Students Challenge Racism at New Orleans Teach-In

By Julie Bourbon

More than 500 students from Jesuit colleges, universities and high schools gathered in New Orleans March 9-12 to discuss racism and poverty and engage in spring break service work. They were among the approximately 2,000 Jesuit-affiliated students who descended on New Orleans in a 10-day period to aid in the city’s ongoing recovery efforts.

The teach-in, Rebuilding Our Communities: Facing Racism and Poverty, featured discussions on institutional racism, economic development and poverty, environmental racism, fair housing and employment. Sponsored by the Ignatian Solidarity Network in San Francisco and the New Orleans Province of the Society of Jesus, the event also featured spiritual reflection and a Sunday morning liturgy held under cloudy skies and presided over by a personal representative from Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach.

“Every victim has the power to walk ahead. The power is there,” said Fr. Fernando Franco (GUJ) in his homily. “Never make the mistake to think that you will give the power in this city. You have seen people who have suffered, but you have also seen people who walk.”

Franco, secretary for the social apostolate at the Jesuit Curia in Rome, applauded the students for their efforts and for their desire to rebuild a more just city. "In the name of the Society of Jesus, I want to thank you," he said. "Because I feel that you are living the charism of the Society of Jesus."

Students came from as far away as California and New York, some flying, some driving, to take part in the teach-in. See Teach-In on page 3

‘Smiles a mile wide’ Greet Installation of Youngstown Bishop

By Lou Jacquet - Youngstown Exponent

If the installation of Bishop George Vance Murry (MAR) as the fifth shepherd of the Diocese of Youngstown had taken place a day earlier, the temperature would have been 20 degrees closer to what he was used to in his eight years as bishop of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

But as it was, temperatures were the last thing on the minds of some 900 diocesan Catholics, prelates and honored dignitaries. See Murry on page 3
Jesuits Philosopherize in Chicago


Seventy Jesuits and colleagues were in attendance. The conference opened on Friday with mass, followed by the keynote address by Fr. James G. Murphy (IH), professor of philosophy at Millitown Institute, Dublin. The papers were presented on Saturday morning. In the afternoon there were plenary sessions for open discussion of the papers, with responses from panelists, including Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago.

Mass on Saturday was concelebrated by George, Fr. Provincial Edward Schmidt (CHG) and Fr. Daniel Hartnett (CHG), rector of the Loyola University Jesuit Community. Fr. Robert Thesing (CHG), the superior of men in first studies at Loyola, presided at mass on Sunday.

Murphy’s keynote address focused on the evangelization of culture and how Catholics and Christians doing philosophy can offer service to theologians and the wider Christian community. “Before attempting to evangelize culture, we must first become aware of the degree to which we are, in the words of Jürgen Habermas, ‘colonized’ by the culture,” he said.

Reflecting upon Fides et Ratio’s statement that “the Church has no philosophy of her own,” Murphy said, “there is no Catholic philosophy as such.”

He went on to address the philosophical issues of relativism, metaphysical anti-realism, moral anti-realism and skepticism that he said “challenge the Christian to remember who one is, what context motivates the study of philosophy, and what it is one seeks in the love and pursuit of wisdom.”

Most of the presented papers dealt with the nature and transcendence of God or the social role of philosophy for any valid critique of contemporary issues. "As the church seeks to engage culture in the public domain," he said, "philosophy gives us greater credibility in discussion and assists us with argumentation. It is also essential if theology is to be done well.”

Schmidt observed that the "conference highlighted and affirmed the crucial role of philosophy for any valid critique of contemporary issues." He said it showed that "philosophy is not an arid discipline, cut off from real life,” as he recently heard one scholar describe it. “At this conference we saw philosophy alive.”

In addition to George and Murphy, the response panel included Loyola University philosophy professors Ardis Collins and Adriana Peperzak. At the closing social and banquet, the men in first studies took the opportunity to mingle with the Cardinal and the panelists. The conference was supported by the Loyola University Jesuit Community and by a generous endowment established by the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus for the First Studies Program.

Wendt (WIS) is a second year student in First Studies at Loyola University Chicago.
Teach-In

Several were reunited with Loyola New Orleans students they hosted on their campuses during their "Katrina semester" in fall 2005, when Loyola was forced to shut down, its students scattered to many of the other 27 Jesuit colleges and universities throughout the country.

Drawing heavily on the U.S. Bishops Conference document "Brothers and Sisters To Us," the 1979 statement on the sin of racism, moderators M. Shawn Copeland Ph.D., professor of theology at Boston College, and William Quigley, director of the law clinic and the Gillis Long Poverty Law Center at Loyola University New Orleans, defined racism as prejudice plus power. They cited inequities in employment, education, housing and criminal justice as well as the opposition to affirmative action as being tools of institutionalized racism.

Quigley likened justice to "spokes in a wheel" and exhorted students to re-educate themselves. "The education we receive by and large is an education to live in the status quo," he said.

Copeland told the students that their engagement in justice work is akin to resurrection. "Resurrection is an act of resistance," she said. "It's God's resistance to all that undermines and oppresses."

Her remarks echoed those of Fr. Provincial Fred Kammer (JOR), the evening before. "All that we do in justice and peace work follows the pattern of death and resurrection," said Kammer, a New Orleans native. He asked students to "see, judge, act," and to root their solidarity with others in "fidelity and hope."

That they heard his message seemed clear just by listening to the reasons they had come. A small group from Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia arrived for the start of the teach-in Friday evening, by car, and had to turn around and head back home less than 48 hours later. They were the sixth group from Wheeling to make the approximately 1,000 mile trip to New Orleans in the last 18 months.

"I'm here because when you read the Gospel, it doesn't give me an option not to be here," said Susan Haarman, a Marquette University graduate who is now on campus ministry staff at Wheeling. The school, which has a longstanding commitment to people living in poverty in Appalachia, seems also to have adopted the recovery of New Orleans as one of its causes. "It's really caught fire here on campus. It really has."

Jamie Cousin, a freshman at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Ala., lost her family home in New Orleans East to Katrina's floodwaters. She spent the second half of her senior year in a rented apartment with two older cousins so she could graduate from her New Orleans high school, Mt. Carmel Academy.

The Cousin family moved back into their home in March 2006 after completely gutting and restoring it, with the help of volunteers. The 18-year-old has since spent two weekends at Bayou La Batre, a tiny fishing community near Mobile, doing the same for other families. Addressing the assembly, she thanked the many volunteers at the teach-in for giving of their time and energy, and she reminded them that every structure they worked on was someone's home.

"This is more than just walls," said Cousin, one of 173 Spring Hill students to lose their homes to Katrina. "This is my house."

Murrr

who gathered March 28 at St. Columba Cathedral for the afternoon installation of the new diocesan bishop. The liturgy was filled with moving moments, perhaps none more so than when Murry, 58, told the congregation, in a voice rising with emphasis, that "I commit myself, with God's help, to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to you, and to carry you to the Gospel."

Those present for the event included two representatives from each of the 115 parishes and two missions in the diocese, as well as more than 40 bishops and three cardinals from around the nation.

The day had dawned cool and gray, but finished in the mid-60s with sunshine, an appropriate sign from the heavens, as it were, of the overwhelmingly positive response to the new shepherd demonstrated in sustained applause during the liturgy. As one parish director of religious education put it, there were "smiles a mile wide on every face all day long" at the new bishop's presence and demeanor.

Perhaps the warm welcome had something to do with the fact that the more than 215,000 Catholics in the diocese had been waiting nearly two years for a successor to Bishop Thomas J. Tobin, who was assigned to lead the dioceses since its creation in 1943.

There was also much interest in what the first Jesuit and first African-American to lead the diocese since its creation in 1943 would say in his initial remarks to the Church here. He had received sustained media coverage in daily newspapers across the region for at least a month prior to his installation for the same reasons.

Once the liturgy began, the diocesan Church welcomed their new prelate with rapt attention and singing that filled the cathedral to the ceiling. It was clear that the man described by so many in initial interviews as "a people person" returned that heart, and vice versa.

The installation liturgy was crisp, surprisingly swift, and graced by moments of humor. It was carried live on local television as well; even residents of various faith backgrounds in area nursing homes stopped their morning activities to watch.

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In his homily, Murry reflected on Mark 10: 46-52, the story of the blind beggar, Bartimeaus. It is a story, he said, with great relevance today, because "I believe that we are the ones Jesus comes to heal, for in fact, we are so often blind" to God's everlasting love, to his willingness to repeatedly forgive us, to his real presence in the Eucharist and more.

On a more personal note, Murry said he stood before the priests, religious and faithful of the diocese "to ask the Lord to open my eyes to see you: to see the living God who dwells within you; to see Jesus touch your sorrows and turn them into joys… to see the needs of the poor in our community, including the unemployed, the underemployed and those who struggle each day to make ends meet, to see the hardships endured by immigrants who come to northeast Ohio seeking a better life."

"I pray that the Lord will not only open my eyes but open yours as well," he added, "to see the living God who dwells in your neighbor, regardless of her ethnic heritage or his native language; to see how God makes a way out of no way, even in disappointment, even in death; to see your vocation to be the first and best teachers of your children in the ways of faith; to see our mutual responsibility to lift up the poor; and to see our primary task as building the Kingdom of God on earth."

Stressing that the only way for today's faithful to have their eyes opened is "to come before the Lord" and "seize every opportunity for prayer," Murry reflected that "nothing is impossible" once believers have the courage to embrace the "great gift of faith." With rising emphasis, he added: "Will we face difficulties? Surely. That is the human condition. Will we fail? Undoubtedly. We are not perfect. But will the evil one prevail? Never. For God will keep His promise. He will save us. There is in found our hope."

Jacquet is the editor/general manager of the Catholic Exponent.
JESUITS AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

By Carol Corgan

On September 11, 2001, I was in the early weeks of teaching my social justice course to seniors at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C. Just after class, about 9:15 a.m., I was passing the headmaster’s office. Our registrar and several other members of the administration and faculty were transferred before the television. And I, like everyone else, was drawn into the events of the day. One airplane had already hit the World Trade Center. Before long, we saw smoke billowing forth from the Pentagon, several miles away.

One of our students lost his mother, a flight attendant, on American Airlines Flight 77. Other students were frantic about their parents who worked on Capitol Hill, at the White House, in the State Department, and at the Pentagon. Our school community immediately felt the tragedy and shared the question on everyone’s lips: “Why?”

As a teacher, it became apparent that I would need to revise the material we were covering in our social justice class. To help my students reflect on the events rapidly unfolding, on the national response that would follow, I would have to address the history of the Middle East conflict, as well as Catholic doctrine on war and peace.

I gradually adjusted to this new approach. What I found over the semesters of 2001-02, and as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq unfolded, was that it was impossible to cover the issues involved without addressing in greater detail the beliefs of Muslims, Christians and Jews. It was necessary not only to speak of how we are similar but also to delineate differences which previously may not even have made it into a high school lecture, for example, how Jews, Muslims and Christians view the Holy Land. More than ever before, my task became to inform more thoroughly and to broaden my students’ capacity to understand.

In the five years since, I have taken on a share of teaching our senior foundational theology course. One of our tasks is to challenge the pervasive “culture of relativism,” but from the Catholic vantage of respect for other religions through dialogue and cooperation. We use Nostra Aetate, from Vatican II, to underscore the Church’s affirmation of the activity of the Spirit in all that is right and true in the religions of the world. What I realize over and over again is that, though surrounded by a plethora of media, today’s young people mostly use technology to escape from the pressing problems we all face rather than to learn more about them.

Although well-to-do professionals and diplomats of many religious backgrounds and cultures often live next door to our students in this cosmopolitan city and region, young people often remain unaware of who Buddhists are, where Shintoism is practiced, what Hinduism and Islam might have to do with tensions between India and Pakistan, and the fundamentals of Islam. No surprise, then, that a few continue to voice the tired phrase “all religions are basically the same.”

As someone firmly committed to interfaith dialogue, I have continually voiced my conviction that the faithful who are dedicated to dialogue bear the responsibility and have the opportunity to heal the wounds brought upon the world in the name of religion. Over time, I have had the satisfaction of seeing students grow and change. Through regularly assigned reflection papers, I have seen cracks develop in the wall of ignorance.

In the foundational theology course, I recently gave an assignment asking students to reflect on why it was essential for a Catholic to understand other religions. One young man wrote:

I went to a Catholic day school and had it pounded into me that everyone is equal in God’s eyes. I realize how profoundly this has affected my life. The whole religious atmosphere I had been raised in promoted peace, understanding, and the desire to discover why someone believes something. Being raised in this Catholic tradition allows me to accept that my preconceptions of Islam were wrong, and lets me see how the Bible is interpreted by some literally, and by others non-literally. I have learned a lot, but perhaps the most important thing I have learned up to this point is that before I cast judgment on a religion, I must first try to understand it.

Teaching high school seniors is exciting. They are intellectually curious as never before. They revisit their childhood “whys” with an ability to begin understanding the complexities under-girding reality. This time of life is wonderfully suited to religious formation. Students are idealistic, and they respond to Christ’s call to love neighbor. In our Jesuit schools, we like to invoke Fr. Pedro Arrupe and his call to form “Men (and Women) for Others.” In our divided global culture, in our country which is more and more diverse, we are called to reverence Christ present in the Other as Buddhist, or Anishinist, or Jew, or Muslim. We strive to form our young people in such a way as to meet this particular Other’s needs. Just as we have shaped our curricula to reflect an awareness of the needs of the poor, we seek to shape our courses to meet this demand of social justice.

Corgan is a member of the U.S. Jesuit Advisory Board on Interreligious Dialogue and Relations and is trained in Ignatian spirituality. She has taught for 11 years at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C.

Prayers Requested for Jesuit Shareholder Advocacy

The U.S. and Upper Canadian Jesuit Provinces are united in their shareholder advocacy promoting human rights and global health. Jesuit provinces are currently leading shareholder dialogues, through the National Jesuit Committee on Investor Responsibility, with Bristol Myers Squibb, Monsanto and Occidental Petroleum. For the past two and one-half years, they have also held dialogues with Chevron Corporation, encouraging the adoption and deployment of a transparent, verifiable and comprehensive human rights policy to govern their exploratory, extractive, refining and distribution operations in the 180 countries in which they operate. This effort maintains that human rights must include provisions for: sustainable development, consent of host communities, environmental stewardship, human rights training for employees and contracted security policies, and healthcare access.

On April 26, 2007, the Jesuit-led resolution will be considered at Chevron’s annual shareholder meeting before the full board of directors. Last year, the resolution received an impressive 24 percent shareholder vote. In the weeks prior to the meeting, Chevron shareholders will be casting their votes regarding this resolution. All Jesuit institutions and friends of the Society who own Chevron stock are asked to vote for the Jesuit-led shareholder resolution to develop a Human Rights policy.

U.S. and Canadian Jesuit provincials have unanimously supported this effort, as well as 16 other religious and social investors, including Creighton and Marquette Universities, which co-filed in support of the resolution. The California, Detroit, Missouri and Wisconsin Provinces are leading dialogues. Please consider inviting your school, parish, religious community or organization to join the Jesuit shareholder advocacy effort through prayer and action. For more information, visit www.jesuit.org/SocialJustice/SRI/default.aspx.
Dear Editor:

Fr. George Coyne does a service in criticizing Intelligent Design which does not fit the role of natural science because it does not lend itself to verification by experimental methods (NJN. Dec. 2006/Jan. 2007). And as finding its origins in a religious basis, it appears to many as requiring an element of faith to accept. But it is precisely in this context that one might say it is indeed opposite to the theory of evolution as proposed by Charles Darwin.

It is said that Darwin's study has had "immense success" in scientifically explaining all natural living things by chance mutations and natural selection of the fittest. Of course Darwin as well as others knew of the selective breeding to obtain the best characteristics in plants and animals, so it may seem a small step to make the evolutionary hypothesis. Yet, as a dedicated physical scientist with 45 years of fundamental aero space research and teaching of engineering, I have handled numerous scientific issues related to the material reality about us and realize the need for adequate evidence to firmly establish a theory. And as a Jesuit priest I have had the gift of philosophy and theology studies, so I know there are numerous sciences that lead to certain knowledge about reality. The physical sciences constitute only a narrow branch that arrives at truth but with great limitations on the types of questions it can handle. It is a study of measurable aspects of material reality; hence it is intrinsically incapable of treating issues related to nonmaterial reality.

In this regard that difficulty arises when Fr. Coyne aligns himself with Darwin saying that "all living beings, including ourselves," i.e., humans, come about by this process. Of course man has a material body but clearly is not limited to the category of other "living beings." And evolution does not create; realistic metaphysics demonstrates that only a being whose essence is existence can create, and we call that God. And humans have a spiritual, nonmaterial principle, the soul. So Darwin's full-blown materialistic evolution cannot explain the existence of humans. Following on the period of the Enlightenment, Darwin tried to make it do so by his false philosophical-religious belief in atheism with its rejection of the spiritual nature of man. (This is why Marx adopted Darwinian evolution to show the atheistic philosophy.) Of course no bodily evolution could ever produce the immaterial soul. This is where the comparison and contrast with Intelligent Design might more appropriately fit; both have their genesis as much in a religious viewpoint as in any other source. And that is not the proper place to begin formulating natural science theories (as became evident with the rise of physical science after the age of theological hegemony as the explanation of many things related to the material universe).

I doubt that Fr. Coyne means to state such an all-inclusive formulation of the theory, but his method of description leaves that as the logical conclusion of the presentation. In contrast, the hypothesis of material evolution cannot be considered an adequate explanation of the existence of man. It seems that many writers in religious fields are seeking things in the form that are not the same secular mode of discussing such issues, not giving the full account with adequate distinctions. How many potential readers of his article would be led to conclude they can reject the truth of their spiritual nature and adopt irreligious positions? Not possible to oppose this view.

Darwin knew that the tremendous time exposure proposed for evolution prevented contemporary testing of the concept and at the time no fossil evidence for it existed. But he was optimistic that examples of "missing links" would be found to give some real data. Indeed, quite soon the "Archeopterix" seemed to fill the bill as a transitional feathered dinosaur (unable to fly however). But current neo-Darwinians are in dispute as to its meaning as the geological age doesn't match the required ancestor-descendant time-table. Of course the classic example always shown was a monkey-human missing link. So sure were Darwinists that the theory was fact needing no further verification that the Piltdown man was readily accepted by the whole biological community without proper scientific examination. Now known as the prize hoax of the scientific world, it took 40 years to be shown a forgery and more than 30 years for an old trunk in the attic of the London Natural History Museum to explain the fraud; this revealed that the biological community had failed to submit the bones to the most basic tests of authenticity.

A remarkably similar event in very recent times was the enthusiasm for a new flying dinosaur fossil bought for $80,000 in 1999 and highly publicized by the National Geographic Magazine. It took a Chinese biologist (most of whose colleagues with no religious reasons reject Darwinism) to examine the specimen curiously and point out how nearly he had glanced a clue to the fact of primitive bird skeleton. And of course there is the falseness of Haeckel's embryology drawings purporting to show that biological development illustrated and verified the evolutionary process. The falsity aspect of the comparisons was suspected by the early twentieth century and admittedly well known by biological scientists by the 1970s but the illustrations have persisted as verifications of evolution in many biology textbooks right up to the 21st century.

After nearly 150 years, the mechanism of evolution has not been well established either. With the advent of molecular biology, gene mutation was put forward. However, Nobelist Ed Lewis of Caltech established that the four-winged fruit fly bred from the normal two-winged variety possessed the same identical wing-growth gene in both of his four-winged offspring. The hypothesis gene mutation for the evolutionary process was not the cause of the difference in this case and may well be suspect in other instances of evolving forms. For the fruit fly it was some function not external to the fruit fly that turned it on and off during development. In any case the changes produced a fly that was unable to fly (aerodynamic balance devices no longer present) so it could never survive in the wild.

The conclusion I come to as a scientist is that a full-blown Darwinian evolution does not explain the origin of human life, which has an inmaterial component. If the theory fails in one important species, is it guaranteed in others? I prefer to think of a more limited development theory that illustrates many changes of materialism as considered a certain physical event. Of linking specimens is very thin. Mutations on the biochemical level have been observed (as in viruses) and the development of antifreeze proteins in Antarctic fish is called remarkable. A recent amphibian fossil discovered in northern Canada is considered evidence for another amphibians (e.g., crocodiles) have the same bodily structures to walk and swim but are not considered to constitute a link. (And the beautiful little penguins are birds that can't fly; can hardly walk, but are better than most fish at swimming!) It could be that the remains of appropriate animals have simply disappeared from the Earth, making any physical proof of that part of the theory difficult; but in accordance with the theory the linking forms should have existed over considerable lengths of time.

Darwin's Galapagos finches, later studied extensively in the 1970s with some indication of natural selection, were called a "compelling example" of species origin by the National Academy of Sciences, but were so only by way of extrapolation, which every good engineer knows is the mother of error. The succeeding observations over 25 or so years showed it to be purely speculation as exactly the opposite trend occurred as hybridization appears to be actuality reducing the number of species in the islands. Yet this as well as other misleading examples appear in many recent biology texts.

In our age numerous physical scientists make claims that their experimental methodologies and results are reasons to reject the existence of God (a LaSovietcosmonautsnotfinding God "in the heavens"). An example is zoologist Richard Dawkins in a recent book. He is record ed as saying that the Darwinian world view is not only true but is in principle the only explanation that could solve the mystery of our existence. The second assertion is a philosophical assumption, not a scientific conclusion. It corresponds to his view of atheism as a science and that evidence is "unnecessary" to prove the truth of Darwinism. In this climate it seems to me there is a strong need for a restoration of the substantial study of realistic philosophy in the preparation of Jesuits for the priesthood. I know various false philosophies (Descartes, Marx, etc.) and I also know a valid science of metaphysics that corresponds with reality. Maybe there are others but the one I am accustomed with is the Thomistic approach; it enables us to make the necessary distinctions to present the truth to people of the twenty-first century. A recent advanced biology textbook by Douglas Futuyma claims that it was Darwin's theory of natural selection that is the stage of most current Western thought. But even Richard Dawkins, whose views on evolution are a bit out of the New York Times and 85 percent sure (a 6 out of the total 7 on the atheistic scale) that God does not exist, so there is still hope.

Fr. R. James Arenz SJ (CFN)
Los Angeles, California

AJCU President Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Last month, Jesuit college and university presidents and leaders of higher education associations in Washington, D.C., honored Fr. Charles Currie (MAR), president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), for his 10 years of service as the group's president.

Appointed to the AJCU presidency in August 1997, Currie has been recognized as a leader in higher education, internationalization efforts in Jesuit higher education, service learning and education for justice, Jesuit-lay partnerships, science and theology, and for the development of the Jesuit distance education network, JesuitNET.

Currie served as president of both Wheeling College (now Wheeling Jesuit University) from 1972-82 and Xavier University from 1982-86, directed Georgetown University's Bicentennial celebration, served as a physical chemistry faculty member at Georgetown, and as rector of Saint Joseph's University before arriving at AJCU.

In a show of gratitude for Currie's work in securing federal aid for America's college students, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Congresswoman James McGov ern (D-MA), who could not be in attendance, provided pre-recorded video messages which were shown during the celebration.

"For years on our education committee in the Senate, I have relied on Fr. Currie's wise counsel and insights," said Kennedy. "He is an excellent leader for your institutions and an indispensable ally in the ongoing effort to make college accessible and affordable for every student, regardless of their income."

McGovern's video message to Currie mentioned their travels to El Salvador following the 1989 assassination of the Jesuit priests at the UCA. Currie was named special assistant to the president of Georgetown to coordinate the university's response to this tragedy, traveling to El Salvador many times and participating in the extensive Congressional response.

In his concluding remarks, McGovern stated, "Charlie's leadership at the AJCU is incredible. There is no stronger advocate for students in making certain that higher education is made available to all."

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Meetings That Make a Difference: Jesuit General Congregations

By John W. Padberg SJ

The 35th Jesuit General Congregation is an extraordinary event. But then every general congregation is extraordinary. And some are more extraordinary than others. For example, the 20th in 1820 that deposed the very vicar-general who had convened it. (But more of that later.) This article is too brief to deal with the whole history of the general congregation. Rather, it will highlight some major characteristics of any congregation, some of the important decisions that congregations have made, and some of the rather unusual circumstances, to say the least, that once in a while occurred. Most of the examples will come from earlier congregations in the history of the Society. The more recent congregations, 31st to 34th, were so unusual that they deserve separate treatment.

According to the Constitutions, a congregation is one of the means of uniting the members among themselves and thus is supposed to represent the whole body of the Society. Obviously members cannot all come, and so certain ex-officio members, plus elected delegates, make up the assembly. The Society has been careful that the number of elected delegates substantially exceeds the ex-officio members, “more Indians than chiefs,” so that a variety of voices may be heard. A general congregation is the ultimate governing body of the Society. The superior general presides, but when the congregation is in session, its authority supersedes his authority. Of course, he has great influence in a congregation, but it and not the general sets the agenda, determines the rules and makes the decisions.

The subjects that a congregation decides to take up are overwhelmingly dictated by the postulata or petitions/requests it receives from province congregations. Obviously, a general congregation does not accept all postulata. And that is just as well. For example, the third general congregation in 1573 rejected one postulatum that said that “such was the wickedness of men and the times” that the Society should set up prisons for its members. But another postulatum countered by saying that such was the “sweetness and mildness of governance in the Society” that we should never have prisons or shackles for our members, but that a superior could confine to his room as if under house-arrest a recalcitrant member until he mend-ed his ways. That, too, the congregation rejected. At times, superiors may have wished that it had accepted the proposal.

At a congregation, committees are set up according to the subject matter of the postulata consider them, amend them if needed and then forward them to the whole body with a recommendation on what to do with them. After often several other resubmissions, the congregation finally votes on an agreed-upon text. If the vote is positive, that text officially becomes a decree or enactment that binds the Society’s members to its provisions. In the history of the Society, the number of postulata sent to a general congregation usually comes to no more than several hundred at the most. But approximately 2,000 of them inundated the 31st general congregation in 1965-66. As Vatican II unleashed the desires and the imagination of the church as a whole, it did the same for the Society.

Internal and external circumstances obviously impinge upon a general congregation. The first and most important such is the church and, more specifically, the pope and the offices through which he governs the church. Other obvious influences are organizations in the church, movements of spirituality among the faithful, the governments of the nations in which the Society lives and works, and intellectual/academic questions.

Personalities, Politics and Problems

Here are a few examples of such interplays. The personalities and policies of Pope Paul IV and King Philip II of Spain interfered for two years with starting the first general congregation. The king disliked the pope; the pope, of iron-will, volcanic temper and absolute certainty, detested the king and almost all things Spanish and had engaged in a ruinous war against Philip. That delayed the meeting until 1558, almost two years after the death of Ignatius, until peace was concluded between the two bel-ligerents. And then the pope sent his own cardinal-delegate to count the votes in the election that produced Diego Laynez as general, insisted on choir for the Society, and limited the term of the general to three...
years. Those provisions lapsed with the next pope, Pius IV. And to end on a minor note, that congregation even had to consider whether beards should be cultivated in the Society. Despite the example of our holy founder, the members decided against it.

At the third congregation in 1573, Juan de Polanco was the most obvious choice for general and many historians think that he would surely have been elected except for three circumstances. First, there had already been three Spanish generals in a row and the last, Francis Borgia, had appointed Spanish superiors in all too many places around the Society. Secondly, the kings of Spain and Portugal, out of the then reigning prejudice against people of Jewish descent, put great pressure on the delegates from their countries and also on Pope Gregory XIII that they prevent any such person being chosen. Polanco was of Jewish descent. Third, the pope himself, while leaving the delegates free in their choice, insisted very clearly that he preferred that the fourth general in a row not be a Spaniard. Everard Mercurian from Belgium was elected. More recently, at the 32nd general congregation, Pope Paul VI decided that the congregation should not discuss the question of extending the fourth vow to all the members of the Society, despite the overwhelming number of postulates from all over the Society that requested such a discussion.

Two very different internal challenges arose from the fact that Jesuits had become increasingly prominent as confessors of kings and princes, originally at the urging of Ignatius himself. Over time, charges of their meddling in politics became ever more frequent, even if not true. One congregation after another ordered Jesuits who were such confessors not to involve themselves in “what is secular and belongs to political affairs and the governing of states.” Unfortunately they could never clearly describe where the boundary lay in matters of the personal conscience of the king that were not also in some sense political.

Two very different internal challenges that the congregations had to deal with were dissension within the Society and what was taught in Jesuit schools. For example, during the 34-year term (1581-1615) of Claudio Aquaviva, some Spanish Jesuits became increasingly critical of his governance and wanted a separate jurisdiction for the Spanish provinces. They induced the pope, Clement VIII, to order the calling of the fifth congregation in 1593 to deal with the matter. The congregation repudiated that proposal, and then turned on the so-called “moralitarians,” the group of men who had written the memorials, strongly complaining about Aquaviva, and expelled them from the Society. Unfortunately, then, it went further and supposedly because a large number of them were of Jewish or Moorish ancestry, it forbade future acceptance into the Society of men of such ancestry. Despite the fact that Ignatius himself had earlier strongly refused to countenance such a prohibition, the pressure of long-time prejudices took over. It was not until after World War II that this impediment was totally removed from the books. A striking case of dissension arose at the 20th congregation in 1820, the first after the restoration of the Society. A time of one might have expected a grateful harmony. Before the meeting itself, a very complicated situation arose that involved the constitutional structure of the Society and some pre-suppression and post-suppression Jesuits. Once the congregation finally got started, it immediately expelled several Jesuits (including one scholastic) as “pertrubators” and, as mentioned earlier, even removed the vicar general from office before going on to elect the new general, Luiggi Fortis.

Much less dramatic but of more long-range importance, several congregations ruled that the Society should follow in its schools not only St. Thomas in theology but also Aristotle in philosophy, including “natural philosophy,” as the physical sciences were then called. Although in practice Jesuit schools were in touch with and taught the scientific developments that increasingly dominated the 17th and 18th centuries, they were often hampered by what the congregation dictated as theory.

More Mundane Subject Matter

Plenty of other dramatic, unusual events have occurred over the 450 years between the first congregation in 1540 and the 35th which is to take place in 2008. But most congregations were just long, hard work sessions. What did they deal with most? Overwhelmingly, they dealt with what would preserve, protect and advance the life of the Society, the individual and common religious life of its members and its external apostolates to which they gave themselves. This strikes forcibly any reader of the decrees of one congregation after another. The spiritual life of its individual members as it was lived out in community and apostolate was the center of concern. Challenges from the outside usually entered the life of the congregation only if they troubled community or apostolate—sometimes, it must be admitted, too narrowly conceived.

Over the centuries, four specific matters overwhelmingly occupied the attention of congregations: First the preservation and deepening of the religious life of members of the Society; secondly, preparation or formation of its younger members; third, apostolic activities, especially education; fourth, internal structures and activities of congregations themselves, at times to the level of naval gazing. But given the intermittent nature of congregations, with relatively long intervals between them, and with a large number of delegates always new to the experience, this was almost inevitable.

History by Decree

The direct results of a congregation come out in its decrees. For all of the history of the Society up to the 31st congregation in 1965-66, those decrees are in most cases just a few paragraphs in length and cast in almost legal language. That all changed with the four congregations since Vatican II. The documents of the 31st through the 34th congregations are completely different in their structure and especially in their tone from all of the documents of the previous congregations. They are not so much legal enactments as they are calls or summons to a deepening personal and institutional commitment to the ideals of the Society. As noted earlier in this essay, Vatican II unleashed the imaginations and desires of the church and the Society.

In some ways, the 31st and 32nd congregations, especially, were the real “restoration congregations” of the Society. They called it to the kind of imaginative commitment to its own internal life and its external apostolates that had distinguished the founding of the Society. Jesuits could not have made that kind of call in the fragile circumstances of their own original restoration and in the context of an understandably but deeply conservative church in the 19th century. Both church and Society were recovering from the upheavals of the revolutionary epoch of 1789-1815, which helped change the world not only politically but also culturally, socially, intellectually, geographically and religiously.

What the congregations did in those four meetings held over a period of 30 years—1965-66, 1974-75, 1983 and 1995—is all too recent for “history” to deal with them fully. Their decisions have affected deeply, in many ways and right up to the present day, the contemporary Society as a religious order and Jesuits as its individual members. But that would be the subject of another NJN essay on general congregations.

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The Coetus began its work in Rome on March 15. It will study and organize the 350 or so postulates received thus far, as well as any future postulates received until the beginning of the Congregation (Formula 13). The results of this study will be summarized in relationes praeviae, which, together with the reports of the Commissions on Community Life, Social Justice, Lay Partnership, and Apostolic Obedience, will be sent in due time to all members of the 35th General Congregation (Formula 15).
Reflections on the Realignment of Provinces

By Daniel L. Flaherty SJ

I have read and re-read the explanations for the various realignments of provinces and it seems to me that “99 and 44/100 percent” – to quote the old Ivory soap commercial – of what is trying to be accomplished could be done more simply, quickly and effectively by a “jurisdictional” rather than a “geographical” approach.

By that I mean a “realignment” of jurisdictions, of functions, of the roles of provincials in an Assistancy re-configuration akin to our Federal-State system of government.

The Jesuit Conference, with the 10 provincials as a board of governors, would establish a number of “bureaus” (agencies, departments, etc.) under the jurisdiction of the provinces and the Assistancy to manage and maintain the assistance level and perspective all the apostolic works of the Assistancy: higher education, secondary education, pastoral ministries (retreat houses, parishes, missions, etc.), communications (America, Company, Loyola Press, Loyola Productions, Jesuit website(s), etc.), and international (mission partners, Roman houses, and other assignments to apostolic works abroad). The bureaus would be staffed and run by professional lay colleagues but each would be overseen by a small committee of provincials of the Jesuit Conference.

All apostolic planning would be done by the bureaus, from a national perspective, under the direction and oversight of the “governing committee” of provincials and, ultimately, the full Conference board. All apostolic assignments would be made nationally. The bureau would be responsible for the training of and assignment of Jesuits to the work under its jurisdiction. It would set standards for the “Jesuit character” of the works, from charters to hiring for mission to outcomes assessment. It would provide trustee workshops a la the AGB (Association of Boards of Universities and Colleges), training programs for administrators (Jesuit or lay), and be responsible for the regular periodic “accreditation” of the work as a Jesuit apostolate.

The provincials would be responsible for the cura apostolica of the works of the Assistancy in their dual capacity as members of the JC Board and heads of the committees in charge of the bureaus. Quarterly JC Board meetings would last a week, with a full day given to each of the bureau reports and apostolic planning of each. They would also be responsible, as a group (or through the Conference president/moderator), to Father General and the universal Society for its apostolic needs and new initiatives.

The provincials would primarily be responsible for cura personalis of the men under their regional jurisdiction, according to “our way of proceeding.” They would oversee the recruiting of and acceptance of suitable candidates for the Society and their early formation. They would determine, in the context of cura personalis, the sort of future apostolic work a man is best suited for and most attracted to, and would identify the bureau to which he should be assigned for apostolic studies and formation: studies, workshops, regency assignments, provincial degrees, etc. From their work on the JC Board, the provincials would know the assistance needs and guide men under their cura personalis supervision toward those needs. They would also argue, at the national level, for the re-assignment of Jesuits from the jurisdiction of one bureau to another based on those same needs. And they would ultimately remain responsible for the final incorporation of the members of their province into the Society of Jesus, in collaboration with their colleagues in the bureaus and the approval of Father General.

Local provincials would also develop and experiment with individual apostolic initiatives – e.g., for the homeless, the “unchurched,” the elderly – and support them on a local level until some sort of “national” effort might develop, as New York did with Nativity model schools or Chicago did with Cristo Rey model schools or the newer Charis ministries for young adults and Ignatian Spirituality Project for the homeless. (Examples could be multiplied.)

Sharing information about these initiatives at the JC Board level would lead to more national cooperation and expansion of successful “local” programs.

National cooperation and awareness would also be facilitated by better communication at the assistance level: The JC website, NIN, Company, etc.; Bureau bulletins, websites, chat rooms, etc., and new media developments like iPad and MPA downloads not only for “professional development” but also for wider and more immediate communication of developments, decisions, directives and what have you.

None of this necessarily requires or involves any immediate “geographical” realignment of provinces or redistribution of physical assets. It simply requires a “jurisdictional” realignment of cura apostolica and cura personalis and a corresponding change in mindset and perspective from regional to national in planning and cooperation (something that is already taking place in formation programs nationally) for the more effective use of manpower and finances, the Society’s two principal assets: Geographical realignment (or contraction) may develop more gradually or naturally as manpower availability contracts or expands, but from the days of Ignatius until today it has never been the primary focus of the Society’s governance. That has always been the best and most efficient use of the Society’s resources for the mission at hand, and Ignatius himself did not hesitate to call men from almost every “province” in Europe when he opened the first Jesuit “college” in Messina.

With a more limited (in terms of time expended) but more important (in terms of direct national oversight and control) role in cura apostolica, the provincials would have more time for their essential role of cura personalis, the basis of the Society’s form of government and our way of proceeding. And, from a purely political point of view – I write from Chicago, after all – an American Assistance of 10 provinces rather than five geographic ones would retain the number of delegates to a General Congregation commensurate with the other resources the assistance presently shares already with the universal Society.

The pieces of such a functional realignment are already in place for the most part: the JC itself, a national database, AJCU and JSEA, quasi-national formation programs in First Studies and theology, the JC website, and so on. Actuation of this functional Assistance-wide alignment could begin immediately by a vote of the Jesuit Conference Board. Personnel are already available to staff the proposed bureaus and training of men for the various key positions could begin by this fall.

Let me give just one example of the pieces in place and a possible implementation plan. The JC has already copyrighted the name “Jesuit.” It has just recently issued a document entitled “What Makes a Jesuit School Jesuit?” (the basis, for sake of argument, of an accrediting procedure). Let’s say the JSEA is organized as a national bureau under the leadership of three provincials to see not only to the accreditation of our secondary schools but also to their geographic distribution, staffing and operation. Let’s say the JSEA determines the two or three positions in a school to be held by Jesuits. For the sake of argument, it would be the president, as the most visible Jesuit presence of the school’s Jesuit identity and mission, as well as for community relations, development, and so forth; and the vice president for mission and identity, to supervise the practical details of hiring for mission, faculty and student spiritual development and service programs, “men and women for others,” and so forth.

The bureaus, along with the provincials, would identify men to be trained for those two positions and design programs to implement that training: academic studies, mentorships at existing schools and the like. A cadre of such men should begin to be available to fill those jobs within three to five years, with more following in the pipeline. The JSEA would also develop programs (and teams to give them) for trustees on the character of Jesuit education, as well as for faculty and staff and administrators; the programs need not be mandatory but simply available as needed.

An aside: most of our schools now are not “works of Ours” in the technical sense (cf IAG nn. 117 and 117.1) nor as they were when we began them. That’s simply a reality to be acknowledged and dealt with as the above scenario attempts to describe.

The “intellectual apostolate” which the Society treasures is not a question of Jesuit teachers in Jesuit schools. Men who are suited to this sort of apostolate – the next generations of John Courtney Murray, Avery Dulles, John O’Malley and their ilk – should be wooed/welcomed by Jesuit institutions, but it is not a Jesuit teacher (i.e., classroom teachers) that, as the JC document says, “Makes a Jesuit School Jesuit.” On the other hand, provincials in both their cura personalis and cura apostolica functions will continue to see to it that this intellectual apostolate so often recommended to the Society by its General Congregations will be encouraged and supported by those Jesuits particularly suited for it by talent and temperament.

This scenario, for those who cannot get beyond the numbers questions, would require a total of about 200 men appropriately (not austerly) trained: about 125 in secondary ed (48 high schools and 10 to 20 Cristo Rey or Nativity model schools) and perhaps 75 in the 28 colleges and universities. That’s an additional manpower projected down the road by the numbers in the realignment document. The other two-thirds would be available for new ministries and missions. Numbers are not the issue, therefore – at least they shouldn’t be; discernment is the issue.

Flaherty (CHG) is the publisher of Company Magazine.
Depression: My Partner in Jesuit Life

By Donald F. Rowe SJ

Chronic depression has been my partner in life for 20 years now. I would like to share my experience. My purpose in “telling all” is to help others be supportive of men in the community who are depressed, and to encourage the depressed Jesuit to get help.

Depression is said to affect about seven percent of the American population. Further, it is estimated that depression occurs in about 15 percent of those over the age of 65. They also say that about 16 percent of adults will experience depression at some point in their lives. It is estimated that only about 20 percent or so of sufferers will receive adequate treatment.

About 97 percent of those reporting depression also reported that their work, home life and relationships suffered as a result. So depression is bound to affect a Jesuit’s community and those with whom he ministers, as well as his relationship with God.

Chronic depression is not, in general, a terminal condition. Depressed people do not feel poorly just because of some sad event in their lives, although a traumatic event may make it worse.

Sometimes, objectively, things may be going swimmingly. But there is no joy in any of it. Relationships fall flat. Energy is greatly diminished and it is easier to avoid events and the community than to try to participate. Many things that seemed rich in the past are not meaningful. While duty may prevail, delight and enthusiasm are gone. Most everything is tasteless. Talent, education, previous motivation, spiritual gifts mean nothing. There seems no way out of the meaninglessness and hopelessness that a person is experiencing.

A personal experience

I was diagnosed with chronic depression in 1987. I have had my good and my bad periods since this time. I hold a full-time job and have all of these years. I participate in community. I suppose that many of the Jesuits with whom I live now have no idea that I am chronically depressed.

At the time I gave the name depression to what was bothering me. In 1987, I had just completed seven very stressful years as president of a Jesuit high school that was bankrupt and in a very dilapidated physical condition when I started. On the one hand, there were significant successes that we celebrated. On the other, I was totally exhausted. A friend said, “You need to talk to a professional.”

The idea of talking confused me. Talk about what? My job was talk, talk, talk all day long. My experiences at home and in the Society had been, by and large, positive. I had a spiritual director. What else was there to say?

Later, I realized, things accumulate. As life goes on, sadness can seem to accumulate more readily than remembered joys. Since we often lead quite private lives, even in community, there may not be the opportunity to share with some trusted and interested person the trials of the day. The worries we experience, the wondering we face.

So what happened? I was referred to a psychologist who asked, when I first visited, how did I feel? Like a log, I responded. After a couple more meetings, she asked me the same question again. I said, like committing suicide. That is when she told me I needed to see a doctor about medications, that I needed meds as well as talk therapy.

The medicine doctor

When the psychologist said that I needed to see a psychiatrist, I thought to myself, she thinks I am really crazy. Images of the film “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” came to mind. Maybe I should get out now while I can. But I went.

He was a doc in his early forties. He told me about his wife and children. He did not look like Sigmund Freud. He asked a lot of questions, but was not pushy or preachy. He said that I should continue to talk to the psychologist, and he prescribed some medications.

He also gave me his home phone number and said that I should call him if I had any trouble with the meds or if I felt suicidal. I called him several times over the next year or so for one of these reasons, or both. He had a way of talking that made sense out of my situation and gave me hope to get better.

Where was the problem?

I thought that I was just exhausted, burned out, just “getting old” (I was 48). A number of people said the school needed me, that I could do a lot of good still. I felt at the time that this was impossible.

What had happened to me? What this doc told me, after a good bit of talk, was that I was probably burned out and that I was most likely bi-polar, with the manic episodes coming out in “I will save the school” kind of work.

He told me that there was some kind of a chemical imbalance in my brain and that all the receptors were not working right. It was this, added to the exhaustion, that was causing me to feel so despondent and desperate.

Lots of people experience the flatness, the enervation, the continuing discouragement, the negativity, and are given medications and begin to feel their old selves again. Or maybe the improvement comes on the second bounce, after trying another med or two. Not me. The last med that was prescribed for me around Thanksgiving of this past year was number 39. My pharmacy should host a dinner for me.

I found out that, in about 75 percent of situations, a depressed person can be significantly helped. The rest of us wander like the Israelites, wandering where and if there is a promised land.

Depression as a spiritual “gift”

When I first made the Exercises and was 18 years old, it was not so hard to “prefer sickness to health” if it brought me closer to God. The trick, when you are depressed, is to know that what you are experiencing doesn’t bring you closer to anyone or anything. You are in a lonely, too-hard-to-explain-to-others mindset/emotional state that makes it hard to situate yourself in your daily life, let alone in relation to God.

But, on my better days, I can say, well I am doing all I can about it medically. I have not given up my apostolates. And, for what I can understand of it, what I experience of it, I offer it to God as the poor servant I am. If God wants to “pass a miracle” and make me “alive in the Lord” again, I happily accept. But if He can get along with me this way, I see there is humility in it, even if it is tinged with boredom and disappointment. Nobody ever said that you had to be giddy with delight over accepting God’s will.

What does “well” mean to me

My latest meds doctor, who has done more for me in one year than three others did in 19, asked me what would have to happen for me to know that I was “well” or even “better.” I thought about it and said that I would see improvement when I once again enjoyed baptizing a baby of friends or former students, when I could sit and talk at the dinner table rather than feel like “I have to get out of here” after the salad, when enthusiasm for my work and an ability to appreciate people’s thanks felt like something.

Community support

Some years back, my provincial suggested that I write a note to my community explaining, in brief, chronic depression and that I was suffering from it. Thus, if I left the table early or seemed unresponsive, people would not be offended. It seemed like a good idea, so I did it. Several Jesuits said, “Sorry to hear about it.”

I am not sure what I expected, but I did think that people would ask me how I was doing once in a while, as you might say to the man who had his knee replaced or was coming out of a heart operation. But few did. Perhaps it is harder to remember to empathize with someone with a chronic ailment than with another person whose recovery can be expected.

As I thought about it, though, I did not feel particularly helped when people asked about my depression because I myself was dead-bored with it. It is so hard to explain the experience in a few words, and long explanations about chronic depression, or about someone’s varicose veins, are tedious. But what was for sure is that I did not experience community as being any supportive help in coping with my depression.

I have summed up my experience in a nutshell. There is much information on the internet about depression and almost any possible symptom. Take a look. And consider a professional. Remember, Fr. or Br. Jones may not just be getting anti-social or peculiar in his old age. He might be ill. It is a great grace to try to help him.

Rowe (CHG) is a consultant to Catholic elementary and high schools at the Loyola University Chicago School of Education. Based on his experience, he has written an 18 page “primer” on understanding depression, its causes, various treatment options, what the Jesuit superior can do, what the community member can do, etc. If someone would be helpful to see it, please send him a request at drowe2@hotmail.com and he will include by e-mail attachment.
Hope on the Horizon?

As the scandal surrounding the Colombian paramilitaries deepens, victims groups mobilize in Washington for change.

By Shaina Aber, Esq.

Mid-November 2006 found me in a chalupa, a small covered motor-boat, bouncing along the tumultuous Magdalena River in Colombia. “African palm,” my Colombian JRS colleague pointed out, gesturing toward the thick, verdant bushes lining the bank, miles deep. “Welcome to the green desert.” A biologist colleague working at a JRS/Colombia farming collective later explained that “green desert” was a term coined to describe the explosive growth of the African palm plant, an ecological hazard for indigenous crops. Like other Colombian cash-crops, African palm has a bloody history in the Magdalena Medio region; these palm-oil plantations dotting the coast of the river have formed a focal point for skirmishes between leftist guerrillas, far-right-wing paramilitaries and Colombian army operatives, spurring massive displacement of agrarian communities in the region.

Senseless violence often accompanies newly exploited resources. I was told horror stories by Colombian refugees living in Panama and Ecuador, and by internally displaced persons living in the Magdalena Medio and Valle de Cauca regions: stories of guerrillas gathering community leaders together and indiscriminately shooting them; reports of paramilitaries slicing open the bellies of women far along in their pregnancies to demonstrate their brutality to an entire village as they demanded cooperation from the populace; accounts of Colombian army brigades killing civilians whose bodies later appeared dressed-up as guerilla militiamen.

Hundreds of thousands of Colombian men, women and children have been disappeared or murdered during Colombia’s long history of civil strife. And as the paramilitaries go through a demobilization process with the financial and infrastructural aid of the Colombian government, violence perpetrated by reorganized outfits of the same paramilitary fighters has continued but has also become harder to track. In fact, one woman, a resident of the city of Barrancaberveja, confirmed a report repeated to me several times throughout my trip, a report that was also documented by human rights groups: “These demobilized paramilitaries are not demobilized at all! They control neighborhoods in town, and the national police let them. They tax the residents and tax single mothers more. They put marks on the doors of single mothers. They say it is to protect us, but you know why they do it. So they know us in the night.”

To describe violence in Colombia as senseless may be misleading. Most of it springs from deliberate designs on resource-rich territory. Since 1991, more than 2,000 trade unionists have been assassinated by paramilitary operatives. AUC Paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño’s testimony indicates that the goal of these political assassinations was to demoralize the workers and to encourage investment. Some multi-national corporations have used the conflict to subvert labor struggles and terrorize campesino farmers into working for lower wages. Church leaders and peace activists are specially targeted for death and kidnapping, demonstrating careful calculation by armed militants.

The Colombian cartels also consciously used the FAR C and the AUC paramilitaries in their struggle over coca territory and transport. And President Álvaro Uribe, while governor of the Colombian province of Antioquia, knowingly distributed arms to local factions to support the growth of paramilitary groups that wrested power from the FAR C and “protected” the plantations of wealthy land owners. Colombia’s 40-year long conflict centers around control of resources and land; the individual ideological stances of the various armed groups often seem to play a secondary role in this money-laden struggle.

The verdure of the Magdalena Medio makes it fertile territory for bananas, the oil industry and for the infamous coca crop. Chiquita Banana’s recent guilty plea to charges of hiring one of the key right-wing paramilitary groups, the Autodefensas (AUC), to control the farming communities further up the Magdalena River underscores that the deep and far-reaching roots of the conflict often can be tracked to our doorstep in the United States. The United States government itself will give $750 million in aid this year to Colombia, 80 percent of which is earmarked for the Colombian military, a troubled operation, steeped in human rights scandals and accusations of funneling funds and weapons into the hands of paramilitaries.

Meanwhile, human rights and rural development programs, urgently needed to stem the tide of violence and drugs, are underused and poorly financed. And justice for those displaced and abused by the bloody tripartite conflict seems far away. The Colombian lawmakers themselves appear deeply embroiled in the human rights abuses: 10 members of the Colombian national legislature have been indicted since November 2006 for direct ties with paramilitary death squads. No help for the displaced can be expected from their corner.

The plight of the estimated 3.6 million internally displaced persons in Colombia was crystallized for me later during my journey through Magdalena Medio as I sat surrounded by a community of the displaced.

continued next page
Eleven of the children of displaced families who live on a JRS sponsored farm north of the village of San Pablo pose at the site of their new school with JRS/USA advocacy officer Shaina Aber.

Continued from previous page

placed who now live on a farm outside of the village of San Pablo, a town controlled by ostensibly demobilized right-wing paramilitaries posing as “private security firms.” The farm was invaded six months before my visit by paramilitaries who camped out on the land, living off of the farmers. The regular army followed close on the heels of the irregular armed group, seemingly working in concert with the paramilitaries to locate guerilla units.

“We live here trying to rebuild,” one woman said. “Here we have begun a school for our children. We did that on our own….Here you have helped us to build our homes….It gets hard sometimes, when the [fumigation] planes come, when the army comes, when the groups come….We have been thankful for your support.” The woman’s eyes filled with tears, but her smile beamed through as she recounted her journey through life as a displaced person living on a small farming cooperative that had been supported by Jesuit Refugee Service/Colombia for the past three years. She spoke at a gathering of the farming community, surrounded by her grandchildren, children and neighbors. Minutes before she had greeted me with an enthusiastic hug, warm and open despite the trauma she and her family have suffered at the hands of paramilitaries and guerrillas.

The children of the cooperative are equally welcoming, eager to show me the site for their new school, a straw and wood canopy between the row of shacks where they spend their nights and the open-air meeting hall where they spend their days. Barefoot and energetic, a little girl takes my hand and pulls me toward the thatch-roofed meeting hall.

A few days later, on the way back down the river toward the bustling hub of Barrancabermeja, our boat was followed for a few minutes by a group of young uniformed men with menacing rifles. My fellow travelers glanced nervously over their shoulders at the approaching vessel. The tense atmosphere in the chalupa lifted as our driver gunned the engine and left the other vessel behind. The unspoken message in the air rang clear: you never know when armed men will decide you are the enemy.

Far away from the banks of the Magdalena, in Washington this February, as discussions of a free-trade agreement with Colombia began, delegations representing the victims of the protracted conflict descended on the U.S. Congress. They asked that lawmakers endorse a Plan Colombia for the Victims. 4 As Congress considers whether Colombia merits massive amounts of military aid and free trade perks, we should appeal to our government to stipulate that aid to the Colombian government is contingent on giving restitution to the displaced, cleaning up its human rights record and ending impunity for paramilitary leaders.

The victims of Colombia’s civil war deserve justice. The children of Colombia deserve a lasting peace. The Bush Administration’s plan to dump nearly $600 million into the hands of the Colombian military this year bodes ill for ending hostilities and fostering a culture of peace.

A Call to Action

Currently Jesuit Refugee Service USA is focusing on four specific changes in U.S. government policy:

- A change in the proportion of aid so that more is given for effective sustainable development projects instead of military support and hardware;
- Stipulation of a greater amount of military aid to Colombia based on U.S. State Department certification of Colombia’s human rights practices;
- Use of U.S. political influence to assure that the Colombian government gives restitution to the displaced under the Colombian Constitution.

1 See “Colombia continues to be the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists.” U.S. Labor Education Project in the Americas Report, 2005. Available online at: http://www.usleap.org/Colombia/colombiahome.html.


Newly contracted homes for families on the Granja Project, San Pablo Colombia.

Children of La Granja study in the main building as their school is still under construction. JRS Granja Project, San Pablo, Colombia.
Wheeling Jesuit University Names Giulietti President

Fr. Julio Giulietti (NEN), director of the Center of Ignatian Spirituality at Boston College, has accepted the position of president of Wheeling Jesuit University. He will serve as the eighth president of the university, succeeding Fr. Joseph R. Hacala (MAR), who resigned due to health reasons in September and died February 18 of this year.

“I am honored to be named president of Wheeling Jesuit. As the youngest of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in America, our community is bolstered by a long living tradition of faith that does justice,” Giulietti said. He will assume his duties in mid-August.

The Most Rev. Michael J. Bransfield, bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, said “We have a great allegiance to WJU, and I am pleased that a Jesuit president will head the university.” WJU is the only Catholic institution of higher learning in the diocese.

Giulietti grew up in New York City and was ordained a priest on May 26, 1972. At the Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Boston College, he works primarily with faculty and staff in spirituality and personal development. He also directs the Intersections Faculty and Staff Seminar, a semester-long seminar begun through a Lily foundation grant. In addition, he offers an undergraduate theology course each semester, “The Christian Spirituality of Ignatius Loyola” and “Ignatius Loyola and Discernment: A Seminar on Vocation and Profession.”

Giulietti has graduate degrees in theology, comparative religions and counseling, and he completed a doctoral degree at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has more than 25 years of experience in working with international programs and higher education, including preparing and placing graduating students for two years of service in South America and the Middle East through the Boston College International Volunteer Program.

He has also been the director at Georgetown University’s Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED), which operates in 16 countries in Central America, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia.

Retreats and lectures on Ignatian spirituality, Eastern spirituality and law ministry in the U.S., Asia and South America have long been part of Giulietti’s ministry. He has served on a number of boards and was a consultant to the Daughters of Charity Health Care System. Presently, he serves on the boards of the National Catholic Reporter Newspaper and Partners in Health.

In the Halls of Congress

Fr. Stephen Privett (CFN) stands with incoming Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) after giving the opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives on January 4. Pelosi and Privett have been friends since his inauguration as president of the University of San Francisco in 2000, and Pelosi invited him to give the Congressional invocation. Privett ended his prayer by encouraging lawmakers to focus their time on “those who need us the most.” Photo courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Editor’s Note

The New Orleans province column will return in the June issue.
Dear Editor:

Reading the first page of the National Jesuit News (Feb./March 2007), it appears the leaders do not respect the Principle of Contradiction.

On this page, they uphold the March for the unborn (against abortion) and on the same page praise Jesuit scholar Robert Drinan, who as congressman had voted for abortion. The NJN sees no contradiction.

The pope's answer is to proclaim that the Christian religion upholds the union of Biblical faith and our Greek philosophical heritage which includes the Principle of Contradiction. He writes that "the rapprochement between Biblical faith and Greek philosophy was an event of decisive importance" for Christianity. This union of the two, consisting the true religion, began in Old Testament times, the pope affirms.

Fr. Drinan expresses the contradiction in his life, when he is said to have had "a life-long common concern for the well-being of women and children." And in Congress, he voted for abortion of the little ones.

It was at Regensburg University, September 12, 2006, that Pope Benedict emphasized that our Greek philosophical heritage that includes the Principle of Contradiction was from the beginning inseparable from Christianity.

Philip Conneally SJ (CFN)
Sacred Heart Jesuit Center
Los Gatos, California

Dear Editor:

I read with interest Fr. Tom Acker's stirring call for a more forthright and professional approach to "recruit" to deal with the problem of Jesuit "diminishment." It's worth trying, and certainly better than simple handwriting or outright denial. As Fr. General himself has written, it's not that Christ isn't calling, but ... Another approach might be the Spiritual Exercises, the method by which the first companions were "formed" and the way the early Society grew through the efforts of Faber, Nadal and others. Wherever they went, and whatever work they were otherwise engaged in, the early Jesuits constantly offered the Exercises to everyone they could - and gained a number of new recruits.

A practical suggestion, therefore, might be for the Jesuit Conference to put together a team (four? six? eight?) of our best young Jesuit retreat masters to design and give a "Kingdom" retreat to high school seniors and college undergrads - those who are actively wrestling with the question of what they want to do with their lives and where they are going to apply or sign up. The team would be a full-time assignment, and its members would be available to go anywhere in the Assis tancy, by invitation, to give "student retreats." It would be a very practical response to Fr. General's observation that Christ still calls, and a contemporary application of Ignatius' own preferred method of "recruiting" the first companions. And it shouldn't take long to evaluate its effectiveness...

Daniel L. Flaherty SJ (CHG)
Canisius House
Evanston, Illinois

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Director of Development
New York Nativity Centers

New York, New York

Three small, private, Jesuit, middle schools in NYC share one administration for efficiency and effectiveness. The Director of Development works with the President and Board to devise and execute strategies to raise necessary funding (annual, capital, endowment). The Director manages the development office so as to build relationships with foundations, donors, volunteers, etc. The annual target is $4 million in total.

The Director must have a college degree, several years of related experience, exceptional written and oral communication skills, working knowledge of Raiser's Edge and Microsoft Office, and an appreciation for Catholic education. Health benefits and salary commensurate with experience.

Inquirers call 212-477-2472 x100 or e-mail resume to Fr. Vincent DeCola SJ at vin@nynativity.org.

Pastoral Care Chaplain
Loyola University Chicago Medical Center
Chicago, Illinois

The Pastoral Care Department seeks an energetic and adaptable Jesuit priest for full-time chaplain ministry. Loyola's Pastoral Care Department is a multi-talented, collaborative group of 12 women and men, lay and religious, that provides 24/7 inter-faith ministry to the patients, families and professional staff of the Medical Center. Included in this ministry is a strong Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program which provides dual accreditation (ACPE & NACC).

Pastoral Care chaplains also partner in the early clinical education of medical students at Loyola's Stritch School of Medicine. Applicants should have at least 4 units of CPE education and/or be eligible for NACC or APC certification. Fluency in Spanish highly desirable, as is previous pastoral care experience. Send a letter of introduction and your resume to Joyce Milewski, Human Resources Department, Loyola University Medical Center, 2160 S. First Ave., Maywood, IL 60153 or FAX to: (708) 216-4918. For specific job-related questions, please send an e-mail to Marie Coglianese, Director of Pastoral Care; at mcoiglia@lumc.edu.

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Fr. Michael Engh, dean of the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts at Loyola Marymount University, announced the establishment of the Helfington Ecumenical Institute, which will focus on promoting dialogue and constructive encounters among the religious leaders, theologians and members of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

Fr. Peter Pabst hosted a very successful fundraiser at Bellarmine College Prep in San Jose. The annual fiesta and auction supports the works of the Sacred Heart Nativity School, which is in its sixth year of educating socio-economically disadvantaged boys in grades 6-8.

Fr. Frank Buckley and Mr. Phil Cooke (WJS) hosted six young men interested in the Society of Jesus at the Novitiate (Ignatius House) in Culver City for a weekend of prayer and discernment. Frank is also teaching a weekly yoga class to the extended community of SJTB in Berkeley.

Fr. Sean Carroll and Steve Corder joined several other retreat directors in Hawaii for the semi-annual "busy-persons retreat" held twice a year at the Newman Center in Honolulu. Fr. Christopher Cartwright, director of the center, organizes the retreat each year for the young and old alike.

The Jesuits and staff of Brophy College Prep in Phoenix hosted a summit and forum to examine immigration in light of our gospel call to respect and promote the human dignity of each person. Joining Fr. Steve Privett from USF was Most Reverend Gerald Kincanis, Bishop of Tucson, as keynote speakers.

Fr. Cameron Ayers of St. Agnes Parish in San Francisco organized a discussion on angels through the use of scripture as well as the traditions of the Catholic Church. Ayers is joined by Fr. Russ Roide, who is on sabbatical this semester after several years as pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Phoenix.

After 13 years, Fr. Don Duggan has returned to the Silicon Valley and taken up residence at the Sacred Heart Center in Los Gatos. Don had previously served as chaplain, spiritual director and friend to the sisters of St. Jeanne de Lestonnac at their retreat center in Temecula, which is situated amidst some of the finest vineyards in Southern California.

-- J. Thomas Hayes SJ

Guided by vocations director Fr. Tom Lawler, the Wisconsin Province has recently unveiled www.thinkjesuit.org, a website devoted entirely to vocation promotion. The site includes brief vocation stories and advice in both written and podcast forms (currently featuring Mr. Rick Ralphson and Br. Pat Douglas), snappy visuals, up-to-date loads of resources and the SJ Café, where candidates can email questions and chat with Tom or other Jesuits online. A great new resource.

The Jesuit Retreat House in Lake Elmo, Minn., which offers Fons weekend retreats for men all year round, had a great 2006, with 3,000 retreatants, 10 percent of whom were coming on retreat for the first time.

Alongside superior Fr. Pat McCorkell, Fr. Ed Stihokal and many other veterans, the retreat house also shone with some new talent, including Fr. Rick Abert, Casey Beaumier and Kevin Kersten.


In other news: Frs. Tom Lawler and Tom Simonds each recently took their final vows; PC Magazine ranked Creighton U. fifth in its top Wired colleges – Creighton was the only Jesuit school on the list; and, dust off your shoes and find your old glove, there will be bowling at province days this June.

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California

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Wisconsin

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National Jesuit News  ■  April / May 2007  13
To stimulate international academic links, the Irish Jesuits offer two fellowships a year to visiting Jesuit scholars in Theology (including Spirituality) and Philosophy. The fellowships offer:

- full board and accommodation in a Jesuit residence for either one or two semesters (September to Christmas or January to May);
- a stipend of €15,000 per academic year or €8,000 for a semester;
- office and computer facilities.

The Fellows will teach one MA/STL module and conduct one staff seminar.

Application, with a CV, should be sent by post or preferably by email to Fr. Noel Barber SJ (nbarber@jesuit.ie), Jesuit Provincial Delegate for Learned Ministry, Gonzaga College, Sandford Road, Dublin 6.

The deadline for applications is April 30 prior to the commencement of the academic year (for the 1st semester) and September 30 (for the 2nd semester).

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**Interreligious Institute for Jesuits and All Involved in Jesuit Ministries (July 2007)**

**Georgetown University**
Washington, D.C.

An intensive summer institute tailored for Jesuits and those involved in Jesuit ministries, facilitated by John Borelli (Georgetown), Fr. James Redington SJ (Berkeley), Fr. Patrick Ryan SJ (Fordham), Fr. Ray Bucko SJ (Creighton) and others, including Fr. Thomas Michel SJ (Rome); introduction to Catholic teaching and the Jesuit heritage on interreligious dialogue and relations, introductions to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Native American traditions, and an update on Jewish relations; responses to pastoral and educational interests and needs of participants; visits to a Hindu temple and a mosque; morning, afternoon, and evening sessions with Saturday, July 28, noon until Sunday, July 29, noon free.

Arrivals on Sunday, July 22 and departures after noon on July 30, 2007.

Tuition: $420

Rooms: $60 a night or $480 for eight nights

Meals: Approximately $25-$30 per diem

Parking: $12 a day for weekdays; free on weekends

Participation limited to 25.

For further information contact:

Dr. John Borelli
Special Assistant to the President for Interreligious Initiatives
Office of the President
Georgetown University
Washington, DC 20057-1789

(202) 687-4936

borelli@georgetown.edu
Jesuit Lectures on Pope

Fr. Jared Wicks (DET) delivered Loyola University New Orleans’ spring Yamachi Lecture titled “Prof. Ratzinger at Vatican II: a Chapter in the Life of Pope Benedict XVI.” Wicks, long-time professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome (1979-2004) and now teaching at John Carroll University, was named to the Lutheran/Catholic world-level dialogue in 1986 for the phase that brought out “Church and Justification” (1994) and continued in the dialogue that has produced “The Apostolicity of the Church” (2007). He also worked in the group that drafted the L/R/C Joint Declaration on the “Doctrine of Justification” (1999). Recently, Wicks has become active in research on the contributions of the theologians/peri ati at Vatican Council II.

In January nine members of the Loyola House community moved into the fully renovated residence at 300 Newbury Street, Boston. The first floor now hosts the New England headquarters of The Jesuit Collaborative.

Br. Edward Nizolek of Campion Center in Weston, Mass., has published “O Miraculous Wonder: Help Us Find You,” a selection of his poetry composed over many years. The volume celebrates the God of the many miracles that surround us every day. Publication was privately funded, and the work is available for purchase from Campion Center.

On January 19, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., (above) along with 30 concelebrants, officiated at the new St. John Francis Regis Chapel at Regis University in Denver.

Opened in August 2006, the new chapel was built largely with the help of alumni and friends who contributed more than $6 million to its construction.

“It is a signature building that emphasizes our Catholic Jesuit identity,” said Fr. Michael J. Sheeran (MIS), Regis president.

On January 17, Fr. Allen Novotny, president of Gonzaga College High School, introduced Martin O’Malley, Class of 1981, at an interfaith prayer breakfast the day of his inauguration as Maryland’s new governor. Novotny credited O’Malley’s sense of community and service to his family background as well as to his Gonzaga education and the influence of Jesuits such as the late Frs. Horace McKenna and Clem Petrik, and Fr. Donald Ward.

The late Fr. Joseph H. Hacala, former president of Wheeling Jesuit University, was honored at the annual St. Anthony Parish Benefit Awards Dinner in Charleston, W.Va., on March 14. Hacala, who died February 19, posthumously received the Gregory Loebach Award for Support of Education, named for the church’s pastor, who opened a school in 1922. Fr. Brian O’Donnell accepted the award.

In response to Abp. Lawrence Burke’s question, “How can we [the Archdiocese of Kingston, Jamaica] keep our Catholic schools Catholic?,” Fr. James Hosie, currently of Boston College High School and formerly headmaster of St. George’s College, Kingston, devoted the last few weeks of his one-semester sabbatical visiting the schools in question and making recommendations to the Archbishop and his Catholic Education Board.

Fr. Richard Bertrand, pastor of Sacred Heart/St. Dominic’s Parish in Portland, Maine, was the featured subject of the “West End People” column in the Feb. 23 – Mar. 7 issue of The West End News. His parish is home to Franco-Americans, Africans from the Congo and the Sudan, but mainly from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Ecuador and Chile. Bertrand is fluent in several languages.

Fr. Richard Roes SJ

On January 19, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., (above) along with 30 concelebrants, officially dedicated the new chapel (below) awarded the “Oscar” of the construction industry in Colorado in late 2006. It contains many distinctive elements, including the Madonna Della Strada Prayer Chapel, a tower and bells rising almost 100 feet above the chapel plaza, and the St. John’s Bible Collection, a complete collection of the St. John’s Illustrated Bible, beautifully illuminated in calligraphy and color illustrations by renowned artist Donald Jackson and displayed in a large glass niche inside the chapel. In addition to daily Catholic Mass, the chapel is home to a weekly ecumenical service and monthly Taize prayer and song. Photos by Mika Harper, SI

Chapel Dedication at Regis
MEMORIALS

IN MEMORIAM

We invite you to celebrate the lives of these recently departed Jesuits. To read their complete obituaries, please visit http://www.jesuit.org/obits.

- Fr. Martin L. Brewer SJ (CFN)
  Born: November 3, 1920
  Entered: August 14, 1941
  Died: March 22, 2007

- Fr. Michael E. Browne SJ (NYK)
  Born: July 27, 1941
  Entered: July 30, 1958
  Died: February 6, 2007

- Fr. Danil A. Degnan (NYK)
  Born: July 17, 1926
  Entered: August 14, 1958
  Died: March 16, 2007

- Fr. Donald D. Driscoll SJ (WIS)
  Born: June 17, 1933
  Entered: August 8, 1952
  Died: March 21, 2007

- Fr. Joseph R. Hacala SJ (MAR)
  Born: February 28, 1945
  Entered: July 30, 1962
  Died: February 18, 2007

- Fr. Norbert J. Lemke SJ (WIS)
  Born: January 30, 1914
  Entered: September 1, 1931
  Died: March 27, 2007

- Fr. James P. McCaffrey SJ (NEN)
  Born: July 30, 1922
  Entered: July 30, 1939
  Died: March 7, 2007

- Fr. James E. Morse SJ (CFN)
  Born: March 3, 1920
  Entered: August 14, 1937
  Died: March 21, 2007

- Fr. Herbert W. Rogers SJ (NYK)
  Born: December 29, 1911
  Entered: July 30, 1930
  Died: March 5, 2007

- Fr. Joseph S. Scannell SJ (NEN)
  Born: December 25, 1919
  Entered: July 30, 1937
  Died: March 2, 2007

- Fr. Patrick A. Sullivan (NEN)
  Born: February 13, 1916
  Entered: September 7, 1940
  Died: March 18, 2007

- Fr. Ronald D. Wolf SJ (CFN)
  Born: November 26, 1942
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  Died: March 6, 2007

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BOOKS

Brokers of Culture. Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848-1919
Gerald McKeitt
Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, Calif., 2006
Cloth; 428 pp.; $60.00; ISBN: 0-8047-5357-1

This book examines the interactions among multiple ethi-
ic groups in the American West and a group of nearly 400 Italian Jesuits who emigrated to the United States after 1848 in the wake of the Italian uni-
ification movement. These men eventually played a major role in reforming American seminary education and shaping the evolution of culture in 11 western states.

Transfiguration: A Meditation on Transforming Ourselves and the World
John Dear SJ, with a foreword by Archbishop Tutu
Doubleday/Image Books, 2007,

Dear offers reflections on the story of the transfigura-
tion as an invitation to spend our lives in relationship with Jesus, to pursue his path of creative nonviolence, and to follow him down the mountain to the cross by work-
ing for the abolition of war, poverty and nuclear weapons. “This book is a clarion call for us to be engaged in the project for world peace,” Archbishop Tutu writes in the foreword.

“Let Me Follow
Robert Fabing SJ
CD; 23 songs; $17.00; Item # 20312

Though created for the liturgy, Let Me Follow also has strong devotional application. Many songs express a powerful, personal approach to Christ. Recur-
ring themes include following Jesus’ example, returning to God and growing in holiness. Excellent background music for meditative; these titles are also great for prayer services and small faith group gatherings.

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Ministry among native peoples dates from the beginning of the Jesuit presence in North America and today, according to some, it is the best measure of the general apostolic health of the U.S. Assumption. Having experienced a ministry that yields a rich though demanding, at times exhausting life, 12 Jesuits who met at Creighton University to discuss their experiences in native ministry agreed that they love this work because they love the people and wish to provide a Catholic ministerial and sacramental presence, founded on the ministry of Christ, which gives hope and empowerment. They also believe that Native American ministry needs serious attention.

The U.S. Jesuit Conference’s Advisory Board for Interreligious Dialogue and Relations convened a special consultation at Creighton March 15-18. The meeting drew together Jesuits from U.S. provinces and Canada to reflect on their experiences and to discern future steps for raising consciousness on the centrality and importance of ministry among Native Americans. I chair the advisory board, at the invitation of the U.S. provincials, in my capacity as national coordinator for interreligious dialogue.

Membership on the advisory board consists of a representative appointed by each provincial and a few experts whom I appoint. Two members have considerable experience ministering among Native Americans, Frs. Raymond A. Bucko (NTK) and Carl F. Starkloff (MIS). Fr. Paul B. Macke (CHG), secretary for pastoral ministries, to whom the advisory board reports, also has experience in this ministry and lived many years in Alaska. Fr. Thomas F. Michel (IDO), originally from St. Louis and now Father General’s secretariat for interreligious dialogue, encouraged our planning after his review at the advisory board’s meeting last October. None of the consultations on interreligious relations that he has convened has been for Jesuits who minister among native peoples. At Creighton, we sought to fill a gap while facilitating a fresh reflection during this period of discernment for the future.

We invited Jesuits from the Midwest, Pacific Northwest and Alaska to join us to reflect on the role of interreligious dialogue in contemporary Native American ministries. As the project unfolded, what we already knew was implicit become more explicit, as the title of the consultation’s report indicates: “Jesuit Ministry among Native Americans: Evangelization, Inculturation, Interreligious Dialogue and Discernment for the Future.” Eight U.S. Jesuits and one from Canada joined us: Phillip T. Cooke (WIS), Frs. Donald A. Doll (WIS), Denis G. Donoghue (ORE) and John F. Duggan (CSU), Paul H. Grubb (ORE), and Frs. John E. Hatcher (WIS), Mark Hoelsken (ORE), Peter J. Klink (WIS) and Patrick J. Twohy (ORE). It was encouraging that three were under 40, and two of these, scholastics.

The diversity of experiences and variances in styles of ministry was obvious from the start. Some tribes are flush with new funds from casinos while others, and many even in the successful tribes, still suffer some of the worst poverty and health conditions in the United States. Everyone experiences frustration in ministry, but in Native American ministry one must negotiate at least two worlds and usually more. These worlds interact and sometimes clash in the lives of native peoples, especially those who are Christians, and often one is not certain of communicating or understanding the correct message.

The formal dialogue of experts – scholars, theologians – does not predominate. Catholic sources speak of four kinds of interreligious dialogues: the dialogue of life, the dialogue of social action, the dialogue of experts and the dialogue of spiritual sharing. Interreligious understanding results from all these ways that people of differing faith traditions interact.

Looking specifically at ministry among Native Americans, one is aware of a three-fold dialogue: of Native peoples with their traditional cultures, of Native peoples with ministers of the church, and of the church with Native peoples and with those who minister among them. The common ground for all is openness to that which is sacred and transcendent. We meet, minister together, work together, share and support one another as spiritual companions because we respect our mutual openness to the transcendent, which for us is God working through the word and spirit in the lives of everyone.

The more Native Catholics recover their cultures in the process of being the church, the more complex inculturation becomes in the effort to preserve and promote what is true and good in their lifeways. The majority of Native Americans are Christian, inculturation involves ongoing and multi-faceted decisions that ultimately Native peoples must make for themselves in the intersection of two traditions: Catholic and Native. Those of us on the outside looking in at times are edified and enriched, and at other times uncertain or frustrated.

Do not confine your mental images to reservations. More than half of Native Americans do not live on reservations. Truly, this ministry directly affects the whole Assistance. A vision of interrelated apostolates, such as educational efforts from grade school to university, and attention to Native ministry in urban pastoral centers, already exists but needs to be expanded. If you have not thought about Native Americans in your urban ministries, it is time that you did.

Also, do not confine your mental images to the rich lessons of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, real as these are. Poverty, abuse and poor health remain for many Native Americans. Speaking at the 1997 Synod of Bishops for America, Bishop Donald Pelotte of Gallup (New Mexico and Arizona), whose father was Abenaki, described the situation this way: “...everywhere on our continent indigenous peoples suffer the worst neglect and impoverishment of any population. The pre-eminent measure of the success of the planting of the Gospel in America is the condition of the first peoples who welcomed Europeans and received the word of God in their hearts and minds, each according to their circumstances and abilities. Their condition more often is marked by failure than by success.”

Ten years later, these American Jesuits concur as their report addresses the future: “We have to restart evangelization in its fullest and broadest sense, attentive to the needs of Native peoples and directed at inculturation of the gospel through Native leadership, education, and programs addressing drug and alcohol abuse. To make this happen, we need ministers who have a strong religious identity, are comfortable in their own culture, are free of co-dependent tendencies and can be enthusiastic yet indifferent about their ministry among Native peoples.”

That is why Jesuits in Native American ministry today believe that the health of their relationship with Native peoples is indicative of the general apostolic health of the Assistance. Commitment to this ministry measures how well Jesuits in North America are living out the commitment of the Society to marginalized people and the commitments to justice, intercultural dialogue, interreligious dialogue, education and the never ending purification of memory and reconciliation.

Borelli serves as the president’s special assistant for Interreligious Initiatives at Georgetown University.
FEATURE

Walking, Breathing Parables:
From Exegete to Pastor

By John K. Ridgway SJ

After completing six years of doctoral work in Scripture followed by 10 years teaching mostly biblical studies at Regis University in Denver, I returned in spring 2006 to the Oregon Province to become associate director in the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Portland. When asked if I would substitute that summer for the pastor at St. Andrew Mission on the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton, Oregon, I responded, naively and enthusiastically, “yes.” That one little word altered my heart forever!

With no experience or knowledge of Native ministries, I arrived at the Mission in May for my inaugural and sole tenure, this time, not an academic one. It didn’t take long to “notice.” To notice how my previous exegetical endeavors gave way to “seeing” how biblical characters, particularly in parables, were alive in the people—beloved of God—whom I grew to know and love at St. Andrew. Simply stated, Jesus’ parables are figurative stories that disclose the mystery of God’s presence and actions in the world. Amid the unpredictable, wide-ranging roles of pastor, these parables as expressions of God’s Word came to life. The Word walked and breathed.

I met Him in fresh ways in St. Andrew’s Church and parish center, Kateri Hall; in the confessional and at the baptismal font; at St. Anthony Hospital; in the local market and the sacred Long House; in the tribal school and tribal Cultural Institute; in the beauty of undulating wheat fields and blazing sunsets; when blessing homes and sharing at tables; and at mortuaries and gravesides. While presiding with trepidation at my first Native funeral 10 days after my arrival, I was acutely moved by the wisdom in mourners’ quiet grief and respect, by their remembering, by their unhurried gestures and songs invoking ancestors’ guidance and aiding passage, and by their unity as brothers and sisters in both bereavement and celebration. Beatitude stood up and declared: “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh” (Luke 6:21). This memory will breathe for me in every future funeral.

I met Him via His beloved brothers and sisters in Matthew’s Parable of the Last Judgment: in the hungry, thirsty, estranged, and sick (25:31-46). I encountered Him at the first and last hours of life; in exuberant-laughing hearts and in reflective-plaintive ones; in bright-eyed children returning from a river swim and in elders remembering about ancestors’ ways; in accident victims and emergency medical personnel; in sun-drenched traffic flaggers and inspired printmakers; in the pain generated by a history of white injustices; and foremost in gentle, quiet loving-kindnesses. “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, . . . I was sick and you visited me . . .” (Matt 25:35-36).

In an exceptional way, I met Him in the persona of the poor widow who gave out of her scarcity to support the Temple treasury, in Luke’s Parable of the Widow’s Offering (21:1-4). One afternoon in late July, during my final days on the Reservation, I was away from the Mission on a pastoral call. When I returned, waiting for me on the rectory doorstep was a brown paper bag in which had been placed a booklet of prayers and a 12-ounce can of black olives. Accompanying these offerings was a note expressing gratitude to me. These were gifts from an Indian woman whose material poverty and undernourishment were matched by her plenteous spirituality and capacious heart. Deeply moved was my own heart as I thought: “I’ve just met the ‘poor widow’ in Luke’s parable.” That one little word “yes” altered my heart forever!

I’ll never forget that loving gesture of generosity. Now I was the one nourished: “For I was hungry and she gave me food.” This woman of such scarcity of material means taught me, in my relative affluence, a profound and indelible lesson about big-heartedness, faith, trust and generosity—cornerstones of Gospel living. My fist, and, I hope, heart were pried open, at least a little more. “I thank you, Father . . . that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little ones” (Luke 10:21). I also came to understand at an entirely new depth a verse from Paul’s Letter to the Romans on which years ago I had performed an extended scholarly exegesis but which, until my mentor...
“exegeted”: it anew for me, had not sufficiently lived: “so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (12:5).

The Word walked and breathed among the members of His Body: “For just as the body is one and has many members . . . so it is with Christ” (1 Cor 12:12). Never in my 25 years of priesthood have I had a more tangible, vigorous experience of the Body of Christ than among its members at St. Andrew Mission and the wider Reservation. The view of the risen Jesus in “these His brothers and sisters” was clear in ways that defy description. His tender embrace of His people and their loving dependence on Him were unmistakable.

As priest, exegete and pastor, I had gone to the Reservation presumptively to give, as best I could. By July I had become recipient. As I “saw” God’s profound love for God’s people there, a question kept thumping at my soul: if God loves these people so evidently, can God also love me like this? As I dared to allow grace to answer this query affirmatively, additional scales of myopia about my own lovability and acceptability dissolved. I learned how St. Andrew’s people were heart-full “apostles” through whom God’s love came to illumine some of the dim recesses of my spirit. All these events further enlivened for me the Beatitudes within those people: “Blessed are they, the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8). So much for exegetical control!

My experience is that Indian people at St. Andrew Mission live by their hearts. Big hearts. Respectful hearts. With these hearts they sing and pray, drum and dance, laugh and worry, honor living relatives and mourn deceased ones, support tribal rights and defend the environment, and promote well-being of children and families. Such hearts have room for spirit and Spirit. This great-hearted people expanded my heart. Providentially, such expansion serves my ministry at the Jesuit Spirituality Center. To me, Native and Ignatian spiritualities are complementary since both reverence hearts as loci of spiritual movements. My summer sojourn among great hearts enriches my capacity to “find God in all things.” The spiritual exercises through which I was guided on the Reservation help me “to know him more intimately, love him more intensely, and follow him more closely” (SpEx 104). In the sense that it disclosed to me God’s presence and actions in the world, my sojourn from exegete to pastor was a walking, breathing parable. That one little word “yes” altered my heart forever!

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Army Chaplain Sees Job as Forming People of Peace

By Peter Feuerherd

When Fr. Timothy Valentine teaches about Just War Theory in his college philosophy class, he doesn’t need to worry about keeping his students awake.

An enthusiastic and engaged professor, Valentine knows he can’t take all the credit. This particular course is not just of academic interest to his students at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. After graduation, many will be serving and possibly fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan, or other world trouble spots.

As an Army chaplain, Valentine (NYK) has earned the rank of captain. He sees his service, which included a year’s stint in Iraq, as devoted not to any particular military culture but to the needs as military chaplains is inadequate. Valentine is one of only two American Jesuits currently serving as U.S. Army chaplains. There are about 1,000 priests in the Military Archdiocese, which includes more than 1.4 million Catholics, of which about 375,000 are in uniform.

His road to the military chaplaincy had many twists and turns along the way. A native of Long Island, Valentine, 48, was ordained a priest of the Rockville Centre Diocese in 1985, and then served three happy years as an associate pastor at Corpus Christi Church in Mineola, New York, a busy 4,000-family parish with a large number of Portuguese and Brazilian immigrants.

Yet he often found himself reflecting upon his seminary spirituality training, which was heavily Jesuit-influenced, including a 30-day silent retreat based largely on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, himself a soldier.

“I had very few contacts with Jesuits,” he recalls. But he was intrigued by Jesuit spirituality and what he saw as the esprit de corps and intellectual gifts of the Society. With the blessing of his bishop, Valentine went back into formation as a Jesuit novice, a journey from the relatively public life of a priest in a large suburban parish to the quiet existence of a man making the first steps of Jesuit preparation. It took some adjustment.

After a short stint as a parish priest in Nigeria, he returned to the U.S., where he began work as a campus minister at Canisius College in Buffalo and worked on his graduate education, with the goal of becoming a professor. He eventually earned his doctorate in philosophy at Columbia and began teaching at Fordham’s Lincoln Center Campus, as well as serving part-time at Notre Dame Church in Manhattan.

But then on a beautiful fall day at the start of the academic year, he heard the news of planes striking the World Trade Center. Inspired by the example of a brother who served in the first Gulf War, Valentine felt called to serve his country, too, and asked his Jesuit superiors to release him to chaplaincy work. It took some time, but by May 2003 he was at military chaplaincy school in South Carolina.

Valentine spent most of 2005 at Camp Liberty near Baghdad International Airport, serving the spiritual needs of Catholic soldiers there during one of the most intense times of the conflict. The camp was a pivotal site during the initial Iraq invasion, but by the time Valentine got there, it was relatively peaceful.

Still, shells from insurgents would regularly fly over the camp, occasionally hitting their targets. At one Mass, before Christmas, a rocket exploded, taking down the roof of the building occupied by the worshippers. Nobody was hurt, but “celebrating the sacraments with me is a dangerous proposition,” Valentine says with a chuckle.

In Baghdad there were few Catholic priests, so Valentine was often on call throughout the city, including to the notorious Abu Ghraib prison, although conditions had greatly improved when he saw it.

At one time, Valentine observed a military training team, composed largely of Catholics, teach key concepts about human rights and due process to police, soldiers and legal officials of the new Iraqi government.

“They did a wonderful job. They were affecting a whole culture,” Valentine says. “These soldiers and officers were great. And they came to church, by the way.”

Now back at West Point, Valentine serves at the Catholic chapel there while teaching. On a late winter’s day, as broken ice floes roll down the nearby Hudson River, he reflects on what he’s learned about military culture.

First, he emphasizes, the military reflects much of the wider society. While military cultures frown upon debating politics while on duty, the cadets, Valentine notes, “are not a monolith.”

Those who are studying at the academy came to the military after September 11 and realize they have possibly put themselves in harm’s way. All are encouraged to express their opinions in Valentine’s class.

The diversity of views they express, he says, “is very heartening” to those who seek a military in touch with the views of civil society. He encourages the dialogue and notes that it is very often military people who are most reluctant to use force as an instrument of foreign policy. As a chaplain, he says, “I am not supposed to be an apologist for the war or against the war.”

But in any case, he believes it is imperative for the Church to maintain a presence in the military, providing spiritual guidance to the people charged with carrying out national policy.

“They need spiritual care,” Valentine says. “They have their fingers on enormous power. Service to them will redound to the peace and security of our nation.” Ultimately, he says, “we want people of peace to execute the orders of the president.”

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