces which belong to them. Those Conferences that create joint plans among provinces are realizing greater operational effectiveness. One area in which the provinces are already cooperating is the formation of younger members; this effort allows for Jesuits from different countries to get to know one another, with the result that future collaboration will be easier and more fruitful.

Second, there has been a **marked demographic change** in the Society. During the last forty years the number of Jesuits has diminished significantly, and that number continues to decrease. In most regions the number of new vocations is not adequate to replace the number of Jesuits who die. Nevertheless, there are pronounced differences among regions. Some provinces are increasing in size and have a large number of men in formation, but they are the exception. Most provinces have been shrinking in numbers since the end of the Second Vatican Council.

On the other hand, there has been an increase in the number of **non-Western vocations**, even as there has been a decrease in the number of missionaries, who have come mainly from North America and Europe. As a result, the provinces are much more autochthonous, and the body of the Society has become more diverse than ever.

If, as we indicated in the previous section, the Western world has been ceding protagonism to other regions of the world, we can say that something similar is happening with the Society. At the present time, one-fourth of all Jesuits belong to the provinces of Southern Asia. Overall, some sixty percent of Jesuits are natives of the countries of the global South, in sharp contrast to the past, when most Jesuits were European and North American. The present tendency is toward an even more dramatic shift since fully seventy percent of scholastics today come from countries of the South.

We are therefore faced with the need to introduce new cultural and historical perspectives into a Church and a Society that are still too reliant on Western categories. We are being graced with an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and the prospects that are opened up to us by greater diversity, though we also remain aware of the difficulties that such changes will bring.

Even though our numbers are being reduced, **the challenges of our mission continue**. In fact, we are becoming aware of even greater needs, and the Society's assistance is being requested in more and more places. As a result, the number of our institutions continues to increase, especially in the area of education.

The diminution in the number of Jesuits, occurring simultaneously with an increase in the number of our institutions, necessarily means that the number of Jesuits compared to number of collaborators in the institutions is considerably reduced. Nowadays our institutions carry

out their mission thanks to the presence in them of lay people who are highly qualified both humanly and professionally and who want to take part in our mission.

2.2.2 The situation of the social sector

The social sector, which consists of works directly involved in the social apostolate, has during this whole period constituted only **a small part of the whole complex of the Society's institutions**, which continue to be primarily educational. Some provinces have very few works or initiatives in the social sector.

In past decades works of the social apostolate often depended on the determination and guidance of a single Jesuit. At the present time, in contrast, most of them are **integrated into the body of the provinces** in a way that allows for a smooth succession of directors, as happens in other sectors.

There has been considerable **professionalization** of the works of the social sector in order to improve the services they offer and to satisfy the demands of the financing agencies. Given this situation and the consequent need for higher professional standards for Jesuits working in the social sector, the formation they receive should be well designed so that they acquire the tools they need to engage in a mission that is ever more demanding.

In provinces where the social sector is firmly implanted, it can **help to integrate the other apostolates of the province** since responding to social challenges draws together a variety of different efforts: educational, pastoral, spiritual, social, and intellectual. This sector can play a very effective role in integrating the mission of a province. It is problematic when the apostolic sectors in a province are organized quite independently of one another, with the result that any attempt at integration may be perceived as interfering or as threatening.

Meanwhile, the social sector is in the process of developing **international networks** that will help us to deal with some of the apostolic challenges confronting us today. These networks are an effective way for the Society to respond to a globalized world as a universal body. They seek to integrate both the efforts of different provinces and those of different sectors. We have come to appreciate especially the extreme importance of collaboration between the university sector and the social sector as a means to make a qualitative leap in our mission.

The networks are being developed both at the global level and at the level of the Conferences. In recent years the Social Apostolate Coordinators of the Conferences have met together to reflect on the apostolic networks,³² and we are actively supporting and developing those that now exist. The way ahead is very promising but also very complex. We need to keep delving deeper into how best to form networks across provinces and continents.

One of the most important works of the social apostolate is the **Jesuit Refugee Service**, which was founded at the behest of the general government of the Society. The JRS now has an international presence, and Jesuits from many provinces take part in it. It is an effective response to a global apostolic priority, namely, the urgent, ever-changing reality represented by the suffering of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons. It is a wonderful school and expression of the social apostolate.

³² We elaborated the document *Networking in Order to Respond Better to Our Mission*, which can be found in [Promotio Iustitiae 113](#).

2.2.3 The social dimension

As we indicated already, the promotion of justice takes place in sectors other than the social sector strictly speaking. This social dimension of our works has increased significantly in recent decades. An especially robust increase can be seen in our **educational service to the poor**, who are now a majority of our students.³³

All our apostolic works have increased their efforts to make people more aware of the dynamics of exclusion in the world and to give them an experience of accompanying and serving the poor. As a result, the persons we serve are coming to have an ever greater social consciousness.

The convergence of social consciousness among provinces and among Jesuits is promoting a greater integration of the body of the Society, an integration that will help us to respond better to the apostolic challenges of the future.

All the same, what Father Kolvenbach said in this regard remains relevant. He insisted that the social sector of the Society requires the robust existence of a specifically social sector: “for lack of a vital and well-organized social apostolate, the essential social dimension would also probably fade away bit by bit. Such a process of **erosion** would inevitably reduce *Our Mission Today* (GC 32) and *Our Mission and Justice* (GC 34) to a few obligatory but rhetorical phrases in the discourse of the Society, leaving our option for the poor and our promotion of justice hollowed out.”³⁴ It is therefore important there be a fruitful mutual relationship between the social sector and the social dimension of our works so that both will be enriched.

2.3 Institutional challenges for the Society

The new realities that we find on the international scene and within the Society itself present a series of problems that the Society must face if it wants to respond effectively to the present apostolic challenges. We begin with the more local ones before moving on the more general. What is paradoxical—and we are well aware of it—is that the local challenges are often resolvable only after we have resolved satisfactorily the more general challenges.

The principal challenge is a need for overall planning that includes works, provinces, and Conferences³⁵ and that incorporates both the social dimension of our mission and the work of the specifically social sector. We will spell this out a little further.

2.3.1 Challenges for the apostolic works

In our apostolic works, the main challenges are to ensure the Jesuit identity of our institutions and to ensure that their activities respond to the mission of the Society. These challenges unfold in the following areas:

- *Strengthening the Jesuit identity of the works.* An aid to this end is a summary of the characteristics most proper to works of the Society. A first sketch of these characteristics is found in Decree 6 (nn. 9ff.) of GC 35, though this needs to be adapted to specific contexts.

³³ [Promotio Iustitiae 114](#), with the title *Education at the Margins*, was dedicated precisely to describing this reality.

³⁴ See Kolvenbach, [Letter on the Social Apostolate](#), 15 January 2000.

³⁵ Cf. GC 35, D. 3, n. 37.

A clear statement of what is proper to a Jesuit work will enable us to design better the type of formation that is most conducive to effective collaboration.

- *Formation of lay people and Jesuits for collaboration.* Since the number of Jesuit institutions is increasing while the number of Jesuits in most regions is decreasing, the close collaboration between Jesuits and lay people in the mission is all the more necessary. Both Jesuits and lay people have diverse roles and responsibilities in the works, and they should be well prepared to carry them out.
- *Planning and evaluation of our works.* The planning should include aspects that have to do with the Jesuit identity of the works. Evaluation³⁶ should help us to assess how well the work is contributing to the mission of the Society.
- *Inclusion of the social dimension.* Every work of the Society is called to increase this social dimension as an expression of its membership in a body that is totally devoted to the service of faith and the promotion of justice. In fact, the inclusion of the social dimension is a key indicator of the Jesuit identity of our works.

2.3.2 Challenges for the provinces

- *Strengthening of the social sector.*³⁷ When this sector does not exist in a province, we must begin by creating it in the form of a particular work, a social commission, or a delegate. The social sector is a key factor for advancing the social dimension of the works of any province. This sector can in turn contribute to the integration of diverse works and sectors around a common mission that has real meaning for all of them. This helps to generate a stronger province spirit and a sense of co-responsibility within the works and within the province as a whole.
- *Choice of ministries.* There is always a need for choosing ministries: deciding which should be preserved, which should be abandoned, which should be refounded. Today this task is even more important given the magnitude of the changes we are facing. As recommended in the *Complementary Norms* (260), the selection of ministries should not be done without taking into account relevant studies, including evaluation of the works themselves, and the priorities of Father General and of the Conference.

When the choice of ministries is carried out well, it is an expression of the apostolic freedom and dynamic character of a province, and it generates in the province new energies for responding to challenges with flexibility and realism.

- *Province apostolic planning.*³⁸ Planning helps a province to find a balance among the different apostolates and to improve communication among different works. It also provides the guidelines needed for a wise choice of ministries and for subsequent evaluation of the various works.
- *Corporative apostolic leadership in the provinces.* Such planning requires that the province government exercise strong leadership in the apostolic sphere. The more consensus there is in the planning, the better will be its execution and the less likely will be harmful ruptures when persons are changed.

³⁶ There is a reference to evaluation in the *Complementary Norms*, n. 256, §2.

³⁷ In the case of some provinces, there is rather the need to create a social sector.

³⁸ GC 35, D. 5, n. 25; such planning was also requested in the 2011 document, [The Renewal of Provincial Structures in the Service of the Universal Mission](#).

2.3.3 Challenges for the Conferences and the universal Society

- *Restructuring of provinces.* When the provinces lack sufficient resources, they will be incapable of true apostolic discernment. They will also be unable to assign well-prepared persons to develop the social sector, and they will lack the balance among sectors that is needed to offer integral responses to challenges. Consequently, a deficient province structure frequently results in a poor response in the social sector, among other things.
- *Development of networks.* Networks can be created within the provinces, but they also constitute an important means of interprovincial cooperation in the Conferences. They have the advantage of allowing us to focus on certain questions while respecting the integrity and autonomy of the works and the provinces.
- *Development of the Conferences.* The Conferences are the arenas that allow for growing collaboration among provinces. Planning at the Conference level contributes to their effective functioning.³⁹
- *Coordination among the Conferences.* Such coordination is necessary so that the Society can function as a single body and not just as a collection of units. This will also allow the Society to respond to global apostolic challenges.

Questions to discuss in group:

- What are the new realities around you that have the greatest effect on the life of the excluded social sectors? How are those realities connected to international processes?
- What changes is the Society undergoing in your province and your Conference?
- How much weight does the social sector have within your province as a whole?
- What do you think are the most urgent institutional challenges facing the Society as it seeks to respond better to the mission of faith that does justice?

³⁹ This planning was requested in GC 35, D. 5, 18a.

3. The faith-justice process

In recent decades we have learned to work for justice by integrating many different components: friendship with and service to the poor, reflection on our social reality, and a desire to transform our world. Working for justice is a great challenge because it aims at what is universal even while remaining committed to local realities. It seeks to change the human social structures while remaining close to concrete persons. The challenge consists in **how to integrate all these dimensions that are essential for the promotion of justice** in such a way that the intrinsic value of each is recognized and the great value of their integration is understood. The faith-justice process that we present here responds to this challenge.

3.1 Aspects of the faith-justice process

Our work for justice should cover five areas: accompaniment, service, research/reflection, consciousness-raising, and transformation of structures. We give a brief description of each:

1. Accompaniment takes place in the nakedness of the encounter of human with human, when persons discover their shared humanity and celebrate their coming to know one another. In this way we establish reciprocal relationships with our sisters and brothers, and we walk together with them along the path of life. We accompany others and let ourselves be accompanied. We become true companions. The accompaniment of the poor becomes a spiritual experience, a blessed place where we recognize the human dignity of those around us, as well as our own. It is the space where friendship arises.

This accompaniment happens mainly in those parts of our lives where our relationships are not mediated by the professional roles that we Jesuits normally inhabit. Our insertion communities can be very helpful toward such accompaniment. What is at work is the logic of the Incarnation, by which true human encounter occurs when we put our own interests aside and reach out to others. In such encounter we perceive the beauty and the worth of the poor, and we understand their condition as human beings who are actors in a unique history. Accompaniment is always contemplative, and it transforms our ways of seeing the world. We draw close to those with whom we share the amazing reality of life.

2. Service happens when we realize that we possess resources that we can make available to others to help them improve their living conditions. When we find ourselves among the poor, we quickly see different ways to help them.

Service is essential to Christianity. It is a way of responding to the Lord's commandment to love one another. Service in the Ignatian tradition is expressed as the desire to "help souls," a desire that possessed Ignatius from the moment he returned from Jerusalem.⁴⁰

Service requires means; it gives rise to institutions; it produces profound interior satisfaction when it is effective and when it succeeds in gaining the support of other persons who contribute their abilities or their resources. Service tends to grow. It is the area to which the Society dedicates most of its energies: educational service, social service, pastoral service, spiritual service, etc. Jesuits and the institutions we support are oriented mainly to serving others.

⁴⁰ Saint Ignatius, *Autobiography*, n. 50.

3. Research / reflection. The first companions all had degrees from the University of Paris as “Masters of Arts.” They were university graduates. Some of them stood out for their learning and their intellectual service, such as Laínez and Salmerón, who were theologians at the Council of Trent. From the very beginning the Jesuits studied and contemplated the reality of our world, seeking to discover in it the presence of God, and they studied theology out of a desire to understand the ultimate meaning of the world’s reality.

We stress here the importance of research and reflection⁴¹ that are based on the experience of service and that illuminate that experience with the light of academic knowledge and theological profundity. The research and reflection of which we are speaking is respectful of reality and its laws, since these have been ordained by God himself. At the same time, it seeks to discover the dynamics of change that permeate our natural and social worlds.

Our research adopts the perspective of the poor,⁴² reflects on their reality, and seeks their welfare. Choosing this perspective enables us to expose the forces that systematically exclude the marginalized and to discover the sources of life that will restore to them their dignity. Such research seeks for ways to effectively change social reality so as to favor the poor.

4. Consciousness-raising. Increasing the awareness of persons and communities is an area of work that has been well developed in the Society. There is wide diffusion of ideas, outlooks, attitudes, and symbols that proclaim the novelty that we as Christians are called to inaugurate. Consciousness-raising is aimed at transforming the culture in which we are immersed.⁴³ Some of the most effective means for this are publications, formation programs, press conferences, volunteer service corps, meeting spaces, public debates, etc.

Our research and reflection on the service and the accompaniment we undertake should contribute to raising people’s consciousness of the problems that exist and the possible solutions. Consciousness-raising builds bridges of friendship among diverse social groups, and it expands as people come into closer contact and relate to one another. It seeks to establish a sincere and fruitful dialogue among different social groups so that mutual knowledge and collaboration will give rise to new syntheses.

5. Structural transformation. This is a vital contribution of Decree 4 of GC 32, which states that “service according to the Gospel cannot dispense with a carefully planned effort to exert influence on these (economic, political, and social) structures” (n. 31). Pope Francis is also convinced of this need for structural transformation⁴⁴ for it is what guarantees that we will not limit ourselves to band-aid approaches that fail to bring about lasting solutions.

Structural transformation takes many forms: proposals regarding public policies, active presence in the realms of political decision-making, consequential dialogue with the authorities, denunciations and protests, collaboration with social movements, monitoring and

⁴¹ We do not distinguish between research and reflection except perhaps to say that research is more analytical while reflection is more synthetic.

⁴² In 2000 Father Kolvenbach stated that “by preference, by option, our Jesuit point of view is that of the poor”; cf. “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education,” University of Santa Clara, 6 October 2000. The text may be found at <http://goo.gl/u2ffU3>, accessed September 2015.

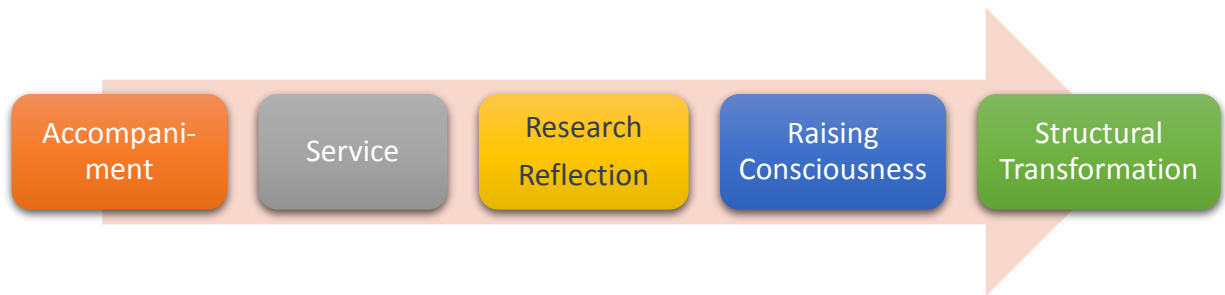
⁴³ GC 34, D. 3, n. 10.

⁴⁴ “As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation and by attacking the structural causes of inequality, no solution will be found for the world’s problems or, for that matter, to any problems. Inequality is the root of social ills.” *Evangelii Gaudium* 202.

evaluation of legislation, etc. The various contexts will determine which forms are most worth developing. GC 35 spoke about “establishing **advocacy links** of mutual support between those who hold political power and those who find it difficult to voice their interests.”⁴⁵ The Congregation refers to *political advocacy* as one of the preferred methods for promoting structural transformation.

3.2 The faith-justice process

We have also learned that our contribution to justice is greater when these five areas are linked together in a **process**, which has the following structure:



To help us understand the richness of this process, we offer the following comments:

- The **whole complex** of these activities and their interrelation reflect the *Jesuit way of promoting justice*: we draw close to the very poor, learning from them and serving them; we reflect deeply about their situation and explore possible solutions; we build bridges with others who can help to change the situation of the poor and even establish new structures.
- The order in which the areas of work are arranged does not reflect their importance but **their relationship to one another**. In order to serve well we must accompany people; in turn, our service will be reinforced by our appreciation of the value and the beauty of the persons we are helping. Within this process, research is done rigorously and in dialogue with the academic world, but it also receives concrete data from our experience of serving, for the service itself constantly provides new information and valuable intuitions about what is happening on the ground. Raising consciousness is not a mere slogan; it is an activity supported by serious, solid reflection, and it makes good use of the passion that comes from living and working close to the poor. Finally, structural transformation attempts to bring about an effective improvement in the lives of those with whom we live and work. Thus, as can be seen, the succeeding areas rely on those that go before.
- **These areas of work need to be interconnected**. Often in the Society they have functioned independently of one another so that the whole process loses effectiveness. What we need are integrated processes in which the different work areas interact and enrich one another mutually.
- **All our apostolic works** are seen to be reflected in some part of this process, but no single work can be responsible for the whole process. Consequently, the faith-justice process that we are describing is essentially a **task that requires inter-institutional and inter-sectorial**

⁴⁵ GC 35, D. 3, n. 28.

collaboration. Without collaboration among our works, as well as with other secular and religious actors, the process cannot function.

- **The process interlaces the local and the global.** The activities of accompaniment and service take place at the local level. The activities of consciousness-raising and structural transformation have a broader reach, possibly extending even to the national or international levels. In order to be effective they require a high degree of consensus and well-coordinated action. It is in these latter areas that the networks function most proficiently.
- **The key pivot area in the process is research and reflection.** It is in this promising area that collaboration between the social sector and the university sector can yield the greatest fruits, but we need more instances of successful collaborative practices. Such collaboration is not easy for either of these sectors since each has its own interests and ways of working, which are not always easy to amalgamate.
- **This faith-justice process develops by way of cycles.** For a certain amount of time we pursue the process in accord with a previously determined plan. At the end of a planned cycle, we evaluate the work we have done and begin the process again in light of the lessons learned.⁴⁶ In this way there is constant feedback that allows for the introduction of new practices. The arrow becomes a circle.
- In practice, this process can proceed only under certain conditions: a) that there be a **determined apostolic priority** toward which the process is oriented; b) that there be direct involvement of the Superior in the area where the process is being carried out; and c) the resources be provided to carry out the process, including resources within the works involved.
- This process allows for all our apostolic works to be incorporated into working for justice since it enables them to contribute to the **dimension of justice**. In turn, the **social sector** exercises the role of accompanying the process and helping to integrate the different activities. The social sector accompanies and serves, it provides reflection, and it brings to advocacy a focus that favors the poor.

This may seem like an easy task, but experience shows that it is not. We must therefore be more humble and continue to learn how to collaborate better, across sectors, across works, across borders. Only in this way will we keep growing into a true apostolic body dedicated to an apostolic mission shared by all.

Questions to discuss in group:

- In which of these areas has your province done the most work? In which areas are the most important institutions in your province working?
- Do you think that these areas are well interconnected in your province?
- Can you identify this faith-justice process in some concrete apostolic priority?
- How can your province advance in this faith-justice process? How can the institution in which you work or the community in which you live collaborate in this process?

⁴⁶ This cycle is explained in “The Cycle of the Mission in the Society of Jesus” in [Promotio Iustitiae 110](#).

4. Recommendations

In this document we have outlined a series of challenges. In this final section we present a series of recommendation that we believe can help us renew our commitment to justice at this time, forty years after it was formulated as the Society's mission in Decree 4 of GC 32. Many of these recommendations have been affirmed by decrees of the General Congregations, but others are still waiting to be given priority and put into practice. We have many good documents, but our practice often lags behind.

Considering this, we present recommendations organized around four themes: community life, collaboration, involvement with the formation sector, and corporative apostolic leadership.

4.1 Community life in proximity to the poor

In the first part of this document we pointed out the spiritual roots of our commitment to justice and the need to cultivate them. If we don't take care of those roots, they may wither. Sustained contact with persons in need provides them with water that keeps them alive. These spiritual roots helps us see the great need for change in our world, and they inspire in us hope.

Sustained contact with vulnerable persons is sometimes made difficult by the mission we receive; the institutions in which we work may not facilitate and may even distance us from the realities of the poor. It is therefore important for us to find spaces in our daily activity and our community life where we can draw close to the poor. We need to create a margin of freedom that allows us share in the lives of the least and the last.

When this happens, community life nourishes our commitment to the poor and makes us grateful that we can share our lives with them. We are motivated to reinforce our spirit of companionship and community in ways that give witness to solidarity and simplicity. In this way **the community itself becomes mission**: it bears witness to the values of a Kingdom in which we are all treated with dignity and justice, and it projects a new way of living together that is more inclusive, more sustainable, and more humane.⁴⁷

Communities can promote this proximity to the poor in many ways:

- **All our communities** are called to seek concrete ways of expressing their solidarity with the poor, cultivating the values of inclusion, and protecting the environment. Friendship, open dialogue, simplicity of life, discussions at meetings, and ways of celebrating can be helpful toward that end. Superiors play an important role in helping to nourish this kind of community life.
- **Insertion communities** are diminishing in number, but they can still be a privileged space for helping us encounter the reality of the poor and share their problems. They can generate mutual trust and friendship.
- In recent years **houses of hospitality** have been opened in some provinces. They are Jesuit communities that for a time receive persons in need – migrants, refugees, persons leaving prison, etc. – so that they can be helped in their process of rehabilitation and social

⁴⁷ Community as mission is a concept that was treated by GC 35 in Decree 3, n. 41. [Promotio Iustitiae 112](#) is dedicated to this theme and offers reflections and experiences about same.

reintegration through living in community. The Jesuit communities that have engaged in this practice say that their community life has become richer and has acquired a new meaning. Such communities give the excluded persons a sense of joy, hope, affection, and acceptance.

- Many Jesuits who today dedicate their lives to the social apostolate **spent part of their formation** living in insertion communities or houses of hospitality. Experiencing this type of community during formation helps to make young Jesuits aware of their vocation to be close to the poor.

4.2 Collaboration with others

Given the magnitude and complexity of social problems and the many areas in which action is needed, the promotion of justice requires collaboration with others if it is to make a significant and lasting impact. We already mentioned the need for such collaboration in the section on the faith-justice process.

Effective collaboration results from a shared understanding of social reality and a consensus about the specific apostolic challenges that confront us. There is therefore a clear need for **ongoing communal discernment about the concrete social reality**; without such discernment, collaboration will give way to voluntarism. Communal discernment requires time for interpreting reality and mutual listening; it assumes a desire to find a better apostolic response. In due course it will allow for the identification of some shared apostolic priorities.

In what follows we describe some of the areas where this collaboration is needed:

4.2.1 Networking

Many of our present apostolic challenges are global or at least regional. As we have seen, the phenomena that affect the lives of the poor are of such a magnitude that they exceed the limits of individual nations and of our provinces. Responding to them requires a contribution from a variety of the Society's apostolic sectors.

One way of responding to **international apostolic challenges** is by means of apostolic networks. Such networks integrate local action and international efforts; they assist small communities to interact with centers of global decision-making; they take people's everyday lives with all their struggles and problems and make them the subject of rigorous reflection about underlying causes and dynamics; they build bridges that allow the suffering communities to have direct contact with those who make decisions. The networks help to unite scattered forces and to coordinate initiatives that would otherwise be ineffective. They also foster learning processes that spread quickly to all participants.⁴⁸ In this world that is ever more interconnected, we have to do more to coordinate all our apostolic efforts. Networking is therefore an essential dimension of our work.

These networks are being developed both in the **Conferences** and in the **universal Society**. They are especially suitable for responding to large-scale apostolic challenges such as immigration, ecological degradation, governance of minerals and natural resources, and

⁴⁸ As we mentioned in note 33, [Promotio Iustitiae 113](#) contains a reflection on networks in the article, "Networking in Order to Respond Better to Our Mission." That document gives further explanation of the reasons for networking and recounts the experiences we have had with them in recent years.

people's universal right to a good education. In recent years we have established networks in each of these areas; they are called **Global Ignatian Advocacy Networks** (GIANs).

We have already established and consolidated many good practices. One network that is outstanding for the quality and degree of its evolution is the **International Federation of Fe y Alegría**, which coordinates the work of the various national offices of Fe y Alegría and undertakes major projects of international scope. The federation has a close relationship with the authority structure of the Society.

The networks can include **institutions that are not directly connected with the Society**, such as organizations of the Church, of other religions, or of civil society. They provide space for intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Finally, our modern **communications technologies** help greatly in the creation and development of networks. It is an area in which we still have much to learn. The [Jesuit Networking](#) initiative offers many possibilities for growth in this regard.

4.2.2 Inter-sectorial collaboration

Inter-sectorial collaboration is beneficial when there is work that is of mutual interest to several apostolic sectors. It is therefore important that there be dialogue among the sectors about the apostolic mission, the changes taking place in society, and the new demands being made upon us. Such dialogue will help us identify and reach consensus about areas of work where the very diversity of apostolic sectors can add great value to our efforts.

Inter-sectorial collaboration thus produces its best fruits when it is responding to an **apostolic challenge that has been identified jointly by different sectors** so that various objectives can be pursued in coordinated fashion. Collaboration improves notably when there is a common project or a joint program that set out shared criteria and cooperative modes of action. It can also help all involved to learn new techniques that make for progress.

All the various works can contribute greatly in the work for justice: the parishes, the primary and secondary schools, the Faith and Justice centers, the publications, the theology faculties, and the spirituality centers. Each sector makes its own special contribution to this work for justice, deepening our involvement in it and extending it further.

As we indicated before, collaboration **between the social apostolate and the universities** is especially important since it allow us go gain new knowledge by means of research. The study and reflection that take place at the universities can help to connect the action of the local communities with larger efforts of consciousness-raising and structural transformation.

It is therefore necessary that the sectors dedicate resources to the specific task of mutual collaboration. There need to be persons who understand the great advantage of interconnecting the different apostolic realities and who undertake the task of building bridges between them.

4.2.3 Interprovincial collaboration

Some provinces have already begun to collaborate closely in the mission to **migrants crossing national borders**;⁴⁹ they are very vulnerable population. Coordinated work on both sides of the border requires interprovincial collaboration.

Such collaboration is being organized primarily by means of the **Conferences**, which are considered to be structures for mission, in accord with GC 35.⁵⁰ This Congregation asked the Conferences to undertake **apostolic planning**, but this has happened in some Conferences more than in others. In each case the obstacles and difficulty should be analyzed; the lack of joint apostolic planning produces a deficient response to the demands of the mission. The presidents of the Conferences play a decisive role in this regard.

Collaboration is necessary not only within Conferences but also **between Conferences**; it can contribute greatly to the consolidation of a truly universal apostolic body. Even going beyond Conferences, we need broad **apostolic planning** at the **global** level in order to identify apostolic priorities and areas that lend themselves to collaborative work. There will be a continued need to discern the future priorities of the Society, assess the present priorities, and develop plans of action and norms for evaluation them.⁵¹ In this regard the central government of the Society has a responsibility that cannot be assumed by other levels of authority.

4.2.4 Collaboration with lay people, religious congregations, and social movements

Collaboration can happen in many locations in the provinces and above all in the works, and it happens because of the great apostolic benefits that flow from it. It can take many diverse forms depending on regional and cultural practices.

Collaboration presupposes certain things:

- It requires **recognition** of those with whom we are collaborating: of their culture, their faith, their manner of proceeding, their language. It involves mutual **sharing** of discernment and experience. Such reciprocal recognition and learning allow participants gradually to prepare the path for cooperative work.
- Collaboration requires a **humble attitude** that allows one to be affected by the problems of others and learn from their values and capacities. This is all the more necessary when the groups with which we unite our efforts are excluded communities that we desire to accompany.

We single out two areas that have been particularly beneficial:

- One area especially fruitful for collaboration is **political or public advocacy**, in which the united efforts of many persons produce greater awareness and impact. We need to be ready

⁴⁹ This work on the borders has been developed especially in America. The following countries stand out: United States – Mexico ([Kino Border Initiative](#)); Mexico – Guatemala; Haiti – Dominican Republic; Colombia – Venezuela; Colombia – Ecuador; Bolivia – Peru – Chile; Peru – Colombia – Brazil.

⁵⁰ “Conferences are structures oriented for mission and not just instruments of inter-provincial coordination. They must continue doing apostolic planning at the inter-provincial level, taking into account the apostolic preferences of the universal Society,” GC 35, D. 5, n. 18a.

⁵¹ As requested by GC 35, D. 3, n. 40.

to collaborate in programs of political advocacy that other religious or secular actors undertake.

- Our collaboration with **groups of young people and volunteers** allows us to take advantage of their great creativity even while it helps them to discern their vocation. It also demands of us great flexibility and openness. In reality, every work of the Society needs volunteers since they are a wonderful model of the generosity that is required for the mission to which we are committed.

4.3 Coordination with the formation sector

Coordination with the formation sector requires a double effort:

- The social sector should relate to those in formation in order to inform them about the work that it does, to encourage dialogue about the concrete social reality, and to offer opportunities for the scholastics to participate apostolically and be well accompanied.
- The formation sector itself should incorporate concern for the promotion of justice into the scholastics' community life, their studies, their spirituality, and their apostolic experiences.

In any case, we need to nourish bonds of affection and friendship between the social apostolate and the formation sector. Without such bonds the closeness desired between the sectors will be lacking.

4.4 Corporative apostolic leadership

We have seen that there are two key areas in which the promotion of justice needs to grow. The first is in those provinces where the social sector and the social dimension still have not been sufficiently developed for a variety of reasons. The second area is that of increased collaboration. Many individual apostolic works are always joining force in their efforts to develop joint agendas and obtain the resources they need. Experience indicates that these processes are very drawn out; the objectives of the diverse works often do not easily converge, especially when the works differ greatly in nature.

If we want to establish collaboration at the different levels that we have indicated—among sectors, among provinces, and with other religious groups and secular movements—we need to have corporative apostolic leadership that **directs, encourages, and supports specific collaborative initiatives.**

Such leadership will allow us to respond well to the present global apostolic challenges and to carry out the discernment and the apostolic planning that our Congregations have repeatedly asked of us. This will require careful elaboration, implementation, review, and evaluation of the plans we develop.

Questions to discuss in groups:

- What recommendations do you consider most important for your province?
- What can you do in your community and in your work to help implement these recommendations?

5. Looking toward the future

Like so many other human groups, we also have a **future vision**, an image of what we would like to be and what we would like to achieve in the years ahead. Such a vision helps us measure our progress and gives us guidance at times of discernment.

Today, as at the time when GC 32 issued Decree 4, we continue to be **sent to the frontiers** where people's lives are at stake. We are called to offer our abilities and our resources in so many places where exclusion and death hold sway and where we experience both our own vulnerability and that of others. Wherever we are sent, we sense that the faith and the hope of the poor restore new vitality to our own faith and hope.

We have a great desire to be united in a **single apostolic body** that works on behalf of all those sisters and brothers of ours who have been discarded and forgotten. We want a cohesive body in which Jesuits and collaborators, communities and works, share the same mission of serving faith that does justice. We desire provinces that have an **active social sector**, one that is close to the poor people it serves, that reflects on the reality of the country and the world, and that seeks ways of practicing solidarity and effecting social change that improves the life of the poor. We want provinces in which all the apostolic works are permeated by a **social dimension** and a social awareness that helps them find the meaning of their existence in concern for the outcasts of society.

With the help of this option for the poor and for justice we want to continue to deepen our **spirituality**, for we know that when we are exposed to the reality of poverty and accompany the human beings who live in misery, we are ultimately encountering the “newly incarnated” Lord (SpEx 109), who is waiting there for us so that we can serve him and be keenly aware of his presence. This is a spirituality that we can share with other groups and communities that are constant in their efforts to bring comfort and fortitude to the poor.

We do such sharing already with many others persons in our **Ignatian family** of Jesuits and collaborators; we share our mission with many lay men and women who often are the ones who do the major part of the work in our institutions. Thanks to them we can continue to respond to this mission in a corporate manner.

In this way we form **communities of solidarity** in which we work for a more just world even as we make ourselves into a school of the values we want to promote. We form communities that announce the new life that we seek for our suffering world by caring for the most vulnerable and by protecting nature – that is, by encompassing all humanity in a sustainable society. Some of our communities are also communities of hospitality, spaces that receive and care for persons in need of shelter and support.

We want communities that look to the future with **hope**, that are prepared to work for the long haul, that are willing to plan and evaluate, that are flexible, dynamic and creative, and that show concern for the world in its vast extent and not just for the immediate reality in which they find themselves. We need communities that are willing to denounce unjust structures and announce a new way of being human.

We seek to have apostolic works that not only offer **proficient service** but demonstrate **the passion of volunteers** because everyone who works in them is able to combine both human warmth and professional rigor.

We need apostolic works and social sectors that create **effective networks** with other works and sectors and with international institutions so that they will have greater impact on the globalized world in which we live and will develop a strong sense of international citizenship in order to bring about the transformations that are necessary.

We trust that some of the ideas expressed in this document can be aids to reflection and discernment and that they will help us commit ourselves once again—as individuals, as communities, and as apostolic works—to faith that does justice.

Question to discuss in group:

- What are the most important qualities and activities that it would be good for us to develop in your community, work, province, or conference in the coming years?

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