

**Counter-
Cultural
Perspectives
of an Organic
Intellectual:
Selected
Works
of
Rudolf C.
Heredia**

Volume XI

Jesuitica:

For the

Jesuit

Parivar

Volume XI

JESUITICA

written by
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Counter-Cultural Perspectives of an Organic Intellectual:

Selected Works of Rudolf C. Heredia.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO COUNTER-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF AN ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL: THE SELECTED WORKS OF RUDOLF C. HEREDIA

This collection brings together essays and presentations that span some five decades of my work. These are in the overall discourse of the social sciences and though I have trained as a sociologist, my perspective is more interdisciplinary. This is really the only way contemporary social issues and questions can be approached if they are to have any relevance today.

A continuing thread that runs through this collection. It represents an on-going venture to bring a critical reflection on social issues that engage activists in the field. Thus, rather than indulge in 'ad hoc' responses, they can create a praxis of action-reflection-action in the tradition of Paulo Freire. Hopefully this interaction between the 'desk and the field' will enrich both, activists to more effective action on the ground and theorists to a more critical appreciation on the underpinning ideas.

The collection is divided by common overall themes into separate volumes to provide a coherent unifying perspective to each volume. While each essay has its own specific context and topic, yet given the time span they cover, some overlap and repetition across these volumes is inevitable. However, we have tried to exclude this within the volume itself, unless there is a different nuance in the presentation that justifies its inclusion despite the overlap.

Each volume has its own brief introduction putting the theme in focus and the sequencing of the essays contained is chronological. Wherever possible each article has a by-line way by of a reference indicating its source and date. This should help to particularise its context and occasion.

The following are the subdivisions of the collection.

I. Socio-Cultural Perspectives: Pluralism and Multiple Identities

II. Socio-Political Perspectives: Contradictions and Complementarities

III. The Development Debate: Growth and Equity

IV. Religion and Society: Secularism and Its Discontent

V. Ecological Concerns: Environmental Sustainability

VI. Hermeneutics of Dialogue: Discourses on The Self and The Other

VII. Education: The Dual System

VIII. The Tribal Question

IX. Gandhiana: Essays on A Yuga Purush

X. Globalisation And Its Discontents Globalisation

XI. Jesuitica: For the Jesuit Parivar

XII. Miscellaneous Articles

XIII. Book Reviews

XIV. Poems

XV. Homilies

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME XI— JESUITICA

This collection puts together articles that are of particular relevance for Jesuits, though they may be of interest to Jesuit collaborators, other like-minded persons in the Jesuit *Parivar* (family). They appeared in Jesuit magazines that reach out to such persons. However, non-Jesuits might also find some interest in them as well.

Rudi Heredia's personal account of his journey as a Jesuit — on the occasion of his *Final Vows, Feast of St Francis Xavier, 3 Dec 1981*

[24. Fulfilling Promises: Why did I become a Jesuit?](#)

***JESUITICA: FOR THE
JESUIT PARIVAR***

1. THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST

Indian Theological Studies, Vol. 22, No.4 (1985) pp. 338-375, 12,173 words

I. INTRODUCTION

THE UNAVOIDABLE QUESTION

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE MEANING OF UNIQUENESS

II. JESUS AND CHRIST

THE GOSPEL TRADITION

THE SEARCH FOR UNIQUENESS

THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS

THE COMMUNITY'S CHRIST OF FAITH

PHENOMENOLOGY OF INCARNATIONAL PIETY

KYRIOS CHRISTOS

III. BULTMANN'S DEMYTHOLOGIZATION

FORM CRITICISM

MYTH AND KERYGMA

THE NECESSITY OF MYTH

THE REALITY OF EVENT

A CRITIQUE OF BULTMANN'S METHODOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

BULTMANN'S CLOSED WORLDVIEW

LUTHER AND BULTMANN

IV. CULLMANN'S SALVATION HISTORY

BULTMANN REJECTED

PROPHECY AND MYTH

THE CHRIST-EVENT

THE TITLES OF JESUS

CONCLUSION: CHRISTOLOGY AND MYTHOLOGY

V. PANNENBERG'S REVELATION HISTORY

GOD'S SELF-COMMUNICATION

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL EVENT

1. The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

CHRISTOLOGY 'FROM BELOW'

CONCLUSION: SUMMATION IN CHRIST

VI. RAHNER'S EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

ACTIVE SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

DYNAMIC UNITY

CHRIST AND EVOLUTION

UNIQUENESS IN SOLIDARITY

VII. CONCLUSION

UNIQUENESS AND ARROGANCE

A PERSONAL RESPONSE

Abstract

Jesus confronts all those who come in contact with him: 'Who do men say that I am? Here his utter uniqueness poses us with a dilemma. This paper examines the theology of Rudolf Bultmann, Oscar Cullman, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Karl Rahner.

I. Introduction

The Unavoidable Question

Part of the 'scandal' of Jesus Christ is the question with which he confronts all those who come in contact with him: 'Who do men say that I am?' (Mk.9:27) For those who take his gospel seriously this is an inescapable question, while for those who do not, have already given an answer, and a negative one at that. In fact, this is not so much a question that requires an answer as a challenge that demands a response. For Jesus is not content to pose this as a generalized query: 'Who do men say that I am?' At this level of involvement, we are only too ready to answer impersonally like the apostles: 'John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; and others one of the prophets.' But Jesus wants a personal response: 'But who do you say that I am?' And if we are able to respond in faith with Peter, 'You are the Christ,' then this is only because the Father reveals to us the true identity of his Son.

Hence, while it is true to say that the answer to this question depends on how we will read the Gospels, the opposite is equally true. For our response to this crucial question and our study of the Gospel, both finally depend on the predispositions we bring with us. Leon-Dufour remarking on how so many intellectually honest scholars come to such different conclusions about Jesus and the Gospels makes this insightful comment: 'This disagreement stems ultimately

not from dissension over the literary methods employed, but from other presuppositions which have nothing to do with literature.’¹ Indeed, genuine scholarship agrees that honesty demands not that we abandon such presuppositions, something not really possible, but that we spell them out in our work rather than surreptitiously insinuate them into it.

Methodological Considerations

At the very outset, then, let us state that here we will not attempt any polemics against outsiders (in an age of dialogue this is misplaced if not futile), nor do we intend any apologetics directed at them (though this may still be valid today). Rather our intention here is not to demonstrate proof to the outside, but to articulate a faith vision from the inside.

We do not believe that this approach falsifies one’s scholarship or limits one’s research. For once we have the facts, we are faced with a question. Then faith provides the interpretation of those facts and the answer to the question. We must use the means at our disposal to cull the facts carefully and so pose the question in context. Only then will our faith truly stand in awe at the length and breadth and height and depth of the mystery of God in Christ Jesus.

The Meaning of Uniqueness

The topic of this essay is of central importance to any Christology today. We believe it is the Christological question of the day, especially in India - the land of avatars and myth, where dogma and historicity are so hard to comprehend. Unfortunately, so much misguided missionary misrepresentation has shrouded the true uniqueness of Christ in a strange and alien grab, and so, without even being confronted with the real challenge of Christ, many have been turned away by the hard-sell of these over-zealous travelling salesmen. If we could examine what exactly the uniqueness of Christ consists of, we would then be better able to present him without so much dross and drag to a world that awaits his coming in inarticulate agony and from which we have hidden him for too long already. We do not believe that this question has received the importance it deserves. Certainly, it is

¹ Xavier Leon-Dufour, S.J. *The Gospels and the Jesus of History*, Collins, London 1968, p.272.

not exhausted yet. We hope this effort is a small contribution in the right direction.

Let us first attempt to specify the meaning of ‘uniqueness’. On first reflection, we soon reach an impasse. For in so far as nothing is exactly repeatable, everything is unique. The old scholastic dictum had a very valid insight: *omen ens est ineffabile*. But then if everything is unique, the word itself becomes meaningless. Hence to extricate ourselves from this stalemate, we must carefully refine and qualify the use of the word in this essay.

Pittenger starts with a common parlance definition: ‘Unique means absolutely and completely different from anything else.’² Here uniqueness is defined in terms of difference; it is the contrast between the unique and the others that is highlighted. We would call this the uniqueness of differentiation. Pittenger goes on to a discussion of whether this unique difference in Christ is one of degree or kind. We feel that such a discussion depends so much on a definition of terms that it seems quite futile.

But there is a further aspect of uniqueness that we would like to bring out with another definition: ‘Unique means one and only.’ This is the original etymological sense of the word. Here uniqueness is defined not so much in terms of difference as in terms of itself. It is not unrelated to the others, but its own ‘specialities’ are the point of reference. We would call this uniqueness of identification. Notice how this is prior in reality to the early one defined, even though it is the difference that strikes us first.³ Now this identification can be based on mere self-identification, and in this sense, every being has its own identity, its own uniqueness; or it can be based on its other-significance as well, in this sense some things are unique because of their decisive importance for others.

Now we shall attempt to apply all this to Jesus Christ. Here his utter uniqueness poses us with a dilemma. For if he is totally different from us, then how is he significantly relevant to us? And if he is not, then how is he decisively important for us? We have here a transcendence-immanence tension in which both must be saved. For neither the Christian experience of the utterly otherness of Christ, nor the Christian confession of the universal significance of Christ can be sacrificed in a truly Christian solution. We can see that it will be this uniqueness of identification based on other-significance that must be

² Norman Pittenger, *Christology Reconsidered*, SCM Press, London, 1970, p.125.

³ Prof. Moule’s categories of the uniqueness of exclusion and of inclusion, broadly correspond to the two types here. Cf. *ibid.*, p.126.

predicated of Christ. The task of this paper will be to examine how far and in what precise sense this is a meaningful articulation of our Christ-experience.

II. Jesus and Christ

The Gospel Tradition

Classical apologetics used the Gospels as reliable biographic documents to establish the divine credentials of Jesus. But modern exegesis has undermined such an approach, by invalidating the assumptions on which it was based. In the Gospels, there is no little concern with the biographic details of Jesus' life, which are either codified or omitted, that they could not have been intended as historical reports as we understand these today. To use them as such does them violence. Further, the order of the narrative so differs from Gospel to Gospel, that if we would take the synoptic problem with the seriousness it deserves, then it becomes impossible to hold the traditional treatise *De Evangeliiis* without the most fantastic mental and literary gymnastics.

Today we no longer regard the Gospels as memoirs but as mosaics, not as eye-witness reports but as compilations of various community traditions about Jesus. Their purpose is not biographic interest but theological proclamation. They are not just a word about Jesus, but a word to me that challenges my faith. Such documents can hardly be used for the rationalistic approach of traditional apologetics. Only from within a faith-vision are the Gospels truly meaningful. Thus the only access we have to Jesus of Nazareth in history is through the Christ of faith in the community.

We have then stages in the formation of the Gospel tradition which we must work with to discover the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Firstly we have the historical Jesus, whose words and deeds are seen and heard by his disciples. This eye-witness testimony is our guarantee of the historicity of the traditions. The Scandinavian school⁴ has insisted on the fidelity with which such rabbinic teaching was handed down, though the first Christians seemed to give less importance to what Jesus said than to what he did. They would venture to modify his words, even attribute sayings to him, but they were adamant about the essential facts of his life, the basic truth about

⁴ Cf. H. Riesenfeld, "The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings", *Studia Evangelica*, Berlin, 1959; pp. 43-78, and B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, Lund' Gleerup, 1961.

1. The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

his person. For they proclaimed not just what Jesus taught, but Jesus himself as a living person, the Christ of faith.

Thus the eye-witness testimony develops into the second stage the pre-Gospel oral tradition. This is already a transfigured tradition because the recollections of Jesus are formulated in the light of the Easter faith. Further, it is a functional tradition related to the particular needs of the community, and finally it is a biblicized tradition clothed in the theological language of the Old Testament. From criticism studies, these oral forms and attempts to identify their type and *Sitz im Leben*, the situational context in which they arose.

Finally, we have a third stage, when these oral forms are written down and compiled by editors into a framework more theological than historical. Redaction criticism studies this last stage and attempts to establish the contribution of the compiling evangelists. Thus what we have today is a 'highly theologized proclamation of Jesus relevant to the community for which the Gospel was written.'⁵

Each of these layers of tradition obscures as it manifests the original Christ-even and though working through them may demand a more subtle and sophisticated scholarship than that of the classical apologists, we can steer clear of the modern sceptic. Even someone as critical as Bultmann concedes that 'one may point to a whole series of words found in the oldest strata of tradition which do give us a consistent representation of the historical message of Jesus.'⁶ More recently J. Jeremias has been at pains to show that the tradition about Jesus is much more trustworthy than is commonly assumed.⁷ We do have in the New Testament the solid bedrock of the *ipsissima verba Jesu*, the essential facts of his life, the basic truth about his person, on which to anchor our faith.

The Search for Uniqueness

Now the question seems to pose itself. Where do we find the uniqueness of Jesus Christ? In the Jesus of history or in the Christ of faith? Already since the Enlightenment, as Pannenberg points out, 'it has appeared to be impossible to unite the God-man of the

⁵ G. Soares Prabhu, *An Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels*, Jnana Deep, mimeographed manuscript, Pune, 1970 p.2.

⁶ R. Bultmann and K. Kundsins, *Form Criticism*, Harper Torch, New York, 1962, p.61.

⁷ J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, SCM Press, London, 1971.

Christological dogma with the historical reality of the Jesus.⁸ In fact Harnack, and later Albert Schweitzer, had suggested a dichotomy between the *evangelium Christi* and the *evangelium de Christo*. It is this dichotomy between Jesus and Christ, between history and faith, that gives rise to two different approaches to the question of his uniqueness.

The Quest for the Historical Jesus

First, we will consider the attempt to find this uniqueness in the quest for the historical Jesus. This approach focuses its attention on the man Jesus and has left us many brilliant insights into his human personality. The Christ of faith is treated as merely as religious myth, that originally may have arisen in connection with the man Jesus but later developed into something quite alien to his original inspiration. Jesus of Nazareth is idealized as a great man, even the exemplar for all men. Renan perhaps best epitomizes this approach.

Now this quest seems to rush headlong into an obvious naturalism which eventually develops into pietism, if there is an emotional impetus, or into rationalism, if there is an intellectual emphasis. But in either case, we have at most the individual's uniqueness of differentiation. As a great man Jesus is indeed different, but how is he significant for other times and places, especially when there is a question of societies and cultures so alien to the one he lived in or the ones in which his message happened to evolve? Now if such a cultural gap is crucial, and we believe it is, then there can be no question of a decisive uniqueness of other-significance as we have defined above.

Further Albert Schweitzer's critique on *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*⁹ has shown conclusively that the Jesus so reconstructed was always dependent on the contemporary philosophical currents. And so it seems futile to attempt to find the uniqueness of Christ here.

The Community's Christ of Faith

The second approach deals with the Christ of faith. Here Jesus of Nazareth becomes all but irrelevant and the Christ of faith becomes a

⁸ W. Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, SCM Press, London, 1968, p.11.

⁹ Black, London, 1910.

subjective interpretation. This can be either my faith: thus we have Luther's emphasis on the '*pro me*' as a recurring theme in his Christology; or it can be a community faith: the modernists would seem to fall into this category. The first leads to subjectivism and individualism, and Barth, sensing the need for some objective anchor for such a faith, insightfully points out that there can be no '*pro me*' without a prior '*pro se*'¹⁰. The second relativizes faith with its communal subjectivism.

In either case, the question remains: how does this faith arise? Is it merely an irrational leap of faith of the individual? Does the community create this faith or vice versa? The evidence that the early Christian community was formed because of their Easter faith, is an acute embarrassment to such a subjectivistic faith. Note that in both cases faith becomes an individual or communal myth, in the sense of a convenient interpretation uncritically accepted. Thus the decisive uniqueness of Jesus Christ is lost. A myth is always relative, always functional and essentially replaceable in a changed social context.

Phenomenology of Incarnational Piety

The two approaches we have been dealing with are in fact scholastic and academic, but if we would articulate 'a theological Phenomenology of 'incarnational piety'', as Karl Rahner suggests,¹¹ we can discern correspondingly two similar tendencies. The first is less prevalent, though perhaps more sophisticated. Here, Jesus Christ, the God-man is regarded as unique because he is a charismatic man. Here we have an implicit naturalism with overtones of the great-man theory, that characterized the quest for the historical Jesus. The second is rather the opposite of the first, more prevalent though less sophisticated, where Jesus Christ, the God-man is regarded as unique because he is God. The divinity is so emphasized that the humanity is not taken seriously. Hence we have an implicit gnosticism with overtones of the redeemer myth.

We can easily see how these two types of piety correspond to the two academic approaches mentioned earlier, and how here too the decisive uniqueness of Jesus Christ is once again lost sight of.

¹⁰ Church Dogmatics, IV/I, p.212.

¹¹ Theological Investigations Vol. I, Ch. 5. "Current problems in Christology," p.189.

Kyrios Christos

The approaches mentioned thus far lead to dead-ends because they are based upon a false dichotomy between Jesus and the Christ, between history and faith. Such an approach is not much in vogue today. Leon-Dufour commenting on the fourth Gospel writes: ‘John wanted to be both a witness of Jesus of Nazareth (by telling what he remembered of him) and a witness of Christ the Lord (by trying to make us share his faith in Christ).’¹² And more explicitly concluding a chapter on Paul he writes: ‘In short, St. Paul did not set aside the historical Jesus in favour of a spiritual or mystical Christ: he knew only one Jesus, who was crucified, rose again and now lives forever.’¹³ Herbert Butterfield warns us: ‘It would be a dangerous error to imagine that the characteristics of a historical religion would be maintained if the Christ of the theologians were divorced from the Jesus of history.’¹⁴

Thus a fundamental principle of a sound Christology is the identity of the Jesus of Nazareth in history and the Christ of faith in the community. This was expressed by one of the earliest Christian confessions used in the first century already: *Kyrios Christos*. The confession of a faith rooted in history is essential if Christology is not to dissolve into mythology. In fact in the academic approaches already mentioned where the unfortunate dichotomy between Jesus and Christ is explicit and in the forms of incarnational piety typified above, where the same dichotomy is more implicit, we can see the mythologization of the kerygma at work. And so with Bultmann, we have a demand for a radical demythologization based on the exacting exegesis of form criticism.

III. Bultmann’s Demythologization

Form Criticism

We have mentioned earlier that form criticism studies the second stage in the formation of the Gospel tradition, the one consisting of the pre-gospel oral forms that circulated in the community. Now it is important to know something of this methodology for it is the

¹² Op. cit., p.105.

¹³ Ibid., p.59.

¹⁴ Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, Collins, London 1957 p.168.

exegetical basis of Bultmann's demythologization. Here we will briefly and schematically outline it.

By the turn of the century, literary criticism with its two-source theory had reached an impasse, and it did not seem to yield further results. Once it had been demonstrated, thanks to W. Wrede¹⁵ and L. Schmidt¹⁶ that the framework of the synoptic Gospels was not a natural historical one but an artificial theological one, the Gospels came to be considered as a compilation of stories and sayings about Jesus that circulated as isolated units in the oral tradition of the Church. This became the starting point of form criticism. With the help of a comparative study of contemporary Jewish and Hellenistic literature and a synoptic examination of the first three Gospels, it articulated a few basic characteristics of any oral tradition: firstly, because it is transmitted by mnemonic techniques, an oral tradition readily assumes stereotyped forms which have their own inner structure and logic. Thus different forms can be identified and studied. Secondly, as an oral tradition develops, it tends to get elaborated and contaminated. Thus details are added, indirect speech becomes direct, and dim figures are characterized.¹⁷ Hence the development of the form can be traced. Thirdly, an oral tradition is created by a community for a specific need. Thus we can discover the *Sitz im Leben* of a form and hence know something of the community situation in which it arose.

So far the methodology is irreproachable. Unfortunately with some form critics, 'the life of Jesus portrayed in the gospels was regarded as being almost entirely the creation of the early Christian believers.'¹⁸ But then how far is Jesus of history the basis of this community creation? Bultmann is quite categorical about the complete separation. Thus whereas for some scholars 'it must remain questionable whether Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah at all, and did not rather first become Messiah in the faith of the community,'¹⁹ he is quite convinced of the latter alternative: 'I am personally of the opinion that Jesus did not believe himself to be the Messiah.'²⁰ Again he holds it was Greek Christianity that first 'represented Jesus as Son of God in the sense of ascribing a divine

¹⁵ Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien, Gottingen, 1901.

¹⁶ Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu, Berlin, 1919.

¹⁷ R. Bultmann, *Form Criticism*, op. cit., p.32.

¹⁸ Leon-Dufour, op. cit., p.168.

¹⁹ Bultmann, op. cit., p.71.

²⁰ Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, Collins, London, 1958, p.15.

‘nature’ to him, and thus introduced a view of his person as far removed as possible from his own.²¹

Thus the Jesus of history is separated from the Christ of faith by an unbridgeable gap. Indeed for Bultmann the Jesus of history is unknowable and irrelevant, and so he focuses his attention on demythologizing the community’s Christ of faith. Here we must pause to ask ourselves two questions: firstly, how far is such a separation legitimate? We have dealt with this earlier. And secondly, how far can a community be creative? This we will take up a little later.

Myth and Kerygma

Bultmann’s starting point, then is the assumption that the *evangelium de Christo* is a community creation arising out of its own *Sitz im Leben*. Hence the message proclaimed will necessarily be in terms of its own *Weltanschauung*, which is essentially mythological. Thus the event of redemption is presented in a mythic garb derived in essence from Jewish apocalyptic and gnostic redemption mythology. The Gospel is myth plus kerygma; the myth was used to communicate the kerygma. However, ‘to this extent the Kerygma is incredible to modern man, for he is convinced that the mythical view of the world is obsolete.’²² It is ridiculous to burden twentieth-century man with a first-century myth. Hence Bultmann concludes with the imperative need to demythologize the Gospel in order to make it credible to modern man: ‘If the truth of the New Testament proclamation is to be preserved, the only way is to demythologize it.’²³

Bultmann defines myth in the sense used by the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*:

Mythology is the use of imagery to express the other worldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of the human life, the other side in terms of this side.... Myth is not used in that modern sense, according to which it is practically equivalent to ideology.²⁴

Note the difference in meaning between this definition and the one we used earlier. Here the definition is more precise and technical. Bultmann, then attempts to use form criticism not to eliminate the New Testament mythology as the older liberals did (that would dissolve the kerygma into the mystical) but to interpret the kerygma

²¹ Ibid., p.152.

²² R. Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, Harper and Row, New York, 1961 p.3.

²³ Ibid., p.10.

²⁴ Ibid., p.10, nt.2.

and so preserve the decisive eschatological event. To distinguish the mythic from the kerygmatic, 'the criterion adopted must be taken not from modern thought, but from the understanding of human existence which the New Testament itself enshrines,'²⁵ or else we will have forced artificial categories. And so he adopts an existentialist interpretation, for he discovers that 'the New Testament offers man an understanding of himself which will challenge him to a genuine existential decision.'²⁶ In fact, without such an acceptance of existential responsibility the New Testament is quite unintelligible.

Bultmann welcomes the charge that his approach is 'anthroponomous' rather than 'theonomous'. He writes: 'I would heartily agree: I am trying to substitute anthropology for theology, for I am interpreting theological affirmations as assertions about human life.'²⁷ Others have pointed out that this means reducing the Gospel to philosophy, substituting a classical mythology with a modern existentialism, that itself will inevitably be dated. To this, he replies that 'existential analysis is simply the systematization of the self-understanding of existence involved in existence itself.'²⁸ Thus he would hold that it is something quite basic and essential to man.

In fact, the existential understanding of man in the New Testament is also found outside it, especially in the philosophy of Heidegger, whose 'existentialist analysis of the ontological structure of being would seem to be no more than a secularized, philosophical version of the New Testament view of human life.'²⁹ The New Testament views the human condition in terms of 'sin', Heidegger as one of angst. Both agree in their analysis of the human situation; it is in the response to it that they disagree. For the philosopher liberation is realizable through knowledge; for the Christian salvation is only by faith.

For Bultmann, then the act of faith is the eschatological event. For him, 'the meaning of history lies always in the present, and when the present is conceived as the eschatological present by Christian faith the meaning of history is realized.'³⁰ The importance of the kerygma is not its relation to the Jesus of history but its relation to me. The uniqueness of the Gospel derives not from the history of Jesus but

²⁵ Ibid., p.12.

²⁶ Ibid., p.16.

²⁷ Ibid., p.107.

²⁸ Ibid., p.191.

²⁹ Ibid., p.24.

³⁰ Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, Edinburg, 1957, p.154.

from my faith. But faith in whom? If demythologization is carried to its logical conclusion, and Bultmann insists that it must, does not Christ become a myth for God? And perhaps God, a myth for something else too? Hence the uniqueness of Christ is lost in mythic symbol and eventually demythologized away.

However, the challenge posed by Bultmann's radical demand for demythologization cannot be so easily wished away because of the difficulties it raises. The worldview and language of the Bible must be translated into intelligible terms today if the Gospel kerygma is not to be entirely lost to modern man. There are two possible responses to Bultmann which we will expose below.

The Necessity Of Myth

Firstly, we must insist on the necessity of myth. Indeed myth and science are necessary, though quite different, modes of human thought and language. Science is better suited to a non-religious, empirical reality; myth to a religious, transcendental one. How can man conceive or communicate about the other world except in terms of this one? How can he refrain from objectivizing the transcendental in sign and symbol if he is to make it real to himself? Ernst Lohmeyer does well to point out:

On Bultmann's definition, however, it follows that myth is the language of all religion, the form in which it is expressed, and that to demythologize a religious proclamation of whatever kind is to condemn it to silence and therefore to destroy it.³¹

This is precisely what Bultmann ultimately succeeds in doing.

However, this alone would be but a partial answer to Bultmann's problem. It points out his failure, or rather his excess, but doesn't quite suggest an alternative. The necessity of myth must be acknowledged, but the need to go beyond must be conceded as well, the need to interpret intelligibly and authentically to our world. Now if myth is in fact a necessary mode of religious thought, then there can be no question of a real demythologization but only of remythologization in more relevant myths. But then again, as H. Thieliicke points out, 'it is quite impossible to substitute one mythological framework for another... it is impossible to substitute the worldview of modern science for the Bible mythology'³² Hence we

³¹ Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, op. cit., p.126.

³² Ibid., p.164.

reach an impasse, for, as J. Schniewind observes, 'Every attempt to escape from mythology leads either to nihilism or the question whether the invisible has in fact become visible, and if so where?'³³ This brings us to the second response to Bultmann.

The Reality Of Event

To the question, how far must we demythologize? Bultmann would answer until we reach the kerygma. For him, the kerygma is a doctrine about decision and faith. He derives this interpretation from his existentialist inclination and presuppositions. Thus for him, 'the abiding significance of the cross is that it is the judgement of the world, the judgement and the deliverance of man.'³⁴ And again, 'the real Easter faith is faith in word of preaching which brings illumination.'³⁵ The objective event of Jesus Christ is treated as something mythical and existentially interpreted. But note that a doctrine can always be further interpreted, further refined, further demythologized, rationalized, subjectivized, psychologized, etc., until it ends in nihilism.

But the kerygma is the salvific event in Jesus Christ. Leon-Dufour writes:

The central point in St. Paul's teaching is that the human race has been redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus. This statement concerns an event which took place in time: it is not the result of abstract reasoning, or the influence of Hellenic religion.³⁶

The same would certainly be true of the synoptics as well. Even in St. John's dialectic, 'the historical event is an outline of the mystery which it explains.'³⁷ Thus the three essential elements of the Gospel proclamation are events: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Or to put it slightly differently the kerygmatic events are: Resurrection, Pentecost, and Parousia.

Now an event is a given objective reality. It cannot be a mere symbol or a mere myth; it cannot be demythologized away. Alfred Jeremias' definition of Biblical myth highlights this aspect very well: 'it is the narration of a heavenly process presented in a definite logical

³³ Ibid., p.47.

³⁴ Ibid., p.37.

³⁵ Ibid., p.42.

³⁶ Op. cit., p.55.

³⁷ Ibid., p.93.

series of motifs reflected symbolically in objective events.’³⁸ The kerygmatic event is a reality that points beyond itself to a mystery. To attempt to demythologize this event only ends by rationalizing the mystery. In fact, Oscar Cullmann would not use the word myth for such a Biblical interpretation at all. He would rather speak of ‘prophecy’. We will return to this in more detail later.

A critique of Bultmann’s methodological presuppositions

Before concluding this section on Bultmann, we think it will be in order to make a brief critique of his methodological pre-suppositions for these colour his use of form criticism and prejudice his conclusions.

The first presupposition is a literary axiom: the Gospels were not written as unities but are a collection of oral forms. This is basically a valid proposition. But we must add that, though it is not possible to write a detailed biography of Jesus, we do have recorded the most important events of his life and we can reconstruct its historical outline. Further, though the Gospels are not memoirs but mosaics, the evangelists are not mere compilers, but editors who imposed a literary and theological pattern of their material. It is this pattern that redaction criticism studies, going a step beyond form criticism.

The second presupposition is a sociological axiom: the Gospel forms are the product of a sociological context. They are the creation of the community. Though Bultmann never explicitly formulated this axiom it is certainly operative in his work, as is evidenced by the separation he makes between the Jesus of history and Christ of faith. For him, the *Sitz im Leben* of these forms is not the life of Jesus but the situation of the Church. Hence they have no historical basis.

But is a community thus creative, especially if it is an anonymous one? Now while the early Christian community certainly was not anonymous, it was structured after the Jewish pattern, which had fixed and accurate techniques for transmitting traditions in a controlled manner. The Scandinavian school at Upsala has given considerable importance to this, and made a valid point against the scepticism of Bultmannians. The Christian community does not create the Gospel, but in remembering it, is created by it, and so goes on to interpret it.

³⁸ Emphasis added.

1. The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

The third presupposition is a historical axiom: the Gospel tradition is theological, not historical. But it is a gross exaggeration to assume that the early Church was not concerned with history when it staked its very life on a historical event. Indeed it rooted its proclamation in historical evidence. The Gospels are rather theologies of an event.

Finally, we have a philosophical axiom: the possibility of any event that transcends cosmic and historical causality is a priori excluded. Thus once Bultmann assumes such a closed worldview, anything supernatural is always mythic, and so he must, as Thieckle observes, 'retreat from revelation as a historical event into an abstract philosophy of life.'³⁹ Such a deterministic worldview leaves only one area of freedom, man's subjective decision. Bultmann retreats into this with his existential act of faith. But with modern behavioural psychology, even this area of freedom is put in doubt! And so a closed worldview while trying to remain scientific can get quite suffocating.

Now it seems to us quite one thing to have such a closed worldview as a working hypothesis for science, but to absolutize it into a philosophical axiom for life is destructive of all religious faith. Bultmann does precisely this and we can ask: is Christian faith left at all or just an existential decision?

Bultmann's Closed Worldview

Summing up, then, we would say that the real difficulty with Bultmann's demythologization is that he reduces the supernatural entirely to the mythic because of his closed worldview. Hence for him, the kerygma cannot be event. This would mean God's intervention in history, which is a priori excluded in his worldview. The kerygma, then must be reduced to a doctrine, and according to one's criterion demythologized. Bultmann begins with existential self-understanding and he ends with existential self-decision. This is an entirely subjective act of faith that brings a completely individualistic salvation.

³⁹ *Kerygma and Myth*, op. cit., p.152.

Now if this is the endpoint that makes the Gospels relevant today, why use them as a starting point in the first place? In other words, is the Gospel a useful myth at all today? Has not Heidegger got better news for us? Or perhaps Buddha?

Luther and Bultmann

There is an interesting parallel between Luther and Bultmann. Luther's subjectivism is in the moral sphere: we are justified by faith alone, not by works. Bultmann's demythologization brings a subjectivism into the epistemological sphere: we know the supernatural by subjective faith alone not by objective events. Thus Bultmann seeks to destroy every false security, every false certainty whether we seek it in our good works our ascertainable knowledge. So he tells us, 'we can believe in God only in spite of experience, just as we can accept justification only in spite of conscience... More precisely, demythologizing is the radical application of the doctrine of justification by faith to the sphere of knowledge and thought.'⁴⁰ Thus he concludes:

'Faith in God means faith in justification, a faith which rejects the idea that certain actions can be marked off as conveying sanctification. Faith in God means faith in creation, and this likewise rejects the idea that certain areas of status and event in the world can be marked off as holy.'⁴¹

Thus we have an entirely privatised Christianity and we must ask whether such individualism is meaningful to socially conscious modern man today?

Conclusion: Historicity Without History

Bultmann's positive contribution in his untiring emphasis on the need for personal existential decision. It is only such a subjective appropriation that gives saving efficacy to the objective salvation-event in Christ. As J. Schniewind epigrammatically observes, 'the *pro me* is parallel to the *ephapax*.'⁴² Bultmann does indeed give us a penetrating preview of the historicity of man, who is burdened with

⁴⁰ Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, SCM Press, London, 1964, p.84.

⁴¹ *Kerygma and Myth*, op. cit., p.211.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.79.

the past, stands in the present, facing the future in decision, 'not the false future over which he has no control, but the future which will give him a character which he does not yet have.'⁴³ Here we have a picture of a man whose historicity is indeed the seal upon his finiteness, but it is also the seal upon his dignity as 'freedom called out', as a person. Further, for all his scepticism, 'Bultmann's view, undoubtedly, reveals a profound awareness of the transcendence of divine action and of the inability of the 'empirical' history to grasp the deep significance of Christ. It indicated a keen appreciation of the permanent actuality of the salvific even.'⁴⁴

But the same author also notes that with Bultmann 'historical time is completely eliminated for the sake of the existential decision; Christ's person is completely eliminated for the sake of God's Message. Only the eternal action of God remains, encountering men through the Message in the time of decision. And it is always outside time.'⁴⁵ The eschatological 'once and for all' does not imply the uniqueness of a historical even. The real eschatological event takes place in human self-consciousness at the moment of decision in faith. The historical uniqueness of the revelation of God is given up in favour of historicity as a pattern of human life. We are left with a historicity without history. However, the true meaning of historicity must be sought in history. For the Christian, his personal existential historicity finds meaning only in and through salvation history.

Thus Bultmann's attempt at demythologizing the Gospel ends with de-dogmatizing its doctrine and de-historicizing its events, and we would not use the word 'Christianity' for what is left after this!

IV. Cullmann's Salvation History

The insistence we have been placing on the kerygma as event is given a firm exegetical foundation and developed by Oscar Cullmann's, *Salvation in History*.⁴⁶ Here he develops and updates his earlier thesis in *Christ and Time*.⁴⁷ We shall here consider this theme, for we believe it is a very valid answer to the problem raised by Bultmann.

⁴³ Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p.96.

⁴⁴ Jean Mouroux, *The Mystery of Time*, Desclee, N.Y., 1964, p.134.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.134.

⁴⁶ SCM Press, London, 1967.

⁴⁷ SCM Press, London, 1967.

Bultmann Rejected

Cullmann heartily accepts the positive contribution that existential analysis makes in terms of ‘the call to decision, of which Bultmann speaks so impressively.’⁴⁸ In fact he does not consider the concept of *Heilsgeschichte* as opposed to an authentic existential understanding of the original kerygma. It ‘is rather the boldest expression of the prophetic dynamism of the Bible, leaving ample room for a free decision.’⁴⁹ For in the salvation history perspective faith is not an isolated act, but a decision here and now that aligns us with a sequence of event that are seen as having a salvific significance for all men. Thus it is with the subjective and individualist emphasis of the Bultmannians that Cullmann takes strong exception.

In his rejection of Cullmann’s thesis, Bultmann, in his much-cited article ‘History of Salvation and History’⁵⁰, does admit that salvation history is found in the Acts. But following Schweitzer’s ‘consistent eschatology’ school he sees this merely as an attempt to solve the problems arising out of the indefinite delay of the expected parousia. Thus de-eschatologizing and demythologizing both lead to a negation of salvation history. Since Bultmann sees a separation between Jesus and the community, he has no difficulty seeing an opposition between their eschatologies either. Besides we have already noted that his interpretation of ‘historicity’ with its emphasis on the punctiliar event places him in opposition to any theology of history.

We, however, have insisted on the importance of the identity between Jesus and the Christ and, as Cullmann points out, ‘anyone who speaks of a continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of early Christian faith is implying a salvation history, whether he wants to or not.’⁵¹ The eschatological ‘now’ of the kingdom is stretched between a tension of the *Naherwartung* and *Fernwartung*, between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ to include the future and the past in the history of salvation. In fact we can exegetically trace this tension to Jesus himself, for his eschatology, which does indeed have elements of this tension, is far too original to have been contributed by a Jewish or Hellenistic community. Thus we find salvation history in the original kerygma itself. So Cullmann concludes against Bultmann:

⁴⁸ Salvation in History, p.90.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.12.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ibid., p.45.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.52.

If the decision in faith intended in the New Testament asks us to align ourselves with that sequence of events, the sequence may not be demythologized, de-historicized, or de-objectified. But this means that the message about these events must be taken seriously as a report about something that has happened objectively.⁵²

Prophecy and Myth

Cullmann overcomes the dichotomy between history and myth by posing a third category, which is the basis of salvation history perspective: 'Redemptive history as a whole is 'prophecy'. Here is the point that transcends the contrast between history and myth.'⁵³ Prophecy then is history viewed from a revealed point of view. We can, therefore, distinguish three stages in the genesis of salvation history⁵⁴: first, we have an eye-witnessed event; second, a revelation concerning it; third, an interpretation in the light of the past. This last provides a continuity with previous salvation history, which is reinterpreted or rather interpreted more deeply and truly anew, in the light of the new event. Martin Noth and Gerhard Von Rad have shown how in the Old Testament individual events and interpretations coalesce in a later kerygmatic view. Cullmann attempts to do the same for the New Testament. Thus he says that a new event is not just subordinated to earlier history, but rather 'the kerygma itself is, on the contrary, interpreted anew in each case on the basis of the present event!'.⁵⁵

Putting this schematically, we would say: myth is symbol plus meaning extrinsically added. Prophecy is 'event' plus 'word'. Now an event is an occurrence with an intrinsic meaning, which is then further explicated in the word. The kerygma is event and word. But these two are never opposed realities for:

Word and event are not separable in the mind of God himself, and accordingly in the biblical view, the Word is an event, and conversely the event is the Word. Nevertheless, from the human point of view, we must acknowledge that the event has priority.⁵⁶

We would, therefore, say that the kerygma is event, while from the interpreting word develops a theology. In fact, already in the Gospels,

⁵² Ibid., p.70.

⁵³ Christ and Time, p.97.

⁵⁴ Salvation in History, p.90.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.93.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.97.

we have a theology woven into the kerygmatic proclamation as redaction criticism has shown.

Now this concept of saving history is central in Israel's faith. Von Rad is quite emphatic about this: 'From first to last, Israel manifestly takes as her starting point the absolute priority in theology of event over 'logos'.⁵⁷ Yahweh is experienced primarily as the Lord of history, leading it to its final fulfilment. Thus Von Rad will not call the stories from the fall to the tower of Babel 'myths' at all, for myths are essentially ahistorical.⁵⁸ When the Bible does take up mythic expression it transforms it by 'historicizing' it, using it to 'prophecy' about an event, whether it be an original event that alienated man from God, or a final one that will unite him with God. Thus we would agree with Cullmann when he writes:

Demythologizing may, therefore, be recognized as one of the aims of exegesis, only it must be undertaken in the biblical sense, that is in terms of historizing the myth, i.e. interpreting history, and not adapting them to an extraneous philosophy, whether it be metaphysics, as in Philo, or existentialism, as in the Bultmann school.⁵⁹

In fact, it is this salvation historical orientation that distinguishes the Judaeo-Christian faith from all other religions. Bultmann by de-historizing it only succeeds in remythologizing it in more sophisticated terms.

The Christ-event

Salvation history does not demand faith in a series of events connected by an unbroken line of causality, but rather faith in a God who enters history freely and unpredictably choosing to make certain individual events the ground for his encounter with man. It is by an existential decision here and now that we must appropriate this history. As Cullmann writes, 'by virtue of our birth we belong to many 'histories' - the history of our family, or the history of our nation, for instance. By our decision in faith, we align ourselves with this very special history, salvation history.'⁶⁰ But if this history is indeed a sequence of events, as pointed out earlier, then it must imply a

⁵⁷ *Old Testament Theology*, Oliver Boyd, Edinburg, 1968, Vol. I. p.116.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.154.

⁵⁹ *Salvation in History* p.139.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.21.

‘prophetic’ community based on the kerygmatic events and making them present through history. Now the kerygmatic event is Jesus Christ. ‘The event in the Word-made flesh contains within itself the entire salvation history that came before and that comes afterwards.’⁶¹ Thus the Christ event has a universal and decisive uniqueness of a once and for all men, and a once and for all time!⁶² And it is only by decision in faith that I can share in this, through the community that makes it present for me.

The Christological problem that the early Church faced was not a controversy over natures. This is a much later development in a Greek milieu. For the early Christians were right in their intuition that Christology is a doctrine of an event not of natures. Hence their concern is to express the uniqueness of the Christ-event. They are compelled to do this in the categories they know and yet none is quite adequate. Even the language Jesus used of himself falls short of his own mystery.

What is interesting though is that they do not attempt an answer to this problem with the use of myth and symbol, or rationalize it away as the gnostics did. Rather they adopted a typically Hebraic way of applying titles, of using names. For since a name stands for the unveiled reality it can be used to point to the revealed mystery.

The Titles of Jesus

Let us note at the start that none of these titles is mutually exclusive. They do overlap and though we follow Cullmann in classifying them accordingly to the four christological functions one can distinguish, rarely does a title relate only to one of them.⁶³

With this in mind let us first consider the titles that refer to the earthly work of Jesus. The title of prophet when applied to Jesus refers well to the unique authority of his eschatological vocation. The *ebed* Yahweh concept goes back to Jesus himself and gives rise to ‘one of the oldest and most important Christologies.’⁶⁴ It does indeed express the central theme of Jesus’ earthly life, i.e. his atoning death, but soon it recedes into the background. The High-Priest title, especially when it is combined with the ‘servant of Yahweh’ concept, expresses a deep insight into the New Testament’s understanding of

⁶¹ Ibid., p.100.

⁶² Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, op. cit., p.123.

⁶³ Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, SCM Press, London, p.109.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.69.

Jesus. For here we see, that, 'it is precisely in offering and taking the greatest humiliation upon himself that Jesus exercises the most divine function conceivable in Israel, that of the high priestly Mediator.'⁶⁵

With regard to the future work of Jesus, the title of Messiah, to which Jesus showed an extreme reserve, is valuable because it establishes a continuity between the work of Jesus and the mission of Israel. More appropriate is the title of Son of Man, which Jesus himself used. This represents the highest possible glorification in Judaism, and when it is combined with the 'servant of Yahweh' as in Mk: 10.45, it gains a new Christological depth and meaning.

The present work of Jesus, as Cullmann points out, 'is by no means a 'Catholic' invention, but a fundamental idea of the whole New Testament.'⁶⁶ Though the Kyrios title is a post-Easter one, 'this designation expresses as does no other the thought that Christ is exalted to God's right hand, glorified, and now intercedes for men before the Father.' No wonder, then, that Kyrios Christos became one of the Church's oldest confessional formulas, and Maranatha one of her first liturgical prayers. In fact the title Saviour grows out of this one.

The title, referring to the pre-existence of Jesus 'does not indicate unity in essence or nature between God and Christ, but rather a unity in the work of revelation, in the function of the pre-existent one.'⁶⁷ Thus we have the Logos concept, which St. John so daringly applies to Jesus in a way that forcefully emphasizes 'the unity in historical revelation of the incarnate and pre-existent Jesus.'⁶⁸ It is the *logos* concept that dominates later Christological developments. With regard to the Son of God title, Cullmann observes that though we cannot definitely say whether it goes back to Jesus himself or not, the 'title as applied to Jesus expresses the historical and qualitative uniqueness of his relation to his Father.'⁶⁹ Finally, the designation of Jesus as God does not go beyond the Kyrios title.⁷⁰

Conclusion: Christology and Mythology

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.91.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.193.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.247.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.258.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.275.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.314.

It is important to realize that even though a title may express one function well it falls short when applied to the others. Thus it is only by an accumulation of such titles that the Christ-event can be designated at all. Gradually from the perspective of salvation history, the connection between the titles emerges and the ineffable richness of the Christ-event is a little better realized. Thus 'the question about Jesus was not answered by early Christianity in terms of a mythology already at hand, but in terms of a series of real facts,'⁷¹ in terms of events in history. Though the first Christians did use many elements from their Jewish tradition and their Hellenistic environment, there is no evidence of 'a myth which was externally imposed on an essentially non-historical kerygma.'⁷² Rather the prophetic pattern seen in redemptive history from the first creation to the new one is the Christ-line that finds its centre in the earthly life of Jesus. The kerygma is not, then, the proclamation of a revealed doctrine, but of the Christ-event, the mystery of our faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

We can see, then, how Docetism is the fundamental Christological heresy, for it springs from 'the failure to respect the historically unique character of the redemptive deed of Christ.'⁷³ The more obvious forms of this heresy fall back on the redeemer myth or an avatar image, the more subtle ones reduce the Christ-event to an abstract teaching in terms of some contemporary philosophy. Cullmann rightly remarks, 'the history of dogma teaches us that the decisive debate of the ancient Church consisted in its successful resistance against the Gnostic attempt to eliminate salvation history of the Bible by philosophical reinterpretation.'⁷⁴ Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, is keenly sensitive to the danger of such Hellenistic Gnosticism, and in Luke, who writes for the Hellenistic Christians, we already have a decisive theology of history.

The real *skandalon*, then, is not from the seeming mythology of the New Testament, but from the decisive uniqueness claimed for the Christ-event, namely, that a contingent event historically datable, has assumed a once-and-for-all time significance for all men, and on the acceptance of which we stand judged! Paradoxically,

it was infinitely easier to believe in the redemptive history as long as its mid-point was still placed, as in Judaism, in the eschatological

⁷¹ Ibid., p.316.

⁷² Ibid., p.317.

⁷³ Christ and Time, p.127.

⁷⁴ Salvation in History, p.23.

future, that is in a time that could only be the object of prophecy and not at the same time of historical confirmation.⁷⁵

Indeed we who are separated from the event by two thousand years and many more miles cannot quite appreciate how fantastic the claims of Jesus must have sounded to his contemporaries. No wonder then he was rejected and crucified: He is mad; (Jn:10:20); Crucify him; crucify him! (Jn:19:6) The scandal for modern man, with his electricity and atom bomb, is not greater than it was for these people, because in the final analysis, it has little to do with a cosmological mythology, it is rather a challenge to our human hybris.

Cullmann's study of the primitive Christian conception of time and history, lays the exegetical foundation for the uniqueness of Christ in the *ephapax*, the 'once and for all' Christ-event, that is 'decisively unique for the salvation of all men and all times.'⁷⁶ It is an event that is totally different and universally significant.

Cullmann has certainly made an invaluable contribution to the Christological debate. His notion of salvation history has provided a sound common basis for an ecumenical dialogue, for 'the unity of Christians derives from their final adherence to their 'final' history; their disunity stems from their adherence to inauthentic 'new histories'.'⁷⁷ However, before concluding this section a word of caution seems in order on the neo-orthodox Protestant attempt to solve the problem of the relation of the Christian faith to history, by calling in the notion of Heilsgeschichte. Thus for men like E. Brunner and Karl Barth, this is a 'very special history' which runs parallel to but never intersects secular history, and to which the secular historian has no access, but only the man of faith. This amounts to a subtle de-historization that is far from Cullmann's original thesis. However, it is Pannenberg and his followers that are more categoric in their rejection of such a stance.

V. Pannenberg's Revelation History

While Cullmann's Salvation in History is very well founded exegetically, Wolfhart Pannenberg's Revelation as History⁷⁸ is more a theological reflection.

⁷⁵ Christ and Time, p.124.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.123.

⁷⁷ J. Navance, History and Faith in the Thought of Alan Richardson, SCM Press, London, 1966, p.145.

⁷⁸ Sheed and Ward, London, 1969.

God's Self-communication

Pannenberg follows the present consensus that considers revelation not as concerned with a number of truths, but rather as the self-communication of God. But this is not a direct self-communication of his essence without any mediation, nor is it a symbolic, cosmological one as in traditional myths. Rather in the Bible, we discover 'a conception of indirect self-revelation of God as a reflex of his activity in history.'⁷⁹ This is true of the Old Testament⁸⁰ as well as the New.⁸¹ For Pannenberg, then, the biblical revelation in God's self-communication in his historical acts, i.e., in his words and works. Thus he insists on the unity of word and event.⁸²

Since we are 'not involved with single revelatory events, but with a series of occurrences,'⁸³ he introduces the notion of revelation history. This is not opposed to Cullmann's idea of salvation history but rather correlative to it: 'For the man who is disposed to an openness towards God, revelation in its deepest sense means salvation, fulfilment of his destiny and his being.'⁸⁴ Now in the biblical tradition, 'the whole of Judaism expected the decisive, saving, self-revelation of Jahweh in the eschatological future.'⁸⁵ So too in the New Testament, the Christian apocalyptic expects the parousiasic fulfilment of God's plan in the future. Hence Pannenberg's thesis: 'Revelation is not comprehended completely in the beginning, but at the end of the revealing history.'⁸⁶

The Eschatological Event

If it is history as a totality that is God's revelation, what then of the Christ-event? If Jesus Christ is the fullness of God's revelation, two difficulties arise: first, how can a single contingent event within the historical process have absolute meaning as revelation? In other words, how does the Christ event assume a universal significance for all men? Second, if the historical process still continues, why cannot

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.23.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.131.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.53.

⁸² Cf. Ibid., p.189.

⁸³ Ibid., p.131.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.156, nt.14.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.59.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.131.

there be progress beyond this past event? In other words, how does the Christ-event assume a decisive significance for all time?

Pannenberg answers these difficulties with an insightful application of ‘anticipated eschatology’, which implies a tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’. His thesis, then, is this: in the fate of Jesus the destiny of every man is fulfilled, ‘already now’ but ‘not fully yet’. It is in this ‘anticipative’ sense that Jesus is the fullness of God’s revelation, for in him the end of history is consummated, ‘already now’ but ‘not fully yet’. Hence he has a universal and decisive significance for all men, for all time. This constitutes his uniqueness.

Thus, in his own words, the revelation history approach ‘is characterized by the concept of the pre-happening of the end of history in the activity and destiny of Jesus.’⁸⁷ For Pannenberg, then, for whom the resurrection is the epitome of the Christ-event, ‘the paradox (if we may call it such) ‘that a historical event is the eschatological event’ forms precisely the nerve of our interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus.’⁸⁸

Christology ‘from below’

It is from this perspective of Revelation as History that Pannenberg goes on to develop his Christology of Jesus - God and Man.⁸⁹ It is not difficult to see why he would reject a Christology from above, one that began with the divinity, and then traced its descent. The reasons he proposes against this seem sound. First, it presupposes the divinity, whereas the task of Christology would seem to be to lead up to it. Second, it is preoccupied with the difficulties of the God-man union and plays down the historical Jesus. Third, it is more a *quoad Deum than an quoad nos* in its approach.

Hence Pannenberg would put away classical Logos Christology.⁹⁰ For, with its Hellenistic overtones, it tended to de-emphasize the historical Jesus. Now

To the extent that the concept of the incarnation cuts itself loose from the Old Testament and Jewish theology of history, it becomes a mere myth of a divine being descending from heaven and ascending again.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, SCM Press, London, 1986, p.12.

⁸⁸ *Revelation as History*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1969, p.193.

⁸⁹ Op. cit.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.157.

1. The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

He would, therefore, replace the Logos concept with the idea of revelation, which he summarily describes thus:

Revelation is no longer understood in terms of a supernatural disclosure or of a peculiarly religious experience of religious subjectivity, but in terms of the comprehensive whole of reality, which however, is not simply given, but is a temporal process of a history that is not yet completed, but open to a future which is anticipated in the teaching and personal history of Jesus.⁹²

Thus he would develop a Christology ‘from below’, rising from the historical man Jesus to the recognition of his divinity.⁹³ This he feels is the only way to overcome the contrast between the Antiochene and Alexandrine Christologies, to suppress the dichotomy between Jesus and the Christ.

From the perspective of revelation history, ‘Christology is concerned, therefore, not only with unfolding the Christian community’s confession of Christ but above all with grounding it in the activity and fate of Jesus in the past.’⁹⁴ The starting point for this is the resurrection which is the eschatological event, the ground of all Christ’s claims and of all Christian faith. For this is the meaning of the resurrection all through the New Testament: it is the revelation and anticipation of man’s destiny with God.

Thus Jesus Christ is the revelation of God and the revelation of man. He reveals God to man and man to himself. Here, then, is the foundation for his decisive uniqueness:

Only because the destiny of man is supposed to be revealed in his own fate could Jesus claim for himself in his earthly activity that the meaning of life for all other men, their human destiny, was decided in the encounter with him.⁹⁵

Conclusion: Summation in Christ

Jesus Christ is, then, the eschatological summation of creation. He is the end of all things; he is also their beginning. He is alpha and omega. For in the Hebrew understanding of things their true essence is only decided by what they become. And so there is a correlation between creation and eschaton, between Genesis and Apocalypse, for ‘the predestination of all things toward Jesus, their eschatological

⁹² Revelation as History, p.ix.

⁹³ Ibid., p.33.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.28.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.211.

summation through Jesus, is identical with their creation through Jesus.⁹⁶

In conclusion, we would say that Pannenberg's positive contribution is his insightful use of the 'anticipated eschatology' concept. For here the dilemma between uniqueness and relevance is squarely faced and solved by placing the Christ-event at the very centre of human history and destiny. However, his rejection of descent Christology we feel eliminates one polarity in a healthy and necessary tension in any theology of the incarnation. His starting point of the resurrection as the eschatological event has many advantages, but we feel that the paschal mystery is more inclusive as a starting point for a Christology, for it is here that the Christian enters the descent-ascent movement of redemption. Further, the death-resurrection theme of the paschal mystery holds two opposing views in a realistic tension: one more optimistic, which regards history as the scene of the resurrection; another more pessimistic, that regards history as the stage of the crucifixion.

Finally, though we would not say that Pannenberg's revelation is static, we feel that Rahner's evolutionary perspective is more dynamic and comprehensive.

VI. Rahner's Evolutionary Perspective

Our intention here is not to write an apologetic for Christology in view of the theory of evolution, but more positively with Karl Rahner our task will lie 'in bringing out clearly the inner affinity of these two doctrines - a sort of similarity of style and in explaining the possibility of their being mutually related.'⁹⁷ We believe that such an attempt would be extremely meaningful to modern man.

Active self-transcendence

Rahner begins his reflections by presupposing an evolutionary worldview that implies two things: firstly, a unity between spirit and matter. Only if there is no insuperable chasm between these two, only if they can form some sort of unity, is it meaningful to speak 'about

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.391.

⁹⁷ K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. V, Ch. 8, "Christology within an Evolutionary View of the World," Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1966, p.158.

the unity of the world, of natural history and the history of man.”⁹⁸ Secondly, in this matter-spirit continuum, the basic tendency is the orientation of matter toward spirit.

Now from the basic datum of the experience of ‘becoming’, a given that cannot be denied, Rahner develops the notion of active self-transcendence. For if ‘becoming’ is to be meaningful, it must mean a ‘becoming more’ in some sense. If, on the contrary, it is merely the flux of change then we are in the world of the eternal return, where time is devalued and history meaningless. But since we do give meaning and value to these things, this ‘becoming’ must be a ‘becoming more’, a real self-transcendence, an evolution in one direction.

It is only in man that this active self-transcendence of matter towards spirit makes a breakthrough into self-consciousness. Thus Rahner writes:

If man is thus the self-transcendence of living matter, then the history of Nature and spirit forms an inner unity in which natural history develops towards man, continues in him as his history, is conserved and surpassed in him and hence reaches its proper goal with and in the history of the human spirit.⁹⁹

Dynamic Unity

Now if matter finds its meaning in man, where does man find his meaning? What does his self-transcendence reach out to? Surely this must have a meaning and value too! Here we would say that man’s inner dynamism reaches out to God in a final consummation of what in Christian terms we call his destiny to ‘grace and glory’.

However, man does not find himself as an isolated monad. The social expression of his extension is space and time is community and history. If there is a unity to the world, as we have pointed out above, then there must be a unity here as well. If man’s personal destiny is grace and glory, then his community must be open to grace and his history destined to glory, that is, if we take the social dimension with the seriousness it deserves.

But this destiny is not something that can be grasped by an active self-transcendence. Rather it can only be received as a gift, for it is nothing less than freely receiving the freely offered self-

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.159.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.168.

communication of God himself. Hence the whole dynamism of creation in evolution is to receive this self-communication of God, in so far as it is offered and we are capable.

But is there an essential unity to this evolutionary process or a radical plurality? For Rahner, there can be little doubt. There is one world because it has one source. We are one human community because we have one father, we have one salvific history because we have one destiny. The origin, sustenance and confirmation of creation is one ultimate reality, God.

Christ and Evolution

In this evolutionary perspective, the Incarnation is no longer a static doctrine preoccupied with the problematic union of two natures. Rather it is the intersection of two movements: the evolutionary process that reaches out to receive the self-communication of God and he offering himself by entering this process and fulfilling it from within in the history of Jesus. Thus the Incarnation is 'an intrinsic and necessary element in the process of God's giving himself in grace to the world as a whole.'¹⁰⁰

Hence the Hypostatic union is the fulfilment of that openness toward God, to which all evolution tends. Thus, one we understand that man is an *ens finitum capax infiniti*, we can begin to see how Jesus 'precisely by being man in the fullest sense (which we never attain), is God's Existence into the world.'¹⁰¹ And so Rahner theologizes on the Incarnation:

Indeed the Logos made man has been called the abbreviated Word of God. This abbreviation, this code-word for God is man, that is, the Son of Man and men exist ultimately because the Son of Man was to exist... man is forever the articulate mystery of God.¹⁰²

Uniqueness in solidarity

Hence in this evolutionary perspective, 'the Incarnation appears as the necessary and permanent beginning of the divinization of the world as a whole.'¹⁰³ It is moreover a divinization from within, a fulfilment that the whole process itself is oriented to receive. Thus

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.180.

¹⁰¹ *Theological Investigations*, Vol. I, Ch. 5, "Current Problems in Christology", Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1961, p.184.

¹⁰² Ibid., Vol. IV, Ch. 4. "On the Theology of the Incarnation" 1966, p.116.

¹⁰³ Ibid., Vol. V. Ch. 8, p.161.

Jesus Christ is placed at the very heart of the evolutionary process and his uniqueness now consists precisely in his solidarity with man and his ultimate personal and communal destiny at the end of history. So truly is he man that he can even be truly God, for man is essentially an openness to God, an *ens ad Deum*. Thus *vere homo, vere Deus* is an old formula that gets new life in Rahner's evolutionary perspective.

Notice how antithetical this perspective is from the understanding of a redeemer myth or avatar, where 'the 'human' element is merely the clothing, the livery, of which the God makes use in order to draw attention to his presence here with us.'¹⁰⁴ On the contrary, 'the incarnation of God is therefore the unique, supreme case of the total actualization of human reality.'¹⁰⁵ To the extent that a Christology fails to grasp this it is inevitably mythic.

The evolutionary perspective of Rahner firmly grounds the significance of the Christ-event in human history as part of a larger cosmic process. This was precisely the strength and attraction of Teilhard de Chardin's vision. But it implies a oneness of human history that is itself a philosophical and theological postulate. How does such unity integrate the rich diversity of peoples and cultures? Rahner does not address this problem here but it cannot be wished away.

Now if the histories of diverse peoples are totally independent of each other, then the Christ-event would not be cross-culturally unique. Indeed it would be quite meaningless outside its cultural context. If cultures were hermetically sealed units, then communication across them would be impossible and human history itself would be impossible and human history itself would be an unintelligible chaos of isolated peoples in the larger cosmos of creation.

On the other hand, if there is a dominant axis to the direction of history then the Christ-event would be the fulfilment of a central historical process but it would leave other marginal histories uncompleted, except in so far as they are subsumed into this central one. The first alternative seems unacceptably isolationist, the second obviously imperialist. One denies the essential unity, the other neglects the rich diversity of mankind. What we need is a pluralist

¹⁰⁴ *Theological Investigations Vol. I*, Ch. 5, "Current Problems in Christology", p.156.

¹⁰⁵ *Theological Investigations Vol. IV*, Ch. 4, "On the Theology of the Incarnation", p.110.

conception of history that will neither deny the first nor neglect the second.

A theology that accepts polygenism already accepts a radical diversity at the very origin of our species. But this is not a denial of our essential unity in our sinfulness and redemptive need. Such a theology can accommodate a multi-directional history that integrates diverse peoples as equal, not as sub- and super-ordinated partners. In this perspective then, the Christ-event is not perceived as the centre of the end of a linear progression. Rather it is the symbol and sacrament of God's salvation, a promise and a pledge of human self-transcendence.

VII. Conclusion

Uniqueness and Arrogance

The uniqueness of Jesus Christ as we have attempted to articulate here is necessarily an affirmation of faith. It cannot be a demonstrated proof. It is grounded in the existential experience of the decisive personal significance of the Christ-event 'for me' now, and opens to a vision of the determinative universal significance of this for all men and for all time. But how must all this appear to a person outside this faith encounter?

The confession of decisive personal significance may be conceded to a believer even by someone who does not share his faith. But the claim of a determinative universal significance cannot but seem incredibly arrogant and dogmatic to the 'outsider', and, in a time of inter-religious dialogue, an acute embarrassment to the 'insider' as well. Even more incredibly many Christians have proclaimed their faith in just such arrogant and exclusive terms. But is this not a betrayal of the very Jesus they proclaim? Can the spirit of Jesus be present here? Arnold Toynbee underlines this imperialistic arrogance of Christianity which reflects a most un-Christian pride.¹⁰⁶

It is difficult to see how such 'exclusive arrogance' can be disowned if the significance of Jesus is based on a uniqueness of differentiation. For then he would be decisive and determinative for

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Pettinger op. cit., p.92.

us from the outside of our human experience and history. This is a betrayal of the incarnational mystery. It is also a rejection of our humanity and our history, especially that part of it which is found in the rich and diverse traditions of non-Christian religions and cultures. And dialogue with them would be impossible, and confrontation inevitable. This much we should have learnt by now.

However, the personal and universal significance of Jesus Christ affirmed in this essay, is grounded in a uniqueness of identity; not a mere self-identity but a solidarity which is inclusive of all that is human. Jesus is decisive and determinative for us not because he is different from anyone of us, but because he is one of us, only so truly human, that he is also truly divine. It is not a significance that makes every one else insignificant. It is not a uniqueness that makes everything else irrelevant.

Such an affirmation can only be made in faith, but it can be meaningful even to those who do not share this faith. For it is not an arrogant rejection of their faith but an affirmation of humanity that speaks to theirs. It is not a vision of faith that subordinates them but one that is open to theirs. This is what can make dialogue an enriching encounter.

Such an inter-religious dialogue would require a theology of religions that would establish the basis for each religion to be an equal partner in an open and trusting encounter. The scope of this essay has been more modest - it tries to show how the uniqueness of the Christ-event need not be an obstacle to this dialogue, but ought to be a compelling reason for engaging in it. For we have rejected an interpretation of Jesus in terms of an exclusive uniqueness and tried to articulate our faith in his significance for us in terms of an inclusive and universal solidarity.

This solidarity is not a task which has already been achieved. However, it has been radically begun in Jesus, but is not fully complete in us. Hence the urgency of a dialogical encounter with other faiths, not just to understand them, but to enrich and enliven our own. Historically this understanding of the Christ-event has all too often been betrayed by the exclusiveness of our Christianity. But today it can be the only basis of a respectful and fruitful inter-religious dialogue.

For our faith commitment is to the uniqueness of Jesus not to the uniqueness of Christianity, which, as an institutional expression of faith, cannot but be culturally and historically conditioned. It is only in dialogue that we can begin to transcend these limitations. Then we

might, for instance not only discover the unknown Christ of Hinduism, we might also uncover the unacknowledged Hinduism, we might also uncover the unacknowledged Hinduism in our Christian faith.

A Personal Response

The uniqueness of Jesus Christ, that we have endeavoured to articulate in a meaningful way, is best seen in a dynamic perspective. Thus from Bultmann, we have the importance of an existential decision for Christ, an expression of faith that is a pre-condition to understanding his decisive and universal uniqueness. Cullmann's history places the Christ-event at the mid-point centre that validates and sums up all the rest. For Pannenberg, the eschatological event is Christ's resurrection in which our destiny is anticipated, and guaranteed. We feel that Rahner's evolutionary perspective is best equipped to draw all these threads together. For when the evolutionary process meets the revelatory one, we have, expressed in terms relevant to modern man, the dual polarity so essential to understand Jesus Christ, and with which every Christology must struggle. But we must understand human evolution not as unilinear but pluralistic, and divine revelation not as unitary but as multifaceted. Then we have an authentic basis for an inter-religious dialogue as well.

Jesus is *Deus pro nobis*, something we have been accustomed to stress. Jesus is also the man for us before God, but this is often neglected. Thus in the final analysis it is in the humanity of Jesus Christ and its significance for us that we must find his decisive uniqueness of other-significance. For this Jesus not only reveals to us the face of God, he also unveils to us the being of man. He is the 'parable of God and paradigm of humanity.'¹⁰⁷

This immanent self-utterance of God in his eternal fullness is his Logos. In Jesus Christ, this Logos has now been irrevocably uttered into the world, into the human community, into man's history. In him too man and his world and his history have made their response. 'Brahma is silence', the ancient Upanishads insisted, and this is indeed, the epitome of a profound cosmic revelation. But Jesus Christ

¹⁰⁷ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. H. Hoskins, Seabury Press, N.Y. 1979, p.626.

is the Word in whom God has broken his silence and initiated a dialogue with man in history.

And so we come back to the question at the beginning of the essay: 'Who do you say that I am?' Jesus himself does not directly answer this question for us.¹⁰⁸ Each of us must make a personal response from our own existential faith experience. There will be many kinds of responses at many different levels. But any authentic response must be an open-ended commitment to the future that Jesus promises.

If I may be allowed to conclude this long essay with a personal response, for me, Jesus is the man with whom I face the future of God. A future that first reconciles and heals our past, then integrates and carries forward our present in new and mysterious ways; a future that began with God and will end with God. Indeed this God will not be contained by the categories of our mind or constrained by the limitations of our heart. For, 'He comes, comes, ever comes,'¹⁰⁹ as promise and pledge, symbol and sacrament.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Schillebeeckx, *Op. cit.*, p.637.

¹⁰⁹ Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, Macmillan, London, 1920, No.45, p.30.

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JESUIT PROVINCE ADMINISTRATION: THE GOVERNMENT YOU DESERVE

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I. INTRODUCTION

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ORDINARY GOVERNANCE IN THE SOCIETY (TABLE)

Abstract

Here is the substance of a working paper presented by the writer during the 'Province Days' (Bombay: April 17-19, 1985). Most of the principles and statements might be applicable to other provinces. In presenting this paper on province administration, the focus will not be on the routine administration of the province curia, but rather on the governance of the province especially in terms of policy-decisions—how they are made, implemented and evaluated.

I. Introduction

In presenting this paper on province administration, the focus will not be on the routine administration of the province curia, but rather on the governance of the province especially in terms of policy-decisions—how they are made, implemented and evaluated.

Generally, there was more dissatisfaction with, than appreciation of such province policy. Briefly, concern was expressed in regard to:

- The lack of consistency and comprehensiveness in province policies;
- The role of consultors and commissions;
- The influence of opinion leaders and pressure groups ;
- The need for clear goals and criteria for policy-making ;
- The lack of co-ordination between communities and between apostolates ;
- The way policy decisions taken are communicated;
- The need for a more effective structure for decision-making and for on-going evaluation.

II. Propositions On Governance

It seems best to first set out the premises underpinning the model of governance to be proposed later. Hopefully, this will help to clarify the issues involved and make the discussion more fruitful.

1. Governance in the Society is a spiritual discerning process, not a political, democratic one.

It is not an attempt to balance the power or coordinate the interests, of individuals or groups. Much less, it is based on membership rights. Rather, it is a quest for God's will in the fulfilment of the mission we have collectively accepted as friends in the Lord. This requires our active participation in the search for God's wills just as it demands obedience to it once this will is discerned. There are, of course, institutional and human limitations implied in all this, but the more these are overcome, the more authentic the Governance of the Society.

2. Governance in the Society distinguishes between decision-making and consultation.

Decisions are always very person-centred. They imply a bond in conscience between superior and subject that binds both in a loving fidelity to their mission and to God. Thus, in what the superior commands and as to how the subject obeys, it is fidelity to God's mission that must prevail. It is anything but a relationship of power, and it transcends the juridical understanding of rights and duties.

Consultation too has always been very much a part of 'our way of proceeding', and it has been seen as an essential input for any decision-making. However, the emphasis in such consultation has been on getting and appraising the information necessary for a discerning decision rather than merely to give people a sense of involvement. It is more concerned with sound inputs for a spiritual discerning decision than with meeting the psychological needs of those involved. Thus, a superior is not free to consult or not according to the 'style' of Government he prefers. He must consult to the extent demanded and possible by the decision to be taken, even though he must make the final decision himself and take responsibility for it. So, too, those consulted are not to promote an interest or a point of view but to assist in the search for God's will.

The input from this consultation is not just a matter of the appropriate information but of the proper perspective for its appraisal as well, not just a question of a specialized competence but of a more generalized common-sense for its contextualization as well, not just a concern with human wisdom to see the signs of the times, but with the spiritual vision to, discern. the movement of grace as well.

There is always a tension and a delicate balance in such consultation and decision-making, which once again is subject to human limitations as everything else. Generally, the 'cura personalis' is much more a matter of personal decision between superior and subject, while the 'selection of ministries' is much more an area for consultation between the superior and his collaborators.

3. Governance in the Society demands open communication and accessibility especially between superiors and subjects but also between those consulted and the decision-makers.

The hierarchical levels in the Society have been of set purpose restricted to facilitate this. Each level of decision-making must correspond to an appropriate structure of consultation: the general,

the provincial, the superior, the director of works. The breadth of mission of the Society and the complexity of our social situation today make such openness and accessibility all the more crucial at every level of decision-making, even down to the lowest.

4. Governance in the Society requires constant review and revaluation precisely it is difficult to concretize its all-inclusive mission, from long-term policies for the apostolate to specific tasks of the ministry. Moreover, the Constitutions give only very general criteria or guidelines for ‘the selection of ministries.’ But they do set down ‘our way of proceeding’ in seeking the more ‘universal good’ with greater ‘freedom of spirit.’

III. A Model Of Governance

With these basic premises in mind, a model can be elaborated by specifying the different hierarchical levels of Governance in the Society.

1. The Society as a whole

The highest order of Governance for the as a whole is the General Congregation which legislates for and interprets the mission of the society. This is an extraordinary instrument of governance. The ordinary one at this level is the Superior General as the decision-maker, and the structure of consultation to assist him comprises General Councillors, general and regional assistants, the various secretariats and the Curia. Governance at this level means inspiring and motivating the body of the Society to internalize the spirit and implement the decrees of the General congregation. But it is also concerned with the calling and preparing for a General Congregation.

2. The Province

Correspondingly at the level of the Province, it is the Provincial Congregation, which elects representatives and sends postulates to the higher-level bodies. But, again, this is not the ordinary instrument of governance of the province, nor is the appointment of a ‘visitorator’. The provincial is the ordinary decision-maker here and the structure of consultation includes the consultors, the

commissions and the province curia, which assist him. More recently, 'Province Days' on a less formal and less continuous basis, have performed this consultative function in some provinces. Governance at this level is more specific and must focus on policy for the apostolate within the spirit and decrees of the higher-level bodies. But it is also responsible for keeping these bodies in touch with the apostolate and its ministries.

3. The Local Community

There is no extraordinary instrument of Governance at this level. Ordinarily, the superior is the decision-maker and his consultors assist him. More recently, community meetings have performed a consultative function on a more or less formalized and continuous basis in some communities. Governance at this level is still more specific and should focus on apostolic goals within the framework of province policy as well as give feedback to the provincial on the apostolate and its social context.

4. The Workteam

This is the unit of execution and the last level of Governance in the Society. The ordinary instrument of governance here is the director of works, and though he has no structure of consultation provided for by the legislation of the society, more recently and increasingly so, provision is made for such consultation through Governing bodies and standing committees. Often, these are formalized structures within the law of the land, but hopefully with the spirit of the Society. At times, even the whole work team itself can function as a consultative unit depending on the team spirit. At this level, governance is the most concrete and must be concerned with the ministry and its tasks. But, again, it will feedback to the higher levels to make this ministry more effective. Thus, while the mission and inspiration of the Society is progressively specified and concretized through province policy, and community goals down to work tasks, so too are new challenges and experiences feedback from the field, through the community and province, up to the Society as a whole. Further, while lower levels of governance derive from higher level ones, so too must these higher levels integrate the lower level ones. The tasks of our ministry derive their inspiration from our mission,

but this mission itself is made vibrant in the tasks in which it is expressed.

IV. The Implications Of The Model

The implications of the model of governance proposed can now be worked out. Some of these are mentioned here, others too can be deduced. But the more obvious and more important ones should be considered.

1. Given the relationship of openness and accessibility between the various hierarchical levels it follows that ***governance in the Society is a two-way process at every level***. Not only must inspiration, directives, and requests for information come from above, but equally must new experiences and challenges, questions and information from the field be feedback. A failure in governance can result from a breakdown of either one of these two processes. Only when we view governance in the Society as an overly top-down process are we inclined to assign to those on top the responsibility for such a failure of governance. Whereas often the constraints on governance come from below. Even in the Society, we get the Government we deserve!

2. Once the distinction between decision-making and consultation is accepted, then decisions regarding the *cura personalis* can remain within the bounds of a manifestation of conscience, to the extent they require, while consultation for the apostolate can be expanded to the extent needed. Moreover, if the superior must directly and personally be involved in the decision-making itself, especially when it concerns this *cura personalis*, the extensive consultation can be done for him rather than by him, freeing him of a burden without promising his authority. Further, there can be circumstances in which it would be expedient to delegate his decision-making authority, even though he cannot the responsibility for the final decision.

3. Since there is an increasing need for more ***extensive consultation, this becomes the natural point at which to initiate collaboration with non-Jesuits*** in fulfilling our mission. Real authority can be delegated to such collaborative bodies, except of course that which pertains strictly to the Society and so falls within the bounds of conscience. As long as the final responsibility for decision-making rests with the Society, the non-Jesuits would be collaborating with us. But there could be instances in which even this is given over to these joint bodies, and then the Society would be collaborating with them. Between these two poles, there is still a vast

area for collaboration which can begin with consultation and reach over to decision-making as well.

ORDINARY GOVERNANCE IN THE SOCIETY (table)
Extraordinary structures of Government (as General Congregations and Province Congregations) are not considered here

(SPECIFICATION)			(DECISIONS)		(CONSULTATION)
			ORDINARY STRUCTURES OF GOVERNANCE		
	LEVEL OF GOVERNANCE	FOCUS OF CONCERN	DECISION-MAKERS		STRUCTURES OF CONSULTATION
1.	THE SOCIETY	MISSION	GENERAL	↔	COUNCILLORS ASSISTANTS, SECRETARIATS, CURIA
		↕	↕		
2.	THE PROVINCE	POLICY	PROVINCIAL	↔	CONSULTORS, COMMISSIONS, CURIA (PROVINCE DAYS)
		↕	↕		
3.	THE COMMUNITY	GOALS	SUPERIOR	↔	CONSULTORS, TRUST BODIES, (COMMUNITY MEETINGS)
		↕	↕		
4.	THE <u>WORKTEAM</u>	TASKS	DIRECTOR OF WORKS	↔	GOVERNING BODIES, STANDING COMMITTEES
(INTEGRATION)			(REPRESENTATIONS)		(FEEDBACK)

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3.

AN ECO-SENSITIVE SPIRITUALITY FOR TODAY

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INTRODUCTION

CREATION SPIRITUALITY

REDEPTIVE VISION

THE MONASTIC WAY

A COSMOTHEANDRIC SYNTHESIS

TWO PERSONAL MODELS

Abstract

A spiritual response to the ecological crisis must not exaggerate one or other specific aspect of it. The challenge is rather to strive for a holistic integration in our historical context. Discussed also are the models of St Francis of Assisi and St Ignatius of Loyola to concretise our cosmotheandric synthesis.

Introduction

A religious understanding and the ethical commitments consequent on, it must be expressed in an integrated vision and way of life. This is our understanding of spirituality here. However, it will be no more than a conceptualization until it is internalized by persons and socialised in society, as a lived reality.

Such a spiritual response to the ecological crisis must not exaggerate one or other specific aspect of it. The challenge is rather to strive for a holistic integration in our historical context, not one that merely resolves dilemmas and reconciles contradictions, but going beyond would hold opposites in a creative tension and Transcend dichotomies in a higher unity—a *'coincidentia oppositorum'* as Nicholas of Cusa has said.

After a brief sketch of other less comprehensive versions of an eco-sensitive spirituality, we will attempt to collect the scattered fragments of insight and integration into a broader and deeper vision within the cosmotheandric perspective of our discourse.

Creation Spirituality

Creation spirituality goes back to humankind's first religious awakening to the 'enchantment' of their world. It is still alive in most tribal and many agricultural societies, and in most traditions of Eastern spirituality. Nature-mysticism is the primordial human response to encountering the world. However as Max Weber has shown the 'iron cage' of our rationalized modern society leads to a 'disenchantment of the world', particularly with the 'Protestant ethic' in the West.

In the Eastern Church the idea of 'theosis', or the divinization of all creatures, kept alive this creation-centred spirituality but in the Western Church, even much before the Reformation, it was displaced by a redemption-centred one. Some historians of Western spirituality would trace this shift to the trauma of the Black Death, the plague that wiped out a third of Europe's populations between 1347 and 1349. Some cities like Florence lost one-third of its citizens in three months! One response to this was a drive to a greater control over nature that developed into an aggressive science; the other, more immediately was a quest for redemption out of a tragic world.

The wheel has come full circle now, with creation-spirituality adherents urging the need for a 're-enchantment with the earth' as the condition for our preserving it 'from the impending destruction that we are imposing on it'. Some even called for a moratorium on redemption-spirituality to force it to 'quit its hegemony for a while' so that creation-spirituality can involve itself 'in re-understanding the meaning of redemption in different cultural and historical periods' (Fox).

The revival of creation-spirituality today represents to some 'the most important development in this century'. Its emphatic cosmocentrism relinquishes The Tragic Sense Of Life that has for so long dominated Christian spirituality in the West. But as the focus shifted from a pessimistic anthropocentrism to an optimistic cosmocentrism, the idea of original sin was displaced by the one of original blessing. And yet as long as tragedy and sin, suffering and injustice are a part of the human experience, it is difficult to see how creation-spirituality can be anything but a partial and unsatisfying response to this human predicament, unless of course one is involved in, and uncommitted to it.

Redemptive Vision

The traditional redemption-scented spirituality grappled squarely with this, sometimes to the point of being almost obsessive about sin and compulsive about atonement. But in spite of some of its undeniably negative features, to summarily dismiss it as irrelevant, in favour of an exclusive creation spirituality, or nature mysticism, only ends up trivializing both. For, if estrangement from God and from creatures go together, then communion with them must also do the same.

Moreover, it is belief in the redemption which dominates the whole of the Old Testament. The creation motif is but a magnificent foil for the message of salvation. The doctrine of creation emerges historically much later and is essentially a soteriological understanding of creation. The New Testament is not less redemption-centred, as the very name Jesus indicates. It would be difficult to discount this theme without rejecting something very essential in the tradition itself (Von Rad).

With liberation theology, the foundational experience of the Exodus is recaptured and reinterpreted to liberate oppressed and

marginalized people today. To our thinking, this is surely the most relevant and inspiring version of redemption-centred Christianity today, unless of course, one chooses to ignore the oppressive poverty and rank injustice of our world. Matthew Fox attempts to co-opt liberation theology as ‘a species of creation spirituality’ but rather unconvincingly. A deeper synthesis is required if what is valuable in both is not to be lost.

The Monastic Way

However, if redemption spirituality counter-balances some of the exaggeration of a creation-centred one, its anthropocentrism is as likely to lead to exaggerations of its own: an insensitivity to the biosphere and the cosmos more generally, and more lately, a naturalist humanism, to the exclusion of the divine.

A theocentric spirituality will of course avoid this particularly as it is epitomized by the archetype of the monk, the one who seeks God alone, *Deus Solus* with a singlemindedness (*ekagraha*) the exclusivity of a goal that shuns all subordinate though legitimate goals.

And yet the monk and his monastery lived in symbiotic harmony with their environment. There is convincing historical evidence of this wherever the monastic tradition has been found, both in the East and the West. Different religious traditions may have had a variety of understandings of the human relationship to the world and its final purpose. However, more immediate concerns, like the environment, were creatively and constructively integrated into the ultimate ones, like the quest for the absolute. Even when they were not logically derived from them, a certain harmonious integrity prevailed within a lived myth, if not on an articulated theology.

Moreover, together with sin and atonement, the monastic tradition did emphasize forgiveness and reconciliation, and by the sanctification of work and poverty, it revolutionised both the order of social values which had dominated the empire and that which was expressed in the warrior ethos of the barbarian conquerors (Dawson). *Mutatis mutandis* much the same can be said of the spiritual influence of monasticism in the East.

However, monasticism especially in the West today, finds itself marginalized in modern secular society. On the one hand, the religious worldview on which monasticism is based has been critically undermined; on the other, its contemplated dimension distances it from an active involvement in this-worldly human struggles. On both counts then, traditional monasticism has not addressed itself to ‘the

crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes’.

Other theocratic spiritualities went the same way. They all have a tendency to and other-worldliness that seems to undermine a commitment to the earth and its inhabitants in this world.

A Cosmotheandric Synthesis

None of these spiritualities are exclusive to the Christian tradition. Eastern mysticism and tribal religion are unmistakably creation-centred, as the saviour-god cults and the bhakti traditions are committedly redemption-centred. The monastic tradition with its theocentrism is still alive in the East as in the West. They are all living traditions even today, though, in our secular-materialistic this-worldly society, they may not be as dominant as they once were.

Once again then, we must bring together in a more comprehensive whole the partial contributions of these three approaches to the spiritual life: the celebration of the universe, the reconciliation and healing of redemption, and the single-minded commitment to the divine.

Here our tentative synthesis will be attempted within the Christian ethos and more particularly the cosmotheandric perspective we have specified. Coopting the contribution of one spirituality into the perspective of another can produce only an artificial juxtaposition, not a genuine synthesis. What we are seeking here, beyond even the creative tension of a dialectical opposition, is a dialogical integration.

Moltmann’s understanding of creation as the beginning of gods *‘kenosis’*, which is completed in the Incarnation, provides a promising starting point for such a synthesis, the endpoint of which we would add must be the consideration of redemption as the second creation, beginning with Christ and perfected in the resurrection, ‘already now but not fully yet’. Thus, creation and redemption are not opposed polarities, but mutual modalities of divine activity that embrace the cosmic and the human.

In trinitarian terms, creation and redemption are inseparably joined in Christ. The cosmic evolution, which as we have already said, comes from the Father through his Son and goes back to the Father through the Son, and in the Spirit. Even when this creative process is disrupted by human freedom and sinfulness, human weakness and ignorance still an ever-faithful God redeems his people and the world He created.

In a cosmotheandric perspective, if it is the cosmic dimension that inspires a creation-centred spirituality, then the human will motivate a redemption-centred one, and the divine will hold them together in the kingdom of God already now among us here, and coming in its fullness hereafter. In Hinduism the cosmic perspective is integrated into the three-fold yogic marga: 'Karma-Yoga puts us in touch with the Cosmos; Bhakti-Yoga manifests the specific calling of the human person; and Jñana-Yoga opens us up to the mystery of the Divine' (D'Sa).

Two Personal Models

Spirituality of vision and way of life is best expressed in living models. Here we present two widely accepted, yet deeply challenging ones to concretise our cosmotheandric synthesis.

St. Francis of Assisi's mystical intuition saw in the precariousness of our existence the loving self-gift of the Creator. 'In this fundamental poverty of creatureliness, there is equality'. But Francis does not answer the Heideggerian question, of why there is being rather than non-being, with angst. His response is joy. For he finds in this poverty a communion with all creatures in an inspiring I-thou community. Not undeservedly, then, is he the patron saint of the environment.

But this does not make him any the less Christocentric, to which the crib he first blessed, and the stigmata he bore, give witness. The world becomes the sacrament of God's salvation for us, and Christ, our encounter with him. All this makes for a profound eco-sensitivity within a holistic vision and integrated way of life.

St Ignatius of Loyola is less obviously associated with ecology. The Principle and Foundation of his Spiritual exercise, with its very rational '*tantum quantum*', seems to treat creation as but a means for human ends, which are in turn subjected to the purposes of God. However, others have convincingly rejected such an interpretation, to show that the elegantly sparse prose is based on Ignatius's own mystic experiences and is meant to elicit 'in each exercitant the experience of God creating—not creating *in globo*, but continually creating myself, in concrete particulars even down to my authentic desiring'. We have here, then, a founding of creaturehood on the personal providence of God.

At the end of the retreat, in the Contemplation to Attain Love, this becomes patently evident. Ignatius recalls the 'blessings of creation and redemption', 'how God dwells in creatures', and 'works and

labours' there, as the source of all blessings. In the context of the Spiritual Exercises, then, the Ignatian injunction in his Constitutions—to seek God in all things and all things in God—provides the basis for a mystic-prophetic spirituality of action, if 'things' are understood within the inclusive cosmotheandric vision as Ignatius himself would. For Ignatius, from the littlest flower on earth to the furthest star in the heavens, from the most routine action of the day, to the noblest deed of one's life, in encountering God in consolation or desolation... in all this human and cosmic world, God is the validating reality, not instrumentally but providentially. And our response is not the monastic '*contemplata aliis tradere*' but the Ignatian '*contemplativus in actione*'.

This is regarded as the favoured formulation of the Ignatian ideal. Nadal's original phrase was '*simul in actione contemplativus*'—contemplative in his very action. The ideal remains Ignatian, though differently expressed. But to our mind, Ignatius's own articulation 'seeking God in all things and all things in God', is the richest. Certainly, ecological consciousness can draw inspiration from this 'broader and more inclusive synthesis'.

4.

CONVERSION AND CONFRONTATION: THE TALASARI MISSION EXPERIENCE

Vidyajyoti Journal Theological Reflection, New Delhi, V. 57, N.II, Nov. 1992

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL PART
ISSUES AND CONCERNS

1. THE ISSUE OF CONVERSION
 2. THE OPPOSITION FROM VESTED INTERESTS
 3. THE CONFLICT WITH THE COMMUNISTS
- CONCLUSION

Abstract

This is a sociological study of the evolution of the Talasari mission in Maharashtra in the last seventy years. This is an analysis of the forces at work in the passage from a religious/proselytising concern to involvement in development projects and finally to the promotion of conscientization among the people in search of justice, and shows how the three are interconnected. The early section of the study, dealing with the situation of the Warlis and the history of the mission is omitted and presented in summarised form by the editors of VJTR.

Religious communalism and fundamentalism have more recently escalated the issue of tribal conversions into a national one, just as the greater awareness among the tribals of their own identity and the injustices they are subjected to has precipitated many local movements for change at the grassroots. Though religious conversion is no longer as urgent an objective as it used to be at the Talasari mission, other more secular movements for change among the tribals

have certainly gathered momentum and have of ten resulted in 'violent' conflicts.

How did the inspiration of the first missionaries who set out to convert the tribals in the area change over the years? What kind of opposition did it provoke and why? How did this change as the mission developed? In attempting to answer such questions we expect to arrive at a better understanding of the role of the mission in 'the service of the faith and the promotion of justice' among these people.

Summary of the Historical Part

The so-called Talasari mission in the Thane District of Maharashtra serves an area largely inhabited by tribals, mostly Warlis, who had been exploited for centuries. Symington's Report of 1938 calls the situation 'a blot on the administration.' A series of movements of protest and rebellion was organised at least from the end of the 19th century.

The mission was started there in 1922 by members of the Missionary Society of St Francis of Assisi. They began by organising public meetings and talking about the Christian faith as an assurance against the feared *bhuts* or evil spirits. The missionaries were non-ordained brothers, themselves served by chaplains from the diocesan clergy. The Sisters of St Francis Xavier soon joined the mission. In 1937, the Jesuits were sent there by the Archbishop of Bombay and soon took over responsibility for the mission. They were slower at baptising than their predecessors and insisted on consolidation and faith instruction. Education was seen as the best chance to empower the Warlis against their dependence on landlords and moneylenders. Multipurpose cooperative societies were established from 1951. Health and medical work was done mostly by the Xaverian Sisters and later by the Canossian Sisters who came to help them, with special stress on the problem of leprosy prevalent in the area.

Experience of the needs of the Warlis led from 1958 to organising schemes of socio-economic benefits, like intense rice cultivation, use of fertilisers, food for work, etc. The work was secular, the inspiration religious. The legitimacy of the secular involvement, disputed at first, seemed to be established by Vatican II. But in the last two decades, a new element came in from liberation theology. Now conscientization for demanding social justice from below became the primary target, non-formal education one of its means, although the school network was never given up.

Issues and Concerns

The issue of conversion is a sensitive one and difficult to handle to the satisfaction of all. Here it is presented from the perspective of an ‘insider’, which cannot but give it an orientation that not all may be comfortable with. Hence to correct this bias to the extent possible an attempt will be made to present in like manner the concerns of the local opposition to the mission, if not empathetically then at least as fairly as we can. We hope this procedure will be more acceptable than a mere disclaimer of any prejudice.

1. The Issue of Conversion

The discussion of the issue of conversion here will not entail a theological analysis of this issue. Without negating the importance of such an approach, especially in this time of dialogue and religious pluralism, our attempt is rather to reflect on the social significance and meaning of such religious phenomena. This is indeed a necessary step for theological discussion, which becomes meaningful only in the social context in which many religious phenomena become intelligible and significant.

The ‘tent touring’ of the Franciscan brothers is an example of what has come to be called ‘the direct proclamation of the gospel.’ This has been a time-honoured strategy of missionaries from the time of St Paul (‘Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel,’ 1 Cor 9:16) to the days of St Francis Xavier and after. Indeed this ‘tent touring’ surely has some parallel with the missionary activity of Xavier, who would recite the ‘Credo’ or preach a sermon that he had learned by heart in a language he did not comprehend, and then baptize thousands of ‘pagans’ before moving on to newer pastures. Now if our judgement of Xavier must be in the historical context of his time, then our discussion of ‘tent-touring’ must be contextualized in ours.

It is rather presumptuous to conclude that such conversions are the result of a mass realization of the ‘truth’ of the new religion as opposed to the inadequacies of the old one, or that material inducements and clever persuasion have led such people to change their religious allegiance *en masse*. Such presumptions seem to derive less from historical fact than from the ethnocentric perspective and paternalist prejudice of the outsider, who has too much regard for his own religion and/or too little for the integrity of other peoples. A

realistic appreciation of tribal society and culture would demand a less facile explanation.

The religious conversion of a group represents a change in social allegiance that is more than just religious. It is the function that the new allegiance fulfils, and the new social context that it creates, wherein the significance and meaning of this change must be sought in any sociological reflection.¹

From the historical context of the Warlis, it is apparent that the tribal situation at the time of their conversion was one of oppression, both religious and social. Their animistic faith was not a bedrock of assurance against the fears and anxieties that seemed to crowd in on them with the political, economic and social changes that left them increasingly more and more oppressed and defenceless. Yet a change of religious allegiance meant cultural and tribal isolation. This made individual conversion socially rather costly and difficult. Group conversion provided more security. While it is true that the earliest converts were somewhat scattered, marginalized persons, eventually those who persevered were more likely to have been helped by the support of a family and even of a larger group of families in the village or at least in its hamlets.

The earliest efforts of the brothers at evangelization addressed themselves to the condition of spiritual distress the tribals seemed to experience in their changing world. But their endeavour was never confined to religion alone. From the very beginning, the mission did make efforts to buffer the social isolation of conversion and lessen tribal dependence on landlords, moneylenders and other exploiters. They supported the neophytes as best they could by building small communities for them, providing some measure of charitable relief for the needy, and especially education for the tribals who wanted it.

From its early endeavours, the mission's social involvement progressively increased, as it consolidated the school system, expanded into development work, and eventually into non-formal education and conscientization. The tribal response to these efforts can hardly be explained by force or fraud. Some genuine need, some deep aspiration of these people, must have been touched for them to

¹ 1. Cf. Augustine Kanjamala, *Religion and Modernization of India*, Pune: Ishvani, 1981, esp. Ch.2, 'Mass. Conversion to Christianity and Social Changes before 1949. P. 55 and ff.

choose an allegiance to the mission in spite of the opposition they had to brave.

When social change adversely affects a people and they find no adequate ways of coping with their insecurities from within their prevailing religion and culture, then religious renewal or conversion can easily be precipitated. In the oppressive situation of the Warlis at the time, the brothers' preaching must have represented such a spiritual liberation from their fear of evil spirits and a new assurance against their anxieties in their fast-deteriorating situation. Obviously, the social involvement of the mission in their lives had something to do with this change in their religious allegiance. But to dismiss the importance of the religious factor and its significance for these tribals is to discount their religious sensibilities because of our own secular prejudices.

Certainly, the religious promise and hope the missionaries brought these tribals was rendered more credible by their endeavour to uplift them socially. For the religious does not exist in isolation from the human, either in the individual or in society.

Over the years we have seen how the understanding of the missionary endeavour did change in the direction of a broader commitment to social development and human liberation, though the religious inspiration is not lost. If then the early conversions among these people were from an experience of spiritual and religious liberation, their perseverance in the face of persecution and violence becomes intelligible only when it is seen in the light of a larger experience, a wider and more integrated liberation in their struggle for justice, and not just in that of the faith.

. The Opposition from Vested Interests

If we have rejected the facile explanations of tribal conversions which seem to derive from ethnocentric or paternalistic assumptions, then here too we must not be naive with the mission's opponents. To discuss the opposition to the mission in terms of demonic forces and evil inspirations or the inevitable burden of the cross may go better with some theological perspectives than with others. But we are engaged in a sociological reflection, not a theological controversy. Hence our attempt will be to contextualize the concerns of the mission's opponents in terms of the social situation from which they derive. For even apparently accidental events and individual

motivations ought to be seen in this context. Only then is it possible to discern the structure into which they fall, and make an analysis at the level of social significance and meaning, as we did earlier for the issue of conversion.

How one comes across to one's opponents must surely be included somehow in one's self-understanding. For their perception can often come from an entirely different perspective, and as such can provide some interesting and revealing insights, once a proper context has been set. It would be unfortunate to discount them as merely subjective and prejudiced and to miss the opportunity of seeing oneself through the eyes of one's opponents, for whatever it is worth, which sometimes does amount to rather much. Hopefully, we will not make this mistake.

Although the brothers first pitched their tent near Bhilad railway station in November 1921, it was only in 1926 that they were able to secure land at Zaroli nearby. For, roused by a visiting Brahmin priest, the landlords began a campaign of protest to the government to keep the brothers out of the area. This opposition seems to have increased even though it never quite succeeded in stopping the progress of the mission.

Frequently the opposition was expressed in a landlord expelling his Christian Warli tenants, who were not much more than bonded labourers. So it fell to the mission to rehabilitate them on land it acquired on their behalf. Thus in 1939, the Christians of Thakurpada, a village near Dapcharti, were expelled by their landlord for refusing to give up their faith and were resettled by the mission at Varkhanda. Eventually, the land legislation enacted after Independence did provide some means of legal redress, however inadequate.

At times the opposition was more organized and planned. In 1936, Brother Sales, a Franciscan, converted to Hinduism, assumed the name of Narayan Sharma, and with the active support of the landlords and moneylenders (*saukars*), mounted a vigorous campaign against the mission trying to wean people away from it. On occasion, the confrontation took a violent turn, as when on the 13th of November 1939, Narayan Sharma called a large public meeting at Numberpada near Nagzari and the mission mobilized Christians to oppose it.

In the end, the faithful persistence of the missionaries in following their flock led to the diminishing of Sharma's impact. By 1943 his influence seems to have waned if we go by the people's response to the meetings he called. By 1947 he moved out of the mission area to the

coast. He was finally reconciled to the Church in 1954, and his Brahmin wife received into the faith in 1955.

Obviously, there were religious, political and economic concerns involved in this opposition. For the Hindu priests and tribal shamans (*bhagats*), the new faith represented a religious and cultural challenge they could not take lightly. Hence their attempts to isolate and ostracize the neophytes. However, the converts' response, encouraged by their priests, was to preserve as much of their tribal culture and religion as was compatible with their new faith. Becoming Christian was not to alienate themselves from being Warlis. They would authentically be both. This approach served to buffer the change of conversion for both sides. Later it was developed into a full-fledged policy of 'inculturation'.

Interestingly it is only more recently, and rather as a response to tribal conversions to Christianity, that Hindus have claimed them as their own. Earlier their animistic religion was not regarded as part of the 'sanatana dharma', and certainly tribal gods were not part of the Hindu pantheon, though tribals had adopted some of its deities. Today this claim that primitive tribal religion is part of Hinduism seems to be more politically inspired than historically or sociologically founded.

Moreover, much of the opposition to the mission came from Muslims and especially Parsi landlords, who could have little religious concern over conversions that did not directly affect their religious community. It seems then that underlying the expressed religious concerns of the mission's opponents were political and economic ones. These could only come from perceiving the mission as a threat to their interests in this area, which must lead us to conclude that the mission brought more than spiritual or religious liberation (*moksha*) to these tribals. Its involvement in social welfare and development, in education and conscientization, was rightly perceived as a threat to the social structure that had served the vested interests in the area so well. Surely this was a threat even less acceptable than the religious challenge the mission posed.

3. The Conflict with the Communists

If the mission was seen as an instrument of change on behalf of the oppressed by the established interests, then it becomes problematic indeed to explain the confrontation with a political party struggling for the same goal. The Adivasi revolt led by the Communist party in

the area provoked a harsh response from the states,² and the mission by and large seems to have sided with the state against the communists. These in turn seem to have perceived the mission as supporting the status quo and opposing genuine structural change.

At first sight, a conflict between an atheistic political party and a property-conscious Church might well seem inevitable. However, we cannot but be sceptical as to how atheistic these tribal communists were though their party leaders may well have been. The hostility of these two protagonists is not easily explained in terms of the local situation alone, but must be seen in a larger context.

This was the time of the cold war on the international scene when the Catholic Church and the Communist Party were implacable enemies. The Catholic Church in India clearly took its cue from the Roman Church just as the Communist Party in India did from the international communist movement. Thus in 1937, Pius XI in his encyclical 'On Atheistic Communism' condemned communism as 'intrinsically perverse' and forbade Christians to 'collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever.' A decree of the Holy Office in 1949, which was reiterated again in 1959, excommunicated Catholics who collaborated with the Communist Party. And this could hardly have remained as a one-sided antagonism.

On the national scene, the Congress Party in power was firmly opposed to the Communist Party and its ideology. The Indian Church, with its sensitivity to its minority status, took the safer option of siding with the state. The Communist Party, with its revolutionary pretensions, took the option against the government.

Moreover, the preoccupation of the Indian Church with the Communist threat is well reflected in the *Reports of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India* (CBCI). In 1946 the entire report dealt with Communism, claiming that 'the gravest danger to faith and right social order is present-day Communism Extensive rioting and lawlessness in big cities can be traced to Communist activities.'³ And as late as 1960, the bishops wanted to 'protect the people in general and Catholics in particular, against the virus of Communist ideology.'⁴

² 2. Cf. Godavari Parulekar, *Adivasi Revolt*, Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1975, Ch. 10, pp. 1 6ff.

³ Cited by John Desrochers, Bangalore: the author, 1982, p. 408, from the CBCI Report, 1946, pp. 57 and 59.

⁴ Ibid. from the CBCI Report. 1960. d. 40.

And once again, on the international as well as at the national level, the Communist Party was not about to respond to such a stance by turning the other cheek.

It seems then that it was really the religious-political conflict on the international scene, and the political-economic one in the nation, that oriented and triggered the confrontation between the local church and local party in the mission area. Today the context has changed. Internationally the religious cold war between Catholics and Marxists has thawed. The two sides have become more appreciative of each other since liberation theology made its appearance. Nationally too, there has been change. The communist parties have entered parliamentary politics, and the Church is more willing to oppose the government on issues of justice. Such changes have slowly begun to filter down to the local level at Talasari, where the hostility is less overt, though the suspicions remain.

Eventually, both the protagonists settled down to a working arrangement. The mission withdrew its overt opposition to the communist vote, and the party refrained from actively harassing the Christians in the villages. The tribals still vote communist in the area, and the Christians still practise and preach their faith. Such co-existence makes for a precarious peace, which easily breaks down whenever the mission has attempted anything that may threaten the party's political base, which it jealously guards.

In 1978 the Kashtakari Sanghatana was launched as a movement to fight for the rights of the toiling masses, under the guidance of two Jesuit priests who were inspired by liberation theology. Many educated tribal youth, mostly Christian, participated. This was seen by the Party to be a direct threat to its political dominance in the area and there followed a series of violent attacks on mission property and personnel, on Christian villages and sympathizers. Of the two priests, one left, the other was expelled from the Order by 1982, and only when the mission completely dissociated itself from the movement was there some reprieve from violence.

The Kashtakari Sanghatana has evolved into a Marxist-Leninist inspired movement and is actively involved in the political struggle of the area. However, the hostility between the two Marxist-inspired protagonists is unabated and often spills over into violence. This situation is hardly to the best advantage of the tribals but it is not uncommon with grass-roots movements of the left.

Conclusion

The questions pertinent to conversion and confrontation are not peculiar to Talasari. The dynamics of the issues involved are more general, and this makes them relevant to a wider discussion.

The shift in the mission's focus from a narrow religious approach to a broader social involvement and eventually to a political concern is not an exceptional case. Two complementary processes are at work here. From the outside, the experiences of the interrelatedness of the religious and the social, and the response this calls for; and on the inside, a reflection on this experience, questioning the old and inspiring a new vision for mission work.

The confrontation that the mission met with is very much a part of the mission's experience, just as the perceptions of its opponents are also very revealing. The extra-religious involvement of the mission in the lives of the people to liberate them is indeed authenticated by this opposition of the landlords and moneylenders, especially when religious conversion was not an issue for the non-Hindus among these (Parsis or Muslims): why were they so opposed to the mission!

It was the same vested interests that had earlier opposed the Devi cult that had swept through this area in 1922.⁵ It was a religious movement which advocated vegetarianism and ritual cleanliness, banned liquor and boycotted the Parsis. Thus it was both an 'act of assertion against the most rapacious of the local exploiters, the Parsis/' and an attempt 'to appropriate (and thus democratize and implicitly change) the values associated with the regionally dominant high caste Hindus (and Jains).⁶ Eventually, the movement was suppressed by the British when it took on a nationalist turn. But the centrality of religious symbolism to the movement and the challenge it posed to the tribal exploiters are crucial to our understanding of the tribals' conversion to Christianity and its implication for the local vested interests, as part of the saga of the mission.

The conflict with the Communist Party seems to have ideological overtones, a religious ideology for the mission and a political one for the Party. These seem to derive from the international affiliations of both, the Roman Church for the mission and the international communist movement for the Party. At the national level too, the

⁵ David Hardiman, 1987, *The Coming of the Devi — Adivasi Assertion in Western India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁶ Ibid, p. 164

opposition between the government and the Communist Party disinclined a Church conscious of its minority status from supporting any radical opposition to the government or the *status quo*.

The conflict then between the Christians and the communists seems to have been precipitated less by the local situation itself than by factors extraneous to it. Only when the Church posed a threat to the political vote of the Party did they retaliate. Otherwise, a coexistence seems to have been worked out. More recently, with the mission's connection with the initial stages of the Kashtakari movement, there were violent reprisals by the Party. However, now that the mission has distanced itself from the movement the status quo ante prevails. This of course is not an appraisal of the role of any of the parties to this conflict, it is only a comment on the relationship between two of the protagonists.

The mission to the Warlis in Talasari represents a small missionary endeavour in the Church's history. But its evolution does have parallels elsewhere in the country. Though we cannot develop them here we will do well to at least indicate one of them, so the broader implication of our conclusions for Talasari is not lost.

The Ranchi mission to the tribals in Chotanagpur, begun in the 19th century, has been a model for Talasari. Here too the initial efforts at evangelization soon included a social involvement, as epitomized by the struggle of Constance Lievens on behalf of the tribals against their oppressors. There have been tribal movements, from Birsa Munda in 1895 onwards, that revolted against this oppression, but the local church was not in confrontation with them. These movements were by tribal leaders, not communist outsiders. The local situation did not warrant any conflict and extraneous factors did not intervene. The Jharkhand movement today with its demand for a separate tribal state represents a coalescence of earlier movements against the 'dikhu', the outsider. But Christians were not considered so. In fact, they are largely supportive of the movement.

The parallel between Talasari and Chotanagpur should not be overplayed, but it can be instructive in understanding the saga of the Talasari mission. To see this saga as the secularization of the mission is to miss the really critical issue: the quest of the mission is to liberate the people, a quest as old as the Exodus and enlivened today with the inspiration of liberation theology. It is beyond the scope of this paper to trace the development of the theology implied in this quest, and how the 'liberationist' elements have been articulated at various times. This has been documented and made explicit in numerous

theological studies now available. Here we have tried to underline the social processes which have moved the mission in this direction, processes which do in fact embrace the religious and the social, including the political and economic dimensions as well.

At one level, the service of the faith and the promotion of justice must be explicitly integrated in an apostolic endeavour; there is a tension between them that must be transcended. And yet at another level, the very interrelatedness of the realities encountered in the field demands a correspondingly integrated approach, which any genuine involvement must meet or become marginal to the real needs of the situation. At Talasari both these levels were operative, at times perhaps one more than the other, though the general trend of the shift has been from the implicit to the explicit articulation of the liberation perspective operative here.

And so, it is only in such a total context of the interrelatedness of these aspects, and their connectedness to the situation beyond the local one, that the true saga of the Talasari mission can be told. It is a tale not without its share of lost opportunities and unintended consequences, but certainly also one of dedication and perseverance, of quiet heroism and selfless sacrifice. This is perhaps best brought out by the fact that the Mother General of the Xaverian Sisters died of leprosy, contracted through her constant care of her patients. But this is not the end of the story. We feel sure the saga of the Talasari mission will continue and be retold many times.

5.

OPENING THE DOOR: THE JESUIT MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTION TO DIALOGUE

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE JESUIT QUESTION

II. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

III. THE MADURAI MISSION

IV. THE DUAL DISCOURSE

V. CONCLUSION: A NEW CHALLENGE

Abstract

In their encounter with the cultures and peoples of the mission lands, the Jesuits made their best contribution to a deeper dialogue. This study will try to set the context in which this encounter took place, describe the vision which set the dialogue going, and outline the debate which led to its untimely suppression. The approach here will be sociological rather than historical, in that it will not focus on the 'chronological inter-relationships between particular events with a view to determining their causality', but rather on 'the relationship between the fundamental elements of the social organism existing at the given time'.

I. Introduction: The Jesuit Question

On the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Jesus, John Padberg, the Director of the Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, responding to 'The Jesuit Question' in London's *Tablet*, wrote: 'To some they have been a suspect band of innovators (in today's version a group of flaming revolutionaries); to others a welcome group of: religious well aware of the world and the Church; to yet others a blind bulwark of a retrograde papacy or, to those with a martial streak, militant soldiers of Christ; to many quite frankly a puzzlement...Those responses and others have persisted through

several centuries of Jesuit growth, success, disaster, suppression and revival.¹

It seems almost a part of the Jesuit charism to be controversial! Certainly, the early Jesuit missionaries from the 16th and to the 18th centuries were men of dynamism and daring, pioneers at the cutting edge of change, pushing to the very limits the new frontiers of mission, geographic and theological.

A Protestant clergyman, Peter Mundy, after a visit to the Jesuit College in Macao in 1637, wrote admiringly of them:

‘And to speak truly, they neither spare cost nor labour, diligence nor danger to attain their purpose’². With such single-minded dedication, it is hardly surprising that those who are in agreement or at least empathetic with this ‘purpose’ would surely be very different in their appreciation of the Jesuits from others who are in disagreement with, or hostile to it. Thus ‘the ruin of the Portuguese empire’ on the Jesuits who ‘were fanatics and like all fanatics did irreparable harm’; their ‘religious bigotry and proselytism, fostered by the Inquisition, sapped the vitals of the empire’.³

For an insider, like the present writer, it is not possible to sketch the Society of Jesus in black and white. There are far too many areas of colour and light, of shadow and shade—besides grey ones. This paper does not attempt a comprehensive appreciation of the role of these missionaries. Rather it will discuss one particular venture of the Jesuits in dialogue, in the Madurai mission of South India. It is a story of heart-warming success and heart-breaking failure, of brilliant achievement and depressing disillusionment.

The contribution of the Jesuits to the mission lands was certainly multifaceted. They introduced the first movable type printing press into India⁴ and published ‘a variety of grammars and guides to vernacular languages including Tamil, Japanese and Marathi-Konkani’.⁵ A Jesuit father, Thomas Stephens, was one of the first to see ‘the connection between Indian and European languages.’⁶

¹ *The Tablet*, Vol. 244, No. 7836, 22 Sep 1990, p. 1189.

² Cited by C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century* (Delhi, 1980), p.15.

³ Boies Penrose, *Sea fights in the East Indies in the Years 1602-1639* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931) p. 14.

⁴ C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire: 1415-1825* (London, 1969) p.83.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 348.

⁶ The *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais* (Brit. Mus. Ms Sloane 1820) of Father Jacobo Fenicio, S.J., edited with an introduction by Jarl Charpentier (Uppsala, 1933) p. iv

Jarl Charpentier is somewhat embarrassingly lavish in his praise, when leaving aside the merits and demerits of the Order's missionary methods, he claims that 'it may be safely asserted that the modern knowledge of the geography of the then unknown parts of the world and the acquaintance with the history, religions and social customs of Asiatic, African and American peoples and races has been founded by the Jesuit missionaries'⁷. More recent scholarship, too, reaffirms how 'the Jesuits trained by their admirable education, pursued with avidity the intricacies of the alien cultures which they discovered in both the Far East and South America'.⁸

Indeed, it was in this encounter with the cultures and peoples of the mission lands that the Jesuits made their best contribution to a deeper dialogue—and some would add, made some of their worst mistakes as well. Without doubt, much of the missionary endeavour represented an aggressive inroad into the culture and religion of the indigenous people, which left behind a trail of ruin. But there were at least some among the Jesuits who did attempt a more sympathetic dialogue with, and a more genuine adaptation to these people. If they failed, it was more due to a lack of understanding from inside their own Church than rejection from the people outside it.'⁹

This study will try to avoid making facile judgements about earlier times from the vantage point of our own. Rather it will try to set the context in which this encounter took place, describe the vision which set the dialogue going, and outline the debate which led to its untimely suppression. Even though much has changed since, there is still much for us to learn from this story. For its significance transcends the narrow boundaries in which the original controversy was defined.

The approach here will be sociological rather than historical, in that it will not focus on the 'chronological inter-relationships between particular events with a view to determining their causality',¹⁰ but rather on 'the relationship between the fundamental elements of the social organism existing at the given time'.¹¹ This study then does not claim to be the work of a professional historian. Rather it is closer to one of sociological popularizing.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. xxxvii.

⁸ J.H. Plumb in "Introduction" to C.R. Boxer, *op. cit.* 1969, p. xxiv,

⁹ Cf. Malcolm Hay, *Failure in the Far East* (London, 1956).

¹⁰ François Houtart, *Religion and Ideology in Sri Lanka* (Bangalore, 1974) p.5

¹¹ *Ibid.*

II. The Historical Context

The meteoric rise and decline of the Portuguese empire in Asia is an enigma which poses many awkward questions about the dramatic success of 'this small, rather poor, culturally backward nation'; the sudden collapse 'to a shadow of itself with a span of fifty years'; the failure of the empire 'to act as a catalyst in Portugal'.¹² An exhaustive study of such questions is not within the scope of this paper. Yet in sketching a response to them we are setting the context for the theme treated here.

The Portuguese expansion overseas was very much a continuation of the reconquest of their own country from the Moors (1226-1238) into a crusade for 'the grandeur of Portugal and the destruction of the Arab and Turkish powers'.¹³ It took them down the coast of Africa until Vasco da Gama in 1498 threw open the sea route to India. It was a state venture, vigorously supported by the royal power of the newly founded monarchy which was now consolidating itself. Thus when Prince Henry the Navigator assumed the monopoly of all trade along the West African coast in 1443, there was already in Portugal 'the propelling force provided by an emergent mercantile middle class whose influence was displacing the dispersed and discredited older nobility for siding with the Castilian invader during the revolutionary crisis of 1383-85'.¹⁴ The colonial expansion gave the burgeoning aristocracy too a controlling role to play in this military enterprise and thus increased their prestige and revenue.

But the mass of people also had to be mobilized for so vast a venture for so small a country. And it is here that religion played a crucial role. After all, the spirit of the Crusades provided a model of Europeans as a chosen people. Portugal was thus a nation chosen, the conquest was God's work against the heathen imprisoned in his evil by the powers of darkness. "This missionary zeal need not be understood as a pretence, but it provided the required motivation for mobilizing the poor and the naturally pious peasantry of Portugal, without whose sweat and hard collaboration the Portuguese nobility and middle class could never hope to achieve its goal".¹⁵ How far the

¹² J.H. Plumb, "Introduction" to C.R. Boxer, *op. cit.* 1969, p, xxi,

¹³ Houtart, *op. cit.* 1974, p. 103.

¹⁴ Boxer, *op. cit.* 1969, p. 17

¹⁵ T.R. de Souza "The Portuguese in Asia and Their Church Patronage" in *Western Colonialism in Asia and Christianity*, ed. M.D. David (Bombay, 1988) p, 13.

poor peasants in Portugal themselves benefited from this crusade remains a moot point, but they did give their lives for it.

The colonial conquest was thus expressed in religious symbols and so it acquired ‘an indisputable status sanctioned by the divine will’.¹⁶ Not that this powerful religious legitimation of the enterprise was ever to displace the commercial interests that sponsored it. Indeed Vasco da Gama came to India seeking ‘Christians and spices’. And King Manuel, the Fortunate, who was entitled ‘Grand Master of the Order of Christ’, was also known as the ‘Grocer King’ and the ‘Pepper Potentate’!

The relationship of religion and politics is obviously a complex one, involving deeper passions and conflicting interests. But ‘this combination of greed and godliness has always been regarded as the major driving force’ of the Iberians.¹⁷ Indeed unlike the other colonial ventures in the seventeenth century, the Portuguese one was initiated by the king who ‘organized and to an extent regulated the commercial enterprise.’¹⁸

The *Padroado Real*, elaborated in ‘the sixty-odd Papal bulls which studded the route of the conquerors’¹⁹, juridically legitimated church-state relationships. Beginning with Pope Calixtus III’s *Inter cetera* in 1456, and culminating in 1514 with *Praecelsae devotionis*, these defined ‘a combination of rights, privileges and duties granted by the Papacy to the crown of Portugal as patron of the Roman Catholic missions and ecclesiastical establishments in vast regions of Africa, of Asia and in Brazil’.²⁰ Thus ‘With the Portuguese, Christianization was a state enterprise’²¹ as well.

This union of the two ‘swords’, political and religious, empowered and legitimated ‘the ferocity, the savagery, the compulsions that drove these remorseless men.’²² And when the papal bull *Dum diversas* in 1452 gave the King of Portugal ‘the full and entire faculty of invading, conquering and expelling and reigning over all the kingdoms... of the Saracens, the pagans, and of all infidels, wherever they may be found;

¹⁶ Houtart, *op. cit.* 1974, p; 109.

¹⁷ J. H. Plumb, ‘Introduction’ to Boxer, *op. cit.* 1969, p. xxii.

¹⁸ Francois Houtart and Genevieve Lemerciner, *Genesis and Institutionalization of Indian Catholicism*, (Louvain-la-neuve, 1981) p. 49

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ C. R. Boxer, *op. cit.* 1964, p. 228

²¹ K. M. Pannikar, *Asia and Western Dominance: A survey of the Vasco da Gama epoch of Asian History, 1498-1945* (London, 1953) p. 280

²² J. H. Plumb, ‘Introduction’ to Boxer, *op. cit.* 1969, p. xxii.

of reducing their inhabitants to perpetual slavery, . . .’²³ these conquistadors were hardly reluctant to take full advantage of it. ‘Few European historians will face up to the consequences of the murderous Western onslaught on India and the East, which broke not only the webs of commerce but of culture, that divided kingdoms, disrupted politics and drove China and Japan into hostile insolation’.²⁴ And the Portuguese were only the first in a long line of ‘blood and carnage that followed in their wake’.²⁵

The missionaries followed the merchants. They worked very much in collaboration since they depended on the colonial powers and patronage, and the Church seemed little more than the spiritual appendage of the state.²⁶ Little wonder then that nationalistic chauvinism carried over into the missionary endeavour as well.

The main lines of missionary policy were laid down by the ecclesiastical synods of Goa. The first in 1567 reflected the first flush of a self-confident, post-Tridentine Church, which later ones—there were five up to 1619—reaffirmed with only slight modifications. C.R. Boxer outlines the three main guiding considerations of these councils:

1. All religions other than the orthodox Roman Catholic faith as defined by the Council of Trent were intrinsically wrong and harmful in themselves.

2. The Crown of Portugal had the inescapable duty of spreading the Roman Catholic faith, and the secular power of the state could be used to support the spiritual power of the Church.

3. Conversion must not be by force, nor threats of force, for nobody comes to Christ by faith unless he is drawn by the Heavenly Father with voluntary love and prevenient grace.²⁷

Good intentions apart, the freedom implied in the last injunction was clearly at odds with the explicit intolerance consequent on the first two, and in effect it was denied by other decrees of the councils, which were given the force of law, e.g., *Inter alia* in 1567 which enacted harsh restrictions including the destruction of temples in Goa.

²³ Cited by Houtart, op. cit. 1974, p. 116

²⁴ J. H. Plumb, ‘Introduction’ to Boxer, op. cit. 1969, p. xxiv.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Cf. George M. Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India* (Bombay, 1964) p. 140-141.

²⁷ Boxer, op. cit. 1969, p. 67.

Religious tolerance was hardly the characteristic of the age, and missionary practice was in reality inspired by a theology as narrowly myopic as it was compelling: '*extra Ecclesiam, nulla salus*' (no salvation outside the Church). In Europe, the political exigencies of the Protestant Reformation forced a concession in practice: *cujus regio, ejus religio* (the religion of the ruler). The '*compelle eos intrare*' (force them to enter) of Luke, 14:23, was used to justify forced conversions. And the Padroado Real gave all this the sanction of the state.²⁸

However, 'a distinction must be drawn between Portuguese policy and social attitudes towards adherents of other religions in the first and second halves of the sixteenth century'.²⁹ The Hindus were at first tolerated as a counterweight to the Muslims. But the religious conflict in Europe precipitated an erosion of this religious tolerance that 'was clearly reflected in the East during the reign of Dom João III (1521-57)'.³⁰ But the 'Latin arrogance' of the conquistador that inspired the early decades of the Portuguese expansion in the East was soon humbled by the hammer blows of the Dutch navy and by the end of the 16th century 'they were primarily concerned with peaceful trade and keeping what they had already got'.³¹

Unlike the colonial officials of the government or the Church, who treated the subject peoples more as objects under their jurisdiction, rather than subjects with their own distinctiveness and contribution in the commonwealth, a serious understanding of the colonial enterprise, missionary and mercantile, cannot ignore the social context of these people and its effect on the colonial encounter. Thus, in India religious Hinduism and the all-pervasiveness of caste can only be ignored at the risk of seriously misunderstanding or even falsifying some of the most fundamental elements in this situation. Given the limited scope of this paper, these will not be explicitly enumerated, though they must be consciously kept in mind.

For this is not meant to be a complete sketch of the political and religious dimensions of the colonial situation in which the missionary endeavour took place, but only to give one a sense of the unresolved ambiguities and underlying tensions in which the Jesuits found themselves. On the one hand, they needed Portuguese power to

²⁸ Cf. S. Rajamanickam, 'Robert De Nobili: Christianity in the Indian Version', *Jeevadhara*, 17 (1987) p.304-321.

²⁹ C.R. Boxer, op. cit. 1969, p. 72.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 73.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 78

protect and promote their work and their newly founded Christian communities, and yet they could hardly condone the corruption and exploitation of the colonial power. Already St. Francis Xavier's letters inveigh against this. They depended on Portuguese Church patronage for the support and the jurisdictional monopoly it gave them, but felt constrained by the regulations this imposed, and hampered by the internal ecclesiastical politics, especially in the Padroado-Propaganda conflict. However, 'even a cursory survey of Portuguese Asia at the end of the sixteenth century reveals an impressive and a continuing achievement by the missionaries of the Padroado and in general and by the Jesuits in particular.'³²

III. The Madurai Mission

The achievement of the Jesuits in successfully initiating an 'inculturated' church was a bold and farsighted venture in religious adaptation and cultural dialogue. It was far ahead of its times, and did not survive the cultural myopia or the church politics of that age. Indeed, the ecclesiastical injunctions against the Malabar and Chinese rites, which dealt a death blow to this remarkable endeavour in the eighteenth century, have been revoked only in the middle of our own one.

Arnold Toynbee perceptively remarks that 'Our discussion of the Asian people's encounter with the West would be incomplete if we did not take into consideration the line which the Jesuits in China and India opened out. The Jesuits tried to disengage Christianity from non-Christian ingredients in the Western Civilization and to present Christianity to the Hindu and to the Chinese, not as the local religion of the West, but as a universal religion with a message for all mankind.'³³

Indeed, there was every indication of an indigenous church, establishing itself in harmony and dialogue with the local people, enriched by them and hopefully enriching them too. With the condemnation of the Malabar rites in 1704 and the Chinese ones in 1707, and later with the suppression of the Society of Jesus itself in 1773, the promise of an indigenous Christianity in Asia was abandoned in favour of a colonial one, which is even now still struggling to find itself in a post-colonial age.

³² Boxer, op. cit. 1969.

³³ Arnold Toynbee, *The World and the West* (London, 1953) p. 63.

This paper deals with Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) and the Jesuit mission in Madurai. In many ways, his adaptation of Christianity to Hinduism in India cut deeper than the earlier efforts of his fellow Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, in China, of which he was no doubt aware.³⁴ For, whereas they both distinguished social from religious custom, cautiously accepting what was sociocultural, and carefully reinterpreting what was religiously ambiguous, De Nobili went beyond external rite and symbol, 'to uphold Christian doctrines in terms of Upanishadic thought'³⁵ much as the early Church had done with Greek philosophy. K.M. Panikkar, certainly not a particular friend of Christian missionaries, regarded him as 'a man of remarkable insight'³⁶ 'who 'argued with Brahman scholars with all the trained ability of a Christian priest who had mastered Hindu metaphysics'.³⁷

The Malabar rites like the Chinese ones have been studied in great historical detail. Unfortunately, these studies have been generally based almost exclusively on ecclesiastical and Western sources. A subaltern review of this subject would surely carry the discussion beyond the immediate issues of jurisdiction and doctrine and enlighten a more relevant and comprehensive discourse. But such sources are as yet too scarce to underpin this task. However, without them a sociological reflection can still be sensitive to a point of view even if not adequately articulated. This will be our concern here.

The historical details of the Madurai mission will not be the focus of this paper: Not much can be added to the extensive documentation and studies already done.'³⁸ the new beginnings with De Nobili's arrival in 1606 after the failure of Fr. Gonçalo Fernandes to make a break-through; the struggle to gain official ecclesiastical approval for the Malabar rites, from the provincial superior, Fr. Pero Francisco's censure in 1610, to Pope Gregory XV's decision in 1623, *Romanae Sedis Antistites*, granting final approval; the establishing of the *pandarasamis* and the progress of the mission; the revival of the controversy with the Jansenists in Europe and the *Société des Missions Étrangères* de Paris in the field; the condemnation by the Papal legate Maillard de Tournon in 1704, the fateful oath demanded

³⁴ Vincent Cronin, *A Pearl to India* (New York, 1959) p. 9.

³⁵ K.M. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 281.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 288

³⁸ e.g., D. Ferroli, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, 2 vols, (Bangalore, 1951); Joseph Thekkedath, *A History of Christianity in India*, vol. II (Bangalore, 1982).

by the Clement XI's papal constitution, *Ex quo singulari* of 1742, and the withdrawal of the Jesuits from the mission after their suppression in 1773. Rather the attempt here will be to sketch in bold outline the 'discourse' within which the controversy over the rites is set.

Adaptation of the Christian faith to local expression and understanding is as old as the faith itself. Form criticism demonstrates how the Gospel stories themselves are articulations of the communities by whom they were first collected and handed down. John the Evangelist's use of the term 'logos' is a striking example of the adaptation of the faith to Greek thought. Paul of Tarsus wanted to be 'all things to all men' (I Cor. 9.22) and vigorously opposed the Judaizers in the primitive Church. The early missionaries within the West were largely successful not from force of arms, but because of their sensitive 'reaching down' to the peoples they evangelized. St. Clement of Alexandria called it 'Synkatabasis' and St. Augustine of Hippo, '*condescensio*'. But in the colonial period this was clearly not in evidence.

However, the Jesuits began to break new ground in their missionary endeavour. Already Francis Xavier adopted the silk clothes of a Japanese sage in 1551 to make his message more acceptable there. In 1583 Ricci entered China 'as a Buddhist bonze and in 1594 he adopted the dress and lifestyle of a mandarin. Soon deeper encounters began with the serious study of the local people, their language and religion. One of the earliest Jesuit scholars in India was Fr. Jacob Fenicio, who with his *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais* completed in 1608, 'well deserves a place amongst the many eminent forerunners of the present European knowledge of India'.³⁹ At first, such works were carry-overs from a context of controversy and debate rather than dialogue and exchange. Their purpose was largely 'to furnish readers with an adequate knowledge of Hindu mythology as a necessary basis for its refutation'.⁴⁰ But later, in spite of their limitations, these missionaries 'or at least their outstanding exponents, embody a desire to understand, whose singular power and

³⁹ . Jarl Charpentier, 'Preliminary Report on the 'Livres de Seita dos Indios Orientais' (Brit. Mus. Ms. Sloane, 1820)', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London, 2 (1921-23) p. 748.

⁴⁰ John Correia-Afonso, *Jesuit Letters and Indian History. 1542-1773* (Bombay, 1969) p. 21.

problematic nature arise from their deep and uncompromising *desire to be understood*⁴¹

Robert de Nobili certainly belonged to such a genre. His upbringing in ‘the most cosmopolitan city in the world’, as Montaigne wrote of Rome in the 16th century, must have sensitized him to cross-cultural encounters, and soon after his arrival in Madurai in November 1606, he realized that a new approach had to be found. He distanced himself from the ‘*parangis*’, became a sanyasi, mastered Tamil and Sanskrit, discovered the Vedas. He wanted to present Christianity ‘as the crown of all that was best in India’⁴² And if, ‘on issues of dogma he was firm’,⁴³ he was no less genuine in his appreciation and love for his people. He is regarded as ‘the father of Tamil prose’⁴⁴ and Max Müller spoke of him as ‘the first European Sanskrit scholar’.⁴⁵

In spite of adversity and calumny, he never abandoned his flock. When towards the end of his life, he was sent to Sri Lanka for reasons of health, he longed to come back to those to whom he belonged. They gave him the title of ‘Tattwa Podhakar’, Teacher of Reality, by which he is still known today. He died in 1656 and lies buried in an unmarked grave, still one with his people. ‘No Tamil town or village can claim his remains; he belongs to all.’⁴⁶

De Nobili’s justification of his work was from within the Christian discourse. He very ably set out his defence at the Conference of Goa in 1619, convened by the Pope and presided over by the Archbishop of Goa.⁴⁷ He sums up his own argument in four basic principles: ‘The evangelical preacher, following the precept of our Lord Jesus Christ and the example of the Apostles is to make himself all to all, and take up that mode of life which will make him acceptable to the people among whom he works. We have explained how this mode of life requires holiness of life, solidity of doctrine, and the adoption of the way of living of the people. In this consists the first Foundation on

⁴¹ Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (New York. 111110) p. 53.

⁴² Cronin, op. cit., p. 118.

⁴³ Panikkar, op. cit., p. 288.

⁴⁴ Halbfass, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴⁵ Lectures on the Science of Language, London, 1866-67, cited by A.

Sauliere, ‘Fr. Roberto de Nobili, S.J., The First European Orientalist’, *Indica*, Indian Historical Research Institute, Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume (Bombay, 1953) p. 373.

⁴⁶ A. Saulière., op. cit. p. 276.

⁴⁷ S. Rajamanickam, ‘The Goa Conference of 1619: A Letter of Fr.

Robert de Nobili to Pope Paul V’, *Indian Church History Review* (1968) pp. 81-96.

which stands the Madurai Mission. Secondly, we find that the Church never prohibited the diverse customs and practices observed by different nations. This is the second Foundation. Thirdly, we have seen how innumerable partially social and partially superstitious practices were allowed by the Church to continue, after they had been rid of their superstitious elements. This is the third Foundation. Finally, we have shown how the Church allowed innumerable ceremonies and rites, which were wholly religious in character, but which she rid of all superstition and turned into practices of Christian piety'.⁴⁸ And so he argues that the thread, the tuft of hair, the sandal paste, baths, etc ... are social customs that should be allowed his neophytes. Basically, then De Nobili's adaptation touched not only the lifestyle of the missionary 'as a Hindu religious agent' ⁴⁹among his people but their social identity and position in society as well.

De Nobili's argument sounds surprisingly contemporary and seems to anticipate the discussion in *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*,⁵⁰ where Newman accepts 'that great portion of what is generally received as Christian truth is, in its rudiments or in its separate parts, to be found in heathen philosophies and religions'. However, he dismisses Mr. Milman's argument against adaptation: 'These things are in heathenism, therefore they are not Christian': We on the contrary prefer to say 'these things are in Christianity, therefore they are not heathen' from the beginning the Moral Governor of the world has scattered the seed of truth far and wide over its extent',⁵¹ and the Church draws in and gathers them, 'correcting their errors, supplying their defects, completing their beginnings, expanding their surmises and thus gradually by means of them enlarging the range and refining the sense of her own teaching.'⁵²

For a while, De Nobili's argument prevailed and his work was allowed to continue. Later as a further concession to caste he introduced in 1640 the *pandarasamis* who ministered to the low castes while the *sanyasis* like de Nobili did to the higher castes. ⁵³ And

⁴⁸ Roberto de Nobili, *Adaptation*, edited by S. Rajamanickam (Palayam-kottai, 1971) p. 83.

⁴⁹ Houtart, op. cit. 1981, p. 176.

⁵⁰ John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, (New York, 1914) p. 380.

⁵¹ Ibid.,

⁵² Ibid. p. 381

⁵³ A. Francis, 'Socio-Historical Study of the Pandarasamy' in *Jesuit Presence in Indian History*, editor Anand Amaladas (Anand, 1988) p. 318-333.

so the Madurai mission began to flourish, in spite of adversities and persecutions. Where there was not a single convert before De Nobili's arrival, there was a community of 30,000 in 1661. 'The number rose to 75,000 in 1688, 90,000 in 1705 and over two lakhs in 1760.'⁵⁴ Indeed the community was blessed with Tamil scholars like Constance Beschi, who wrote the first Tamil grammar, and James de Rossi; martyrs, like John de Britto; and a vigorous, inculturated Christian membership. Other missions in Andhra and Karnataka too began to follow this approach.'⁵⁵ 'But the Church in India was not prepared to accept such bold steps'.⁵⁶

When the controversy was raked up again the situation was more complex. Dissatisfied with Padroado's performance in the missions, their jurisdiction was being contested by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The Jesuits too were under attack, inside and outside the Church. And after a long and tortuous struggle, the Malabar rites were condemned even before the Chinese ones.

IV. The Dual Discourse

The decision in favour of the adaptation initiated by the Jesuits in the Madurai mission was as precarious as its condemnation was tragic. Even though there was an inevitable overlap. The verbal discussion was largely located in the religious discourse while the decisive conclusion was made in the political one. This is not surprising, for most often, though not necessarily, it is the political, where power and interests are operative, that dominates the religious, where values and commitments are, in Parsonian terms, the generalized media of exchange.

Basically, there were two arguments adduced against these rites; they were superstitious, and the concessions to caste, unchristian. Yet within the prevalent religious discourse such arguments could have been effectively countered.

For one thing, all folk-religions, and the popular religiosity that goes with it, are a socio-cultural-religious mixture, in which faith and superstition can hardly be separated even when they can be distinguished. The decadence of the Church in Europe itself had

⁵⁴ S. Rajamanickam, *The First Oriental Scholar* (Palayamkottai, 1972) p. 77

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ A. Mathias Mundadan, *Indian Christians: Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy* (Bangalore, 1984) p. 136.

provoked a Reformation, and the reaction to the Inquisition, was a cure worse than the disease. It certainly intimidated people and helped keep them in line, but such fear hardly ever displaces superstition with genuine 'faith'. Actually, there were numerous examples of such 'accommodation' to local customs among the neophytes even in Goa, in spite of the Inquisition there.⁵⁷

The argument against caste was even less convincing. In fact, it seemed quite hypocritical, coming as it did from a Church which had made no official condemnation of slavery nor ever made the freeing of slaves a condition for being received into the Church or the keeping of them a matter for being rejected by it. From Onesimus, for whom St. Paul pleaded in his letter to Philemon, to the horrors of the slave ships, among whom St. Peter Claver laboured in colonial Cartagena, the accommodation of the Church with slavery was surely not less unchristian a concession than the Madurai mission's adjustment to caste. Azu Naik, a local Hindu administrator, complained to the Portuguese king that only the slaves of non-Christians who converted, were entitled to be freed, but not so if their masters were Christians!⁵⁸

Nor was this 'adjustment to the caste system' completely acceptable to the local people, but for very different reasons. As long as the Christians were restricted to the low castes there was little opposition. But as it spread to higher castes, the Brahmins were alarmed. For them 'the sharing of the same religion by both high castes and pariahs signified the social degradation of the dominant castes and their voluntary assimilation to the pariahs'.⁵⁹ The universalism of Christianity was at odds with the particularism of caste. But in this society 'the void of castelessness' was an even less viable alternative than the ostracism of the outcaste. A feudal culture could have understood this need for social identity in a closed society, outside of which 'an isolated individual had no social existence at all'.⁶⁰ except as a sanyasi, a 'renouncer, an individual outside this world'.⁶¹

Rather the condemnation of these rites was a decision that is intelligible; not so much within the religious discourse of the

⁵⁷ Cf. Anthony D'Costa, *The Christianisation of the Goa Islands: 1510- 1567* (Bombay,1965).

⁵⁸ . *ibid.* p. 44.

⁵⁹ Houtart, *op, cit*, 1981, p. 182.

⁶⁰ Houtart, *op, cit*, 1981, p. 177.

⁶¹ Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus : The Caste System and its Implications* (London, 1972) p. 231.

Catholicism of the time, even though it was articulated in, these terms, but within the political one of secular and sacred power, within which it was really made. If such were not the case, then a proselytizing church could have been expected to bend over to excuse, rather than condemn such practices as increased their numbers, and to wait till later for a fuller integration, as indeed was done for most, especially for forced conversions. But in the final analysis, neither the Portuguese Padroado, nor the Roman Propaganda was really empathetic to the creation of an authentically indigenous Church. And clearly this eventually was where these rites were leading.

The Portuguese with Padroado were determined to 'Lusitanize' the local Christians, which was an implicit extension of Portuguese cultural influence, to where their political power did not reach. Certainly, Padroado was protective of the national interest. They kept 'a meticulous watch, to see that no undesirable foreigners were admitted into the royal mission'.⁶² Spaniards especially, their national rivals, who had their own *Patronato* and whose friars had reached the Philippines in 1565, were excluded. Moreover, all missionaries of whatever nationality 'sailed in Portuguese ships and were directly subordinated to Portuguese Government control through their provincials and superiors'.⁶³

But already with its decline in the seventeenth century, Portugal was unable to meet the political, economic or manpower needs of the missions and so the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith was founded in 1622 in Rome. Its acclaimed means to make the missions 'independent of colonial patronage was to promote indigenous vocations'.⁶⁴ But there was resistance to an indigenous clergy from the foreign missionaries.⁶⁵ The Jesuits too had ordained only one Indian before 1773.⁶⁶ However, for Propaganda, independence from Padroado did not mean less dependence on Rome. 'The impractical idea of centralizing all missionary work throughout the Church under their direct departmental control'⁶⁷ only replaced Lisbon with Rome and neither was really much closer to the local Church, or very encouraging of an inculturated one.

⁶² Felix Plattner, *Jesuits Go East* (Westminster, Maryland, 1962) p. 20.

⁶³ Boxer, op. cit., 1969, p. 234.

⁶⁴ Mundan, op. cit., p. 137.

⁶⁵ Cf. George M. Moraes op. cit., p. 236-38.

⁶⁶ Boxer, op. cit., 1969, p. 252.

⁶⁷ Hay, op. cit., p. 99.

The lack of empathy of both Padroado and Propaganda to the local Christian communities is well illustrated by their encounter with the Syrian Christians they found in Kerala. Here was an old and well-settled community eager to strengthen its tenuous links with the universal Church after its period of isolation.⁶⁸ But the keenness of the Portuguese Padroado to Latinize them under their jurisdiction, condoned until too late by Rome, precipitated a schism that is still to be completely healed today. With a greater tolerance of the Syrian rite and their Church structures, 'things would have proceeded more peacefully'⁶⁹ to a happier outcome.

For the St Thomas Christians, their Latinization would have identified them with the more recent lower-caste converts who were regarded by others as outcastes, 'parangis'. Their religious culture, and their local ecclesial structures supported their communal identity. These in turn were embedded in the wider society and its caste hierarchy. A denial of their rite would destroy their cultural identity and undermine their social position something neither the colonial state nor church could grasp.⁷⁰ Here again, there is a dual discourse: the narrower ecclesial one in which the Portuguese argue to extend their jurisdiction, and the broader socio-cultural one in which the Syrians see themselves compromised. Only in 1934 was there a papal pronouncement by Pius XI against the Latinization of the Orientals.⁷¹

And only in 1939 and 1940, respectively, were the oaths required of missionaries against the Chinese and Malabar rites withdrawn.⁷² The interpretations given by De Nobili and Ricci were accepted, almost two hundred years too late! For only now secularization in the West and the looming end of the colonial era in the East had altered the terms of the political discourse and the discussion could return to the more appropriate religious one.

⁶⁸ . Cf. Placid J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the Indian Church of the Thomas Christians* (Kottayam, 1979).

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷⁰ Cf. Houtart and Lemerciner, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁷¹ Podipara, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁷² V. Cronin, *Malabar Rites Controversy*, in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1967) vol. ix, p. 98.

V. Conclusion: A New Challenge

The Jesuit contribution to the religious and cultural dialogue between Europe and Asia in the 16th to the 18th centuries was as remarkable an achievement as it was a precarious one. Certainly, it was not without its ambiguities and tensions, but it did open the door to an indigenous and inculturated Christianity which surely had the promise of a deep and enriching encounter between East and West.

The venture was legitimated by the Jesuits largely in terms of a religious discourse, which tried to sift the essentials from the accidentals and present their teaching in the local religious forms and cultural idiom. But this was eventually overridden by the ecclesiastical conflicts within and without the Church, the exigencies and limitations of a declining colonial power, the resistance of the local elites supporting the status quo. Hence it was the political discourse that implicitly subsumed the more explicit religious one, and closed the door, which the Jesuits had opened with so much dedication and sacrifice.

Today the door is open once again, and the religious context has dramatically changed with Vatican II, as the political one has in a post-imperialist world. The encounter with the West has precipitated a modernization of Asian societies which has drastically affected their political structures and religious culture. A new dialogue with a new focus is called for today, for the actors in the drama, and the stage-setting itself, have changed. But there is still something to be learnt from Robert de Nobili and the Madurai mission.

For 'like few others, he exemplifies the idea and the problematic nature of the encounter between Christianity and Hinduism and, more generally, the hermeneutic ambivalence and dialectic of missionary teaching and scholarship'.⁷³ Moreover, the sacred and the secular cannot be separated even when they must be distinguished. There is the ever-present possibility of an overlap between the two in such a discourse and the consequent confusion and obfuscation of the issues under discussion. And even as a certain autonomy for each is demanded, the interaction between the two must be seriously considered. The Malabar and Chinese rites point to the need for a greater sensitivity to the political in the religious, and vice versa.

The institution of caste in India illustrates this complex interaction well. It is so deeply embedded in the religious ideology and so much

⁷³ Halbfass, op. cit., p. 38

part of the political reality here, that any religious or political change must come to terms with it. Even as this institution weakens it still leaves its mark on this society. De Nobili and the mission in Madurai have been criticized today for perpetuating caste among the Christians. But this is a judgement based on hindsight. For the Jesuits of those times may well have expected the hierarchy of caste to be overtaken and displaced 'by the egalitarianism of the Christian faith, in the same way as the master-slave relationship was in the ancient world.

Popular religiosity too in this sub-continent underscores most emphatically the sensitive inter-penetration of the sacred and the secular, and the violent potential of exploiting one for the other. Mahatma Gandhi was only too conscious of this. Now in our day religion and politics have made such an explosive mix, we seem to be incapable of separating the issues of one from the other for any kind of inter-religious exchange among people.

Today the inter-religious dialogue poses a new challenge—discovering 'its unfulfilled potential, its deeper, though still hidden aspirations'⁷⁴—and demands a new approach—'unlearning the inherent dominative mode'⁷⁵ to validate inter-cultural exchange. Vatican II, in ways radically different from the post-Tridentine Church, opens up the theological horizons to the possibility of a new hermeneutic for this dialogue. The post-imperialist world too has a different agenda from the colonial one, and focuses on a new content for an encounter between the sacred and the secular.

And though the Jesuits began somewhat cautiously after their restoration in 1814,⁷⁶ they are once more at the cutting edge of this exchange, and as might be expected, they have become controversial yet again with their Mission Today inspired by their 32nd General Congregation in 1974: 'for the service of faith and the promotion of justice.' Whether their contribution will be as significant in this century as it was in earlier ones, will be a judgment for history to make, but the evidence is already coming in. And it already suggests, that the Jesuits are still controversial, still at the cutting edge of change, still pioneers at the frontiers of a new mission today!

⁷⁴ Halbfass, op. cit. p. 402.

⁷⁵ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London, 1958) p. 376.

⁷⁶ William Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis, 1986) p.433.

6.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND NEED FOR A NEW HERMENEUTIC

Ignis V. 21, N. 4, pp.175-184, 1993, Part II, V. 22, N. 1, pp.15-23, Part III. *ibid.*, 1993, V. 22, N. 2, pp.62-73.

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Abstract

There is an urgent need for a reorientation and a renewed articulation of our spirituality. More than just a textual criticism, we need a hermeneutical understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises* that will make the Ignatian charism come alive for us today, by re-reading the exercises in the light of our commitment to faith-justice.

I. Introduction

1. Mission and Spirituality

Mission and spirituality are necessarily related. A separation or dichotomy here can only lead to the religious equivalent of schizophrenia! For if mission is a 'sending forth' which has a purpose and destination specified; if, moreover, the underlying motivation and the overriding method for this are explicated as well, then it must of necessity imply a vision and way of life, a spirituality, which will sustain commitment to, and deepen awareness of this mission. A Christian spirituality is precisely this vision and way of life that lives out the Christian mission.

Again, a spirituality that is without purpose or direction in terms of a lived mission cannot be truly Christian, if indeed we regard mission as integral to our faith, especially in its trinitarian and Christological dimensions.

The real difficulty, however, has been not so much the negation or the neglect of one or the other of these two in Christian religious life generally; rather it is the continuing mismatch, the lack of mutuality between them which becomes counter-productive or even destructive of both, mission and spirituality.

For the Society of Jesus 'the application today of the formula of the Institute and of our Ignatian Charism¹ has been spelt out in December 4 on 'Our Mission Today', together with December 2 on 'Jesuits Today', the two have been 'arguably the most significant pieces of legislation produced by any religious congregation in this century.'²

¹G.C. 33, no. 38

² George Soares-Prabhu, "Our Life: In the Church, in the Spirit, in Community, in Poverty: An Introduction to Part I of Companions of Jesus sent to the World, the Documents of the 33rd Congregation of the Society of Jesus", *Ignis, Studies*, vol.II, No. 5, Jan-Mar, 1984, pp. 13-23, p. 23.

Unfortunately, it would seem, an equivalently inspiring and challenging spirituality of action to sustain and deepen this mission is yet to be articulated. Attempts have been made,³ but as yet no emerging consensus, or widespread practice or official documentation has filled this lacuna in a convincing and effective manner. Obviously, something is at odds here.

There is an urgent need for a reorientation and a renewed articulation of our spirituality. For

‘To the extent that Jesuit spirituality is speaking an archaic language (and this may be the core issue) because it proceeds from a defective societal awareness it is failing all Jesuits in their ministries, even though that failure may be felt most acutely among those whose experience of ministry takes them away from more familiar life-styles.’⁴

It is precisely these, who are likely to have gone furthest in integrating the faith-justice dimension of Our Mission Today into their ministries, and they are the ones who then feel the most isolated.

To put the crux of the issue more starkly: we cannot derive our mission today from a radical liberation theology, and expect it to be supported by a spirituality from yesterday elaborated within a humanist liberal perspective. The fundamental options, the basic prejudgments between these two are mismatched and at odds.

For the purposes of this essay, the term spirituality as designating ‘a vision and way of life’ needs some further explanation. It implies:

- ‘(1) a theoretical or reflective organization of material having to do with the human person and his or her life before God, and
- (2) a praxis or practical regime of life mutually interacting with this theoria.’⁵

The ‘praxis’ is commonly called ‘the spiritual life’, the ‘theoria’ would be ‘spiritual theology’. More simply then, lest this becomes too esoteric or abstract, ‘the concrete way of life of individuals and groups make up their spirituality.’⁶ For reflection is always at least implicit in human action, or else it is not ‘human action’ but just ‘the acts of

³ Roger Haight, S.J., “Foundational Issues in Jesuit Spirituality”, *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits*, Vol. II, No. 4, Spet 1987, pp. 1 -61.

⁴ Thomas E. Clarke, S.J., “Ignatian Spirituality and Societal Consciousness”, *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* Vol. VII, No.4, Sep. 1975, pp.127-150, + 170-171, p. 129.

⁵ Clarke, op.cit., ibid.

⁶ Haight, op.cit. p. 21.

humans'; and reflection must somehow be actualized and become real in action, or else it is mere abstract speculation and the less real for it.

However, 'the spiritual life' cuts deeper and means more, than mere 'lifestyle', or an unconscious ideology. For in to far as human life is intentional and willed, and this is precisely what makes it human, it will involve fundamental options and basic pre-judgements that are consciously lived out in daily life, and make the difference between 'living authentically' and merely existing'. For the Christian, these options and pre-judgements will come from their faith-commitment. To put the matter somewhat differently, spirituality is but the living out of the mission of faith.

2. The Fundamentalist Trap

Vatican II reaffirmed the importance of the founding charism for the renewal of religious orders and congregations in the church. Much earlier the first Jesuits had been quick to recognise the founding role of their father Ignatius. Thus in an exhortation in Spain in 1554 Jerome Nadal claimed that 'God stirred up in Father Master Ignatius, imparting a grace to him and through him to us.'⁷ And again in Alcala in 1561 he said: It was more or less as if God founded the Society in him, and one sees the first FORM and grace which the Lord gave to the Society.'⁸

In other words, in Ignatius, we have both the efficient instrument and cause and also a kind of formal cause in that the charism of Ignatius' spirituality was to foreshadow the spiritual life of the Jesuit. It was not just *his* grace. It was for all his spiritual sons as well.

Now Ignatian spirituality is best and most succinctly expressed in the little book of the Spiritual Exercises and later elaborated into the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. There is then no exaggeration in saying that:

'It is a long-established fact of history that the character and thought of Ignatius found their clearest expression in the

⁷ Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu (MHSJ) Vol. 5, p.37, cit. by Philip Endean, S.J., "Who do you say Ignatius Is? Jesuit Fundamentalism and Beyond", *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, Vol., 19, No. 5 Nov. 1987, pp1-53, p7)

⁸ MHSJ Vol.5, p. 287. Emphasis in text, cit. *ibid*.

book of Spiritual Exercises and that his order arose and is ever freshly renewed from that world of thought.’⁹

Indeed H. Bohmer praised it ‘as a book of destiny for mankind.’¹⁰ For indeed the exercises do represent ‘a kind of synopsis of Christian Spiritual life.’¹¹

The crucial question then is not whether Ignatian spirituality is significant or not for us today. Certainly, it is for those for whom ‘it shapes and catalyzes our experience of God’s ongoing self-gift, together with our free response.’¹² The question rather is how can it be critically meaningful for our mission today inspired by a liberationist perspective in the post-Vatican II Church?

Obviously then ‘the Exercises need to be applied in one way in the 16th century, the age of the Renaissance, and another way in the 20th century, the age of science and anxiety.’¹³ Such a difference in world-view, *weltanschauungs*, will demand an interpretative contextualization ‘which is not to change the fundamental principles and values of the founder, but precisely to preserve them by adjusting them to new suppositions and making them operative in a new situation.’¹⁴ Certainly, this is a process fraught with danger and difficulties but the alternative of not doing anything would be worse, leaving the tradition anaemic and arrested.

The worse danger of course is to fall into the ‘fundamentalist trap’, i.e., when confused and angered by the convulsive changes of the times, one seeks security in the dogmatic affirmation of absolutes and uncritical submission to an authority. It is easy then to point out the speck of compromise in the eyes of those struggling in their search for relevance, and to miss the beam of self-righteous in one’s own.

Indeed this is a regressive, more than even a static stance. For a living tradition must be open to the signs of the times and redefine itself continually, otherwise it will die, or survive only as a fossilized curiosity.

⁹ Hugo Rahner, S.J., *The Spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola: An Account of its Historical Development*, trans. Francis John Smith, S.J., The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1953, p.xi

¹⁰ Cit. H. Rahner, op. cit., p.ix

¹¹ Haight. op. cit. p.3

¹² Philip Endean, S.J., “Who do you say Ignatius Is? Jesuit Fundamentalism and Beyond”, *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, Vol.19, No.5, Nov. 1987, pp.1-53, p.46

¹³ Theodore V. Purcell, *The Social Sciences and the Spiritual Exercises in Contemporary Thought and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*, ed. Robert F. Havenak, Loyola Press, Chicago, 1963, p.7

¹⁴ Haight, op. cit., p.2

In other words ‘spiritual fundamentalism’ ceases to ‘mediate our trusting union with God’, it ‘falls within the range of the idolatrous quest for a security that is both tangible and absolute. What makes it an especially insidious temptation is that it takes on the quiet of piety and total dedication.’¹⁵

There is, however, an authenticating test for any new rendering of such a tradition or text. It is whether or not a person experiences God’s transforming grace and love in and through it, and not some extrinsic and arbitrary absolute from the past. For the past is important precisely because, or we might even say only because, it contains the promise of the future, that frees us from our burdens of the past, even as it unfolds into our present hopes.

2. Hermeneutical Suspicions

If we are to avoid the fundamentalist trap in updating the spiritual exercises for our times, we will need more than just an enthusiastic ‘revival’. Rather this will demand a deeper renewal based on a more insightful reorientation relevant to our situation. Such a process must be open to the signs of the times and sensitive to the concerns and preoccupations of people today.

Now even an initial stage of questioning cannot but be initiated from a particular perspective and with its own pre-assumptions. This is what we would call the hermeneutical ‘suspicion’. ‘It is more than a doubt. It is an insight, still dim and unconfirmed but already charged with an interrogatory force.’¹⁶

It is this questioning from our own situation that will constitute the focal point for a reinterpretation of the text in our present context. Here we will take up three such suspicions in three different dimensions that we think are crucial to a reorientation of the spiritual exercises for Our Mission Today.

Our first suspicion is with regard to the psychological dimension. The questioning can be incisively formulated from the perspective of a ‘social hermeneutic’.

‘Have the *Spiritual Exercises* been co-opted in the privatization of spirituality so they reinforce social indifference? Is the way we are presenting the *Exercises* fostering this privatization, or is it serving

¹⁵ Thomas E. Clarke, *Fundamentalism and Prejudice The Way*, Vol. 27, No.1, 1987, pp. 37-38, pp. 34-41

¹⁶ Libano, J.B., 1982: 15, *Spiritual Discernment and Politics: Guidelines for Religious Communities*, trans. Theodore Morrow, Orbis Books, New York. 1982, op. cit., p.15

the prophetic element?... Is there something in the *Spiritual Exercises*.... that would push for a kind of human solidarity that would result in a serious social conscience?’¹⁷

The tendency to a privatization is particularly pertinent to an individualistic psychological approach, especially when it exclusively emphasizes counselling and therapy. The danger is even more acute today when psychology creates the myths for modern human beings and the psychotherapist has become the new guru and high-priest, displacing the clergy of an earlier time. No wonder the clergy today are now only too eager to learn the new ‘magic’ and introduce it into their other rites and rituals! Certainly there seem to be more psychoanalysts and counsellors than social analysts and activists among retreat directors today.

The difficulty then with this psychological interpretation of spirituality, is that it too easily ‘tends to turn the Christian vision of human life back in upon the human person in a private individualistic way.’¹⁸ Holiness is reduced to wholeness and the emphasis on personal growth does not go beyond ‘my growth, my personality development’. The ‘me generation’ may be quite comfortable with this, but it is self-centred in an obviously unchristian way, for such self-centeredness can only alienate one from a sense of other-centred service, which is what Christian mission is all about.

Moreover, only a rather superficial first reading of the spiritual exercises will support an individualistic understanding of the text. A more serious re-consideration will find that ‘this collective dimension appears, but not only as a more or less distant backdrop: it forms the very substance and tissue of these texts.’¹⁹ Indeed, what has been called the ‘social moment’²⁰ of the exercises is not restricted to the second week, but runs through the entire text. Any individualistic or self-centred reading of the text can only do real violence to this.

Our suspicion then of an overly psychological interpretation of the spiritual exercises leads us to look for a new, more social hermeneutic. This of course does not displace the need for an

¹⁷ Michael J. O’Sullivan, “Towards a Social Hermeneutic of the Spiritual Exercises: An application to the Annotations”, in *The Spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius Loyola in Present-Day Application*, Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, Rome, 1982, pp.11-122, p.41

¹⁸ Haight, op. cit., p.3

¹⁹ Jean-Pierre Lasarriere, The Christology at Work in the Second Week, in *The Exercises and the Collective Dimension of Human Existence*, Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, Rome, 1979, p.70 - pp.55-71

²⁰ H. Rahner, op. cit. p. 56

understanding of personal psychology, but contextualizes and leads forward from it.

Our second suspicion concerns the political perspective of the spiritual exercises. This of course is not unconnected with the social dimension of the text, but all the same it needs some attention.

Ignatius was very much a man of his times. The imagery and the implicit ideology of the exercises is inevitably feudal: society was undisputedly hierarchical, the state overwhelmingly monarchical. Unity and uniformity were greatly emphasized, while pluralism and freedom were not widely acknowledged values. The democratic and the industrial revolutions were far into the future. To a democratic, industrial, mass society today such a socio-political system is anathema, if it is really comprehended at all. Obviously, some adjustment will be called for in re-reading the exercise from the perspective of our times.

But Ignatius was more than just a man of his times. He had a genius for friendship and an insight into loyalty and liberation that forms the warp and woof of his spirituality. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that 'the Society of Jesus came to be established on the principle of loyalty as liberation.'²¹ Surely there are values that speak to our socio-political context of infidelity and license.

Moreover, though Ignatius could not have elaborated a social analysis, he surely understood intuitively the corrosion of wealth and the corruption of power. These are very fundamental themes in the exercises. Certainly, they are a prophetic witness for our country today, divided as it is between the over-consumption of a few and the deprivation of many, where the arrogance of our political leaders is matched only by the subservience of their lackeys.

Unfortunately, Ignatius in his feudal setting is usually pictured as a soldier, not exactly the most attractive image in an age hungering for peace. In fact, he too refers to himself as such even after his conversion when he describes himself as a 'new soldier for Christ' though he more often refers to himself as 'the pilgrims'.²²

This martial imagery of Ignatius as a 'military strategist' for the church militant, carried over to his order that once gloried to be called 'commandos for Christ', and 'shock troops of the Church'. But Ignatius actually belonged less to the militaristic than the romantic chivalrous

²¹ Parmananda R. Divarkar, S.J., *Placed With Christ: The Making of an Apostle*, Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, Rome, 1977, p. 21

²² *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola*, trans. Williams Yeomans, S.J., Inigo International Centre, London, 1985

tradition of the Middle Ages, one that was dying on the eve of the Enlightenment.²³ And if such idealism had something to say about the protection of the weak then it surely can be made relevant to the empowerment of the poor now.

But whatever the positive elements we might find implicitly in Ignatius's political perspective, our suspicion points to the need for socio-cultural analysis to contextualize the exercises today. Once again this does not substitute for spiritual discernment but is the framework within which any socially sensitive discernment, personal or communitarian, must be done. Finally, the third suspicion we consider concerns the religious *weltanschauung* of the spiritual exercises of Ignatius. Clearly, it would be unfair to expect Ignatius to have anticipated Vatican II. But it would be as foolish to ignore the fact that he belonged to the Tridentine church.

Thus Jon Sobrino mentions four factors that have conditioned Ignatius's theological understanding in ways we would regard as seriously limiting from our post-Vatican II advantage:

‘First of all, it is obvious that Ignatius read the Scriptures without the aid of any critical exegesis...

Second, Ignatius shared the ‘monarchical’ view that prevailed in his own culture and time.....

Third, Ignatius held certain conceptions of moral theology that are highly questionable today for example that there is some distinction between a morality based on the commandments that is addressed to all and a morality of discipleship addressed only to a chosen few.

Finally, he shared a view of ‘humanity that was tinged with dualism’²⁴

All this must be accepted. But more importantly, ‘the authentic theology of Ignatius is centred around a Christology of the historical Jesus and the following of Jesus. Embedded in that theology, then is a certain understanding of God and sin’.²⁵ Moreover, the Trinitarian discourse that Ignatius introduces into the exercises is certainly pertinent for a spirituality beyond what Karl Rahner called ‘Christian monotheism’. It leads us into the heart of the Triune Godhead. In a country of avatars it would seem, to us that a Christology in a trinitarian context can be a sound basis for dialogue.

²³ Cf. Divarkar, op. cit., p.12 & f.

²⁴ Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Cross Roads: A Latin American Approach*, SCM Press, London, 1978, p.397-398

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.397

Hence, whatever difficulty we might find with Ignatius's Tridentine orthodoxy, it is his more relevant orthopraxis that appeals to us today in meaningful and significant ways. For it is here that we can find the most emphatic affirmation of the option to follow Christ poor in solidarity with the poor, the powerless, 'the fools for Christ'!

Our suspicion then with regard to this theological dimension of Ignatian spirituality is that deriving as it does from a radical liberation theology, Our Mission Today calls for a supportive spirituality, which can we find in the equally radical options and commitments of the orthopraxis of the exercises.

II. The New Hermeneutic

1. *The Need and Principles*

What all this really adds up to is the urgent need for a new hermeneutic and a rejection of a 'classicist' account of the texts, the more foundational these are, the more the need for an interactive interpretation that will re-read the text into our context.

The term 'classicist' is used by Bernard Lonergan and he defines it thus:

'The classicist is no pluralist. He knows that circumstances alter cases but he is far more deeply convinced that circumstances are somehow accidental and that, beyond them, there is some substance or Kernel or root that fits in with the classicist assumptions of stability, fixity and immutability.'²⁶

Indeed if the church has accepted the validity of modern exegesis for scripture, can the Society of Jesus now resist the same for the *Spiritual Exercises*? But more than just a textual criticism, we need a hermeneutical understanding of the *Exercises* that will make the Ignatian charism come alive for us today, by re-reading the exercises in the light of our commitment to faith-justice.

The purpose of such a hermeneutic will be to find in the *Exercises* a contemporary spirituality relevant to Our Mission Today, or in other words 'synthesizing our Christian spirituality with our Christian concern.'²⁷

²⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*,² Herder and Herder, New York, 1972, p.301

²⁷ O'Sullivan, op. cit. p.112

Following Fr. Arrupe's saga of the renewal of the Jesuit order, we will like him, attempt a renewal of the *Spiritual Exercises*, based on the three principles he identified: 'the foundational charism' of Ignatius, 'a sound incarnation of religious life in the world', 'a right interpretation of the signs of the times.'²⁸

Before actually applying it to the *Spiritual Exercises*, a word about the hermeneutic is to be used. We will begin, following Paul Ricoeur, by putting aside certain misconceived ways of appropriating the meaning of a text.²⁹

Firstly, since the meaning of a text, and especially its significance can well go beyond the intention of the author, the '*mens auctoris*', a return to 'a congenial' coincidence with the 'genius' of the author' is too static, and does not open up the meaning of a text to us in a dynamic way.³⁰ Neither can the interpretation of a text be ruled by the understanding of the original addressee. 'Since the text has escaped its author and his situation, it has also escaped its original addressee.'³¹ Finally, 'the appropriation of the meaning of a text by an actual reader would place the interpretation under the empire of the finite capacities of the understanding of this reader.'³²

The first two can only make for a reconstruction of the past, the third is only a subjective present. But if each of these three separately is inadequate, falling short of a viable hermeneutic, taken together more comprehensively, they can add up to 'a mediation of the past into the present', so that 'our understanding of the text is rooted in the present and has been shaped by the past.'³³

Hence for Hans-Georg Gadamer, the present situation of the interpreter is not something negative, but 'already constitutively involved in any process of understanding.'³⁴ We can never be entirely rid of our prejudices, or more literally our 'pre-judgments', or in communication terminology our 'filters'. For 'the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word,

²⁸ Cf. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., *Challenge to Religious Life Today*, ed. Jerome Aixala, S.J., St. Louis's Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1979, pp.157-173

²⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, Texas Christian University Press, Fort Worth, Texas, 1976

³⁰ *ibid* p.92

³¹ *ibid.*, p.93

³² *ibid.*, p.93

³³ O'Sullivan, *op.cit.*, p.53

³⁴ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. David E. Linge, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 1977, Introduction by Linge, p. xiv

constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience.³⁵ Hence it follows there can be no pre-suppositionless interpretation, since there is no pre-judgmentless experience!

But if the ideal of the enlightenment, of an unbiased, autonomous subject, must be abandoned how does this become a positive constituent of any interpretation, and not a limiting one? Now if we realize that the significance of a text is located within a 'horizon of meaning', then when it is read within different 'horizons', different potential meanings will be actualized.³⁶ For as Ricoeur insists 'the sense of a text is not behind the text but in front of it.'³⁷

Unfortunately only a 'collision with other's horizons' makes us aware of our own deep-seated pre-judgments.³⁸ This happens usually in times of intense inter-cultural contact or rapid intra-cultural change.

There can in such circumstances be a 'fusion of horizons', that brings out the meaning of a text beyond the original intention of the author, or the understanding of the first addressees, or even the perception of a present reader. For there is always an 'excess of meaning' in a text³⁹ hidden in its 'circle of the unexpressed' as Hans Lipps calls it.⁴⁰ To understand a text thus 'is to follow its movement from sense to reference; from what it says, to what it talks about.'⁴¹

Being aware of one's own pre-judgements and those of the author, will enable the interpreter to discover

'the fundamental concern that motivates the text—the question that it seeks to answer and that it poses again and again to its interpreters..... To locate the question of the text is not simply to leave it, but to put it again, so that we, the questioners, are ourselves questioned by the subject matter of the text.'⁴²

In such a dialogue, 'it is this infinity of the unsaid—this relation to the whole of being that is disclosed in what is said—into which the one who understands is drawn.'⁴³

This then is the conversation, perhaps he would call it a colloquy, that we, with this new hermeneutic, want to initiate and carry on with

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 9

³⁶ Cf. Ricoeur, *op.cit.*, p.78

³⁷ *ibid.* p.88

³⁸ Gadamer, *op. cit.*, p. xxi

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.xxv

⁴⁰ *ibid.* p. xxxii

⁴¹ Ricoeur, *op. cit.* p.88

⁴² Gadamer, *op. cit.* p. xxxi

⁴³ *ibid.* p.xxxii

our Father Master Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises*. We want to enter into his context and comprehend his worldview from within as it were, while being fully aware of the concerns and aspirations, fears and our hopes that make up our own situation and world. And as we question *his Spiritual Exercises* from where we are, we must allow the fundamental options and commitments, the values and the mindset there, to challenge us in our present situation and calling. Surely there is an ‘infinity of the unsaid’ still to be articulated here!

3. Horizons of Understanding

These hermeneutic suspicions can now become the points of departure for us to initiate and continue this dialogue across the centuries. But we must first be clear with regard to the horizons of understanding in which it takes place. Only then can there be a ‘fusion’ between them, and the dialogue will assume ‘the buoyancy, of a game, in which the players are absorbed.’⁴⁴ And it will happen as in ‘every conversation that through it something different has come to be.’⁴⁵ Our earlier ‘suspicions’ had already indicated a difference of perspectives and initiated a process of questioning that now needs to be carried forward. Such a venture could well be a project in itself. Here we will only sketch rather briefly some of the main features so as to open up the application of the new hermeneutic to the *Spiritual Exercises*.

First, with regard to the psychological individualism of the *Exercises*, it is our contention that this was a later co-optation of an implicitly communitarian and service orientation in the text. Ignatius was very much a man of the later Middle Ages at the very beginning of the Reformation. He was born into a world where the organic existence of society was hierarchically structured into its functioning. The imagery used to represent society also reflected this organic unity, where the individual was largely absorbed into the group. But ‘nominalism’ was already making a breach in this organic view.⁴⁶

Moreover, the religious individualism of Luther and the Reformers gave rise to a ‘subject’ liberated from traditional social and ecclesial structures, and carried forward by the Enlightenment. Luther’s passionate ‘pro me’ set the individual directly before Christ

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, op. cit. p.xix

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. xxii

⁴⁶ Cf. Herman Tuckle, Late Middle Ages, in *Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner, Burns and Oates, London, 1968 Vol. IV. pp. 31-37, at p. 37

as the only mediator before God, making each one's own priest and one's own prophet! This led to a sense of personal calling, that breaks through the traditional 'duty of one's state of life' to a potentially radical individualism.

Ignatius himself had anticipated some of this but without breaking down the framework of ecclesial and social structures, in which he saw the person called and chosen for the larger enterprise of the kingdom. But this personal calling and discernment was very new at the time. No wonder he was examined by the Inquisition in Spain in his early years, and the suspicion of heresy was to follow his order long after even to this day.

Today the rational individualism of the enlightenment and the utilitarian ethics and economics it fostered have clearly failed in the face of a multifaceted, multi-level crisis, especially in the context of peace and justice in our world. What we need desperately today is 'a new understanding of the human, in which the societal dimension is seen, together with the intrapersonal and the interpersonal, as constitutive, and not merely as extrinsically environmental.'⁴⁷

For this, we need a deeper understanding of the 'human person' that goes beyond the definition of Boethius that is still so basic to much of Christian and Western thought: '*naturae rationalis individua substantia*', an individual substance of a rational nature. But this stresses the uniqueness of the individual subsisting separate and indivisible, '*incommunicabilis*' and '*ineffabile*'. It embraces only the intra-personal dimension and emphasizes the rational aspect there. It is a definition of 'person' in terms of self-awareness, and it ultimately goes back to Greek philosophy and its conception of the human being as *a rational animal*. That conception has made its way through the enlightenment to the modern philosophy of subjectivity: To be a person is to have possession of one's self.'⁴⁸

But if a Christian understanding of the human person must include the personal, the communitarian and the social, then we need a more relational definition of 'person'. Such a definition can be derived from the trinitarian discourse of relationships from Augustine's time. Richard of St. Victor and Duns Scotus, too, see the person as relationally defined. 'This line of thought culminates in Hegel's definition: The essence of a person is to surrender oneself to the other and find fulfilment precisely in the other.'⁴⁹ And again to

⁴⁷ Clarke, op.cit. p.131

⁴⁸ Sobrino, op. cit. p.73.

⁴⁹ ibid.

quote Hegel on this: 'The authentic reality of the person, then, consists in submerging oneself ontologically in the other.'⁵⁰

The emphasis in this relational aspect of personhood is that 'to be a person is to be from, toward, for and with other persons, to be capable of personal, dialogical relationships.'⁵¹ We begin to realize the far-reaching implication of this relational understanding of person for our spiritual 'theoria' and 'praxis' when we recall that in the triune Godhead 'person' and 'relation' are identical.

But this relational dimension of the person is more than just inter-personal. It must include explicitly the societal, the social relationships and consequent structures, the patterns of social interaction and consequent institutions in which the human person is relationally embedded.

Long ago Aristotle had defined man as a social (or political) animal. Unfortunately, it has been those on the left of the political spectrum, especially the socialists and Marxists protesting social injustice and inequality in our capitalist-industrial society, that have been quicker to come to terms with these stark aspects of the human situation than orthodox mainstream Christianity, that is until very recently. However, we now believe that it is both possible and necessary that the 'social moment' of the Exercises, be convincingly opened up to the need for a critical social analysis.

This brings us to the second consideration in our conversation, which touches on the socio-political aspects of our 'dialogue'. Once this societal dimension is seen as constitutive of the human condition, then any neglect of its consequences in our lives can only truncate the comprehension of our human situation, especially our understanding of the injustices and inequalities, the oppression and violence it generates.

It would surely be unfair to expect of Ignatius a post-enlightenment consciousness, and certainly not a full-blown social analysis. The Enlightenment has been understood in two different but not incompatible ways. However, the liberative potential of the Spiritual Exercises is not alien to either. Thus

'Some have seen it as espousing the autonomy of reason vis-a-vis any imposition from the outside (the movement which began with Kant). Others have seen it as espousing the autonomy of the whole

⁵⁰ *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion III*, posthumous ed., Vol.16, p.239. cit. by Sobrino, op, cit, p.141, ft. nt., 24

⁵¹ Clarke op. cit., p.132

person vis-a-vis alienating structures (the movement that began with Marx).'⁵²

The first is hardly quite alien to the kind of Christian humanism and rationality that Jesuit spirituality inspired over the years. The second depended on a social critique that mainstream Christianity is only now coming to terms with. Indeed it is only as recently as after Vatican II that political and liberation theology have used such a critique as the point of departure for their faith-reflection.

But if the *Spiritual Exercises* could inspire an acceptable Christian humanism, then we believe they can be opened to a newer and deeper inspiration when re-read in the context of a credible social analysis. For Ignatius's deepest intuitions there, about wealth and power, the seriousness of this life and the primary of effective love, about Christ-centredness and Spirit-indwelling, to mention but a few, represent foundational and far-reaching evangelical values and options that are perennially very important but especially pertinent today.

Moreover, Ignatius's mysticism of service'⁵³ was, from the example of his own life, an involvement in the events and issues of his day, wherever he saw a chance for the 'greater glory of God'. From his early days at Manresa, where he was a spiritual guide to many, to his last days as General of the order, Ignatius was a mystic in action, not turning away from the world in a mystic trance, but running towards it to embrace the crucified there, to 'poverty with Christ poor.'⁵⁴

There is a deep yearning for liberation today that has moved beyond the first phase of the enlightenment to a second and perhaps one more crucial to our times. For

'the movement has had two structurally distinct phases. One phase concentrated on the liberation of reason from dogmatic faith (Kant). The other phase championed the liberation of the whole person from a religious outlook that supported or at least permitted social, economic and political alienation (Marx). We might sum up the two phases as a general yearning for reasonableness and for transforming praxis.'⁵⁵

⁵² Sobrino op. cit. p. 19

⁵³ Cf. Joseph De Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice: A Historical Study*, trans. William J. Young, Institute of Jesuit Sources, Chicago, 1964

⁵⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*, no. 167

⁵⁵ Sobrino, op. cit., p.348

Certainly, the horizon of Ignatius's '*obsequium rationabile*', and his Christ-centred praxis can fuse with the horizon of such a yearning to yield a liberative and effective understanding, for a free people and a just society.⁵⁶

The third consideration now brings us to the religious dimension the Ignatius's and our worldview. Obviously, the sacral culture of the 15th century and the present-day secularization of society are very different worlds, and the basic preoccupations of classical scholasticism then are very different from the issues that agitate religious thinking today.

Thus

'Where classical theology talked about God versus creature, nature versus grace, and faith versus works, we must now talk about the church versus the kingdom of God, injustice versus liberation, the old person versus the new person, and the gratuitous entry of the kingdom versus active effort on its behalf.'⁵⁷

But Ignatius makes no claims to be a theologian, not even a classical scholastic one, and his relevance to us is not so much in his articulated *theoria* but in his actuated praxis. It is in the following of the historical Jesus, that he searches for in the *Spiritual Exercises* with us, that he speaks most pertinently and cogently to us.

In fact the *Exercises* are the fruit of his own personal experience rather than his study. From the transforming mystical graces on the Cardoner (river) and the notebook in which he jotted down his reflections in guiding others in the life of the Spirit, to the studied prose and methodical arrangement of the exercises, Ignatius's little book of destiny was genuinely the essence of his own spiritual journey and life.

The *Spiritual Exercises*, therefore, cannot but have a special appeal to those who lay a special claim to his founding charism. But further, Ignatian spirituality does reach out beyond his order and not just through his spiritual sons. For as a spirituality of action, a search 'for God in all things and all things in God', it certainly has a strong and close affinity for our mission of faith and justice today and for all who make this mission their own.

As 'the Society emerges from a highly confused Church, struggling to redefine itself in the face of the Protestant challenge and a radically

⁵⁶ Cf. Vat. II, *Gaudium et Spes*

⁵⁷ Sobrino op. Cit. p. 356

new cultural environment,'⁵⁸ it is continually under suspicion, even when it is most loyal to the very church that eventually suppressed it in 1773, and revived in 1814. There seems to be something in this spirituality that puts its serious disciples at the cutting edge of change, on the frontiers of new challenges.

It would seem to us only natural that this spirituality succinctly expressed in the Exercises, will have something very special to offer to our changing, challenging times, and will yield something very new in its encounter with our present crisis. It will be another fusion of horizons that can inspire us to be 'contemplatives in liberative action', to seek and find Yahweh of the *anawim* in all things in solidarity with them.

III. Hermeneutic Applications

1. The Purpose

Hermeneutic principles are best understood and developed in their concrete application. Here we will not make an exhaustive analysis of the text of the Spiritual Exercises but rather attempt a more limited illustrative interpretation of a few of its major themes. An exhaustive exposition will have to be the subject of another essay. Further, our effort here will not be merely for a contemporary work of a literal translation, however valid that might be.⁵⁹ Rather what our hermeneutic must yield is a contextual interpretation or 'a re-reading based on a given concrete situation.'⁶⁰

Rahner might rightly insist that the meaning of the *Exercises* emerges only in the light of its ultimate purpose.⁶¹ This can be spelt out as detachment, discernment, decision.⁶²

⁵⁸ Endean, op. cit. p.21

⁵⁹ This has been attempted elsewhere. Cf. David I. Fleming, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading*, Gujarat Sahitya Pakhash, Anand, 1978.

⁶⁰ Sobrino, op. cit.cit., p. 397

⁶¹ Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius, the Theologian*, trans. Michael Barry, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1968, p.55

⁶² Cf. *Spiritual Exercises* (Sp.Ex) nos. 1 & 21

2. The Annotations

At the very onset, Ignatius indicates some preliminary help which he called ‘annotations’. But a special social hermeneutic would often require something antecedent to these. Some exercises would be in order to concretise retreatants to social issues and update theology if needed.⁶³ Too easily has the 20th annotation withdrawal from distracting conditions into privacy been used to justify the comfort and beauty of many a retreat house, far from the madding crowd, such as only the rich can afford.

But an understanding of the privileged place of encountering in the poor *anawim*, would surely require a new understanding of this, i.e., withdrawal from distancing conditions not from enabling ones. This is what some have attempted in the ‘contextualised retreat’, where the exercitant is inserted in, and exposed to conditions of deprivation and injustice.

This requires the skilled assistant of the retreat director, who must be sensitive to the openness and vulnerability of the retreatant. These should never become an excuse to exploit the generosity that the retreatant is urged to in the 5th annotation. In fact, in these days of ideological extremism, it is important to distinguish between an authentic kingdom-centred generosity and a ‘generosity motivated by my egoism, by the instincts of self-defence and self-satisfaction.’⁶⁴ Moreover in our world of exaggerated group chauvinism, it is a matter of some delicacy to discern between ‘fanatics’, who are excessively devoted to and absorbed in their group bonding, and the ‘martyrs’ who witness to the truth with their lives.

3. The Principle and Foundation

The individualistic orientation of the Principle and Foundation⁶⁵ has been remarked by many. Salvation there is also seen in a very limited framework. To “save one’s soul’ could be construed as an individualist temptation.’⁶⁶ Other-worldly personal salvation is less an issue of personal angst today than concern for human creativity

⁶³ Jose Magna, *Ignatian Pre-Exercises and Theology: A Spirituality for Liberation*, St Louis Institute of Jesuit Resources, St Louis, 1976.

⁶⁴ Sobrino, op.cit., p. 21

⁶⁵ Sp. Ex. no. 33

⁶⁶ Haight, op.cit., p.25

and freedom, for justice and peace, and the desire to take responsibility for and make a contribution to, as subjects not merely objects of our history. However, if we understand ‘man’ in the context of ‘humankind’ and ‘soul’ to be translated in Biblical terminology to mean ‘life’, then some of these difficulties can be addressed.

But the question of detachment is deeper than merely a textual one. For, then a matter of individual asceticism, here we touch upon a question intimately interwoven with our social position and dominant culture. For there are powerful sources of unconscious and uncritical prejudices, vested interests and attitudes, the mindset and options, that we must distance ourselves from to be capable of any liberating discernment.

Too often our culture and ideological addictions go unexorcised disordering our lives and relationships. This is not at all helpful in our quest for authentic meaning. In actuality then, under an archaic phraseology what Ignatius is urging us to at the beginning of the exercises is the imperative need to take life seriously and not to absolutise any creature or even ourselves, if we are to find our lives meaningful and purposeful. Only then will he begin to treat the issue of sin.

4. Social Sinfulness

The Ignatian treatment of sin in the first of the *Exercises* has been likened to a ‘masochistic introspection’. And if one remains locked in one’s personal burden of guilt this may well turn out to be true. But we have already noted the implicated ‘social moment’ here as well. What is needed is the opening up of these meditations on the social dimensions of sinfulness, how sin is embedded in unjust structures and oppressive institutions, of which we cannot avoid being part, however unwillingly, and before whose power we feel helpless.

This is the sinfulness that threatens the meaningfulness and purposefulness of our lives most fundamentally if we are convinced that the social dimension is essentially constitutive of our personhood and mission. Such ‘social sin dominates today’s complex world’ and ‘threatens to crush human beings not only materially by its concrete effects but also spiritually.’⁶⁷ For it destroys human creativity and negates human freedom. But any response to this sinful situation

⁶⁷ Haight, op.cit., p. 42

must be corporate; isolated individual forts are doomed to failure and eventually to cynicism or escapism. This brings us to our consideration of the kingdom.

5. The Kingdom

From the earliest days of the Society, the two contemplations of the Kingdom and the Two Standards have been considered to be central to the *Spiritual Exercises*. Nadal said of Ignatius that:

The Lord gave him a profound knowledge and a lively sense of the divine mysteries and the Church. Especially in the two contemplations of the King and the Two Standards.⁶⁸

For Rahner, the two are 'joined together as the opposite poles between which *the Exercises* oscillates ... each of them intimately bound up with the Church.'⁶⁹

Now the feudal character of the King can hardly be gainsaid, not to mention some of the exegetical difficulties we are faced with when we realise that 'Jesus preached the kingdom of God not himself.'⁷⁰ And that he is known on occasion to have rejected the title.⁷¹

However, on closer examination, we find that Ignatius' King is more like the Servant of Yahweh, than a medieval feudal lord. Moreover, he is a political figure with a political agenda: to win all lands of the world for the Father, to herald God's reign. Certainly, this is a liberative mission.

The implicit elitism of 'those who will want to be more devoted and distinguish themselves in all services.'⁷² Can be understood best in the context of Bonhoeffer's distinction between 'cheap' and 'costly' grace.⁷³ This will redeem it from the feudal context. For even though today such distinctions are onerous for us since we are all called to the same fundamental and evangelical options, there is still a gradation in the response to this commitment that surely no democratic society can negate.

⁶⁸ *Fontes Narativi de Santo Ignacio*, Vol. I. p. 307 Rome, 1964, cit. H. Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, op.cit., p. 68

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Kark Rahner, *Christologie-systematisch und exegetisch*, Herder and Herder, London, 1972, p. 29, op. cit., p. 41

⁷¹ Jn. 6.15

⁷² Sp.EX. no.98

⁷³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Costly Grace in In the Cost of Discipleship*, Macmillan, New York, 1963, pp. 47 - 48

6. The Two Standards

However, this commitment is too serious to be just a matter of enthusiastic goodwill. It will demand a careful and critical discernment. Hence the meditation on the Two Standards.⁷⁴

Here again, Ignatius has been charged with dualism, and with some justification if would seem. Certain Satan and his devils are hardly popular players in our secular world, even though many other ‘demons’ in our society are still to be exorcised. But behind the quaint imagery of this meditation is a severe and incisive indictment of false and alienating social standards. Starkly counterpoised to this is the paradox of evangelical life and mission. This brings into sharp relief the inevitable contradictions between wealth and poverty, honour and humiliation, pride and humility.

In terms of a social hermeneutic, we have here an insightful basis for a societal understanding that puts the idolatry of riches and honour, the injustice of false poverty and oppression as the very root cause of social disorder repression on the breaking of the covenant with Yahweh and the alienation from his Kingdom.

In our contemporary terms, it is our crazed quest for upward mobility, of keep-up-with and staying-ahead-of-the-Joneses that subtly brings us to moral and spiritual ruin. It feeds our insecurity and anxiety; it reduces our sense of personal worth to our position on the social ladder of comparative rankings. No wonder we fall so easily into ‘conspicuous consumption’ in Thorstein Veblen terms, and the ‘fetishism of commodities’ as Karl Marx calls it. Thus our own labour gets ‘commodified’ as our being is gradually reduced to having, to use the distinction made by Erich Fromm. In such a society, ‘where money is an idol to be poor is a sin’⁷⁵

For we must realise how ‘even ‘legitimate’ upward mobility can undermine one’s social commitment in the long run; and upwardly mobile individuals frequently (often willingly) serve institutions and social processes that run counter to gospel values.’⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Sp. Ex. No. 136

⁷⁵ William Stringfellow, *Dissenter in the Great Society: Christian View of America in Crisis*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1966, p. 40

⁷⁶ Dean Brackley, S.J., “Down Mobility: Social Implications of St Ignatius’ Two Standards”, *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits*, Vol. 20 No. 2, 1983, pp. 1-50, at p. 21

In this interpretation, it is possible ‘to locate the discussion of the way of Christ as ‘downward mobility’ within the wider framework of.... ‘forward mobility’ towards the Kingdom or Reign of God.’⁷⁷

Now the Christian insight from liberation theology and the struggle for justice is that ‘forward advance towards dignity for all requires of the non-poor genuine solidarity with the poor’⁷⁸ For in our solidarity with the outcast can truly challenge our caste society to be one with no castes, and no inequality and or domination.

It is such solidarity, and the voluntary poverty and humiliation it entails, that is the essence of Ignatian humility’ motivated by Jesus to the ‘third degree’.⁷⁹ This humility is surely not a question of the repetitive ‘imitation of Christ’ but rather one of incarnating in one’s own concrete situation the risks and dangers, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and options that characterised Jesus’s own solidarity with the poor. For this is ‘the ultimate motive for Christian living.’⁸⁰ Thus, once again we have a truly creative fusion of understandings, Ignatian humility and solidarity with the poor.

7. The Call to Discipleship

It is these basic themes and insights that play themselves over and again in the following weeks of *the Exercises*, enabling us

‘to adopt the following of Jesus as a praxis rather than a theory, as the basic hermeneutic principle for comprehending who God is and, ... who the Christ of faith is.’⁸¹

For the Christology of the *Spiritual Exercises* is not a contemplative but a praxis-oriented one, ‘a Christology of the historical Jesus that triggers a concrete form of discipleship structured after the activity of Jesus himself,’⁸² with this Jesus who calls us to his mission.

Coming to the consideration of ‘The Three Classes of Men’⁸³ we are brought here face to face with the cost of discipleship and tested against our willingness to pay the price. It is interestingly put in terms

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 28

⁷⁸ *ibid.* p. 29

⁷⁹ Sp. Ex. No. 167

⁸⁰ Sobrino, *op. cit.*, p. 411

⁸¹ Sobrino, *op.cit.*, p. 60

⁸² *ibid.* p. 404

⁸³ Sp. Ex. No. 149

of a financial decision, very much within our contemporary frame of reference: putting your money where your mouth is! The concrete contextualisation of the following of Jesus is only then personalised in the election and discernment of spirits that go with it.

8. The Discernment of Spirits

Today we have psychologised the ‘evil spirit’ and located it within our own concupiscence. But we need also to see this ‘enemy of our human nature’ in the kind of ‘social customs and habits’ laws and other verifications of societal sin”⁸⁴ For a social hermeneutic will require over and above insight into the inner movements of the spirit, a further a sensitivity to signs of our times. For without such critical social awareness, our ideological perspective and mindset will unduly limit our sensitivity to the spirit and consequently our responses as well.

Now if we do take social sinfulness and structural injustice with the seriousness it deserves, we must respond socially and structurally with equal seriousness to the need for socio-structural change. For a socially sensitive consciousness will demand that discerned decisions are not only to change persons but also our history, to align ourselves with the will of God there. Traditionally this has been seen as some divinely present plan that God has worked out for us. Today we struggle to see the meaning in all this confusion, but it still provides ‘an open invitation and an exhilarating challenge to our freedom.’⁸⁵

9. The Contemplation for Love

It is this freedom to love that Ignatius wants us to seek and be graced with in his final ‘Contemplation for Love’⁸⁶ For our cynical, jaded world it is no doubt very pertinent that Ignatius will not allow a wishy-washy romanticism however spiritual. His praxis is as down to earth as it is divinely inspired -- *Conversion and Spirituality*: Bernard Lonergan. It is not a contemplative love that is sought here; it is a contemplation for an active love manifested in deeds, not in words or good intentions and noble thoughts. Thus finding implicitly God in all things will mean, not just finding his presence here, but making him

⁸⁴ Clarke, op. cit. p. 44

⁸⁵ Haight, op. cit., p. 44

⁸⁶ Sp. Ex. No. 230

present explicitly as well. By now it should not be too difficult to see how an effective love can be translated into effective action in solidarity with the poor, for a justice that is the basis of peace and the foundation for an on-going love.

Ignatius is certainly helping us here to reach out to the limits of our own understanding and to loving action from there.

10. The Appendices of Rules

Now for the various ‘rules’ that are appended to the *Spiritual Exercises*. A contemporary mentality may easily dismiss them as almost petty-minded in the details and most unrealistically exaggerated in their hyperbole at times. But a more empathetic and open interpretation could lead us to conclude otherwise.

Thus the ‘Rules for Regulating Oneself in the Matter of Food’⁸⁷ do seem to come down to minutiae. But even here a sensitivity to the social dimension will lead to a relevant ‘praxis regarding food and drink’⁸⁸ In our world of over-consumption and starvation, of food fetishes and health fads, of body-abusive dietary habits and agro-economic exploitation that degrades nature to support these, ... truly in a world such a viable praxis is need and even necessary.

So too with regard to the ‘Rules for Distributing Alms’⁸⁹ While almsgiving is out of vogue in the welfare state, the kind of selfless detachment Ignatius urges here can indeed speak to the socio-political activists that go beyond the charity of relief work to societal structural change. Perhaps most controverted of all these rules are the ‘Rules for Thinking with the Church’⁹⁰. ‘Sentire cum Ecclesia’ is better translated as, ‘feeling with the Church’. Here we will discuss them at some length.

Ignatius had been dragged before the Inquisition no less than some eight times! The early Society of Jesus had to defend itself on the one hand, against the suspicion of heresy, before an often embarrassed at times hostile Papacy and on the other, a hierarchy with it jealous of its power.

But feeling and resonating with the Church, as we are called to in these rules, we must contextualise them not in the 16th-century Church but in the contemporary one today. Certainly, the Tridentine

⁸⁷ So. Ex. No. 210

⁸⁸ Clarke, op. cit., p. 147

⁸⁹ Sp.Ex. no. 337

⁹⁰ Sp. Ex. No 352

Church was very different from the one following Vatican I, and both these are even more so from the post-Vatican II Church, which counter-poised episcopal collegiality to Papal primacy and defined the Church as the 'People of God', not in hierarchical terms. More basically we need to resonate with the Apostolic Church of the New Testament, especially as depicted in the Acts of the Apostles: 'that is where the poor have a double precedence: both as recipients and as proclaimers of the gospel.'⁹¹

But even in the Acts, the human conditions of the Church is not hidden or glossed over: her deceit with Ananias and Saphira⁹² and conflict between Judaisers and Hellenist followers of 'the Way'. What we need then is a realistic acceptance of the inevitable limitations of any human institution. As in a family under stress and strain, here too, some Christian 'pietas' would certainly help. For we need both 'a mystery-laden vision of the Church and the hard wisdom of practical apostolic conduct.'⁹³ And for this, Ignatian prudence which always goes together with Ignatian courage, and with Ignatian discernment, this will be our best guide.

A more serious limitation is that they are explicitly directed at those in 'the Church Militant'. They do not relate to non-Catholics and even less to non-Christians. Ignatius wrote no 'rules' for such a dialogue, except perhaps the general orientation found in his 'presuppositions' to the *Spiritual Exercises*.⁹⁴ But if we do take our hermeneutic seriously, then Ignatius has not yet spoken his last word in the *Spiritual Exercises*. He will speak in dialogue with us, and it is this we must now articulate.

IV. Conclusion

Before concluding this endeavour it would seem helpful to recapitulate the argument made here lest it gets lost in words and we miss the wood for the trees. How successful it has been if for readers to judge. Hopefully, they will be moved by the presupposition at the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises* 'every good Christian is more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to

⁹¹ Libano, op.cit., p. 22

⁹² Acts 5:1-11

⁹³ Oliver Dinechin de, *Rules for Thinking with the Church*, CIS (Review of Ignatian Spirituality) 1979, Vo. 10, o. 3, pp 93 – 110, p. 103

⁹⁴ Sp. Ex. No. 22

condemn it.’⁹⁵ And so to enter into a dialogue that will take this discourse a step further.

1. The Threefold Endeavour

Our Mission as spelt out in Dec 4 of the 32nd General Congregation and confirmed by the 33rd, demands a social commitment to the option for the poor and a critical social awareness of unjust structures. For such a social commitment to be deepened and broadened we must go with an equally committed and conscious spirituality. Traditionally the Jesuit mission has been inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises*, which have been regarded as the epitome of the Ignatian charism, and a compendium of the spiritual life for the Jesuits.

However, many suspect that the *Spiritual Exercises* have not been equal to this task, largely because they have been too individualistically interpreted. We need a viable hermeneutic to bring out the social dimension of these *Exercises*, which for far too long have been opted by the individualism of an earlier time.

The endeavour of this paper has been threefold:

- i) setting out the need and the principles for new hermeneutic as an urgent and very necessary task;
- ii) applying this to the *Exercises* in the context of the socio-religious situation Ignatius wrote them, and elaborating for us today;
- iii) illustrating this with some of the major themes of the *Exercises*.

Our purpose has been to make these *Exercises* relevant to Our Mission Today, a source of inspiration and continuing renewal for a spirituality that puts faith-justice at the centre of the following of Christ and the option for the poor and the marginalised at the cutting edge of its witness to the kingdom.

2. The Quest for Discipleship

The detachment, discernment and decision of the disciple must become an on-going quest in following of Jesus. However, as our horizons of understanding recede and fuse we must ‘expect to live

⁹⁵ Sp. Ex. No. 22

with a continuing breaking and recovery of this same frame of reference at deeper and deeper levels.⁹⁶

In this quest, it is not the past that authenticates our quest in the present, or the present that can do the same for the future but only 'the creative fidelity of God at work then and at work now, at once ever old and ever new.'⁹⁷ As Tagore in his evocative poetry says: 'He comes, comes, ever comes ...' revealing himself in new and wonderful ways. Indeed this quest touched on our very identity as Jesuits; it 'constantly pass through cycles of loss and recovery, death and resurrection,'⁹⁸ it is a reliving of the paschal mystery.

Albert Schweitzer writes movingly on this discipleship and fidelity: 'He comes as one unknown, without a name, as of old by the lakeside. He came to those who knew him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow me!' and sets us to the task he has to fulfil for our time. He commands and to those who obey him, whether they be wise or simple, he will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings, which they shall pass through in this fellowship, and, as an effable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who he is.'⁹⁹

We have tried to establish that Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises* can be our guide on this quest of discovery and commitment as disciples of Jesus. Only we must grasp something of his spirit summed up in an anonymous Jesuit in 1640 in *Imago Primi Saeculi Societatis Jesu* in this finely chiselled phrase: *non copheberi a maximo contineri tamen a minimo, hoc divinum est*, which can be paraphrased to read: 'to reach out to the greatest, yet stay by the least, that is truly divine'¹⁰⁰

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⁹⁷ Endean, op. cit., p. 53

⁹⁸ *ibid.*,

⁹⁹ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, Macmillan, New York, 1966, p. 403

¹⁰⁰ Paramanda Divarkar op. cit. p. 22

7.

JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA TODAY: INSTITUTIONALIZING OUR CHARISM IN THE AFFILIATING UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The dialectic tension between the 'institutional' and the 'charismatic' is inherent in any social system. Religious organizations illustrate this very convincingly. Educational institutions too, particularly when they derive from a religious, or otherwise charismatic inspiration, are also subject to this dialectic tension, and Jesuit education certainly falls into this category.

The dialectic tension between the 'institutional' and the 'charismatic' is inherent in any social system. Indeed, while charismatic inspiration and authority need institutionalization for continuity, yet at the same time it is alienated by these very structures. Now while the dialectic between these two necessary polarities constitutes an inescapable dilemma, the tension between them could be a source of creative growth and innovative adaptation, rather than of confusion and chaos or of rigidity and ossification, as would happen if only one or the other horn of the dilemma is stressed.

Religious organizations illustrate this very convincingly. Consider the beginnings of a church or religious congregation, where the early charism of the founder(s) is institutionalized in later structures, precisely to extend it over time and space. Educational institutions too, particularly when they derive from a religious, or otherwise charismatic inspiration, are also subject to this dialectic tension, and Jesuit education certainly falls into this category.

Jesuit educational institutions are an important apostolic commitment of the Society of Jesus. Indeed, the education ministry was one of the earliest apostolates of the Society, and today one of its largest commitments as well. St. Paul's College in Goa, which the Jesuits took over in 1549, was one of the earliest colleges of the Society of Jesus, and one of the first Western institutions of higher education in India. Giving expression in this ministry to our Jesuit charism and the mission it calls us to has always been a challenge, and an increasingly difficult one today, especially in this country and most particularly with higher education here.

This is not because our charism and Our Mission Today and tomorrow, as once again affirmed by our most recent General Congregations, have no relevance for this country, but rather because the institutional constraints of the educational system here are becoming increasingly problematic: over-bureaucratization, excessive governmental control, inadequate finances, widespread politicization,... to mention but a few of the problems plaguing the system. Moreover, for lack of political will, even carefully worked out and much-needed reforms have time and again been stymied. In fact, the very relevance of the system is being questioned and it is fast losing credibility, but as yet no alternative to the present formal system has emerged to replace it. Clearly then for the seriously committed Jesuit the inescapable tension between the inspiration of our charism and the constraints of the system is heightened to the point of exasperation, if not exhaustion!

For the affiliating university has aptly been described by the well-known educationist, Suma Chitnis, as a 'minimum demands system' for all the constituencies involved: students, teachers, administrators, government officials. As such, it creates powerful vested interests that resist change. This progressively alienates the university and its colleges from changing social realities and needs. In the post-Independence period this is glaringly apparent.

More recently, the 'Autonomous Colleges', first recommended by the National Education Commission 1964-66, are a promising innovation that might well provide a breakthrough for undergraduate education in the affiliating university. Jesuit institutions have welcomed the recommendation and most would certainly qualify for selection. But as yet few universities are willing to grant such autonomy, and where they have, the scale of implementation has been more symbolic than significant. Indeed, only in South Asia does the original form of the centralized affiliating system survive. Elsewhere

various degrees of autonomy, academic and otherwise, for the affiliated institutions of the university have long been a necessary decentralization as the system grew unmanageable.

Jesuit higher education in India is mostly located in undergraduate colleges today. These are among the most prestigious in the country. But paradoxically their very success within this system has become their own worst enemy. For institutional prestige all too easily becomes the measure of academic excellence. Now when this is in a system that by our own admission has become increasingly irrelevant educationally, in terms of a positive contribution to the needs of a changing society, then can such 'excellence' be an authentic expression of Jesuit commitment today? This is a difficult and painful question that must be squarely faced in the light of recent Jesuit understandings of our mission today. For in the final analysis institutional structures are but means, albeit necessary ones, and hence they cannot be allowed to displace educational goals and values, which must be derived from the vision which inspires the Jesuit mission.

More specifically, then the challenge facing Jesuit higher education today in this country is to achieve not just an academic excellence, but one that is socially relevant as well. The institutional expression of such relevance, at a first level must be in terms of the people we have opted to serve. Thus admission criteria must express our option for the poor, and not be based solely on a class-biased merit which negates this. For a 'meritocracy' will be as unjust as an aristocracy, in a class-caste ridden society such as ours, where equality of opportunity is severely constrained and access to good education is limited from the earliest stages.

At a second level, besides the students we select, the graduates we produced must be in Fr. Arrupe's words 'men for others' and 'agents of change' for justice and faith. Course content and administrative structures are but means to be geared to these pedagogic goals. Obviously, there are the constraints of the system, particularly acute in the affiliating universities in this country. But the challenge is precisely to use what freedom we have to create the freedom we want, rather than find alibis for continuing with the status quo.

At a *third* level, such in-house goals must be complemented with outreach programmes in terms of an extension service that is compatible with the pedagogic commitments of an educational institution. This is sometimes called 'service education', which really amounts to education through service. The institutional goodwill and

the professional and other resources of a prestigious college can indeed make a real contribution to the local community and beyond. The specific contribution could vary from making institutional facilities available to the neighbourhood, to advocacy programmes, engaging faculty and students on issues of social concern.

Besides much community service, a *fourth* level of relevance for a Jesuit college could well be in research that is action-oriented on issues of social concern, particularly the kinds that are neglected by professional academics. In fact, Jesuit colleges in this country did cultivate a strong research tradition as long as they had post-graduate departments. Once these were centralized in the university the emphasis shifted to undergraduate teaching. But research today opens into a much larger space than then the academic post-graduate would. There are non-governmental agencies that are leaders in new areas of research, where the Jesuits would be challenged to revive their lost tradition.

Fidelity to our charism and the reality of our limitations will demand careful discernment at these various levels, as to what has been done, and especially, what more we can do in each of them. At times we may well be challenged to make a prophetic witness and the price could be very high. Such a model of Jesuit higher education for a third-world country has been heroically expressed by our murdered brothers in San Salvador: university men, whose prophetic witness against injustice and violence there led to their brutal martyrdom and an even greater witness before the whole world.

In our own situation here there is surely much our institutions can witness to and stand up for in solidarity or protest. Issues of religious communalism and fundamentalism, caste, class and gender inequalities and violence, political and human rights, etc., while these are not direct concerns of our educational institutions, still they cry out for some appropriate institutional response and not merely a personal or private one from individuals. And if these institutions claim to be gospel-inspired and Jesuit run they cannot be deaf to such cries.

Certainly, something is being done in Jesuit institutions at all these various levels: i.e., in terms of admission policies weighted towards the underprivileged; of value education and orientation programmes for, and extension service and outreach projects with staff and students. Moreover, after this has to be done against the tide of resistance from the constituencies associated with these institutions, i.e, students and parents more concerned with

examination results than holistic humanist education; staff and faculty for whom teaching is a 'job' rather than a 'vocation'; even the Christians who often demands preferential treatment over those less privileged. A more recent judgement of the Delhi High Court, requires minority institutions to follow a 'merit' list for admissions, though the criteria of such 'merit' could be ascertained by the college's own admissions' tests, provided these were objective and transparent. However, state governments have in places insisted that the marks obtained in public examinations marking be followed.

Obviously, we cannot ignore the very real limitations we labour under, but neither must we betray our charism and mission. For they are any number of institutional constraints and cautions that can be used to distance us from such commitments and involvements and to rationalize the isolation of our institutions in their islands of excellence and ivory towers. But to the extent this happens, it is not an expression but a betrayal of our charism and Our Mission Today, and even more so will it be tomorrow!

A 'Study of Jesuit Colleges in India' by Fr. John Macia in 1982, concludes with 'the conflict between two organizational goals: (a) the pursuit of academic excellence, (b) the promotion of greater social justice'. In the present context of the affiliating university in this country our mission today indicates an obvious choice in favour of the second. The new economic policies being adopted in the country, which are likely to hasten growth and certainly sharpen inequalities, only make this choice all the more urgent. The real creative challenge then is not in the resolution of this played out goal-conflict, but rather in the dialectic tension between a critical intellectual quest and an effective commitment to education for justice. This we believe must be the real creative challenge for Jesuit higher education in this country on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

8.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

(This paper is a revised version of a paper presented at a dialogue workshop on 'Option for the Poor— A challenge and an Opportunity', Pune, 29th September to 1st October 2002, organised by the diocese of Pune in collaboration with the diocese of Eichstatt.)

INTRODUCTION: THE DILEMMAS
CHRISTIAN PRAXIS
UNIVERSAL OPENNESS AND PREFERENTIAL OPTIONS
LIBERATION AND RECONCILIATION
TOWARDS A CREATIVE TENSION
ACHIEVING A SYNTHESIS
INTEGRATION AND EXCLUSIVENESS
A HOLISTIC APPROACH
LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING AND ACTION
CRITIQUING THE PRESENT
IMPLICATING THE LOCAL CHURCH
HEARERS AND DOERS
CONCLUSION

Abstract

This article tries to deal with the questions—What does the option for the poor mean today in the wider context of the Christian tradition? How must his option be exercised in the social situation in which we and the local churches live? What sort of justice must this option promote?

Our attempt here is to initiate a search for an authentic faith-understanding and a genuine action-response to the Gospel in our situation.

Introduction: The Dilemmas

What does the option for the poor mean today in the wider context of the Christian tradition? How must his option be exercised in the social situation in which we, and the local churches live? What sort of justice must this option promote? These are some of the questions we will try to deal with here. Too easily avoidance of such questions or superficial answers to them escape the real challenge they represent and negate the claims they make on us. Thus, we escape into contemplative inaction that preoccupies itself with utopian ideals without any engagement with the realities on the ground. Or we overextend ourselves with ad hoc practicalities which do not add up to an effective impact for lack of clarity and integration.

Our attempt here will not be to outline a balance between utopian ideals and practical constraints, nor to enumerate criteria for a discernment of ministries, much less to present guidelines for implementation or evaluation of our apostolates. Rather it will be to elaborate a framework for a Christian praxis of faith-action, i.e., for action-involvement and faith-reflection as an ongoing interactive process. What is attempted then is to initiate a search for an authentic faith-understanding and a genuine action-response to the Gospel in our situation.

We know that the final answers to our questions or the ultimate solution to our problems are always beyond the horizon of our capacity but never beyond the horizon of our hope. For, our complete enlightenment and fulfilment will come only with the resurrection, which is 'already now but not fully yet'. In view of this eschatological goal, what an authentic praxis does promise is an expansion of our horizons, even as we allow these to clash and fuse with other horizons of understanding and of involvement. For the way we conceptualise a situation, frames if it does not determine our response to it. Insightful understanding is necessary for relevant and effective involvement. And vice versa critical reflection and involvement is essential for deeper understanding and more insightful conceptual modals.

Christian Praxis

There are two poles of reference in Christian praxis, in which the understanding of our faith represents the reflection dimension, and our involvement in the world, the action one. The first derives from the experience of our tradition including scripture, second, from the experience of our situation, including a critical analysis of it. It is necessary to hold these two in dialectical relationship to interpret past tradition so that it speaks to the present, and to respond to the present situation so as to create the future.

Paulo Freire used the word praxis to indicate something beyond committed practice or involvement even if this were inspired by a consistent ideology. In the Freirean sense, praxis refers to an ongoing process of action-reflection-action: an action-involvement inspired by a first understanding is followed by a further reflection and a consequent deeper understanding, which in turn allows a more effective action-involvement. Thus both action and reflection refine and deepen each other in a kind of hermeneutic circle.

Hence praxis becomes a meaningful process both to expand our own horizons of action and reflection, and allow them to fuse with others in an ever more humanising ongoing process. For if indeed action and reflection are essential components of human life an integrated humanism must embrace both.

Thus in a Christian praxis of action-reflection, faith-understanding will represent the reflection dimension, and our involvement in our world, the action one. Faith-understanding must of course be premised on an experience of our tradition including scripture, just as action-involvement must be founded on an experience of our situation including a critical analysis of it. It is necessary then to hold these two, faith-understanding and action-involvement in a dialectical relationship; to interpret our past traditions so that it speaks to our present life situation, and respond to this present situation so as to reach out to an eschatological future.

Universal Openness and Preferential Options

The universality of the Gospel and its option for the poor present a different dilemma. On the one hand, the Gospel is good news to all; on the other, it is preferentially weighted to the lowliest. Can good news for the poor be good news for all? Isn't it really bad news for the

some? The Gospel is not against the rich, even when it denounces riches. It is not opposed to the powerful even when it critiques the use of power. But all too often it is precisely the rich and powerful who by their very riches and power, set themselves in opposition to the Good News as well. It is only when they realise their real 'poverty' and helplessness, their need for a 'physician', that they can hear the Good News addressed to them.

In attempting to resolve this dilemma we begin with the experience of our tradition. Here the Gospel is basic, and in the Gospel the ministry of Jesus is basic, and the basic thrust of this ministry is to the poor, the 'anawim'. The ministry of Jesus excludes no one, but the authenticating sign of this is that the Good News is preached to the poor. What authenticates Jesus as 'Good News' for the poor is the healing, the forgiveness, the wholeness, the justice this promotes for the lowliest, the widow, the orphan, the outcaste.

However, the universality of the Gospel is the necessary condition for a preferential option for the poor, which in turn is the authenticating sign of the good news for all. Hence the openness of any Gospel ministry is critiqued by reference to its relationship to the poor and a preferential option for the poor is no longer defined in negative terms as an opposition against the rich. However, in a complex situation, while it may not be possible for all to work directly for, or identify with the poor, it must be possible for everyone to work at least indirectly for, and in solidarity with them.

And yet however divided the rich and the poor may be, the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and the powerless, there is only one Gospel to be preached to all, only one kingdom to which all are invited. This only sharpens the dilemma of ministering the Gospel in two opposite directions. It is not unlike the tension of serving two irreconcilable masters. And all too often it is the more rich and powerful one who prevails. Too often universal openness leaves out the poor, not by choice but by default. The preferential option for the poor must never become an optional preference for the rich!

Moreover, once the meaning and practice of Good News is institutionalised in a 'church', authentic action-involvement becomes even more problematic. The Church like all religious institutions experiences this tension between institutional need and prophetic charism. To deny the first is to pretend the Church is not human and so leave the door open to the even more drastic error of imagining the Church is all divine! To deny the second is to betray the essential

religious meaning of the Gospel and to sacralise a given ecclesiastical order. Neither of these have been uncommon errors.

Liberation and Reconciliation

Moreover, even though working for the poor might necessarily involve taking sides in a conflict situation, which may not be open to an immediate reconciliation of those involved, until emotions subside and memories heal, we must never positively exclude this reconciliation, which is indeed integral to the Gospel. For an option for the poor cannot involve hating anyone else. It is sin we reject not the sinner. Rather we must reach out in fundamental openness to, and reconciliation with all. So in the ultimate analysis the option we make for the poor must always reach out to the kingdom and integrate its values into our strategies and struggles for liberation of the oppressed. For our vision of the kingdom ultimately cannot be one of conflict and coercion, it must one of harmony and freedom. Hence if we do start with conflict, we must ultimately end with reconciliation.

Without such reconciliation as Gandhi foresaw: ‘an eye for an eye would make the whole world blind’! Even for Marx, who is pre-eminently regarded as a conflict theorist, class struggle is ultimately for a classless society. So should it be with caste conscientisation; it must ultimately be for a casteless society, and gender contestation for gender equity. We give a voice to the voiceless so that all may be heard and no one is denied a hearing. Empowering the powerless is meant to make for an equitable distribution of power in our society. Integrating the marginalised is to give all a chance to participate and contribute to the common good.

Towards a Creative Tension

The dilemma between the institutional and prophetic in the Church is not solved by balancing the two so as to compromise one or the other or both, rather the two must be held together in a creative tension that puts one at the service of the other. The institution is to serve the prophetic element by facilitating its expression and preserving the critique it makes. The prophetic element is to serve the institution by continually reforming and reviewing it.

The option for the poor in the Church today must not lose its prophetic dynamism but it must also be institutionalised at various

levels in the Church. It is not therefore a matter for individual choice, but for group decision and community organisation as well. At all these levels concrete action-involvements must find both an institutional as well as a prophetic expression.

Institutionalisation then only further accentuates the dilemma between a universal mission and concrete options. Again the dilemma is not solved by a balanced compromise: making the Gospel available to all passively but ministering it to the preferentially chosen more actively. For when passive availability to one group is juxtaposed to active ministry to another, it readily amounts to an exclusion of the first. At least this is what has happened where the Church was merely made available to the poor but actively administered to the rich. How else were the working classes lost to the Church during the industrial revolution in Europe? And why are the struggling masses in the third world alienated from the institutional Church and the Gospel today? The temptation of being preferentially for the rich is surely greater than the one of being exclusively for the poor. But any exclusiveness negates the universality of the Gospels.

Now in a complex society with a highly specialized division of labour, the Gospel must be made present in a wide diversity of specialised areas if it is to make any claim to universality. However, the professionalisation of life that such specialisation brings, leaves the poor far behind if it does not shut them out. It is the powerful, not the poor that have specialised competence in today's society. Is the pursuit of professional excellence really to benefit the poor or does it promote a sectarian interest? How then is the Gospel message authenticated here, by reference to the poor? How can the Church be present here without betraying the 'anawim' and itself? Once again institutionalisation only makes the problem more acute. Is there a way out?

Achieving a Synthesis

The poles of this dilemma between a Gospel for all and a Gospel for the poor can be held together in a creative tension if the first is made the condition of the second, which must become the criterion of the first. Thus the universality of the Gospel is the necessary condition for a preferential option for the poor, which in turn is the authenticating sign of the Good News for all. Hence the openness of any Gospel ministry is critiqued by reference to its relationship to the poor, and

the preferential option for the poor is no longer defined in negative terms as an option against the rich.

In a complex social situation, while it may not be possible for all to work directly with the poor, it must be possible for everyone to work at least indirectly for them. Further, while any work directly with the poor may not be immediately open to a reconciliation for all, it must not ever exclude this.

Hence the option for the poor is exercised when the basic thrust of the apostolate is towards the poor and its fundamental openness reaches out in reconciliation to all. If it is not possible for a particular apostolate to do this, then it is justified by being integrated into a more comprehensive one that does. Thus all apostolates that are not directly for the poor are justified not so much by the value they may have in themselves but more by their integration into one which is directly for them, and this direct apostolate for the poor is in turn authenticated not merely by the justice it brings them but also by the reconciliation it eventually brings to all.

All this has implications for the institution at the three levels at which this option must be made. The basic thrust of an individual apostolate must be towards the poor. If not, it is validated only if it is integrated into a group apostolate that is so weighted. So, too, the basic thrust of a group apostolate must be towards the poor. If not, it is validated only by its insertion into the apostolate of the larger community, if this is so weighted. Thus it is only as an integrated part of a larger whole that such 'indirect' apostolates are justified. Correspondingly, if an apostolate precipitates confrontation and conflict it can only be justified as part of a larger effort that eventually is intended to bring reconciliation and peace. And here too we can distinguish various levels for integration as before.

Integration and Exclusiveness

Integration at higher levels is not possible if there is exclusiveness at lower ones. Thus if an individual apostolate is exclusively for the rich it has no basis for integration into a group working preferentially for the poor. At most it can be juxtaposed externally to, not integrated internally with the group's apostolate. So too at the higher levels of the group and the community: exclusiveness negates the very basis for integration in a larger enterprise.

As with the option for the poor so too with reconciliation for all: an apostolate not directly concerned with this reconciliation is authenticated with its integration into a larger group that does this at a higher level, the individual into the group, the group into the community. But again exclusiveness here defeats integration. An individual apostolate that positively excludes reconciliation has no possibility for integration into a group apostolate trying to bring such reconciliation about. The same would be true of group reconciliation into a community.

This integration at higher levels is possible only when there is an openness to this at lower ones; not an openness passively indicated in mere desire but actively expressed in one's life. Even where the main thrust of one's apostolate is not for the poor there must be some genuine expression of this option for them, not as a legitimising token but as an authenticating sign that signifies and effects, making possible an integration into a larger and more complete whole.

It is in this context that we can better understand St. Ignatius' insistence that his sons in high places always have some humble apostolate as well. Thus Lainez and Salmeron at Trent were told to serve the poor in the hospitals; so too the vow of the professed Jesuits to teach children. It is not only a matter of witness unto others but an efficacious sign for oneself of concern for the little ones of God's Kingdom.

Thus the Church as a whole can be open to all in a variety of ways and yet opt preferentially for the poor. But the burden of 'proof' is not on those who work directly with the poor, but on those who do not. It is for them to establish how effectively they promote real justice for the poor however indirectly. And the more 'indirect' their effect, the greater must be their concern as to how effective it really is. The question to ask is this: how does any ministry directly or indirectly bring justice to the lowliest, the widow, the orphan, the outcaste? In our context, our concern will find some authentic expression in our work, when it is genuinely for Gandhi's 'last Indian'; not merely as a symbolic token for him, but as a sacrament of encounter with him, that makes our ministry a true extension of Jesus' own and not an individualised or an institutionalised betrayal of it.

A Holistic Approach

Now a social order is not defined only in terms of the politico-economic dimension. The socio-cultural, including the religious, is just as integral to society. Hence we cannot restrict our understanding of the human to '*homo economicus*' or '*homo politicus*', and neglect the more inclusive '*homo socialis*', that includes the cultural and the religious as integral to a human society.

For our quest in life is not only for 'dignity', in terms of a quality of life; it is also a matter of identity, as a way of life. It should be apparent how closely related the realities of identity and dignity are, both at the individual and group level. The negation of one will inevitably mean the negation of the other, the affirmation of one demands the affirmation of the other. Dignity without identity is not feasible, identity without dignity is not acceptable. A positive identity is a necessary constituent of one's dignity, a sense of one's self-worth and self-respect. The recognition of one's dignity by others is a necessary condition of a positive identity, since this is socially derived. And the same can be said of a social group's sense of collective dignity and identity as well.

Hence our interventions for change towards a more just and human society must embrace both these dimensions: political and economic empowerment, and cultural and religious liberation. Moreover, in keeping with a more holistic approach, our intervention in one dimension must not negate but rather complement interventions in the others. Thus economic-political action must be religio-culturally sensitive or they can precipitate a backlash; and cultural or religious interventions must not undermine or betray the real economic interests or the political empowerment of struggling peoples if they are to be liberating.

Moreover, in our globalising world, that homogenises people into a consuming mass, cultural identities become viable and effective ways of mobilising ethnic groups against both economic oppression and cultural alienation. The concrete context will have to be discerned to decide which of these dimensions offers us the most feasible point of entry and/or the optimum possibilities for our intervention. But for this an integrated and comprehensive socio-cultural analysis is necessary.

The socio-cultural aspects of oppression are particularly relevant in South Asia. This is not in anyway to underemphasise the brutal

reality of the economic and political exploitation of our peoples, but rather to situate this in the context of the inhuman cultural and religious oppression they are still subjected to from one generation to the next. Thus caste discrimination and ‘untouchability’, communal violence and religious fundamentalism are cynically used to perpetuate structural injustice and protect privilege. The history and continuing oppression of Dalits and tribals, minorities and women in our land is stark and gruesome testimony to this. In such a situation, intercultural and inter-religious interventions for ethnic reconciliation and communal harmony become a necessary dimension of structural change for a better world.

And so while justice, in its rich biblical meaning, is the primary referent for this option for the poor in the political-economic dimension of society, it must also include faith, if it is to be Christian. Hence we must not ignore or negate inter-religious dialogue and inculturation in the socio-cultural dimension of our social life, if indeed it is to be relevant, especially among diverse peoples in a globalising world. In the context of South Asia, this must also include inter-ethnic and intercultural harmony and peace.

Levels of Understanding and Action

Jesus is good news for the poor because he brings them ‘justice’ in its most comprehensive meaning: healing, forgiveness, and wholeness. The option for the poor is precisely to promote this justice for them. Here we will consider social justice and the progressive development in the Church’s understanding of it.

The earliest understanding was service and charity for the have-nots, i.e., relief work, usually almsgiving to relieve the harsh lot of the poor. A later understanding was development and progress for the backward, i.e., increasing the productivity of a society so as to improve the standard of living and later this included their quality of life as well. The present understanding of social action is the empowerment and liberation of the oppressed, i.e., the promotion of human rights in its broadest sense.

There is a genuine development of doctrine here, a deepening of our understanding in the light of the experience of the people of God. Corresponding to these various levels of understandings are different levels of action in the quest for justice. And just as later understandings can be seen not to negate but complete earlier ones,

so too different levels of action must be made to complement not neutralise each other.

Thus action at one level must be open and not exclude or hinder action at another, or the justice it promotes will be truncated. Charity for the have-nots is acceptable only when it does not hinder progress for the underdeveloped or obstruct liberation for the oppressed, just as development must not exclude charitable service or liberating justice, nor justice for the oppressed deny charity or negate development. Emphatically then justice is primary and must be foundational for any social intervention. Charity cannot be a substitute for it, nor development a displacement of it. Rather it is justice that must make love effective and development equitable. Again justice must be complemented by a development, which lifts up all, sarvodaya, and not level everyone down. And finally justice must be perfected by charity, going the extra mile, giving away the second coat.

Now in a complex society, the problem of injustice is a multidimensional one, and the promotion of justice cannot in principle be reduced to a unidimensional response. However, the basic thrust of any multifaceted response must be with the most complete understanding of justice and the action it calls for open to all levels of involvement. Once again, in a highly specialised society it may not be possible for everyone to work directly for the oppressed, but all our work for justice is validated by the contribution it makes, albeit indirectly, in this direction. And the more indirect its contribution the more carefully must it be examined.

In an institutionalised context this means that if the basic thrust of the promotion of justice at one level is not to bring liberation to the oppressed, then it is validated by its integration into a more comprehensive one that does: the individual into the group, the group into the community. Here too the burden of proof is on those not working directly to bring justice to the oppressed. It is for them to establish how their work is integrated into a larger effort that does.

Moreover, a critical analysis of the institution in its social context is necessary in order to match limited resources to real needs and strategies of action to available opportunities. At times resources and opportunities are not just found; they can be created. And yet it may be necessary at times for practical reasons to focus the more immediate quest for justice on a partial aspect of the larger problem of injustice. What validates such a partial response is its openness to a more complete one, resources and opportunities permitting. But the

more partial such a response the more its openness must be critically analysed.

Hence our promotion of justice must at once be multifaceted and yet basically oriented to liberate the oppressed. It may of necessity be limited in its present response but it must be in principle open to a more complete future one. What authenticates our promotion of justice is not simply the charity that activates it, but the degree to which our action for justice at one level facilitates its fulfilment at a deeper more comprehensive one. Thus at whatever level our interventions in society be, in a situation of structural injustice, they must facilitate and promote structural change for justice, in the rich biblical meaning of such justice, i.e., the total integral liberation of human beings. Otherwise, these may well be corporal or spiritual acts of mercy, which are laudable expressions of Christian charity but are not the kind of social involvement that leads to structural change and social justice, such as the option for the poor must be concerned with, if it is indeed to be the option that the Gospel call us to make.

The experience of our tradition then, gives us a vision of a just society that is the inspiration of our struggle for justice. A society that will affirm human values: human dignity, personal freedom, social equality. A society that will humanise the means to attain these values as well: cultural identity, decentralised subsidiarity, peoples' participation. A social order in which all persons are fulfilled and not just some, where no person is unfairly sacrificed for the group; where as many as possible actively participate and not merely as few as are necessary.

Critiquing the Present

The second pole of reference in a Christian praxis is the experience of our present situation including a critical analysis of it. Here we are not suggesting any particular model of analysis a priori nor are we attempting to critique the various ones available. What we are insisting on is the need for such an analysis as part of any sustained quest for the kingdom. This is indeed a difficult task but we betray our ministry if we leave it undone. For it is essential to have a critical understanding of our life situation in order to address it constructively or even cope with it. This is all the more urgent when the situation itself is as uncertain and unstable as ours.

This analysis must be made in the concrete context of the situation by those existentially involved in it. Accepting borrowed models

somewhat uncritically, or rejecting alien ones however validly, is a poor substitute for the basic task of making the analysis ourselves. To do otherwise makes little contribution to an ongoing praxis of action-reflection. In an institutionalised setting this process is all the more complex, for it is no longer just a personal task to be done in isolation, but a collective responsibility to be pursued through shared experiences and group reflection. Here we will not elaborate a methodology for building an analytical model, but we do want to underline the minimum that any critical analysis must do, if it is to carry forward an ongoing praxis.

We all bring to our critical reflection an ‘unconscious ideology’, call it ‘stock knowledge’ or ‘domain assumptions’. This whole set of unconscious assumptions, values, norms, attitudes, etc. makes up an implied though inarticulate understanding of our social situation. Unless these are made explicit, they cannot be critiqued, and so they influence us in unacknowledged ways. At the more conscious level, every model of analysis has its own ideological basis, which is built on some assumptions. These too must be spelt out and critically evaluated, or they will prejudice any interpretation even before it begins. We cannot avoid making assumptions, but only when they are explicitly acknowledged can they become working hypotheses to be tested and modified by our experience, or else they easily become self-fulfilling prophecies that truncate it.

Thus, do we privilege consensus or coercion as the integrating principle of society? In actual fact, no society will be organised on one or the other of these principles exclusively. But in any given social situation consensus or coercion may be the more operative. This must be ascertained *a posteriori*, not assumed *a priori*. Similarly with regard to cooperation and competition as universal social process, we must be aware of the direction in which our inclinations lie and then ascertain how these are operative, and the mix we may expect. And there other such ‘pre-judgments’ in our ‘unconscious ideology’ that we need to confront with a hermeneutic sensitivity, whether these come from personal trauma or collective memories, from cultural jingoism or religious dogmatism, from political chauvinism or economic hegemony.

Critiquing our assumptions is a reflective effort. We must move to action if we are to initiate any kind of praxis. Hence we need to clarify our objectives and the strategies to obtain them. But if such action is to lead back to reflection we must be able to critically evaluate it; hence the need of specific criteria for this. Hopefully, this evaluation

will critique our assumptions and refine our analysis and so constitute a true praxis.

Hence in our view any model of analysis or critique must as a minimum first articulate its underlying assumptions, its objectives and strategies, its criteria for evaluation, and then critique them against our experience of the present situation, as well as the experience of our past traditions.

This need for a critical understanding of our life situation and the analysis it requires is indeed difficult and demanding. Unfortunately is too often dismissed as an irrelevant fad of the social sciences, especially sociology. It is argued: 'doing good cannot be that complicated'. This is dangerously disingenuous.

Perhaps an analogy to the behavioural sciences, especially psychology, would illustrate this issue. No one today would engage in counselling or directing persons without some sound psychological background. One may not accept a particular kind of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy, but to engage in such a ministry today without some critical understanding of psychology might well do more harm than good. For to neglect the resources provided by the behavioural sciences even in such a spiritual ministry would be an inexcusable and irresponsible omission to say the least.

So too with any social action; good intentions and goodwill alone are obviously inadequate for the complexities of our situation. A critical understanding is a serious responsibility if we are to serve and not betray our cause. To neglect this responsibility then is to opt out of the struggle.

Earlier, we have tried to show how the experience of our tradition is authenticated. It is this experience of the past that must come alive in our present action and reflection. Our involvement in the struggle for authentic involvement must become an extension of Jesus' own ministry, our vision of the kingdom a reflection of his own. In deepening our involvement, the Good News of Jesus does not supply ready-made answers, but it does raise more incisive questions. In inspiring us with a vision of the kingdom he preached, Jesus provides no full-blown model but he does provide an incisive critique for the assumptions underlying our own. This opens us to a more authentic experience of the present situation, which in turn will deepen and clarify our understanding of the past, and inspire us to hope for the future.

Implicating the Local Church

What does all this imply for the local church? First the need of a concrete socio-cultural analysis cannot be gainsaid any longer. Professional help can be sought for this but there are many models of such analysis developed that can be used in an ongoing process even by non-professionals. There is of course no one model that is completely adequate for a given situation. Social science has not yet reached that level of certainty and predictability. But meaningful interpretative procedures and methods are available and can be useful and relevant to local situations.

Rapid Rural assessment (RRA) that is now extended to urban contexts as well has proven helpful to many in the voluntary sector and could serve for the local parish team as well. 'Mapping' a parish in terms of the spatial distribution of the various aspects of the local community, i.e., resources and services, ethnic groups and class strata, political boundaries and religious barriers, etc., can provide new insight and motivation for social intervention.

Following such a sociocultural analysis a faith-reflection and community discernment must be made. For though there are multiple ways of impacting underlying patterns of social interactions and structures, our faith-vision will impel us to some even as it will distance us from others. And once an action response is made a further faith-reflection must follow in an ongoing process.

The practical implication from such a pastoral praxis will help review and reorient our social involvement. How should the parish position itself with regard to the different levels of involvement: charity-relief, development-growth, empowerment-justice? How should the limited resources of the parish team be allocated? Answers to such questions must add up to a coordinated response on which there must be a further integrated reflection. Here some tentative suggestions are mooted.

Building community in the local church must clearly be its first priority. We have idealised models of community in the Acts of the Apostles. How can these ideals be realised today in a globalising world? We have to animate a bottom-up grassroots process and at the same time facilitated it with a top-down complement.

Reaching out to the 'anawim', the widow, the orphan, the stranger, must be an expression of our option for the poor. Today this would mean addressing issues of gender justice and domestic violence,

youth alienation and crime, the needs of internal migrants from within the community and external immigrants from without. Community centres in parishes can be powerful agents of for such constructive social intervention. But to be effective these must be participative and democratic, or they will inevitably reflect the authoritarian hierarchy of the pre-Vatican II church!

Inter-religious dialogue and communal harmony may not seem at first to be issues directly concerned with the poor, and yet when religious and ethnic tensions spill over into communal and political violence, it is the most vulnerable, the poor, women and children, that are the most adversely affected. So too with environmental degradation. It is the poor who suffer most when the commons are degraded, just as creating an ecological sensitivity among the environmental polluters befits all, but especially those most vulnerable, the old, the sick, the indigent.

These are but a few indications of possible options for the poor that can be localised in a parish. There is surely no dearth of such possibilities for ready, willing and able people. However, what seems important, as we are urging here, is a fidelity to our faith-experience both to motivate and sensitise us in our understanding and response to particular situations and local needs; and vice-versa an in-depth and insightful grasp of our concrete circumstances to add new meaning and relevance to our faith-experience. Only when both these processes come together will a genuine praxis be possible, otherwise there is always the danger of falling into a 'spiritualised faith' that does not address the realities on the ground, or into human 'hybris' that pretends to be adequate to these realities.

Hearers and Doers

Thus we come back to the two poles of reference for a Christian praxis: the understanding of our past traditions and our experience of the present situation. Both past and present must be held together in dialectical tension if a new future is to be created. So too with the dilemmas we face in our lives. It is not by elimination or compromise that the tension in the dilemmas are resolved, but by a creative synthesis, of the contraries involved. Confronted with the terrible reality of poverty and conflict in our society there can be no more authentic starting point for a Christian praxis today than this preferential option for the poor. Faced with the shearing divisions among our people of caste and class, of religion and community, of

language and ethos, of parties and factions ... there can be no more urgent requirements for this praxis than a universal openness that excludes none and an integrating reconciliation that includes all.

In elaborating a framework for a Christian praxis of faith-action we have attempted to show how such syntheses can be operationalised in an institutional context. This is not a one-time task, but a continuing process. There has been much-confused thinking and hesitant action in this matter of an authentic Christian praxis. Hopefully, our contribution here will be to animate our action-involvement and enlighten our faith-reflection, and so carry our Christian praxis a step forward.

In making adults literate, Freire insists that we must read the word in order to read the world, and vice versa, to read the world in order to read the word. In both cases, reading implies a critical perception so that our understanding of the word will interpret our world, just as our interpretation of the world will rewrite the word. We have here a praxis for an authentic humanism.

A Christian is a hearer of the Word as expressed both in tradition and scripture, who must then 'enflesh', incarnate, this in experience in the world. Hence as hearers of this Word we understand our world and are called to respond in it. Then again as doers in the world, we are once again challenged to reinterpret the Word and become the more obedient hearers and more faithful doers as well.

Conclusion

In the ultimate analysis, our option for the poor must be founded on the Gospel faith wherein the poor are not just the best receivers of the good news, they are also givers as well, witnesses and carriers of this good news to others. Good news of the kingdom begins with them but it does not and cannot end there. For the power of the gospel is the good news of God's reign that will eventually be as pervasive as the presence and power of God himself.

In this subcontinent with its pervasive religiosity, an option for the poor must be expressed in a praxis that will do for this popular religiosity what the praxis inspired by liberation theology did for in Latin America. And there is a great reservoir of genuine faith in popular expressions of religion, but these are rarely unambiguous and often are quite anomalous as well. Thus they can easily be misled into revivalism, or run aground in fundamentalism. In the ultimate

analysis, it is only an option for the poor, which is itself inspired by the mystery of Jesus that can bring the freedom and liberation of the kingdom that he promised.

In conclusion, then, while it is our option for the poor that is the inspiration and motivation for our social commitment and struggle against injustice, it is a justice of the kingdom that includes reconciliation and forgiveness, a faith that reaches out to other faiths in inter-religious dialogue, a mission that expresses itself in solidarity with the cultures of the people it serves. For ultimately it is the kingdom of God that we work for: a kingdom of faith and justice, freedom and harmony, of peace and joy, with all men and women of goodwill.

9.

COLONIALISM TO GLOBALISATION: REFOUNDING THE CHURCH OF THE INDIES

Jesuits in India: Visions and Challenges, ed. Delio de Mendonca, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, 2003, also in *Jesuits* 2006.,

A DISCONCERTING SAINT

HAGIOGRAPHIES AND LEGENDS

CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

REFOUNDING AND RESTORATION

VATICAN II AS A REFOUNDING PARADIGM

REFOUNDING THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

THE FINAL PARADOX

REFERENCES

Abstract

We interrogate the legacy of St Francis Xavier. The challenge is to refound the churches in the post-colonial age, to inculturate, or rather incarnate the Good News in a globalising world.

Celebrating the 450th anniversary of St. Francis Xavier's arrival in India, presents us with a perplexing paradox. On the one hand, his worldview, both religious and secular, is very different from ours. And yet Francis is still a subject of a popular devotion that has enthused and inspired countless Christians in this country, in the Indies and indeed throughout the world. Thus, as we interrogate the legacy of St. Francis Xavier, this in turn interrogates us and invites us to openness to dialogue with his times so different and distant from ours.

But there are definite continuities and similarities as well. Francis was the founder of the colonial churches in the Indies. He planted or

rather transplanted the Roman church of his times in the missions he founded. Our challenge today to ‘refound’ the churches in the post-colonial age, to inculturate, or rather incarnate the Good News in a globalising world. In other words, we must not just recall and do today what the founder did then and there at that time and place, but rather ‘intuit’ and do what these founders would do here and now in this time and space.

And yet there is now a certain ‘restorationism’ already at work. This is a defensive reaction that often expresses itself in religious fundamentalism and revivalism that is all too often both obscurantist and regressive, the more so in a globalising world. And so, the specific challenge of the Church today is whether Vatican I must be interpreted in the light of Vatican II or vice versa.

Today we can as well speak of a refounding of the Society under the inspiration of Fr. General Pedro Arrupe. In Asia, this calls for ‘Asian Jesuits’, not just Jesuits in Asia.

This then is the final paradox of St. Francis, a saint from a very different time that can still be a saint for our time. This saying of Jesus so challenged and haunted Francis, that it drove him to the ends of his world: ‘What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his life.’ This can now be reversed for us today: What would it profit us if we saved our lives and lost the whole of our world for our God?

A Disconcerting Saint

Celebrating the 450th death anniversary of St. Francis Xavier presents us with a difficult paradox. Indeed, Francis Xavier is a disconcerting saint for our times. On the one hand, his worldview, both religious and secular, is very different from ours. We would certainly claim to have outgrown his theological vision, and distance ourselves from some of its negative expressions with regard to both believers (in the Inquisition he approved) and non-believers (in the destruction of their places of worship he encouraged). His relationship with the colonial powers even when this was a critical one, is not something we would be comfortable with today. There is thus a separation and a discontinuity between the way Francis Xavier understood and lived his mission, and the way we would ours.

And yet Francis is still a subject of popular devotion, that has enthused and inspired countless Christians in this country in the Indies and indeed throughout the world. His sense of compelling urgency and complete commitment to his mission is something that

we can all identify with even today. His total dedication and sensitive devotion to the people he laboured for and with, his unrelenting perseverance in their service to the very end is still an example and challenge for us. And so even when we part company with him, we cannot but help feel a sense of gratitude for the heritage that he left us even though this is a problematic one. Thus as we interrogate the legacy of St. Francis Xavier, this in turn interrogates us, if only we will let it do so in openness to, and in dialogue with his times.

Hagiographies and Legends

Here we will not undertake the task of trying to distinguish the man from the myth, since this has been attempted before with uneven success. Earlier hagiographies of the saint are so overlaid with legendary and miraculous stories, that they strain our credibility today. Unfortunately for us, these lose the real large-as-life hero in the mirage of the plastic saint. Others have tried to separate the wheat from the chaff, but then some like Georg Schurhammer's epic research to uncover the truth, in all its factual detail, leave the saint buried in four tomes, more daunting to the layperson than any tomb! So that Broderick rightly and wryly observes:

'Poor St. Francis tends to be drowned in a deluge of facts, valuable in themselves, but not really relevant to his heroic study. No saint, no man however great, and Francis was very great, could stand up to such an overwhelming cloudburst of facts and footnotes as we are given here ...'¹

This is corroborated by another Jesuit historian, R. Villoslada:

'This admirable biographer (Schurhammer) of the saint from Navarre knows everything, absolutely everything that refers to the environment in which Xavier lived ... but in this immense sea of data and information, the central figure suffers shipwreck, as it were, and disappears.'²

Broderick's own biography is readable and empathetic. (Broderick 1952) He is quite aware of the historical limitation of the saint but does not engage the issues that would concern us today:

¹ Cited by M. Joseph Costelloe, 1973, "In Memoriam: Georg Schurhammer, S.J., 1882-1971", in Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life and Times*, Vol. I. *Europe 1540-1541*, Trans. M Joseph Costelloe, Jesuit Historical Institute, Rome, p. xxvii.

² cited by Costelloe, *ibid*.

‘Papist and Jesuit of the old Spanish vintage, Francis Xavier might not, at first sight, seem a promising subject for modern consideration. Though his dates are Renaissance he was mediaeval to the core, and confident of his world in a way difficult for us, heirs of uncertainty, even to understand. An effort is made in this book to picture him with all his limitations – which he so magically transcends.’³

A more contemporary attempt is made by Louis Bermejo, which is persuasive and critical. Bermejo does point out the shadows in Francis’s otherwise brilliant carrier,’ (Bermejo 2000: xii) but does not stop there, and his genuine admiration comes through the critique.

Continuities and Discontinuities

Here we will not engage the biographical details but rather attempt to locate Xavier broadly in his times and sketch the parallel with ours. Hopefully, this will help us to interrogate Xavier, and in turn allow him to interrogate us, both of which make him a rather disconcerting saint, but one relevant still to our times.

For if we interrogate the legacy of St. Francis to discern what is acceptable, and fine-tune the inspiration that we can derive from his life and mission, we must at the same time allow the text of his life to speak to us, and the genius of his spirit to inspire us. We can do this only by contextualising this inspiration and interpreting it for our times.

For the world of St. Francis Xavier was very different from ours. The Reformation was gathering momentum in Europe, and a Counter-reformation was already in place in the Catholic Church. The Council of Trent had begun, and it became a paradigm of a defensive reaction to the Protestants with whom the Church was engaged in deadly mortal combat. Eventually, it crystallised into the fortress Catholicism that prevailed right up to Vatican II. The Roman Church distanced itself from the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment it brought about. Eventually, the Church alienated itself from the modern world by condemning many of the most cherished values of the age. It was a fortress in isolation, and not always splendid!

But there are definite continuities and similarities too between those times and ours, which we would do well to recall. Francis lived at the beginning of a new age when the colonial world had begun its

³ Brodrick, James, 1952, *Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552)*, Burns Oates, London, p.vii.

expansion beyond the boundaries of Europe. Many would regard this as an early stage in the inexorable march of globalisation, that has overtaken our post-colonial world today.

The geographic expansion at the dawn of the colonial period brought an encounter with the very different cultural and religious traditions of the colonised peoples. This in turn led to a new awareness among the colonisers themselves. At times this was expressed in a very negative reaction such as racism, and at others in a more positive response such as pluralism.

Our world today is also pressing against new frontiers, and though these are not geographic ones, they are bringing changes even more radical than the ones that the discovery of Columbus and Vasco da Gama brought to the age of St. Francis Xavier. Genetic engineering is redesigning our biology, and virtual reality is creating new worlds in our very own private space. And there are negative consequences too: we are ever more divided between the haves and have-nots, and as yet the only final arbitrator we know is violence, for ours is still a mad world of mutually assured mass destruction. Yet there is a new sensitivity to human rights and a greater awareness of our interdependencies brought on by ecological and other crises.

Different then though our worlds are, the sense of urgency that the saint brought to his mission can certainly be ours. Francis was the founder of the colonial churches in the Indies. He planted or rather transplanted the Roman church of his times in the missions he founded. He lived by his lights, which are not ours, but his dedication and commitment were total. Francis could of course have reacted negatively to the challenges of his age. He could have stayed behind with a comfortable academic or clerical career in Europe. But he seized the day and made a difference.

Refounding and Restoration

Fidelity to the legacy he left us cannot demand that we do again today what he did then. That would be naiveté at best and atavism at worst. Our context and circumstances are different. There have been three ecumenical councils, many revolutions and even more wars that separate our times from his. Rather our challenge is to refound the churches in the post-colonial age, to inculturate, or rather incarnate the Good News in a globalising world.

‘Refounding’, as we understand the term, implies not that we go back to the origins to recreate the same mission again as though we have strayed from the path, but rather that even as we find our way in new situations, we do not go backwards in history but forwards with time. For refounding requires that we allow the original inspiration, the founding charism to speak to our present, to situate the original ‘text’ in a new ‘context’. This requires not that we read the text of Good News in its old context, but rather that we read this text into our present context, that we reinterpret it again to find new meaning and relevant motivation for our contemporary world.

In other words, we must not do today what the founders did then and there, at that time and place, but rather ‘intuit’ and do what these founders would do here and now, in this time and space. Refounding then is something beyond reform and renewal. It is a new beginning or a radical reorientation that expresses both continuity and discontinuity with our past. This demands that we read the signs of the times and discern continuities and discontinuities with the past honestly and critically to be able to cope more constructively and creatively with the challenges and opportunities of the present, and so to grasp the promise and hope of the future the more faithfully.

Vatican II as a Refounding Paradigm

The Second Vatican Council is surely the paradigm for such a refounding of the Church. For as Karl Rahner insightfully observed it is the greatest council of the church since the very first one in Jerusalem! For as that first council in Jerusalem opened the Church to the Greco-Roman world, it is only now, with Vatican II, that the Church is opening itself to the modern world. The ecumenical councils in between were mostly directed to the internal problems, schisms and heresies within the Church. This council attempted to speak *ad extra* to our contemporary world. (Wilkins 2002)

And yet there is now a certain ‘restorationism’ already at work. This is a defensive reaction that often expresses itself in religious fundamentalism and revivalism that is all too often both obscurantist and regressive. (Wilkins 2002a) And so the specific challenge of the Church is well expressed thus: whether Vatican II must be interpreted in the light of Vatican I, or Vatican I in the light of Vatican II, even as we reach out to Vatican III. And as we were surprised by joy in the Spirit with Vatican II, with the optimism of a Xavier, we can dare hope

to be even more joyfully surprised, when this Spirit of God renews the face of the earth and makes all things new once again!

This ambiguity between refounding and restoration, between a Church looking back to Vatican I and one looking forward from Vatican II, is perhaps best illustrated by the present Pope. On the one hand, you have John Paul II, a parish priest to the world, whose enthusiasm and flair have endeared him so much to both the young and old. And on the other hand, you have the Pope of dicasteries, so pre-occupied with protecting the deposit of faith and enforcing institutional discipline. And so on the one hand, there is the enthusiasm and inspiration of the *Tertio Millennio Euntes*, The Coming of the Third Millennium, and on the other, *Dominus Jesus*, both under the same signature!

The commitment of John Paul II to ecumenism and dialogue, cannot be doubted. He has even confessed that his office is the biggest obstacle to such unity and has asked his brother bishops to suggest ways to overcome this. And yet this is the same person who has allowed the Vatican Curia to be filled with conservatives who carry forward their unreformed agenda in the name of the Pope, still resisting any *aggiornamento*. However, we are now certainly at the end of one papacy and at the beginning of a new one, which may belie both the pessimists and the optimists and surprise both conservatives and progressives!

Refounding the Society of Jesus

Society of Jesus in its mission cannot escape the trials and tribulations, the challenges and opportunities of the times. St. Francis was among the first and the closest companions of Ignatius of Loyola, who with them founded the Jesuits in 1540, as a response to the turbulent times they lived in then. Today so much has changed in the Society Francis knew, especially with and after Vatican II and the 32nd and the 34th General Congregations thereafter, that we can really speak of a refounding of the Society under the inspiration of Fr. General, Pedro Arrupe.

The Society of Jesus was at the beginning of an age, and it blazed a trail and broke new ground wherever it went and took root. The Jesuits were at the cutting edge, on the new frontiers of the then-known world, in all kinds of capacities in very different fora. Nothing human was alien to their mission! They were pioneers and precursors

in the new worlds being opened: whether in the Americas or Asia, in the north or the south, among enemies or friends. Francis was among of the first Jesuit companions so inspired by this Ignatian charism.

Later perhaps the Jesuits had overreached themselves. They seemed to have become too successful for their own good. Eventually they could not be saved from the opposition generated even within the Church they served so generously. The suppression of the Society in 1773 was certainly a trauma and tragedy for the Society, which was difficult to come to terms with. Certainly, with its restoration in 1814, there was much greater caution and a determination to found of the Society once again just as it was before. Continuity with the old Society was the main preoccupation, and so the overriding concern of the Society was restoration, not refounding, as we have defined it.

And yet the basic inspiration and charism of the Society as expressed in the *Spiritual Exercise* of St. Ignatius was irrepressible. Once again Jesuits began to reach out to new frontiers and new worlds. But there was not the same explosion of energy as experienced in the early years of its founding when Jesuits like Xavier epitomised its charism. Perhaps like every founding moment, that was a privilege one hard to recreate once again.

But with Vatican II when religious orders were once again asked to revitalise their original charism, under the leadership of Fr. Peter Arrupe, Jesuits took this with characteristics seriousness and commitment, inspired by the Ignatian '*magis*', the restlessness to do ever more for the kingdom. The 32nd General Congregation in 1974-75, gave the Society a new articulation of its mission in terms of 'the service of the faith and the promotion of justice'. This marked a turning point in contemporary Society and can easily be considered as the beginning of a refoundation. But once again there were difficulties and opposition for disturbing the status quo, and Jesuits were accused of being overly secular and worldly.

By 1981, the Society of Jesus once again found itself under grave suspicion and the Pope imposed on it his own delegate to bring it back to the straight and narrow. But with the election of Fr. Kolvenbach in 1983, and the 34th General Congregation in 1995, which expanded the articulation of the Society's mission from 'faith and justice' to include inculturation and dialogue as well, the charism of Ignatius was revitalised and the legacy of Pedro Arrupe was reconfirmed. His cause for canonisation has now been introduced. So we are at a turning point, and the present Fr. General already spokes of the 'refounding' of the Society to the Congregations of Procurators in 1999.

The Final Paradox

This is precisely where the courage and energy, the enthusiasm and optimism of Xavier can be an inspiration to us. The spirit of Xavier lives, even though perhaps his theology and his ideology has been laid to rest. And this is precisely the legacy of Xavier that we must cherish and that must inspire us. However, in the final analysis there is no blueprint that spells out the details of where this refounding may take us, whether in the Church or the Society. We have only general guidelines for the Church from Vatican II, and for the Society of Jesus from its recent General Congregations. But we do have the optimism of the Spirit, who more than restores, renews, and more than renews, refounds the kingdom of God among us with each new generation.

Certainly, our challenges now are not any the less than the ones that confronted Francis Xavier in his time, and this is precisely where he can enthuse and inspire us once again. He too was tempted with pessimism and despair as we may well be in our situation at times so desperate and depressing. But Francis was always a saint in a hurry at the very edge of the then-known world, and as such he urges us to explore the new frontiers and new worlds opening up in our times, with a courage and faith, with a hope and trust that was his in such large measure.

This then is the final paradox of St. Francis, a disconcerting saint from a very different time, he can still be, *mutatis mutandis*, an inspiring saint for our times. For to recognize human limitations is not to be less, but rather to be more human. And we need hardly be surprised that even saints are subject to them. To point out Xavier's limitations, then, is not to diminish his stature; rather our quest must be to transcend them and further to anticipate any escape from the challenge that his undeniable heroism poses to our lives. The beginning of Xavier's conversion is marked by the haunting words of his master: what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? (Mt.16:26). The end of his life is marked by the even more urgent obverse of that: what does it profit a man to save his life and lose the whole world – not for pelf and power, but for the kingdom of God and his justice? That in the final analysis is the question Xavier's life addresses to us as he lies dying on a little island off the coast of China, still hoping to extend yet another frontier for this kingdom.

Today so many of us live in small individualized, isolated and hostile worlds that have no new frontiers because our horizons are so narrow. Perhaps the image of Xavier continually pushing his mission East, on the very edge of the world he knew, perhaps Xavier whose letters stirred the imagination of the students of Europe in his day and moved them to follow in the trails he had blazed, perhaps this same Xavier can challenge our lives to a sense of purpose and direction, with the call of destiny – even though we may ‘march to the beat of a different drummer’, his dedication, commitment and sense of urgency can still inspire us today, as he did others in his times.

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10.

DISCERNING TOGETHER: SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT

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Abstract

This article attempts to operationalise discernment into practical methodologies which were explored at a workshop at Santa Severa, Italy, in 2005.

For any Ignatian discernment detached indifference is a *sine qua non*. The whole process is premised on this, or it could well be misleading and obfuscating. This of course must be an ongoing effort/endeavour leading to deeper and deeper Ignatian indifference. It must be renewed although the process of discernment lest we lose the plot along the way. However, discernment as a group or community process can be elaborated so that it can be a properly shared and fruitful process. Three kinds of methodologies are involved at three different levels of engagement.

The first level is *discussion* to clarify ideas. The method followed is that of an intellectual exchange/ interaction, with inputs that could be in terms focused presentations or position papers or academic

studies or scholarly opinions. Here the purpose is primarily an intellectual quest to clarify ideas and broaden perspectives. To be meaningfully participative it must be a dialectic process, that involves reading one's position – a thesis – against the other's – the anti-thesis – so that a new synthesis emerges.

This requires doing a reciprocity of perspectives, that is, seeing the other's point of view from within the other's perspective and not from one's own on the outside, and then interpreting it from within the other's frame of reference and not one's own. In other words, to understand the other as the other means to be understood, not reading/ listening to the other from one's own pre-judgments, i.e. prejudices, whether positive or negative. For this, we must be willing to get out of our own mind-set and not allow ourselves to be dogmatically trapped in it. It is a quest for understanding points of view and conclusions even when one disagrees with them. Without such openness to the other, the discussion can only end in a fruitless debate. Only then can our understanding be truly real and not just notional.

The second level would be one of *dialogue* to understand the 'other'. Here the method is open communication between the participants in a conversation to understand each other and ourselves at a more comprehensive and inclusive level, a more human and personal one, and not just intellectually as in a discussion. Differences here may well persist and need not always be simply bracketed away but rather sifted to find common ground from which the conversation can move on to higher ground.

Thus, differences come not just to be accepted and respected but become even enriching and as such can be celebrated together as well. For in dialogue, we come to understand not just the other but ourselves as well, not just our 'self' in the other but the 'other' in our 'self' too/ also. When such a dialogue is open and equal, trustful and trustworthy it opens us to our inner voice, and becomes it becomes the necessary foundation for an Ignatian discernment.

The third level now is that of *discernment* to follow the inner voice of the Spirit. Here the method is of listening together to this inner voice in our conscience, this Antaryamin who enlightens our minds and touches our hearts. Listening requires us to be silent in order to hear that 'Other' voice, to focus our distracted minds to understand, to calm our disturbed hearts to ready to follow the light.

This Antaryamin can be best heard in the silence of our hearts, and his presence most felt in the 'gentleness of the breeze' that blows

where it wills, and we often know not where it comes from nor where it goes. Such listening is a spiritual experience and may well be counter-intuitive as when it leads to a prophetic call to witness where our experience urges caution.

The first level of discussion is well suited to clarifying issues and concepts and so deepening insight and sharpening ideas. It is all too often more ideologically than intellectually driven, especially when sensitive and divisive political and social concerns are involved. As a result the clarity and incisiveness it effects may well bring difference and division into the open without necessarily reconciling or integrating them. As such, it may be a useful but still a first step in a constructive group encounter. But discussion can get so polarized as to be unable to proceed any further.

The second level of dialogue must then follow on first, not anticipate it. Defensiveness and distrust do not make for open communication, rather it stymies it. We all have our baggage of suspicions and apprehension and so a measure of self-awareness and introspection is a necessary condition for any real open communication. Hence, a fruitful dialogue demands a careful preparation. However, open communication without some clarity and comprehension of the issues we are dialoguing about can only lead to a sharing of ignorance, not to a real understanding or worse to misunderstandings. Obviously, dialogue is a delicate matter and is best seen as an on-going learning process inviting us into ever-deeper sharing. It is not just a one-off event. The mutual understanding and self-discovery that such a dialogue results in becomes the basis on which contentious issues can be resolved and acted upon.

At the third level of discernment, there are issues which are complex and complicated beyond any clear certainties, yet demanding a response. Confronted with such human ambiguities and uncertainties, when we have reached the limits of our own abilities, we must seek the guidance of the inner voice of the Spirit to make a prudential judgement and act. This precisely is what *discernment* is all about. The Spirit does not substitute for human endeavour but meets us on the way to guide us further along. Hence, group discernment must follow, not precede a dialogue in open communication. This dialogue in turn must be first enriched by a discussion that leads to a clearer understanding and wider comprehension of the issues involved.

This method of discerning together can be replicated and taken forwards if we learn from what went right, we must also be sensitive

to where we fell short. But conclusions cannot be artificially forced from outside the process. To listen to our inner voice we must listen patiently, to follow where the Spirit leads, we must wait for the Spirit to show us the way. Only when we are completely detached from other callings, will we hear the voice and only when we are totally committed will we see the path.

The workshop at Santa Severa was organized to include three methodologies in a process that reiterated itself over two weeks. If it demonstrated anything, it was surely how rewarding such a process can be for the participants. The inputs from the experts, the three case studies (from Chad, India and Columbia), and the issues and concerns arising from all this, represented the first level of discussion. The dialogue on these expressed the second level in this group sharing. And finally, a careful attention to the movements of one's heart and the urgings of the inner voice of the Spirit culminated in the third level of the group discernment.

Without a doubt, this is an experience and a methodology to be replicated on any issue as complex and urgent as the one this workshop was gathered around. But if replication demands

This method of discerning together can be replicated and taken forwards if we learn from what went right, we must also be sensitive to where we fell short. But conclusions cannot be artificially forced from outside the process. To listen to our inner voice we must listen patiently, to follow where the Spirit leads we must wait for the Spirit to show us the way. Only when we are completely detached from other callings, will we hear the voice and only when we are totally committed will we see the path.

And here I express a personal disappointment, a sadness, at 'the path not taken', even though the general consensus seemed to be moving in this direction. Yet forcing a conclusion on the issue of non-violence would have been a contradiction in terms. However, I still retain the hope that the threshold will be crossed in some future follow up.

Non-violence does find an important place in the workshop's statement, but it did not become an explicit option in its recommendations. I believe the lack of clarity at the first level of discussion did not make for a deeper dialogue and a more sensitive discernment of the question that gripped us all: how far is an option for non-violence viable in a violent world? To address such a question in dialogue and discernment we must first clarify the issues involved. Now if we understand 'violence' as the violation of persons, of people

of groups and communities, then it cannot ever be justified. To speak of '*defensive violence*' is extremely problematic, if not a contradiction in terms. It is far more exact and proper to speak of the legitimacy of, and justification for '*defensive force*' against violators who have forfeited their rights by failing to respect the same in others, and so can justifiably be restrained and prevented by proportionate and appropriate force as required or necessitated.

The option for non-violence does not condemn the use of such '*defensive force*'. Rather it is sensitive to the real possibilities of any use of force, particularly in situations of collective violence where it too often results in unintended and uncontrollable collateral damage. In most complex situations, there are no precision-guided instruments even for the use of defensive force. I am not here urging this as an option for all, even for all Christians. But just as the option for the poor is not an option against the rich, but a prophetic witness to the kingdom, so too some can be called to make a similar option for non-violence without judging those who do not.

To suggest that this is an impractical option is to ignore the freedom movement of Gandhi that brought an Empire down, or the civil rights movement of Martin Luther King that steered the racial violence of the ghettos away from further bloodshed, or the peaceful coup against the armed power of President Marcos in the Philippines led by Cardinal Sin, or the 'Rainbow Coalition' of Nelson Mandela in South Africa that avoided a blood bath there. We need only to imagine what the use of even defensive force, however justifiable might have meant in all these instances in order to realize how the moral power of non-violence can be both realistic and humanising.

Too often discernment has focused, not on the non-violence as a prophetic response, but on violence and force as a justified defence. Undeniably structural violence in society, genocidal massacres of defenceless victims, pogroms against ethnic minorities ... are difficult and intractable issues. However, we have been better at developing a theory of a 'just war' that justifies force, than adept at discerning non-violence as the means to a just peace. How different would this workshop have been if it had focused on 'Non-Violence and Peace'? For non-violence is more than the avoidance of violence or the renunciation of force. It is a positive option to suffer rather than inflict suffering, an appeal to conscience premised on the moral authority of the cause and its promoters.

Surely, this is the way of Jesus, the way of the Cross, of power in powerlessness, the Paschal Mystery? But of course, it is those who

have experienced the injustice and terror of violence that can speak for such an option. To propose such an option from a position of power and pelf, of privilege and security cannot ring true. Nevertheless, there can be some who are called to make such an option as they listen to the inner voice of the Spirit and the still small voice of conscience. Archbishop Oscar Romero did make such an option even as he refused to condemn those who did not. There are many Jesuits who have witnessed thus with their blood and surely not in vain, from those martyred at San Salvador to others in similar situation across the world.

The workshop at Santa Severa did not conclude with such an option, but it did not close the door either. Perhaps at some later date, maybe at the next General congregation, the door will open again and the Spirit will invite us to walk through, to walk as Jesus walked, for he too lived in a violent world and in truth triumphed against it non-violently in the end, but only at the cost of his own violent death. This is the cost of discipleship that we are called to discern.

11.

PRE-EMPTIVE RESPONSE OR ONGOING DISCERNMENT: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR GENERAL CONGREGATION 35

Jivan, Aug 2006

Abstract

The article is about the coming 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 2008. What leadership will GC 35 provide and whose stamp will it carry? Where will the turn in the crossroads take us and how will we respond?

The 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus called for January 5th 2008, will come after the end of the long papacy of John Paul II. It had been a difficult and delicate time for the Jesuits. It saw the imposition of a papal administrator in 1981 and then the election of a new General in 1983. In calling this General Congregation as his long Generalate nears its end, Fr. Kolvenbach, seems to be signalling his desire that a new leadership take the society further into the 21st century. This dual change of the leadership, in the Church and the Society, makes this General Congregation (GC 35) so very important for the Society, and I dare for the Church today as well, or at least for the Society's relations with the 'Vatican'.

Certainly, the churches in Asia and the South Asian Assistancy seem to be passing through a crucial period of their history, one that will define their future for decades to come, perhaps to the end of this century and beyond. For our subcontinent is tumbling through a period of rapid change, that so disproportionately benefits some and so cruelly marginalizes others. This precipitates unsustainable

tensions, which spilt over into the horrendous violence of political extremists and religious fundamentalists.

The South Asian Assistancy is the largest in the Society and growing. Yet the Regional Assistant for South Asia, Fr. Julian Fernandes, after 13 years in Rome, found

‘a third of our men outstanding in the quality of their Jesuit life and of their apostolic commitment ... A substantial middle group are good and dedicated workers in the Lord’s vineyard, ‘nesters and plodders’. ... It is the third group, the cynics and drifters, ... who have the potential but have settled for the minimum; the kind of men whom I imagine Ignatius would not have tolerated. I suspect that they constitute a fairly large 25 per cent.’ (Jivan, Aug 2005: 17)

What this means for the Assistancy cannot go uninterrogated. However, a serious and broad-based discernment on this vital matter has yet to begin. But this is only one of the defining issues that we need urgently to reflect on in preparation for the coming Congregation.

For this is more than a question of whom we admit and how we form them. Who motivates and inspires us Jesuits to the ‘magis’ in our mission? What challenges us to acquire the skills, and competencies, attitudes and values that will make us effective and efficient instruments of this mission and capable of an ever more magnanimous magis? How can this be concretised and contextualized today? If we do not find answers to such questions and begin acting on them soon, the 25 per cent indicated by the Assistant may reach a critical mass and overtake the others, condemning the Society to further mediocrity. This is typical of organizations that begin the declining phase of their lifecycle: to settle for less, and maintain the status quo instead of confronting the challenge. Hopefully, we will not doom ourselves to such entropy.

In answer to the question: ‘Are our young men competent?’ Fr. Joe Thadavanal, the Assistancy Delegate for Formation (ADF) writes in Jivan (Sept 2005: 9): ‘We have to admit that there is a crisis of motivation when it comes to ecclesiastical studies.’ But is the crisis limited to just these six years of philosophy and theology? Surely not all the 25 per cent of ‘cynics and drifters’ are in formation? This forces on us the compelling question: are the most formative experiences of young persons in the classroom and library or in the field and the mission? Must not these be subsequently consolidated by contextual reflection and study? The Delegate is convinced that

‘a time has come to redefine our formation in terms of transformation. ... the crucial question is whether a young man joining the Society is being transformed into a competent and authentic Jesuit, both in his life and mission.’ (ibid.)

But if mission defines our identity it cannot be separated from formation, especially ongoing formation. As the ADF emphasised in the same response: ‘We have to revisit the important FRC proposal of ‘formation in mission’ with greater seriousness,’ (ibid.) a proposal submitted by the FRC (Formation Review Commission) in 1992.

Our mission today and tomorrow raises urgent and vital questions. The endemic inequalities in a globalizing world and the obscene inequalities in the rapid economic growth of the Asian giants demands a relevant and incisive social analysis on which we can find an appropriate and adequate response. Tired old slogans have worn themselves thin. The old ideologies are unable to make sense of the new contradictions in our imploding world: the poverty amid affluence; violence with progress; ethnocentrism with globalization, ... the number is legion. What must our service of the faith and our promotion of justice mean in such a world?

GC 34 broadened our mission to include culture and dialogue. But have we sacrificed depth and focus for breadth and inclusiveness? The Inculturation Commission emphatically urged a contextualization of our formation in 1978. GC 34 in 1995 made culture an integral part of our mission. Today cultural contextualization is more problematic than ever in a rapidly changing cultural scenario, hybridised by globalization and democratized by popular cultures. Making our timeless, and often counter-cultural, message, meaningful in a situation such as South Asia, which is being transformed all the time, demands an enormously innovative effort at cross-cultural sensitivity and new creative ministries. Are we satisfied that we are adequately prepared for this?

South Asia is home to most major religious traditions in the world, many with enormously large and vibrant followings. For religion is still very alive and popular in South Asia. However, the traditional inter-religious harmony, never perfect but by and large viable, has now been ruptured, and intolerance spills over into conflict and violence. Religious and cultural institutions have undergone a dangerous politicisation that must be urgently reversed, for it is slowly but surely becoming a matter of long-term survival.

All this has inevitable implications for our mission in the subcontinent today and there is likely to be a more drastic fallout tomorrow. In these circumstances, the call of GC 34 to dialogue between peoples of various cultures and religious traditions is a challenge we cannot ignore without betraying our mission and the Church in South Asia. Some bold ventures have broken new ground but seem to lead into a theological minefield. But rather than throwing in the towel, we must strive for a wider, deeper more human understanding. Hence, we need to first strengthen the dialogue at the level of lived traditions, of life, of action and of shared experiences, and not just engage in theological articulation,

This demands that we engage not just with the majority tradition but with the others as well. With many of these, we have not as yet entered into dialogue in any credible and meaningful way. How do we express a sensitive and inclusive commitment to such a pluri-religious dialogue in concrete sustainable institutions? Surely, we need to anticipate some of this by raising the issues and facing the challenges that confront us now.

There are other issues, like lay collaboration and gender equality, that ought to concern us. A sure-fire indicator of our openness to engage with lay persons as equal partners is our willingness to work under the direction of a lay person, man or woman, if so assigned. I'm not sure how many of us would be comfortable in such a situation. Again, the bawdy humour that often marks our all Jesuit get-togethers would not be kosher if women were present. But even in their absence, this hardly indicates gender respect.

In sum then, GC 32 in Decree 4 redefined 'Our Mission Today' the service of faith and the promotion of justice. GC 34 called us to an inclusive promotion of justice and a more comprehensive service of the faith in multi-cultural inculturation and pluri-religious dialogue. But in no way must it be an occasion, or an excuse to lose focus and depth in 'our mission tomorrow'. Here I have tried to articulate more or less coherently, some of concerns not as a pre-emptive response, but as an on-going discernment that a General Congregation invites us to.

After decades we are now at the crossroads of leadership in the Church and the Society. GC 32 bore the stamp of Fr. General Arrupe and is testimony to his incredible charisma. The stage for it was set by GC 31 that elected him and altered the rules for election to a General Congregation. GC 33 was a transitional one that elected Fr. General Kolvenbach and set the stage for GC 34, which does indeed bear

witness to his credible leadership. What leadership will GC 35 provide and whose stamp will it carry? Where will the turn in the crossroads take us and how will we respond?

The Provincial Congregations will give us the first formal opportunity to discuss and discern the issues raised here and focus them more precisely in preparation for the coming General Congregation. It is not too early to begin this dialogue.

12.

DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES: A PERSONAL REFLECTION FOR GC 35

Jivan, October 2007, pp. 6-9

Abstract

How will the General Congregation 35 read and respond to the times? A General Congregation is essentially a process of discernment, whether it be the election of the superior general, the processing of the postulates or the decrees to be voted on. Here an attempt is made to delineate various levels in this process, the best would be a bottom-up continuous, participative process.

Reading the ‘signs of the times’, as Vatican II called us to do, can be somewhat problematic and daunting in our age of information overload and 24x7 news fatigue. Responding to them is even more so, given the scale of the problems we confront and the constraints of the resources we have at hand. Yet the ‘times’ will not wait for us to read or respond to them. The pace of change has unsettled past certainties and created future possibilities that leave us further confused. What does the *magis* call us to in such a situation and how will the coming general congregation respond to this?

A General Congregation is essentially a process of discernment, whether it be the election of the superior general, the processing of the postulates or the decrees to be voted on. The process begins with our provincial congregations and continues with the discussions and briefings that follow among us and the elected representatives. For discernment is best done as a bottom-up continuous, participative

process. Here an attempt is made to delineate various levels in this process.

Somewhat schematically we can distinguish three. The first level is *discussion*. Here there is an input of information in terms of position papers or academic studies. The purpose is primarily an intellectual quest *to clarify* ideas and articulate concerns. This is best done as a dialectic process, 'a reading against' each other of various positions and points of view. But all too easily it can be stymied in fruitless debate, especially if some protagonists try to impose on others.

The second level would be one of *dialogue*, 'talking through', where the emphasis is on open communication between the participants in a conversation that tries to understand, not just intellectually or notionally but at a more comprehensive and inclusive level, a more human and personal one. Many cultural, ideological and religious differences can only be usefully engaged with at this second level. However, pre-judgments and ethnocentrism may stifle the exchange and end in parallel monologues.

The third level would be one of *discernment* where the priority is to listen together to the inner voice of conscience, where the presence of the Spirit can best be heard and felt in the gentle breeze that blows where it wills, and 'we know not where it comes from nor where it goes'. This listening is a spiritual experience and may well be counter-intuitive as when it calls for a prophetic response. In such a discernment the 'spirits' must be tested and confirmed, for it can also lead to self-deception and worse. The Ignatian Rules for the Discernment of Spirits are critical here.

The first level, i.e., discussion, is well suited to clarifying issues and concepts and so to deepen insight and sharpen ideas. Inputs by experts on the issues can be of immense help but when this is more ideologically than intellectually driven, especially when sensitive and divisive political and social concerns are involved, then it only brings more contention and confusion than concern or comprehension. However, when it does lead to clarity and incisiveness this may well bring implicit differences and divisions into the open without necessarily reconciling or integrating them. As such, this is a useful, but still a first step in a constructive group discernment. Discussion, then, must be premised on an openness and receptivity or else it can get polarized, unable to proceed any further and eventually breakdown in dissension. Defensiveness and distrust do not make for open communication. We all have our baggage of suspicions and

apprehensions and so a measure of self-awareness and introspection is a necessary condition for any real open communication.

The second level, i.e., dialogue, must then follow on discussion for a fruitful dialogue demands careful preparation. A dialogue without some clarity and comprehension of the issues can only lead to sharing blind ignorance or worse, to intractable misunderstandings and miscalculations. Often this ends in sloganeering that merely serves as a 'certificate of conscience' and a very poor one at that. Obviously then, dialogue is a delicate matter and is best seen as an ongoing learning process, inviting us into ever deeper and more engaged sharing, where we learn about the other as much as we do about ourselves. It is not just a one-off event. The mutual understanding and self-discovery that such a dialogue effects becomes the basis on which contentious issues can be resolved and acted upon. But this is possible only when the dialogue is engaged in as equal partners, for without mutuality and reciprocity it degenerates into dominance and subservience. There may not even be parallel monologues, just a single overriding soliloquy and an inattentive audience, if any. Yet even an equal dialogue still remains within human possibilities and potentialities.

Beyond it is the third level, i.e., discernment. For there are issues which are too complex and complicated to admit of any clear certainties at the level of a human dialogue, even with the best of intentions from the participants involved, and yet these concerns do demand a response. Confronted with such ambiguities and anomalies, when we have reached the limits of our own abilities, we must seek the guidance of the inner voice of the Spirit to make a prudential judgement and act. This precisely is what discernment is finally about. However, the Spirit does not substitute for human endeavour but meets us where we are to encourage and guide us further along the way. Community discernment, in particular, must follow, not precede an equal dialogue in open communication. This 'dialogue' in turn must be first enriched by a 'discussion' that leads to a clearer understanding and wider comprehension of the issues involved.

Obviously, these are neither exclusive nor sequential stages in this process. Each level has its place and purpose and yet there is a priority between them for the first is really a preparation and condition for the second, and so is the second for the third. Thus an open discussion prepares us for an 'equal' dialogue, which in turn sets the stage for spiritual discernment. There is then an inclusion and simultaneity in

this process that reiterates itself in successive cycles as the levels deepen and complement each other so that finally the outcome will be open to a truly prophetic response.

This involves a receptivity to, but not a mere passivity towards, the other. The first level of 'discussion' is more oriented to the intellectual, rather than the emotional, but not exclusively so. At the second level of 'dialogue' the emphasis changes from understanding to empathy, from the head to the heart. Finally, the level of 'discernment' moves beyond the human to a sensitivity to the Spirit, the ultimate, utterly Other. The levels are thus complementary as we move from intellectual understanding to a more comprehensive grasp of issues and persons involved, from a reciprocal human trust to a faith surrender in the Spirit.

The articulation here is a poor representation of a process that we must experience in order to learn. But some illustrations may be helpful at this point. Thus globalisation is a very complex and complicated problem with many angles and aspects. Oversimplification here cannot lead to a genuine dialogue; it only gives us a false 'feel good' reassurance that will prejudice any real discernment before it begins. A discerned community response in one's own particular situation as affected by globalisation is a very complex issue that will require expert inputs, before any dialogue or discernment can begin. We cannot dialogue or discern about something we don't quite comprehend. It will be a sorry misadventure to do so. Unfortunately, there are some of us who rush in like fools where wiser men fear to tread. An authentic discernment may well call us to a counter-cultural globalisation from below, e.g., bringing global connectivity to impact human rights issues. In the context of the booming, globalising economies of Asia and the increasing inequalities and human rights violations there, we are forced to confront the scope and pace of this globalisation, critically and courageously.

Inculturation is an issue necessarily specific to particular situation. However, no matter how much involvement one may have about one's own circumstances, this will always have its inevitable limitations and specific parameters. Dialoguing with others from other situations and different contexts, about their various experiences and diverse exigencies is surely a most effective way of enriching one's own understanding of inculturation nearer home, freeing hidden potentialities and opening up new possibilities. Too much self-containment can be as bad as too much self-complacency, and

certainly the very opposite of the *magis*. Thus a bottom-up inculturation would concern itself less with high culture and more with a liberating one. Unfortunately in India inculturation has been tilted towards the Sanskritised and upper castes to the neglect of other subaltern and minority traditions.

Lay collaboration is a pressing concern that demands a response in terms of both intelligent pragmatism and deep trust, and these two do not always go well together. In our South Asian Assistancy discussion and dialogue on lay collaboration has not brought us very far. For many of us an adequate response is still something beckoning from beyond our present horizons. Before the issue resolves itself by default or worse, with the falling numbers in the Society, we need a collective discernment to make a breakthrough, perhaps even a prophetic one. But this might require not only that we find ways of working with lay persons, but of working under them as well, something too few Jesuits seem to be ready for as yet.

In our world of war and terror, of oppression and marginalisation, of structural sin and suicidal aggression, of legalised torture and child abuse, ... what must the Ignatian *magis* mean in such a violent world? What is the response we are called to make? Perhaps only those who have suffered real violence can be credible on such heart-rending issues. Nothing illustrates the necessity of discernment as starkly as does this issue of violence. It is all too easy to buy a cheap peace for ourselves, or to give in to hopeless despair. The only other response we seem to use against violence is more violence. This has not brought us any peace but only another kind of war. Beyond discussion and dialogue, only discernment can show us how to respond with the *magis* and perhaps even call us to a prophetic breakthrough. Is there today a role for non-violence in the land of Gandhi? How many of us will be ready for this?

These are just a few of the urgent and pressing concerns in our preparation for the general congregation. A final word about the preconditions for an authentic Ignatian discernment: if the stages in the process community discernment delineated here are not followed, it will break down and flounder. However, most often this happens because the preconditions for an Ignatian discernment do not obtain in the measure necessary, even though the procedural stages were followed, for without these, any conclusion a discernment reaches will soon begin to unravel, if it does not collapse before that. These preconditions are implicit in the stages just articulated. Openness in a 'discussion' implies a necessary detachment from one's own ideas

and priorities; in addition equality in 'dialogue' demands respect and mutuality between participants; further 'discernment' can be prophetic only where there is a receptivity and sensitivity to the Spirit, the still small voice within, as well.

How will our coming general congregation read the signs of the times? What will be the response? Will it be a prophetic or a legislative one? Whether it turns out to be an inspiration or a formality, surely depends on us now, as it will later on the representatives we have elected to it.

For now, we can pray in the words of Fr. Arrupe for the Spirit to help us read, discern and respond to the signs of the times:

'Give me that Spirit that scrutinises all, inspires all, that will strengthen me to support what I am not able to support. Give me that Spirit that transformed the weak Galilean fishermen into pillars of your Church and into Apostles who gave, in the holocaust of their lives, the supreme testimony of their love for their brothers.' (final address Procurators Congregation, 5 Oct 1978)

Will this general congregation settle for a safe harbour or will it 'launch out into the deep', (LK 5:4, RSV) and set our sails against the wind?

13.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND COMMUNALISM: THE CHALLENGE FOR ASIAN JESUITS

Jivan, March 2007, pp. 21-22./1677 words

- I. RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM
 - . COMMON CHARACTERISTICS
 - . LEVELS OF IMPACT
 - . THE JESUIT RESPONSE
- II. RELIGIOUS COMMUNALISM
 - . A DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION
 - . LEVELS OF DISCOURSE
 - . THE JESUIT RESPONSE

Abstract

Religious fundamentalism and religious communalism feed on each other as they rampage across all major religious traditions today and especially South Asia: Muslim Salafis, Christian evangelicals, Hindu extremists and religious radicals of all kinds.

I. Religious Fundamentalism

1. Common Characteristics

Religious fundamentalism exhibits some common characteristics across various religious traditions. Firstly, it is premised on a static understanding of reality. But the real world does change and with it our worldview. Such change precipitates a plurality of theologies, even within one faith. Religious fundamentalism negates such a pluralism as betraying their one static truth.

Secondly, most fundamentalisms negate the metaphoric nature of religious language. We cannot express mysteries in conceptual formulae no matter how verbally elegant. The literalism evoked by fundamentalism inevitably leads to dogmatism and absolutism.

Thirdly, fundamentalism is commonly a quest for certainty and security in an uncertain and insecure world. It attempts to exorcise insecurity from people's lives whereas only trusting faith that can help cope with an uncertain and unpredictable world.

2. Levels of Impact

Fundamentalism as a negative reaction to rapid change freezes traditions and beliefs in a literalism, wherever these are undermined and/or challenged. It impacts individual and community life at various levels. Firstly, at the socio-psychological level, it represents a quest for reassurance in the face of uncertainty and insecurity, often accompanied by negative emotions, fears, anxieties ... These easily coalesce into unfocused aggressive reactions. Security is sought in authoritarian and hierarchical structures, which thrive on such defensiveness towards a changing world and its impact. However, we cannot turn the clock back. Challenges must be faced creatively and constructively. The rapid social changes in Asia have increased the uncertainty and insecurity of people leaving many prone to this to such religious fundamentalisms.

At the socio-cultural level, fundamentalism is often expressed in popular conservative movements, not really open to the 'other'. In a multicultural world, pluralism is a given. A religious tradition must express itself in various cultures and sub-cultures of a society to be relevant and not do them violence. Multi-cultural Asia must be particularly sensitive to a creative inculturation or remain forever on the margins of Asian society.

At the socio-economic level, insecurities and injustices lead people to seek refuge in their religious communities. At the socio-political level, this becomes a powerful force for mobilisation and manipulation of popular religiosity, especially in its fundamentalist expressions. Such identity politics readily becomes the politics of passion, often to the exclusion of any responsible rationality.

Demagogic electoral politics is particularly prone to this. Even non-democratic systems are not spared. However, exclusive, closed identities only lead to more violence as Amartya Sen has argued in his recent essays on *Identity and Violence* (Penguin, Delhi, 2006). Thus

‘cultural nationalism’, as propagated in South Asia by Hindu extremists; and suicide bombers, as promoted by Muslim terrorists, are macabre examples of this deadly politics.

At the religious level, fundamentalism decontextualises the content of faith. But there is no text without context, no communication without interpretation, even for a divine revelation made to humans. This is elementary hermeneutics. Self-communication too must be interpreted to oneself. Further, once we accept our pluri-religious social reality, dialogue becomes necessary, not just within a tradition, but more so across them. Otherwise religious movements in our increasingly interdependent and globalising world will precipitate a ‘clash of ignorance’, not facilitate a ‘dialogue of faith’. Unfortunately, such dialogue has been esoteric and elitist. We need the dialogue of life and action, not just of theology and religious experiences, to embrace all our peoples, and every religious tradition.

3. The Jesuit Response

A holistic and integral response must be premised on an integrated, inter-disciplinary understanding of these various levels, which are distinct but not separate. Religious traditions can respond positively and creatively to rapid social change, but any effective reform must be initiated and driven from within the community. Outsiders can suggest and support. Anything more could well be counter-productive. We ought to focus on our own religious traditions, and then be light and salt to others; take out the beam in our own eye rather than the speck in the other’s.

Vatican II opened a window to the modern world. Now a ‘restorationism’ seeks a return to the certainty and security of the ‘fortress Catholicism’ of Vatican I. The basic controversy is whether to interpret Vatican II in the light of Vatican I, or vice versa, Vatican I in the light of Vatican II, even as we look forward to Vatican III! We need not a ‘restorationism’, but a ‘refounding’. This is most critical for the Asian Church, burdened by a colonial past.

This does not require going back to what the founders of the Christian tradition did then and there, and doing it again here and now, but rather internalising their charism and spirit, and doing what they would do now in our circumstances today. It is not enough to ask, what Jesus and his disciples did in their time and place, but rather what he with them would do here and now in our times and our

space. The same holds for those first missionaries of the Gospel in Asia. Only where there is the spirit of Jesus, as St Paul says, is this possible, but to do this we must first read and interpret the signs of the times so we can act on, and respond to them with creative fidelity.

The Society of Jesus has had its restoration almost two centuries ago. Now after Vatican II we need a 'refounding', a word that Fr. General himself has recently used. This is the 'unfinished business' of Fr. Arrupe! It is not served by 'Jesuit fundamentalism', rather it challenges us to 'a new beginning', 'a creative fidelity', the 'magis' for an unpredictable and uncontrolled future: not to do in Asia what Ignatius and his companions did in Europe in their time and place, but what they would do here and now in ours. For Jesuits in Asia this is precisely the meaning of being Asian Jesuits!

II. Religious Communalism

1. A Descriptive Definition

Our understanding of communalism implies: (1) the construction of group identities based on ethnic characteristics, innate and/or imagined; (2) the creation of an ideology to mobilize the group in pursuit of perceived interests to the exclusion of the interest of other groups; (3) the homogenization of group members as against pluralism/diversity, within and among groups. In Asia today religious communalism and religious fundamentalism fuel each other in a dangerous escalation of social violence and hate politics.

2. Levels of Discourse

Like most complex and multi-dimensional social phenomena communalism can be comprehended at several levels of discourse. For a more holistic, comprehensive understanding, it requires not just a multi-dimensional, but an inter-disciplinary approach as well. The socio-psychological discourse focuses on the need for identity, surely one of the most basic human needs, especially in changing social conditions, when human relationships come under great stress and familiar identities are ruptured and threatened. Individuals become easily susceptible to constructed identities from which they derive a sense of security and agency. As these become exclusive and closed,

and take on religious overtones, they consolidate religious communalism and fundamentalism.

The socio-cultural discourse on communalism explains the phenomena in terms of the cultural or ethnic traits on which group belonging is constructed and its mobilization made possible. Too often these traits are taken as innate and unchanging, and further legitimated by religion rather than as socially constructed and liable to deconstruction and reconstruction in more open and harmonious ways.

The socio-economic discourse finds the feeling of relative deprivation to be the basis of group mobilization. Economic interests are perceived to be common to many religious groups. Religious identity then becomes the foundation on which these are the mobilized for apparently religious reasons, but in fact for economic purposes. Growth without real equity ferments tensions which eventually undermine social consensus and cohesion, leaving society prey to such communalisms and fundamentalisms.

Similarly in the socio-political discourse, the mobilization of the group is premised on political interests. 'Religion in danger' is a powerful battle cry used by leaders jockeying for control within the group and for power in the larger society. Given the deep religiosity in Asia, political movements easily acquire such religious overtones. This becomes a dangerous politicisation of religion, that militant religious nationalists thrive on.

In the socio-religious discourse, differences are seen to be the basis for group mobilizing. Too often these are seen as threatening and/or unacceptable. Intra-religious differences within the group are perceived as heretical, polluting orthodox purity. To fundamentalists seeking homogeneity to strengthen group solidarity, inter-religious differences across groups pose a threat from without. Hence they shore up group boundaries and facilitate collective mobilization. Thus popular religiosity readily acquires aggressive political overtones, as V.D. Savarkar, the Hindutva ideologue, demanded: 'Hinduise all politics and militarise all Hindudom.'

3. The Jesuit Response

Here again, our response must be premised on an integrated, comprehensive, multifaceted approach. We must be concerned when any community is adversely affected and not just our own. For this is not merely a matter of minority and/or religious rights but of

fundamental and human rights as well. Unfortunately, the Church in Asia is most concerned when its own people suffer such atrocities. Rather we should reach out to all, especially more vulnerable communities. This will affirm our pluri-religious, multicultural heritage. Indeed, it is here that Jesuits can play a prophetic and mediatory role.

In Asia today there is a crying need for dialogue, both intra- and inter-religious at all levels: of life, action, experience and belief. The 'dialogue of cultures', not the 'clash of civilisations', is the more authentic Asian perspective, where harmony is privileged. It is precisely in such dialogue that Asian Jesuits can make their contribution to 'refounding' the Society of Jesus and the Church of Vatican II in our broken, bruised world! Our 35th General Congregation must take up the challenge of this 'unfinished business'. Fr. Arrupe, I'm sure, would give us his blessing.

14.

INCARNATING CHRIST IN INDIA: PEDRO ARRUPE AND INCULTURATION

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ARRUPE: WORLD CITIZEN AND 20TH CENTURY CHRISTIAN
INCULTURATION: SERVING THE FAITH, PROMOTING JUSTICE
INCULTURATION AND CATECHESIS
INCULTURATION IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS
INCULTURATION AND VATICAN II
INCULTURATION AND INDIA
INCARNATION AND THE PASCHAL MYSTERY
PLURALISM: PROBLEM OR SOLUTION
INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
ARRUPE'S CHALLENGE TO SOUTH ASIAN JESUITS
ARRUPE: THE MAN OF HOPE
REFERENCES

Abstract

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus was a paradigm for the inculturation he so earnestly promoted and advocated in the Church and the Society. The paradox of Fr. Arrupe was that in being the more inculturated, emerged, into the local situation wherever he was, he becomes the more universally relevant to the world beyond it.

Arrupe: World Citizen and 20th Century Christian

Fr. Pedro Arrupe's life spanned almost the entire 20th century, 1907 – 1991. He lived in many continents and witnessed some of the most crucial events of the century: the Spanish Civil War and the rise of fascism, two World Wars and the devastating aftermath. He was with his novices at Nagatsuka, just six kilometres from Hiroshima when the first atomic bomb, the *pika-don*, destroyed the city. He participated in the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, and guided the Society of Jesus as its General through the renewal and controversies that followed. He participated in six Synods of Bishops between 1967 to 1980. He was elected President of the Union of Major Religious Orders for five consecutive terms. Truly, he was a citizen of the world and a Christian of the 20th century, a servant of the Church and the beloved General of the Society.

Fr. Arrupe often referred to the zigzag path that brought him to Japan. He gave up a promising medical career in Madrid to join the Jesuit novitiate at Loyola in 1927. The Jesuits were expelled from Spain in 1932, and he completed his Jesuit formation in Belgium and Holland and finally in the United States in Cleveland, where he did his tertianship, the final year of his Jesuit training. Here his earlier request to be sent to Japan was at last granted and he landed at Yokohama in October 1938.

Characteristically he threw himself into his new mission, as parish priest and novice master and then provincial superior. The Japanese Jesuit province was made an international mission by Fr. General Janssens. Arrupe describes it thus: 'Jesuits from some thirty nations were working in Japan. It was a small universe where we were receiving echoes from nearly everywhere.' As Provincial, he journeyed around the world more than once to promote this mission. It was an international experience that gave him wide exposure to the post-war world and sensitised him to its hopes and fears, its promise and alienation.

He was surely including himself when he wrote in his letter 'On Inculturation' about the 'shock' of a deep personal experience 'of one called to live in another culture as something needed for an initiation into the process of inculturation'. (Arrupe 1981: 179) His own initiation into Japanese society was almost like a baptism by slow fire: the impact of his first encounter with the poverty there, his imprisonment and interrogation during the war, the disorientation

that followed the defeat in the war when the Emperor disavowed his divine status ...

There were tensions and difficulties in speaking about the Good News in such circumstances to the Japanese people. Very early as a parish priest he realised that

‘in Japan, for instance, the image of the Good Shepherd is not usable, since there are neither flocks nor sheep. The same is true for the lily, which for us is a symbol of purity. It was necessary to find other symbols over there ... Which paths was I to follow to reach the Japanese soul?’ (Arrupe 1986: 60)

As the novice master, he faced this question:

‘How was a Spaniard going to train young Japanese Jesuits? I had to learn how to mix Oriental intuition and Western rationalization; how, without giving a course in scholastic philosophy, which contains too many untranslatable concepts, to share a little of the spirit of this philosophy which belongs to the Christian tradition. It was a complex but fundamental situation: No culture is perfect, and there ought to be a reciprocal enrichment.’(ibid.)

Thus Arrupe’s initiation into the process of inculturation, began, as indeed it must, with a question, not an answer. He was convinced that ‘if a man wishes to work with a people, he must understand the soul of that people.’ (ibid.: 61) And so once again with his irrepressible optimism and dedication he threw himself into

‘the paths (*do*) of Zen. In other words, the manner of preparing and serving tea (*chado*), a ceremony which has nothing to do with our rules of politeness; the manner of shooting with a bow (*kyodo*), which is not a sport but a complete philosophy; the manner of arranging a bouquet of flowers (*kado*), which requires five years of study before one obtains a diploma; the manner of defending oneself (*judo*), which links elegance to efficacy; fencing (*kenddo*), which is practiced as much with sticks as with swords, and which is as much an art as a confrontation. And finally (*shodo*), the way in which a poem is composed and written, not only as to the idea or the prosody, but also as to the design of the characters which express it.

I tried to learn all that, with reasonable success for a European, because I was dealing with an entirely new mentality and my task was to discover it ... I served an apprenticeship which corresponds somewhat, I believe, to inculturation through Zen.’ (ibid.: 60 – 61)

The paradox of Fr. Arrupe was that in being the more inculturated, emerged, into the local situation wherever he was, he becomes the more universally relevant to the world beyond it. In this,

he is a paradigm for the inculturation he so earnestly promoted and advocated in the Church and the Society.

Inculturation: Serving the Faith, Promoting Justice

Arrupe once remarked: 'I would indeed say that, as far as I was concerned, I could agree that the decision to call a General Congregation has been the most important of my generalate.' Indeed, it was a congregation that was very much under his guidance and reflected his sense of mission and his vision. It was surely a defining moment of the post-Council Society of Jesus 'faced with new and very complex situations – 'limit situations', as I called them at the 31st General Congregation – for which we have no solution.' (ibid.: 47) That is, a situation that has reached a point of breakthrough to something new with the breaking down of the old and familiar. The 32nd General Congregation did, indeed, achieve such a breakthrough.

It sought more than a return to the 'original sources' of Ignatian inspiration, but rather to

'reincarnate this charism, not by rummaging through the centuries and the thoughts and deeds of the Jesuits during those centuries, but by seeking out anew St. Ignatius. And we should study him as founder not as superior general.' (ibid.: 46)

Thus the Congregation in its 4th Decree redefined 'Our Mission Today' as 'the Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice'. As expressed at the end of the introduction to the Decree XI, the focus was 'to make Christ known in such a way that all men are able to recognise him who from the beginning took delight in being with the sons of men, and ever continues to be active in human history.' This set the stage for inculturation as the link between faith and justice.

For, as Fr. Arrupe had constantly affirmed, 'inculturation' must mean 'incarnating' Christian living in a specific people's way of life. For Christ must be recognised and known from within a people's culture and history, from where they are, as they are at the time in their encounter with the Good News.

Decree IV of this General Congregation already expresses a sensitivity to the need 'to adapt our proclamation to the culture, country, group or class concerned.' (No. 36) For

'the incarnation of the Gospel in the life of the Church implies that the way in which Christ is preached and encountered will be different

in different countries, different for people with different backgrounds.’(No. 54)

And for the first time, it introduces the term ‘inculturation’:

‘Moreover, the Church is aware that today the problematic of inculturation must take into account not only the cultural values proper to each nation but also the new more universal values emerging from closer and more continuous interchange between nations in our time.’ (No. 56)

This now goes still further to bring up the question of ‘interculturism’.

The Fifth Decree of the Congregation on ‘The Work of Inculturation of the Faith and the Promotion of Christian Life’ was brief and straightforward. Earlier the term ‘indigenisation’ had been rejected as inadequate and misleading. The Decree mandated Fr. General to clarify and promote this process of inculturation in an instruction to the whole Society. As we have seen, Fr. Arrupe’s whole life was an embodiment of this very process and the Congregation could not have found a more suited person to take up this mandate.

Commenting on this Decree, Parmananda Divarkar writes:

‘it is interesting to notice that whereas Decree IV was a response to an urgent demand from the base, as expressed in numerous postulates presented by Provincial Congregations, Decree V arose, more immediately, from the experience and felt need within the General Congregation itself.’ (Divarkar 1976: 78)

However, what this brief decree could not capture was the experience of the Congregation of a unity of minds and hearts in the Ignatian charism and a diversity of cultural and national backgrounds of the members. Never before had there been a Jesuit assembly of such diversity and yet with an overwhelming sense of belonging together. Though there was no common language, still real communication was possible and even more, communion in a common mission.

Fr Arrupe drew attention to this in his final summing up at the end of the Congregation:

‘allow me briefly to call to mind how much was brought to us and to the Society by the participation of our brothers from the younger regions of Africa, Asia, and so on ... this is somewhat new in the history of the General Congregation. For true ‘inculturation’ began already in the Congregation itself. If our documents manifest a certain sense of balance and universality, if they constantly call us to the essentials of our life and labour, accidentals being rather passed over, this must be

ascribed in no small measure to the presence among us of these brothers. They also help us by demonstrating that the Ignatian charism is universally valid and actual. For there is no culture in which, together with the Gospel, the charism of Ignatius cannot be made incarnate.’ (cited by Divarkar 1976: 79)

Later the 34th General Congregation tied together faith, justice, culture and dialogue, in its Second Decree on the Servants of Christ’s Mission (No. 19):

‘Today we realise clearly:

No faith without
promotion of justice
entry into cultures
openness to other religious experiences.

No promotion of justice without
communicating faith
transforming cultures
collaboration with other traditions.

No inculturation without
communicating faith with others
dialogue with other cultures
commitment to justice.

No dialogue without
sharing faith with others
evaluating cultures
concern for justice.’ (No.47)

What was implicit in Decree Four of the 32nd General Congregation was now made unambiguously explicit in the Second Decree of the 34th, ‘Servants of Christ Mission’.

Inculturation and Catechesis

To the universal Church Fr. Arrupe had already expounded his understanding of inculturation at the Synod of Bishops on Catechesis in Oct 1977. He emphatically affirmed:

‘One of the important problems which the Church and catechesis in particular have to face is the real influence of faith on the living conditions of man, on his culture. One element which can lead to a solution to this vital problem is ‘inculturation,’ the absence of inculturation is one of the main obstacles to evangelization. Catechesis presupposes the inculturation of the faith; catechesis comes after this inculturation; and likewise catechesis continues to be

a very powerful and dynamic means of inculturation.’(Arrupe 1981: 163)

This meant more than adapting older forms, or adopting more attractive strategies, or a mere de-Westernisation. It was not a benevolent accommodation or a folklorist approach (Arrupe 1981: 164) Rather it meant assuming and purifying cultures, reaching people in their most profound experiences, so as ‘to speak *with* (not just *to*) the men and women of our times about their problems, needs, hopes and desires.’ (ibid.: 165)

Certainly, there would be difficulties and fears in any such dialogue of faith and culture, but the Gospel needed to be ‘incarnate in a culture’ if it is to be ‘incarnate in human beings’. (ibid.: 165) He saw this as a challenging call:

‘Clearly, successful inculturation calls for a combination of apparently contradictory qualities: audacity and prudence, initiative and docility, creative imagination and practical good judgement, a strong will and unending patience, esteem for one’s own culture and the humility to be open to other cultures. ‘Why should anyone wish to impose the colours of the sunset on the dawn?’ (Arrupe 1981: 166)

Inculturation in the Society of Jesus

Arrupe realised

‘that to write a letter to the entire Society (and I have written quite a few of them!) is never very easy. I must present the universal values – those which, precisely, nourish the union of minds and hearts – and accept the different concrete attitudes which will result from them. I must not impose on the Society something which may be only European.’
(Arrupe 1986: 63)

It took three years of study and much consultation before his letter ‘On Inculturation to the Whole Society’ was dispatched on 27th June 1978.

To begin with

‘the fundamental and constantly valid principle that inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (that would be only a superficial adaptation), but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about ‘a new creation’. (Arrupe 1981: 173)

He urges the relevance of inculturation not just in the ‘missions’ or the third world, but also for the changing cultures in modernised societies and its subgroups, especially youth. Here ‘a re-incarnation of the faith’ (ibid: 173) is called for, and this ‘the more so where people think they do not have this need’. (ibid.) The challenge is to ‘a mutual enrichment and complementarity, the ‘robe of many colours’ of the cultural reality of the one People of God’. (ibid.: 175)

In today’s inevitable, and ‘providential opportunity for interculturalisation’, contact and exchange between cultures, Arrupe is convinced that

‘Christianity can play a most important role: its mission is that of searching the depths of the past with lucid discernment, whilst it opens a culture both to values that are universal and common to all human beings, and to the particular values of other cultures; it must ease tensions and conflicts, and create genuine communion.’ (ibid.: 174)

In the Society, Arrupe urges Ignatian spirituality and discernment as the guiding principles of inculturation. Pioneers like Matteo Ricci (1552 – 1610) in China and Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) in India were trail blazers to inspire and build on. Among the internal attitudes required are: a unifying vision, docility to the Spirit, interior humility, discerning love, ...

Arrupe emphasises that inculturation must first begin with the person and within the Society itself. This interiorisation often needs ‘the shock of a deep personal experience’, whether this happens in a country other than one’s own or in the changing situation of one’s own country. Arrupe perceptively remarks: ‘I think that many Jesuits, especially in the developed countries, have no idea of the abyss which separates faith and culture; and for that very reason they are less well-equipped servants of the Word.’ (ibid.: 179)

Inculturation and Vatican II

Unfortunately, in the Western churches, including the Roman one, the 'Hellenised Christianity' that is projected globally, as happened in the colonial era, can hardly claim to be cross-culturally relevant, and it can no longer be accepted as a genuinely universal and final inculturation of the Christian faith in our multi-cultural, pluri-religious world today. The Second Vatican Council, the 21st Ecumenical Council of the Church in which all the bishops of the world gathered together with the Pope, in its *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 58) is emphatic about this:

'the Church, sent to all peoples of every time and place, is not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, nor to any particular way of life or any customary pattern of living, ancient or recent. Faithful to her own tradition and at the same time conscious of her universal mission she can enter into communion with various cultural modes, to her own enrichment and theirs too.'

For Vatican II, then, a living tradition is always a cumulative process of renewal and reform, of affirmations and rejections, of additions and subtractions, in a continuing 'Development of Doctrine', the thesis of Cardinal John Henry Newman that is now mainstream theology in the Church. This will require a constant and open-ended critique to be faithful to the original founding experience of a religious tradition. *Ecclesia semper reformanda* (the Church must always be reformed) is an old axiom going back to the Fathers of the Church at the beginning of the Christian era.

John Paul II was quite lucid about 'inculturation' in his encyclical letter (2 June 1985) on *The Apostles of the Slavs*, Ss. Cyril and Methodius, who evangelized Poland towards the end of the first millennium. He calls inculturation 'the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church.' (no, 21) In a later encyclical (7 Dec 1990) *Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Redeemer) the late Pope describes inculturation as 'an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures.' (no. 52) Obviously, inculturation cannot negate the historical past of a tradition. Certainly a proper hermeneutics is required on such a sensitive issue, and yet to affirm the historicity of a tradition cannot mean to absolutise it once

and forever without openness to further development of doctrine in the context of its encounter with different cultures.

The first Council of Jerusalem did this with regard to the Jewish heritage of the first Christians in Palestine. Hellenised Christianity carried this further for Europe at the beginning of the Christian era. Vatican II now requires an extension beyond the whole world. Indeed, in the contemporary multicultural, pluri-religious situation in which we live, Arrupe challenges us to engage in a new hermeneutic: to seek the meaning of the old text in the new context.

Inculturation and India

In India, we have perhaps the most challenging and complex situation for inculturation. This subcontinent has long been the home of many major religious traditions of the world. The dominant one is the rich Hindu traditions with all their bewildering diversity over almost forty centuries. Buddhism and Jainism were born in ancient India. The Gospel message reached the shores of Kerala in the south at the very beginning of the Christian era with the St. Thomas Christians there. Not many are aware that the second mosque after Medina was built by Arab Moslem traders in 629 CE, in Kodungallur, Kerala. Today India is still the third largest Muslim nation after Indonesia and Pakistan. Judaism too has an ancient tradition here and the Jews as a religious community have never experienced a pogrom or oppression here. The ancient indigenous religions of our tribals still thrive.

In medieval times newer religious sects and traditions emerged and found their place in the parliament of religions in this land, such as Sikhism, numerous bhakti *panths* and Sufi devotees. Even today popular religiosity finds newer and more contemporary devotional expressions.

In such a complex churning, a *manthan* we would call it, what must inculturation mean? Most unfortunately the perception of Christianity is still coloured by the colonial past, in which period an aggressive and extensive expansion took place, often under the patronage of the Christian colonial powers.

In China, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and his companions after him had begun and stabilised a process of adapting Christianity to Chinese culture and traditions which found widespread acceptance there. In South India, the Jesuits went further and in the 17th century pioneered a vision of an Indian Christianity, with de Nobili (1577-1656) and many after him, like Constance Beschi (1680-1746), John

de Britto (1647-1693), Thomas Stevens (1549 – 1619) and numerous others.

But after the suppression of the Malabar and the Chinese Rites, in 1704 and 1707 respectively, the inculturation process was stymied and has not as yet gained the same momentum since. The Roman Church withdrew the oaths required of missionaries against the Chinese Rites in 1939 and the Malabar Rites in 1940. Now in the post-colonial period and especially after Vatican II, Ricci and de Nobili are once again accepted and praised. What they had attempted then is now promoted and encouraged. But the burden of history cannot be easily jettisoned. It still weighs us down with a Church that has been transplanted, not quite inculturated as yet, and still considered colonial and alien.

It is most appropriate then that in the new dispensation on inculturation that Arrupe addressed a letter to the Indian Assistancy on the occasion of the presentation of the 'Final Report of the Inculturation Commission on Jesuit Formation in India' (1978). Arrupe was well aware of the tension that

'arises from the meeting between thousand-year-old civilisations and the too-westernised, paternalistic, and self-sufficient presentation of the faith of Jesus Christ. From this comes the necessity of decolonizing the proclamation of the gospel when we are face to face with a nationalistic sentiment which exalts liberty and the possibility for each people to create its own future.' (Arrupe 1986: 59)

Indic civilisation was almost forty centuries old and had experienced more recently some five centuries of colonialism. The Asian Church has never quite recovered from the tragic suppression of the Malabar and Chinese rites. There was now a new opportunity but also a daunting challenge. Little wonder that the Commission had a difficult and delicate task. Old prejudices and new fears stalked its path. Colonialism had been internalised by too many to be simply wished away. At the presentation of the Report to the Jesuit Conference of India in March 1978 Fr. Herbert Alphonso who chaired the Commission concluded his brief introduction thus:

'This Commission on Inculturation has been given – and even 'called' (!) – several names; one rather shady name it has earned is the 'Commission on Insemination'!! Taking it in good part, though – etymologically – the Commission is aware that it has but 'sown the seed'; others will water it, and others still will reap the fruit.' (*Jesuit Formation and Inculturation in India Today*, 1978; 142)

Certainly, it seems to me that the Commission would not have been able to complete its task successfully and much less have its recommendations accepted and even welcomed by the Indian provincials without the inspiration and support of Fr. Arrupe that helped to defuse any apprehensions and misgivings there might have been. He welcomed the Report as

‘the biggest effort made in any Assistency in the Society to implement decree 5 of the 32nd GC ‘on Promoting the Work of Inculturation of Faith and Christian Life’. The Whole Society, therefore, will look towards you for the next few years to see the working and fruits of your programme. Remember the great influence of India in antiquity. May your example and achievements be an inspiration and guide for all of us!’ (Arrupe 1981: 181-2)

He rightly stressed the importance of inculturation into the total reality of India. This meant not just an insertion into the high culture and the sophisticated philosophic and religious thought of the country, but a solidarity and an identification with the struggling masses and the Christian communities, ‘some in urban and industrial areas, others in rural and tribal territories, dispersed among different religious and social groups.’ (ibid.: 183)

Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery

A religious faith cannot be separated from its living manifestation. It must be experienced and lived by real people. The Christian faith too cannot remain an expression in abstract formulae. God’s action in the world is discernible and real. This is the meaning of salvation history. The fullest expression of this is the incarnation of the Son of God, climaxed in the Paschal mystery, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is why inculturation must mean much more than the older ‘adaptation’. Following the consistent teaching in Church documents, Arrupe too speaks of inculturation as the ‘incarnation’ of the faith in a culture of a people.

‘The Incarnation of the Son of God is the primary reason and perfect model for inculturation. Like him, and because he did it first, the Church incarnates herself into each culture, in the most vital and the most intimate possible way. She enriches herself from the values of each culture and brings to them the unique redemption of Christ – his message, and the sap which gives new life. None of these values

may be suppressed or ignored; all must be encouraged and accepted. (Arrupe 1986: 57)

How does this living out of the death and resurrection of the Paschal mystery take place in the inculturation process? Here Arrupe's vision is clear and incisive: 'It is a matter of renouncing a superiority complex and a monopoly on the forms of expression' (ibid.: 57) of the faith. Tensions and apprehensions notwithstanding, 'if inculturation rests, upon a reciprocal understanding, a true exchange, a sincere dialogue, the difficulties may be overcome.' (ibid.: 58)

For in the process of cultural encounter and dialogue there must be mutual sharing and reciprocity. Giving and receiving are complementary and enriching processes that are not to be separated. Giving without receiving becomes patronising on the part of the giver, receiving without giving becomes demeaning for the receiver. In this exchange then something will change in both the giver and the receiver, there will be a mutual purification and enhancement in both partners to this dialogue.

No culture is without its shadow side that must be enlightened and the rot excised. Nor can a people be so untouched by grace and as to be devoid of some measure of enlightenment with which to enrich others. The inculturation process must be a dialogue in which each partner helps the other to a greater realisation of the lights and shadows, in the other and in oneself. This calls for a discernment together and Ignatian spirituality will challenge Jesuits to this.

Arrupe pushes on to a limit situation:

'Along this line, I would say that all "inculturation" demands – if I may express myself in this way – a "transculturation" (that is, an opening to and an exchange with other cultures); and this itself demands a partial "deculturation" (which includes a questioning of certain aspects of one's own culture).' (ibid.: 58)

In the concrete context of India, by way of example, there is the scandal of caste and the oppression of patriarchy. Neither of these are compatible with the kingdom of God and the promise of Jesus. Authentic inculturation would require the Church in India to reject, not to internalise this, something it is still struggling to do. Christian compassion and love must exorcise this demon of caste prejudice and female suppression. However, the relentless search for God, for the Absolute, that has characterised the *rishis* and *munis* of India, the *sants* and Sufis in the land, the *sadhus* and *fakirs* among our people is surely to be integrated and pursued. This and much more can

inspire Christianity today and challenge the this-worldly consumerism that has so infected contemporary Christians. Thus each partner to the encounter must die to the evil that impedes grace, so as to live to grace that transforms nature.

How does one inculturate the Paschal mystery in the concrete circumstances of our mission today to the peoples of other civilizations, especially in Asia? These have very different cultural languages of myth and symbol, of metaphor and legend? How can we use the resources of these civilisations to this end? How can these churches bring a liberating salvation history to the peoples of Asia if it does not address the burden of their history and that of their other traditions, cultural and religious, in terms of an equal partnership of forgiveness and reconciliation for justice and peace?

This still remains the road less travelled and there are miles to go before we sleep. To attempt such a journey assumes an in-depth understanding of the deep structures of these cultures and to do this we must begin with a 'deculturation', as Arrupe suggests or rather a 'transculturation' as he urges. But as yet the Churches in Asia have still to come to terms with the hurt and resentment that the colonial heritage of these churches is still burdened with because of their implication in the colonial past, directly involved or implicitly compliant. The story of Brahabandav Upadhyay, whose birth centenary we celebrate this year is evidence of this, but we cannot go into that sad story here! The baggage of this colonial history still weighs down the churches in Asia, which even today are perceived as alien and alienating.

For South Asia this would have to mean using the cultural resources of Indic civilisations: the Sufi-bhakti devotional spirituality to challenge patriarchy and hierarchy and promote an egalitarian society where all are equally children of one God; the shramana philosophical traditions that so opposed, and for a while even prevailed in large parts of the subcontinent over the brahmana ones, which were premised on caste and hierarchy and inequalities of the *bedabbed* traditions. We need a contemporary Asian liberation theology, not one uncritically transplanted from abroad, to transform popular religiosity in South Asia creatively and constructively, as happened in Latin America.

To privilege European culture as the one that still gives the Christian faith its decisive character, as Hillaire Belloc famously claimed: 'The Church is Europe and Europe is the Church', and as some in the European churches still do demonstrates an incredible

innocence of this colonial history, if not a callous insensitivity to peoples of other cultures, let alone other faith traditions. The anomalies and contradictions of such a retrograde position seems to border between the ridiculous and the ludicrous, in a post-Christian Europe, in which the European Union has rejected any specific reference to its Christian origins, in spite of repeated urging by the Vatican at the highest levels.

In practice for any viable inculturation

‘at the very minimum, it is necessary to acquire a certain mastery of the language, when one is in a foreign land, or of the ways to express oneself properly to a group. In like manner, one needs an adequate acquaintance with the basic elements of the new culture. If not, the apostolic work remains superficial and bears little fruit.’ (Arrupe 1986: 61)

But inculturation must go much beyond this minimum:

‘We must apply the basic orientations to concrete situations, and then choose adapted apostolic means. We should take into account ways of thinking, philosophical categories, scales of values, symbols expressing beauty, respect, and the like.’ (Arrupe 1986: 62)

This is a radical and farsighted understanding of inculturation.

Arrupe’s own life is a model for such a journey into the unknown and the uncertain. His own experience of the Paschal mystery in his life cannot but inspire us: a prisoner under suspicion of treason during the war in Japan in 1941, as an improvised doctor in the horrible aftermath of Hiroshima, his final illness and the papal intervention ... all show him as a man of courage and faith. He can finally say both, amen and alleluia at the end of his life!

When India, and the Church and the Society here, seem to be at such a point of dead-end darkness, then the ever cheerful incorrigible optimist, that Arrupe was, can be our guide.

Pluralism: Problem or Solution

Inculturation obviously and necessarily demands a cultural dialogue and an acceptance of *de facto* and *de jure* cultural pluralism. This is often at odds with the political and bureaucratic systems where unity is premised on, and guaranteed by uniformity, whether this be political or secular, cultural or religious.

Inculturation cannot be a transplanting of the Christian Church from one country or nation to another. It must be contextualised

among the people and cultures that encounter it by assuming and transforming them. This in turn will inevitably lead to a pluralism that seems to be the sticking point with many who are apprehensive about inculturation and where it could lead. They seem to think that pluralism would undermine the unity of the Church. But this is to identify unity and uniformity, which is both superficial and misleading. For the unity of the faith must come from inner commitment not for external imposition.

Arrupe is acutely aware of this

‘tension between the concept of unity (doctrinal, liturgical, and the like) about which we have struggled during the centuries (such as, in what concerns the Society of Jesus, the ‘quarrel over the Chinese rites’) and the conviction that cultural adaptations are necessary to permit the introduction of the faith to each people. Inculturation engenders a certain type of diversity on a worldwide scale; but it ought to maintain union of hearts as a primary objective desired by Christ.’ (Arrupe 1986: 58 - 60)

He is too sensitive not to realise that

‘an imposed uniformity, rather than variety, is what causes divisions. We are talking, then, of ‘colonialism’. Why should all people in all nations speak, eat, and dress like Europeans? On the contrary, to give an example, allowing different cultural groups the possibility of having their own proper liturgy reinforces the ties with Rome, for the love of Holy Mother Church is deepened. The same is true for the Society.’ (ibid.)

Rather it is a lack of pluralism that is already causing a crisis of faith. For any authentic understanding must be in a cultural language and symbolic idiom that is familiar to people. Thus

‘if, beginning from a common source, the plurality of applications is well made, according to the Ignatian criteria and in line with authentic faith and charity, then this plurality becomes the means of a union which is more profound, more true.’ (ibid.: 63)

Hence Arrupe urges that

‘a healthy and enriching pluralism be recognized, and that we know how to utilize the components of different cultures in order to enrich the doctrine and evangelical practice in diverse countries. From this point of view, a common

denominator will be, with fidelity to the doctrine of the Church, the desire to do the research and experiments necessary to enrich the treasure of the Church. Such is certainly one of our characteristics. Research, experimentation, understanding vis-à-vis other values are the fruits of an opening which permit a positive assimilation within an Ignatian discernment.’ (ibid.: 69)

Yet even in this Arrupe exercises Ignatian prudence, which is but complementary to Ignatian courage. He is too much a man of the Church not to respect the hierarchy even when he is prophetically ahead of his times:

‘While we avoid the two extremes of an unenlightened zeal and pride on the one hand, and paralyzing pusillanimity on the other, we shall always remember that the ultimate responsibility for directing the work of inculturation rests with the Hierarchy and so shall carry out our programmes in a sentiment of genuine love for the Church, the “Spouse of Christ”, submitting our activities to the directives of the Hierarchy.’ (Arrupe 1981: 183 – 184)

Unlike science where concepts and symbols are clear and precise and even measurable, religious communication is necessarily symbolic and metaphoric, always embedded in history and myth. In Asia legends and parables are the privileged mode of religious language, not abstract philosophy and teaching. This makes any translation extremely problematic and rather calls for the genuine faith-experience of a religious tradition to be expressed anew and not merely translated or worse transliterated from the language and culture of the earlier tradition.

This can even bring further enrichment: new dimensions and hidden nuances of the experience that may have been only implicit or even buried in the old tradition. No religious tradition can exhaust the religious experience on which it is founded, if in fact the experience itself is an encounter with the sacred, the numinous, the ‘*mysterium tremens et fasinsum*’, as expressed by Rudolf Otto.

Hence in our complex and compounded world today, it is more rather than less pluralism that is the urgent imperative. For ‘the riches of the Incarnation cannot all be contained in a single culture, nor even in the sum total of all the cultures of history.’ (ibid.: 1986: 58) Once again Arrupe gives us an example and the motivation to forge ahead with an inculturation that will mean diversity without compromising but rather enhancing unity.

Inter-Religious Dialogue

Now at a deeper structural level, cultural traditions contain and constrain, inspire and promote a religious tradition, which in turn is the institutionalisation of a founding religious experience. Max Weber has elaborated insightfully on the precarious yet inevitable relationship between charisma and its routinisation, is both necessary and subverting whether this be in the political or religious social arena. (Weber 1946) Thomas O'Dea spells out the implications of this in his *Sociology of Religion* (1966) where he insists that religious experience needs most and yet suffers most from institutionalisation. Dostoevsky's parable of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* is a powerful message in this regard, and can surely be reread even today to devastating effect.

In the final analysis then, inculturation needs more than an intercultural dialogue, it demands at a deeper level an inter-religious one. For inter-cultural dialogue is the necessary, not the sufficient conditions of an inter-religious one. However, corresponding to the political and institutional difficulties of the inter-cultural dialogue, here we experience the theological and clerical obstacles for the inter-religious one.

Yet there are many levels of such a dialogue as pointed out by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue in 1991, 'Dialogue and Proclamation': life, action, theological discourse, and at its deepest level, a sharing of religious experience. It is here at the level of experience, religious and even mystical, that we must find the common ground that can premise and found the dialogue, both inter-religious and intercultural.

Arrupe's Challenge to South Asian Jesuits

As provincial of Japan, Arrupe had said that he was always looking for the 'limit situation'. (ibid.: 23) I do believe he would have pointed to such a situation in South Asia today. A booming economy in India is only accentuating the inequalities in the land while promoting an aggressive consumerism for the advantaged few. Social injustices are increasing, not decreasing, with the growth of the economy. Ethnic and religious strife stalk the region and is precipitated and manipulated by political leaders, who reap electoral gains from collective violence, and perpetuate civil wars to further

their partisan interests. Religious and political terrorism has become endemic in some of the states in the Subcontinent bringing some of them to the point of virtual collapse. Human rights violations are perpetrated by state corruption as much as by extremist groups.

Of course, there is a brighter side as well to the dilemmas and difficulties of the region: a resurgence of voluntary action and civil society; liberation movements of various kinds, from Dalits and tribals to feminists and the environment; a cultural revival and a lively media, ... What must inculturation mean in such complicated circumstances?

In India the inculturation process had begun with far too much a preoccupation with Hindu high culture, with the more textual and Brahmanic aspects of religion, rather than a concern for the folk culture and popular religiosity of our peoples, especially our Dalits and tribals and other backward castes. There are few Jesuits experts on Islam in this third largest Muslim nation; or on Buddhism when there is a vigorous neo-Buddhist movement here among the Dalits. With other minority traditions we fare even worse, like Jainism and Sikhism. Certainly, such challenges at times seem quite daunting. But in the context of the growing tensions between religious groups, especially majority and minority ones, but between others as well, this is a challenge that stares us in the face. Arrupe would surely want a youthful and growing Assistancy like ours to respond with the Jesuit magis, with a heart as large as the problems and possibilities of the region and more. Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue is the obvious place to begin. But this requires a long term investment in our mission, not ad hoc compromises to immediate demands.

As Arrupe urged, this 'limit situation' cried out for a 'real "Indian incarnation" of the charism of St. Ignatius', (Arrupe 1981: 183) He was realistically aware of the difficulties and opposition it would entail for he knew that 'given the charism and service proper to the Society, these conflicts are humanly inevitable.' (Arrupe 1986: 65) Our history was witness to this, our present involved in it and our future would not be entirely free from it either. Yet he remains optimistically convinced.

‘that if we were faithful to what the Holy Spirit teaches the Society about the different aspects of the Ignatian charism, we would be able to be more Ignatian today than in the time of St. Ignatius himself. That is to say, there is progress in our understanding of the diverse ramifications and meanings of

some of his principles and his fundamental religious experiences.’ (Arrupe 1986: 66)

This then is Arrupe’s legacy for the Society in India: the challenge to be, as Fr. General Kolvenbach articulated it, not just Jesuits in India, but truly Indian Jesuits, authentically Indian and genuinely Ignatian.

Arrupe: The Man of Hope

The first title for Vatican II’s ‘Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World’ was *Luctus et Angor* (Grief and Anguish). Happily, it was eventually changed to *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope). For as Teilhard de Chardin reminded us, ‘The world will belong to the one who will give it the greatest hope.’ Hope was a driving force for Arrupe, always an incurable optimist, truly a world-citizen. He was a man of hope in the most hopeless situations, whether it was Hiroshima or towards the end of his active life, when he was disabled by a cruel stroke in 1981, that left him unable to function as General. Impeded in his speech this irrepressible communicator became a silent witness to perhaps the most extraordinary papal intervention in the Society since its suppression in 1773, the suspension of Society’s ordinary administration and the imposition of a papal delegate by Pope John Paul II.

In his touching farewell to the Society when he finally resigned as its General in 1983 he spoke of how he found himself in the hands of God as he had always hoped and prayed for:

‘More than ever, I now find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life, from my youth. And this is still the one thing I want. But now there is a difference: the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in his hands.’ (cited Bishop 2000:343)

He thanked the Society and prayed for prayed for it, full of hope, offering

‘to the Lord what was left of my life, my prayers and the sufferings imposed by my ailments. For myself, all I want is to repeat from the depths of my heart:
Take, O Lord and receive ...’ (ibid.)

He had to wait almost a decade longer for his final ‘consummatum est – ‘all is finished,’ the final amen of my life and the first Alleluia of my eternity.’ (Arrupe 1986: 103)

Not since Ignatius has a General of the Society of Jesus been so loved by his brother Jesuits. Indeed, he was the second founder of the Society of Jesus, the one who refounded it, inculturated it in the post Vatican II Church and the World in ways that made it both more local and more global. He still challenges the South Asian Assistancy to be both more Asian and more universal.

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15. DEVELOPMENT AS LIBERATION: AN INDIAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

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CONTEXTUALISING DEVELOPMENT
TWO DISCOURSES, THREE CONTEXTS
THE ETHICS OF CHARITY AND JUSTICE
THE LIBERATIONIST RESPONSE
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Abstract

An open mind and an unsealed heart are the minimum we can require of a Jesuit apostolate. This article explores the Jesuit intellectual apostolate, as described in GC 34 Dec. 16, No. 1 on 'The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries'

Many Jesuit social activists tend to dismiss the intellectual apostolate as impractical and even irrelevant, sometimes explicitly, at others more by implication. Their stance towards these ‘intellectuals’ seems to be: ‘you have nothing to teach us about social justice’. But eventually unreflected activism gets mired in pragmatism with a receding horizon of hope. Such activism runs on an ‘ideology’, perhaps unconscious and not explicitly articulated. But without a sound grounding in theory, it inevitably degenerates into sloganeering. Action becomes repetitive, ideas remain stagnant. There is closing of the mind to new ideas.

Then again there are academics, who are certain they can learn little from insertion in the social apostolate: has anyone said anything significant on justice after Aristotle? Aquinas has said it all! Such classism and medievalism dates a person’s mindset and locks it up in the ancient and medieval worlds. There is an urgent need for a reality check or rather shock therapy, to bring such persons to contemporary realities on the ground. Here there is a sealing of the heart to new learning experiences.

Contextualising Development

The understanding of ‘development’ must be placed in the context of the European Enlightenment and the industrial revolution there. Modern industrialisation was first powered by the science and technology rooted in the rationalism of the European Enlightenment, which was to presage a new age of reason to liberate humankind from oppressive traditions and initiate an age of progress for all.

The rationalism of the Enlightenment critiqued religious beliefs and questioned traditional authority. In its encounter with the Church in the West, and later with other religious traditions elsewhere, it focused more sharply on fundamental issues of faith versus reason. Thus the ‘critical question’ was with regard to the legitimacy and authentication of knowledge, which was now no longer to be the monopoly of religion or tradition.

For modern science, as the cutting edge of the new wisdom, was premised on reason not on faith. All knowledge and practice were to be subjected to the rationalist critique. Eventually in the West, some measure of compromise was found in the separation of Church and State in a secular society and the polity. But this did not anticipate the inevitable backlash to this secularism in the religious revivals that are

apparent even in the most advanced technological societies, as in the United States of America and elsewhere, as also in the traditional societies that have been impacted by such modernity. How was the Church to respond to this new secularism that seemed to pose a threat to its traditional faith?

The *laissez-faire* capitalism of early industrialisation was legitimated by social Darwinism, an ideology that applied to human society the biologist's evolutionary 'natural selection for the survival of the fittest'. This was the very antithesis of a Christian ethic founded on neighbourly compassion and altruistic love. Thus the social progress promised by the Enlightenment was betrayed very early in this revolution as industrial development brought with it unprecedented inequality and unforeseen injustice. Crucial issues of distributive justice, rights of workers and duties of the state now became paramount for a more humane social compact.

To contain social unrest, some degree of protection from exploitation and social welfare for the working class was legislated under pressure from working-class movements. Eventually, mass production and mass consumption brought a measure of relief to the masses. Whether or not this effected real political empowerment, and/or increased social efficacy for ordinary citizens, even in the so-called 'mature democracies', is still a moot point. The level of citizen participation in the political process and the 'little alienations' of their everyday lives are the best indicators of this.

Hence the 'social question' focused on equity and equality for citizens: social, economic, political. The Church had to respond to these crucial issues or lose the allegiance of the working classes. Works of charity could bring some measure of relief and these were encouraged. But this did not address the underlying structural causes of injustice and oppression in society. Given the separation of religion and politics demanded by a secular state, how was the Church to engage these issues?

Two Discourses, Three Contexts

The response of the Church to modernisation in Europe was thus contextualised by these two pressing issues: the 'critical question', related to the encounter of religion and science; the 'social question', concerned with issues of faith and justice. The Christian understanding of development evolved in relation to these two crucial

questions, precipitated by the Enlightenment and the industrial revolution in Europe.

In the West, this 'critical question' revived more acutely the old controversy between faith and reason, which was now seen as traditional religion versus modern science. A philosophical resolution was attempted by Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) with his *Critique of Pure Reason* that justified modern science, and then by his *Critique of Practical Reason* that founded his ethics. But this still left religion and faith open to a rationalist critique.

The Christian response to this challenge was at first mostly defensive and cautious, especially with the mainstream churches; but at times the reaction was assertive and aggressive too, as with more evangelical and fundamentalist ones. Eventually, liberal theology attempted an understanding of faith that would be compatible with modernity and human progress. It was premised on a demythologisation of religious belief and a reinterpretation of religious essentials with a more critical hermeneutics.

This began an intra-religious debate and dialogue in the churches and liberal theology represented the Christian response to this. It soon found a place in mainstream Protestant churches as represented in the World Council of Churches (WCC), which culminated in an ecumenical movement among Protestant denominations that began in the 19th century. In the Catholic Church too, when after the first ambiguities in its response to modernism, it opened a window on the world with its Second Vatican Council (1963 - 65), called by Pope John XXIII, who wanted the Council fathers to read the sign of the times and update (*aggiornamento*) 'the Church of all and especially of the poor' (cited Gutierrez 1999: 62).

However, liberal theology was not a radical political theology. It was very much within the framework of liberal capitalism and the welfare state. Hence the understanding of development in this perspective was that of facilitating and sharing economic growth within a capitalist system. But very soon this was found grossly inadequate in the struggles of the developing world.

The social question was taken up first by the socialists, the more radical of whom challenged the status quo to propose a fundamental restructuring of society. Karl Marx was foremost among these theoreticians on the left of the political spectrum. With the Enlightenment rationalists, Marxists too privileged reason and science over faith and religion and perceived religious institutions as embedded in the alienating oppressive capitalist system.

Towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, in the Protestant churches the 'social gospel' propagated a radical understanding of the New Testament that found in early Christianity the roots of a primitive socialism and called for a return to its communitarian values (Acts 4: 32-35). The Catholic response was elaborated in the periodic social encyclicals, from Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, 'On the Condition of Workers', in 1891 to John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus*, 'The Hundredth Year', commemorating its centenary in 1991, eight major documents that set out the Church's thinking and policy.

However, for Christians in the developing world, liberal theology was soon seen as inadequate to a Marxist analysis of social injustice and oppression, as structurally rooted in the class system. Development was perceived to be a structural problem demanding a class struggle to restructure society. Hence Christians sought to theologise their faith more contextually in their own life situation. Here the issue was not with the compatibility of faith and reason, and by extension, that of religion and science; the most pressing concern was the relationship of faith and justice, and its extension to structural change and the status quo. For in the developing world, of the two, the 'social' question was far more compelling than the 'critical' one.

This was the basis of liberation theology, developed first in Latin America. Its standpoint is as different from liberal theology as liberal capitalism is from radical socialism. For Christians then, development is an ethical issue and therefore a religious one too, for religious belief systems inevitably influence social relations and so necessarily impact developmental processes. The history of a religious tradition, as a necessary part of a society, is therefore inevitably implicated in its social development. Gandhi and Ambedkar were very aware of, and sensitive to this.

The colonial powers brought the European Enlightenment and the industrial revolution to their colonies and this could not but bring radical change in these traditional societies. In spite of some commonalities, the local contexts were very different, and so was the response. In countries like India, the response to the Enlightenment was at times defensive and revivalist, but it was more predominantly reformist and progressive, beginning in Bengal and Maharashtra with Ram Mohan Roy and Jyotibai Phule, and culminating in the struggle for Independence led by men like Gandhi and Nehru.

Once the colonies gained independence the emphasis shifted to development. Of the two prevalent social paradigms at the time, the

capitalist and the socialist, India chose a mixed one: a planned socialism, where the commanding heights of the economy would be controlled by the state, as a secular, democratic polity, with universal suffrage and neutrality towards all religions. The development model consequent on this was essentially modernist, based on industrialisation, driven by science and technology. The goal was 'growth with equity'. However, between 1950 and 1980 the economy floundered at what the economist Raj Krishna called 'the Hindu rate of growth' of two per cent, even as inequalities increased. Eventually, the response to the resultant crisis was to open the country to a market economy in the 1990s. The crisis of real structural change was thus postponed rather than confronted. With the new economic liberalisation, which begun towards the end of the last century, economic growth has now jumped almost fourfold to over eight per cent per annum. But inequalities have further increased, and the crisis has deepened rather than moved any nearer resolution.

In so far as the Indian context was that of a developing country closer to Latin America than the developed West, the Christian understanding of development here draws more on the liberationist than the liberal discourse. But because these societies differ, the Indian articulation of this theology is specific to its own context and the concern for Dalits and tribals here.

For the history of a faith tradition follows a dialectic encounter between experience grounded in history and belief based on faith. Theology is the articulation of this discourse. It 'emerges at the intersection between 'a space of experience' and 'a horizon of expectation'.' (Koselleck 1985) This is the religious framework within which a theological praxis is articulated and in which the Christian understanding of development will be circumscribed.

In sum then, these two theological discourses ground the Christian understanding of, and the churches' response to the challenge of development today. The first makes the second possible: the liberal in response to the critical question, and the liberationist in response to the social one. Both discourses are differently concretised in three diverse contexts: the liberal discourse was articulated in the situation of the developed West; the liberationist one was elaborated more in the stark circumstances of development in Latin America. However, in India, the context of development was not just one of gross inequality and injustice, but also a multicultural, pluri-religious scenario, peculiar to South Asia.

The Ethics of Charity and Justice

Christianity originated in Palestine as a persecuted Jewish sect. Soon it spread through the Roman Empire in spite of much persecution for its refusal to acknowledge the divinity of the emperor. As a subaltern religion in its early centuries of oppression, the Church's preoccupation was more with survival than power. In this situation, concern for the neighbour was a matter of charity, expressed as caring and sharing following the commandment of Jesus:

‘A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.’
(John 13: 34,35. Today's New International Version)

This ‘agape’ or selfless love, as distinct from ‘eros’ or erotic love, would distinguish Christians. St. Luke describes the first community of believers in somewhat idealised terms:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ... And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need (Acts 4: 32 – 34. TNIV).

Tertullian in the 3rd century (ca 155 – 230) reports this as the distinguishing characteristic of these Christians as perceived by others: ‘See how they love one another’ (*Apologia* 39: 7).

As the Christian community made the transition from a persecuted ‘sect’ to a powerful ‘church’ in the middle ages, the scholastic theologians conceptualised charity, as distinguished from justice, in the seven corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, harbour the harbourless, visit the sick, ransom the captives, bury the dead; and seven spiritual ones: instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offences willingly, comfort the afflicted, pray for the living and the dead. But this was rather a personal approach that did not cut to the heart of the issue of deprivation in society, as was sensed even then. St Augustine in the 4th century approved giving bread to the hungry but he also said ‘it would be better there were no hungry’ (Cited Gutierrez 199: 53 nt. 16).

As distinct from such works of mercy the medieval scholastics defined justice as ‘giving unto each his due’. This was primarily understood as ‘commutative justice’ between individuals. The complement of this was ‘distributive justice’, defined as the proportionate distribution of the common goods of society in terms of the needs and merits of individuals (Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologia* Pt. II.II. Q. 61). However, fairness here was in the context of the given social order, which was not as yet incisively interrogated by the ‘social question’ precipitated by the industrial revolution or by a structural analysis of society.

There were social upheavals and natural and manmade disasters in the middle ages: famines, floods, peasant uprisings, plagues, the ‘black death’ and the like. The Christian response was in terms of charity and compassion, almsgiving and works of mercy. In today’s development terminology, this would be termed relief work and aid. The injustices of society were addressed not in terms of planned social change, or ‘social engineering’, but with an appeal to live by, and witness to, moral values inspired by the Gospel message. Injustice was an evil rooted in the human heart rather than in the structures of society, and it was to be addressed with a change of heart. The great religious orders, like the Franciscans, were as much social, as they were religious reforms movements, witnessing to Gospel values (Boff 1980).

With the industrial revolution, the social changes precipitated by laissez-faire capitalism developed a powerful dynamic of its own. This demanded an in-depth analysis of society and a more radical response to its structures of injustice. Thus Karl Marx in *Das Capital* argued that the evolving modes of production precipitate an inevitable class struggle that will end only with a classless society. Religion was an alienating ‘opium of the people’; it would wither away with other oppressive social institutions, like the capitalist state. However, others were more perceptive in their disagreement with Marx.

Emile Durkheim’s anthropological study of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* underscored the functional necessity of religion for all societies as ‘a unified system of beliefs and practices’ (Durkheim 1915: 62, emphasis in original), or some equivalent substitute. Max Weber too was not sanguine about the irrelevance of religion for he saw an affinity between religious traditions and their societies, most notably in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In the aftermath of the devastation of the Second World War in Europe, L.J. Lebrecht pioneered a development ethics to humanise socialism and

establish the compatibility of both efficiency and humanisation (Goulet 2006: 35). The emerging social analysis from such studies sharpened and focused the social question for the churches and demanded a more adequate response.

Consequently, the concept of justice necessarily acquired a compelling social dimension, beyond the individual morality of commutative justice, and the proportionality of distributive justice based on the status quo of a society. The response to the social question now, demanded an understanding of 'social justice' as a reconstruction of the social and political order in view of a more equitable distribution of common goods through the reform of a society's institutions. It must include equity and equality, fundamental rights and civic duties, human dignity and cultural identity. This was the challenge that liberation theology addressed.

The Liberationist Response

The Enlightenment posed a twofold challenge: liberation from blind faith in any unexamined social tradition, and from all oppressive social structures. The first corresponded to the 'critical question', the second to the 'social' one. Western liberalism focused on the first, i.e., promoting secularism and rationalism, rather than the second, i.e., addressing equity and equality in society. Capitalist society with its social Darwinism rationalised this, but then the Enlightenment's promise of progress would be only for the fittest who survived. It took the challenge of the socialist alternative to bring the social question to urgent public concern.

Liberal theology was based on reason and free will as privileged in the Enlightenment and with its demythologisation of religious beliefs and its critical interpretation of sacred texts, it did address the 'critical question', which Christian fundamentalists rejected or denied. However, as a critical hermeneutic its liberative potential though real was focused more on individual freedom than on social liberation, it was inadequate as a politically engaged theology. It lacked an effective social praxis and critique with which to address the 'social question' effectively, and as such became increasingly unsatisfactory for Christians in the unprecedented upheavals of the 20th century in the West. Some attempt to break out of this constraint was made with the political theology of Johannes B. Metz (1969) and the theology of hope of Jurgen Moltmann (1967), which can be seen as a transition to liberation theology, but still within the liberal theological structure.

In Latin America, the understanding of development was rooted in an incisive social analysis derived more from Marxist premises than those of liberal capitalism. Moreover, with the prevalence of dependency theory by the 1960s, its perspective was international as much as national. From its first inspiration with Paul Baran (1957) to a more elaborate articulation by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) 'dependency', in the capitalist social order, was seen as structural, reproducing 'unequal exchange' and thus stymieing both growth and equity in spite of an abundance of natural resources. For

'unequal exchange is the elementary transfer mechanism... it enables the advanced countries to begin and regularly to give new impetus to the unevenness of development that sets in motion all the other mechanisms of exploitation and fully explains the way that wealth is distributed.' (Emmanuel 1972: 265)

Hence liberation from such dependency called for structural change in the status quo. A reformist approach to development could not achieve such a breakthrough. Development was now no longer seen as a process of modernising traditional society but as liberation from this dependency. For the social analysis, on which dependency theory was grounded, the central concern was structural injustice. In this understanding, Western capitalism was the cause and could not be a model for redressing such injustice, neither in the process to, nor as the goal of true liberation. On the contrary:

'there can be authentic development for Latin America only if there is liberation from the domination exercised by the great capitalist countries, and especially the most powerful, the United States of America. This liberation also implies a confrontation with these groups' natural allies, their compatriots who control the national power structure.' (Gutierrez 1973: 88)

This is the starting point of liberation theology in its faith-reflection on the social situation. One of the first liberation theologians, Gustavo Gutierrez, defines 'liberation' thus:

'In the first place, liberation expresses the aspiration of oppressed peoples and social classless, emphasising the conflictual aspect of the economic, social, and political process which puts them at odds with wealthy nations and oppressive classes ...

At a deeper level, *liberation* can be applied to an understanding of history. Man is seen as assuming conscious responsibility for his own destiny.' (1973: 36)

In the first place, then, such liberation requires an unmasking of this exploitative dependency. For this, 'only a class analysis will

enable us to see what is really involved in the opposition between oppressed countries and dominant peoples' (ibid.: 87). Dependency theory would be wrong and misleading if it 'is not put within the framework of worldwide class struggle' (ibid.). In the second place, if the poor were to become agents of their own history, any genuine participation in their liberative struggle must be in solidarity with them. Hence the 'promotion of justice' demanded a 'solidarity with the poor', not to be against the rich, but in order that this liberation would be more universally for all, as Paulo Freire insists in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1972). For the rich too are alienated from their true humanity by the exploiting hegemony of their own class, as Marx did recognise.

Thus liberation theology is based on a radical left-of-centre social analysis and its faith-reflection proposes an equally radical 'praxis', i.e., an action-reflection-action process, in which liberation is the central theme of the Christian mystery and 'the struggle for a just society is in its own right very much a part of salvation history' (ibid.: 169). Moreover, 'the option for the poor' is an essential aspect of this struggle for justice. Hence, as Gutierrez sums up,

"The theology of liberation attempts to reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society; this theology must be verified by the practice of that commitment, by active, effective participation in the struggle which the exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors' (ibid.:307).

The Latin American Churches

Very soon liberation theology was by and large espoused by the Latin American bishops, and later spread to Catholic churches elsewhere. The Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) in 1968 at Medellin, Columbia, and then in 1974, at the World Synod of Catholic Bishops on 'Justice in the World' in Rome, were both inspired by liberation theology. This was confirmed again by CELAM in its conference in 1979, at Puebla, Mexico, and again in 1992 at Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic.

Though liberation theology began with Catholic theologians, it soon spread to other mainstream Christian denominations. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, James Cone wrote about *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969) and followed this up with *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970). In 1976, the first

Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, rejected an academic theology divorced from action, for one committed to a critical reflection on the reality of the third world. The prophetic edge of the good news must not be blunted by academic analysis and interpretation. Liberation theology thus began to be rooted in the Christian churches in the developing world as well.

Secular Marxists too began taking stock of liberation theology. In the summer of 1984 the *Monthly Review* discussed its merits and later its implication for the churches in North America (Tabb, ed., 1986). Some felt that its understanding of society was not based on a scientific analysis as Marxism was (Currier 1987), while still others urged a deeper and more critical dialogue (Boger 1988). Not unexpectedly, the religious right did not take kindly to liberation theology. Christian conservatives and fundamentalists, evangelical and extremist denominations accused it of turning from Jesus to Marx, or rather turning Jesus into a Marxist! Religious nationalists and dogmatic Communists stigmatised it as another attempt to convert the poor after having failed with the rich.

The response of the World Council of Churches (WCC) was less ambiguous than the official Roman Catholic one from the Vatican, which, however, was clarified later. Already its influence can be seen in the WCC's Melbourne conference of 1980. In its first assembly in Latin America in Porto Alegre, Brazil, it took recognisance of this new approach:

'This particular consideration for the poor, the marginalized and the excluded in different societies throughout history have been at the origins of the particular theological approach known as Liberation Theology. Strongly incarnated in the social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, more recently it has expanded its foci towards the economic, ecological, gender and inter-religious dimensions. Therefore, nurtured in this theological methodology rooted in a deep spiritual experience, Latin American Christianity has become deeply involved in defending, caring and celebrating life in its multiple manifestations, recognising God's presence in every life expression and especially in human life. This experience has been a gift of God to the whole Church' (9th WCC Assembly, Statement on Latin America, no. 19, 2006).

While the Latin American bishops' conferences were enthusiastic about liberation theology the Vatican was more hesitant. It was not completely comfortable with the radical challenge to the status quo as

represented by this theology, particularly with the volatile social inequalities of Latin America and the authoritarian regimes there, which at the time were not unfavourable to the institutional Catholic Church. Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 'On Evangelization in the Modern World' in 1974, (Nos. 25 - 39) insisted on the integration of spiritual salvation from sin and evil with human liberation in terms of rights and liberty, peace and development.

However in 1984, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine and of the Faith issued a more cautionary instruction, 'On Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology', against the use of Marxist ideological assumptions and social analysis in liberation theology. But later its 'Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation' in 1986, was more positive, affirming the importance of experience and scientific analysis. John Paul II was himself critical of liberation theology insisting that it conform to Papal social teaching, but on its main themes of dependency and exploitation, he was more in agreement with it than with Capitalism as is evident from his three major social encyclicals: *Laborem Exercens*, 'On Human Labour' in 1981, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 'On Social Concern' in 1987, *Centesimus Annus*, 'The Hundredth Year' in 1991.

Liberation Theology in Asia

By the mid-1970s liberation theology had begun to make an impact on the Asian churches. It inspired a new movement in the Indian Church among its development workers. In 1981 the CPI(M) politburo resolution took notice of this and cautioned its cadre about Christian activists for fear of a reactionary plot (Fernandes 1999: 83). The RSS journal *Manthan* saw liberation theology as 'just another strategy or politics of conversion' (Singhal 1983: 115). 'Working under cover of socio-economic issues instead of its earlier religious cover' (Agarwal: 1983: 135), its purpose was 'to play a political role ... to break Hindu society from within by exploiting all its weak points and creating local conflicts' (ibid.: 137).

Traditionally in colonial India, Christian churches had been by and large involved in schools and hospitals, and other charitable works. After Independence this continued and expanded into developmental projects, which were considered to be non-political in intent and impact. But with the inevitable similarities between developing societies, liberation theology soon arrived and now posed a new challenge, inspiring a new mission. Obviously, the approach seemed

out of joint in a society not used to such religious activism from Christians, who were only too conscious of their minority status. Yet, Gandhi's *seva marg* (the way of service) and Ambedkar's Navayana (new vehicle) Buddhism were religiously inspired by social and political action-commitments.

However, if liberation theology was to take root in the Asian churches, it would require Asian theologians to contextualise this theology in the particularities of their own continent. For borrowing uncritically from a rather similar eco-political, but very different religio-cultural context in Latin America, would not substitute for authentic Asian theologising. Moreover, this challenge could not be met in religious libraries or seminary classrooms. It had to be met in context of a concrete social praxis. Latin American liberation theology had to be creatively thought through and inculturated in the South Asian scenario. Thus in the Philippines, this happened with the basic ecclesial community movement adapted from Latin America. In South Korea it was indigenised in Minjung theology, literally, theology of the people. The Sri Lankan theologian, Aloysius Pieris, was one of the first to creatively recast *An Asian Theology of Liberation* for the South Asian context (1988), based on the social analysis of the Sri Lankan sociologists, Paul Caspersz, while Sebastian Kappen's *Jesus and Freedom* (1977) and George Soares-Prabhu's *Dharma of Jesus*, a collection of essays, explore the meaning of Jesus in contemporary India (2003).

Liberation theology did find proponents in the other major religious traditions of India as well: in Islam with Asghar Ali Engineer's Centre for Islamic studies and his *Essays on Liberative Elements in Islam* (1990), and with the Arya Samaj's Swami Agnivesh and his Adhayatma Jagaran Manch with its *A New Agenda for Humanity* (2003), a movement for spiritual awakening for regeneration.

The Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) at its First Plenary in Taipei in 1974 on 'Evangelisation in Modern Day Asia' declared: 'Since millions in Asia are poor, the Church in Asia must be the Church of the poor. One element in holiness, here, is the practice of justice.' In its Sixth Plenary in 1995 in Manila, it recognised the specificities of the Asian churches and called for 'a movement toward the triple dialogue with other faiths, with the poor and with cultures.' Over this period The FABC documents reveal a struggle, not always clear-cut but discernible all the same, of a Church coming of age, liberating itself from its colonial past, in its desire to be an authentic

Asian Church, not just a Church in Asia. Peter Hai traces the evolution of its contextual theology across

‘five of its major characteristics, which complement and enrich each other: (1) a synthetic contextual character, (2) a similarity between the FABC’s theological methodology and that of Latin American liberation theologies, (3) a faith seeking dialogue, (4) an approach that encourages theological pluralism and aims to achieve harmony, and (5) a development that constitutes a paradigm shift in theology.’ (Hai 2006)

Corresponding to development in the Catholic Church, there is a parallel movement in the mainstream Protestant Churches from M.M. Thomas’s *Religion and the Revolt of the Oppressed* (1981) to Sathianathan Clarke’s *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (1998). EATWOT attempts to bring the Catholic and Protestant streams together.

Inevitably, such a theology would interrogate the development interventions of the churches. The earliest focus was on charitable aid, then on economic growth, but not so much on human rights and social justice, which was considered to be a secular task, that was more in the domain of political and civic institutions and not to be directly engaged in by religious ones. This was the context in which liberation theology would have to address the concrete Asian reality in its own distinctiveness (Pieris 1988).

A Paradigm Shift

The developments in the Asian Church could not but affect the Indian one and eventually, this precipitated a paradigm shift in the Church’s approach to its interventions in society. The Indian social reality is one of overwhelming poverty, deep religiosity, and bewildering plurality, both cultural and religious. How adequate would an exclusive class analysis be to this situation, where voluntary poverty was a positive cultural value, where people’s worldview was still dominated by popular religion, where civic identities were subservient to cultural and religious ones? An uncritical use of Marxist class analysis left out more than it explained. Besides class, there were caste, ethnicity, religion and numerous other collective identities impacting social change. Asia was a whole world apart in its complex diversity that demanded an equally holistic and comprehensive socio-cultural analysis.

In coming to terms with liberation theology and its impact on the church, the Plenary Assemblies of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) in their 'Final Statements' also reveal a trajectory similar to the FABC's. In New Delhi in 1966 after the Vatican II (1962-65), they called for a campaign against hunger and disease (De Souza, ed.: 5). By 1972 in Chennai, they affirmed the 'right to development' (ibid.: 15). In Mangalore among the specific areas of concern was the transition from formal to non-formal education and from high-end hospitals to primary health centres for the rural and urban poor. The empowering of Dalits and tribals was specifically recommended to the social apostolate in Trivandrum (ibid.: 162). While regretting communal violence in their meeting in March, 2002 in Jalandhar, they urged 'dialogue with the followers of other religions' (ibid.: 180).

The Protestant Christians the Church of North India (CNI) in 1970 set up a Board of Social Service (SBSS) in 1970, which during its Forward Plan for 1996-1998 made a shift 'from social service and economic development' to 'empowerment through a rights-based approach' and this was confirmed at its Synod held in Ranchi in 2005. The larger Church of South India (CSI), 75 per cent of whose members are of Dalit origin, has from its earliest constitution made a commitment to Dalits and the oppressed. Since the 1980s, this has begun to be increasingly expressed in a Dalit theology, which regards liberation as the essence of the Church's mission (Samartha 1997). Finally, the Quadrennial Assembly of the National Council of Churches in Tirunelveli in 2004, recognised Dalit and tribal concerns and adopted the recommendations of the National Bishops' Conference and of the Global Conference related to Dalit liberation 'as the agenda of the Church as a visible and active preferential ministry'.

Development Approaches

The Christian concept of development evolves towards a holistic understanding in which three broad approaches to social intervention can be distinguished but not separated. Relief work is the response to human need motivated by Christian charity; this addresses the symptoms more than the disease. The development approach uses modern technologies to target upstream causes rather than the downstream effects with ad hoc projects and programmes. These were mainly interventions for economic growth or for human resource development, and not deliberate political strategies. With a more

refined analysis of social structures a 'rights-based approach' was used to conscientise people for their empowerment and for structural change.

Historically, the evolution has been from 'charity' to 'development' to 'justice', but these are complementary not exclusive approaches. For charity cannot replace the demand for justice or the need for development, but it can bring a measure of compassion to justice and of inclusiveness to development. Moreover, development must be humanised with charity and moderated by justice for without these it would be insensitive and inequitable. Further, justice can never be so comprehensive as to replace charity, neither does it substitute for development; rather it must be the enabling condition, not a limiting one for both, or else it will be regressive and eventually repressive as well.

These approaches taken together add up to a holistic approach for a fuller humanisation than each would imply singly. The motivation for charity comes from traditional theology's 'works of mercy'; the rationale for development is legitimated by liberal theology; the demand for justice is inspired by liberation theology. This 'development as humanisation' must be contextualised in the stark poverty, deep religiosity and bewildering pluralism of Asia with the triple dialogue that liberation theology calls for: with the poor, with cultures and with religions (FABC 6th Plenary 1995).

Thus the dialogue with the poor is premised on solidarity with them. Such an 'option for the poor', and for the 'promotion of justice', privileges a down-up approach over a top-down one. The dialogue with cultures must make development initiatives sensitive to the popular religiosity and transform it into a liberating faith, that is conscientised to local hierarchies. It must not allow religion to be the opium of the people. The dialogue with religions must bring an appreciation of religious pluralism and the imperative of a secularism that respects all religious traditions and seeks common ground for collective action. Thus the Christian understanding of development in Asia would be based on a down-up, periphery-to-centre approach, sensitive to indigenous cultures and aware of local hierarchies, appreciative of religious pluralism and committed to political secularism. Together this threefold dialogue precipitates a paradigm shift in the churches' approach to its interventions in society as well.

The Indian Scenario

In colonial times the churches were seen as being too close to Western religious and political powers, and Christians themselves as too Westernised. A more careful reading would establish that such perceptions were rather too stereotypical. The real relationships between Christianity and colonialism in the subcontinent were far more ambiguous, ranging from subservience and patronage to opposition and critique. However, by and large, the independence of the churches was seldom uncompromised.

As the freedom movement gained momentum the churches began to recover a more independent identity and with Independence in 1947, Christians too began to find their space in the new India. However, they have not quite overcome their minority consciousness and are still under suspicion from extremists, religious or nationalist. This affects their engagement in the development process. Relief work, education, medical aid ... interventions that did not challenge the status quo, but brought a measure of ethical sensitivity to civic life were welcomed. Mother Teresa is not just the best-known Christian in India, she is among the best-known Indians in the country as well.

By the 1960s, as Christians began to find their voice in Independent India and with it greater self-confidence, they began to venture into development work, supported by foreign contributions. Though this work did benefit a large number of people, they did not directly address the structural causes of poverty. In fact, rather than empowering the people, it often resulted in 'strengthening the power of the clergy, who are the initiators and managers of most of these developmental projects' (Hourtart and Lemecinier 1982: 196).

Such social and economic ventures did generate a certain awareness in the churches and among Christians. In the 1970s, with the impact of liberation theology and the more incisive social analysis that went with it, issues of justice and human rights were foregrounded. Contextualising this in the Indian scenario demanded a rethinking by the churches and a new appropriation of their mission. The churches now decisively focused on the marginalised and oppressed, the dispossessed and disempowered. Concretely, these were represented by tribals and Dalits as the epitome of 'preferential option for the poor' in India. This option situated the 'promotion of justice' in an Indian liberation theology, and was further indigenised as Dalit and tribal theologies, which have begun to come of age. For a

contextualised theology must be inculturated in the life-situations of the people.

Tribals in this country have been and still are so marginalised that the traditions they have evolved are markedly different from both, Sanskritic and the Dalit ones. A coherent and valid tribal theology will be correspondingly different from both mainstream Indian Christians and the Dalit theologies, for it draws on tribal history and culture, their myths and legends, symbols and rituals, to articulate a theology that integrates tribal communitarian values and eco-sensitivity into their quest for liberation. Moreover, building on the long history of tribal movements and the *Rebellious Prophets* (Fuchs 1965) that led them, tribal theology cannot be apolitical.

For Dalit theology, 'Pain or Pathos is the beginning of knowledge', as symbolised in the crucifixion of Jesus (Nirmal n.d.:141) and founded on the Dalits' lived experience of an oppressive and exploitative caste hierarchy that imprisons and crucifies them. Its articulation foregrounds the Biblical Exodus experience and their own oral traditions to construct a counter-cultural worldview that rejects caste hierarchy and the theory of karma in their struggle for liberation. This involves a process of

'(i) the deconstruction of their identification with symbols given by the others, (ii) the reconstruction of their identification by reversing the meaning of the symbols, and (iii) the repossession of the transformed symbols and re-identification with them' (Arun 2007: 284).

All this amounts to a subversion of the mainstream Sanskritic religious discourses.

These two liberation theologies do have essential commonalities. Both require the integration of the cultural dimension into any understanding of society. Hence the development model will demand a socio-cultural analysis not just a political economy one. Both Dalits and tribals are repressively alienated from mainstream society, but insofar as they articulate different contexts, they will necessarily bring different nuances to the mainstream discourse, a bottom-up and a periphery-to-centre perspective respectively.

Thus tribal theology is more a theology from the margins, but it also expresses and demands cultural autonomy, in which tribal identity and the respect this must command will be centred. Dalit theology is more a theology from below, in which the dignity and equality this demands must be central. However, these are not exclusive concerns but rather a matter of emphasis, for one implies

the other as an essential component of a counter-hegemonic movement for self-respect and social equality. Together identity and dignity constitute the warp and woof, the very definition of liberation, in any understanding of development that these theologies inspire.

Development as Liberation

Amartya Sen convincingly argues that ‘the removal of unfreedoms, ... is constitutive of development’ (1999: xii) for freedom is ‘the Foundation of Justice’ (ibid.: 54-86). ‘The Perspective of Freedom’ (ibid.: 13 – 34) demands capacity building (ibid.: 87) and democratic participation (ibid.: 146-159) to create real opportunities and enable people to make free choices. This recent approach has an obvious affinity with the liberationist one.

For in liberation theology, empowerment is also constitutive of liberation, which in turn defines development. Moreover in this understanding, a necessary implication is the ‘promotion of justice’, which is to be achieved in an option for, and in solidarity with the poor. Now ‘justice’ as well as ‘liberation’ are integral concepts. Thus justice only for some and not for all is patently unjust, and so any demand for justice must be inclusive, never exclusive. So too with liberation, deliberately targeting some of the oppressed for liberation and leaving others to their fate is already illiberal. True liberation must be intended for all not some.

Hence this option for the poor cannot be an option against the rich, but rather precisely to make the promotion of justice the more universal. This is exactly what Gandhi had in mind in choosing the least and last India as the criterion for authentic decision-making he gave Nehru. For only when the poorest get justice, can a society genuinely claim to be a truly just one. Hence the option for the poor demands not an option against the rich, but a clear stand against the abuse of wealth and power. Solidarity with the poor is not an alienation from the rich, but from their riches. Like Ambedkar, one can be against Brahminism without being against brahmins.

There may well be a partial achievement of justice and liberation in given circumstances, but then, to that extent injustice and oppression prevail. A Christian understanding of holistic development as a deeper, fuller, more complete humanisation must then be brought to bear on such a situation. For holistic development requires overcoming the class-caste divide in a classless-casteless egalitarian society, as also regional and rural-urban inequalities for a

more equitable exchange between these; in other words, transcending the divisions and inequalities of society in equitable integration and fair exchange in a society that is free and participative. In today's world this cannot but be a counter-cultural utopian vision. In Biblical terms it amounts to a prophetic witness, as it was that of the early Christians in ancient pagan Roman society: 'See how they love one another' (Tertullian *ibid.*).

So finally, development as liberation in the Christian perspective is a quest for human rights and social justice but does not end there; it must go beyond to come back to charity and compassion, without excluding growth and development, in a reiterated circular process towards a more comprehensive praxis for a fuller humanisation of persons and societies. Thus the models of social praxis these theologies inspired are correspondingly complementary and not exclusive. Liberal theology was the answer of the churches to the critical question, where traditional theology was not adequate. Liberation theology is their response to the social question, where liberal theology fell short. And both the critical and the social question are still relevant today.

A Transforming Praxis

Jon Sobrino, a liberation theologian from San Salvador sees the European Enlightenment as a liberative movement that

'has had two structurally distinct phases. One phase concentrated on the liberation of reason from dogmatic faith (Kant). The other phase championed the liberation of the whole person from a religious outlook that supported or at least permitted social, economic and political alienation (Marx). We might sum up the two phases as a general yearning for reasonableness and for transforming praxis.' (Sobrino 1978: 348)

The Enlightenment and the industrial revolution precipitated two compelling questions: the critical one concerned the challenge of reason and science to religion; the social one concerned the compatibility of industrialisation and progress with the imperative of social justice. The democratic revolution was the response of secular society to the first challenge but this was incomplete without responding to the second. The socialist revolution was an attempt to complete the Enlightenment's promise of progress for all. Thus authentic socialism extends democracy to constrain capitalism.

These were premised on a modernism that is now contested by a postmodernism, which rejects the ‘grand narratives’ and rationalism of the Enlightenment as a ‘tyranny of reason’, for a pluralism which all too easily falls into a subjective relativism and too readily compromises objective justice. However, if the compulsions of justice are gainsaid in a postmodern permissive relativism, then the liberative thrust of the Enlightenment surely stands betrayed.

Moreover, rationalist modernism and the energy-intensive industrialism that went with it were not sensitive to environmental concerns. Today ecological constraints have reached critical proportions and compelled the development debate to consider and contest alternate models.

Liberation theology cannot be at home with a postmodernism that compromises justice in the name of relativism, but it can certainly take on board ecological concerns, for the poorest suffer the most deprivation in an ecological crisis or disaster. Thus it privileges an open-ended transformative praxis for development as liberation, which in the Indian context foregrounds Gandhi’s option for the least and the last Indian, the marginal and oppressed, the tribal and the Dalit.

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16.

MY INTER-FAITH JOURNEY MULTIPLE IDENTITIES, MULTIPLE BELONGINGS: COMMON GROUND FOR EQUAL DIALOGUE

Journeying Together in Faith: A collection of Inner Pilgrimages in Honour of Jesuit Father Paul Jackson, ed Victor Edwin, SJ and Edwin Daly, SJ, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, 2008

Abstract

More than ever we need inter-cultural and inter-religious engagements in an equal dialogue: with the poor for justice, between cultures for harmony and among religions for peace. This essay honours Father Paul Jackson, S.J., who was the founder of Islamic Scholars Association for Christian-Muslim Dialogue, and one of the earlier pioneers in this field.

When Vatican II opened a window on the world for our Tridentine Church we looked out over its 'Catholic' battlements to see a new world opening before our eyes. This fast-changing world, was not new but our perspective was. We now encountered a new challenge to our Church and to our Jesuit charisma. Earlier forays outside our 'fortress Catholicism' were limited and tentative, and we always returned to the security of the high walls without daring to venture further afield. Now we were asked to read the signs of the times and dare to take bolder initiatives. With John XXIII, the charismatic pope, new breezes began to blow about this Church and, unfortunately, perhaps some were blown off their feet.

All this created an exciting expectation of change in a Church now reaching out to the modern world. Fr. Arrupe, our much-loved General, persistently challenged us to be pioneers at the frontiers, faithful to the Jesuit 'magis' in a new world longing for healing and wholeness. Our formators accompanied us into this brave new world, They inspired and not just taught; initiated us into philosophising and theologising with them, not just 'banking' what was learnt.

‘Rethinking theology’ was the shibboleth of Karl Rahner with which they encouraged us.

The Jesuit tradition of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue has a long history which I was heir to. It went back to Mateo Ricci (1552-1610) and Robert de Nobili (1577-1656), These were daring men adapting the faith to local cultures and religious practices, much ahead of their time. Not surprisingly, their vision was misunderstood and contested by lesser mortals. The tragedy of the suppression of the Malabar and Chinese Rites, 1704 and 1707 respectively, is something that the colonial Church in Asia has never recovered from and even in the post-colonial age we still are burdened with its painful legacy. Only as late as 1939 did the Roman Church withdraw the oaths required of missionaries regarding the Chinese Rites and in 1940 for the Malabar Rites. Fr. Shilananda, who later founded Sanjivan Ashram in Nashik district, introduced us in my noviciate to Malcolm Hay’s vivid telling of this *Failure in the Far East: Why and How the Breach between the Western World and China First Began*. I remember with deep sadness feeling that we four centuries behind now!

This was the context of my introduction to inter-religious encounters with the late Fr. Matthew Lederle, one of the founders of Snehasadan in the heart of the old city of the Peshwas. It was a centre for inculturation into, and dialogue with Maharashtrian society in Pune. Matthewji, as he was affectionately called, was a versatile and persuasive figure. His doctorate in Pune University on *Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra*, is still regarded as a major contribution and used as a reference for postgraduate studies in philosophy. He promoted Indian Christian art and a scholarship scheme for the underprivileged. Snehasadan was one of the earliest Jesuit ashrams and Matthewji played a major part in the Christian ashram movement in India, seeking a more culturally adapted expression of Christianity. Inter-religious dialogue was an integral part of this venture.

Providentially, I was to be able to spend my third year of theology at Snehasadan, while attending classes at Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, at the other end of town. Earlier, I made a pilgrimage with Matthewji through Bodhgaya all the way to Badrinath, where the ice Shiv Ling impressed me less than the Sivananda ashram and especially its acharya, Swami Chidananda. I have never forgotten the story Matthewji told me about the encounter of the Swamiji and the Indian bishops, whom he had taken to make a retreat in the ashram, in the

wake of Vatican II. They asked Swami Chidananda for a message and he came and said to them: brothers, I have just one thing to ask you, are you as willing to be converted to us as you expect us to be willing to be converted to you? And he left. The bishops had never addressed such a question before, if they had ever thought of asking it!

How blind we are to the way others from outside our religious tradition view us, even as we attempt to understand in order to be understood! How unprepared, perhaps even reluctant, we are to dialogue with others as equals, i.e., to search for the truth together, and not engage with others merely to present our truth in acceptable ways to win them over! This is surely a distorted perspective on dialogue. But with Vatican II's new understanding of non-Christian religions and Teilhard de Chardin's (1965) cosmic Christ, so incisively developed further by Raimundo Panikkar, (1964) I came to a more inclusive Trinitarian perspective and a less exclusive Church-centred one.

This drove me to seek an intra-religious dialogue with myself and others in my own religious tradition, to search together for a more inclusive faith, one that would lose self-centredness, while it retained its distinctiveness and its uniqueness, and yet be understandable and meaningful to others outside this faith tradition. In other words, not be imprisoned in an insider or emic perspective, but to break through to an outsider or etic one.

The dialectic between these two perspectives, emic and etic, has been the driving force and inspiration in my inter-faith journey. For singly and separately, neither one is comprehensive, and even together in dialectic tension, they cannot grasp the whole truth, which always remains beyond our horizon, a mystery to be pursued and experienced. Yet we must seek common ground on which we can meet in trust and tolerance, only then can we begin to dialogue as equals.

This journey has led me to accept and encourage in myself and others multiple cultural identities and multiple religious belongings, while being anchored in my own. I found Gandhi's approach to other cultures an inspiring challenge to be both, open and rooted:

'I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them.' (*Young India*, June 1921: 170)

Inter-religious dialogue must extend this cultural openness to religious traditions as well. As Mother Teresa, in her simple and direct said in an interview with *Time* (1989): I love all religions, but I'm in

love with my own. Hopefully, this love is not the kind that will us blind to others, but open our eyes wider to the beauty and depth of other religious traditions, and so come to a better grasp of our own as well theirs. This was not the approach in the earlier Tridentine age of ‘controversy’ when contentious debates, in which we so excelled, only left the protagonists satisfied with themselves and distanced from the others, and in the end all the more ready to do violence in the name of their own God.

All the major religious traditions of the world have had a living presence in South Asia and they are still popularly practised, pervasively believed and singularly resilient. Here is a history not just of peaceful coexistence between religious traditions, but of harmonious engagement and public discussion on religious matters, from the Adi Sankaracharya to Emperor Akbar, and beyond. Regrettably, there have been undeniable ruptures and aberrations, as against the Jains in the South and with Aurangzeb in the North. Yet if dialogue is to be viable and vibrant in our world today, it needs to be demonstrated effectively here in South Asia. This will be the litmus for others around the world. But most deplorably our electoral politics still divides us, even as our civic society struggles to unite us.

What is patently missing in our ministries in the South Asian Assistancy today is a viable dialogue with Muslims and their cultural and religious traditions. The great work of Fr. Courtois in Kolkata in this regard has not been continued or carried much further. I have been very fortunate to meet and work with Asghar Ali Engineer, author, activist, religious reformist, who founded The Institute for Islamic Studies and the Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism. I came to realise a wealth of goodwill inviting us to engage with Muslims. This is a challenge not just for Jesuits in South Asia but for the whole Universal Church and all the world as well. Perhaps the 35th General Congregation in 2008 will address this challenge and call Jesuits to this mission.

However, the stakes for India and the world are indeed high. Hans Kung, one of the key drafters in 1993 in New York of the ‘Declaration Towards a Global Ethic’ for ‘The Parliament of World Religions’, indicates three contemporary global challenges to which he proposes three corresponding responses (Kung 1998: 1- 40): there is no survival of democracy without a coalition of believers and non-believers in mutual respect; no peace between civilisations without a peace between religions; no peace between religions without a dialogue between them. Globalisation further sharpens differences in

a diverse but imploding world which could leave us with *The Clash of Civilisations*, that some have already assumed to be inevitable (Huntington 1996).

More than ever we need inter-cultural and inter-religious engagements in an equal dialogue: with the poor for justice, between cultures for harmony and among religions for peace. The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) in its Sixth Plenary Assembly, 1996, calls us all to this threefold dialogue: 'with Asia's poor, with its local cultures, and with other religious traditions' (FABC 1995). This is a challenge for the Universal Church as well.

The 34th General Congregation of the Jesuits legislated this as our mission today and tomorrow, insisting that each of these dimensions conditions the others and none must be singly or separately considered. Thus the Congregation pointedly integrated inculturation and dialogue into our mission, service of faith and promotion of justice, in its Decree 2, no. 47: no service of faith without justice, inculturation, dialogue; no justice without faith, inculturation, dialogue; no inculturation without faith, justice, dialogue; no dialogue without faith, justice, inculturation.

In my own inter-faith journey, each of the dimensions of this threefold dialogue powers and drives the others into one integrated whole. However, this must be preceded by, and premised on an internal openness that will presage and guarantee an external one. Thus a dialogue within, i.e., an intra-personal, intra-cultural, intra-religious one, must be the foundation of a dialogue without, an inter-personal, inter-cultural, inter-religious one, respectively.

Three sutras summarise for me this inter-faith journey:

to be 'person' is to be inter-personal,
to be cultured is to be inter-cultural,
to be religious is to be inter-religious.

And three negative ones complement them:

no inter-personal dialogue without an intra-personal one,
no inter-cultural dialogue without an intra-cultural one,
no inter-religious dialogue without an intra-religious one.

For me, then, multiple identities and multiple belongings are very much part of the common ground we seek for an equal dialogue. Totalising identities and singularising belongings only makes for a more divisive, divided world, where dialogue is well nigh impossible. Surely, this cannot be the kingdom Jesus preached. Raimundo Panikkar's description of his own journey has been the model for mine:

‘I ‘left’ as a Christian, ‘found myself’ a Hindu, and I ‘return’ as a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian.’
(Panikkar 1978: 2)

This is a journey that is reiterated in ever-widening circles, ever-more inclusive *parikramas*. And so my inter-faith journey is still a work in progress.

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17.

REDISCOVERING OUR CHARISM: PRAYERFUL REFLECTIONS ON THE DOCUMENTS OF GC 35

Jivan, Nov- Dec, 2008

THE PROCESS: IMAGES AND METAPHORS

DECREE: 'WITH RENEWED VIGOUR AND ZEAL'

DECREE: A FIRE THAT KINDLES OTHER FIRES: RECOVERING OUR CHARISM TODAY

EXERCISE: SHARING OUR STORIES

EXERCISE: THREE FOUNDATIONAL CONTEMPLATIONS FOR PERSONAL AND GROUP PRAYER

A. MANRESA (CONVERSION)

B. THE CARDONER (VISION)

C. LA STORTA (MISSION)

A TELLING TRIPTYCH

DECREE: CHALLENGES TO OUR MISSION TODAY: SENT TO THE FRONTIERS

DECREE: OBEDIENCE IN THE LIFE OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

DECREE: GOVERNANCE AND THE UNIVERSAL MISSION OF THE SOCIETY

DECREE: COLLABORATION AT THE HEART OF MISSION

PLANNING, OPERATIONALISATION, IMPLEMENTATION

Abstract

The most effective way to internalise the inspiration of the General Congregation Thirty-Five (GC 35) is prayerful reflection and group sharing. These are meant to facilitate an imaginative and intuitive internalising of the spirit and inspiration that a General Congregation brings, as it calls us to renew our charism and missions us to 'new frontiers'.

The Process: Images and Metaphors

The most effective way to internalise the inspiration of the General Congregation Thirty-Five (GC 35) is prayerful reflection and group sharing, melding personal stories into a collective history, igniting small sparks into a blazing fire. These suggestions are not intended as a rational discourse of theology or even spirituality much less an ideology, but rather to facilitate an imaginative and intuitive internalising of the spirit and inspiration that a General Congregation brings, as it calls us to renew our charism and missions us to ‘new frontiers’.

Personal reflection and group sharing is best done in images and metaphors, personal stories and collective symbols, not impersonal theories or personal rationalisations. Hence the process proposed here begins with personal reflection and then moves on to sharing in groups, from the work teams in ministry and life-groups in community, to the collective of the province, to our lay collaborators and where possible even beyond.

There will be need for inputs at the personal level and facilitation at the group level, but essentially this is meant to be a prayerful reflection, not an academic discourse. The emphasis must be on concrete experience not abstract theories, on imagining not reasoning.

The *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius* are meant to transform us profoundly at the level of the ‘myths’ we live by, not just the ‘rationalisations’ we act from. For, as being is prior to doing, living is prior to acting. The ‘exercises’ sketched here follow the Ignatian method of contemplation rather than meditation. The images suggested are meant to be a ‘composition of place’ for an ‘application of the senses’ to initiate a transforming dialogue.

Decree 1: ‘With Renewed Vigour and Zeal’

When the Holy Father calls us ‘to respond to the expectations the Church has of you’ (GC 35: 5.1.2), in his address to the Congregation, we cannot but recall our solemn fourth vow of obedience to be missioned by him. This expresses an essential characteristic of our vocation to the universal Church, even as it is lived out in the local one. We must be ready to be sent because, as the pope reaffirms with his predecessors: ‘the Church needs you, counts on you, and continues

to turn to you with confidence, particularly to reach those physical and spiritual places which others do not reach or find difficulty in reaching' (ibid.: 5.1.2). In reply the Congregation missions us to the 'new frontiers of our time' (ibid.: 3.1.15) and reminds us that 'mediocrity has no place in Ignatius' worldview' (ibid.: 3.1.14).

Our response to the papal call must be both personal and corporate, creative and critical. Perhaps we can ask, as Fr. Kolvenbach often did, what would Ignatius do today in our circumstances? How would he express his 'creative fidelity'? Would he avoid critical issues and 'talk of Pope Marcellus' or would he represent the matter and how would he do this? We can recall the struggle he had to name his order 'The Society of Jesus'. There are heroic examples of Jesuits who sought only to be sure this was indeed the blood of Christ before drinking of the chalice of obedience, as Teilhard pleaded before he was silenced and accepted his exile from Europe and his work and colleagues there.

An image we can recall here is Ignatius praying as he wrote the *Constitutions*, even as he knew that he would have to submit it all to the approval of a not always sympathetic pope. He could only trust that God's will would prevail.

Decree 2: A Fire that Kindles Other Fires: Recovering our Charism Today

Story-telling has always been a powerful tradition in Asia. The Asian Missiological Conference's final statement was entitled *Telling the Story of Jesus In Asia*. ('Message of the First Asian Missiological Congress', Chiang Mai, Thailand, 18-22 Oct 2006). Our identity is embedded in the personal stories that make up our collective history. To recover our charism, as the Congregation urges, we must once again share our stories so that there may be 'Many Sparks, one Fire: Many Stories, one History' (GC 35: 3.2)

The definitive image for Jesuit identity is Ignatius the contemplative in action going about his daily business, finding God in all things and all things in God.

Exercise 1: Sharing Our Stories

How do we make one history from our many stories? Beginning with my story, from our first calling to where we are right now in our ministry and mission; and how and why we got there. Shared in small groups, our personal stories can be collected to make our collective history today: that of the community, the province, the assistancy, the universal Society. This would be an exercise to internalise our story as foundational for our identity. Do our lives ‘provoke the questions: ‘who are you, that you do these things ... and that you do them in this way?’” (GC 35. 3.2.10) Our personal self-reflection and sharing would then be: how far are our lives a prophetic witness? At the level of the person, the community, our institutions ... Having taken stock of where we are we can then reflect on where we want to go.

As an input to this pilgrimage from one’s personal story to our collective history we need to recall the inspiring history of the Society from the foundation to this General Congregation and the stories of significant Jesuits from the first companions to our contemporaries, its long journey of triumphs and tragedies. A Jesuit who hasn’t felt these historical tragedies: the suppression of the Chinese and Malabar Rites, the destruction of the Paraguay Reductions, the suppression of the Society itself; or the traumas of today: the murder of Jesuits witnessing to faith and justice in San Salvador and elsewhere; the Jesuit who hasn’t been thrilled by the lives of Ignatius, Xavier, ... Ricci, de Nobili, Lievens, Arrupe and so many others we may recall,... such a Jesuit must ask whether his story is grounded in the history of the Society as we know it today or whether he stands outside it with some other inspiration, secular or sacred, ideological or spiritual ...

Apart from a collective history, a personal identity will tend to be individualistic at best, self-centred at worst. Most of these will be just flashes in the pan. Sparks without enkindling a fire! Jesuit identity is essentially relational, as the document says, and as intensely personal as it is corporate. Ultimately identity is a matter of belonging: to know who I am, I must know not just where I come from and where I’m going, but more immediately where I belong. Where is the centre of gravity of our affections? ‘Where your treasure is there will be your heart be also’ (Mt 6: 21).

Exercise 2: Three foundational contemplations for personal and group prayer

These are exercises to internalise in ourselves the foundational experiences of our founder. If the graces given to the founder are meant for all Jesuits, as Nadal taught, then surely his foundational experiences must also be ours.

a. Manresa (Conversion)

The conversion experience of Ignatius is not so much a single transforming event as a continuing process led by the discernment of spirits. From the wounded soldier still so vainglorious, to the outraged enthusiast who wanted to murder the Arab because he had insulted Our Lady, and finally the gentle old man looking at the stars in a contemplation of love, he was always a pilgrim, as he characterised himself in his autobiography. I too must internalise this experience of Manresa so I can then place my story besides his and discern my own path and share it with my brothers. The experience of the seven companions at their first vows in Monmartre or their first discernment before the founding of the Society can be a meditation for a group exercise.

An expressive image here is Ignatius 'led like a child by God' at Manresa, Ignatius leading his companions as a companion among them.

b. The Cardoner (Vision)

Ignatius's mystic insights on the banks of the Cardoner are surely the founding vision of Jesuit mission and so it must be ours too. The mystical unity of the entire cosmos coming from God and going back to God in Christ through the Spirit, the understanding that the more universal a good, the more divine it is. This is a vision of the Spiritual Exercises that begins with the 'Principle and Foundation' and ends with the 'Contemplation for Love' and it is continually redefined and renewed along the way by the Weeks in between.

An evocative image here is Ignatius the mystic in ecstasy by the river bank, Ignatius in mystical union contemplating the Triune God of love.

c. La Storta (Mission)

At La Storta, Ignatius receives his final mission for himself and the Society. But the mission was not as he had thought, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to pray and serve there. It was the path to Rome, to be at the service of the universal Church. The essential characteristics of our mission are already here: the Trinitarian dimension, the journeying with Christ and his cross, the intercession of Our Lady,...

Arrupe realised the importance of La Storta when he prayed there and refurnished the chapel to commemorate this experience of Ignatius. There is surely something lacking if our sense of mission today cannot relate to La Storta. We must find the connection in the defining characteristics of our personal and corporate ministry today.

A moving image here is Ignatius the pilgrim, walking to Rome with his companions to an as yet unknown future, Ignatius the Superior General missioning Xavier: go set the world aflame.

A Telling Triptych

Three key concepts in this decree (GC 35 3.2.19) should guide our reflections. For the Jesuit identity is relational, community is communion, our ministry challenges us to the ‘magis’. Thus Jesuits are ‘friends in the Lord’ and ‘companions on mission’, always restless, ever free, totally committed, completely detached!

Decree 3: Challenges to Our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers

In a globalising world, we need to imagine and be open to the new frontiers to which we are being called in our various apostolates. We need to uncover new frontiers in the commitments we have already made; where they are waiting to be renewed, i.e., made new. Further, depending on our availability we must discover new commitments at the frontiers we are called to but have not yet reached. What would building counter-cultural communities of solidarity, as GC 34 called us to, mean for us today, here and now?

An inspiring image here is Xavier being sent by Ignatius to the Indies ready to leave with just his breviary and crucifix! Or Fr. Kolvenbach leaving the Curia for Lebanon with just a carry-on bag the day after his resignation was accepted by the Congregation!

Decree 4: Obedience in the Life of the Society of Jesus

In defining Jesuit obedience in terms of ‘creative fidelity’ we have a relevant and significant contextualising for today of the Ignatian ideal of obedience and the images he uses in his letter to the scholastics at Coimbra to emphasise the centrality of obedience in the life and spirituality of the individual Jesuit and the corporate Society. The Congregation now gives us an understanding of obedience that is a compelling challenge to all Jesuits today: to our individualism, our careerism, our mediocrity, our self-seeking and settling in comfort zones at various levels of performance and competence,...Equally, or perhaps more so this ‘creative fidelity’ is a challenge to superiors: to interrogate the compromised peace they may negotiate in difficult circumstances, to dare great things and still be concerned for the little ones, to plan for the greater more universal good over the immediate, provincial one, ever to make their governance the difficult yet very Ignatian combination of *cura personalis* and *cura apostolica* without compromising either. ‘Creative fidelity’ once again the Congregation calls us all to be men of the magis.

An instructive image here is Ignatius in his encounter with Paul IV at the founding of the Society, or Arrupe with John Paul II.

Decree 5: Governance and the Universal Mission of the Society

This decree is a challenge not just to greater availability but directly to our parochialism, our regionalism, our ethnocentricity ... The perspective here clearly derives from the pursuit of the more universal good and challenges us to put the resources of the Society to serve the magis.

Moreover, groupism or factionalism of any kind, whether jingoistic communalism or chauvinistic casteism, ideological rigidity or theological dogmatism, ... cannot sustain a universal mission. The two perspectives are inevitably incompatible. Not many of us in this assitancy can easily exempt ourselves from an examination of conscience on these scores.

A challenging image here is Ignatius with his heart as large as the world governing the universal Society, yet ready to regain his composure in fifteen minutes if it were to be suppressed.

Decree 6: Collaboration at the Heart of Mission

In case we had not realised how important lay collaboration is, the Congregation reminds us that to be a Jesuit is to be a team player! If we cannot collaborate among ourselves how can we with laypersons? The simple test here is the real and ready willingness of Jesuits not just to work with, but under a layperson! The Ignatian *agere contra* can challenge us to ‘our way of proceeding’, in Arrupe’s expression, more determinedly and effectively and this can be a timely reminder of how far we have to go in such collaboration.

An exemplary image here is Ignatius working with others, sharing his ministry and mission, inspiring them, both men and women, whether at Manresa, in Paris or Rome, a companion accompanying them on the mission they share.

Planning, Operationalisation, Implementation

Prayerful reflection is but the first step. Planning and operationalising our vision and mission, our ministries and competencies must follow as a second step before implementation. However, we need to remember what is often forgotten and yet so obvious: the first step must precede the second and the second the third! Otherwise, we might trip, as in fact we often do. The Congregation calls us to a difficult and demanding mission, but it is not a new one but rather a challenge to a renewed one. Being companions and friends will make all the difference. *Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum fratres habitare in unum* (Oh how good and joyful it is for brothers to live in union).

18.

IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, MISSION: JUBILEE REFLECTIONS FOR MY FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS

Promotio Iustitiae, No. 105, 2011

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

MISSION

COMMUNITY

DEFINING IMAGE

Abstract

This article looks back at Heredia's 50 years of journey as a Jesuit.

Any pilgrim's progress over 50 years has to be such a long journey. At times I've felt the loneliness of the long distance runner, but looking back from where I'm at, the sentiment in my heart and the memories in my head are best expressed in the song we sang at Jesuit gatherings: *Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum, habitare fraters in unum!*' (Oh, how good and joyful it is to live united as brothers.)

Fifty years ago, on the 20th of June my family reached me to the novitiate in Vinayalaya, Bombay. This year on that day, I concelebrated the Eucharist at the Indian Social Institute with my Jesuit friends and companions in Delhi. I wish some of you could have been there. For what they are worth, I present here some reflections in the light of our recent General Congregations (GCs) that I shared with them and now with you. A golden jubilee is an occasion for me to share with you my reflections on these themes in gratitude for the past, in fidelity to the present and in hope for the future.

GC 35 puts together a triptych: Identity, Mission, Community. We need to live this integration as Jesuits *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.

Identity: Who am I?

GC 35 gives us an image of a Jesuit: 'Our lives must provoke the question, who are you that you do these things ... and that you do them in this way?' (Dec 2 No. 10) This means living a prophetic witness in our way of life.

A student of mine once questioned me: What do you do that is so different? I can do just as much and perhaps better without being like you. So what makes you so different? I wondered, what could have been the witness coming across to him from me as a teacher and the college as an institution? Was I perceived as a sign, or contradiction, or just another Jesus freak going with the flow? Was the institution perceived as more concerned with the collective 'profit' than prophetic engagement, more focused on institutional excellence than social relevance, on prestige not justice... Did the testimony that reached this young man, and others like him, seem far from prophetic?

GC 32 Dec 1 No. 11 defined a Jesuit thus: 'What is it to be a Jesuit: It is to know one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was.' Dec 4 of the Congregation gave us a moving image of our option for the poor: 'If we have the humility and courage to walk with the poor, we will learn from what they have to teach us what we must do to help them ... which is to help the poor help themselves: to take charge of their own personal and collective destiny' (GC 32 Dec. 4 No. 50). GC 35 brought us back to our roots: 'Jesuits know who they are by looking at him' (Dec 2, No. 2)

My more personal take on the spirituality of Ignatius goes back to what I recall from the old Summary Rules of the Constitutions we read in the novitiate. Even before admission as candidates we were asked if we had at least the desire for the desire 'to don the livery of their cherished and respected Lord... to resemble Jesus Christ and be clad with his garb...' (Summary Rule 11, Examen 44, Const. 101). The Ignatian mysticism of action I find so evocatively in his own words: 'to seek God in all things transcending the attraction of all creatures, as far as possible, to set their heart wholly on the Creator, loving him in all creatures and them all in him' (Rule 17, Const. 288), in others words: to seek God in all things and all things in God.

The old 11th Rule (Const. 101) goes back to the Spiritual Exercises (No. 167), the three degrees of humility, better understood as three ways of loving, with the third degree of humility-- identifying with Jesus even in his humiliations-- as a more excellent way of loving. The old 17th Rule (Const 288) is inspired by the Contemplation for Love

that climaxes in the dedication so movingly familiar to us: Take and Receive (No. 234).

St Francis Xavier responded with his Prayer for Generosity: Teach me Lord to serve you generously as you deserve. To give and not to count the cost...save that of knowing that I do your most holy will. Fr. Arrupe sums this up in his imitable way: 'a personal love for the person of Jesus'. Without such a personalised commitment a resolute Jesuit could so easily become a dangerous commissar, ruled only by his head even when it betrays his heart: what's love got to do with the party line? Off to the firing squad! Or a cool hitman who shoots his hapless victims: nothing personal, sir, just business as usual. Bang! We have seen such men, and there but for the grace of God go I.

Moreover, a Jesuit must be driven by the Ignatian 'magis', the restless pursuit of the greater good. A Jesuit settling into a comfort zone, on an ego trip, or pursuing a career has lost his vocation though he may still be in the Society. He becomes deadwood, rotten fruit that weighs down the tree.

Ignatius has said that if he wanted to live longer it was because he wanted to be stricter with admissions to the Society. He was concerned that in his lifetime it had expanded from the 7 friends it began with, to the limited number envisioned in the approved Formula of the Institute, to over a 1,000 at his death. His approach was: I would rather be a horse that needed the control of the reins than one that needed the kick of the spurs. Over the last half-century, I know I have needed both.

Mission

Dec 4 of GC 32 defined our mission as the service of faith and the promotion of justice. Not 'the faith' or 'our faith' or even religious or ideological 'faith', but 'biblical faith' which is more a loving trust than an intellectual belief; in Ignatian terms an *obsequium rationale*, a meaningful, not necessarily rational, offering of oneself in trustful surrender to our God. GC 34 challenged us to build '*communities of solidarity*... where we can all work together towards total human development... sustainable, respectful, .. diverse,..' (Dec. 3 No.10). GC 34 brought this service of faith and promotion of justice together in an integrated mission with inculturation and inter-religious dialogue as Servants of Christ's Mission (No. 47).

The context of all this must be the Ignatian norm: the more universal a good, the more divine. Ignatius was a man with a heart as large as the whole world. He could be inspired by the flowers on the curia terrace and the stars in the sky; he worked in the confines of his room, yet planned for missions to the jungles and deserts in faraway places.

Our mission is inspired by the vision of the Trinity at work in the meditation on the incarnation in the Exercises. There our salvation is grounded in the life of Jesus and his kingdom; it culminates in the challenge of the Paschal mystery and climaxes in the contemplation for love.

Community

Our vocation is to be friends in the lord and companions on mission. This is what the first companions were and it is what led them to persevere as 'Companions of Jesus'. Today this would mean living a common life and working as a corporate team: life groups and team work. I belong to the Society through the friends I have there. If I don't have such friends in the Society my centre of affectivity will gradually migrate elsewhere, to my work, my co-workers and then even beyond both these. I live in the Society with the companions I have there, I work for my mission in the Society with the team we make together.

GC 32 challenged us to a community life of union of minds and hearts, *unio animorum* (GC 32 Dec 11). GC 35 affirms that community as an essential dimension of our identity and mission too, which together define our prophetic calling, a 'fire that kindles other fires' (GC 35 Dec. 2). We are a *communitas ad dispersionem* (a community for dispersion), but our communities must give prophetic witness, or else they become bachelor chummeries, ruled by the simple norm: don't ask, don't tell. Our institutions must be counter-cultural challenges, or else they will be organised bureaucracies: no exception to the rule except for another rule. This is a negation of our identity and our mission; it betrays genuine Jesuit community living, and undermines any institutional witness to our mission.

Defining Image

To bring these reflections together in a personal image, I would rather be a small bit player in the main drama of salvation history than run in the wrong race and win. I do not want to settle in a comfort zone of mediocrity. I still want to 'put out into the deep', to set my sail against the wind. I want to live my life with the Ignatian mysticism of action, never intimidated by the greatest and yet always concerned for the least. I want the romance of Francis of Assisi, whom G.K. Chesterton described as a poet, whose whole life was a poem. I would hope my prophetic witness, such it may be, will be a counter-cultural solidarity, defined by apostolic action and spiritual mysticism, humble courage and caring concern, moving poetry and enthusing romance. For Fr. Arrupe this would mean falling in love with God! And for Jesus this did not exclude humans, but the last and least most especially.

A prophetic witness in the image and likeness of Jesus must be a counter-cultural one as Jesus was in his day. And so the defining image of my life as a Jesuit is this: to walk this earth as Jesus did, with my companions on mission, as friends in the Lord.

19. COMMUNITY AS MISSION: COMMUNITY AS PROPHETIC

Jivan, July 2011

FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS
LIVING AND WORKING
AB INTRA AD EXTRA MISSION
CRISIS AND CONSENSUS
PROPHECY AND WITNESS

Abstract

General Congregation 35 has affirmed 'community as mission'. To be a prophetic community implies that our mission too will be prophetic. Community as mission calls us to prophetic witness in both, our living and our working together.

Friends and Companions

General Congregation 35 has affirmed ‘community as mission’. However, this cannot happen through institutionalisation and bureaucracy, i.e., rules and regulations, organisational structures and monitoring,...These may bring an apparent harmony, but below the surface of the politeness, the letter of the rule displaces the inspiration of the spirit, routine overrules charisma, ritual substitutes for witness. The connect with community as mission is at best formal, at worst missing.

When we live in community as ‘friends in the Lord’, our affective centre is located in the relationships that support and challenge us. This brings a sense of belonging, and affirms our common identity of ‘who we are’ and ‘what we do’. After all one’s personal identity is never an individual or isolated matter; it is always in a social context, embedded in a web of relationships that together makes for a collective identity, as a group, a community of friends. A person’s identity must have a social dimension or it is severely truncated.

Now if we are friends in the Lord we must also be ‘companions on mission’, teamed together in a common venture, one mission in our many ministries. This strengthens our commitment to our mission, inspires and calls us to the magis. Community then becomes mission, centred in friendship and companionship yet ready to be dispersed on mission in our various ministries. For such a community is premised not so much on being located in the same place, as belonging and working together for a corporate venture.

Living and Working

Building and facilitating such a community cannot be done with an authoritarian, hierarchical structure. This cannot bond us as friends and companions. But neither is community built by an individualistic laissez-faire permissiveness, ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’. If our mission is a corporate one, this must be reflected in our communities or there will inevitably be a disjuncture between community and mission. There must be a collective responsibility for both if we are to live and work together in a community as mission.

Obviously, this must be a collective venture and the responsibility of all community members. When we say the superior has the final say in community decisions, we must also affirm he has the first responsibility for community building. Similarly, *mutatis mutandis*,

community members too must claim a voice in, and accept responsibility for the community. More importantly, the purpose of this community must be mission, whether directed *ad extra* or *ad intra*. What the General Congregation is emphasising is the connection between the two. For the way we live and the way we work are integral aspects of our one mission.

Institutionalisation and bureaucracy are means to give stability and continuity to the community. They must not substitute for its purpose. Means displacing ends is all too common in organisations and our communities and institutions are no exception. Only a continuing awareness and monitoring can address this endemic issue. Communities that neglect to do so betray their mission. At best such communities become a convenience for individuals living together, at worst a countersign and eventually a scandal.

Measuring up to this is a difficult challenge for any community today, and the task is the more delicate when there are difficult members and strong-headed individualists in the group, or when leadership in the community is rigid and tradition-bound. However, the critical Ignatian norm for any discernment is always the greater good. In the context of community as mission, the intention of the rule-maker not a superior's ad hoc interpretation legitimates the rule, it is the spirit of the law not its letter must guide us to this greater good;

Ab Intra ad Extra Mission

Community as mission is Janus-faced: looking to the needs of the members as also to the requirements of mission. It must maintain a delicate dialectic between authority and obedience, freedom and responsibility, trust and accountability. In other words, it must be an open-ended endeavour that seeks not the security of the old stability, but the magis of our ever-renewed mission.

Perhaps this is idealistic but that does not mean it is impractical! For Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuit magis is all about high aspirations that are made effective with prudent practice, not compromise on either side: authoritarian imposition or laissez-faire licence. Both undermine credibility and community spirit. Either members become a passive and some sullen presence in the community or they find ways of individual and private adjustment.

Community life is not meant to be a substitute for our mission, and yet an overly task-oriented community will eventually undermine

itself to the point of being counter-productive. Rather an enriching community life strengthens and calls us to the magis in our mission. Moreover, even when the mission is a collective endeavour, teamwork must be premised not just on efficiency and competence, but equally on supportive and challenging relationships as well. It makes personal contributions so much the more effective. This is what community and mission is all about: living as friends, working as companions, centred in community, reaching out beyond.

Crisis and Consensus

Community as mission is necessarily premised on a moral community of friends and companions. The juridical structures are meant to firm this up they cannot substitute for it. This is what Ignatius meant by the law of charity and love being primary in the Society, even as it is spelt out in our Constitutions and updated by our General Congregations. Hence it is moral authority, rather than juridical structures that is the key to building such a community as mission. This precisely is the crisis of authority that is then reflected in the crisis of obedience. For, if subjects are bound in conscience to obey, superiors too are equally bound in conscience to listen, to dialogue and build consensus through community discernment.

Consensus building is critical for moral authority in a moral community. Accommodating difficult members in such a community is a delicate task. A blame game between superior and subject is not our way of proceeding. It only deepens the crisis. Resorting to authoritarian dictates by falling back on legal authority is a sure sign that a superior has little moral authority. The superior always has the final say, but never the only say. Only God has the final say, and no one has a monopoly on God. Hence community discernment must mediate consensus.

Buying an easy peace with difficult members often runs the risk of putting a premium on nastiness: if I am nasty I will get my way for the sake of peace. Authoritarian impositions may bring an apparent quiet while hidden resentments build up. Avoiding difficult decisions postpones rather than resolves the underlying issues that impede a discerned community consensus. All this undermines community as mission, which must be the superior's first responsibility not an add-on to the others he may have. If anything the reverse is true.

However, it also very much a co-responsibility with community members and it places demands on them as well. For a community of friends and companions cannot be built on a merely pragmatic

tolerance of each other. This at best brings a cheap and very superficial peace, at worst an isolated and alienating co-existence. Our tolerance of each other must be positive and proactive, appreciative of each other and expressive of it as well. Our consensus must be built not on debate that ends with winners and losers, but on genuinely open and equal dialogue. This is what bonds friends and companions in living and working together. But it does demand a large amount of patience and persuasion, self-negation and discernment on all sides.

Prophecy and Witness

A telling criterion of discerning how we measure up to these demands of community living is the quality of conversations and encounters, of meetings and prayer in our communities. But there is a more incisive and challenging image that GC 35 gives us in how a Jesuit identity should be perceived: ‘Our lives must provoke the question, who are you that you that you do these things ... and that you do them in this way?’ (GC 35 Dec 2 No. 10) This is a call to prophetic witness in our way of life. Indeed, a prophet witnesses to a deeper more fundamental reality by the way he lives even more than what he says or does.

Prophetic witness is seldom efficient in terms of a cost-benefit analysis, but it is effective in the questions it raises and the challenges it inspires. The General Congregation is calling us to the magis of living community as such a prophetic witness to our mission. Will people see us in community and ask: who are these men who live this way and why do they do it? But then again to be a prophetic community implies that our mission too will be prophetic. Community as mission calls us to prophetic witness in both, our living and our working together.

20. INTELLECTUAL APOSTOLATE: PASSIONS OF THE MIND, COMPASSION OF THE HEART

Jivan, October 2013

CLOSED MINDS, SEALED HEARTS
BRIDGING THE DIVIDE
THE CHALLENGE
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND SOCIAL PRAXIS
ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS
PROPHETIC WITNESS
TEAMWORK AND ASCETICISM
REFERENCES

Abstract

Unreflected activism without a solid grounding in theory degenerates into sloganeering. A concerned and thoughtful intervention in society requires both an open mind and an unsealed heart. This is the minimum we can require of a Jesuit intellectual apostolate, as described in GC 34 Dec. 16, No. 1 on 'The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries'

Closed Minds, Sealed Hearts

Many Jesuit social activists tend to dismiss the intellectual apostolate as impractical and even irrelevant, sometimes explicitly, at others more by implication. Their stance towards these 'intellectuals' seems to be: 'you have nothing to teach us about social justice'. But eventually, unreflected activism gets mired in pragmatism with a receding horizon of hope. Such activism runs on an 'ideology', perhaps unconscious and not explicitly articulated. But without a sound grounding in theory, it inevitably degenerates into sloganeering. Action becomes repetitive, ideas remain stagnant. There is a closing of the mind to new ideas.

Then again there are academics, who are certain they can learn little from insertion in the social apostolate: has anyone said anything significant on justice after Aristotle? Aquinas has said it all! Such classism and medievalism dates a person's mindset and locks it up in the ancient and medieval worlds. There is an urgent need for a reality check or rather shock therapy, to bring such persons to contemporary realities on the ground. Here there is a sealing of the heart to new learning experiences.

However, a concerned and thoughtful intervention in society requires both an open mind and an unsealed heart. This is the minimum we can require of a Jesuit apostolate. Both these positions are alien to the Jesuit intellectual apostolate, as described in GC 34 Dec. 16, No. 1 on 'The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries':

'Since its foundation, the Society has held intellectual labour in high esteem, ... For this reason General Congregation 34 strongly affirms the distinctive importance of the intellectual quality of our apostolic works.'

Bridging the Divide

Intervention on an issue is premised on a felt concern. An informed involvement requires the data-collection of data, its analysis, and interpretation. All three stages need a theoretical framework that derives from an ideological perspective premised on theoretical reflection. Using available studies needs an adequate and intelligent perspective in which to evaluate the findings before we accept and act on them. Or else we are allowing ourselves to be uncritically led. All this requires serious intellectual effort for effective, committed action.

We see how those attempting serious socio-political change in society, whether of the left or the right of the political spectrum, are committed to fostering in-depth studies to impact the public discourse in their favour even at considerable cost and investment of personnel and finance. They set up, not just PR endeavours, but also think-tanks and study centres and circles to train their own cadre and impact the public discourse in their interest.

Serious study is very much part of the DNA of the Society, though obviously not all of it. In its response to needs and demands in our contemporary world, GC 32, Dec 4, in 1974, refocused the mission of the Society in terms of the 'service of faith and the promotion of justice'. Unfortunately, the fallout for those who took seriously the call to a preferential option for the poor but misread Dec 4, was a

devaluation of the intellectual apostolate; it was seen as too academic and isolated, situated as it was in our universities and colleges. This did not speak convincingly to the lives of the poor.

To correct such a misreading of GC 32, Dec 4, Fr. Arrupe wrote a letter to the whole Society on 'The intellectual Apostolate in the Society's Mission Today' in 1976. Already in the Decree itself, there is an anticipation that addresses this issue. Referring to the false idols and images with which secularisation has permeated our world, No. 26 (a) of the decree challenges us to 'find a new language, a new set of symbols that will enable us to rediscover the true God... to share our human pilgrimage and make human destiny irrevocably our own.'

Moreover,

'each particular situation should be subjected to a careful diagnosis, using the analytical instruments of both the sacred as well as the secular sciences... followed by a serious spiritual discernment of the pastoral and apostolic aspects.'
(No. 44)

The Congregation called us to adapt 'the structures of theological reflection, catechesis, liturgy, and pastoral ministry be adapted to – or rather, grow out of – local needs.' (No. 54). Clearly all this implies that Our Mission Today as sketched in Dec 4 is much broader than social activism and our social interventions must be deeper than mere pragmatism!

Our intellectual apostolate in our institutions of higher learning is particularly problematic as these endeavour to reorient their vision and mission in response to Dec 4. But the university has never been the only location of this apostolate. Think of Matteo Ricci and Robert De Nobili, of Henry Heras and Camille Bulcke, Henry Santapau and Cecile Saldanha and so many whose scholarship had an enormous impact on the mission they were inserted into. Obviously, the Jesuit intellectual apostolate is more than just academics, but to deny our institutions of higher learning a place in the intellectual apostolate is to overextend the brief of Dec 4 in devaluing these institutions.

The Challenge

Today the calling of the Jesuit intellectual apostolate is twofold: first to provide a perspective for the reorientation of our other apostolates that the ‘service of the faith and the promotion of justice’ demands; and second to interrogate the terms of discourse prevailing in a world which is all too often contrary to the kingdom of God. Both these must be done at two levels: the personal vocation of the individual Jesuit, and the corporate mission of our institutions.

At the personnel level, the Society has always invested enormously in the formation of its men. Formation is the personal capital that a Jesuit brings to his apostolate. Every Jesuit is expected to work ‘intelligently’. A commitment to the ‘intellectual life’ must first be nurtured and integrated into one's spiritual life in formation. Unlike Thomas a Kempis, a Jesuit must feel and also be able to define compunction! (Ch 1, 3) This requires a contemporary contextualisation of both the content and method of our formation and an accompaniment of our scholastics by formators. Ideally Jesuit intellectual would be a scholar-saint. Many of our formators were examples of such scholarship and saintliness.

However, Our Mission Today is even more demanding. Scholarship and sanctity notwithstanding, the Jesuit must be an intellectual and an activist, a thinker and a doer, discerning ideas and ideals, as well as committed to values and norms. Ivory tower isolation in formation houses might well have been suited to the integration of the intellectual and the spiritual life once but it cannot do for the integration demanded by GC 32 of a faith that does justice and justice inspired by faith. This integration must be forged by insertion into the real and experiential world of the poor and marginalised, not in an ideal and notional one of the academy, and certainly not in a hothouse scholasticate. For this, our formation has to extend beyond the desk to the field, beyond the classroom to the street, and integrate both into an ongoing pedagogic experience.

This ongoing quest to meet the changing circumstances and challenging demands of our mission today in an integral and inclusive manner is surely the special contribution that a Jesuit brings to his apostolate, whatever and where it is. This is still something that others have come to depend on Jesuits for, in spite of our many other shortcomings. Hence GC 32 in Dec 6, on ‘The Formation of Jesuits’ in No 18, emphasised that: ‘a truly contemporary apostolate demands of us a process of permanent and continuing formation.’ And of course,

this must begin with our formators themselves first! This is their priority intellectual apostolate, rather than extra-mural ministries.

Academic Excellence and Social Praxis

A merely intellectual academic life is inadequate for this challenge. Jesuit intellectuals are still struggling to find ways precisely as intellectuals to exercise their option for the poor for the promotion of justice. In our complex and changing world, measuring up to such a calling necessarily stretches our Jesuit imagination and lifestyle, calling us to a constant commitment to the Jesuit magis.

Prior to GC 32 the Jesuit intellectual apostolate was, to my mind, overcommitted to 'academic excellence' as the 'summum bonum' of Jesuit intellectual life. In today's context of Dec 4, this is inadequate if not misplaced. It was more an import from secular academia in which our men and their institutions were embedded, rather than from an authentic Ignatian inspiration.

Academia is committed not to the poor but to an intellectual elite. Academic institutions are far less concerned with changing the injustices of their societies than to support the status quo of the establishment. Intellectual neutrality, value-free knowledge, objective rationality were the discourse that underpinned their perspective and standpoint. The sociology of knowledge has unmasked such obfuscation long since Karl Manheim's time. Privileged elites have little real motivation to change their world, except perhaps to make it more of the same! Theirs is to interpret the established status quo, not to change it.

Thus an organic relationship between intellectual theory and social engagement was lost. This is a classic instance of Paulo Freire's 'banking' system of education: learning is receiving knowledge passively. The social capital thus accumulated is then banked where it will pay interest to the investors and provide capital to the bankers for profitable uses. Most knowledge elites earn their keep not by challenging the prevailing public social discourse but by promoting it. At most they nuance and tweak it in the same direction.

Against this, Freire advocates a praxis approach of action-reflection-action, which many left-leaning intellectual activists have used. This provides a model for a committed Jesuit engagement as well. Freire's praxis involves an analytical reflection on involvement in action to refine it further for more fine-tuned, incisive action, and then reflection again in an ongoing reiterated process of action-

reflection-action, in which action and reflection complement each other. Such a praxis does not privilege one over the other, but brings together both in an experiential grounding of thought with an analytical reflection on action. Surely such praxis ought to be a defining characteristic of a Jesuit intellectual. I certainly discern an authentic Ignatian way of proceeding here.

Organic Intellectuals

For this, the Jesuit must position himself with Antonio Gramsci's organic intellectual and not be merely as an academic one, even if he happens to be in an academic institution. This is the challenge of the Jesuit intellectual after GC 32: to identify and belong to the subaltern group he speaks for and positions himself with, and from here to articulate for the group an analysis of their life situations, addressing critical issues arising therein.

This is not some lowbrow substitute for the intellectually challenged, who fall short of academic excellence. Organic intellectuals must be as rigorous as any in argumentation and presentation, and as prolific in publications, if they are to intervene effectively in the public discourse and impact the structures of society that affect the lives of people. Intellectual rigour must not be surrendered for the options we make but rather the demands of this rigour and the commitment to our options should complement each other bringing both insight and urgency to the discourse. This is what a 'public intellectual' does: Edward Said, Amartya Sen, Noam Chomsky, and numerous others, do this very effectively. We need more Jesuit public intellectuals today.

Organic intellectuals bring the reflection dimension to action by positioning themselves within, not without the life situations of the poor and marginalised. The perspectives and purposes they bring to their study, the pre-judgements and agenda they set out with are radically different from those of traditional academics. They seek not just to interpret in order to understand, but to understand in order to change. Their commitment is not to the truth of their ideas but to justice for their people. GC 34, Dec. 16 No. 6, 'The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries' requires

'that each of us acquire the ability to live the creative tension between profound insertion into all the details of our work and an open and critical attitude towards other points of view and other cultural or confessional positions. However, acceptance of such

tension must not lessen our witness of personal commitment to the service of the Church in its journey towards the Kingdom of God.’

Prophetic Witness

As a corporate mission, the Jesuit intellectual apostolate is beyond the capacity of an individual Jesuit. To be effective and sustainable it must have some institutional basis but a flexible one. Much caution is required lest the institution as the means displaces the mission as its goal. From its founding, the Society has sought to meet such complex challenges corporately. The natural location for our intellectual apostolate becomes our institutions of higher learning, for teaching and research.

But when these are overtaken by other compulsions, they betray their core purpose as means displace ends. And so Jesuits there end up not as public intellectuals but as academic teachers. This does not make the institution a prophetic witness to the kingdom in the service of faith and the promotion of justice. Rather by default, it can even become a counter-witness.

Reflecting on his murdered companions at the Universidad Centro Americano, Jon Sobrino rightly insists that an institution, which supports an unjust status quo, even by default, is part of the sinful structures of that society. (Sobrino, Jon, 1991) In such a society an institution that sets itself to pursue truth and justice will certainly be at odds with a social environment of untruth and injustice. The Jesuit university’s mission will be to unmask the untruth and expose the injustice. Sobrino’s Jesuit companions in San Salvador were martyred in this cause. This is precisely the intellectual vocation of Jesuits in such institutions, not merely administrative efficiency or academic excellence, but to speak truth to power, and witness to justice against oppression.

Obviously, this requires a credible institutional base, but over and above this, it requires our institutions to take a collective stand on social issues in terms of the value commitments and goals we profess. To neglect this, amounts to a rejection of the critical and transformative role that our institutions are called to exercise. Unfortunately, too many academic institutions have become secularised to the point where institutional commitments are considered an embarrassment to academic freedom, and the resulting pluralism degenerates into permissiveness. Such institutions do not move society, they just mirror it.

As with individuals more so with institutions, free-floating, value-free intellectual professional ones become dangerously uncommitted resources available to be uncritically coopted to ambiguous causes. Without an integrating vision, the inner dynamics of academic institutions tend to excessive professionalism and overspecialisation. This leads to a compartmentalisation of knowledge and an atomisation of the disciplines. It fractures the overarching perspective of the intellectual endeavour that then easily loses its way in the in academic details of teaching and research. In our institutions of higher learning, this betrays the very purpose of the Jesuit intellectual apostolate and distances such institutions from their mission of the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

In an acceptance speech on receiving an honorary doctorate at the Jesuit University of Santa Clara, California, Ignacio Ellacuria, the martyred rector of the Universidad Centro American, San Salvador, pointed to a vision and mission of a Christian-inspired university:

‘As a social force, it should enlighten and transform that reality in which it lives and for which it should live... The University should become incarnate among the poor, it should become science for those who have no science, the clear voice of those who have no voice, ...’ (cited Sobrino 1991: 51-52)

Those San Salvadorean Jesuits authenticated their commitment to this vision and mission with the witness of their martyrdom. The shock of their murder eventually precipitated a national peace process and healing. This is eloquent testimony to what the Jesuit intellectual apostolate, individually and collectively, can do for the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

Teamwork and Asceticism

The idea of a corporate commitment to the intellectual apostolate, as reoriented by GC 32, Dec 4, is still to be operationalised in our institutions of higher learning. Putting together an interdisciplinary team on selected issues to impact the society and environment in which these institutions are embedded would be a good start. This can reach out to a whole spectrum of socially relevant action-research projects: from the physical and biological sciences to the social and behavioural ones, from the humanities to the arts, and from issues of ecology and theology to those of violence and peace. The dynamics of this will further involve making it possible for capable Jesuits to join

and contribute to such a project, and not merely making it an add-on to the many other demands that such Jesuits already have.

The intellectual apostolate requires a rigorous asceticism. It involves an enormous investment in long hours of study on one's own, and a patient apprenticeship to critique and feedback from others. Moreover, any serious scholarly project requires a long gestation period, before it sees a successful conclusion. There is little support and at times less understanding: from superiors, pressed with more immediate urgencies; or from companions, coping with their own heavy workload. Accompaniment from colleagues is not always readily forthcoming, appreciation rather rare, and recognition often posthumous if at all.

However, living out this long lonely haul with its anxieties and ambiguities, misunderstandings and misrepresentations, even from within one's own house, brings other rewards: a sense of a challenging mission fulfilled, a critical contribution made, and at the end of the day to hear: well done good and faithful servant from the one who motivates and integrates our lives as Jesuits.

The crucial question is the priority the intellectual apostolate is given in the Society. And there's the rub: too much lip service, too little real action. The South Asian Assistancy has a rich tradition of creative scholarship and serious research. We have a responsibility to keep it alive and growing. GC 32 calls us to another way of intellectual proactivism and now a new generation must pick up this baton and run with it into a future that will bring the kingdom of God closer!

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21.

GC 36 & THE JESUIT RESPONSE TO THE FRANCIS EFFECT

Jivan, 2016, Nov-Dec.

OUR JESUIT IMAGINATION
A PROPHETIC WITNESS
A DEFINING MOMENT
A DEFINING RESPONSE

Abstract

The 'Jesuit imagination' creatively expresses the inspiration of the Jesuits' spiritual vision and mission. When they renege on our Jesuit imagination, they lose the unifying thread; and they lose the plot.

Our Jesuit Imagination

In his first homily after taking office the new General Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ, called the audacity of faith to 'seek not only the improbable, but the impossible, because nothing is impossible for God' (Luke 1:37).

The unifying thread through the various ups and downs, twists and turns of the Jesuit saga, I suggest, is the 'Jesuit imagination' that creatively expresses the inspiration of their spiritual vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation into which the Jesuit is inserted, imagining new possibilities and daring new ventures, projecting them into the future in anticipation of our mission today and tomorrow. When we renege on our Jesuit imagination, we lose this unifying thread; we lose the plot,

and then what will be left of our mission? It easily becomes ‘a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing...’

A Prophetic Witness

Prophets witness by living out that inspiration in their lives rather than thundering against people in the marketplace from safe ivory towers or minarets. Prophets do the deeds that make their words credible. General Congregation 35, put together a triptych: Identity, Mission, Community, and challenges us to a prophetic witness: ‘our lives must provoke the questions: ‘who are you, that you do these things ... and that you do them in this way?’ (GC 35. 3.2.10) This applies to our personal and community lives.

Moreover, in our complex, confusing world of networked organisations and interests, a prophetic witness is most effective when it is cooperative and corporate. Given our huge institutional investment in our various apostolates what is needed today is prophetic witnessing not just by charismatic individuals, but by our institutions as well. This is an enormous challenge but Pope Francis himself has not shied away from it. The *Economist* has aptly called him an ‘Operating Prophet’. (Apr 19th 2014.)

Pope Francis’s example challenges us to make a prophetic breakthrough with our contribution to society and the Church Only discernment can show us how to respond. Furthermore, we need to take this to another level with a prophetic institutional witness for today. For this we must read the signs of the times and build contrast-communities of solidarity in continuity with our faith, to be a sign of contradiction in the world, for the world. The Jesuit of Universidad Centroamericana (Central American University) in San Salvador did this by standing against the injustices of a brutal regime, and six Jesuits paid for this with their lives. Their martyrdom precipitated a nationwide peace process.

Bureaucratisation and professionalisation of our institutions may streamline our administration. Yet organisational structures are but means to fulfil the ends of our mission not merely institutional goals. Institutional efficiency must not replace prophetic effectiveness. Rather efficiency must serve effectiveness, not vice versa. This holds good for both our institutional and personal witness. This is a dilemma that cannot be resolved, it must be lived. With our falling numbers in the Society, we need a collective discernment to make a breakthrough. And we must have the Ignatian courage, which is not

different from Ignatian prudence, to pull down where necessary and build up as needed and where called. Rather than do what others are doing better, we need to discern what needs to be done and do it well as we can. We would do well to exorcise the demons of fear and doubt that prevent us from doing this. Like Ignatius, we need hearts to embrace the whole world.

A Defining Moment

In his first meeting with the media on 16th March, Pope Francis referring to his choice of patron sighed: ‘Oh, how I wish for a Church that is poor and for the poor.’ This is a defining moment, a *kairos*, for the Church, and particularly pertinent in our consumerist and unequal society, which has forgotten how to care and share, even as multiple crises overtake us on all sides. Pope Francis’s vision and mission has brought a paradigm shift for the Church. He has called the Church to be poor and for the poor; to witness to the joy of the good news (*Evangelii Gaudium*); to be merciful as the precondition to reconciliation and harmony; to sustain and regenerate creation (*Laudatio Si*).

He challenges us to come out of our comfort zones. It is a call for a prophetic witness that contextualises our preferential option for the poor and the promotion of justice in solidarity with them. It is a radical and counter-cultural call for renewed priorities in a world of conspicuous consumption and desperate deprivation, of power as the instrument of the privileged few and not at the service of the multitudes of the powerless, of the pursuit of self-referential individualistic goals not the common good of all.

We need to constantly contextualise our understanding of what it means to be poor for our Church today and every day. Who are the poor, the *anawim*, and how they are to be served today? What does the option for the poor mean in the wider context of our Jesuit tradition? How must this option be exercised in the communities and constituencies we serve? What sort of justice and reconciliation must this option promote? How do we develop an effective Christian praxis for the service of the faith and the promotion of justice? What are some of the implications for our apostolates and institutions of being a prophetic witness to the kingdom of God to which we are all called?

To address such questions, we must identify unjust structures and endeavour to dismantle and replace them with more just and egalitarian ones. This requires collaboration among ourselves and

with people of goodwill. Further, it demands a Christian praxis of action-reflection-action, for both process and product, for means and ends are both important and must not be compromised or corrupted. On the contrary, ad hocism may keep us busy but finally such improvisation repeats itself and eventually changes little, except to make do-gooders feel good as they mouth platitudes and shout slogans. Such an option for the poor becomes easily the refuge of scoundrels, for it does not impact the status quo, either structurally or culturally, but rather perpetuates the need for such do-goodism.

Rather what is necessary is a viable socio-cultural analysis that will interrogate the terms of the discourse that dominate and stymie our well-intentioned endeavours with unintended effects. I believe this is the best contribution we can make to society and the Church today. It is a challenge we all are called to face together as a believing, prophetic counter-cultural community of solidarity, of caring and sharing. It is the challenge Pope Francis gave the Society on the 200th anniversary of its restoration, 14 September, 2014. And it is emblazoned on the logo of GC 36: 'Row out into deep water'. (Lk 5: 4)

A Defining Response

Jesuits have been at the leading edge of controversies and conflicts and have ventured into difficult and dangerous terrain. They have read the signs of the times and have rearticulated contextualised our mission in response innovatively and daringly.

Decree 4 of the GC 32 in 1974 articulated 'Our Mission Today' as 'the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. ... for the reconciliation of men and women among themselves, which is the reconciliation God demands, must be based on justice.' (No. 2) GC 34 in 1995 in decree 2 on 'Servants of Christ's Mission' (No.19), broadened this mission of faith and justice to include culture and dialogue, spelling out the interrelationship between the four. GC 35 in 2008, in decree 3 on 'Challenges to Our Mission Today' calls us to 'promote reconciliation and peace', (No 18) with God (No. 18) with one another, (No. 25) with creation, (No. 31) 'and to witness to the reconciliation in solidarity of all the children of God.' (No. 43).

Now we need to reaffirm and live the integration of all these six: a *faith* that does *justice*, is sensitive to *culture*, committed to *dialogue*, sustained by *reconciliation* and *peace*, reaching out in forgiveness, culminating in harmony, anticipating the kingdom of God, already now but not fully yet.

We pray that General Congregation 36 will define our Society's response to the challenge of Pope Francis's vision and mission: to set our hearts on fire so we can set other hearts on fire; to call us out of our comfort zones and to live the magis; to challenge us to be men of God and men in the world; to be mystics for God and prophets in the world, 'seeking God in all things and all things in God'; to have that audacity of faith to 'seek not only the improbable but the impossible because nothing is impossible for God.' (Luke 1:37), as Fr General Arturo Susa urged in his first homily on taking office.

After Vatican II, the Arrupe effect reset the Society of Jesus on this trajectory that stretched out to new frontiers and beyond. We now need the Pope Francis effect to bring a tsunami of the Spirit in the Society to take to new horizons and beyond. Let us then row out into the deep water and prayer for the Spirit to be able to read, discern and respond to the signs of the times and define a committed and effective response. Surely being true to our Ignatian charism demands no less.

22.

THEORISING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT: A NOTE ON LOK MANCH

Jivan, 2017, Sept, 8-13 /3375 words

PRACTICAL PRAXIS

CONCRETISING AN IDEOLOGY

CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGISING

CONSEQUENTIAL IMPLICATIONS

CONCLUSION

Abstract

Lok Manch, a major initiative of Jesuits in Social Action (JESA) in the South Asian Assistancy, was begun a little over a year ago with the two Indian Social Institutes of Delhi and Bangalore as founding members with JESA. This is an attempt to conceptualise the initiative as a faith-inspired inclusive movement so that it can be up-scaled and replicated, motivated by a relevant ideology and an inspired by an appropriate liberation theology and driven by an effective spirituality of action.

Practical Praxis

Learning from our field experience and reflecting on it is a much-neglected aspect of our work in the South Asian Assistancy, in our apostolates and institutions, and more especially where it is most needed, as with new ventures in a fast-moving environment. Given the resources we have and the opportunities available, this amounts to a culpable neglect. An absence of a serious critical reflection on action can only end in 'ad hocism' that leaves us going in circles, repeating mistakes without learning from them, forgetting achievements without carrying them forward, wasting resources when they are already scarce. To break this routine we need to

integrate a process of praxis as articulated by Paulo Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: action – reflections – action in an on-going accompaniment to all our works. (1970) This must be an pervasive commitment in all our endeavours. It is very much part of Ignatian discernment.

Lok Manch (LM) as a large and significant project in which JESA is heavily invested, has the potential of being replicated as a model of collaboration in other apostolic fields, *mutatis mutandis*. There have no doubt been reports and reviews but so far they have not been articulated and theorised in a framework that would help to focus, plan and lift the project to the next level in scale and scope once it reaches a constraining threshold. This is critical if there is to be continuity with new participants being initiated into the culture and dynamic of Lok Manch as a people's movement.

Lok Manch (Peoples' Forum) is conceived as a platform for social action organisations to work for the 'Development and Access to Entitlements of the Marginalized.' (See Document: Understanding Lok Manch) These organisations would include faith-based and other NGOs. It is premised on the principle of collaboration with like-minded agencies for a common goal in an interactive network of support. This is articulated in its vision: building an egalitarian, just, inclusive, democratic and secular society in India, spelt out in 3 objectives:

- a vibrant national platform,
- for improved access to government schemes,
- identifying gaps in policies and implementation.

These are to be monitored, reviewed and evaluated by 3 indicators:

- lobbying for the implementation of schemes,
- improved access of households,
- training of key leaders.

The process is further premised on 11 core values: liberty, justice, equality, fraternity, love, peace, social commitment, gender justice, credibility, forgiveness and excellence. These are operationalised in 3 core principles:

- decentralized, participative decision-making;
- transparency in accountability;
- shared responsibility and teamwork;

All this sets a rather high bar for the partners It will require a selection process to screen out the chaff from the wheat, and a continuing socialisation into the inspiration of the organisational vision/mission to separate the sheep from the goats.

A detailed organogram illustrates how the network of partners will function. (See LokManch – Organogram) The network is envisaged as self-sustaining once set up and initiated by Lok Manch's National Committee. There is an ambiguity in the organogram where the National Committee (NC) is mentioned as the 'implementer', whereas elsewhere Lok Manch itself is referred to as a facilitating venture. This is not clearly indicated from the beginning in the founding documents, nor is the process of transition operationalised from initial implementer to ongoing facilitator. Moreover, whether sustainability is to be [remised on a top-down process or centred at the base for a bottom-up initiative, facilitated from higher levels in the organisational structure is a question that remains hanging. This must be clarified and spelt out if devolution and subsidiarity must be meaningful in the context. This is a first step in contextual theorising.

'Understanding Lok Manch' is spelt out in 13 bullet points. Summarising some of the key points from LM documents, Lok Manch must be conceived of as:

- a faith-inspired movement,
- of advocacy at the local level,
- for the marginalised and excluded,
- using its structures of organisation and leadership,
- to link the grass-root organisations to each other and to higher level structures,
- empowering access to entitlements from available government schemes,
- conscientising on communalism, caste discriminations, and other negativities, and
- building up leadership skills and knowledge.

It is imperative that the implicit ideological understanding, the theological framework and spiritual perspective underpinning our work, be made explicit and communicable to initiate collaborators and partners and so effectively sustain the vision and mission, and our way of proceeding. For if partners are to be on the same page in their understanding, they must be socialised into the vision and mission which gives purpose and meaning to the endeavour. This is all the more necessary if a facilitating agency must motivate by inspiration rather than the carrot and stick.

But first, the lesson from SAPI, an earlier version of Lok Manch must be learnt, lest they be repeated. Organisationally SAPI was rather similar to Lok Manch. The World Social Forum in Goregaon, Mumbai, 16-21 Jan 2004, was SAPI's high point, where it established

a significant presence on an international stage. However, its demise seems to have been due to its over-dependence on the Jesuit initiative, particularly that of the province Co-ordinators of Social Action (CSA), which was often not forthcoming as personnel changed and new ones had other interests and priorities. Hence, after 8 years, as new persons had little understanding of SAPI, they did not bite into its vision and mission. Funding too seems to have been an issue. The one layperson, still holding on with the remnants of SAPI, might be able to fine-tune our understanding of the decline of SAPI. There are two lessons here that need to be carried forward:

overdependence on Jesuit participation is no guarantee of continuity, rather it undermines capacity building in non-Jesuit personnel;

two, committed, responsible lay persons are the main building blocks of such a movement.

Moreover, an ideological perspective must be expressed in an organisational culture, which then becomes the creative basis for a consequent organisational structure. A mismatch between the two can be fatal. Too often we overemphasise structure and neglect culture, which then stymies any strategy for organisational growth and enrichment. We forget, what Peter Drucker said: culture eats strategy for breakfast. (Economist 11 Jan 2014) Articulating an ideology must be founded on experience, and the practical way to do this is with a praxis approach of Freire, mentioned earlier. The same would be true for a contextual theological understanding. Furthermore, a praxis approach for social action would be called for as will. This is to 'ideologise' and 'theologise' a movement.

This paper attempts to flag some of the key points that must be integrated into an ideology of social action, which must then be refined further by experience in the field, and followed by a faith reflection for a contextual theology of collaboration.

Concretising an Ideology

The bedrock of an ideology for Jesuit-initiated social action must be Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and the faith-vision implied there, which amounts to a Catholic Social Ethic, in contradistinction to the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. (Max Weber) Too easily on the one hand, have we assumed the invisible hand to resolve tensions and contradictions and paid homage to the gods of the free market and encouraged profit-making as human achievement; and on the other, for too long have we dogmatically accepted Marxist social analysis, without testing its relevance to the South Asian context. Aloysius Pieris has convincingly demonstrated the urgency for an Asian Liberation theology, not a transplanted Latin American one. Here are some of the crucial points in CST:

- the priority of the human persons as an ends-in-themselves, hence their inviolable dignity and freedom;

- human person as essentially a person-in community, not an individual by oneself, an independent monad;

- for to be person is to be inter-personal, i.e., being in relation to others in a network of relationships that constitutes a community;

- the human community is not made up of isolated monads in interaction but of interpersonal I-thou relationships that humanise persons, not I-it relationships that alienate Them. (Martin Buber):

- human relationships are not just a matter of survival, or mere convenience, but of ethical responsibility, and finally love;

- our ethical responsibility is exercised first for those most in need, the poor, the last and the least, marginalised and excluded, 'the widow, the orphan, the stranger'.

- this responsibility is shored up and sensitised by love, for the poor, the *anawim*....as the talisman of our authentic concern.

This ideology is social democratic, rather than liberal democratic. It must be concretised with a socio-cultural analysis as and when required.

Here there is little scope if any for unregulated free markets, or free enterprise principally for making profit rather than contributing to the common good; or for a consumerist culture that indulges the material and alienates the human. Hence CST implies that

markets are primarily for exchange, not for profiteering and speculation;
private enterprise must serve the public good not just private purpose;
man does not live by bread alone.

In other words, CST is necessarily counter to a political economy premised on market efficiency, individualised profit, and materialism. The ecological crisis is a stark pointer to where such a perverse political economy has brought our world today and where it is leading from here.

Finally, an ideology must find support in cultural expressions in social myths and rituals, the arts and literature. Rather than attempting to create a new organizational culture, suitable cultural expressions can be drawn from the broader culture of society, e.g, the rich understanding of ‘community’ in traditional and tribal society;
exchange relations as embedded in community structures,
not the market;
the person as part of, not apart from the human community
and the more inclusive eco-community;
the idea of frugality contrary to the prevailing consumerist culture.

Moreover, such an ideology premised on the common good, with down-up priorities, will call for collaboration both horizontal and vertical. We are all in this together and common/collective problems call for common/collective solutions. In our complex world, interrelated problems cannot be addressed individually or singly; rather they demand a corporate, integrated response. This is the ideological premise for collaboration and pooling resources through networking.

Contextual Theologising

There is a compelling scriptural and theological foundation for CST that need not be elaborated here. There is a rich and moving imagery for the Kingdom of God that represents the eschatological fulfilment of the ultimate common good. Here suffice it to say that there are complementary understandings in other religious traditions, among them the Gandhi’s seva-marg beginning with the last and the least, so beautifully expressed in his favourite bhajan *Vaishnava Janato*, the Bodhisattva mythology, the inclusiveness and equality of the Umma in Islam, the non-violence of Jainism, the

bravery of Sikhism,... All these make for inter-religious possibilities with like-minded collaborators, that can bring together faith-based NGOs in a dialogue of action. Further, there are other secular and political ideologies that vibe with this vision. This can add an 'extra-religious' humanist dimension to our dialogic endeavour. We still have to articulate a 'sacred secularity' and a spirituality to go with it, as Raimundo Panikkar has suggested, to consolidate our resources and inspiration, both ideological and theological.

If we understand spirituality as a vision and way of life, then within the ongoing *practice* of such a spirituality, *praxis* must become part of a discernment process, that opens us to that 'inner voice', the still small voice of conscience that speaks to us, as persons and in groups, in the innermost recesses of our hearts, where our deepest desires and concerns, our hopes and longings, not just for our own enlightenment and fulfilment, but of that collective dream waiting to be brought into the reality of a more just and human world. Too many of us suffer from the disease identified by the Australian aboriginals in their encounter with the colonialists: the White man he hath no dreaming!

Our world is becoming a dreamless nightmare, where the rich suffer from affluenza – the bad effects of living in a society where many people are too rich, such as always wanting new, expensive things or having to work too hard – and the poor suffer from deprivation and disease. We must find the motivation to bring hope to this broken, bruised, hopeless world. A social activist spirituality, whether religious or secular, faith-based or otherwise must be one of hope, so emphasised by the Marxist Ernst Bloch in his *Principle of Hope*, (1986) and so poetically expressed in George Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* (1921): 'You see things; and you say 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say 'Why not?' This is a worldly hope in the promise of the future reality as the noumenon hidden in the *maya* of the present phenomenon.

Consequential Implications

CST is an ideology of caring and sharing. For such an ideology to be effective it must be alert to, and deal promptly with the convenient abuse in the 'free rider theorem' that results in the 'tragedy of the commons'. The person or group that rides free on the generosity and goodness of others selfishly, taking advantage of a set-up but not contributing in turn to the venture, hollows it out. Eventually, once a certain threshold of free riders is crossed, this leads to a crash that can

only be set right by starting all over again with all the participants internalising the required mindset.

This corrosive and contagious malaise is rooted in a mindset that seeks one's own advantage, not community benefit, private profit, not social welfare, material goods, not spiritual happiness, individual privilege, not the common good. Common responsibility for the common good becomes no one's responsibility! This is a social Darwinism where the devil takes the hindmost, each for oneself in a war of all against all. This precisely was the basis of Thomas Hobbes's social contract, which begins on the premise that human life is 'poor, nasty, brutish, short', and only authority and force can sustain the social fabric. When this is inadequate, it leads to the 'tragedy of the commons', the degradation of common resources that finally presages the 'war of all against all'.

This 'tragedy of the commons' is most apparent in our present ecological crisis, but the same happens when social resources and social capital are drawn down but not reinvested in and replenished. Our present social crisis is surely the result of an excess of individualism and little sense of communitarian responsibility.

Salvatore Quasimodo expresses this movingly:

'Each alone on the heart of the earth
impaled upon a ray of sun:
and suddenly it's evening.'

We have forgotten John Donne's inspiration:

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.

For any effective network, this commitment to a common purpose for the common good is imperative, a *sine qua non*. Indeed, it is the relationship of inter-dependence between the nodes in the net that sustains it, or else it unravels into loose strings and isolated knots.

The theological basis for such a communitarian understanding of the human has a firm basis in Scripture, where the kingdom of God is for the people of God as a people, a community, not just as individuals. Salvation, for the Catholic Christian, is not an individualistic affair, but concerns us as persons-in-community, who make up the people of God that includes all persons of goodwill. As such we are called to collaborate with each other; this is embedded in our mission.

A second implication is regarding collaboration. This is essential for the complexity of the tasks to be dealt with today: confronting new

challenges with our limited and ever-diminishing resources, not just material and financial, but especially of personnel. However, partnerships cannot be genuine if they are instrumentalised. Collaborators must be partners not employees or volunteers who execute assigned tasks. Obviously, partners must be called to own the endeavour and their ownership will be proportionate to the responsibility taken, or rather given and accepted. To the extent they contribute their resources and invest themselves, they can claim and must be given ownership of the endeavour as well. This is the meaning of an equal, or rather equitable and meaningful partnership, and it demands a basic level of trust.

So much of our organisational collaboration suffers from a corrosive clericalism, that is unable to trust the lay person to be worthy and equal partners. This is the battle that Pope Francis is fighting in the Vatican dicasteries with their hierarchies and bureaucracies. It is part of a war that needs to be fought at lower levels and in other places as well. The assumption that only our own can be entrusted with our missions seems to show that so little has been learned from the recent scandals in the Church, not just at the local level, and in religious orders, not excluding our own. Undeniably then, clerical betrayal of trust and mission has been enormous.

Equal/equitable partnership demands an appropriate initiation of, and training for would-be partners. They must be competent and committed, and getting them there must be the responsibility of those sharing their mission. The spiritual understanding here is mission as gift, a gift that has to be shared, not kept for oneself. Sharing this gift means making collaboration with others a part of our mission, not a practical need to be fulfilled by employees when finance is available or by volunteers when finance is short. This is where collaboration must be grounded, in our obligation to share the mission we are called to together.

These are but two implications spelt out here. There are many others that need to be elaborated, which will depend on the context. This can be done in an ongoing praxis and suggested earlier.

Conclusion

In summary, then the starting point must be a practical praxis: learning from the past and reflecting on the present, reaching out to the future. This needs a sociocultural analysis based on Catholic Social Teaching, which is in essence about caring and sharing. This in turn must be concretised in a social democratic ideology, applicable in the local context. For faith-based groups, this can be further inspired by a liberation theology for Asia that goes beyond the religious to find a sacred space in the secular so that all like-minded persons of goodwill can be included in a dialogue of action for the common good. Only a spirituality of hope can make this praxis, this ideology, and this theology sustainable. And finally, discernment, collaboration and networking are founding premises which can make this mission effective for the kingdom.

This is a beginning exercise in theorising a people's movement. It may seem like a dream. But if I dream alone it may not add up to much, but if all dream together, that can make our dream a reality! Fr General Arturo Sosa has challenged us thus: *our audacity can go even further and seek not only the improbable, but the impossible*, because 'nothing is impossible with God'. Could we then dream of things that never were; and I say 'Why not?', with this audacity of faith we called to 'Row out into the deep water' (Lk 5:4).

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23.

JESUIT CONTRIBUTION TO NATION-BUILDING IN INDIA: CHALLENGING THE JESUIT IMAGINATION

Inaugural Address international seminar on the occasion of the 200th year Commemoration of the Restoration of the Society of Jesus on Jesuit Contribution to Nation-Building in South Asia from the Nineteenth Century till Today. Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, November 27-29, 2014 Later published in April 10, 2018

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Abstract

The celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of our restoration, calls for an open-ended encounter with our Jesuit past. In this sense, history as remembrance is also prophecy. Here I have focused on India and the Indian Assistancy.

From pre- to the post-restoration Society, there is continuity and change, rupture and rediscovery. The unifying thread through the varied historical circumstances of the 'The Jesuit Saga', is the Jesuit imagination that creatively expresses the inspiration of their spiritual vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation to which the Jesuit is missioned.

Coming to terms with our past in an open-ended encounter is a sine qua non for healing our memories and rebuilding our dreams. The celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of our restoration, calls for an open-ended encounter with our Jesuit past. In this sense, history as remembrance is also prophecy. Here I have focused on India and the Indian Assistancy.

From pre- to the post-restoration Society, there is continuity and change, rupture and rediscovery. The unifying thread through the varied historical circumstances of the 'The Jesuit Saga', is the Jesuit imagination that creatively expresses the inspiration of their spiritual vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation to which the Jesuit is missioned.

The pre-suppression Society embraced the challenges of their new world unfolding before them with discernment and daring. After the trauma of the suppression the 'cautious new beginnings' of the restored Society, must be read against the background of a politically conservative post-Napoleonic Europe and a defensively traditionalist post-Tridentine Church. Yet the Jesuits did still attempt to push back the constraints.

In the colonies of the imperial state, the colonial church was in thrall to the colonial state. In British India, Protestant churches were more likely to stand up to the colonial state than Catholic ones, from whom the Society took its cue. 'Nation-Building and the Colonial State' do not go together, and the contribution of Church and of the Society to nationalism would, if at all, be indirectly through civil society as the social infrastructure for nation-building.

'Three Defining Moments' brought three paradigm shifts: for the country, the Church and the Society. The freedom struggle espoused

a pluralist, democratic India to celebrate our diversity and protect the vulnerable, but now there are increasingly persistent and popular voices 'Contesting the Idea of India'. Vatican II began 'The Aggiornamento of the Church', with a big bang. Today it is still a project in progress though not without constraints and resistance. In this post-Vatican Church, the Society initiated a process with General Congregations 32 through 34 and 35 of 'rearticulating our mission today', first in terms of faith and justice, which was then broadened and deepened to include inculturation and dialogue, and collaboration with the laity as well.

I. Remembrance and Prophecy

An authentic historical consciousness can best be described as a passionate concern with the present, a compassionate interpretation of the past and taking both into a creative anticipation of the future. It is about discovering where we came from, so as to realise who we are and how we got here as we reach out to construct our future. We mine the archives of the past, not just to get at the 'facts of history', but also to find our origins in them, discover our roots there, and inspire hope for our future. Coming to terms with our past in an open-ended encounter is a *sine qua non* for healing memories and rebuilding dreams. In this sense, all history as remembrance is necessarily contemporary, that is, interpreted from the present. Thus in helping us to understand the present and read the signs of the times, history can also be prophecy.

A genuine historical memory must be faithful to the facts. We do not create the past nor can we recreate it. Yet the past is never quite dead, it lives in the present and has implications for the future. This is precisely the explosive potential of history. However, the selection we make of the facts and the meaning we give to them will demand an honest and sensitive transparency which preconceived prejudice does not permit.

A positivist approach to history presumes to base itself on a 'hard core of facts' following the popular wisdom of 'facts speak for themselves'. But historical facts, such as they are, come to us refracted through the observer, the recorder, the transmitter 'Facts' can hardly remain 'pure' on a journey of so many possible distortions, like a game of 'Chinese whispers' down the ages, across the globe. E. H. Carr insists that 'the facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order

or context.’ (Carr 1996: 11) Without a judicious selection, it is possible to drown in an ocean of detail. Our survival response to ‘information overload’, finally, settles us into a comfort zone of oversimplified stereotypes, loud sound bytes and enhanced media images. For Carr history is ‘a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past.’ (Carr 1996: 30) ‘Any reliable meaning derives from the interpretation of facts rather than the facts themselves.... Any interpretation moves from the illusive history to the engaging story.... History is accessible only through tradition and comprehensible only through interpretation.’ (Charlesworth 2007: 461)

My standpoint here is that of an Indian Jesuit trying to trace the story of the Jesuits in his country that will open the future rather than close the past. Hence in celebrating the 200th year of our restoration, I propose such an open-ended encounter with our Jesuit past for an interpretation and understanding that will call us into our future. Fr. General’s letter of 14th November 2013, the feast of St Joseph Pignatelli, on the ‘Commemoration of the second centenary of the Restoration of the Society of Jesus’ is a timely reminder:

‘As we all know, memory and identity are profoundly linked: one who forgets his past does not know who he is. The better we remember our history and the more deeply we understand it, the better we will understand ourselves and our identity as an apostolic body in the Church.... We wish to understand and appreciate our past better so that we may go forward into the future with ‘renewed fervour and zeal’ (GC 35, Decree 1) for our life and mission today.’

This is especially important for our young Jesuits in formation: to know, to recall, to celebrate family traditions, memories, stories, ... because our family values are embedded in our family traditions and carried into our future by memory, remembrance and recollection. This is a project for many conferences and seminars, and the books and documentation that could come out of them. In this presentation the approach will be to select critical issues by way of illustration, tracing their historical trajectory from their origins in the Society’s history, through their evolution in our mission today and projecting them into the future we anticipate for our mission tomorrow.

However, as we celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of this restoration, a triumphalist reading of the events might leave us with an emphasis on recreating the old rather than a reorientation to creating the new. For in the transition from the pre- to the post-restoration Society, there is continuity and change, rupture and

rediscovery. There are lessons to be learnt as we trace this trajectory: how, inspired by its original charism, the Society embraced the challenges of their new world unfolding then; how it once again tried to do the same at the restoration, and how it must do so yet again in each new age so as to carry it forward into the unfolding future.

In this presentation rather than getting lost in an overreach that attempts too much and finally falls short with too little, my approach will be focused on the Indian Assistancy: celebrating gratefully the mission of the pre-suppression Society, as indeed it deserves, examining critically the restored Society's endeavour to re-establish this mission, as indeed we must; and discerning the signs of the times to interpret anew that mission today so as to carry it forward for tomorrow.

Obviously, the pre-suppression Jesuits were men of their times and it would be unfair and presumptuous to judge them from our advantage point today. Times have changed and the self-understanding of the Society too. However, in spite of the rupture of the Suppression, it is in the Ignatian charism that the continuity of our identity must be resourced, not as it was expressed then and there, but in what it must call us to in the here and now, defined by a post-colonial, post-Vatican II, post-General Congregation 32 world.

I will attempt to trace the unifying thread through the various ups and downs, twists and turns of the Jesuit saga. This underlying unifier, I suggest is the 'Jesuit imagination' that creatively expresses the inspiration of the Society's vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation into which the Jesuit is inserted, imagining the future of new ventures and daring possibilities. I will focus on three areas more relevant to our South Asian Assistancy today: justice and reconciliation, inculturation and dialogue, and collaboration and the laity.

II. The Early Jesuit Saga

The trajectory of Jesuit history in South Asia dates back to the very origins of the Society of Jesus, even before its Constitutions were promulgated. The Jesuit mission in India, especially in the South was a thriving adventure and its suppression in 1773 was a traumatic rupture from which the Church has not yet fully recovered. We can only speculate 'on what might have been if only ...' But that would be an exercise in escapism, as would be any preoccupation with regret and recrimination. Certainly, the restoration of the Society in 1814

was a quiet vindication of the Jesuits and their mission, an affirmation of faith in the lasting validity of the Ignatian charism, a confident trust in its relevance of the Society of Jesus for the future of the Church and the world.

The Society of Jesus was founded as an international order with a characteristic universal mission expressed in the Fourth vow of obedience to the Pope, to go on mission wherever sent by him. As such, the loyalty of Jesuits to the emerging nation-states of 18th-century Europe was suspect with nationalist leaders of the time. They were perceived as more obedient to the Pope than loyal to their country and king. This suspicion only further compounded the misunderstandings and accusations that Jesuits were misusing their power and influence for things other than the national interest. Traditional and conservative interests in the Church colluded with them, opposing the Jesuits for their supposed doctrinal heterodoxy and lax moral teaching. Eventually, powerful nationalist leaders succeeded in compelling the Pope to repress the Order.

It was a devastating blow to the Society, surely the most severe crisis since its foundation in 1540. The forced withdrawal of the Jesuits from their missions in the colonies and beyond was an irreparable loss for the Church. The innovative apostolic approach of the Jesuits was reversed and no breakthrough could be made long thereafter.

As the Age of Reason followed the Age of Faith, the Jesuits as learned religious promoted a Christian humanism. They also initiated a dialogue between religion and science, by being both learned priests and competent scientists in their universities in Europe, and the Imperial Court in China, demonstrating in their lives the compatibility of faith and reason. There were other mission encounters too: with the poor and oppressed: Francis Xavier with the Parayas in South India, Peter Claver with the slaves in Cartagena in South America; with the high and mighty: in the courts of Europe, Agra and China...Indeed the Jesuits straddled this divide between the rich and the poor as they sought to bridge it justly and equitably: 'Non coerceri maximo, contineri tamen a minimo, hoc divinum est' (to reach out to the greatest yet stay by the least). (Cited Divarkar 1977: 23)

In their early missionary endeavour, with Mateo Ricci (1552 - 1610) and Roberto De Nobili (1577 - 1656), the Jesuits had initiated and fostered the Chinese and Malabar Rites. After prolonged controversies, they were finally approved in 1615 and 1623,

respectively. But controversies and contestations continued and were finally suppressed in 1704 and 1739 and eventually, they were definitively condemned by Benedict XIV in 1741 & 1744 respectively. The interdict was removed only in 1936 and 1939. The Paraguay Reductions (1609 - 1767) was an attempt to save Amerindians in Latin America from the genocide and ethnocide indigenous peoples faced in the terra nullius that were brutally colonised by Europeans. By and large, the churches in the colonies tended to side with the colonial state and even well-meant efforts for the indigenous peoples were suspect, especially when perceived to be at odds with state priorities. They were, seen as self-interestedly promoting the institutional Church and increasing their numbers with conversions.

The Church in much of Asia is still considered Western and hence alien. Certainly, in South Asia, religious nationalists regard the Churches with varying degrees of negativity, from active even violent hostility to passive often disengaged tolerance. In a post-colonial age, the churches here still cannot quite shake off their colonial past, especially in China, where the opium wars are not forgotten, and India, where aggressive proselytisation is still an unhealed memory. However, before we rush to judgment and condemn such misgivings, we need to examine and come to terms with our own history and the legacy it has left: turn the searchlight within as Gandhiji would urge his satyagrahis to do.

The worldview of the pre-suppression Jesuits cannot be ours today, but we can still be inspired by the daring that inspired their endeavours. The theology that underpinned the mission of Francis Xavier and the missionaries of those times will not motivate us today. But their courage, in pressing to the frontier limits of the worlds they knew then to 'save souls', must challenge us even in our own times. The Paraguay Reductions have their ambiguities with the paternalism with which they were ruled, and paternalism cannot be an option for us today. The Chinese mission with its elitist Mandarin tilt, was not an option for the poor. The Malabar rites with their casteist concessions are anathema for Dalits in India. Before the abolition of slavery, the Society and its missions were financed largely by slave labour on Jesuit-run farms in the Americas. Georgetown in Washington DC is now coming to terms with this by compensating the descendants of those slaves. Obviously, we must find other ways of financial viability for our apostolates and administration today.

In a hierarchical world, a top-down apostolic strategy might have made sense. However, as the old world of the *ancien regimes* passed

away, it took the Church and the restored Society a while to come to terms with the new realities of the new world being born. The mission strategy was basically top-down. More could be said and yet conceding all this there can be no denying that within the world view and discourse of these men their apostolic ventures were leaps of imagination, perhaps a leap too far for the political compulsions of the state and beyond the horizons the ecclesial understanding then.

Two and a half centuries too late the Church today is at last encouraging inculturation and dialogue with cultures and religions! Furthermore, going back to its sources (*ad fontes*), the Church, with the 'option for the poor', explicitly articulated in the World Synod of Bishops, 1971, is reaching out to the last and the least. The restored Society followed with General Congregation 32, (1974-75) which redefined Our Mission Today as the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

What we must carry forth from the saga of the early Society into our future, if we are to have one, is the Jesuit imagination so dramatically exemplified then and brought to bear on their apostolic mission in their encounters with other cultures and religious traditions that eventually evolved into a programme for inculturation and dialogue, for justice and reconciliation today.

III. Cautious New Beginnings

In 1773, Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus because 'it was very difficult, not to say impossible, that the Church could recover a firm and durable peace so long as the said Society subsisted.' (*Dominus ac Redemptor*). There is a complete reversal 41 years later by Pius VII's, '*Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum*' in 1814:

'We believe we would be guilty of serious crime in the sight of the Lord, if in such grave necessity we failed to put in place those helps that God, with singular Providence, gives us and if we, placed in the little barque of Peter, agitated and shaken by continuous swirls, were to reject such expert and brave oarsmen who offer themselves to break the waves of the open sea, that threaten us of shipwreck and ruin ...'

This reversal of perspective is quite remarkable!

And once again we must seek an explanation for this beyond the contingent events that led up to it. There was the changed situation in the world, and the Church realised the need for the ministry of the Jesuits to cope with this new and challenging scenario. Now the

restored Society had to engage with a Church and the world, both very different from the ones the Society was born into and even the ones in which it was suppressed later. This was a post-Napoleonic Europe now reacting to the earlier upheavals. It was a Europe of empires and colonies, a time of religious traditionalism and political conservatism. In both these domains, the status quo was privileged.

Once accused and condemned for religious syncretism and political instigation the new beginnings of the restored Society was understandably cautious. The Society 'took up its work officially overly conditioned by the politics of restoration inspired by the Congress of Vienna' in 1815. (Coll: 2014: 66) There was a need to affirm a continuity of identity with the old Society and so it 'worked hard to take on completely the way of life and customs of their predecessors.' (Danieluk 2014: 45) But in doing so they might have lost more by not innovating for the future in a new world being born, than was gained by retrieving the past and contextualising it in compatibility with the status quo. A creative fidelity to our original charism would have run counter to the conservative and defensive establishment of Church and state at that time. But given the trauma the Society had undergone and was just recovering from, this is quite understandable.

The restoration has been studied far less than the suppression and so the question of continuity and discontinuity between the 'Old' and the 'New' Society still needs to be addressed. Rather than a rupture there was surely a change of emphasis in the Society's apostolic priorities, away from the controversial to the more orthodox. They had to function within the confines of a fortress Catholicism, and the Protestant domination of large regions of Europe and the colonial world. However, the basics of Jesuit spirituality and identity remained though this was more contained by the prevailing ecclesial and secular status quo into which the Society now made a cautious re-entry.

Unfortunately, the compulsion of supporting their institutions and the scholastics' formation in Europe made the Society more dependent on their benefactors and more pragmatic too, though the apostolic zeal of the Society was evident in their going out to the geographic frontiers of the colonial world into new mission lands. The dynamic apostolates of the Society once again attracted numerous vocations that led to its rapid growth. However, there is less evidence of the creativity and daring of their earlier Jesuit predecessors. The restored Society in India was no exception. This cautious approach

inevitably reflected the constraints of their times and should be read in this context and not judged from our vantage point today.

The Jesuits arrived in Calcutta, the capital of British India then, in 1834, and rapidly spread from there south and west. Their apostolic witness was mainly through their institutions, schools and hospitals, mission stations and charitable works. They reaped a rich harvest of converts especially among the poor and marginalised, the low castes and the outcasts, the tribals and the Dalits. The more prestigious institutions of higher learning and academic endeavour in major cities were a very credible presence among the upper levels of colonial society and has carried over into the post-colonial period.

The restored Society, especially in the colonies, was necessarily cautious in regard to political involvements. In India, the Jesuits were very reluctant to oppose the Anglican colonial state that had welcomed them into its territories. If political engagement was beyond their mission and vision, a socio-cultural involvement was not. Their mission was to evangelise the non-Christians, plant the Church and build a Christian community of faith and move on from there to do the same where they were needed most. Nation-building was not part of this mission agenda.

IV. Nation-Building and the Colonial State

Colonial states exploited the colonies for the benefit of the mother country. It justified its rule as a civilising mission. For the colonial churches, this was understood as a Christianising mission, something more than civilising or humanising. It had to be pursued within the political compulsions that prevailed, and the theological and cultural context of the time. This meant evangelising the non-Christians by proclamation and witness. Besides direct proclamation, they witnessed the Good News through their many educational and other institutions and numerous charitable works. Where their message was accepted, they founded local Churches and established Christian communities.

This was an indirect contribution to nation-building in terms of creating the social infrastructure for a modern civil society, especially through their educational institutions, which were among the earliest exemplars for the new colonial education system in the country. There were many revolts against colonial rule: some local, tribal rebellions and peasant uprisings; others on a subcontinental scale, as was the

Great Revolt of 1857. But as yet there was no real consciousness of a common national identity or a quest for nationhood until the nationalist movement created such an awareness.

When we think of nation-building we think of *Old Societies and New States* in their *The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, (Geertz, ed. 1963). We seem oblivious of the historical experience of the West, where the idea of a nation-state originated. As an imperative for political unity in a country, a brutal uniformity was enforced with an aggression visited on their own peoples and also on other nations, as with the revolution and wars in Europe driven by jingoist nationalism ‘for God and country’; or when the imperial European powers expanded their colonies and subjugated conquered peoples to their repressive rule. Ironically, the unravelling of this world in the 20th century, saw post-colonial nations replicating this process in their haste to catch up with the developed nations. As people constructed a common socio-cultural identity, they sought to give political and economic expression to it as a nation-state. Local languages and dialects, ethnicities and subcultures were all subsumed in a uniformised national identity.

This would hardly be possible in the Indian subcontinent without a Balkanisation of the subcontinent. Differences of caste and class, religion and region, ethnicity and language are still deep and volatile, and could easily explode into violence if exacerbated by forced repression rather than being contained and constrained by a consensual overarching unity embracing the bewildering diversity of India’s rich religious and cultural heritage. This was a dominant inspiration of our freedom struggle against the colonial Raj, to celebrate an inclusive political unity in our rich cultural diversity.

With the nationalist movements in colonies, the Church and the Society found themselves in circumstances where discretion seemed to be the better part of valour. In British India, the Protestant Churches, and particularly the Anglicans as the official Church of the establishment, could more easily afford to challenge, and at times even face down the colonial government, though by and large they were in sympathy with, and supported the colonial state. The other Christian denominations, particularly the Catholic Church, were understandably more cautious in opposing the colonial state and its government lest they compromise their acceptance and overstay their welcome.

Both, the colonial Church in tandem with a colonial state were governed by Europeans. There was a social commonality and cultural

compatibility between the governing elites of the Churches and the Raj. This reflected the ethnocentrism of the age and was rationalised in terms of the 'white man's burden'. Not surprisingly most Churches and Churchmen distanced themselves from any direct involvement in the nationalist movement, even if perchance they were sympathetic to it. However, English Protestant pastors, especially Anglican ones, were far more likely to be bolder in supporting the freedom struggle in India than Catholic priests or Jesuits. There was no Catholic equivalent to C.F. Andrews, the exemplary Anglican Gandhian.

The Catholic hierarchy and the Society of Jesus in India at the time were largely European and unsurprisingly not very sympathetic nor very appreciative of things indigenous. In the colonies, the future, as they perceived, lay with a modern, and that meant Westernised, society and nation. The early Indian renaissance in Bengal and Maharashtra mirrored, internalised and presented such a perspective. This was evident in the way the Catholic Church dealt with Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya (1861-1907). He was a remarkable Catholic, who considered himself a 'Hindu-Christian', Hindu by dharma, i.e., by birth and culture, and Christian by his chosen sadhana, i.e., by rebirth in Baptism and his commitment to the Catholic Church.

His creative religious understanding was under suspicion then, though now its seminal value is recognised. Ironically Brahmabandhav was rejected by the Church for his heterodoxy, he was also deemed suspect by Hindus for his Christian profession, and charged with subversion by the colonial government for his nationalism. He was a man before his time, only now beginning to be recognised. Once again it would seem that an innovative opening to an inculturated Church, integrated into national life was missed. But then it is not surprising for a colonial Church to be part of the colonial system, and the Jesuits of the time were very much a part of this Church. In fact, most were foreign missionaries of European origin.

In the colonial state, there is little room for daring and creative apostolic initiatives, such as the inculturation De Nobili had pioneered; or for an Acquaviva in daring dialogue at Emperor Akbar's court. Yet the Jesuits did seek new frontiers in new missions as in western and southern India with the Dalits. They dared new ventures with the tribal, as did Constance Lievens (1856-1893). In 1885 in Chota Nagpur Lievens began with the usual mission services but went on to enable the tribals to defend their land rights, thus saving them from falling into bonded labour. Jesuits founded innovative

institutions— as John Baptist Hoffmann (1857-1928) who in 1909 started a Catholic cooperative society to save the tribals from exploitation by loan sharks. Today, there is a vigorous and vociferous Dalit Church in South India, tracing its origins to Francis Xavier, and in tribal Chota Nagpur, the Church is more than a million strong, with several tribal bishops and even its own cardinal.

However, the Jesuit institutional commitment was largely made in education, much of it in the cities, especially in higher education. Their mission parishes with schools attached to them became replicable models elsewhere. These were enduring commitments, but were not daring expressions of the Jesuit imagination that the Jesuit saga had shown earlier in the pre-suppression Society. There were more sober perhaps, but rather credible instances of this imagination in the departments of science in Jesuit institutions of higher learning, where Jesuits established a Christian presence in scientific disciplines and scholarly studies: in St Xavier's Calcutta, Eugene Lafonte (1837 - 1907) in Physics; at St Xavier's Bombay, Jean Ferdinand Causis in micro-biology, Father Ethelbert Blatter, SJ (1877 - 1934) who founded the Blatter Herbarium, and Hermenegild Santapau (1903 - 1970) who was Director of the Botanical Survey of India; Henry Heras (1888 - 1955) in history and Adolf Esteller (1899 - 1984) in Sanskrit in Bombay, Victor Courtois (1907 - 1960) with Islam in Calcutta, Camille Bulcke (1909 - 1982) in Hindi literature; in inter-religious dialogue, Robert Antoine (1914 - 1981) in Calcutta and Mathew Lederle (1926 - 1986) in Pune. And too many others to mention here.

V. Three Defining Moments

Postcolonial India offered a radically new context for the Catholic Church and the Society of Jesus. The transition necessarily meant an Indianisation, not just in personnel, but demanded a new ecclesial culture and self-understanding of the organisational structures and climate to express this. The breakthrough to a new level of engagement came with three defining moments in the second half of the 20th century opening up new horizons for new challenges.

The first, for the people of India with the end of the British Raj on 15th August 1947; second, for the Church universal with the Second Vatican Council, the 21st Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church, 11th Oct 1962 – 8th Dec 1965; third for the Society of Jesus with the 32nd General Congregation, December 2nd, 1974 – March 7th, 1975.

Each of these represented a paradigm shift and demanded a radically changed approach. We shall briefly outline the implications of each in turn for the country, the Church and the Society.

1. Contesting the idea of India

Nationalist movements that have powered colonised peoples into independence, often sacrificed real freedom for their peoples for the supposed glory of the nation. In India, Gandhiji, was very wary lest the nationalist movement merely replaces ‘white sahibs’ with ‘brown’ ones. He feared we might succeed in getting independence, (swatantrata, independence), from the British for the political and other elites, and fail in achieving freedom, (Swaraj, ‘self-rule’), or rather purna swaraj (integral ‘self-rule’) for the whole Indian people, especially for the last and least among them. The ideal he envisioned in his ‘Ramrajya’ was not just ‘freedom from’, but more so ‘freedom for’, freely to fulfil one’s duties not merely affirming of one’s rights. This was not just an economic-political agenda, but a socio-cultural revolution. Today we find his fears were all too prescient.

With independence, a new period in India’s history opened in the struggle for freedom from colonial rule in the subcontinent. The movement had constructed a new idea of India. The challenge now was to follow through and complete the social revolution promised with the promulgation of the Constitution spelt out in terms of civil liberties and democratic rights, and contextualised in the directive principles. The Gandhi-Nehru legacy was a consensus that interpreted these for both governance and civil society. Granville Austin, an early authority on the Indian Constitution, insisted that it

‘is first and foremost a social document. The majority of its provisions are either directly aimed at furthering the goals of the social revolution or attempt to foster this revolution by establishing the conditions necessary for its achievement.’ (Austin 1966: 50)

In Gandhian terms this meant going the distance from swatantrata to swaraj, from political independence from foreigners to integral freedom for our peoples. For Nehru there were two most critical problems to be faced, as he communicated to Andre Malraux in an interview:

‘Creating a just state by just means, ... Perhaps, too, creating a secular state in a religious country. Especially when its religion is not founded on an inspired book’ (Malraux 1968: 160).

The idea of India in our Constitution cannot be forced into a sectarian, communal interpretation without doing violence to its basic structure. Hindutva's pursuit of a Hindu Rastra, with its cultural nationalism and chauvinist 'majoritarianism', is really such an attempt, precipitated by the failure of earlier governments to do what they were elected to do: protect and promote the constitutional rights of citizens and implement the Constitutional agenda on the integral development of society and progress for all its citizens. This was so eloquently expressed in the Preamble to our Constitution:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation; IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

Regrettably, over the years the mainstream political parties and the successive governments they have formed have failed to effectively address the very real long-term challenges that have and still confront India. In the pursuit of lesser short-term goals, vested interests and poor governance have prevailed. The displacement of 'interest politics' by 'identity politics' has polarised our society into regional and linguist, caste and religious communities. The consequent cascade of crises and disruptions leaves us with an unresolvable contradiction between the Constitutional idea of a republican India premised on liberal democracy, and a Hindu Rastra premised on the Hindutva agenda of cultural nationalism, which is exclusivist majoritarianism.

The secular left now sees a connection between 'Saffronisation and Liberalisation' (Ahmad 1996: 1329) and the predatory capitalism the latter has spawned. (Lele 1995: 38) The liberal right and 'saffron neo-liberalism' (Teltumbde 2014) make willing bedfellows. With this last election in May 2014, even the winners were surprised at the saffron wave that swept the country. Some view our predicament as due to the 'pragmatic communalism' of 'pseudo secularists', who have used the communal card to appease the minorities. Others explain it as the

well-planned ‘programmatic communalism’ of the Hindutvawadis, who manipulate religious sentiment and polarize religious communities. Modernists see this revival as a failure of rationality and a regress into a reactionary tradition; postmoderns blame the homogenising nationalist state (Gellner 1983) with its ‘technocratic mind sets’ (Kothari 1988: 2227) for precipitating a communal reaction.

Today caste and ethnicity, religion and region have become faultlines along which collective violence periodically rips apart the fabric of our society, leaving wounded people in broken communities, crying out for relief and justice that is delayed if not denied. And through all this, the real issues of poverty and marginalisation, of inclusion and participation, of rights and freedoms are compromised in favour of the vested interests of the rich and powerful. There is an urgent need for people of goodwill to come together on the common ground of our basic humanity to affirm human rights and fundamental duties, and to stand by Gandhi’s last and least Indian in our quest for a just and decent society.

The Constitution we gave ourselves must be the common foundation on which to build this together as we draw on the best in our Indic traditions to make the Constitutional idea of India a viable and effective reality for all Indians, especially the poor and marginalised. We can be proud of our democracy which has shown enduring resilience in spite of the hiccups, like the National Emergency of 1975 – 77, when Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister, suspended even fundamental rights and the Supreme Court at the time buckled in. A new government had to reverse the damage done with a constitutional amendment. India is a continuing electoral democracy, but substantive democracy has still a long way to go to bring ‘swaraj’ to Gandhi’s last Indian. Today the idea of India of the freedom movement is being contested as never before by those who never really participated in it but discovered their nationalism after independence when it was safer.

The 2014 general election was an alarming warning of the real and present danger of our Republic being highjacked by an aggressive majoritarianism. Hindutva ideologues are now pushing an agenda for a Hindu Rastra, and those who have embraced the neo-liberal free-market state have jumped on the bandwagon. This privileges the urban neo-middle class but it will marginalise further the poor and the minorities. And in a globalising world, the free-market eventually compromises even the sovereignty of the state in favour of multinational corporations and multilateral institutions.

The present challenges independent republican India faces are very much within the contemporary mission of the Church, and the Society took a lead role in addressing them within the constraints of the resources available and the limitation of its understanding of the issues. Breaking out of this mindset demanded a new consciousness in the ecclesial community and the Society, which was not as yet within the self-understanding of either. Vatican II did this for the post-Tridentine Church and General Congregation 32 with decree 4 did it for the restored Society. Both these themes are discussed below.

2. *The Aggiornamento of the Church*

A living tradition is always a cumulative process of renewal and reform, of affirmations and rejections, additions and subtractions, in a continuing 'Development of Doctrine', the thesis of Cardinal John Henry Newman (Newman 1945 1st 1845) that is now mainstream theology in the Church. This will require a constant and open-ended critique to be faithful to the original founding experience of a religious tradition. *Ecclesia semper renovanda* (the Church must always be renewed), *ecclesia semper reformanda* (the Church must always be reformed) is an old axiom going back to the Fathers of the Church at the beginning of the Christian era; or in Luther's more emphatic expression *ecclesia semper purificanda* (The Church must always be purified).

The Second Vatican Council, 1962-65, the 21st and largest Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church, was called by good Pope John XIII for an updating, an *aggiornamento*, of the Church. A window was opened to the modern world and the winds of change rushed in and blew some off their feet and others against the walls as Fortress Catholicism began crumbling. For the Council was more than just a renewal, for many it was a refounding of the Church, an affirmative engagement with the modern world against the anti-modernism that had overtaken the Church at the beginning of the century and the earlier but still prevailing defensiveness of the Post-Tridentine Church. It was an emphatic re-appropriation of the authentic tradition and spirituality of the Apostolic Church.

Today the importance of Vatican II cannot be gainsaid. For, even as in Jerusalem in the first century the Apostolic Church opened to the Greco-Roman world, Vatican II in the twentieth opened the contemporary Catholic Church to the modern one. That is why

Vatican II created such an enthusiasm and optimism not just in the Church, but outside as well.

Those of us who lived through that time will surely remember the excitement that the Council generated.

‘Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive

But to be young was very heaven.’

(Wordsworth, ‘The Prelude’)

The changing scenarios that followed required a sensitivity to discern the signs of the times and the courage and daring to respond to them. This was a ‘hermeneutic moment’. It needed a ‘new language’ that was both subversive and generative; it had to be seized with ‘creative fidelity’. (Hanvey 2001) A New Evangelisation now calls us all back to this: the challenge of living our genuine Christian faith authentically. It was a paradigm shift to a new way of being a Church in witness to the kingdom of God that many in the Church were not quite ready for. They perceived the change more as a rupture with the past and particularly with the pre-Conciliar Church of Vatican I. However, in asking for a return to the sources to bring alive in our world today their original inspiration, the Council was calling for continuity in change, a development of doctrine in Newman’s sense of the term.

Certainly, there is no going back, no reneging on the transformation the Council had achieved as the Church internalises this vision of a Church reaching out to the modern world. It is a work still in progress. The real controversy now seems to be whether to interpret Vatican II in the light of Vatican I, or vice versa, Vatican I in the light of Vatican II, even as we look forward to Vatican III and adjust to our rapidly changing world!

Besides the seminal breakthrough in many of the Council’s dogmatic and pastoral constitutions and major decrees, some of the main themes from the Council are of particular relevance for the Church in India: a contextualised inculturation in the lives of the people, an interreligious dialogue with other Churches and religious traditions, a respect for human dignity and religious freedom in society, a preferential option for the poor.

None of these have a direct bearing on nation-building, but in indigenising the Church in the postcolonial world, privileging human dignity and freedom, affirming the essential good in the modern world, contributing to dialogue between cultures and religions in a pluralist society, placing the poor at the centre of our concerns, ... the influence of this new role of the Church in building a vibrant civic

society cannot be gainsaid. This represents a new challenge for the Indian Church, and Vatican II has positioned her to face it.

The Sixth Plenary of the Federation of the Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) in 1995 in Manila, recognised the specificities of the Asian Churches and called for 'a movement toward the triple dialogue with other faiths, with the poor and with cultures.' This has been a repeated call and needs to be energised with the Spirit once again: *ecclesia semper renovanda, ecclesia semper reformanda, ecclesia semper purificanda*. And dialogue with others is surely a most effective way of doing this: dialogue as mission for today.

The context for this triple dialogue must necessarily address the Asian situation as characterised by three inescapable conditions: economic poverty, popular religiosity and cultural diversity. (Pieris 1988) For in Asia voluntary poverty still has a religious value as represented by detachment from earthy goods and desires; popular religiosity runs too deep among our peoples to be easily dismissed and it expresses religious values and practices that must not be discounted, rather this needs to be carefully and empathetically discerned for the genuine faith in which it is embedded; our cultural and religious diversity is an inescapable reality in Asian religious traditions, one not just to be accepted but to be discerned and then celebrated. It makes the call and challenge of such multiple dialogues for the Asian Church distinctive and critical for the Church Universal as well.

In this scenario, where will the Indian Church position itself? Will we dare to ask: what kind of Church do we want to be? What contribution are we called to make to the peoples of India? As a small religious minority our contribution can hardly be really crucial in terms of quantity and scale, but it can be very significant in term of quality and impact. The restrictions on foreign missionaries, and now the constraints on foreign funds have forced the Indian Churches to be more self-reliant. The many anti-conversion bills, euphemistically called 'Freedom of Religion Acts', have restricted institutional evangelisation. This has become an alibi for perpetrating violence against converts and converters.

However, the Church in India continues to make a critical contribution in education at multiple levels, in various fields and in far-flung places, to public health and social welfare services to the poor, to development and relief work, to social work and action, to advocacy and para-professional training. With a committed cadre of clergy and religious congregations, the Church has created exemplary

institutional models in these areas that have been replicated by others. It has set standards of performance which have become points of light for others.

Yet even in the post-Independence, post-Vatican II Church, the misconception that 'Christianity is essentially European and European religion has traditionally been Christian' (Frykenberg 2003: 5) persists. The identification of Christianity with the West, and particularly with Europe, lingers as a post-colonial hangover and is enormously difficult to shake off this culture of suspicion to which the Churches in Asia are often subjected. Yet, in our own time, based on sober demographic projections, Walbert Buhlmann saw *The Coming of the Third Church* (Buhlmann 1977) already on the horizon. This will certainly not be a European or a North American Church.

Such a trajectory of change is not surprising, when we consider that Christianity has never had a single sacred language, nor was it practically or doctrinally tied to a specific location. Historically and geographically, linguistically and culturally, spiritually and theologically, there has been a proliferation of centres and pluralism at the peripheries. It is in this mosaic of the Universal Church that Indian Christianity has its distinct and special place. The Catholic Church is growing and vibrant among the developing nations, while the West enters a post-Christian phase. So we would be very short-sighted if we would impose the colours of the sunset on the dawn!

3. Rearticulating Our Mission Today

In the light of Vatican II, the Church and we as Indian Christians must interrogate our mission in this very challenging and still changing scenario. More particularly, the Society of Jesus must reorient our mission today, and for tomorrow. Vatican II in its 'Decree on the appropriate Renewal of Religious Life' called for a 'return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time.' (*Perfectae Charitatis*, no.2) For Jesuits, this was a call to recapture the inspiration of the pre-Suppression Society and to express it with courage and imagination for the post-Vatican II Church in the modern world. The Jesuits had played an important role in the preparation for, and the debates in the Council. They were very much a part of the enthusiasm and energy the Council generated in the Church and beyond.

Jesuits have been at the cutting edge of this constructive reform and innovative change. We read the signs of the times and have rearticulated our mission today. The transition in the Society from a mission conceived at the time of the Reformation as 'the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls' (Formula of the Institute) to one for a post-Vatican II Church began during the Council itself (1965 – 66) with General Congregation 31. It elected Fr. General Pedro Arrupe and prepared the ground for the real breakthrough with General Congregation 32 under his leadership.

The 4th Decree of the Congregation articulated 'Our Mission Today' as 'the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. ... for the reconciliation of men and women among themselves, which is the reconciliation God demands, must be based on justice.' (No. 2) It is clear from the context, that this is a justice of restoration and forgiveness, not retribution and revenge. It refocused our vision and mission in a post-Vatican II Church, calling us to a creative fidelity: firmly rooted in our charism, faithfully reading the signs of the times, and courageously anticipating the future in our ministries. After four decades, Decree Four still challenges us with the *magis*.

General Congregation 34 in 1995 broadened this mission of faith and justice to include culture and dialogue, spelling out the interrelationship between the four in its 2nd Decree on 'Servants of Christ's Mission' (No.19) thus:

Today we realise clearly:

No faith without
promotion of justice
entry into cultures
openness to other religious experiences.

No promotion of justice without
communicating faith
transforming cultures
collaboration with other traditions.

No inculturation without
dialogue with other cultures
commitment to justice.

No dialogue without
sharing faith with others
evaluating cultures
concern for justice.' (No.47)

General Congregation 35 in 2008, in Decree 3 on ‘Challenges to Our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers’, calls us to ‘promote reconciliation and peace’, (No 18) with God (No. 18) with one another, (No. 25) with creation, (No. 31) ‘and to witness to the reconciliation in solidarity of all the children of God.’ (No. 43). This inclusive reconciliation was somewhat neglected from our earlier efforts for the service of faith and the promotion of justice, which tended to be more contentious and even confrontational. We now need to reaffirm and live the integration of all these six: a faith that does justice, which brings peace, which is sustained by reconciliation, which reaches out in forgiveness, and culminates in harmony. They are all part of our mission today and will be our mission tomorrow as well.

In our quest for a collective identity as Jesuits in a multicultural society in these changing times we must ask: What kind of people do we want to be? Will we allow the winds of many cultures to blow about our house with confidence and trust, and thus be enriched, or we will be overwhelmed and blown off our feet and so build walls for our house and close windows in our rooms? In our pluri-religious situation are we willing to pursue an intra- and an inter-religious dialogue with whoever is willing to be engaged and at whatever level this is feasible? Whether at the level of the dialogue of life, or of action, of articulation or of experience? (Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue 1991: no. 42) Will we cast our lot with the ‘India shining’ for the top ten per cent, waiting for the good days to come (‘ache din aa rahi hai’), or the many millions below the poverty line whichever way that is defined?

Are we serious about the integral development of our peoples, or satisfied with partisan gains for our own institutions and communities? Will we educate a critical people to a committed and responsible civic-political sense so essential for a participative and inclusive democracy or do we implicitly acquiesce in a system that produces passive and obedient people, whether in our schools, parishes, or social centres?

VI. Imagining the Future: New Ventures, Daring Possibilities

As ‘Servants of Christ’s Mission’, where do we position ourselves in the context of the scenario just sketched? For in changing circumstances and new situations, past success is not the best guide

to future initiatives. When formulae for success are repeated long past their shelf-life, they become an impediment to more creative and adaptive innovation; yesterday's success becomes today's worst enemy. For we are *Living in a Revolution* (Srinivas 1992) of continuing and radical change, which can be risky and threatening, even paralysing. But often the risk in not changing can be even greater. We are challenged to respond to such changes for delay or postponement will lead to stagnation and irrelevance.

We must incarnate and express our mission for the Church, in both its institutional and charismatic dimensions. Given the huge institutional investment of the Society, what is needed today is prophetic witnessing not just by charismatic individuals, but by Jesuit institutions. For in our complex, confusing world of networked organisations, a prophetic witness is most effective when it is cooperative and corporate.

For this we must read the signs of the times and build contrast-communities of solidarity in continuity with this Christian faith in order to be a prophetic sign to the world. Our action-response must be in creative fidelity to Our Mission Today for Our Mission Tomorrow. Articulating a viable agenda of an action-reflection-action praxis and pursuing it with prudence and courage would certainly be a major contribution of the Church in India and the kingdom we witness to.

A prophet is one who critiques his people from within their tradition and history, and calls them to face the future with a new and creative fidelity to their original inspiration, contextualised in the present and pointing to the future. Prophets witness by living out that inspiration in their lives rather than thundering against people in the marketplace from their ivory towers or bully pulpits. They do the deeds that make their words credible. In a religious tradition, the prophetic witness is more involved with renewing the original inspiration and spirit of the tradition in response to the signs of the times. The prophetic witness is to call the people back to fidelity to the original charisma of the tradition of their founding community.

The institutional function is a necessary complement to this and is more concerned in preserving and transmitting the original inspiration of this tradition in its institutions. This is the routinisation of charisma, without which it cannot continue over generations or spread across places. Thus the prophet plays an essential charismatic role, the administrator a necessary bureaucratic one. However, for a prophetic witness to inspire, the bureaucracy must serve not smother

the charism, as happens when the efficiency of the bureaucrat replaces the effectiveness of the prophet. Both these must be held in tension lest there is a displacement of priorities.

How can our Jesuit imagination help discern innovative, out of the box options to make the kingdom of God present in our world of escalating violence, and suicidal aggression, of legalised torture and child abuse, of war and terror, of oppression and marginalisation, of displacement and forced migration of millions of vulnerable and unprotected people within national and across international borders? How can we globalise our mission in an international network to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world? Given our limited resources in facing these enormous challenges confronting us how can we best position ourselves most effectively? Only discernment can show us how to respond and call us to a prophetic breakthrough by taking our contribution to society to another level with a prophetic institutional model for our times.

The four decades since the ‘refounding’ of the Society, General Congregation 32 has not been without controversies and ambiguities. The tension in most intractable of these dilemmas and controversies must not be resolved by eliminating or compromising either or both contraries involved, but lived in a creative synthesis. For those who take the middle road, often end up on the road divider!

Here we will consider the issues of justice and reconciliation, of inculturation and dialogue, of collaboration and community, as we trace their trajectory and project them into the future even as we look forward to General Congregation 36 in 2015.

1. Justice and Reconciliation

The universality of the Gospel and its option for the poor presents a difficult dilemma that still confronts us with practical difficulties in our apostolates. There is only one Gospel to be preached to all, only one kingdom to which all are invited, yet too often universal openness leaves out the poor, by fault or by default. But Jesus is good news for all: for the poor because he brings them the justice of the kingdom in its most comprehensive meaning: healing, forgiveness, wholeness; for the rich because he calls them to be free of their riches, repent and welcome the kingdom into their lives.

Institutionalisation, further accentuates the dilemma between a universally open and a preferentially weighted Gospel, especially with rich and powerful institutions. The dilemma is not solved by balanced compromise: making the Gospel actively available to all, but ministering it passively to the preferentially chosen. For when active availability to one group is juxtaposed to passive ministry to another, it amounts to an exclusion of the latter.

The universality of the Gospel is the necessary condition for a preferential option for the poor, which in turn is the authenticating sign of the Good News for all. We are learning that in practice, the openness of any Gospel ministry is critiqued by reference to its relationship to the poor, and the preferential option for the poor is no longer defined in negative terms as an option against the rich.

A preferential option for the poor must be expressed in action for the promotion of a just society. There is a genuine deepening of our understanding over the years: from relief work to inclusive development, to human rights advocacy, to liberation of the oppressed.

These levels of understandings and action must complement not neutralize each other: charity must not hinder progress for human development or stymie advocacy or obstruct liberation; just as development must not deny charitable service or activism for human rights, or liberating justice; nor must justice for the oppressed deny charity or negate development, or marginalise human rights. And it must all culminate in reconciliation and forgiveness, peace and harmony.

Moreover, a differentiated and specialised society demands an inclusive vision to reconcile the dichotomy between option and action for the poor. Hence while all our ministries may not be directly with the poor, all must at least indirectly impact them positively. All

apostolates that are not directly for the poor are justified by their integration into one which is directly for them.

However, action not just at the grass-root but engagement at other levels is needed for structural change on the ground. We must intellectually interrogate the terms of discourse in an unjust society to promote a just one, we need a presence in the media to mobilise people against human rights violations, and political goodwill to protect the vulnerable. But we must do this without compromising our mission of faith and justice.

Thus our action for justice must facilitate a fulfilment of a deeper more comprehensive justice. The degree to which it does, authenticates our promotion of justice and our solidarity with the poor in whatever our apostolate may be. Thus it is only as an integrated part of a larger whole that such 'indirect' apostolates are justified, the individual ministry in the community apostolate, and this in the province mission.

Further, while a ministry that deals directly with the poor may not be open immediately to reconciliation for all, it must never exclude this. Correspondingly, if an apostolate precipitates confrontation and conflict it can only be justified as part of a larger effort that eventually is intended to bring a more inclusive reconciliation and peace. The challenge is to reach across multiple divides that mark the fault lines of violence in our societies: caste and ethnic, religious and regional, racial and national... For the justice of the kingdom must include reconciliation and forgiveness, a faith that reaches out in solidarity with those most in need, the poor, the marginalised, the vulnerable; in a mission that expresses itself in open and equal dialogue with the cultures and religions of the peoples it serves. Ultimately, it is the kingdom of God that we work with all men and women of goodwill for a kingdom of faith and justice, of reconciliation and forgiveness, of freedom and harmony, of peace and joy. Thus the service of faith and the promotion of justice must be expressed in a ministry of reconciliation and beyond this to forgiveness:

no harmonious peace without justice,
no sustainable justice without reconciliation,
no credible reconciliation without true forgiveness.

Surely, such forgiveness is a Christian ministry and should be a Jesuit priority in our divided and violent world.

This ministry of reconciliation in regard to social conflicts, communal violence, both religious and casteist, has not been the focus of our social apostolate. Rather our concern has been to support the

victims of such violence by seeking justice and rehabilitation for them, trying to help them heal. But our involvement has not generally included the perpetrators of the violence. This is a difficult and delicate process, but without it there can be no lasting peace between the protagonists in the conflict. The scars and bitterness remain, and these too readily boil over into violence again.

Any resolution of collective conflicts must be premised on justice to all the constituents involved in the conflict. Lasting reconciliation must be based on mutual forgiveness and trust. Building such trust needs a long gestation, more so when the hostility is mutual. We need to build relationships that will bridge the divides between communities to contain and defuse the tensions between them before they spill over into collective violence. This requires continuous and sustained effort with these divided communities at the various levels to create this mutual trust that will bring reconciliation and healing, within and between the communities.

We *ought* to, and *can* live this service of reconciliation in the South Asian Assintancy. Our focus has been on the promotion of justice, not on reconciliation and healing; on social work and action, not on dialogue. Reconciliation and dialogue were seen as a compromise, even though both these are explicitly mentioned in General Congregation decrees and in our other documents.

2. Inculturation and Dialogue

As this service of reconciliation must be integrated with our promotion of justice, so too must our ministry for dialogue be an integral part of our service of faith. Inculturation implies making the faith of the Church universal accessible to the local church. This further demands a cultural kenosis so that this faith can be incarnated in the local idiom: in other words, a contextualised faith experience and a dynamic translation of our religious tradition must be the foundation for both, the local and the global Church.

This reconciliation of these apparent polarities of the local and the universal must be a two-way process: seeking not just to make the Universal Church intelligible in a particular cultural context, but to enrich the Universal Church with the local traditions in this new context. Such an inculturated and dialogic Church would be the more universal for being the more enriched. It would be a multifaceted Church with 'many mansions', where diverse peoples would find a

home in peace and harmony. This is the kingdom to which the Church must witness to.

Thus the dialogue with the poor is premised on solidarity with them. Such an 'option for the poor', and the 'promotion of justice', privileges a down-up approach over a top-down one. The dialogue with cultures must be sensitive to popular religiosity and transform it into a liberating faith. It must not allow religion to be the opium of the people. The dialogue with religions must bring an appreciation of religious pluralism and the imperative of a secularism that respects all religious traditions and seeks common ground for collective action.

Besides addressing issues of justice, in our social apostolate we need to make peace across the unjust divides we find, especially between hostile groups and communities. The promotion of justice based exclusively on a confrontational approach premised on an ideology of conflict precludes this. Conflict resolution must be integral to our promotion of justice. We need to go beyond to healing and reconciliation as 'our way of proceeding'. There are numerous strategies and techniques available but sadly not used enough in our social centres.

Dialoguing with others from different situations and various contexts, about their varied experiences and diverse exigencies is surely a most effective way of enriching one's own understanding of inculturation nearer home, freeing hidden potentialities and opening up new possibilities. A bottom-up inculturation would be relevant to this. This concerns itself less with elite high culture and more with liberating popular folklore. Unfortunately in India, inculturation has been tilted towards Sanskritisation and the upper castes to the neglect of other subaltern and minority traditions.

So too centres for dialogue meant to promote inter-cultural and inter-religious harmony are most effective as a down-up process beginning with local communities, creating positive interactions and relationships between communities in a second track process outside formal social and political relationships. Healing and reconciliation at this level is most needed and most neglected, often simply by default more than deliberation. Moreover, this process must be facilitated by top-down initiatives so that both complement each other: the local ventures up-scaled to the more universal, and the abstract understanding more grounded at the grassroots.

Too easily do we stop at levels of the word in seminars, conferences and even prayer sessions. These are good beginnings but not enough for real healing and true reconciliation. We need to reach out to the

‘other’ in deeds that will make our words credible and so we can meet each other and heal together, be reconciled and accept and live with, and even celebrate our diversity as mutually enriching.

Dialogue with a reluctant or hostile partner cannot begin with a dialogue of words or action, we need to prepare the ground with a dialogue of life: relating to each other in everyday living as neighbours. Through the ages, this has been the dialogue in our local communities and villages. But even these are getting polarised and overtaken by communal conflict and violence. Our schools, community centres, etc., provide a platform for an outreach across community divides. Our institutions can be used effectively for dialogue at other levels too: corporate, collective action, sharing our beliefs and praying together.

Dialogue with Muslims and Islam is crucial and still much neglected in our Assistancy. This could be a significant contribution to the Church and beyond. In a country where most members of our Muslim communities are still not radicalised into extremism, we, as a neutral party to the conflict of Hindu-Muslim antagonism, are better placed at building mutual trust before communal polarisation goes further out of control. This is a delicate matter of how we position ourselves, and we need to proceed with caution but also with daring.

Stretching across many borders in space and time, the Church and the Society is well positioned to initiate and majorly contribute to such a dialogue of cultures and religions, beginning with a dialogue of life and experience, and facilitated by a dialogue of action and articulation. Will we open our windows without fear of being blown off our feet?

Silence and suspicion are good neighbours. Each encourages the other, in a reciprocal manipulation, feeding stereotypes, encouraging falsehoods, spawning rumours, spreading disinformation, and fuelling odium and mistrust. Such a ‘culture of suspicion’ is the very contradiction of a ‘culture of dialogue’. If we grant that dialogue is essential to the human condition then it must be a dialogue that breaks the silence and opens communication, discredits suspicion and creates trust.

‘All dialogues have to cross borders – cultural, political, and above all, psychological.’ (Nandy 2012: 44) To cross these we must first experience a *metanoia* in our hearts that will free us from the *paranoia* of the other.

3. Collaboration and the Laity

Lay collaboration is a pressing concern that demands a response in terms of both calculated pragmatism and cautious trust, and these two do not always go well together. With the falling numbers in the Society, before the issue resolves itself by default or worse, we need a collective discernment to make a breakthrough, perhaps even a prophetic one.

The present models of lay collaboration in our Assitancy, are based on, or tend towards coopting the lay collaborators in an unequal partnership: 'You collaborate with us. We'll be grateful for your cooperation; you be happy for the privilege.' This unequal exchange stymies genuine partnership, and entrenches Jesuit control.

In a clerical culture, both clergy and people expect priests to be in positions of authority in our institutions and works, and lay persons to be in supporting roles. Clerical status now derives more from administrative positions than pastoral work much 'to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables' (Acts 6:2). The lay persons we appoint as deacons seem to be liturgical assistants at crowded masses rather than exercising real secular responsibilities that do not require an ordained priest.

In our formal institutional ministries, our lay collaborators are salaried employees, or volunteers willing to play second fiddle to the priest. The bureaucratic structures set in place make the model work and carry both partners along. Organisational relationships and roles within the structure are more or less personalised and idiosyncratic, or paternal and patriarchal. This is a top-down model of command and control based on old-style hierarchical management, long abandoned by managers of today, except perhaps in government offices in some countries.

When good Jesuits are scarce, then lay participation becomes a fallback option, an unfortunate circumstance, best met by increasing the supply of Jesuits rather than looking for, forming and empowering good lay partners. The accompanying mindset can be expressed thus: we own the ministry/institution, we are responsible; you work for us and we will tell you where, when and how.

Effective collaboration requires an equal partnership with a shared vision for a shared venture in a corporate team, differentiated by functional roles, not hierarchical status, focused on concern for the mission, not preoccupied with self-centred interests, not driven by competition, but encouraged to cooperate in supportive roles.

Functional efficiency and motivational effectiveness are compromised by status consciousness and partisan considerations, self-interest and self-promotion. If we are not exemplary models for our lay partners, we can hardly expect to inspire or motivate, much less lead them.

An effective model of collaboration for the future will require a very different understanding of our apostolic endeavours today. The imperative to share our mission with others is not a pragmatic necessity we cannot escape. It is an integral part of our mission, a vocation we are called to, and must share with like-minded persons, a mission with others and for others, to reach out and create an extended Ignatian family. General Congregations have repeatedly called us to this and such extended families are vibrant in many parts of the Jesuit world.

Given the hierarchical model of governance in the Society, this requires a careful and creative response. Ultimate responsibility for Jesuit works must realistically rest with the Society, but there can be delegated authority that empowers more mediate levels with real responsibility, proper monitoring and real accountability. Modern management systems have developed models for this, but all these depend on an organisational culture to support such corporate governance and collaborative execution. It demands a culture of teamwork among all the players as a necessary condition for such collaboration.

We need to think out of the box and develop new organisation models suitable to equal partnerships in a democratic and egalitarian society. Working for others is not the same as working with others, and working as equals is a much bigger leap than working as superiors and directors. So we must take stock of where we are and reform our present way of proceeding to debunk our patriarchal clerical culture. The transition from the dominant present model to a possible future one will demand a change in mindset or it will fail. But the writing is on the wall: if we don't walk this path willingly now, sooner rather than later we will be forced to take it with fewer choices at hand.

Effective lay collaboration will require a professionalization of our institutions, not just streamlining our administration but designing organisational structures as means to fulfil the 'goals' of our mission as 'ends'. This once again brings us to the dilemma of professional efficiency and prophetic effectiveness. The magis here would demand that the Jesuit be positioned strategically more as a prophetic witness to our mission, not just the efficient professional in our institutions.

Efficiency must serve effectiveness not vice versa. That's what a prophetic witness is about.

VII. Lighting Fires, Firing the Imagination

Coming to terms with our past in an open-ended encounter is a *sine qua non* for healing our memories and rebuilding our dreams. The celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of our restoration, calls for an open-ended encounter with our Jesuit past. In this sense, history as remembrance is also prophecy. Here I have focused on the Indian Assistancy and on India.

From the pre- to the post-restoration Society, there is continuity and change, rupture and rediscovery. The unifying thread through the varied historical circumstances of the 'The Jesuit Saga', is the Jesuit imagination that creatively expresses the inspiration of their spiritual vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation to which the Jesuit is missioned.

The pre-suppression Society embraced the challenges of their new world unfolding before them with discernment and daring. After the trauma of the suppression the 'cautious New beginnings' of the restored Society, must be read against the background of a politically conservative post-Napoleonic Europe and a defensively traditionalist post-Tridentine Church. Yet the Jesuits did still attempt to push back the constraints.

In the colonies of the imperial state, the colonial church was enthralled to the colonial state. In British India, Protestant Churches were more likely to stand up to the colonial state than Catholic ones, from whom the Society took its cue. 'Nation-Building and the Colonial State' do not go together, and the contribution of Church and of the Society to nationalism would, if at all, be indirectly through civil society as the social infrastructure for nation-building.

'Three Defining Moments' brought three paradigm shifts: for the country, the Church and the Society. The freedom struggle espoused a pluralist, democratic India to celebrate our diversity and protect the vulnerable, but now there are increasingly persistent and popular voices 'Contesting the Idea of India'. Vatican II began 'The Aggiornamento of the Church', with a big bang. Today it is still a project in progress though not without constraints and resistance. In this post-Vatican Church the Society initiated a process with General Congregation 32 through 34 and 35 of 'rearticulating our mission

today', first in terms of faith and justice, which was then broaden and deepened to include inculturation and dialogue, and collaboration with the laity as well.

In his address to the 35th General Congregation, Pope Benedict XVI reaffirmed the Church's faith in the Society: 'the Church needs you, counts on you, and continues to turn to you with confidence, particularly to reach those physical and spiritual places which others do not reach or find difficulty in reaching' (GC 35: 5.1.2). In response to this affirmation the Congregation missions us to the 'new frontiers of our time' (ibid.: 3.1.15) and reminds us that 'mediocrity has no place in Ignatius' worldview' (ibid.: 3.1.14). This is our vocation to the universal Church, which we are missioned to fulfil in the locales we are sent to.

General Congregation 32 bore the stamp of Fr. General Arrupe and is testimony to his incredible charisma. The stage for it was set by General Congregation 31 that elected him and altered the rules for election of the provincial and general congregations. General Congregation 33 was a transitional one that elected Fr. General Kolvenbach and set the stage for General Congregation 34, which does indeed bear witness to his very credible leadership. Fr Adolfo Nicolas was elected at General Congregation 35, which puts together a triptych: Identity, Mission, Community and challenged us to a prophetic witness: 'our lives must provoke the questions: 'who are you, that you do these things ... and that you do them in this way?'' (GC 35. 3.2.10)

In 'Rediscovering our Charism' will we become 'A Fire that Kindles Other Fires'? Will we make our 'Many Sparks, One Fire: Many Stories, One History'? (GC 35 3.2) As we look forward and prepare for the 36th General Congregation in 2016, we would do well to take stock of where we are and how we got here, and where God is now calling us. Where will the turns in the crossroads take us and how will we respond?

A General Congregation is essentially a process of discernment, whether it be the election of the superior general, the processing of the postulates or the decrees to be voted on. In our time the pace of change has unsettled past certainties and created future possibilities that leave us further confused. Yet, the present pace of change all around us will not wait for us to read 'the signs of the times' or respond to them. How will the coming General Congregation respond to this new scenario? Will this next General Congregation settle for a safe harbour or will it 'launch out into the deep', (LK 5:4, RSV) and set our sails against the wind? Will the 'Francis effect' (*Economist* 19 May

2014) of the Jesuit Pope, which has enthused the whole Church and the world, fire up our Jesuit imagination once again?

For now, we can pray in the words of Fr. Arrupe for the Spirit to help us read, discern and respond to the signs of the times with his guidance:

‘Give me that Spirit that scrutinises all, inspires all, that will strengthen me to support what I am not able to support. Give me that Spirit that transformed the weak Galilean fishermen into pillars of your Church and into Apostles who gave, in the holocaust of their lives, the supreme testimony of their love for their brothers.’ (final address Procurators Congregation, 5 Oct 1978)

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24. FULFILLING PROMISES: WHY DID I BECOME A JESUIT?

Final Vows, Feast of St Francis Xavier, 3rd December, 1981

Abstract

Rudi Heredia relates what his vows, taken long ago mean to him in the present.

My dear friends,

Oftentimes I have been asked: why did you become a Jesuit; or at times even more pointedly: how did you ever become one of those? Sometimes the question is posed out of light-hearted curiosity and perhaps earnest surprise, sometimes it is thrown at me with a little disappointment and perhaps some disgust. But even when the question comes from a genuine interest and concern, I find it extremely difficult to answer. I don't know where to begin – or how to end. It is a question which is so personal and all-embracing, that I am always a little afraid that something of the personal mystery will be lost in the answer or that the story may not make the same sense to the other – if indeed it makes sense at all.

And yet if an occasion like today is to mean anything to those who witness it, then something must surely be said of the reality symbolized and witnessed in this ceremony. I do not intend to inflict an autobiography on you here, nor will I attempt to explain what went into my decision 21 years ago. But I would like again today to tell you what these vows, taken long ago and confirmed once again today, mean to me now, and what I'm trying to say to you with them. In making this personal statement I am not denying the juridical aspects involved in these vows – lest perchance some doubt be cast on their validity. But beyond the letter of the law, it is the Spirit who gives meaning to these promises, and the one who has brought me to this day in mysterious and wonderful ways.

The determination to live the evangelical life is too open-ended and comprehensive a decision for anyone to make in a single, once-and-for-all act. Rather it is expressed in decisions that one must make every day, all the time. Indeed it is not so much a resolution one takes and keeps, rather it is a promise that makes and shapes one's destiny

we all are as yet promises unfulfilled. And only when the promises we make fulfil the promise that we are, can they be true and holy. So much of our life is strewn with false promises which have scared our souls, or shattered with broken promises which have betrayed our hopes that many of us are unable or too afraid to make promises anymore. And so the promise we are remains unfulfilled, unspoken and unheard.

To me the religious vows speak to a promise to live the evangelical life as fully as one can, to live as Jesus of Nazareth taught us to live, in freedom and trust; to walk as he did, bring healing and hope; to work for the kingdom he preached – of justice, fellowship and love. Each vow represents an aspect of this evangelical life that must witness to this kingdom.

Poverty then is my act of trust in God's providence. In a society so sharply divided between the affluent rich and the destitute poor, the promise of poverty I make certainly gives me no claim to be one with the masses of our people. In fact, the very renunciation of wealth in favour of community living gives me a kind of security that few can enjoy in our world. But I do not attempt to define my poverty negatively – in terms of insecurity; but positively in terms of trust. And in the support derived from my community I hope to find the courage to risk all I have, and all I am for I am for the sake of the kingdom; to stretch what talents and abilities I may have for this service; to risk what may be most precious to me, my reputation even, in this task. Such a trust can be sustained only by a personal conviction in a divine providence, that rules our lives and never fails us in our need. Such trust does not come easily. But it would be hollow and empty if there was no real willingness to risk. And yet what a joy it is to risk and be held up triumphant.

Chastity is my act of faith in God's future. It is not a denial of human love or intimacy but rather an attempt to affirm this for the sake of the kingdom. And renouncing an exclusive union in marriage and the closeness of family love it brings, I believe I will find the grace for a detached and unselfish love that will reach out and touch those who need it most, a love that will be involved and yet not want to possess, faithful yet make no demands, vulnerable and yet never grow bitter. And if my faith should fail me, then truly I am lost and my life is wasted. For there is a terrifying loneliness in the celibate life, if indeed God does not fill one's heart. My faith is that he will not let me down, for he is a God of love and the future he promises me in the resurrection, begins already now, in the relationships I have

experienced and come to treasure even more than my life; but it is not fully yet because the fullness and completeness still to come is as yet beyond our dreams.

Obedience is my act of freedom for God's kingdom. A truly free person is a rare and beautiful find. Too many of us chafe under any restriction from without and so preoccupy ourselves with these that we never come to realize how we are even more imprisoned from within by our own passions and emotions, our own limited reasoning and unchanging ideas and, most subtly of all, by our over blown egos. And if one is not free from oneself and free for others, then one's freedom is lost even before it is found. I know how easily I can betray my calling to the evangelical life for a professional career or clerical status. How quickly the service of others can be converted into prestige and privilege for oneself, and how subtly the glory of God can become just another ego trip. And so, in submitting myself to the authority of a religious order pledged to the service of the kingdom, to a team of brothers dedicated to the same ideals as I am, I hope to find that freedom from myself and my self-centredness and that freedom for others and the task I am given. It might seem paradoxical but it is true, in giving up my freedom for the kingdom of God, I hope to find it once again renewed and strengthened. And so far, I have not been disappointed. Authority for me is then no longer a mere juridical structure but a discernment for the greater good; and obedience not just blind submission but the loyalty of friends in a common venture.

Finally, for Jesuits, there is the special vow of obedience to the Pope which till only recently might have seemed a mere formality! But for Ignatius a man whose heart embraced the whole world, this was, I believe, a symbol of a more universal vision and unity that saw even the most ordinary tasks in the light of the larger mission. For to be a Jesuit is to seek always the greater service, the more universal good. And no matter where a Jesuit is sent he is always bound to his companions in the Society in this common purpose.

Indeed it is this aspect of being 'friends in the Lord' that is for me the unique strength of the Ignatian charism. Francis Xavier expressed this when he carried the names of his Jesuit companions in a locket he hung around his neck. And indeed, it is through my Jesuits friends that I belong to this Society of Jesus.

I hope what I have said does not seem arrogant or presumptuous. If I am over-reaching myself, it's only because I trust God's grace will see me through. If I am promising too much, it's only because I know I can get by with a little help from my friends. Indeed I would never

have reached this day without friends like you and I am leaning on your support to walk the path beyond.

I do not know where this will lead, but I do know I must follow.
And so far
I don't regret the path I've trod
looking back from where I'm at
the wonderful things that happen
already now but not fully yet.

And if I were to begin over again, if everything were possible, I would still choose to live this evangelical life; to walk this earth as Jesus did with his face set to Jerusalem where he poured out his life to win for us a future and a hope; to walk this earth as it was made for us to walk on, not to lie under; where children can play and men and women be equal and free; to pour out my life for this for this is an *anjali* of offering, and hope it will not be lost or in vain.

My dear friends, how wonderful it would be...
if we could walk together
for just a while — ..
or for always if you will —
to a future that reaches out
beyond our grasp...
to things invisible and dreams impossible
to a fidelity that's free
a love that's everlasting
forever and for always
will you walk with me
my friend?

25.

ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS FOR A COUNTER-CULTURE: JESUIT MISSION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Jivan, February 2, 2019

THE PROBLEMATIQUE
RESEARCHERS, TEACHERS, ACTIVISTS
ACTION-REFLECTION-ACTION PRAXIS
DISPLACEMENT OF GOALS
COUNTER-CULTURAL DYNAMICS
ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS

Abstract

The mission of the Jesuit social scientist is to be an authentic organic intellectual not merely interrogating the terms of the discourse that frames people's lives, but further renegotiating them to empower the powerless and to produce a counter-cultural discourse to build legitimate counter-cultural communities of solidarity for the common good.

The Problematique

Should Jesuit social scientists as professionals be oriented to their peer groups or to the people, whom their preferential option calls them to serve and whom their profession impacts? Should this responsibility imply that the latter be involved, directly or at least indirectly in their work, or only to be a source of information and passive recipients of professional practice? Are they objects for research, or participating subjects, partners or just clients? Undoubtedly, for Jesuits the focus of concern in their apostolate and the concrete situations in which they intervene must necessarily be

within the parameters of their mission of the service of faith, and the promotion of justice.

For professionals, their peers are their reference group. They may eschew responsibility and concern for the constituencies they serve and/or impact in some way. These people must have some effective participation and voice as well in their mission. However, Jesuit professionals are called to be committed to the people their mission sends them to serve, rather than be legitimated by their professional peers.

Researchers, teachers, activists

In the social sciences, as with other intellectual disciplines, there are three categories of persons: researchers - who generate knowledge, teachers - who transmit it, activists - who use or apply it. These divisions are distinct but not always separate. They help conceptual clarity for incisive understanding. Each of these categories will have distinct priorities: researchers must meet professional standards of their peers; teachers are oriented to their students; activists are responsible to the people they claim to speak for and serve.

In the context of social research, the people are readily involved with providing the data; researchers critically reflect on and theorise the data to create new knowledge in the public domain; teachers transmit this knowledge to their students in and outside the classroom; activists apply it in the field to the people they work for and with. A feedback loop beginning with the people in the field must then be set off to help researchers to modify and fine-tune their knowledge perspectives and research methodologies in order to create more socially relevant knowledge for society. This in turn must help teachers to update their own comprehension and pedagogy in transmitting the content of their teaching and practices, hopefully to produce men and women who understand social issues and are sensitive to and concerned about others. The feedback must also reach activists in the field to enable more credible and effective action for people's empowerment and welfare.

Action-Reflection-Action Praxis

Thus the creation, transmission and application of knowledge becomes a continuing reiterative process. This is Paulo Freire's praxis: action-reflection-action. It is parallel to the hermeneutical circle of

interpretation-suspicion/doubt-reinterpretation. The reiteration of this praxis, as with the hermeneutical circle, must add up to a critical and grounded discourse. For change agents such praxis must interrogate the terms of the contemporary discourse, which is so distorted by power politics, consumerist economics, social prejudice, and then produce an alternative counter-cultural one.

Bringing together these three domains of research, teaching, action in an on-going process of praxis is a difficult and arduous task, but not an impossible one. For middle class intellectuals and academics, teachers and trainers, even activists, who are alienated from the grassroots people in the field, it is a difficult and delicate task. But it is a worthwhile much needed endeavour.

Displacement of Goals

To effectively impact the complex world of today such a counter-cultural discourse is beyond the capacity of single, separate individuals, and so it gets institutionalised. But then a new dynamic sets in, there is a displacement of goals. Jesuit institutions are not immune to this.

We can easily sleep-walk into it in a day dream of absent minded short-sightedness that can become a nightmare. Here our mission of faith-service and justice-promotion must define the research themes we choose, the kinds of students we teach, the people our social action serves. This is our priority, our preferential option. It is not the same for other professional researchers or teachers or social activists/workers.

Today the information overload is but another way of confusing people and obfuscating issues. The sound bite and the captivating image is an oversimplification that subverts any meaningful understanding. The corporate media is focused on realising goals of profit and pelf through higher viewer ratings and increased readership, rather than on the authentic issues and aspirations of real people, or educating their audience and readers.

Counter-Cultural Dynamics

Our research must not be vacuous and abstract, an incestuous interaction among the researchers themselves for professional recognition and prestige. Too often what we claim as 'research' is

funder-driven project that collects data, tabulates it, writes up a report, and then applies for more funding for another project. This creates no new knowledge, it only serves up information, which may or may not be useful. It requires little or no scholarship only survey methodological competence to collect data, computer literacy to process it and writing skills for the report. How is such research relevant to our Jesuit mission as social scientists? It seems closer to the ad hocism of an activist or the routine of the teacher. The social scientist must bring the Freirean praxis to bear and upgrade such misdirected ventures.

Our teaching in academic institutions must not be 'teaching to the test', for better exam results, which bring student and parental satisfaction, and institutional prestige. This cannot make men and women for others, emotionally integrated and critically alive. Rather it may produce persons with skills and competencies, but not with concern for others and human values. Examination performance and institutional prestige cannot be the purpose and mission of our educational apostolate. These must not become alibis to escape discerning the decisions required to keep our institutions in tune with our mission. So too our teaching must not be repetitive but creative. They must produce change agents, not followers. For this teachers need inputs from researchers and activists, and alumni feedback. This praxis must reorient and fine-tune our teaching.

Our apostolic involvement in social action must never be merely 'ad hoc' action without on-going reflection and feedback, which researchers must facilitate. Or else we might then be running well but in the wrong race!

To interrogate our apostolic practice and create a counter-cultural community effectively demands a corresponding counter-cultural discourse. We need to engage in the kind of praxis that will address the crises around us and the challenges we face with intellectual honesty and firm commitment, and an openness to the future still coming to us and which we can help to create. Otherwise we might just end up going with the flow in the assembly line of the academy with its research and teaching, or get engulfed in the 'ad hocism' of action. In the rush and tumble of our everyday life, we then become less and less relevant even as we are more and more busy, more and more involved in the tasks at hand, and yet less and less true to our mission and purpose!

Organic Intellectuals

To put this differently, the challenge is to become organic intellectuals. As men of ‘solid virtue and solid learning’, committed in their mission of faith and justice, Jesuits are surely called to be organic intellectuals. Without going into the elaborations of the Gramscian discourse, we can sketch some characteristics of this organic intellectual, as someone who can catalyse and articulate the experience of the people, voice their knowledge, echo their wisdom, make them present in places where they are not heard or recognised. This would mean sifting their overabundant information for relevant data, catalysing this into insightful knowledge, articulating all this to bear on their lives.

Eventually, it is the people’s knowledge and wisdom we must come back to, not to naively romanticise these, but to understand from within, critique constructively, and then to celebrate as valuable and viable the wisdom of our people, and put it to effective use for them and the common good. Perhaps we might discover that there is as much sense and sensibility in them as there is pride and prejudice in us. In this process, we must find common ground for the engagement of activists, teachers and intellectuals.

The mission of the Jesuit social scientist then is to be an authentic organic intellectual not merely interrogating the terms of the discourse that frames people’s lives, but further renegotiating them to empower the powerless, give voice to the voiceless, to the last and the least, remembering that for Ignatius the more universal the good, the more divine it is. This then must be the mission of the Jesuit social scientist within the larger one of the Society: to produce a counter-cultural discourse to build legitimate counter-cultural communities of solidarity for the common good.

26.

THE MYSTICISM OF ST. IGNATIUS

Jivan, May 2021, pp 18-19

CLARIFICATIONS AND CONTEXTS

MYSTICISM AS THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

DYNAMIC COINCIDENCE OF OPPOSITES

Abstract

'The Christian of the future will be a mystic or not a Christian at all' - (Karl Rahner). That future has already arrived but not fully yet. Ignatian spirituality properly comprehended has a critical place in bringing about this *kairos*.

Clarifications and Contexts

In sociological terms, mysticism is about charism, an especial gift that attracts a following. Weber sees this charism as being institutionalised in a tradition to preserve and spread its impact. This at the same time alienates the very charism from its origins. It is a dilemma for all traditions, especially religious ones: the freedom of the spirit that brings newness and authenticity to its belief and practice, versus the letter and the law which makes for stabilising and preserving it. This dilemma cannot be resolved, it must be lived in creative and imaginative tension, or fall into a dichotomy in an institution, a schizophrenia in the soul. In sociological terms, religious prophets are charismatic, persons graced with a deep experience of the Divine that gives them a natural authority over others: they teach 'with authority'.

A prophet's 'ethic' can be either this-worldly or otherworldly oriented. In the Abrahamic, Semitic traditions, there are more ethical prophets, focused on action; in the Eastern cosmic religions, they are more mystical, and devoted more to contemplation. This polarity must be addressed creatively, as a contemplative-in-action, or an inspirational example. These cannot be completely exclusive of each

other; just as ‘doing’ and ‘being’, necessarily imply each other, as we see with all the great prophets and mystics. The difference is of priority and emphasis in any particular instance.

By way of illustration: those gathered in the name of Jesus share a salvation history. Within this tradition, Jesus experiences his Father, Abba, and gathers disciples into a fellowship which grows into a community that eventually structures itself into an assembly – people of the Way— a Church which must continually be reformed and renewed. Ethical and mystical prophets do this differently. We can think of the Society of Jesus as companions living out this fellowship inspired by Ignatius’s charism with its spirituality and mysticism, which gets institutionalised in a religious order in the Church,

This religious order creatively expresses the inspiration of their spiritual vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation into which it is inserted, imagining a future of new ventures and daring possibilities from the greatest to the least.

Mysticism as The Experience of God

Traditionally spiritual theologians, like de Guibert, (1953) have understood mysticism in terms of acquired or infused contemplation. However, Karl Rahner, whose theology of grace earned him the title of the teacher of mysticism (Doctor Mysticus) begins by presenting the divine as accessible and the human person as ultimately oriented toward this divine transcendence, while remaining an incomprehensible mystery. Rahner’s work is particularly relevant to spirituality. The experience of God as an ordinary occurrence gives it a sense of normality which does not focus on the extremes of many of the saints. Though he does not deny their value, he holds that every human being has experienced this Mystery, and needs only to recognize it.

Hugo Rahner’s *Spirituality of St Ignatius Loyola*, (1953) keeps this tension between action and prayer. His image of Ignatian spirituality is of one, who from the foot of the Cross runs to the world to save it, not from the world to save himself. For Hugo Rahner, this adds up to a spirituality of service, a mysticism of action. Jerome Nadal captured this in one of its earliest formulations ‘contemplative in action’. But the expression that goes back to Ignatius himself is: ‘Finding God in all things and all things in God’, which is foregrounded in the Fourth Week, in ‘The Contemplation for Love’.

However, every 'week' of the Spiritual Exercises has its own spiritual experience that matures into its own special mystical intuition as its natural progression. Detachment and purposefulness are the intuition in the principal and foundation; sorrow and repentance in the First Week, generosity with the Triple Colloquy; in the Second Week it is familiarity with the Master in order to discern, decide and follow him; in the Third Week, immersion into the Paschal Mystery, with the Third Degree of Humility as the high point of a Christocentric love; in the Fourth Week it's Resurrection Joy, and finally in the Contemplation for love as the culmination of the Spiritual Exercises, it becomes a practical mysticism of everyday things, a mysticism of joy in the world, premised on the experience of God's gratuitous love given us and followed by our grateful love in return.

This is precisely the experience in Ignatius's encounter with the Holy Trinity that begins at Manresa on the Cardoner: God 'labouring' to bring forth the world out of nothing and reintegrating it all into his Trinitarian self as its final end. This is 'The Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World,' as Karl Rahner termed it: 'Finding God in all things and all things in God', in Ignatius's own words.

We do possess a vague empirical concept of the ultimate in our lives by whatever name we call it. These may not be the extreme religious experiences of higher impulses, of visions, and inspirations. However, we all have had peak experiences of closeness to an ultimate. We need to recognise and cultivate them, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All this is comprised in our understanding of Ignatian mysticism.

What exactly is of ultimate importance in our lives? The details may diverge but ultimately converge in the same finality. Whatever name we call this mystery, it is always accessible to and yet never completely comprehensible: within our reach but beyond our grasp.

Dynamic Coincidence of Opposites

The integration of opposites in Ignatian mysticism is always dynamic. Ignatius is not content to be entranced by the marvel of creation coming from God and returning to God. He must be involved and participate in this movement. Ignatius's vision on the Cardoner sees the whole of creation coming from God out of nothing and returning to find its fulfilment in the Three Divine Persons:

originating in the ‘Father’, reflected in the ‘Son’, bonded in the ‘Spirit’. All are invited to wonder at and participate in this mystery. The separation of contemplation and action is thus dissolved; being and doing are not distinct.

This God, far from the unmoved mover of the philosopher, is the loving Father of Jesus, who brings us back through his saving death and resurrection, and leaves his Spirit as a continuing presence for us. Ignatian mysticism is quintessentially Trinitarian – embracing all three divine persons.

Ignatian mysticism apprehends God’s presence in the everyday things of this world, yet is humbly aware the Divine always remains incomprehensible; the immanence and transcendence of the Divine are two aspects of the one mystery, epitomised in the life of Jesus.

The traditional ‘examination of conscience’ focuses on our infidelities; we need an examination of consciousness as a practical way of deepening our ‘consciousness’ of the Divine presence and founding our lives on it. For in it we live and move and have our being. All too often the ‘noise’ around distracts us. Deepening ‘consciousness’, focuses one’s mind—mindfulness—sharpens and clarifies our spiritual discernment, and stimulates our apostolic imagination, leading us to be more loving persons for others, and more inspirational exemplars in our world.

This gives the coincidence of opposites in Ignatian mysticism its especial characteristic—the Jesuit imagination—creatively expressing the inspiration of their spiritual vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation into which they are inserted, imagining a future of new ventures and daring possibilities from the greatest to the least.

In this Ignatian year, let us endeavour to recapture this Jesuit imagination: ‘*Non cohiberi a maximo, contineri tamen a minimo, hoc divinum est*’ (to reach out to the greatest yet stay by the least). (Parmananda Divarkar 1977: 23)

27.

ST IGNATIUS: SOLDIER-SAINT OR PILGRIM-MYSTIC

Rediscovering Inigo the Pilgrim in South Asianness, edited by Elil Rajendram SJ, ISPCK, New Delhi, 2023, pp. 160-179.

- I. EARLY TRANSFORMATIONS
- II. IGNATIUS AND THE INQUISITION
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Abstract

The life, spirituality and mysticism of St Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus.

I. Early Transformations

The image of St Ignatius in the popular Catholic imagination is that of a Soldier-Saint, or rather ‘a noble knight, leader of a brave array’, felled in battle, defeated, wounded and almost accidentally converted during his convalescence, from the ambitions of mediaeval chivalrous honour in the court of his liege to a saintly pilgrim, who founded of a religious order. During his convalescence in response to his request

for some romantic reading, he was given the [*Golden Legend*](#), a collection of the legendary lives of the saints of the medieval church, one of the most popular religious works in the Medieval Church by Jacobus de Varagine (1228-1298) and *The Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony (c. 1295 – 1378), a Carthusian monk.

These were in the tradition of what was called the *Devotio Moderna*. (or ‘Modern Devotion’), a late medieval spiritual renewal movement that originated in northern Europe and attracted educated laypeople and reform-minded clergy. It consisted in meditatively projecting oneself into the situation described in a scriptural text under consideration and feeling with the characters therein.

This new ‘romance’ he came upon here soon transformed him. He found himself imagining doing the great things the saints had done. Why couldn’t he be like St Francis of Assisi or St Dominic and follow them? He found a lasting consolation and peace in such thoughts. Whereas, when he went back to imagining the great chivalrous deeds he would do for worldly honour, the pleasure he felt was transitory and soon left him disconsolate and dissatisfied. This was the beginning of Ignatius’s experience of the discernment of the spirits and how the good and evil spirits moved him in opposite directions.

He was left wondering what such experiences could mean. Finally after a struggle with himself, the once ‘noble knight’ turned away from his deceptive ambitions and determined to become a humble ‘pilgrim’, a title by which he refers to himself in his *Autobiography*. (1990) However, he still had much to learn and experience as he set out on the new life, he had chosen to commit himself to.

In his *Autobiography* dictated to his secretary, Gonçalves da Câmara between 1552 and 1554 in Rome as Superior General of the Jesuits. Towards the end of his life as he recalls how after his conversion riding down a dusty road in Spain in the company of a Muslim Moor discussing religion, they disagreed and the Moor ended the discussion and rode off after making some insulting remarks about the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Ignatius was outraged. He thought it might be his knightly duty to defend the honour of the Blessed Virgin by killing the Moor, but he wasn’t sure that would be consistent with his new faith. So he left the decision up to the mule he was riding. They were approaching a crossroads on their way. If the mule took the road that the Moor took, Ignatius would follow and kill him. If the beast took the other road, he would let him go. *Fortunately, the mule took the other road!*

We can only speculate what the consequences would have been if the mule had followed the Moor. The Society of Jesus that the saint went on to found many years later seemed to have depended on the impulse of a mule!

From Loyola in northern Spain, he set out for Manresa in the south. On the way he made an all-night vigil before the statue of the Madonna in a chapel, where he left his knightly armour at the altar and set out on his mule once again with a pilgrim clock and staff. He stayed in Manresa as a penitent pilgrim from March 25, 1522, to mid-February 1523. This turned out to be a decisive period in his spiritual journey.

He lived in hospice by the river Cardoner, spent seven hours a day in prayer on his knees, scourged himself three times a day, fasted rigorously, and slept little. Such exaggerated penitence took a toll on his physical and mental health. He became plagued by scruples to the point of seriously considering suicide to end it all. He made a general confession in some forty-seven written pages to his Benedictine confessor who then commanded him to leave his past behind and moderate his penances. Once he resolved to obey his confessor he found peace, though earlier disturbances still returned from time to time. He began to discern the movements of the spirits; those that moved him to peace and consolation and others to doubt and desolation.

However, after he moderated his extreme penances at the command of his spiritual confessor that his health, physical and mental, was restored and he found peace, and was freed from his scruples. For he had now come to realize that these exaggerated extremes were a temptation from the evil spirit rather than an inspiration from God. Thus he was being schooled in the Discernments of Spirits which was changing him from 'an obsessive-compulsive neurotic' into an 'a person of great holiness, a mystical genius and one of the most brilliant men of his time', as the Jesuit writer Richard Lenoard opines. (Tablet, 3 Jul 2021)

Already in his cave in Manresa, and on the Banks of the Cardoner river, he was transformed by extraordinary mystical experiences. These now introduced him to mysticism in action that would become the distinguishing spirituality of the religious order he later founded, the Society of Jesus, which had an enormous impact on the Church and the world, then and down to our own day.

But as he began to help persons who came to him for guidance, he drew the attention of the Spanish Inquisition. They were surprised

that someone with no learning in religious matters was engaging in such a spiritual ministry, and though they could find nothing ‘heretical’ or erroneous in his teachings and guidance, the inquisitors forbade him to continue.

To prepare himself better for such a ministry, Ignatius decided he would have to educate himself further. He began studying Latin in Barcelona and went on to the university at Salamanca. Here he once again began his ministry of ‘helping souls’, as he termed this. Those who came to him for guidance were attracted by his evident saintliness and charisma. Once again he was brought before the Inquisition, which was very suspicious of lay people who sought to teach or preach lest they be heretics or secret Protestants! Here was someone who by his own admission not well educated in such spiritual matters, guiding lay persons, who came to him for help. So he was imprisoned and thoroughly investigated by the Inquisition.

Ignatius was suspect because aspects of his spiritual vision and teachings were based on what was known as the *Devotio Moderna*. Ignatius had been introduced to it by the spiritual books was given to read during his convalescence in Loyola. However, in the context of Spain, the semi-mystical elements of this movement that was not controlled by the Church hierarchy, led to its being frequently confused with the supposedly dangerous Spanish heresy of the *alumbrados* or ‘illuminated ones’, a group whose teachings were condemned in 1525 by the Inquisition of Toledo.

II. Ignatius and the Inquisition

However, after a thorough examination, the inquisitors could find nothing incriminating and released him with a warning not to teach or preach until he was properly qualified to do so. This time Ignatius demanded and got a certificate of orthodoxy from them. This finally put paid to the several encounters he had had with Holy Inquisition.

From Salamanca, he went on to study in Paris, where he collected a small band of companions, with whom he shared his vision of mission. These then began the founding core of the Society of Jesus in Rome. However, Ignatius and his companions were still under suspicion of powerful clerics associated with the Inquisition.

Ignatius had begun collecting his reflections in notes based on his experiences in guiding others who came to him for spiritual direction. He continually revised these and eventually put them together in a

compendium as the ‘Spiritual Exercises’. This little collection of meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices later served to help people deepen their relationship with God. These were constantly revised as it was used as a manual for giving the ‘Ignatian retreat’. It was considered an authentic encapsulation of Ignatian spirituality grounded in his spiritual vision and teachings.

Considering that Ignatius and his Jesuits were proposing a new kind of religious order that broke from traditional practices of the monasteries, premised on a spirituality that integrated, rather than compartmentalised contemplation and action, the opposition from the religious establishment was not surprising. The Jesuits had to establish their credentials of orthodoxy and authenticity, against suspicions of the traditionalists of the old orthodoxy.

III. Melchior Cano and Ignatius of Loyola

One of the most ardent early critics of the spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola, was the Dominican theologian Melchor Cano (c.1509–60). Terence O’Reilly has made a detailed study of Melchor Cano’s *Censura y parecer contra el Instituto de los Padres Jesuitas, Censorship and opinion against the Institute of Jesuit Fathers* (2017). Here Cano’s reasons for associating Ignatius with the illuminists were documented. The original manuscript was prepared with a view to present it to Pope Paul IV (r.1555–59), who was no friend of the new order and questioned the need for it and even found the name Ignatius had chosen for his band of followers, ‘The Society of Jesus’, (Compania in Spanish) to be inappropriate. He would rather these men were integrated into the already existing religious orders. This Pope had evidently not grasped the originality of Ignatian spirituality. His successor Pius IV (r.1559–1565) was more sympathetic and eased the situation of the Society as a whole. In Spain, the change of atmosphere was confirmed when Cano died suddenly in Toledo in 1560.

The original copy of the *Censura* has been lost but excerpts survived and have been put together in a manuscript which is now available in the British Museum. It enlightens us on Cano’s view of Ignatius, the *Spiritual Exercises*, and the Society of Jesus, and helps us understand why the Inquisition had been so suspicious of Ignatius and his little book. Cano was convinced that it was but an offshoot of the kind of the ‘illuminism’ practised by the *alumbrados* or *dexados*,

a group whose teachings had already been condemned in 1525 by the Spanish Inquisition in Toledo.

Melchor Cano had met Ignatius and drawn a very vivid and negative portrait of him that could not but have influenced his suspicions regarding the *Spiritual Exercises*, in which he found several features that reminded him of the *alumbrados*. His reservations about the Exercises, and those of his fellow Dominican, Tomás de Pedroche, are examined in, ‘The Spiritual Exercises and Illuminism in Spain: ‘Dominican Critics of the Early Society of Jesus,’ (O’Reily 2020: 199-228)

Cano’s own argument in the *Censura* is summarised here by O’Reily:

‘First, he deplored the fact that they offered everyone the same spirituality of a contemplative kind, irrespective of different temperaments and callings....

Cano’s second reservation about the Exercises was prompted by the importance he considered they accorded to affective spiritual experience...

Cano’s third objection to the Exercises concerned their encouragement of indifference as a means of discerning God’s will....’

In the ‘discernment’ taught in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Cano sees the imprint of the *alumbrados*, who sought direct guidance from the Lord in all areas of their lives and undermined respect for reason, learning, and authority. For Cano, Ignatius and his *Spiritual Exercises* were a threat to the religious traditional religious orders, of the Spanish kingdom, just as Luther and his Lutherans were to Germany and Christendom, they would bring about in Spain the calamities caused in Germany by the Protestants with less clamour but equal efficiency.

Cano’s passionate conviction that the Society was a ‘*novedad*’, an innovation breaking with the sacrosanct precedents of the traditional religious orders, abandoning various features of the religious life that had always expressed and safeguarded the virtue of piety. Moreover, members of the Society are not men of proven virtue; they can show no evidence of the miracles associated with holy persons as was expected in those times. He even casts doubt on the order’s canonical legitimacy, since it was approved in 1540, before its Constitutions were written and adopted in 1553.

Melchior Cano was challenged vigorously, not only by members of the young Society, but by some of his own fellow Dominicans in

Spain to whom his crusade against the Jesuits was an embarrassment, especially after the approval of the new Society by Pope Paul III in 1540, though he set a limit of 60 members which was soon lifted. The *Spiritual Exercises* were also approved and printed in 1548. Today modern scholarship has confirmed that in many respects Cano was grossly mistaken. However, he does help us to understand the deep hostility aroused by the new order.

IV. The Spiritual Exercises and the Illuminati

Inquisition had suspected Ignatius to be a follower of *alumbradismo* or ‘The Way of Enlightenment.’ These ‘illuminati’ (enlightened ones) expressed contempt for the cult of saints, the reverence shown images, for indulgences, fasting, abstinence and the commandments of the Church. They were dismissive of all forms of liturgical prayer and disdainful of all tradition and authority. Moreover, they considered all such activity is an obstacle to the divine presence in the soul. An edict of faith issued by the Inquisitor General in 1525 condemned many such propositions and practices of these. (O’Brian 2021)

The Spiritual Exercises was a new spirituality offered to all irrespective of different temperaments and callings. It set out a method to discern the will of God in our personal lives. This seemed dangerously close to the individualism of the ‘illuminati’ at the time, who claimed direct access to enlightenment by God in contemplation, without regard to the hierarchical Church that represented the collective Christian community. On the contrary Ignatian spirituality as preached and practised by the Jesuits, creates a community of ‘companions in mission’ and ‘friends in the Lord’.

Ignatian discernment is not individualistic. Rather it encourages consultation and guidance, and is even at times practised as a community exercise, as we see in the early Society, even before it was formally founded, and is to this day re-enacted in its various congregations at the level of the provinces and the universal Society. In other words, Ignatian discernment is always a prayerful search for the will of God and contextualised in the larger Christian community.

Ignatius had put together some notes on his experiences of ‘helping souls’ as he termed his spiritual direction already from his days in Manresa. In one of the later additions to the book of *Spiritual Exercises* before it was published were his ‘Rules for Thinking with

the Church'. This is a most unfortunate translation of the Latin *Sentire cum Ecclesia*, which is better rendered as 'feeling'/sensing' with the Church. For here rather than setting redlines on the limits to orthodoxy, what Ignatius seems to be trying to emphasise is an attitude of respect and openness to the orthodox Church teachings at a time of great contestation by the Protestant Reformation.

In his 'Rules for Feeling with the Church' Ignatius is deliberately distancing himself from these 'illuminati' and calling the exercitant to eschew the sharp criticisms of the Protestants and other heretics, and have an open attitude of heart that gives the benefit of the doubt to the Church authorities. These Rules are not meant to promote a blind obedience that abandons all reasonableness and sensibility. Jesuits have always insisted on an '*obsequium rationale*', a meaning offering after an appropriate discernment.

One of the errors of the the *alumbrados*, or *Illuminati* (*enlightened ones*) was privileging prayer and contemplation as incompatible with a life of action and service to the point of the neglect the works proper to their vocation. However, Ignatian spirituality endeavours to combine the active and contemplative lives. He remained apprehensive of long hours spent in prayer and exaggerated public penances, as was customary in the monastic rule at the time. The real test of openness to the Spirit was the 'mortification' of the self, a total renunciation of self-love, self-will, self-interest, in other words, a total surrender of oneself to God's will.

The Jesuits' exemption from the recital of the choir in common, as was done in the religious orders of the time, was a further exception for suspicion. The Jesuits' endeavour to be both men of prayer and action was too much of an innovation for mainstream religious orders at the time. Yet today Ignatian spirituality is accepted as one of the more challenging ones, and more suited to our times: contemplation in action as Jerome Nadal ([1535-1575] one, of the early Jesuits described it.

Much of the resistance of persons like Melchior Cano and other monks seem to have been grounded in a reluctance to accept, or rather even a misunderstanding of this basic newness of Ignatian spirituality. Much of all this is now history, but recalling it here should help us to a better and deeper understanding of Jesuit spirituality and a more authentic practice in returning to its sources, *ad fontes*, as Vatican II urged all religious orders to do.

V. Soldier-Saint to Pilgrim-Mystic

Presenting Ignatius as a 'soldier-saint' and the Jesuits as the 'commandos' of the Church, is a militaristic imagery that was more suited to combating the Protestant Reformation and to an expansionist missionary age of colonial times. The missionary preacher followed the conquering soldier, the sword preceded the cross. This imagery drew on the chivalric culture of the mediaeval knight. We find such imagery even in the contemplations of the Two Kingdoms in the *Spiritual Exercises* of the Second Week: (Nos 91 & ff)

Today, the leading image of Ignatius is that the mystic and his mystical experiences in Manresa, at La Storta, and in Rome, as related in his *Autobiography* (1990) and the *Spiritual Diary* (1990), are foregrounded as the fountainhead of his spirituality. The text of the *Spiritual Exercises* after some initial controversies was formally approved earlier in 1548. The Society of Jesus he founded was formally approved in 1540, and its Constitutions adopted in 1553.

However, the image of the soldier-saint is still popular among many, even some Jesuits; and the image of the Society is that of a conquering crusade, the 'commandos' at the frontiers of the post-Reformation Church. The newly discovered mission lands were closely associated with colonial governments, which preferred new converts to be obedient subjects of the colonisers, and so the colonial Church could not truly inculturate itself among their people.

Most unfortunately, some of the most significant breakthroughs made by the Jesuits, like Chinese and Malabar rites, and the Paraguay Reductions in the 17th century, engendered such resistance in the Church at large, that these rites were terminated by papal decree in 1704, and the Jesuits were expelled from Paraguay and other Latin American countries in 1767, even before the Suppression of the Society in 1773. The Society was restored in 1814, but these rites had to wait till 1939, two centuries after their suppression before the ban on them was lifted. The Catholic Church in the missions, especially in Asia and elsewhere has never quite recovered from such a fatal misstep.

Today more attention is now focused on this Ignatian mysticism of service that integrates contemplation and action in everyday life, seeking God in all things and all things in God. Ignatius wanted the Jesuits to be men of God and men for others, men of solid virtue and

solid leaning, in the world but not of it. This is the source of the Jesuit imagination and their pioneering ventures.

VI. Mysticism as The Experience of God

Hugo Rahner's *Spirituality of St Ignatius Loyola*, (1953) talks of it as one, which keeps up this tension between action and prayer. The image he has of Ignatian spirituality is of one, who looks up from the foot of the Cross and runs to the world to save it, not from the world to save himself. For Hugo Ranher this adds up to a spirituality of service, a mysticism of action. Jerome Nadal's 'contemplative in action', one of the earliest formulations of the Ignatian charism attempted to capture this. But the expression that goes back to Ignatius himself is: 'Finding God in all things and all things in God', which is foregrounded in the Fourth Week, in 'The Contemplation for Love.

Traditionally spiritual theologians, like de Guibert, (1953) have understood mysticism in terms of acquired or infused contemplation, which graced the great mystics of the Church. However, Karl Rahner, whose theology of grace earned him the title of the teacher of mysticism (Doctor Mysticus) begins by presenting the divine as accessible, and the human person as ultimately oriented toward the transcendent, while still remaining incomprehensible.

This makes Rahner's theology of 'grace' particularly relevant to Ignatian spirituality. The experience of God as an ordinary occurrence gives it a sense of normality which does not focus on the extremes of many of the saints. Though he does not deny their value, he holds that every human being has experienced this Mystery and needs only to be taught to recognize it. For as Ignatius taught us God's generosity always exceeds our expectations, if only we open ourselves unreservedly to him. (Sp Ex no. 5, 5th Annotation)

De Guibert notes that in the Ignatian 'mysticism of service', there is

'the complete absence of what could be called the "nuptial" aspect of mystical union' in Ignatius, as also the lack of reference to a "transforming union", in which our own life somehow disappears and Christ takes us over. With Ignatius, things are different: What dominates all his relations with the divine Persons, with Christ, is the loving, humble attitude of a servant, a concern to discern even tiny

nuances in the service he wants to give, the generosity needed to carry this service out perfectly and on a grand scale’ (de Guibert 1964: 55-56)

Karl Rahner’s mystical theology (1975) is more radically new in what he terms ‘the mysticism of daily life’, ‘the mysticism of the masses’ rather than a ‘mysticism of the classical masters’. The radical openness to the human person to God’s grace is only fully realised when one lives in depth, with faith, hope and charity, in fidelity to one’s conscience. All of us are capable of being ‘homo mysticus’ but the capacity needs to be recognised and realised. Rahner claims the Christian of the future will either be a ‘mystic’, one who has experienced ‘something’, or he will cease to be anything at all (Egan 2013: 51) In other words, being a Christian, or for that matter, being authentically human, one must live in depth and intensity. This view of mysticism as the experience of grace permeates not only Rahner’s mystical theology but also much of his overall theology (Rahner K 1975: 1010-1011)

Karl Rahner’s essay, ‘The Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World’, (1963: 277-293)

‘proposes that the single-minded dedication to God characteristic of monasticism can be lived out also in other contexts, indeed in any life responsive to God’s grace. Thus the disciple engaged in active or prestigious work may count as a kind of honorary mystic, a mystic by extension.’ (Endean 2018:78)

For

‘In the final analysis it is unimportant whether you call such a personal, genuine experience of God, which occurs in the deepest core of a person, ‘mystical’.’ (Imhof et al., eds 1990: 115)

However, neither the categories of de Guibert’s ‘infused contemplation’, nor Rahner’s ‘honorary mystic’ seems to grasp the specificity of Ignatian mysticism. The Ignatian ‘contemplative in action’ is a person completely involved in service, and yet totally detached from the action. This is precisely the ‘coincidence of opposites’ that is characteristic of all authentic mysticism. Thus Ignatius’s mysticism is founded, not so much by his transformative visions and experiences or his elevated states of prayer and

meditation, but by a spiritual pedagogy that sensitises one to the inner voice of the divine Spirit.

This is the core, the heart of Jesuit spirituality that so inspires dedication to service at frontiers of our world and a dedication to those at the margins of our society. It makes for a restless quest for the greater service, the more universal good, in other words, the Jesuit 'magis'. 'Our Mission Today' has been so inspiringly rearticulated by the 32nd General Congregation of the Society in its Fourth Decree: 'the service of faith and the promotion of justice.'

VII. A Practical Mysticism

The *Spiritual Exercises* are focused on finding and following God's will in one's life. The progressive sequence of these exercises is meant to open one to the final experience of a practical mysticism of everyday things, a 'mysticism of joy in the world' (Rahner K 1963), premised on the experience on God's love gratuitously given to undeserving sinners like us, and inviting our grateful love in return. This demands the 'unselfing of the self', not unlike the *nishkama karma* of the Bhagavad-Gita.

These *Exercises* are premised on Ignatius's mystical encounter with the Holy Trinity in the cave at Manresa and on the banks of the river Cardoner: God 'labouring' to bring forth the world out of nothing and reintegrating it all into his Trinitarian self as its final end. This is 'The Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World,' as Karl Rahner (1963) has termed it and it adds up to 'finding God in all things and all things in God', in Ignatius's own words.

After all, we do possess a vague empirical concept of the ultimate in our lives, our God or whatever name we call it by. These may not be the extreme religious experiences of higher impulses, of visions, and inspirations. But there are peak experiences we all have had of closeness to an ultimate. We need to recognise these and become conscious of them, and cultivate them, with the special and personal guidance of the Holy Spirit, the *Antaryamin*, the inner ruler whose providence rules our lives. All this is comprised in our understanding of the word mysticism.

To live intensely we must further ask: what exactly is of ultimate importance, and in our lives. While the details may diverge with each one, they all in the end converge on the same finality. By whatever other name we may call this it is always accessible to people but always

incomprehensible as well. Within our reach but beyond our grasp. This is what makes us to seek and find this God in all things.

The *Spiritual Exercises* begin with the purpose of our lives, its 'principle and foundation' (Sp Ex no. 23) The then Exercises proceed over four 'weeks' but each has its own spiritual experience that matures into its own especial mystical intuition as its natural progression. Detachment and purposefulness is the intuition in the principal and foundation; sorrow and repentance in the First Week, generosity with the Triple Colloquy, In the Second Week it is, familiarity with the Master in order to discern, decide and follow him; in the Third Week immersion into the Paschal Mystery of death-resurrection, with the Third Degree of Humility, an identification with the suffering Jesus as the high point of a Christocentric love; and in the Fourth Week it's Resurrection Joy and finally in the Contemplation for love is the culmination of the Spiritual Exercises.

VIII. Dynamic Coincidence of Opposites

A mystic response is characterised by an integration of opposites. In Ignatian mysticism this is always dynamic. Ignatius is not content to watch and admire the beauty of creation coming from God and returning to God. He must be involved and participate. Ignatius's vision on the Cardoner saw the whole of creation coming from God out of nothing and returning into the Holy Trinity to find its fulfilment in the Three Divine Persons. This is a labour of love to which we are all invited to join, to see and participate. The separation of contemplation and action is thus dissolved.

Being and doing are not distinct. This God is far from the unmoved mover of the philosopher but is the loving Father, the Deus Absconditus, the incomprehensible mystery, who sends His 'son' Jesus, *Deus pro Nobis*, true God and true man, to bring us back to his Father through his saving death and resurrection and leaving his Spirit as a continuing presence for us. Thus, Ignatian mysticism is quintessentially Trinitarian – embracing all three divine persons – from its very beginning. (Sachs 1990: 74 & nt 3). Moreover,

'it arises and develops from the experience of Manresa, 'seeking and finding God in all things', implies a particular view of God, God's action in this world, and our participation in that action. . . (Sachs 1995: 74)

A further characteristic of this is a 'service mysticism' not a 'bridal mysticism' of love.'(Sachs 1990:77) For 'Ignatius' experience of union with God is concretely mediated by Jesus Christ, the Son sent into the world in service of God's reign. (Sachs 1990: 78)

Thus, the very basis of Ignatian mysticism apprehends God's presence in the everyday things of this world, yet is humbly aware that the Divine always remains incomprehensible. In other words, the immanence and transcendence of the Divine are two aspects of the one mystery that dwells in us through the divine Spirit.

The Ignatian 'examen' (a critical reflection and moral evaluation) is not so much meant to focus on our infidelities, Rather it is an examination of 'consciousness', and a practical way of deepening our awareness of the Divine presence in our lives and founding our lives on this presence. For we live and move and have our being in it, though we are all too often distracted from 'noise' around.

I believe 'consciousness' focuses one's mind – mindfulness – sharpens and clarifies our spiritual discernment, stimulates our apostolic and spiritual imagination, in other words, leads one to be a more loving person for others, truer mystics as exemplars in our world.

IX. The Jesuit Today

Jerome Nadal rightly insists that the graces God grants to a religious founder are also meant for the members of the congregation. Ignatius's mystical experiences at Manresa and La Storta. and later in Rome, reveal a profound sense of love and intimacy with the triune God, 'labouring' to communicate his love for the world that originated from and shares in his being. The Jesuit response calls us to be companions of Jesus in his labour of love, a transformative love in service especially of the last and the least for the sake of God's kingdom.

As a pilgrim-mystic, Ignatius's journeyed ever deeper into the mystery of God. He demonstrates how our affections and imagination are crucial in discerning the experience of God's world and a transforming service of love in our world. The 32nd General Congregation 32, (1973-1975) in its Decree 2, nos 1 & 2 articulates the Jesuit identity and mission for today. It

'is to know that one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was . . . It is to engage, under the standard of the

Cross, in the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes....’

This image of the Jesuit as a companion of Jesus, the wandering pilgrim mystic struggling to bring faith and justice to the poor, the lost and the least is most appealing in South Asians and other places, wherever there is need for healing and wholeness.

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LIST OF ARTICLES WITH ABSTRACTS

1. THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST

Abstract: Jesus confronts all those who come in contact with him: ‘Who do men say that I am? Here his utter uniqueness poses us with a dilemma. This paper examines the theology of Rudolf Bultmann, Oscar Cullman, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Karl Rahner.

2. JESUIT PROVINCE ADMINISTRATION: THE GOVERNMENT YOU DESERVE

Abstract: Here is the substance of a working paper presented by the writer during the ‘Province Days’ (Bombay: April 17-19, 1985). Most of the principles and statements might be applicable to other provinces. In presenting this paper on province administration, the focus will not be on the routine administration of the province curia, but rather on the governance of the province especially in terms of policy-decisions—how they are made, implemented and evaluated.

3. AN ECO-SENSITIVE SPIRITUALITY FOR TODAY

Abstract: Jesus confronts all those who come in contact with him: ‘Who do men say that I am? Here his utter uniqueness poses us with a dilemma. This paper examines the theology of Rudolf Bultmann, Oscar Cullman, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Karl Rahner.

4. CONVERSION AND CONFRONTATION: THE TALASARI MISSION EXPERIENCE

Abstract: This is a sociological study of the evolution of the Talasari mission in Maharashtra in the last seventy years. This is an analysis of the forces at work in the passage from a religious/proselytising concern to involvement in development projects and finally to the promotion of conscientization among the people in search of justice, and shows how the three are interconnected. The early section of the study, dealing with the situation of the Warlis and the history of the mission is omitted and presented in summarised form by the editors of VJTR.

5. OPENING THE DOOR: THE JESUIT MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTION TO DIALOGUE

Abstract: In their encounter with the cultures and peoples of the mission lands, the Jesuits made their best contribution to a deeper dialogue. This study will try to set the context in which this encounter took place, describe the vision which set the dialogue going, and outline the debate which led to its untimely suppression. The approach here will be sociological rather than historical, in that it will not focus on the ‘chronological inter-relationships between particular events with a view to determining their causality’, but rather on ‘the relationship between the fundamental elements of the social organism existing at the given time’.

6. SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND NEED FOR A NEW HERMENEUTIC

Abstract: There is an urgent need for a reorientation and a renewed articulation of our spirituality. More than just a textual criticism, we need a hermeneutical understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises* that will make the Ignatian charism come alive for us today, by re-reading the exercises in the light of our commitment to faith-justice.

7. JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA TODAY: INSTITUTIONALIZING OUR CHARISM IN THE AFFILIATING UNIVERSITY

Abstract: The dialectic tension between the ‘institutional’ and the ‘charismatic’ is inherent in any social system. Religious organizations illustrate this very convincingly. Educational institutions too, particularly when they derive from a religious, or otherwise charismatic inspiration, are also subject to this dialectic tension, and Jesuit education certainly falls into this category.

8. OPTION FOR THE POOR AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Abstract: This article tries to deal with the questions—What does the option for the poor mean today in the wider context of the Christian tradition? How must his option be exercised in the social situation in which we and the local churches live? What sort of justice must this option promote?

Our attempt here is to initiate a search for an authentic faith-understanding and a genuine action-response to the Gospel in our situation.

9. COLONIALISM TO GLOBALISATION: REFOUNDING THE CHURCH OF THE INDIES

ABSTRACT: We interrogate the legacy of St Francis Xavier. The challenge is to refound the churches in the post-colonial age, to inculturate, or rather incarnate the Good News in a globalising world.

10. DISCERNING TOGETHER: SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT

Abstract: This article attempts to operationalise discernment into practical methodologies which were explored at a workshop at Santa Severa, Italy, in 2005.

11. PRE-EMPTIVE RESPONSE OR ONGOING DISCERNMENT: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR GENERAL CONGREGATION 35

Abstract: The article is about the coming 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 2008. What leadership will GC 35 provide and whose stamp will it carry? Where will the turn in the crossroads take us and how will we respond?

12. DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES: A PERSONAL REFLECTION FOR GC 35

Abstract: How will the General Congregation 35 read and respond to the times? A General Congregation is essentially a process of discernment, whether it be the election of the superior general, the processing of the postulates or the decrees to be voted on. Here an attempt is made to delineate various levels in this process, the best would be a bottom-up continuous, participative process.

13. FUNDAMENTALISM AND COMMUNALISM: THE CHALLENGE FOR ASIAN JESUITS

Abstract: Religious fundamentalism and religious communalism feed on each other as they rampage across all major religious traditions today and especially South Asia: Muslim Salafis, Christian evangelicals, Hindu extremists and religious radicals of all kinds.

14. INCARNATING CHRIST IN INDIA: PEDRO ARRUIPE AND INCULTURATION

Abstract: Fr. Pedro Arrupe, 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus was a paradigm for the inculturation he so earnestly promoted and advocated in the Church and the Society. The paradox of Fr. Arrupe was that in being the more inculturated,

emerged, into the local situation wherever he was, he becomes the more universally relevant to the world beyond it.

15. DEVELOPMENT AS LIBERATION: AN INDIAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Abstract: An open mind and an unsealed heart are the minimum we can require of a Jesuit apostolate. This article explores the Jesuit intellectual apostolate, as described in GC 34 Dec. 16, No. 1 on ‘The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries’

16. MY INTER-FAITH JOURNEY : MULTIPLE IDENTITIES, MULTIPLE BELONGINGS: COMMON GROUND FOR EQUAL DIALOGUE

Abstract: More than ever we need inter-cultural and inter-religious engagements in an equal dialogue: with the poor for justice, between cultures for harmony and among religions for peace. This essay honours Father Paul Jackson, S.J., who was the founder of Islamic Scholars Association for Christian-Muslim Dialogue, and one of the earlier pioneers in this field.

17. REDISCOVERING OUR CHARISM: PRAYERFUL REFLECTIONS ON THE DOCUMENTS OF GC 35

Abstract: The most effective way to internalise the inspiration of the General Congregation Thirty-Five (GC 35) is prayerful reflection and group sharing. These are meant to facilitate an imaginative and intuitive internalising of the spirit and inspiration that a General Congregation brings, as it calls us to renew our charism and missions us to ‘new frontiers’.

18. IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, MISSION: JUBILEE REFLECTIONS FOR MY FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS

Abstract: This article looks back at Heredia’s 50 years of journey as a Jesuit.

19. COMMUNITY AS MISSION: COMMUNITY AS PROPHETIC

Abstract: General Congregation 35 has affirmed ‘community as mission’. To be a prophetic community implies that our mission too will be prophetic. Community as mission calls us to prophetic witness in both, our living and our working together.

20. INTELLECTUAL APOSTOLATE: PASSIONS OF THE MIND, COMPASSION OF THE HEART

Abstract: Unreflected activism without a solid grounding in theory degenerates into sloganeering. A concerned and thoughtful intervention in society requires both an open mind and an unsealed heart. This is the minimum we can require of a Jesuit intellectual apostolate, as described in GC 34 Dec. 16, No. 1 on ‘The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries’

21. GC 36 & THE JESUIT RESPONSE TO THE FRANCIS EFFECT

Abstract: The ‘Jesuit imagination’ creatively expresses the inspiration of the Jesuits’ spiritual vision and mission. When they renege on our Jesuit imagination, they lose the unifying thread; and they lose the plot.

22. THEORISING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT: A NOTE ON LOK MANCH

Abstract: Lok Manch, a major initiative of Jesuits in Social Action (JESA) in the South Asian Assistancy, was begun a little over a year ago with the two Indian Social Institutes of Delhi and Bangalore as founding members with JESA. This is an attempt to conceptualise the initiative as a faith-inspired inclusive movement so that it can be up-scaled and replicated, motivated by a relevant ideology and an inspired by an appropriate liberation theology and driven by an effective spirituality of action.

23. JESUIT CONTRIBUTION TO NATION-BUILDING IN INDIA: CHALLENGING THE JESUIT IMAGINATION

Abstract: The celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of our restoration, calls for an open-ended encounter with our Jesuit past. In this sense, history as remembrance is also prophecy. Here I have focused on India and the Indian Assistancy.

24. FULFILLING PROMISES: WHY DID I BECOME A JESUIT?

Abstract: Rudi Heredia relates what his vows, taken long ago mean to him in the present.

25. ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS FOR A COUNTER- CULTURE: JESUIT MISSION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Abstract: The mission of the Jesuit social scientist is to be an authentic organic intellectual not merely interrogating the terms of the discourse that frames people's lives, but further renegotiating them to empower the powerless and to produce a counter-cultural discourse to build legitimate counter-cultural communities of solidarity for the common good.

26. THE MYSTICISM OF ST. IGNATIUS

Abstract: 'The Christian of the future will be a mystic or not a Christian at all' - (Karl Rahner). That future has already arrived but not fully yet. Ignatian spirituality properly comprehended has a critical place in bringing about this *kairos*.

27. ST IGNATIUS: SOLDIER-SAINT OR PILGRIM-MYSTIC

Abstract: The life, spirituality and mysticism of St Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus.

